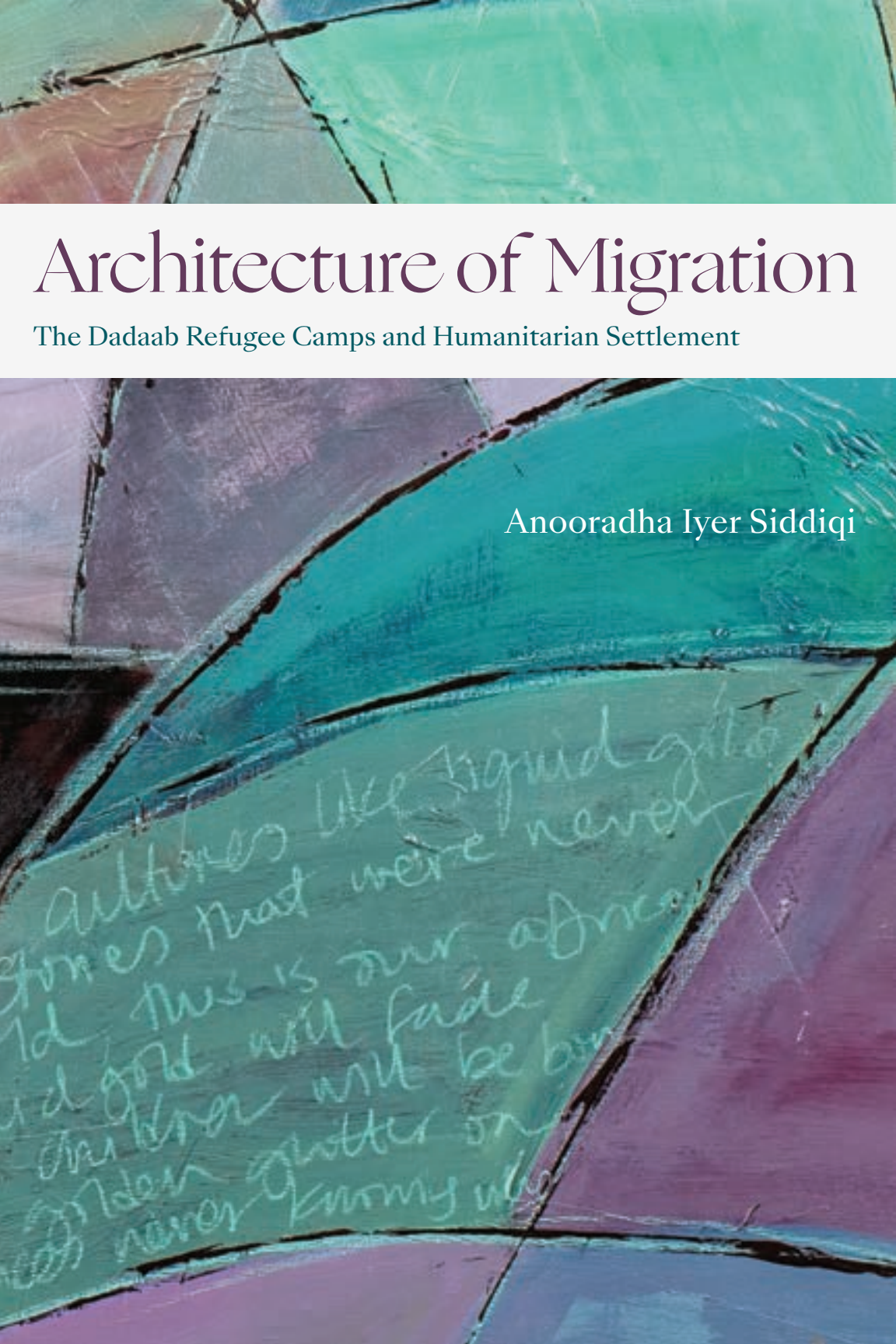

Architecture of Migration

The Dadaab Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Settlement

Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi

THEORY IN FORMS A series edited by Nancy Rose Hunt, Achille Mbembe, and Todd Meyers

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Walter Benjamin purchased an oil transfer monoprint with watercolor, *Angelus Novus* by Paul Klee, in Munich in 1921. In contemplating the work, he concluded that we need history, that struggle is nourished by the image of enslaved ancestors rather than freed descendants. He famously wrote of a strong wind forcing open the wings of the angel of history, driving the angel backward as he faced the past, suspended open-mouthed as the rubble of events piled sky-high at his feet. I have watched Sahil and Ruhi's grandparents, also windswept, yet treading into the future, uncaptivated by that rubble—facing forward.

For Shanta Raman, Dr. K. Venkata Raman,
Professor Najma Siddiqi, and Dr. Hafiz G. A. Siddiqi

As we stand in your giant footsteps

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No one leaves home unless
home is the mouth of a shark.
—**Warsan Shire**

A migrant who chooses to
rewrite an inherited destiny
swims against the current and
faces the wrath of the gatekeepers
who shape that destiny.
—**Shahidul Alam**

At its best and most powerful,
the aesthetic is also ethical.
—**Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o**


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(*previous page*) A provisions shop near Ifo camp where people first encounter settlement at Dadaab.

Contents

Abbreviations

ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LWET	Lightweight emergency tent
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders)
NFD	Northern Frontier District
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WRC	Women's Refugee Commission
WFP	World Food Programme

Author's Note

In this book, I write in collaboration with many cotheorists, named and unnamed. As with histories for which documentary evidence is scarce or provisional, this one relies extensively on unwritten sources and oral transfer of knowledge. I acknowledge the latter by either directly or anonymously citing interlocutors (according to individual wishes) in the primary sources of this book, where I also discuss the ethical complexities of doing so.

Ideas in this book have appeared in all works by the author listed in the references. The dialogue in chapter 1 is republished with minor text and image edits from Siddiqi and Osman, "Traversals." The epigraphs in the preceding pages refer to Shire, "Home," 24; *Shahidul Alam: Truth to Power*; and Thiong'o, "Abdilatif Abdalla and the Voice of Prophecy," 15. (See the references for full bibliographic citations.)

Terms and titles often abbreviated in humanitarian parlance are typically written out in full in this book. However, the list in the preceding pages provides readers with a brief introduction to the bureaucratic vocabulary of acronyms for agencies and organizations representing powers in the field of contemporary international migration: a veritable language that refugees must learn.

As a straightforward means to honor and archive the refugee settlements and their makers, this book's pages are filled with photographs from Dadaab. Yet, we know photography is an intrusion. While always made with the permission of those pictured or the family or community members responsible for their care, these photos have especially attended to people who were public figures already or otherwise explicitly comfortable with the frame of exposure a scholarly publication might produce. (Unattributed photographs are by the author in Dadaab in 2011 unless other details are provided.) As part of writing this book, I engaged people whose perspectives did not involve population management or migration control to imagine and produce

artworks that renarrate and countermap the Dadaab refugee camps. These artists' works appear in dedicated exhibitions, beginning in collaboration with the GoDown Arts Centre in Nairobi, a home for the archive of materials the research for this book has produced.

Architectures of migration, humanitarian settlement, and the materialities of Dadaab form part of a common history and heritage, which I have tried to convey in language accessible to many, even if in a work of academic scholarship written in English. Somali and Kiswahili terms appear in frequently transcribed English forms. The name "Dadaab" may refer to the refugee camps and humanitarian complex together or to the adjacent Kenyan town. The word "architecture" is used metaphorically or with disciplinary specificity as called for in the context of an argument, and is often open to the reader's interpretation or investment. The term "refugee" appears in its ordinary usage as a person escaping harm and also in its precise technical usage by the United Nations in reference to those crossing an international border.

Rather than rehearsing bureaucratic definitions, with regard to legal terms such as "refugee," "asylum seeker," and so on, I ask the reader to consider how we default to received language and instead think about how these terms come to stand in for people's life experiences. While work has been done to acknowledge the power structures attending concepts such as "borderland," "the field," "clan," "community," or "care," the value such vocabulary provides as a shorthand normalizes forms of violence.

This book eschews bureaucratic terms and instead takes a cue from poetics. An aim of this book is to seek new languages and ways to speak of Dadaab, as well as other worlds belonging to migrants toward which Dadaab gestures. An architectural history centering the paradoxes of aesthetics and politics and the many timespaces of African modernity offers a step toward finding those languages.

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(*previous page*) Chairlady Isnina Ali Rage, Ifo camp.

Introduction

ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORY IN A REFUGEE CAMP

A refugee camp is not an object. It is one prolonged event in a history, marked through architecture. The migration occasioning this architecture results from disruption in state and civil order. This architecture extends emergency and gives it form through the materialization and visual rhetoric of precarity. As the architecture of emergency intervention reconfigures the state, international structures, and civil society, the ephemerality of the camp creates figurations of abjection, homelessness, and ahistoricity. This sleight of hand is performed in relation to predetermined frameworks for understanding forced migration only in its immediacy, and not as a factor within longer negotiated processes that slowly erode society and political and cultural imagination. These frameworks cast architecture only as an expression of fixity, establishment, and institution. They have yet to imagine an architecture of migration.

Preconceptions of violent migration and unsettlement circumscribe not only refugees' lives, but notions of home and history. These conditions consign the richer notions of domesticity to the provisionality of emergency shelter. They constrict histories to a limited scope of legitimacy, including only those framed by archives representing landed wealth and settlement. These circumscriptions would suggest that neither architecture nor history may be found in a refugee camp.

That this discourse falls into a racializing chassis may be too obvious to bear mention, as the question of whether or not something is architectural or historical has been inextricably bound up with questions of whether its proponents are fully human. Yet, centering such violence minimizes the more radical misdirection performed by this circumscription of architectures and

histories. Such a limitation masks underlying migrations that form generative ways of life. These migratory worlds constitute alternate approaches to settlement, which resist colonization, fortification, and sedentarization. They propose architectural connections to the land other than those related to the political economy of resource extraction. Looking closely at the spatial and temporal paradoxes of a refugee camp brings into view how migration acts as a basis for people's lives, illuminating how historicity works, so that those lives are extended within landscapes of meaning and critical heritage.

What do we learn when we see a refugee camp? What lives and futures does its architecture trace? How does the space of emergency shape the experience of time? Can we imagine history and heritage in a humanitarian crisis? How does an architecture of migration build knowledge and consciousness for all? These are the questions that animate this book, as it brings into focus one set of refugee settlements as a basis for diverse explorations and concept histories. In 1991, near the village of Dadaab, Kenya, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) initiated an emergency intervention that continues to the date of this writing, a relief operation spawning a temporary encampment into which three generations of people have been born. Dadaab is a Kenyan town whose English translation I have not found. The name also signifies a humanitarian complex of offices and staff residences opposite this town, across a highway, as well as camps to the north and south: Ifo; Dagahaley; Hagadera; Ifo 2; and, at one time, Kambioos. The Dadaab refugee complex began appearing on common maps with the advent of Google Earth in 2001, but for years it was the largest hosting operation ever undertaken by the UNHCR.[1] Its scale resulted from a policy instituted by the Kenyan government, which segregated and restricted the mobility of refugees. This form of apartheid impacted the education, labor, and migration of people. Dadaab has been called an "open-air prison," and in many ways it has been carceral.[2] Yet, it has cradled diverse experiences. In Dadaab, Isnina Ali Rage won an election. Alishine Osman joined the first cohort of refugee students passing through primary and secondary school. Maganai Saddiq Hassan designed and cultivated a farm. Shamso Abdullahi Farah built a home and a body of expertise. Sudanese and Somali women established a restaurant and founded construction workers' collectives. The experiences of these refugees underlie the making of this significant environment. This book sees them as architects and their work as an architecture of migration.

This book understands migration as its own form of knowledge. Through a refugee camp, I examine an architecture that has constricted movement and sedentarized people, yet nevertheless exposes longer migratory lifeways

and traditions. While the category of refugee is a specific legal one, with political and social horizons different from those of the migrant, thinking with the Dadaab refugee camps allows us to place the refugee within the wider landscape of migration, regional and global, present and past.[3] People across statuses converge in Dadaab; all have migrated, and all have settled. I offer a concept history that uses the condition of migration as a method to study settlement.

A spatial politics of humanitarian settlement is the starting point for this book. The singularity and iconic role of the Dadaab refugee complex in the history of the international aid system provides a unique, urgent lens through which to investigate humanitarian settlement. More than any other documented emergency environment, Dadaab has functioned as a significant duty station for institutionally trained architects, arriving from around the world to work as physical planners and operations managers. The structure, infrastructure, and architecture of the complex of settlements iterate decades of emergency relief and physical planning expertise and have provided a test bed for design initiatives and spatial practice implemented worldwide. Dadaab has thus played an important part in a global history of architecture and an international field of humanitarian practice. From 1991 to the present day, Dadaab has been the site of many architectural and infrastructural projects, aggregating into a dense built environment. The refugee camps at Dadaab have housed temporarily displaced people and those joining a vast international diaspora, sustaining people's lives and the growth of communities. The camps have provided a workplace and residence for aid workers, officials in the international system, and architects and planners. If Dadaab has been a transitory space, it has also supported forms, spatial practices, and epistemologies of humanitarian settlement.

I argue for a knowledge gained through knowing Dadaab. Significant local and world histories converge in Dadaab, as explored in the chapters to follow, rendering it singular. Its architecture is not minor or unremarkable, but indeed historically and aesthetically distinct, authored, and monumental. Its epistemological richness provides the platform for diverse concept histories. The close examination of these problems is the aim of this book. Rather than allowing refugee camps to remain distant spaces formed from legal contracts, visible only in relation to the borders of the nation-state, these pages bring into full color the material practices and spaces generated by the forces of displacement and migration. In Dadaab, these practices and spaces are the results of design, construction, ecological and spatial imagination, and urbanism carried out by refugees as well as humanitarians. They scaffold forms of

governance, political self-representation, and homemaking. I present Dadaab as a ground where people make worlds for themselves and where their worldmaking is conversant with global histories of abolition and humanitarianism. I show the vibrant empirical matter through which the Dadaab refugee camps offer a view into historicity and inhabitation, a springboard for theoretical conceptualization. Throughout, I follow individuals, in order to argue against monolithic understandings of refugee camps or humanitarian agencies and, instead, to make a place for a range of situated perspectives held by migrants, aid workers, architects, officials, and other figures. I trace the spatial complexity of the Dadaab refugee camps in the progression of this book as part of multiple histories within which they belong. At the levels of the camp and individual architectures, the camps serve at once as the culmination of a colonial territorial partition, a tool for land settlement, a testing ground for humanitarian shelter practices, and a significant iteration of the spatial languages of emergency relief. In these threads structuring the book's chapters, a seemingly irresolvable tension between the transience of the migrant and the anchoring of architecture imbricates migration and settlement.

This book pursues an architecture of migration that is full with epistemic possibilities. It eschews abstractions of refugee precarity, humanitarian emergency, or migration crisis, which collapse heterogeneous African and Muslim worlds into homogenous, othered zones. Instead, I make a space for diversity and polyvocality, inspired by pluralist and intersectional feminist thought: for example, legal scholar Sylvia Tamale's insistence on decolonizing master narratives that suppress multiplicity; law, development, and conflict studies scholar Radha D'Souza's complication of reductive "West versus Rest" critiques, through European underground and Third World intellectual perspectives; and anthropologist Saba Mahmood's assertions against universalizing epistemes, secular as well as religious, through the articulation of difference.[4] Building on these and other feminist framings, I suggest learning and imagining through the contours of the material and the sensible, through a historically specific architecture. If the term *architecture* implies an aesthetic approach that misunderstands or disregards political and humanitarian exigency, then this book begins with an argument for a different urgency, in which aesthetics and politics are inextricably entangled. Analyzing the architecture of a refugee camp through the affective, symbolic, and epistemic reverses the usual terms in which architecture is meant to represent a political framework. Through Dadaab, I argue instead that constructed environments and spatial practices inform political subjecthood and historical consciousness.

