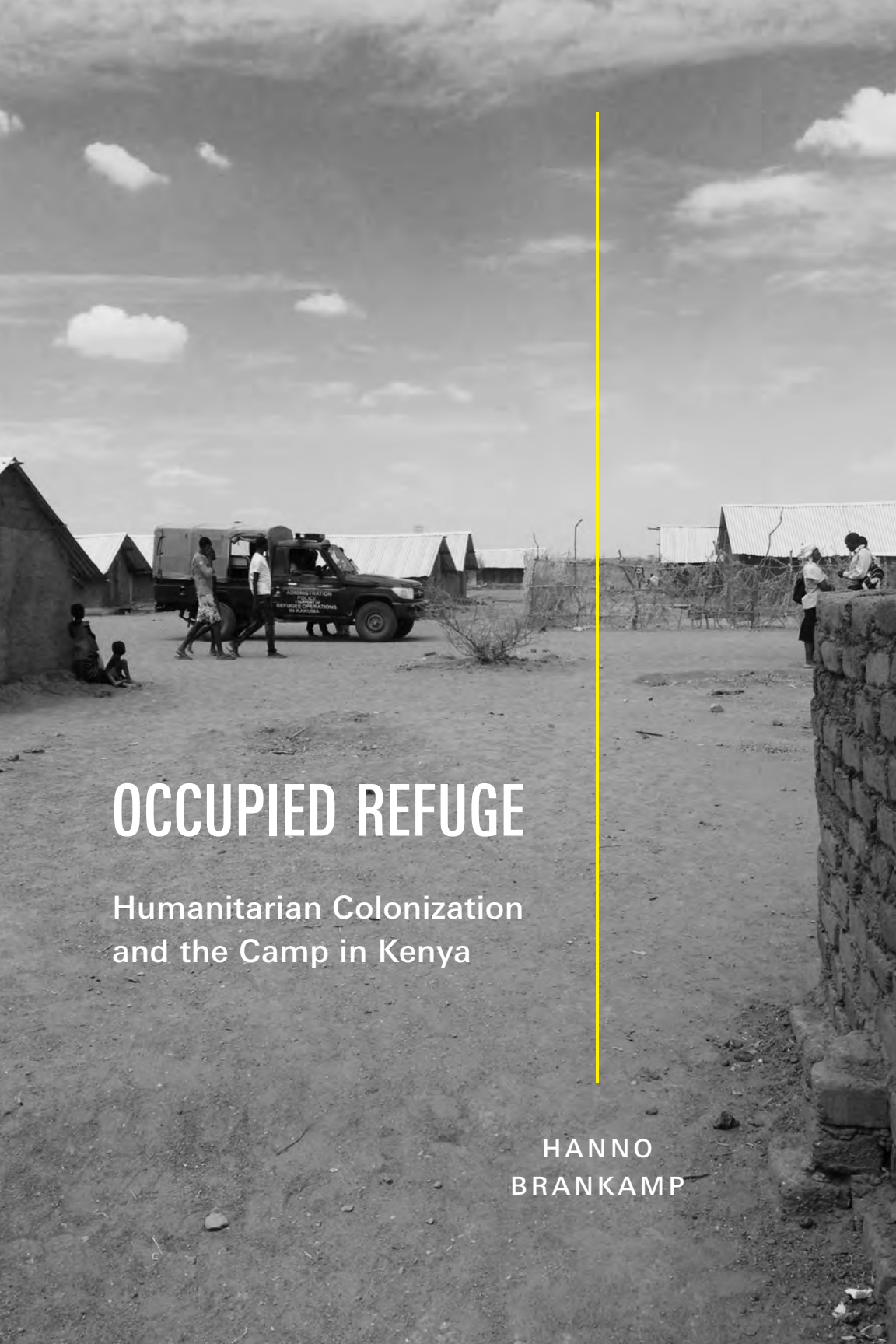

OCCUPIED REFUGE

Humanitarian Colonization and the Camp in Kenya

HANNO BRANKAMP

Occupied Refuge

GLOBAL INSECURITIES

A series edited by Catherine Besteman and Darryl Li

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For Nelson and Kirsty
Sisi ni kitu kimoja!