Dadaab lies at the core of an intellectual history. Rather than merely a flash point of crisis, the Dadaab refugee camps evince shades of meaning, whether seen as the artifact of institutions and the state or as the residue of people's lives and labor. The camps inscribe a condition in which the colonial has been immanent in the humanitarian, producing emergency and reproducing borders, but also entangling refugees and humanitarians in shared materialities and co-constructed territory. The ensuing architectural archive opens onto a people's history of land and migration. Much as architectural historian Esra Akcan has argued, in scholarship against borders, such aesthetic and historiographical openness creates an urgent generosity of theory that "has the strength of overcoming authority and chauvinism."[5] The following sections, which present, first, the social, historical, and environmental context of the Dadaab settlements "in situ" and, next, the epistemic possibility of a site "in theory," examine a politically complex and monumental architecture of migration.

Dadaab, in situ

To think with this architecture of migration first requires close looking, in order to see it in context and to see from its perspective. Dadaab is not merely an oppressed space and, indeed, has much to teach. Much in line with literary and media theorist Cajetan Iheka's vision, it presents an Africa of ecological degradation but also of generative accommodation.[6] Its discursive capacity is driven by its constitutive forms and environments, everyday landscapes that have been endowed with purpose by their designers and builders, similar to those built environment historian Sarah Lopez attributes to Mexican migrants who concretized "remitting as a way of life" by investing aspiration into seemingly ordinary architectures, either through individual acts of patronage or broader financial flows.[7] To understand such a capacity for architectural meaning, let us begin by hearing an inadvertent description of Dadaab's architecture by one of its elected leaders, pictured in the photo opening this chapter.

I met Isnina Ali Rage in 2011 while she served as Chairlady of Ifo camp, the first settlement to be established at Dadaab. Other refugees and aid workers spoke of her yearslong work on behalf of women in Ifo and her reputation as a leader able to resist the overwhelming temptations of power in Dadaab to persistently advocate for her constituents. I learned later from an aid worker that the Chairlady's unwillingness to compromise on principles put her life at risk, causing the UNHCR to resettle her to another country for her own

safety. Our conversations focused on the election process and her advocacy work. I came to see her as a significant protagonist in Dadaab's history and also a custodian of its historical consciousness. Anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot diagnosed the capacity of historical protagonists to become "aware of their vocality" and thus enact the subjectivity that "engages them simultaneously in the sociohistorical process and in narrative constructions about that process."[8] I did not discuss this theory with the Chairlady during the days we spent together in Dadaab, but her intellectual consciousness and political subjectivity were suggested in her comfortable movement between socially disparate communities and among leaders and officials, discussing women's advancement and representative self-governance in the camps. Her description of the process of refugee elections, in the following excerpt from one of our conversations, offers a glimpse into the formation of subjective narratives that arise from political self-realization and self-actualizing experiences.[9]

This conversation occurred during "country plan" meetings, moderated and recorded discussions between elected refugee representatives who met over the course of days to formulate a consensus contribution to Kenyan government policy. We talked outside the Ifo camp community center where the meetings were held, within the compound of the international organization CARE—one of the large World War II–era relief organizations that translated its postwar surplus resources and operations into international development aid—whose Kenya office managed the Dadaab refugee camps until 2006. As the Chairlady recounted her experience running for office, our colleague Hashim ("Abdullahi") Keinan, an interlocutor and interviewee in the research for this book, translated, interpreted, and occasionally intervened directly. A Kenyan raised in the Somali community in Dadaab, he worked in the camps after the refugees arrived as a staff member of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), one of the twenty nongovernmental entities providing humanitarian aid and social services in Dadaab in 2011. As we conversed, it became difficult to distinguish story from setting; the twists in the Chairlady's narrative mapped directly onto the planned blocks and sections where they took place.

ANOORADHA IYER SIDDIQI: One of the things I'm studying is governance in the refugee camps. Can you talk more about your position?

ISNINA ALI RAGE: I'm the chairlady of Ifo camp. I was elected in 2008.

ANOORADHA IYER SIDDIQI: Tell me about the election.

ISNINA ALI RAGE: My election started at block level. In each block there are around three hundred people. They brought the ballot box.

In the block there was another lady, and she was fighting for the same position. From the male side, there were two who were fighting for the same position. Finally, it was me and a male counterpart who won the election.

The block that I was elected from is part of Section C. We have seven blocks. In that section, there were fifty-four community leaders who were elected. Twenty-seven of them were women, twenty-seven were men. The fifty-four community representatives elected me as their section leader.

In the camp, you have got 102 blocks. Within these blocks, 204 community representative leaders are elected, 102 of them being women and the other 102 men. There was another election within the representative leaders to elect the camp Chairlady and the camp Chairman. Of those who were vying, we were four female and six male candidates for the position of Chairlady and Chairman.

The campaign went on for five months! The election day was on the 20th of May, 2008.

HASHIM KEINAN [*for Isnina Ali Rage*]: On that night—the election was the following morning—she fell sick. She was pregnant, and she had a caesarean operation. From eight in the morning, the election started, while she was on the bed for a caesarean operation.

ISNINA ALI RAGE: I was told when I came from the theater: "You won the election."

The Chairlady's account teaches an important lesson. Her description resists the disempowering consignment, articulated by Black studies and feminist scholar Katherine McKittrick, that "the dispossessed black female body is often equated with the ungeographic, and black women's spatial knowledges are rendered either inadequate or impossible"—instead, confirming her proposal that "human geographies are unresolved and are being conceptualized beyond their present classificatory order."[10] The Chairlady's description of her experience of gendered agon provided a glimpse into the aspirations and politics a humanitarian enclosure produced. The contest, her investment, and its outcome were conditioned by the settlement and spatial organization of a refugee population. The drama she narrated, the seeding of a political world, was enabled by just enough architecture. Her meticulous

description of representative governance brought into view the intricacies of a bureaucracy predicated on a refugee census. That census, in turn, was based on the spatial structure of blocks and sections in a humanitarian grid: a plan drawn by UNHCR technicians, implemented by aid workers, and built by refugees. From the level of the camp to that of the plots within which people housed themselves and created domesticities, this was an architecture impregnated with purpose. Further, the Chairlady's description illuminates precisely the possibility of subjectivity and narrative to be constructed within a sociohistorical process, to follow Trouillot's analysis, demanding that the architecture of a camp, which might be underestimated as merely utilitarian, be recognized not only as the setting but as wholly constitutive of the events of a refugee election, one laced with a suspenseful triumph during the mortal drama of childbirth. Following the Chairlady's account, I argue that the universalizing demonstration of participatory and putatively democratic governance in a camp—an example of the political and material structure imposed on and taken up by displaced people in emergency—reveals a practice of what I theorize as humanitarian settlement.

In Dadaab, representative governance within electoral districts of the refugee camps roots humanitarian settlement in a space external but parallel to the state, produced by emergency subjects. This space was provisioned in an overview plan drafted by a UNHCR technical unit and manifested in the fences, walls, and buildings refugees constructed on their plots. In this space, in standing for election, campaigning, and forging relations with or against the UNHCR, al-Shabaab, and a host of other entities, refugees employed a mechanism of democracy: the vote. However, it served an end other than sovereign governance. A body of leaders was elected to act as an organ for communication between refugee constituencies and the UNHCR and host state. What might be imputed to this labor and this form of representative governance? First, it put into effect the representation of a refugee body politic fully recognized within the nation-state system. Thus, it must be understood as political work. Second, this representative governance was ordered through designations of the built environment. Thus, it must also be understood as spatial practice. This emergent political work and spatial practice materialized a world, at the heart of which lies a practice of humanitarian settlement.

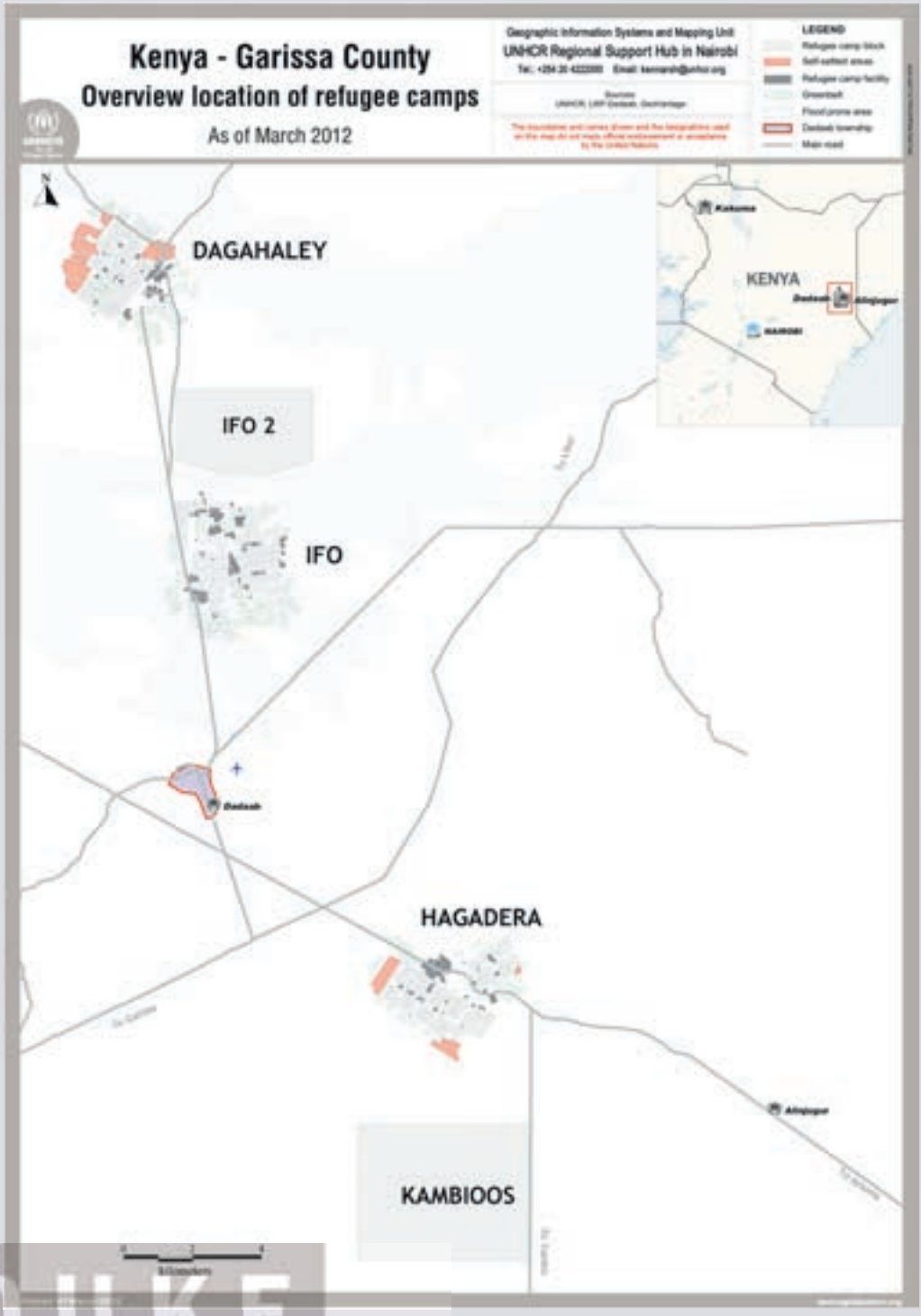
I follow the work and recountings of Isnina Ali Rage, Hashim Keinan, and other refugees and aid workers in the coming pages in order to theorize humanitarian settlement and, from it, an architecture of migration. They are among Dadaab's protagonists and often its archivists and theorists. However,

the stories of Dadaab that begin with them open onto larger narratives of countries, institutions, organizations, fields, environments, and ecologies. Each chapter begins with localized narratives of particular individuals' experiences and structuring contexts, and then connects them to Dadaab's exceptional history of design intervention, construction, spatial imaging, urbanism, and beyond, to wider spheres of activity and thought. This is to say, each chapter draws a line from people's experiences of architecture to an intellectual history.[11] To better situate the architecture that provides this spine, a brief description of Dadaab's sociospatial and historical context follows, succeeded by suggestions for how to think with it.

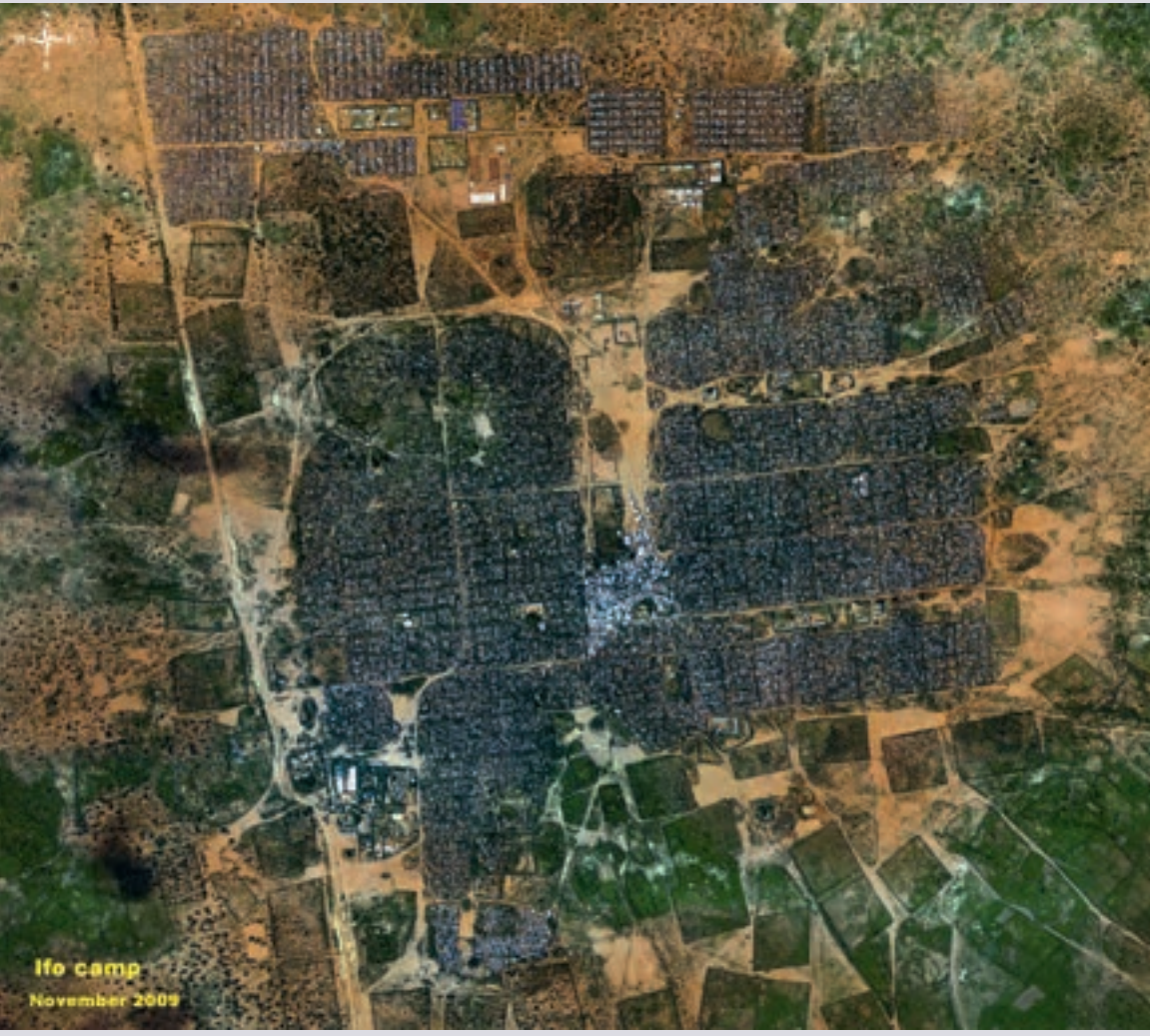
SOCIOSPATIAL CONTEXT

Dadaab is located in Kenya's North Eastern Province, a territory sharing an international border with the Gedo and Lower Juba Regions of Somalia, once called the "Northern Frontier," a nomenclature stemming from a colonial imaginary of an unstable borderland. Long before the construction of this colony, people lived and moved across the region, watering goats and camels at "Hagar Dera," a lake appearing on British imperial military maps whose name fell to one of the camps, the Somali word for the tall *Commiphora africana*, or African myrrh tree, known for extensive medicinal benefits.[12] Dadaab, a town of 5,000 people, provided a hub for pastoralists before the refugee camps were built.[13] When the UNHCR planned the first refugee camp at Dadaab, the density of the surrounding region equaled fewer than five people per square kilometer.[14] In 1991 and 1992, the UNHCR planned and established three settlements, each for 30,000 inhabitants. Ifo was the first, initially self-settled by refugees who had been transported there from the border. Dagahaley and Hagadera were planned soon after, by European architects contracted by the UNHCR. After two decades, in response to the overwhelming of the physical facilities as more people settled around Dadaab, the UNHCR erected two other camps, Ifo 2 and Kambioos (later decommissioned). By late 2011, in settlements originally planned to accommodate 90,000 people, the UNHCR registered approximately 460,000 refugees at

I.1–I.5 (*overleaf*) The map and aerial photographs on the following pages, commissioned by the UNHCR, offer an instrumental record of the graphic coordinates, scale, and materiality of the refugee camps and Dadaab town, providing detail from the overhead perspective without engaging the people whose homes and bodies are captured.



I.1. UNHCR overview map of Dadaab refugee camps, 2012.



I.2. UNHCR aerial view of Ifo camp, 2009.

I.3. (*opposite, top*) UNHCR aerial view of Dagahaley camp, 2009.
I.4. (*opposite, bottom*) UNHCR aerial view of Hagadera camp, 2009.
I.5. (*above*) UNHCR aerial view of Dadaab township, 2009.

Dadaab, with counts inclusive of unregistered migrants or asylum seekers reaching more than half a million.[15] Meanwhile, within a fifty-kilometer radius of the camps, the local population grew tenfold to more than 148,000 people between 1989 and 2010, well in excess of the rate in the rest of the North Eastern Province.[16] The astonishing population of the Dadaab camps, the third-largest grouping in Kenya after Nairobi and Mombasa, is often presented as the end of the matter, but behind this scale is the spatial confinement of people.

Several contradictions have manifested at Dadaab. Most important, as a humanitarian settlement intended to give succor to people displaced from home and execution of a rights framework to people displaced from citizenship, Dadaab has prolonged harm and grounded tensions. As the camp complex institutionalized, it acted as a provision of the security state to control the international border, allowing inequalities between refugees, neighboring host community members, and international aid providers to unfold without remit.[17] Although intended as a legal and political point of transit, Dadaab has provided an armature—an architecture—to suspend people in a prolonged liminal condition. Within it, abuses recorded from the establishment of humanitarian operations continue unabated.[18] Even as Kenya acceded without reservation to the 1951 United Nations (UN) Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1967 UN Protocol, and the 1969 Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (the continent's three primary instruments defining the refugee and determining her rights to legal protection), the country's government imposed restrictions, as did many others, on education, work, mobility, and migration.

Diverse groups have passed through Dadaab over the years. Without eliding the asymmetries of political status or citizenship, I note that the communities in Dadaab include not only refugees but also Kenyan migrants and international humanitarian workers. Together, they have bred a cultural imaginary of Dadaab within vibrant local, regional, and international diasporas and aid labor networks.

People from Somalia have comprised the majority in the settlements. However, Dadaab has housed refugees from many African countries, perhaps most famously children fleeing Sudan in the 1990s, known popularly as the Lost Boys, and Alice Lakwena (Auma) and her followers in the Lord's Resistance Army, the religious faction that escaped Uganda in the 1980s. Refugees were frequently housed in Dadaab temporarily while awaiting third-country resettlement, because the infrastructural capacity of the site lent

itself to hosting people in the process of international transferal. For example, a Congolese refugee in a camp in western Tanzania might have been granted resettlement in North America, Western Europe, or Australia; prior to leaving Africa, she might have been transferred to Dadaab for a waiting period, in order to make place for others arriving at the Tanzanian camp. However, a great many people have also lived continuously in Dadaab since 1991, with children and grandchildren growing to adulthood knowing only the camps. These cohabitations have caused strange and sometimes sudden social reconfigurations and communities of belonging along lines of ethnicity, gender, class, kinship, nation, and more.

The government of Kenya granted refugees entry, but their welcome fell to a host community, ambivalent neighbors impacted by an international presence but ineligible for aid. Yet, members of this host community self-identify using many of the same markers as people living in the camps, shared with those across the border in Somalia: for example, speaking Somali, Boran, Kiswahili, and English; practicing Islam; sharing familial lineage; and adhering to communal economic approaches.[19] Some in Garissa County, where the camps are located, also share kinship affiliation with refugees. However, the complexity of the relationship between refugees and hosts lies in political status. The status of "refugee" has been shared, exchanged, and transferred over time. As an illustration, the first group of people to live in the refugee settlements at Dadaab totaled 4,057, but records showed that only 3,627 of them were transferred from the border.[20] The convoys knowingly or unwittingly incorporated Somali Kenyans, asylum seekers, and other migrants while in transit. By 2010, more than 40,000 people in the host community had come into possession of ration cards.[21] These instances point to complex relationships between hosts and refugees, intertwined communities that grew and changed together over time.

Aid workers, the humanitarian laborers who administer the provision of essential goods and services, form a third community in Dadaab. The UNHCR has contracted multiple nongovernmental organizations, or NGOs, to implement social services, physical planning, and the distribution of humanitarian aid and services, attracting and accommodating a diverse body of international and local employees who live on-site. Among aid workers, Dadaab has been a prestigious station for field duty.[22] The most prominent humanitarian organizations in the world have undertaken short-term relief and long-term aid in Dadaab.

The market is one of the spaces where these diverse groups and their things converge. While refugees have remained dependent on aid, the camp

I.6. A morning in Dagahaley camp market.

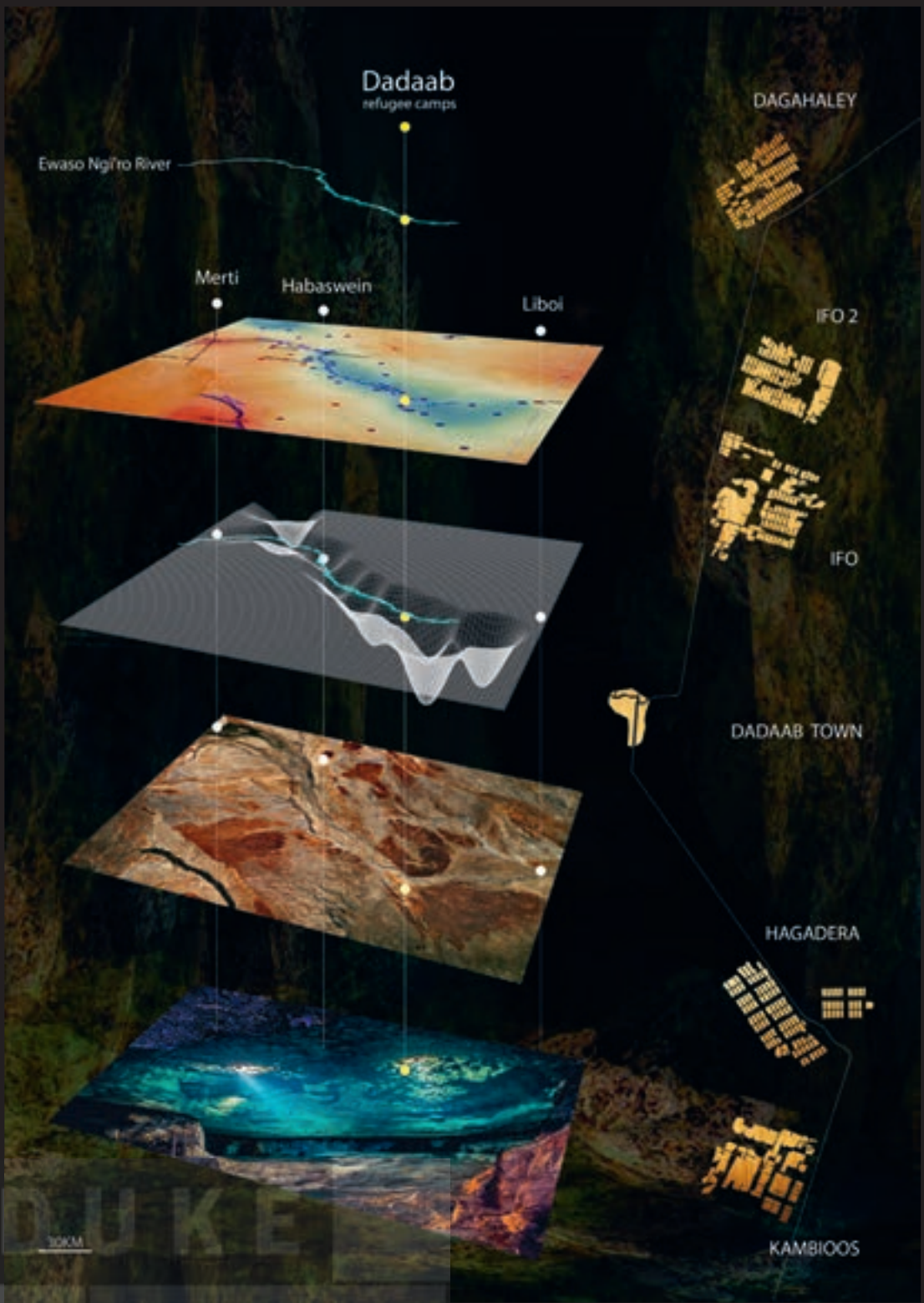
complex has supported a robust economy outside the financial instruments of the state, based on trade in humanitarian food and nonfood items and movement of goods between Dubai and Nairobi. This flow of capital, in combination with remittance funds and the activities of an international community of aid workers and officials, have formed a substrate of the local economy. By 2010, refugee-related operations accounted for $100 million in investment, with $25 million in trade moving through five thousand businesses, from petty traders to shopping malls, offering goods and services from the utilitarian to the luxury.[23] This can be explained by the creativity and imagination of Somali networks, their rapid movement of money, the commercial orientations of Kenya and East Africa, the optimal location of Dadaab on a highway between Nairobi and Mogadishu, and the direct interest of Northern aid economies—all forces catalyzing the growth of Dadaab into a "market town."[24] The "market" provides a rational language to describe

the beating heart of a place that has matured into something analytically different from a camp.

The built environment at Dadaab has evolved according to its own political economic logics, while also occasioning a body of infrastructures. The long-range transportation and wireless communications technologies that enable humanitarian relief in "unmapped" terrains support operations in a former "frontier." They have produced artifacts: a small airstrip, telecom masts, fleets of ground vehicles adapted as mobile antennae, satellite hardware connecting field offices with headquarters in capitals worldwide, secondary schools and other educational infrastructure for people in the camps and Dadaab town.[25] Dadaab had full regional mobile phone coverage before much of the rest of Kenya.[26] These infrastructures are set within a specific ecology and have enabled settlement in an area little developed by the state.

These enabling infrastructures, emphasizing the extended political crisis around the relief site, tell of sudden development made possible by foreign largesse. However, Dadaab's bounty is not international aid but the continuous yield of the freshwater Merti aquifer. This relic of a Jurassic-era rift has made the duration of settlement possible, through a borewell system penetrating the Merti's sedimentary layers, consuming the freshwater confined between saltwater pockets beneath and at the perimeter. The hardware's pumping action and the intensity of inhabitation above have compromised the aquifer, breaching its envelope and introducing salinity into the groundwater at points, yet not risked its depletion.[27] Thus, though these refugee settlements are ever framed as resulting from protracted conflict, their growth and maintenance are also predicated on the aquifer's sustenance, reliable in a semiarid equatorial zone in spite of twice-annual seasonal flooding. The Merti aquifer has enabled the structure and institution of a massive built environment.

That built environment is composed of contradictions. Dadaab has signaled transience through spectacular visual frailty—dwellings clad in recovered textile and sheet-metal fragments, dusted red by the earth and wind. Yet, Dadaab's equally dazzling substance—an array of satellites and their dishes, aeronautic fleets resting on tarmac, all-terrain vehicular convoys, aluminum and polyvinyl chloride water storage towers, hydraulic extraction machinery, and the large settlements themselves—anchors hard infrastructures in the earth and sky. Many refugee camps leave a lighter infrastructural footprint. While durable masonry buildings constitute the central UNHCR compound where agency and organization staff members reside and work, the architecture of the refugee camps has been composed of lightweight, additive elements and



I.8. Tuqul dwellings surrounded by branches for protection against animals, Cawo Jube area of Ifo camp, photo by Bethany Young.

built of found, recycled, and remnant material. It is a landscape of vibrant modernity, composed of architectures that are difficult to read as stylistically modern. The aesthetics performs an act of cloaking, concealing cultural significance rather than making it legible. The architecture that constitutes Dadaab is rendered insubstantial, appearing as little more than shanties and huts in the bush.

The architectural form ubiquitous in Dadaab is the East African tuqul (or aqal, or waab in Somali), a dwelling constructed from green wood that has been bent, tied into a dome, and clad with woven mats or, in the refugee camps, with recovered textile fragments. Intended to be transported overland between grazing areas on the backs of camels, this mobile architecture

I.7. (*opposite*) Cave Bureau, architectural analytical construction of Merti aquifer geology, Dadaab town and refugee camps, and geographical and topographical setting, 2022. Exploded extract deducing lithography from heat maps, satellite imagery, and imagined subterranean hydrology. Ink on paper freehand sketch, digital linework in MicroStation, modeling in SketchUp, collage of textures in Photoshop.

remains stationary in Dadaab, populating the plots, blocks, and sectors of the camps. The tuqul is a recalcitrant object. On the one hand, it resists modernization, quite literally unable to accept mechanical connections to civil infrastructure. On the other, it resists its own history and architecture. The tuqul results from the long constancy of nomadic life, whose fullness is predicated on people's commitment to personal relationships, openness to the land, and free migration. Yet, the sedentary tuqul in the camps evokes an image of depletion of lives in the search for essentials, subject to the terms of vagrancy and representing an unwillingness to cooperate with the state. This tuqul is an architectural object that awakens distrust and the will to sedentarize the migrant. As art historian Allyson Purpura suggests, "ambivalence towards transience is . . . a cultural response, one shaped within a Western regime of value that, from the late eighteenth century onwards, extolled permanence as a virtue and preservation a right of sovereignty."[28] The normalization of fixity she identifies has been present in the European desire to control the unruly East African frontier and the British empire's extractive settler colonial project in the Kenyan highlands. The uncanny stasis of a dense field of tuquls encamped in Dadaab, as in figure 2.11, suggests a history of suppressed migration. The persistence of this recalcitrant architecture in an emergency context offers an architectural historical clue.[29] It calls for different traditions of apprehending architecture and, through them, new ways of knowing.