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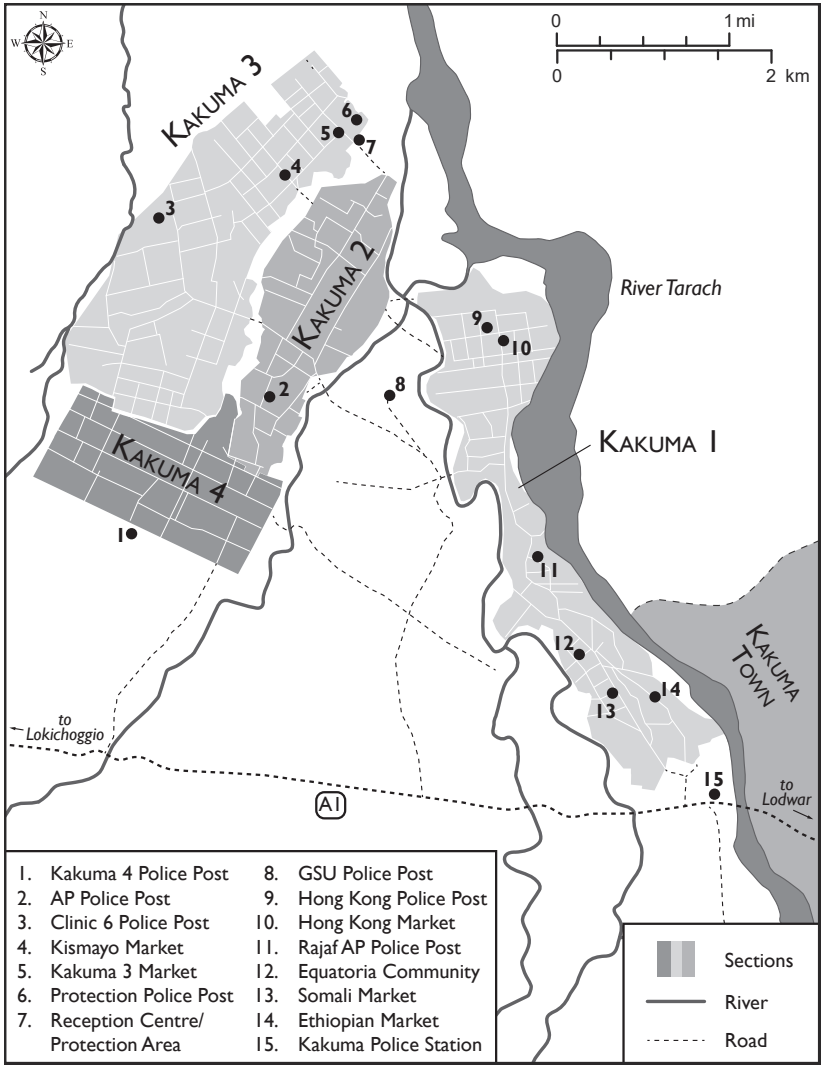
MAP 1. Refugee camps and cities in Kenya. Created by Gabriel Moss.



MAP 2. Key locations inside Kakuma refugee camp. Created by Gabriel Moss.

Your mother is UNHCR, your father is the Government of the Republic of Kenya. You must respect your parents!

—KAKUMA CAMP MANAGER (2017)

The government had come, not to help us, but to instill fear into us, and, out of fear, obedience.

—JARAMOGI OGINGA ODINGA (1967)

Introduction

It was the late evening of December 25, 2016, in Kakuma refugee camp, northwestern Kenya. Abby's, one of the popular bars and clubs in this densely settled neighborhood of the camp, was once again packed with boisterous customers celebrating Christmas over beer, *nyama choma* (barbecued meat), dance, and blaring reggae music. Just as the speakers were turned up, and the party was coming into full swing, a file of olive-green Land Cruisers sped up to the entrance of the bar, and a squad of Kenyan police officers jumped out. With loaded rifles slung over their shoulders, the uniformed men surrounded the premises while partygoers, expecting the worst, desperately tried to escape by scaling the corrugated iron walls or sneaking through the latrines at the back. Two weeks earlier, the Kakuma office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had sent an official request to the town's head of police, the Officer Commanding Station (OCS), asking him to enforce stricter curfews and closing times for bars, *hoteli* (restaurants), and coffeehouses during

the festive season, citing an anticipated uptick in disturbances and security threats. It was no secret that aid organizations and the Kenyan authorities were suspicious of unauthorized gatherings in the camp and routinely criminalized those who took part in them. The directive to preserve "public order" was not unprecedented but illustrated how statecraft and aidcraft were joined at the hip. Emboldened by official backing of the UN, Kenyan officers dragged bewildered customers out of the bar and loaded them onto vehicles that were waiting outside, hurrying them along with yells, insults, and heavy truncheon blows.

The officers drove back and forth between Abby's, Kakuma's central police station, and smaller police outposts that littered the camp, struggling to find enough jail space for the masses of arrested refugees. Joseph, a Burundian *boda boda* (motorbike taxi) driver who witnessed the operation, remembered that "officers began to randomly arrest people at 8:00 p.m., and the police vehicles made five additional trips, picking more people up each time they returned. They must have finished at around 9:00 p.m. By that time everyone was distraught." Holding cells across Kakuma filled up quickly with more than one hundred detainees, most of them adolescents and young adults. The OCS barked instructions at subordinates, reminding them that each detainee should "defend" their own individual case, which was code for the bribes that this inevitably entailed. Late into the night, agitated family members, neighbors, and friends streamed into the police station from every corner of the camp to secure the release of daughters, sons, husbands, wives, and lovers, usually for a standard "fee" of 1,000 Kenyan shillings ($10) or 2,000 Kenyan shillings ($20). But prices also varied depending on a person's social standing, ethnicity, and personal networks. Somalis and Ethiopians, who were often stereotyped as affluent businesspeople or traders, were particularly desirable targets for extortion. Each community began collecting funds to free as many of their kin as possible. Hiywot, the young Ethiopian owner of Abby's bar, pleaded with the OCS to no avail: The price for her freedom was a hefty 10,000 Kenyan shillings ($100), which was doubled as soon as the police realized that she was in a relationship with one of Kakuma's wealthiest businessmen. After finally exiting the airless and foul-smelling cells in the early hours of the following day, Hiywot speculated whether it might have been a competitor who had paid off the police officers to disrupt her thriving business. Recounting his story of the raid, Joseph concluded cynically, "At least the police ate well that night. The New Year found them well. Everybody else suffered."

These scenes encapsulate the deep contradictions that shroud refugee camps today. Camps enjoy a default legitimacy as imagined emergency "safe havens"

that offer much needed shelter, food, health services, education, and humanitarian protection for scores of people fleeing conflict, social adversity, natural disasters, and ecological collapse. By providing the minimum conditions for life and technically managing disasters, camps are the spatial bedrock of a global regime of refugee protection. Estimates suggest there may currently be more than one thousand such institutionalized spaces of refuge dotting the globe, most of which are found in countries of the so-called global South.[1] Yet they are hardly known to be particularly livable places. Camps are popularly associated with rampant insecurity and crime, gender-based and other violence, poor public health, economic dependency, and terrorist threats.[2] Echoing colonial tropes, it is sometimes implied by aid and state actors alike that camp dwellers have their own fair share in prolonging this condition due to unresolved psychological trauma, harmful cultural practices, religious extremism, and the displacement-induced erosion of social bonds. As imperfect as sanctuaries such as Kakuma may therefore always be for refugees, in the institutional imagination they create a stable, if temporary, "environment that supports their fundamental human rights to life, liberty and security of person."[3] Of course, aid agencies such as the UNHCR and its implementing partner organizations on the ground have the betterment of refugee lives at heart. Humanitarian workers, most would agree, are morally invested in their profession and do not intentionally seek to put anyone's life at risk—on the contrary. Their self-identities speak of sacrifice, compassion, and action for both an abstract ideal and the concrete sufferers they help. But the concerted efforts of the UNHCR and the Kenyan state to limit and actively suppress autonomous sociality, mobility, collective joy, and safety among Kakuma's residents—by means of crackdowns, imprisonment, curfews, physical abuse, ethnoracial profiling, and forced micro-extractions of wealth—tell a different story. They raise critical questions about what lies beneath the official mandate of "protection."