This knowing is held within an architecture of migration, a concrete and tenuous eco-materiality of myrrh; marabou storks; an aged aquifer; a town with shops and houses; camps and compounds with offices, residences, and restaurants; and worldwide infrastructures for communications, transportation, and storage. The market, infrastructure, ecology, and ways of knowing speak to urbanity and convivium—activity beyond the purely humanitarian—positing Dadaab as something other than a camp or city.[30] This thinking approaches Dadaab's constructed environment less through legal theory and social science than through aesthetic and historical analysis, building on understandings of subaltern and refugee urbanism.[31] Such theories posit the material and social complexity behind humanitarian settlement at Dadaab as driven not only by abstract forces of relief and development but indeed also by actual people.

It has been common to ascribe limits to Dadaab. For example, some have theorized the camps as an incipient but ultimately untenable urban or sociopolitical form, "an amputated town, bare by definition."[32] Such orientations offer little possibility for the larger historical and theoretical life of the Dadaab refugee camps or for the critical heritage it scaffolds, in both a tangible culture

expressed in Dadaab's architecture and the intangible memories of people for whom it is home. Consigning Dadaab's constitutive political imagination to the margins forecloses the worlds that have been dreamed and created by Isnina Ali Rage and others who preceded and followed her. Archaeologist Sada Mire, who fled Somalia as a child, writes about learning to build a tuqul during summer holidays outside Mogadishu. The practice brought her closer to family as well as forms of knowledge and cultural heritage they valued. The practice also saved their lives. "In fact, we were supposed to learn how to build huts . . . when the war came, it was those skills that made us survive in those landscapes," she writes.[33] In that vein, moving beyond terms of scarcity and exceptionalism to describe Dadaab means refusing to relegate to the utilitarian a history and heritage of people, both African and foreign, whose lives, pasts, and futures have been defined by migration and this specific place and, instead, naming ways that Dadaab's architecture resolves in relation to the land where it sits.

In May 2016, following the horrors of the brutal takeover of Syria, the mass flight of people into neighboring countries, and the ensuing outpouring of international aid to Turkey to support humanitarian response, the Kenyan government announced it would close the Dadaab settlements before the end of the year.[34] In spite of passing an act of Parliament ten years earlier to ensure provision for refugees, the government dismantled the Department of Refugee Affairs, citing security threats and a lack of international support.[35] This closure was stayed by a ruling of Kenya's High Court in February 2017, yet produced significant political leverage within Kenya and internationally—especially in Europe, as states negotiated unprecedented asylum seeking. The Kenyan government's actions accentuate the paradox of permanent impermanence under which the Dadaab settlements have endured, fulfilling an existential *and* representational ephemerality. This architectural ephemerality deserves scrutiny so as not to be normalized in the negative terms of precarity. The following pages provide historical context that defamiliarizes this ephemerality and situates Dadaab not only as a product of space, but also of time: as a specific place at the intersection of histories, framing new concepts and theory.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

To build this spatiotemporal framework, throughout this book, I contextualize humanitarian settlement at Dadaab as architecture with a history. This position counters reductive attempts to define refugee camps as characterized

only by emergency, producing a flattened, textureless timespace of relentless urgency, and instead emphasizes their establishment and growth as events inhabiting longer historical processes. At Dadaab, a range of historical forces produced the intersecting forms of belonging, sedentarization, and underdevelopment to be explored in the following pages.

Processes of belonging, sedentarization, and underdevelopment intersect in the correspondence of architecture to land. The spatial and social belonging of people to land in Dadaab has not been through settlement—that is, settlement or cultivation in one fixed location. The erudition, cultures, and architectures of many East African communities were predicated on migrations, whether pastoralist or seafaring, orienting elsewhere.[36] A plurality of approaches to inhabitation have thus prefigured complex relations between architecture and land at Dadaab, an outcome not of emergency but of multiple forms of migrating and settling over generations.

The first refugee camps at Dadaab were planned to respond to emergency, meeting a putatively temporary need. Their prolongation as a humanitarian settlement was a result of war. Although humanitarian operations at Dadaab provided relief to refugees of wars in many locations, they have primarily responded to struggles within Somalia, or, as writer Rasna Warah trenchantly argues, struggles *with* Somalia, by international military actors.[37] The following historical contextualization of the architecture of migration at Dadaab necessarily begins by taking account of this militarism, especially as tied to the colonial territorialization that preceded it—both the settler colonialism of the empire and the interior colonization of the postcolonial state examined in the chapters of this book. Indigenous, anticapitalist, and feminist articulations of struggle crystallize the use of land for extraction and the criminalization of people whose relationship to land is not based on its circumscription into territory or property.[38] To understand the practice of humanitarian aid as it consolidated in the international system, East Africa, and the architecture of Dadaab requires this wider perspective on land. Belonging, sedentarization, and underdevelopment are forces that emerged from and shaped the ties between land and architecture, and ultimately undergirded architectures of migration and settlement.

Belonging

The violence and breakdown of centralized state structures of the Somali Democratic Republic, from 1988 to a saturation point in 1991, forced people to migrate en masse, precipitating significant territorial shifts, if part of a series of such shifts.[39] Political contestations and mobilities in East Africa

across the contemporary countries of Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia stemmed from conflicting imaginaries of a land where people resisted settlement by others for a hundred years. Forces of colonization and development increasingly produced the justification and means to implement socially based divisions of land in Kenya during the long twentieth century. Expropriated or "grabbed" land and radical new divisions produced diverse territorial forms, such as urban peripheries around Nairobi and Mombasa; countrywide infrastructural transportation and agriculture pockets; and borderlands, reserves, and national parks.

These territorial constructions and divisions produced for the Somali-identifying majority in Kenya's northeast a tension around belonging.[40] While a tension around belonging was experienced differently by various communities coping with British cultural imperialism in Kenya, for people in the northeast, it was rooted in large part by conflicting approaches to territory and borders. Those approaches cast some communities in Kenya as indigenous and others as foreign in an oppositional vision of social, cultural, and political identity. Most people in the Dadaab camps have become familiar with conflations of pastoralist with migrant, misrepresentations exacerbating anxieties around border transgression. Nevertheless, orientations toward migration have defined life and politics in the Kenyan northeast. Explaining his migration from Somaliland to the Mediterranean Sea through the concept of the tahriib, "an Arabic word referring to a form of unregulated emigration," the writer Maxamed Xuseen Geeldoon notes, "the Somali people have a long history of migration. Historically, to go on migration has been a family livelihood strategy. It is one of the ways that Somali men from a pastoralist background have helped their families to survive during times of severe hardship."[41] The Somali, Boran, Samburu, Rendille, and other communities share agro-pastoral economies, political identities, and modernities, which provided unity across ethnic groups in discourses on a Greater Somalia, connecting people across a common, though not static or homogenous, identity forming one of the largest ethnocultural blocs in Africa.[42] The idea of a Somalia with land that did not resolve in borders animated nationalist formation during the independence movement, Africa's decolonization, and the years following. These citizens were to move freely across the Somali peninsula, known from colonial maps as the Horn of Africa (including present-day Somalia, Somaliland, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya). The borderlessness in this vision has produced a latent sense of apprehension toward refugees as well as Somali-identifying Kenyan citizens, translating for people from Dadaab and the northeast into an ambivalent sense of belonging within the nation.

In many parts of the world, negotiations over territory produced vexations for colonial authority as well as open questions in state formation after independence. In Kenya, the transhumance of pastoralists—the seasonal mobility based on economies, socialities, and lifeways of animal husbandry—increased the British colonial administration's ambivalence toward the northeast, unable to render within it a traceable population.[43] This ambivalence found territorial form in partitions and the construction of the "Northern Frontier."[44] The productivity of land determined its value to the modern empire: rendering the fertile highlands a heartland for settlers and the northeast a frontier. That frontier's fungibility was demonstrated by Great Britain partitioning the Jubaland in 1925, ceding its eastern region to Italy (which occupied adjacent Somalia) in return for support during World War I. The "NFD (Northern Frontier District) question" emerged most sharply on the eve of Kenya's independence. As in the example of Kashmir during the construction of an independent but partitioned South Asia, what would become a contested territory began with a "question" about the NFD that evolved into a "problem." In 1962, the people of the northeast voted in a plebiscite to join Somalia rather than Kenya after independence. This sense of self-determination was foreclosed as the British scuttled diplomatic resolution by evading it during their tenure and postponing the decision until after independence. The new government of Kenya declined implementation of the vote's outcome. Historian Keren Weitzberg has documented and argued that this encumbered the Somali sense of belonging in Kenya.[45] I argue that it also fueled the sentiment around northeast otherness that has supported a logic for encampment and persistence of a security regime around Dadaab. This bordering and containment of unfixed, or unfixable, populations echoes security practices performed in the postcolony worldwide to address vexing "problems" that persisted for states and international systems.

If the northeast has been marked by contestations and ambiguities related to the formation of political territory, its recent spatial politics has been actualized through the bordered, determined architecture of the refugee camps, shaped by deep geographical and geological relationships supporting agro-pastoral traditions over a long span of time. Pastoralists have lived with and benefited from the continuous water supply of the Merti aquifer, which has served animal husbandry while also sustaining refugees living in large camps whose sudden population density has pressured, but not compromised, the abundance and utility of this resource. To understand an architecture of migration is to accept sociocultural belonging as a condition that crosses borders and occupies wider ecologies such as these.

Historian Robyn d'Avignon tracks cavities under wide swaths of western African ground made sacred by orpailleurs—artisanal gold miners—building "subterranean knowledge," which would shape the discipline of geology, from the cosmologies, rituals, and territories that defined their belonging.[46] Art and architectural historian Ikem Stanley Okoye writes of the art and settlements of the great Niger River cultures as evidence of "enigmatic mobilities of ideas . . . certain kinds of spatial intensifications, whose pressures gave rise to new and emergent culture, such as might occur at river confluences, lakes and lesser or greater river bends, especially in the context of newly arrived peoples."[47] We might imagine the Merti aquifer producing such intensifications and subterranean knowledge. The belonging of people to this place has to do with the time and historicity embedded in that water and earth.

Sedentarization

The Dadaab refugee camps are a form of humanitarian settlement in which the practices of emergency relief have enacted people's sedentarization through encampment and the foreclosure of migration. This fraught outcome illuminates the relation between humanitarian and colonial practices. The Dadaab camps archive this relationship, providing a material record of past colonial practices that extend into present-day spatial practices. Three examples of colonial spatial practice follow.

The first centers on constructions of contingent territory. The refugee camps extend a form of colonial demarcation begun in the nineteenth century. The short-lived Imperial British East Africa Company, incorporated in 1888 by William Mackinnon, established operations in Mombasa to survey the territory, build a highway and railway to the interior, and develop agricultural land for European settlement, for which the Gĩkũyũ and Maasai highlands proved attractive. This venture did not succeed, and in 1895, the British Crown proclaimed a protectorate reaching to Buganda lands, with construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway the following year. This process produced the imperial territory of East Africa and the Kenya Colony's Northern Frontier. The highlands in the west were opened to white settlers from Europe through ordinances delineating "Crown Lands" and "Outlying Districts."[48] The imperial government controlled movement between districts through the use of kipande passes (implemented in colonial South Africa to regulate the mobility of racially identified groups), which are presently granted to citizens and denied to refugees in Kenya. Vis-à-vis this bordering, Dadaab's relationship to the former imperial territory is telling. While much of Garissa County falls within what was once the Northern Frontier, Dadaab and the

camp complex do not. Dadaab occupies land that was external to the erstwhile Kenya Colony as well as its frontier, a *space* represented inaccurately on maps as a *line* dividing British Kenya and Italian Somaliland. It is a ghost space: contested territory in the present inhabiting unclaimed territory in the past. Fixing territory amid such embedded contingency prepares an environment for sedentarization.

The second colonial spatial practice marked in the Dadaab camps is the construction of enclosure. The camps parallel other settlement forms linked to principles of enclosing land as property—specifically, two conceptual precedents explored in these pages, religious missions and detention centers. Christian missions formed enclosures that directly connected nineteenth-century abolition and latter-day humanitarianism in Africa, for example, in the Rabai and Freretown settlements near Mombasa, established by the Church Mission Society in 1846 and 1875, respectively, which housed people who had escaped or been liberated from enslavement. Freretown was established explicitly with the social mission of rehabilitating newly freed people through practices of valorizing small-scale cultivation as a matter of *morality*, which engendered a cultural logic for land capitalization. Although preindustrial small-proprietor farming at Freretown differed greatly from the succeeding settler colonial schemes (which drew on African labor without supporting agrarian smallholders), it equated liberation with cultivation.[49] A variety of settlement forms stemmed from this philosophy of liberatory and rehabilitative land domestication, including, for example, "native reserves" established in ensuing years, which populated the landscape with an enclosure intended to confine the nomadic Maasai and others: the manyatta. This term is sometimes translated as "village"—poignantly, as the manyatta proliferated in "villagization" detention schemes the British adopted to repress the Land and Freedom struggle, or Mau Mau uprising. Villagization of rebels in manyattas—forced labor camps—across the Kenya Colony introduced a technique of enclosure that the Kenyan government adapted immediately following independence in the 1960s to contain pastoralist insurgents in the northeast. After declaring a state of emergency in the Northern Frontier District, the government ordered a police action in Garissa, confining people identified as shifta, or bandits, in fortified villages. Under a program of planning sites publicized as projects of modernization and development, the government ultimately sedentarized pastoralists.[50] The 1990s refugee encampment policy echoed the 1960s counterinsurgency strategy, as schemes for development and humanitarianism were conflated through a similar progressive rhetoric, ultimately effecting sedentarization. These colonial spatial

practices of enclosure offer a trajectory of a history of capitalism, especially in consideration of the forced dependence of pastoralists on humanitarian aid as populations in the northeast were gradually settled—at the expense of a pastoral way of life, in its entirety. In many different contexts worldwide, such sedentarization practices enabled the criminalization of itinerancy and nomadism through forces as diverse as abolition, detention, and migration, linked unexpectedly to forms of land enclosure.