On a planetary scale, aid programs are—as of late—now increasingly being mobilized as "soft" instruments of migration control to complement "hard" containment infrastructures of walls, detention centers, barbed wire, surveillance technologies, and border guards. By funding refugee camps in formerly colonized—and still geopolitically marginalized—regions of the world, wealthy countries seem to have found a more ethically justifiable way to insulate themselves from people displaced by war, capitalist crisis, militarization, and the direct effects of climate change, without relying exclusively on politically more uncomfortable "spectacles" of border violence on their own doorstep.[4] After all, disciplinary measures to regulate the global circulation of migrants, life seekers, laborers, asylees, the dispossessed, and the racially oppressed are the hallmarks

of an abiding geography of coloniality that is disguised by liberal dispensations of aid.[5] Viewed from Western corridors of power, maintaining refugee camps along the global peripheries is a useful investment to at once defuse gaping inequalities, govern human suffering, exhibit generosity, and, ultimately, curb the free migration of millions, rendering aid in the process a more discreet and, arguably, more sustainable method of "bordering beyond coercion."[6] What emerges here, then, is a camp geopolitics in which spaces of containment are becoming locations of strategic interest for state and aid actors. Even as the "dirty work" of border control is now explicitly being externalized by northern countries that prop of the military, police, and border agencies of their allied states in the global South, the popular imagination of humanitarianism as a morally progressive project of civilian protection remains largely intact.[7] Aid, many like to think, continues to embody a fallback solution to resolve global inequalities by peaceful means.

In this book I am wary of this myopic and, arguably, Eurocentric conclusion. *Occupied Refuge* challenges the idea that humanitarian refugee aid in the South represents a "nonviolent" form of surrogate borderwork, while it equally criticizes the portrayal of violence as simply a given feature of refugee camp life. Indeed, what may from afar appear as a deeply flawed yet ultimately benign international intervention to ease the plight of refugees in "far-away" regions resembles, on closer inspection, the mounting of a full-fledged militarized occupation that is primarily (and often exclusively) imposed on negatively racialized aid recipients who reside in formerly colonized societies and are deemed otherwise unmanageable. With this, aid programs follow age-old scripts of liberal empire in which some are fully recognized as subjects endowed with unalienable rights, individual freedoms, a capacity for rational conduct, and inviolable bodies, while "others" are thought to be dangerously unruly and therefore to require mobility control, moral paternalism, and physical discipline.[8] One rule was always reserved for the metropole and (usually) propertied white citizens, while yet another was applied to the racially subjugated "native" populations confined to the colonial margins. In the postcolonial world, a similar socio-spatial hierarchization was largely upheld yet encoded with the language of liberal democracy, national sovereignty, partnership, development, and aid.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the geographically dispersed operations of liberal humanitarian and migration regimes. The further their subjects—migrants, refugees, and people on the move—are removed from centers of political power in the North, the more their struggles against institutionalized violence move out of sight and are trivialized or refuted. Although life seekers from Africa and other southern places of origin now regularly make

their own way to Europe, North America, and Australia—shrinking the geographical divide between metropoles and former colonies in the process—the Eurocentric myopia that recognizes violence as such only at close quarters, while minimizing it in the distance, persists. In other words, the humanitarian governance of refugees at the global margins brings to the fore "the issue of contingent human violence."[9] The lived insecurities of contemporary refugee camp dwellers and their enduring "vulnerability to premature death," to use Ruth Wilson Gilmore's phrase, are therefore not just the result of "invisible" structural forces that gradually exhaust or weaken their bodies through many years of debilitating encampment, ill health, inadequate food rations, forced waiting, and declining life chances.[10] Rather, they are created in large part by the concrete, visible, and attributable violence of police and penal power that underpins institutionalized refugee humanitarianism today.

Drawing on ethnographic research in Kenya, this book shows that occurrences such as the Christmas raid on Abby's in Kakuma are neither exceptional events nor merely evidence of refugee aid "gone awry." Rather, delivery of humanitarian assistance is, in practice, underwritten by extraordinary levels of policing and militarization, routinely exposing refugees to the sharp end of state power. It traces the workings of this power through the eyes of those involved in the everyday management of camp affairs: police officers, government officials, aid workers, community police, and ordinary refugees. Ironically, it is against the backdrop of "pacification" through batons, guns, prison cells, and collective punishment that humanitarian workers are able to stage their purportedly benevolent missions of protection. However, I argue that rather than simply *masking* imperialist, anti-migration, security-centered, and racist policies concocted in the global seats of power, as is often readily implied, this heavy-handed administration of refugee operations itself represents a material, social, and political project of *humanitarian colonization* that has long been unfolding—seemingly out of sight—in the global South.

I use the frame of colonization not as a contained historical event limited to the structure of European imperialism but to shed light on a more persistent set of geographies and relations of rule in the present. With the advent of sovereign statehood, former colonies like Kenya made significant efforts to fully control their own territories and populations in a drive to create a new "national space." This national expansionism entailed seizing, occupying, settling, and policing the country's frayed rural margins and subjecting them to administrative control by the central state. Instead of offering a fresh start after European colonizers had departed, the new state itself continued to be a "colonizing institution," more interested in attacking than in protecting society.[11] In

doing so, Kenya turned the technology of the camp—once used to defend the imperial order against disobedient Africans—into a means of violently limiting the rights and mobilities of both precaritized minority citizens and "nonnative" migrants thought to jeopardize its new national order, identity, and peace. While this nationalist project of muscular integration effectively stalled within the first decade of independence (*uhuru*), the arrival of refugees during the 1990s breathed new life into it through fresh donor funding, aid infrastructures, and diplomatic encouragement to pursue encampment. Before this humanitarian encroachment began in the late 1980s, and took off in earnest in 1991, Kenya therefore had already engaged in colonizing its own interior. This means that it is not only hypervisibly racialized encounters between the border guards of white-majority countries and nonwhite migrants along the physical threshold of the global North, but also the internal disparities, unequal mobilities, and hierarchies of belonging within postcolonial nation-states that reproduce processes of colonization.[12] This impresses on us the conclusion that "time in the colony and its afterlife is not linear but rather constructed of crossings, reversals, and re-inventions," of which recurrent forms of carceral power and nested relations of ethnoracial domination are pertinent examples.[13] The camp, I argue, is key to understanding how colonial relations are continuously reworked, reinvented, and respatialized across what often appear to be rather disparate histories and geographies today. It blurs the lines between reproducing colonial control, asserting postcolonial sovereignty, and spatially anchoring what some have referred to as "global apartheid" on a local scale.[14]