The third example of colonial spatial practice in Dadaab relates to building. The camps highlight the vexed relation of vernacular architectures to modernity as wholly contemporary settlements composed of traditional dwellings, and intervene in a spatial politics by architecturally representing indigeneity through domesticity in emergency and material expressions of a gendered social structure. Of particular note is the way that the camps contextualize the legitimacy or delegitimization of the "hut" in East Africa, historically based on its integration into or resistance to legal codes, in which the sedentary and taxable domicile articulated in British ordinances as the "makuti hut" stands in contradistinction to the mobile tuqul dwelling accompanying pastoralist ways of life across the region. The tuqul is a gendered architecture: a traditional house designed and built by women within specific rituals and ceremonies, and regularly also by women within contemporary contexts of duress in refugee camps across East Africa.[51] As a recalcitrant gendered architecture, as described earlier, the tuqul in the camps must also be understood as an object caught within forms of political violence, and thus subject to feminist questions of ambivalence on the ethical positions of women within militarized social contexts.[52] Moreover, the prevalence of the tuqul as a stationary architecture in the refugee camps at Dadaab suppresses its fullest actualization as an iteration of women's work, foregrounding the fraught gender politics of its ephemerality. Anthropologist Namita Dharia's meditation on the gendered ephemeral atmospheres of the building construction site in India—another migrant environment in which home and work are collapsed—gestures to qualities she reminds us to seek as we "look, smell, and listen for invisible durabilities within the ephemeral atmospheres of construction," and bears remembering in reading Dadaab, a putatively static landscape that cloaks the intimacies, socialities, anger, anxieties, and love in an environment built largely by women.[53] Architect and historian Mabel O. Wilson has articulated a "provisional demos" as the essential concept with which to interpret the spatial agency of a tent city built by African Americans for the temporary purpose of protest, an ephemeral form that marks a larger, more durable episteme of dissent inhabited by the Dadaab refugee camps.[54] Here,

it is worth contemplating the well-known problem of the Palestinian refugee camp, whose historical particularities differ greatly from Dadaab's, yet whose centrality to the global historical conditions within which the Dadaab camps emerged demand parallel citation and consideration. Compared to a politics of ephemerality in Palestine, where a refugee camp's permanence plays a significant role in expressing the demand for the right of return to a land, in Dadaab, a humanitarian settlement's immobilization of constitutively mobile architectures does another kind of work. Rather than staking ground, fixed structures in Dadaab mask and transform their surroundings, changing people's relationships to the land in plain sight and through gendered precision. Dadaab's buildings erode openly migratory ways of being, through the perversion of the language of the "vernacular" dwelling.

These examinations of territory, enclosure, and building illuminate a complex process of sedentarization that the following chapters take up. They offer an interpretation of a regional history for which the Dadaab refugee camps capture a through line. However, the conditions behind the humanitarian intervention at Dadaab also bring together significant international dimensions with regional ones. They offer a model for reading other refugee camps in the past and present, suggesting that colonial practices of development and underdevelopment underlie any refugee context. Dadaab therefore acts as a powerful object lesson for understanding wider landscapes and architectures of migration.

Underdevelopment

Histories of Dadaab mark relations between three sets of pasts. One is of people belonging to the region for generations. Another is of contested land and architectures of sedentarization. The third is of the political-economic and social interaction between those people, that land, and the system of nations in the practice of underdevelopment. This latter condition has been realized in a late stage through the displacement of agentive community development in the contemporary international practice of humanitarian relief.

The international system in Dadaab operates in certain ways in concert with the exploitative relationship between development and underdevelopment that historian Walter Rodney painstakingly and dispassionately elucidated in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.[55] His discursive recasting of the problem through the simplicity of a prefix suggests a method for rereading a refugee camp toward unfamiliar, liberatory ends. Framing the humanitarian system through the principle of underdevelopment disallows its normalization. Seeing from the perspective of Dadaab provincializes the

humanitarian system and rejects the naturalization of development practice. This estrangement furthermore illuminates the work of refugees as significant contributions to Dadaab's constructed environment and situates the history of that constructed environment as central to a critical global history, in which the oppressions of underdevelopment impact refugees and humanitarians—rather, aid workers—together.

This is not to aggrandize the subject position of the international humanitarian system through continued critical focus. Rather, it is to estrange its subject position in order to disrupt its epistemic power. It is to acknowledge it as a structural force that defines everyday local life, yet also to read it as the foreign and contingent tool that it is. Cultural theorist Sylvia Wynter similarly defamiliarized and reversed the gaze, building on Black Arts and Black Aesthetics movement practitioner Amiri Baraka's "idea that Western thought might be exotic if viewed from another landscape," in her articulation of the liberal humanist circumscription of humanity in relation to the self-alienation and broader systems of alienation of Black people.[56] These inversions offer a strategy for analyzing and resisting the oppressions that play themselves out on macro and micro levels in the landscapes in and around Dadaab—"another landscape," in Baraka's terms. My first method in such an analysis and resistance is an estrangement of humanitarian environments, through visual, material, and conceptual means.

To make sense of this, it is important to first understand that international diplomacy frameworks and refugee law institutionalized after World War II brought into being transnational nongovernmental political structures and communities designated to focus on the relief of suffering.[57] On the one hand, they made spaces and networks for human rights and other advocacy movements to concretize. For example, from the early 1970s, marked by crises in (and media attention to) Bangladesh and Biafra, international activists in a range of professions, from medicine to journalism to urban planning, mobilized worldwide as part of designated state and nongovernmental relief and recovery networks. On the other hand, these structures and communities provided an apparatus for humanitarian action predicated on intervention by outsiders into sovereign territory. For example, by the 1990s, an international "humanitarian" military had intervened into the cities and countries that had constituted Yugoslavia. The justification of intervention into sovereign territory on the grounds of relieving suffering became a driving human rights principle in humanitarian culture. Moreover, this culture was predicated on an asymmetrical discourse locating subjecthood in the body of the individual rather than in political community. This paralleled broad privatization,

emerging as an effect of structural adjustments as neoliberal economic approaches cemented themselves in formerly colonized and yet "developing" parts of the world. Social services that had once been the purview of states appeared in new private-sector humanitarian iterations.[58] Transnational nongovernmental activity replaced these social services and proliferated through increasingly individuated subjects and objects of humanitarian work during the rise of an international human rights culture. This activity displaced the making of political community with the relief of individual suffering—part of what has frequently been discussed as the "humanitarian alibi" or the "humanitarian paradox."[59] What has been less understood is the aesthetic construction of this relief of suffering, monumentalized in various ways through architecture, as in the complex of settlements at Dadaab.

Thus, the Dadaab refugee complex, with its unruly materiality and forms of settlement, has been rooted in a strict logic with more disciplined ends: the formalization of international humanitarian intervention. This process has systematized underdevelopment through the construction of a global industry refined to respond to emergency and relieve the suffering of individuals, rather than to support the construction of political community, or resource mutual aid. This practice of underdevelopment, a humanitarian displacement of politics by aesthetics, has been most palpable in the spatial practices of emergency relief. Therefore the structural embeddedness of one of the forces behind humanitarian settlement, what I term *humanitarian spatiality*, and the discourses behind it, deserve some explanation.

First, at the time that Dadaab was established, a humanitarian spatiality had begun to be defined by the intervention of architects and planners. I use the term to refer to already existing space as well as the bringing into being of spaces, spatial practice by humanitarian entities, and the social and cultural condition of making and inhabiting what has been widely understood as "humanitarian space," the conceptual location of humanitarian activity.[60] This humanitarian spatiality took shape through the combination of an international culture of sovereign intervention and the proliferation of nonstate actors privileging the rights of the individual, as noted earlier. As such, this spatiality was defined in alignment with the state, not within the state but in parallel to it, through the systematic production of architectures such as refugee camps, held legally and practically separate from adjacent environments. The material form-making of and in these spaces occurred through the engagement of both institutionally trained and emergent architects, humanitarians and refugees. The human rights movement held an urgent attraction for architects trained in institutions based mostly in the North,

as they searched for a positivist potential during a precise convergence of the fall of the Soviet Union (as an actual government and the embodiment of an ideology) and the eclipse of the postmodern stylistic turn that dominated thinking in many architecture schools (reflecting economic globalization's coming into its own).[61] At the time, an international community concerned existentially with development and disasters—or, conceptually, with state-building and the environment—began to adopt systematized, technocratic means for realizing humanitarian space. With that, architects and planners began to find their way or be invited into international and nongovernmental spheres. By the 1990s, a rhetoric of moral and ethical consideration dominated international political discourse, and with it, architectural practice and humanitarian action came intentionally into concert.[62] Through these steps, spatial practices and practitioners facilitated liberal interventions into sovereign territory. They contributed to localized erosion of sovereign authority. Sometimes, this was achieved simply, if inadvertently, with the establishment of a border camp. This architecture, with the legitimacy it conferred on space, could help to realize an authoritative material infrastructure. Such outcomes—the construction of humanitarian space, the intervention into sovereign territory, the spatial practices of emergency relief, and the aesthetics of its form-making—accumulated into a humanitarian spatiality of which Dadaab remains a profound iteration.

Second, humanitarian spatiality in Dadaab must also be understood as culminating a trajectory of Cold War dynamics. While geopolitics has played only a partial role in long-contested "borderlands" such as that connecting the African "Horn" to the continental interior, the humanitarian intervention at Dadaab hinged on the shift away from a US-Soviet hegemony at the end of the twentieth century.[63] Many forces converged in the early 1990s, as the United States and the Soviet Union withdrew from proxy participation in wars around the world, removing protections and structural supports for civilians newly contending with markets flooding with small arms. Rapid urbanization—escalated by aggressive land speculation, rural people's migration toward resources, and dramatic climate impacts on new megacities, corridors, and other densely populated areas—produced profound food, water, and shelter insecurity. These convergences spurred forced migrations on scales and with suddenness never before experienced, at a moment when international relief networks began to bridge former political-geographic divisions and proliferate new nongovernmental donor structures. A field of emergency spatial operations growing out of years of practice began to systematize at that time, especially with the input of architectural and planning expertise.[64] While

international political and financial support did not result in the production of more relief camps around the world at that time, it did result in the systematization of camp building and management as a global emergency relief strategy. As a ubiquitous set of architectures and iconographies—elements from tarps to tents to camps that formed landscapes—began to be perceived by a variety of publics and designated as specifically "humanitarian," the materiality of this humanitarianism impinged on the lives of more and more people in East Africa, and a growing number around the world, who increasingly confronted the security state through the border camps erected to stem their migration.

Third, as many people experienced all of these factors simultaneously and sought out established humanitarian operations for subsistence, emergency response as a practice began to be refined, formalized, and institutionalized as a system. This institutionalization was built in part on the overall systematization of spatial practice, anchored in prominent field sites. The refugee settlements at Dadaab became one such—if not *the*—prominent installation, as the UNHCR's largest operation for much of the period at hand and an architectural testing ground. The transformation from practice to system also carried with it certain forms of industry, such as an increasingly privatized, diversified, and competitive market of humanitarian provision of goods and services.[65] The consolidation of this diversity included the entrenchment of humanitarian spatiality through building programs, an architecture and planning culture, and an overall commodification of the designs and built forms of emergency response. The professionalization, privatization, standardization, scaling, and globalization of emergency response and aid delivery marked an overall growth of an international humanitarian industry, distinguished by refined spatial practices. From the architecture of the supply chain to the design of a humanitarian compound, a formalized and refined humanitarian spatiality inscribed an institutionalization of underdevelopment.

The capitalistic and industrial practices that characterized humanitarian settlement in the late twentieth century reproduced and enhanced the very forces of underdevelopment that Rodney exposed in 1972. Yet, ironically, they also marked an evolution of the universal liberal thought that constitutes the object of Wynter's critique. The conflicting and contradictory processes of underdevelopment, sedentarization, and belonging behind humanitarian settlement create unresolvable paradoxes for the liberal propositions of humanitarianism, through a variety of aesthetic, material, and spatial practices. To situate the historical context in this way is not to disregard or devalue the

labors and desires of refugee migrants nor of aid workers. It is to study the past with open eyes and endow the present with realistic meaning, in order to creatively imagine the future. Locating the questions of an architecture of migration in a study of Dadaab in situ offers the empirical ground with which to theorize.

Dadaab, in Theory

This brief sociospatial and historical background of the Dadaab refugee settlements contextualizes the convergence of multiple architectures and historical threads, which the chapters of this book bring into greater focus. Throughout, I argue that architectures in the present provide a pathway to understanding the past and offer alternatives to received narratives. I also argue that the constructed environment at Dadaab provides a significant iteration of humanitarian spatiality and an object lesson on humanitarian settlement. As such, Dadaab offers a powerful basis for theory.

To elaborate, my experience as someone who approached Dadaab without a personal affiliation may demonstrate how its histories and possibilities extend far beyond the refugee camps themselves. I come to Dadaab as an art historian, inhabiting a field rife with the contradictions of empire and epistemic colonization, yet full with politically radical thinkers. As art and visual culture historian Kajri Jain notes, our disciplinary entanglement with capital and realpolitik puts us in "a position of strength to *resist* the discourse and practices of instrumentalization all the way up and down and right across our institutional structures. As artists and art historians, we know how to bite the hands that feed us."[66] Histories of aesthetic, material, and spatial practice and works have informed my methods over twelve years of scholarly intimacy with Dadaab. I draw from training in the architectural history of the global modern and the Islamic world as well as methods of ethnography, history, and media studies; capacity in multiple languages; ten years of work as an architect and planner, first in India and then in the United States; five years as a researcher for philanthropic and advocacy groups engaged with emergency relief and aid; and more than ten years of research into African history, with extensive study in urban areas and border camps in East Africa. My perspective from the humanities differs from that of most of the researchers who have studied refugee camps, usually through law, political science, social science, or technical specializations. My experiences have taught me to think of architecture in the broadest terms and in socially and politically engaged ways, and oriented me intellectually to East Africa, where the stakes of architectural history are

high. This is made clear, for example, by archaeologist Sada Mire's recuperating and writing the archaeology of Somaliland and Somalia in a reclamation of heritage for societies still struggling with the cultural losses caused by war; Omar Deegan's architectural practice of recovering and documenting Mogadishu's designed and built environment in spite of its physical destruction and ruin; Delia Wendel's scholarly sifting through the material practices undertaken by the people and government of Rwanda to construct genocide memorials; or Dadaab's designers, builders, and thinkers making home and world.[67] Keeping those urgencies in mind, it is precisely my scholarly and impersonal relationship to Dadaab that has convinced me, over years, of its significance in unexpected architectural and historical registers.

In 2010, I began research in the UNHCR archives, which immediately turned my attention to Dadaab as a significant site of humanitarian operations. In order to focus on Dadaab and study the environments and architectures this book has ultimately examined, I sought a position as an intern at the Women's Refugee Commission, or WRC. As a research organization advocating for women and children, established by leaders of the International Rescue Committee, or IRC, it provided a supportive scaffold for a study of architecture and history in a refugee camp, and, in turn, I contributed my academic skills to its endeavors.[68] The organization commissions and publishes research on conditions impacting women and girls in displacement contexts, in order to advocate for refugees and support relief practitioners. It is able to conduct global-level research by working closely with organizations on the ground. I was skeptical of a US-based organization intervening in gender studies in heterogeneous Muslim, African, and Asian environments with which it lacks direct affiliation, and questioned how it worked in multiple global South contexts and managed relationships with local refugee aid practitioners and advocacy organizations. I also took note of its limited public criticism (despite the perspective its research might produce) of US policy on asylum, immigration, and borders, or the political responsibility the country holds for many displacements of people stemming from wars it has initiated, engaged, or escalated. Yet the actions of the WRC, as a small organization, offered a "light touch" (due to leanness in the organization's structure, shared by the IRC), and it was respected for the quality of its research, both in the fields of relief and advocacy within the countries in which it works as well as in the international humanitarian system. Working within the organization offered a remarkable vantage. In contrast to the methods of ethnographers whose long residency within or near refugee camps formed the core of their social science scholarship, my aim was to look closely at designed objects

and built environments alongside institutions, which required examining the built environment from many perspectives: on the ground, in archives, and from elsewhere.[69] My position at the WRC provided a situated view of many environments where refugees and aid workers live and labor, and familiarized me with the internal operations of other organizations and agencies in the humanitarian system, notably offering me an "inside" view of the UNHCR without having to be embedded in that agency's bureaucracy, and also bringing me into close conversation with local entities serving displaced people, from the Refugee Consortium of Kenya to refugee construction collectives in Dadaab. Displaced people from diverse backgrounds and across the gender spectrum seemed to be comfortable with the organization, as evidenced by the sensitive material contained in its reports. I aimed to discuss objects, environments, and ecologies with women and people who did not identify as cis-male; around the world, they constitute the majority of people living in refugee camps, yet they are not always the people in refugee communities who venture forward to interact or work with researchers. The WRC and the organizations and people with which it collaborated enabled conversations with important interlocutors. In spite of the asymmetries that often exist between displaced people and the regime of humanitarian NGOs that can govern life in camps, the care and consideration behind these rare preexisting relationships enabled refugees to admit outsiders into the safe spaces and frameworks they coconstructed, and talk with ease. Refugees could also refuse to do so, and often did. The WRC makes clear that no remuneration, favors, or obligations accompany interviews. Ultimately, the organization's cultivated ability to move among all the constituencies constructing and inhabiting the architecture of camps, from the most vulnerable to the most powerful, provided a resource that deeply informed the scholarship in these pages.

On behalf of the WRC, I researched ways that various livelihoods exposed displaced people to gender-based violence or deepened their risk. I compiled the literature on gender violence prevention; conducted interviews with refugees, aid workers, and field specialists; and drafted a report for publication.[70] As I fulfilled my responsibilities, the WRC accommodated my scholarly research, providing me with logistical support during my international travel in return for my supervision of teams visiting camps and other sites. For example, I traveled with Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs student teams to refugee hosting sites in Ethiopia and Kenya, providing guidance and liaising with the WRC. One of the students who accompanied me to Dadaab, Bethany Young, contributed substantial significant

photographic and interview material, as well as a special perspective as a Jamaican studying in the United States, and her work appears throughout this book. In 2010 and 2011, I visited several camps and other locations where refugees are hosted—for example, neighborhoods and apartment blocks in cities in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Bangladesh. Though I declined further travel with the organization, I prepared deep site-specific study for "missions," as the visits were called, to Uganda and Thailand, and further research in South Africa and India. The WRC permitted me to include oral historical questions related to my scholarly research in interviews conducted as part of its advocacy and policy research. Its teams conducted interviews in English and worked closely with interpreters sourced by the IRC and known within local communities.[71] Within refugee camps, the supportive labor of these interpreters involved far more than translation, often including deep bridging between the research teams and individuals and communities. Many of these interviews are included in digital collections the organization donated to the Duke University Human Rights Archive.

This work offered me the privilege of visiting Dadaab in person. To do so as a foreigner has never been a minor matter, and while the pages to follow will expound further, it is worth prefacing them by saying that my visits were chaperoned by the WRC, under the aegis of the IRC and in partnership with the UNHCR. It is common to travel to Dadaab from Nairobi by bus, from the predominantly Somali neighborhood of Eastleigh to the market in Ifo camp. Many do so in spite of having to cross multiple checkpoints and handling the burdens leading to and faced at each of these moments. My professional position required me to fly from the minor Wilson Airport in Nairobi on a World Food Programme (WFP)-chartered flight to the Dadaab airport; stay in the UNHCR compound with its international and domestic staff members and international staff members of all other agencies and organizations (except Médecins Sans Frontières, or MSF); adhere to curfews when visiting the camps; and travel within or between camps in the company of a police escort. These escorts were usually male; they were always armed with rifles, always remained within a line of sight and at a significant distance from the researchers, and never entered refugees' dwellings or shops in our presence. Security protocols varied per agency or organization—for example, MSF staff living in a compound in Dagahaley camp and UNHCR staff living in the segregated and fortified UNHCR compound away from the camps. Security protocols followed by the IRC, and in turn the WRC, represent a point on the spectrum between these. Dadaab was and is under the highest security restrictions and has been the target of both insurgency and counterinsurgency

measures. I limited time spent directly in the camps, as the presence of nonresidents drew from the pool of available resources (food, housing, and more) and had the potential to draw attention to interview participants beyond that for which they may have prepared. The risks I assumed, incommensurate to those faced by people living in the camps, stemmed from my visibility as both foreigner and female in a milieu in which unarmed aid workers had been kidnapped, raped, held for ransom, or killed—dangers indeed, although best framed in terms of the inequality of lives.[72] When my research could be undertaken remotely, in direct communication with refugees and aid workers in Dadaab, I elected this method. My decisions on how to conduct research raised sometimes unresolvable conceptual and methodological problems, and not a small degree of anxiety related to knowledge formation in military zones and in compliance with the police state, questions about the claims and distinctions of feminist theory and praxis, and concerns about how architecture and history collude with power and reinforce colonial practices. However, in the years since I began this work, the barriers between the worlds outside and inside the camps have been more frequently bridged by people who were raised in the camps. This has occurred through the mobility and migration of individuals, formal external initiatives (for example, education programs such as Borderless Higher Education for Refugees or Film Aid's journalism projects), and robust communications and remittance platforms.[73] This bridging and collaboration will work toward eroding the borders imposed on people in the Dadaab refugee camps.

Dadaab's significance has in great part to do with its place in a global history, however little known. Thus, to build on and contextualize primary research in Dadaab, during a period between 2010 and 2012, I consulted papers and interviewed people in unique institutions within the global field of humanitarian practice capable of archiving this significance. Among others, these included the Oxford Refugee Studies Centre and its papers in the University of Oxford Bodleian Social Science Library; Oxfam in Oxford; Shelter Centre and its curated library in Geneva; the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) archives in Geneva; the UNHCR archives in Geneva, central offices in Nairobi, Bangkok, and Dhaka, and several regional suboffices, including in Dadaab; the UNHCR and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) shelter and settlements units in Geneva; the NRC in Nairobi; the Danish Refugee Council in Copenhagen; the IRC in Nairobi, Addis Ababa, and New York; and three MSF sections: the unit in Mérignac near Bordeaux, where I examined kits and mobile architectures designed and assembled for deployment in Africa and around the world (MSF

Logistique), the offices and library in Paris, where I studied the curated collection of books, papers, and manuals (MSF-France), and CRASH (Centre de Réflexion sur l'Action et les Savoirs Humanitaires), MSF's research and critical reflection unit.[74] Over the course of twelve years, I visited libraries and private collections in addition to those mentioned, across East Africa, South Asia, and Europe. I conducted individual and group interviews in person and remotely, involving approximately three hundred refugees, aid workers, architects, scholars, officials, and others. Because many people engaged openly in interviews, I often refer to them by name, as contributors to the oral historical record and protagonists in the history. Yet, because I cultivated discussions with so many people, and heard refrains emerge in multiple conversations, I also draw conclusions based on amalgams I have constructed, without citing any particular interviews. More than half of these interviews were based in Dadaab or involved people with intimate personal or professional connections to it. While the mobility to conduct a study with this range is a privilege, it was also an aspect of the methodology. It established a certain attentiveness and comparative knowledge in a study attuned to migration.[75] I conducted this work over a long span of time in order to enable research in many Souths as well as many Norths, and in spaces well beyond the capitals, centers, or humanitarian headquarters—including in many refugee camps.

Over time, I examined the files and libraries of several humanitarian organizations, interviewed architects in different parts of the world who had designed or managed camps, and talked with many refugees. I met with many refugee mothers who shared insights and travails. Part of my task in these pages is to build on their pedagogy by illuminating the place and significance of their work in broader histories common to all. Conversely, I believe they put faces and names into histories of modernity prone to abstraction. I present excerpts of some of our conversations in these pages. People placed faith in me to share this content, as well as images of themselves, their children, and the places where they live and work. I include photographs taken with the permission of those in the images, or their caregivers. (Please note that children in the photos are no longer recognizable due to the passage of time.) In all instances, I attempt to capture the context in which words and images emerged. My intention in deploying the words and images of others is to construct a fuller, affective picture of Dadaab, of humanitarian settlement, and of an architecture of migration. I also mobilize my own words in order to share the orientations, limits, aims, and imperfections of my questions and our dialogues, to build knowledge from embodied experience and relations with

others, and to dismiss at the outset claims to anything other than a situated knowledge.[76] I insist that what I present here are *fragments*, from which fuller stories may emerge.[77] I invite readers to take this archive on its own terms and produce their own conclusions.

This pictorial writing and critical archiving strategy owes no small debt to John Berger's *A Seventh Man* and Edward Said's *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives*.[78] Each of these books was conceived as an entanglement of the text with photographs taken by photographer Jean Mohr, whose career included extensive reportage and image production for the UNHCR and the World Health Organization. They are iconic books not only for their style but for their pathos and their singular, sympathetic focus on migrants: the former on guest workers in Europe and the latter on refugees in Palestine. Read in the present day, they behave also as pictorial archives of the phenomena they discuss.

Much in the spirit of those two works, this book is predicated on an acknowledgment of the acute and profound practice of caregiving within which forced migrants labor. The intimate work of refugee mothers collaborating, crafting domesticities and worlds, and contending with emergency by making a built environment serves an end beyond survival. Indeed, by the time an asylum seeker reaches a space of refuge, she has already done more than survive. This intimacy labor conserves experience and memory and gathers energy toward life and futures beyond emergency. As such, it serves as a critical heritage practice. This intimate heritage work, embodied in architecture, its histories, and the possibilities it wages for the future, has shaped Dadaab, and carries impacts far beyond it.

AN ETHIC

To study architectural history in a refugee camp is to acknowledge a seeming epistemological precarity, underlying a moral one. The need to turn regularly to contingent primary sources begged the question of why secured repositories and official archives suggested a sense of fixity, and why the stories and things belonging to migrant people lacked this authority. Studying emergency environments, the international humanitarian system, and Dadaab regularly raised questions about the precarity of primary research sources, while also illuminating their inadequacy. Formal documentary archives alone were wholly unequal to the study of an emergency environment, that is, to building a conventional body of evidence for a history, or a credible one.[79] However, it became even more pressing to me to understand the intelligibility of an archive as both precarious and as inadequate.

As I collected a database of oral histories to counteract these problems, my own implication in the process of interviewing hundreds of people transformed my methods and my "authority." Officials, aid workers, and refugees alike, who seemed uninterested in what I had learned in archives, allowed me into their conversations after I notified them that I had visited Dadaab and several other refugee camps. As one young aid worker put it, in response to my questions about processes of establishing recognition and gaining the trust of both refugees and aid workers who would be the interlocutors for the research, "You've got to be in the field, you have to have done your time in the field, you have to have your battle scars from Somalia and Darfur . . . in order to establish yourself as a credible point person."[80] Moving beyond the colloquialisms of this speech, it was difficult not to notice the offhand militaristic language acknowledging the closed space of the refugee camp. What did it mean?

The central problem to writing a history of any emergency environment—humanitarian or other—is not the lack of an archive, but the absence of one. This epistemic vacuum seems to be a matter of politics well understood by those involved. Refugee camps are *not supposed to* leave a trace. They are intended to be fugitive spaces, sometimes obscured by the people sheltering, perhaps hiding, and sometimes by the activities of the people protecting them. Yet, many people in Dadaab sought to share their experiences and perspectives. Why? To resolve this question and recover the history in those absences, meanwhile, demands a risk of potential collusion with forms of carceral migration.[81] As quietly explained by Alishine Osman, a resident of Ifo camp in Dadaab for all of his childhood and youth, "When you live in a refugee camp for twenty-five years, you are not the same as others who have identity, education, and legal rights to move around the country or from one country to another."[82] Studying spaces steeped in the moral, practical, and discursive paradoxes of carceral migration is not a neutral task. It is a fraught one that demands an ethic.

In developing an ethic, I began with a close examination of research methodology. Ironically, Dadaab can be studied by conventional means, as the later chapters of this book show; that is, a narrative and an image—the basis of an architectural history—can be constructed wholly from outside of the camps. The settlements at Dadaab have been drafted and documented by many, which is not the case for many refugee environments.[83] Their planning, design, and construction exhibit the work of the state-sanctioned expert as well as the organic intellectual, offering a range of protagonists to follow.[84] Yet, a study of Dadaab raises problems well beyond scholarly methodological convention. While the present study aims to counter the epistemic violence

of disappeared histories, it has also engaged forces responsible for other forms of spatial, environmental, and more directly encountered violence.[85] Perhaps more at Dadaab than at many other refugee camps, even those administered by the UNHCR, people have served with frequency as objects of research for academics, policy researchers, and practitioners operating from many institutional positions and in many disciplines.[86] To counter this problem demands rigors of a different kind.

Countering epistemic violence calls for methods tied scrupulously to an ethic. Mine revolved around a commitment to continuous negotiations in research and writing. Among the continuous negotiations were questions of how to research in ways that prioritized collaborative knowledge formation over colonial valuation practices and cultural imperialism, how to write in ways that would acknowledge historical difference reparatively and restoratively, and how to construct bridges to a shared narrative that might be common to many across asymmetries. My hope is that the historical constructions and methodology of this book bring Dadaab into the narrative such that those most intimate with it might comfortably and critically intervene over time if and as they see fit, and those most distant might comprehend the worth of an architecture of migration. Education scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou, Māori), writing in favor of Indigenous agency in research, and more broadly on the researcher's being implicated in the research, warned protectively of this "research" that she called a "dirty word," in that "belief in the ideal that benefiting mankind is indeed a primary outcome of scientific research is as much a reflection of ideology as it is of academic training. It becomes so taken for granted that many researchers simply assume that they as individuals embody this ideal and are natural representatives of it when they work with other communities."[87] This book takes up her challenge to "question the assumed nature of those ideals and the practices that they generate."[88] I do so in considering the work of future readers and writers of a narrative of Dadaab and any architectures of migration it represents, and how the narrative constructed here might serve them. I propose that it does a form of bridge work, in addressing a partition at the conceptual and theoretical core of an architecture of migration—and of modern architectural history more generally, as it is broadly understood. The refugee camp, as an architectural end of humanitarian practice, *encourages* and certainly also *discourages* migration. This conundrum transforms the refugee camp from a site of aid for those in need—that is, a monument (if provisional) to the humanitarian ideal—to a site of concentration, which contours darker histories of detention. Just as modern architecture has been

a partner to colonialism, the entanglement of migration and incarceration has been a common theme in its past, a ghost that inhabits its history.[89] This entanglement constitutes the implicit heritage of the refugee camp as a form of modern architecture, a legacy of the twinned condition of migration and incarceration, of modernity and colonial practices. Yet, this Janus-faced heritage also creates the discursive access point for the refugee camp, situating Dadaab as a locus for a critical history.[90] My aim is to negotiate an analysis and build critical understanding of this heritage, drawing on *an ethic as method* in order to make a historiographical bridge.

This book is a call for peace. It is a stand against militaristic knowledge formation. It grew out of a deep reflection on architecture as an instrument of power, informed by the quandaries of studying in war contexts in which people are denied freedom of migration. The oppressive scrutiny of people moving through the Dadaab refugee camps and the attendant production of a body of literature and imagery manufactured a viable object for historical study. Scholarship takes advantage of such enclosures and ought to assume equal burdens of intellectual and moral responsibility to understand them. That is especially so for scholarship produced in imperialist contexts—which describes all scholarship, like this book, produced in academic institutions of the United States. The relationship of scholarship to a militaristic framework is part of what this book aims to confront. These frameworks can be eroded through scholarly awareness and a commitment to an ethic. For me, this ethic has included taking seriously a suppressed architecture as a subject, listening to people directly involved in or impacted by its histories and ecologies, and mobilizing my own viewpoints as a situated and embodied scholar, in order to move toward a liberatory knowledge.

The ethical task demands the act of *writing with*, of researching and constructing narratives in critical sympathy and solidarity.[91] This has called for radical collaborations and the historiographical privileging, rather than effacement, of difference. In the words of feminist theorist Audre Lorde, "Only within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways of being in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters."[92] As she argues elsewhere, exercises in privileged shame and distress over asymmetries must be superseded by action that takes difference in hand. As she writes, "Guilt is only another form of objectification."[93] In this book, I commit to many forms of difference, beginning with finding architecture and history in a refugee camp. This book is an attempt to learn from and write with the refugees at Dadaab and with others whose labor has contoured an architecture

of migration. The intellectual work of these collaborators infuses this book. This acknowledgment is not to assert equivalences that diminish structural inequalities or suggest impossible commensurabilities, but hopefully to place value on the thinking, making, and knowing of interlocutors living their lives in state-administered camps or laboring in humanitarian regimes and to locate their work discursively within broader intellectual histories. It is also to acknowledge the epistemic and spatial violence that can go unstated in academic production.[94] Historiographic approaches can deny certain subjects access to discourse or, alternatively, radically bolster discursivity. In attempting the latter, I turn back to Trouillot: "Human beings participate in history both as actors and as narrators."[95] Following that kernel, this book intervenes first and foremost into the historical narrative, in a spirited, critical act of learning with its subjects.

Dadaab's discursive efficacy lies in the imaginations of its inhabitants and their transcendence of emergency subjecthood to do more than subsist. The text and images in these pages notate ways that, despite radical curtailments of agency, these figures have constructed lifeworlds and authority through architecture and the labor associated with it. Their words and faces as the architects and narrators of Dadaab infuse these pages. Writing with them shifts the narrative to new forms of authority. On this, it is important to note that, while I worked by listening to many people, I do not consider their words as testimony. My methods do not follow conventional ethnographic models, not even those that trace nonhuman subjects or, indeed, designed objects. While I acknowledge the inherently social life of my objects of concern, my precise aim is an analysis not of societies, but of an architecture of migration. Moreover, I do not believe that studying a built environment through ground-level approaches automatically equates to ethnography. Ethnography relies on an affective defamiliarization of a subject for the sake of its analysis. If anything, I have worked to develop an intimacy with the Dadaab complex of refugee camps—even to share with it a domesticity—with the aim of *writing it differently*. Working in Dadaab gave me the opportunity to observe an architecture in use and up close, and to meet people for whom this place and its history might have special meaning. Rather than studying people at a site, it was important to me to hear from people for whom Dadaab has been *home*, for whom my situating the camps as both *historical* and *architectural*—if we understand these markers as taking seriously the epistemic and heritage value of a place—would not occupy a theoretical realm alone. Rather than approaching Dadaab only as an unfamiliar, alien object of "research," this opened the potential for treating it instead as a sensible place, with its own history, origins,

and forms of knowledge. This reasoning converges with Griselda Pollock's analysis that "all texts are structured by their own rhetorical figures," as she names another aim, that "the conscious awareness of 'narrative' when we write 'history' has special resonances for feminists in their desire not only to do history differently but to tell tales in such a way as to make a difference in the totality of the spaces we call knowledge."[96] This book's primary method has been to seek different subjects and objects, historical and political.

THEORETICAL POSSIBILITIES

This diversity emerges in the structure and arc of the book. Taking the Dadaab settlement as an analytic, the book's arguments unfold along a narrative path that reverses the typical structure of an ethnography or material study, either of which moves in the direction of observation and description to analysis and theorization. Instead, the chapters are arranged to present theoretical arguments at the outset, in chapters 1–3, in order to empower the reader to arrive with an expanded knowledge to the immediate history and ecology of the settlement in chapter 4, and to those of a global humanitarian material culture in chapter 5. Encountering a humanitarian environment without first implanting the conceptual premise of drawing theory from forms runs the risk of presenting a teleology, of naturalizing the foreign humanitarian camp rather than estranging it. Refugee camps are frequently rendered as objects of emergency, whose manufactured ahistoricity and abjection imply that people brought the camp, as an endpoint, upon themselves. Instead, Dadaab reveals long historical processes that could have come to other ends. It demonstrates material and epistemic richness in the present. The chapters of this book build, each on the last, to counter a teleology of a refugee camp and to show that it is *not* its own logical end. Rather than a tragedy of the refugee camp in general, and Dadaab in particular, this material and social trajectory is a profound site of theory. It is an architecture of migration.

The opening chapters reveal Dadaab slowly through three frames that build on one another, beginning with the vital conceptualization that undergirds the book: that when we see a refugee camp, what we encounter—what lies underneath—is a partition. That an architecture of migration comes *from partitions* is the first argument made in the book, in chapter 1, and is intended to immediately dispel conventional views of refugee camps by arguing that specific historical and rhetorical forces construct them as oppressed spaces. The first chapter argues that a camp is not an intact event but stems from partitions of land and self. Chapter 2 is intended to push the reader beyond

the frame of emergency to see history in Dadaab, positing that the Dadaab camps emerged out of long and contradictory historical forces of sedentarization and not only a recent emergency. Chapter 3 leads the reader beyond the frame of shelter to intimacies and domesticities, illuminating Dadaab's located domesticities as part of broader, universal histories and global spatial practices of shelter. Having followed this path of eliminating preconceptions, the reader will be critically strengthened to arrive to the humanitarian camp in chapter 4 and humanitarian designs in chapter 5.

The chapters are organized along regimes of historicity: from the first, whose considerations inhabit a period of nearly three hundred years, to the fifth, which occupies a much shorter period during the first decades of the twenty-first century. They are also organized according to spatial registers, expanding or contracting with each chapter, from the single site to the spheres across which its subjects and objects migrate. In each chapter, a vignette brings into focus one aspect of the constructed environment in Dadaab. The vignette speaks to the empirical conditions that distinguish the Dadaab refugee camps, setting the stage for a global history and an intellectual history explored in each chapter. This structure is a strategy to demonstrate how Dadaab "in situ" can open onto Dadaab "in theory."

Chapter 1, "From Partitions," explores the argument foundational to the book, the question of what we learn through close looking at a refugee camp. Underlying a refugee camp is a partition. This chapter begins the book's study with two forms of partition central to understanding a history of the Dadaab refugee camps: the partition of land, a colonial practice that entrenches contestations over territory, and the partition of the self, a humanitarian one that stratifies the lives of persons. Beginning with a dialogue between myself and Alishine Osman, a former resident of the Dadaab refugee camps, the chapter uses the architectural and political divide created by the settlements as a lens on the long figuration and construction of a humanitarian borderland. It examines humanitarian settlement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the fraught partition of the Somali Jubaland in the twentieth century to study how emergency intervention entangled discourses on human rights with those of territory. Learning from the refugee camp in this way enables a conceptual reorientation toward it.

Chapter 2, "Land, Emergency, and Sedentarization in East Africa," uses the problem of enclosure—as legal strategy and empirical space—to argue that the refugee camp is prefigured by approaches to land that intertwine the construction of emergency territory with sedentarization. The chapter opens with a discussion of the yield of a farm, in the form of a kitchen garden

designed by Maganai Saddiq Hassan on her assigned plot, which transformed the arid landscape of Dagahaley refugee camp into a lush, green cultivation. Her agricultural skill is the aftermath of a history of land contestations and practices of enslavement in the Jubaland and a longer path toward sedentarization enacted in a refugee camp. These threads are woven together, first, in an analysis of the construction of the marginal territory in which the Dadaab refugee camps were sited; second, in a prehistory for the refugee camps in the manyattas (the villages, or settlements) used for liberation or coercion in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries; and third, in two building types, the makuti and the tuqul, which represent sedentarization and resistance to it. This chapter finds the justification for humanitarian settlement as well as the logic for settler colonialism in the abolitionist cultivation of land, a moral imperative that pathologized the nomad and instituted the drive to mass sedentarization, ultimately by carceral means.

Chapter 3, "Shelter and Domesticity," examines the architectural coordinates of shelter, so central to humanitarian practice and discourse, and the conceptual problem of domesticity, so crucial for refugee lives. The chapter theorizes the insurgent domesticities of Dadaab, to contextualize a shelter initiative led by Shamso Abdullahi Farah, a pregnant mother living in Ifo camp in the 2000s, and the NRC, an organization specializing in architectural design of shelters. The chapter sets this relief-cum-development work into a history of institutionalization of a global professional architectural and planning practice of emergency relief, beginning in the early 1950s and systematizing in the 1990s. Farah's authority emerges in the domesticities of emergency, in a context that reproduces the emergency homemaker as architect. The chapter explores this and other domesticities that extend the refugee camp well beyond the utilitarian practice and pragmatic discourse of shelter, while also reimagining the theory of shelter so deeply embedded in architectural history.

Chapter 4, "An Archive of Humanitarian Settlement," labors in the space of expanded knowledge built in the three preceding chapters, to present a history of the planning and settlement of Ifo, Dagahaley, and Hagadera camps. It moves through a carefully constructed archive and adopts the historical convention of periodization to produce a narrative of the Dadaab refugee camps from 1991 to 2011. These twenty years represent the time during which official archives of the Dadaab refugee camps remained classified and inaccessible to the public, and the growth, structure, and architecture of the settlements formed the primary record of life in the camps. This chapter begins with foreign architects—that is, *not* civil engineers, but professionals

trained in spatial planning and aesthetics—working in Dadaab during the earliest phases of relief operations. It ends with Dadaab's architects, in a photo essay on Ifo camp's food and water distribution (the primary function and infrastructure of any refugee camp), which operates as an archive of humanitarian settlement.

Chapter 5, "Design as Infrastructure," zooms in on the Dadaab camps' component architectures, authored "works" by major relief organizations as well as refugees in Dadaab: that is, the tarps, tents, and other structures whose design histories chart the material intersections between the camp and the world. The chapter begins and ends with collectives of women whose labor, organization, design collaborations, and building have lent form to the site and created an infrastructure of people within an architecture of migration. Juxtaposing these spatial practices and mobile architectures gives a textured picture of Dadaab, in which *design*—as noun and verb—assumes the role of urgent, lifesaving infrastructure. Yet, ironically, the practices and forms that comprise this infrastructure evince authorship. This chapter examines humanitarian iconography, signature practices, and social lives of objects, putting refugees' localized work in Dadaab into conversation with the global work of humanitarian organizations. Together they create questions about the commodification of aid and paradoxical collaborations in the material practices of humanitarian relief, which underlie a contradictory liberal discourse.

The afterword, "Poetry Is a Weapon That We Use in Both War and Peace," closes on contemporary arts and architectural practices, highlighting work commissioned as part of the process of writing this book, to honor the landscape of pasts and futures a refugee camp opens onto and to test the arguments made in these pages. "Poetry is a weapon that we use in both war and peace," sings the Somali poet Hadraawi. Thinking with the aesthetic and oral traditions carried on by migrants, I argue that the same may be said of architecture. This book looks to the architecture and history of the Dadaab refugee camps for the poetic "weapon" of critical heritage, which endures through war or peace.

A set of critical knowledges comes from the terms set out in the first three chapters. A different ground then emerges in chapter 4, in which a humanitarian settlement represents not merely a zone of rupture and trauma but a historical place with recoverable architectural historical import. It then becomes possible to "see" architectures of emergency relief in chapter 5—the landscapes of tarps and tents—as part of an overall defamiliarization. This is the theoretical and discursive possibility offered by Dadaab.

At the heart of this book is an abolitionist feminist scholarly commitment. I undertake an exercise in close looking at a locus of forced migration as a setting for architecture and history, to clarify the growth and structure of a unique group of settlements; colonial forms and practices of underdevelopment, emergency, counterinsurgency, and sedentarization that prefigured those settlements; and the global histories of architects and architectures in which they played a part. This book is about Dadaab, but Dadaab provides a heuristic for many other pressing studies. I advocate for a nuanced understanding of Dadaab's specificity and significance, but also for the perception of its architecture as supporting diverse inquiry—theoretical, historical, political, and ethical—about the world. This existential as well as epistemic framing of Dadaab is intended to articulate a conceptual ecology through which to read the history of this site, and the wider histories onto which it opens. Architecture and history need not form a cage.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1 The largest numbers of refugees in the world are hosted in Africa, in spite of the international mandate for responsibility sharing by UNHCR signatories.
2 Michelle Shephard, "World's Largest Refugee Camp in Kenya Could Be 'the Future,'" *Toronto Star*, September 21, 2015, https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2015/09/21/worlds-large-refugee-camp-in-kenya-could-be-the-future.html. Mohamed Olow Odowa "calls Dadaab his 'open-air prison.' He has lived here since 1992. Odowa, 28, is a chairman of the camp's volunteer security force. 'We're cops without guns,' he says."
3 See Espiritu et al., *Departures*.
4 Tamale, *Decolonization and Afro-Feminism*; D'Souza, "Decolonizing Knowledge"; Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*.
5 Akcan, *Open Architecture*, 38.
6 Iheka, *African Ecomedia*, 10.
7 Lopez, *Remittance Landscape*, 21.
8 Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 23, 24.
9 Isnina Ali Rage, interview by author; Siddiqi, "Ephemerality."
10 McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, 121–22.
11 I am grateful to Prathama Banerjee on discussions of constructions and constitutions of "history," Delhi, 2018. See Banerjee, *Politics of Time*.
12 I am grateful to Abdullahi Abdulkadir Sheikh Nur for research and translation assistance. "Hagar" may refer to Abraham's wife, significant in Muslim traditions, the mother of Ishmael who was banished and for whom Allah brought forth a well.
13 Corsellis, "Selection of Sites," 150; Horst, *Transnational Nomads*.
14 Pérouse de Montclos and Kagwanja, "Refugee Camps or Cities?," 207.
15 "Dadaab—World's Biggest Refugee Camp 20 Years Old," *UNHCR News*, February 21, 2012, https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/makingdifference/2012/2/4f439dbb9/dadaab-worlds-biggest-refugee-camp-20-years-old.html.
16 Government of Kenya, Royal Danish Embassy, and Norwegian Embassy, *In Search of Protection and Livelihoods: Socio-economic and Environmental Impacts of Dadaab Refugee Camps on Host Communities*, September 2010, 7, 9, https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/1396.pdf.

17 See Walia, *Border and Rule*; Bradley and De Noronha, *Against Borders*; Pallister-Wilkins, *Humanitarian Borders*.

18 Binaifer Nowrojee, "Seeking Refuge, Finding Terror: The Widespread Rape of Somali Women Refugees in North Eastern Kenya," in "Africa Watch," *Human Rights Watch* 5, no. 13 (October 4, 1993); Gerald Simpson, Meghan Rhoad, Agnes Odhiambo, and Human Rights Watch, *"Welcome to Kenya": Police Abuse of Somali Refugees* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2010).

19 The concept of the clan is imprecise, is contingent on social context, and fails to account for many forms of belonging and identification in Somali worlds. Samatar, "Somalia"; Abdi, *Elusive Jannah*, 33; Harper, *Getting Somalia Wrong?*, 14–43.

20 Martin L. Taylor, "Refugees in Kenya: Current Status" (n.p.: Lutheran World Federation Department of World Service, November 1991, provided by Per Iwansson), 11.

21 Government of Kenya, Royal Danish Embassy, and Norwegian Embassy, *In Search of Protection*, 7–10.

22 Interviews with aid workers worldwide reflected this bias.

23 Figures are given in US dollars. Government of Kenya, Royal Danish Embassy, and Norwegian Embassy, *In Search of Protection*, 9.

24 Pérouse de Montclos and Kagwanja, "Refugee Camps or Cities?," 212.

25 For a sociomaterial study of humanitarian infrastructure, see Smirl, *Spaces of Aid*.

26 *The Option*, Safaricom newsletter, December 2009–February 2010, 39, https://docplayer.net/49938857-December-february-2010-think-safaricom-business-win-internet-on-the-move-a-year-s-subscription-to-your-favourite-magazine.html.

27 W. V. Swarzenski and M. J. Mundorff, prepared in cooperation with the Water Department, Kenya Ministry of Agriculture, under the auspices of the U.S. Agency for International Development, "Geohydrology of North Eastern Province, Kenya," *Contributions to the Hydrology of Africa and the Mediterranean Region*, Geological Survey Water-Supply Paper 1757-N (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1977); Fred K. Mwango, B. C. Muhangú, C. O. Juma, and I. T. Githae, "Groundwater Resources in Kenya," in *Managing Shared Aquifer Resources in Africa*, ed. Bo Applegreen (Tripoli: General Water Authority of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, 2004), 93–100; Arjen Oord, Raoul Collenteur, and Lieselotte Tolk, "Hydrogeological Assessment of the Merti Aquifer, Kenya," technical report no. 1 of ARIGA, *Assessing Risks of Investment in Groundwater Development in Sub-Saharan Africa*, August 5, 2014, https://www.worldagroforestry.org/sites/default/files/TR1%20ARIGA-%20Hydrological%20Assessment%20of%20the%20Merti%20Aquifer%20Kenya.pdf; David Ndegwa Kuria and Henry Njau Kamunge, "Merti Aquifer Recharge Zones Determination Using Geospatial Technologies," *Journal of Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology for Development* 1, no. 1 (July 15, 2013): 24–31.

28 Purpura, "Framing the Ephemeral," 11–15.

29 On the recalcitrance of material things—a vital capacity to obstruct—see Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 1–19.

30 Siddiqi, "Ephemerality."

31 I build on a literature on refugee urbanisms and materialities, stemming from foundational studies of constructed environments and landscapes of subaltern, Southern, and/or Muslim worlds. Ananya Roy, "Slumdog Cities"; Pasquetti and Sanyal, *Displacement*; Sanyal, "An Architecture of Displacement"; Seethaler-Wari, Chitchian, and Momić, *Inhabiting Displacement*; Beeckmans et al., *Making Home(s) in Displacement*; Desai and Sanyal, *Urbanizing Citizenship*; Katz, Martín, and Minca, *Camps Revisited*; Katz, *Common Camp*; Sanyal, "Squatting in Camps"; Agha, "Emotional Capital"; Abourahme, "Assembling and Spilling-Over"; Abourahme, "Beneath the Concrete"; Katz, "Spreading and Concentrating"; Bilsel and Maxim, *Architecture and the Housing Question*; Gharipour and Kılınç, *Social Housing*; Abu-Hamdi and Allweil, "Beyond the Camp." Scholarly analysis of Dadaab as "urban" is limited and terming it as such is debated. Siddiqi, "Ephemerality"; Siddiqi, "Dadaab (Kenya)"; Siddiqi, "Emergency or Development?"; Agier, "Camp-Towns: Somalia in Kenya," in *Managing the Undesirables*, 132–46; Pérouse de Montclos and Kagwanja, "Refugee Camps or Cities?"; Jansen, *Kakuma Refugee Camp*. Narrating the camps broadly as a "city" is common in journalistic and humanitarian gray literature: "If counted as a city, Dadaab would be Kenya's third largest—the economic possibilities are tremendous." Melanie Teff, "Kenya Can Turn the Dadaab Refugee Camps into an Asset," *The Guardian*, April 18, 2012, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2012/apr/18/kenya-turn-dadaab-into-asset. See also Rawlence, *City of Thorns*; Alain Beaudou, Luc Cambrézy, and Marc Souris, *Environment, Cartography, Demography and Geographical Information System in the Refugee Camps: Dadaab, Kakuma-Kenya: Final Report: Major Findings* (n.p.: UNHCR/IRD (ORSTOM), October 1999); Jim Lewis, "The Exigent City," *New York Times Magazine*, June 8, 2008, https://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/08/magazine/08wwln-urbanism-t.html.

32 Agier, *Managing the Undesirables*, 145.

33 Mire, "Role of Cultural Heritage," 152.

34 Al-Bulushi, "Kenya's Refugee 'Problem.'"

35 The Refugees Act, 2006, *Kenya Gazette Supplement* No. 97 (Acts No. 13), January 2, 2007.

36 On this poetic condition of Swahili coast architecture, see Meier, *Swahili Port Cities*. On syncretic Indian Ocean identities and pluralistic East African imaginaries of South Asia, see Desai, *Commerce with the Universe*; Aiyar, *Indians in Kenya*; Shankar, *An Uneasy Embrace*.

37 Warah, *War Crimes*.

38 I am grateful for discussions with Nick Estes on land and territorialization during a Harvard University Mahindra Humanities Center fellowship, 2017–2018; with Miriam Ticktin on the anticapitalist history of the "feminist commons" in the Columbia University Center for the Study of Social

Difference working group, Insurgent Domesticities, 2020–2022; and with Zoé Samudzi on genocide and African Indigenous struggle during her Columbia University seminar "Studies in Contemporary Africa" presentation, "Camps, Archives, and Ancestors," January 26, 2021. Estes, *Our History Is the Future*; Ticktin, "Building a Feminist Commons"; Samudzi, "Capturing German South West Africa."

39 For a concise explanation of post-independence politics and civil breakdown in Somalia, see Abdi, *Elusive Jannah*, 32–40; see also Kapteijns, *Clan Cleansing in Somalia*.

40 For a history of contested belonging in Kenya, see Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*. For a history of the partitioned Jubaland (present-day Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia), see Cassanelli, *Shaping of Somali Society*; Bestemann, *Unraveling Somalia*; Casanelli and Bestemann, *Struggle for Land*; Kapteijns, *Clan Cleansing in Somalia*; Ogot and Ochieng, *Decolonization and Independence*; Donham and James, *Southern Marches*; James et al., *Remapping Ethiopia*.

41 Geeldoon, *We Kissed the Ground*, 8.

42 Aidid, "Pan-Somali Dreams"; Laitin and Samatar, *Somalia*; Ahmed, *Invention of Somalia*.

43 Weitzberg, "Unaccountable Census," 409–28; on eliding the governmental view, see also Scott, *Art of Not Being Governed*.

44 Mburu, "The Imperial Partition," in *Bandits on the Border*, 23–42.

45 Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*.

46 D'Avignon, *Ritual Geology*, 13–20.

47 Okoye, "Enigmatic Mobilities / Historical Mobilities." See also Matsipa, *African Mobilities*.

48 East Africa Protectorate Ordinance No. 21 and No. 25 of 1902, "Crown Lands" and "Outlying Districts" (with Ordinance No. 22 of 1926, "An Ordinance to Amend the Crown Lands Ordinance"), Kenya National Archives.

49 I am grateful to Frederick Cooper for discussions on these differences, New York, April 19, 2019.

50 Whittaker, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*.

51 Prussin, *African Nomadic Architecture*.

52 El-Bushra and Gardner, *Somalia*; S. Roy, "Ethical Ambivalence"; De Alwis, "Moral Mothers"; Samuel, Slatter, and Gunasekara, *Political Economy*; Lorentzen and Turpin, *Women and War Reader*.

53 Dharia, *Industrial Ephemeral*, 22.

54 Wilson, "Provisional Demos." See also the essay by the same author in Blanco, et. al. *After Belonging*, 179–85.

55 Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.

56 Wynter, "On How We Mistook the Map."

57 Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink, *Restructuring World Politics*. See also Keck and Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders*.

58 For a critical contextualization, see Incite!, *Revolution Will Not Be Funded*; Sclar, *You Don't Always Get*; McNeish and Lie, *Security and Development.*

59 Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?*; Rieff, *Bed for the Night*.

60 On a performance theory of "architectural spatiality," see Carboni, "Undrawn Spatialities." See also Musmar, "Witnessing." The term *l'espace humanitaire* came into usage in the 1990s, widely credited to former president of MSF-France, Rony Brauman. It can refer to a camp, the inside of a vehicle, or a supply chain; see Smirl, *Spaces of Aid*; Fredriksen, "Emergency Shelter Topologies," 2–3.

61 Samuel Moyn argues that the international human rights movement filled an ideological space vacated by leftist politics. Radhika Coomaraswamy argues against a universal theory of human rights, attending to its diverse iterations in the postcolonial world. ("Not every war is about Americans fighting terrorists," she critiques of a northern, masculinist subjectivity in human rights discourses.) Mainstream architectural discourses have depended on the space Moyn describes; discourses on vernacular, self-help, and user-driven design have depended on that which Coomaraswamy identifies. Moyn, *Last Utopia*; see also A. Clapham, *Human Rights*, 133–37, 182–89. Coomaraswamy, "Reclaiming Parts."

62 Siddiqi, "Architecture Culture, Humanitarian Expertise"; Jamison, "Humanitarian Intervention," 365.

63 Abdi, *Elusive Jannah*; Kapteijns, *Clan Cleansing in Somalia*; De Waal, *Famine Crimes*.

64 Siddiqi, "Architecture Culture, Humanitarian Expertise."

65 Based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) data, emergency relief aid rose sharply in the 1990s, jumping eight billion dollars and rising with overall development aid in the next decade, so that humanitarian aid "moved from a tight oligopoly to a highly competitive market," separate from peacekeeping operations. Fearon, "Rise of Emergency Relief Aid," 69.

66 Jain, "Whose Emergency?," 17.

67 Mire, *Divine Fertility*; Deegan, *Mogadishu*; Wendel, *Rwanda's Genocide Heritage*.

68 I held an internship with the Women's Refugee Commission in 2010–2011, in order to study in the locations where the organization worked. For further explanation, see notes 70 and 75.

69 See, for example, critical ethnographic work in refugee camps by Malkki, *Purity and Exile*; Thomson, "Black Boxes of Bureaucracy," "'Giving Cases Weight,'" "Mud, Dust, and Marougé," and "What Documents Do Not Do." See also ethnographic perspectives on Somali life in Dadaab and the diaspora. Ikanda, "Animating 'Refugeeness' through Vulnerabilities," "Deteriorating Conditions," "Somali Refugees in Kenya," and "Good and Bad Muslims"; Abuye, "Askar."

70 Women's Refugee Commission, *Preventing Gender-Based Violence, Building Livelihoods: Guidance and Tools for Improved Programming* (New York: Women's Refugee Commission, December 2011). This report was partly funded by the US Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, the US governmental unit providing humanitarian protection.

71 Because my work required that I move between refugee communities in which different languages were spoken, I rarely used the Kiswahili I was trained in. I learned enough Somali to play with children in the camps, while meeting with their parents.

72 On "hierarchies of humanity," see Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*, 223–43. See also a distillation on the asymmetry of lives in Keenan, "Do Something."

73 Borderless Higher Education for Refugees, https://www.bher.org. In 2013, the organization Film Aid launched "Dadaab Stories," an evolving online documentary and collaborative community media project combining video, photography, poetry, music and journalism in an artistic oral history, at www.dadaabstories.org. The web initiative has since been discontinued.

74 I am grateful to staff members at all of these institutions and organizations for supporting my study and facilitating my visits.

75 I have attended to a wide range of sources, requiring a great deal of time and mobility. My initial research on this project, up to and during the internship with the Women's Refugee Commission, was self-funded through student loans. My later research benefited from grant and fellowship awards, adjunct teaching contracts at multiple academic institutions, and brief paid consultancies with the Women's Refugee Commission, the United Nations Foundation, and the Coalition for Adolescent Girls. Research for this book later received stable institutional support associated with my position on the faculty of Barnard College, Columbia University.

76 This thinking owes a debt to hooks, *Yearning*; Puig de la Bellacasa, *Matters of Care*; Haraway, "Situated Knowledges"; Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*.

77 On the archival fragment, see Siddiqi, "Crafting the Archive."

78 Berger and Mohr, *Seventh Man*; Said, *After the Last Sky*. I am grateful to Elleni Centime Zeleke for conversations on Berger, and to Dubravka Sekulić for introducing me to his first collaboration with Mohr. See Berger and Mohr, *A Fortunate Man*; Zeleke, *Ethiopia in Theory*; Sekulić, "Constructing Non-Alignment."

79 See Herscher, introduction to *Violence Taking Place*.

80 Anonymous, interview by author, November 30, 2011.

81 I am grateful to Ana María Léon and S. E. Eisterer for the opportunity to present a paper in their session "No Small Acts: Spatial Histories of Imprisonment and Resistance," in the Society of Architectural Historians 2021 annual meeting, and the accompanying 2021 Princeton-Mellon Research Forum on the Urban Environment workshop. See also Oliver, *Carceral Humanitarianism*; Pieris and Horiuchi, *Architecture of Confinement*; Perera, *Australia and the Insular Imagination*; Fleetwood, *Marking Time*; Lopez, "States of Incarceration"; Kirkham-Lewitt, *Paths to Prison*; Jaskot, *The Architecture of Oppression*.

82 A coedited version of our discussion appears in chapter 1 and in Siddiqi and Osman, "Traversals."

83 Siddiqi, "Dadaab Is a Place."

84 Siddiqi, "Dadaab (Kenya)"; see Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 5–14.

85 I draw on diverse analyses of epistemic, environmental, and spatial violence as colonial practices. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"; Nixon, *Slow Violence*; Herscher and Siddiqi, "Spatial Violence"; Wendel and Aidoo, *Spatializing Politics*; Brun and Jazeel, *Spatialising Politics*; Anderson and Ferng, "The Detention-Industrial Complex."

86 Jeff Crisp, interviews by author. The volume of visitors to Dadaab—an international security site of interest proximate to the state capital and regional commercial and humanitarian hub of Nairobi, in an anglophone African country—has occasioned UNHCR suboffice staffing for hospitality and press outreach.

87 Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*. Smith draws from Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, whose detention was executed by some of the same authorities that later incarcerated people at Dadaab. Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind*.

88 Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*.

89 H. Kennedy, "Spatial Writing"; Osayimwese, *Colonialism and Modern Architecture*; Henni, *Architecture of Counterrevolution*.

90 See Siddiqi, "Heritage as Restitution"; Siddiqi, "In Favor of Seeing Specific Histories."

91 Siddiqi, "Writing With."

92 Lorde, "Master's Tools."

93 Lorde, "Uses of Anger."

94 Herscher and Siddiqi, "Spatial Violence."

95 Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 2.

96 Pollock, preface to *Differencing the Canon*.

CHAPTER ONE. FROM PARTITIONS

Epigraph: Owuor, *Dust*, 26.

1 The analysis of territory as a concept is not the aim here, and my orientation to key terms (*land*, *terrain*, *space*, *territoriality*) differs, but on territory as a "political technology," see Elden, "Land, Terrain, Territory"; Elden, *The Birth of Territory*.

2 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 185–97; Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.

3 I am grateful to Carli Coetzee for discussions on a global imaginary of Blackness, 2021, and to Lydia Muthuma, Rohit Mujumdar, and participants from Nairobi, Mumbai, Colombo, and Karachi in our 2022 seminar, "Architecture as a Form of Knowledge," for concerns with Afro-Asian and Indian Ocean consciousnesses.

4 Siddiqi and Osman, "Traversals."

5 Horst, *Transnational Nomads*.

6 Furthermore, on inequalities between expatriates and nationals in the aid labor system (in salaries, contractual terms, and value placed on lives), see Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*, 239.