Kenya is a "high-profile" country of asylum that has attracted significant attention from international media in recent years for hosting one of Africa's largest refugee populations and serving as a hub for humanitarian interventions across the Horn of Africa. It has also long been a key ally for European and US geopolitical interests, giving diplomatic, economic, and military cover for their African designs, and it is the only country on the continent to host headquarters of two major UN organizations: the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP). Most recently, Kenya volunteered to head a multinational security support mission in Haiti to also demonstrate its dependability as a proxy for Western imperial projects abroad. Yet Kenya often slips through the cracks of even critical migration debates and receives less scrutiny than European-funded "frontline" regimes such as Libya or Tunisia that are more squarely involved in deterring migrants on their way to the Mediterranean. Far removed from European shores, "host countries" such as Kenya are nonetheless complicit as regional buffers in a segmented racialized system of global

apartheid that enforces hierarchies of citizenship, differential mobilities, and labor exploitation. But it does so not just by prioritizing the wishes of its global North benefactors but also by leveraging their substantial resources to reinvigorate nation building by force along its internal frontiers.

To tell the story of humanitarian colonization, we need to look back to Kenya's colonial past and into the postcolonial era, when it started increasingly to discriminate against its minoritized citizens and noncitizens. Selected historical retellings in parts of the book lay the groundwork to better understand the parallel workings of colonial repression and newer logics of national belonging after independence. The new state, although based on Black majority rule and self-governing authority (*madaraka*), continued to rely on exclusionary land and property rights, ethnic territoriality, unequal center-periphery relations, insatiable capitalist accumulation, and permanent counterinsurgency as its guiding logics. Much like its colonial predecessor, post-*uhuru* Kenya sought to impose sovereign control over all regions and peoples within its borders. But while the colony had been worried about the *Indigenous* population's ability to subvert imperial order, the Kenyan nation-state saw the greatest peril in populations who were supposedly *alien* to its territory and began to administratively separate its national "natives" from migrant "non-natives."[15] Citizens (*wananchi*) were defined not by their shared history of colonial oppression but, first and foremost, by their nativeness to the land (lit., *Kiswahili* [children of the land]). This was not limited to legal noncitizens; it also included Kenya's minorities, who, with national independence, were made into mere "guests" on the majority's home turf.[16] The burning question of who was autochthonous ("native to the soil") to Kenya, and could plausibly belong, was thus rigidified at the same time as the central state expanded its reach across border territories containing large numbers of question-mark citizens whose loyalty to "the nation" it doubted.

The road from colonial to postcolonial rule hence was marred not only by exclusionary ideas of citizenship but, importantly, also by the state's aim to "colonize" its own peripheries afresh by bringing national unity, development, and aid. Today's refugee aid regime in Kenya, and the formerly colonized world more broadly, thus constitutes a microcosm of our liberal postcolonial order in which universal promises of freedom, development, human rights, and protection are made alongside intensifying processes of state-organized repression, border controls, dehumanization, labor exploitation, and territorial exclusion. This book reveals that, when we scratch the surface of humanitarian spaces such as Kakuma refugee camp, we inevitably stare into their colonial underbelly: a two-faced system of "compassion" based on the militarized policing of mobility,

ethnoracial subjugation, indirect rule, and extraction. But rather than mere hangovers from the historical colonial era, refugee camps show how the logics of colonization and carceral containment have often been adapted by African nation builders, repurposed, and put in the service of global mobility apartheid and national development after the end of empire.

Recentering Refugee Aid in the Global Margins

Kakuma, one could argue, may be a small and insignificant outpost of the global humanitarian regime. Located in the arid lunar landscape of northwestern Kenya, where the borders of South Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Kenya meet, the camp embodies, like few other places, a position at the margins—of Kenya and the world. Yet "small or remote places are not inconsequential," the political geographer Alison Mountz reminds us. "They are key to understanding power relations that shape entry and exclusion."[17] Margins, indeed, have long been recognized as sites of special import for understanding the state, society, and even the whims of global politics.[18] They are empirically and theoretically productive because they trouble our received categories, question the limits of legibility, and expose what is sometimes hidden under the cloak of geographical distance. In fact, a significant body of work now suggests that it is precisely *not* northern metropoles but marginalized spaces in the global South that can grant us "privileged insight into the workings of the world at large."[19]

Yet over the past two decades, much of the literature on humanitarianism and forced migration has slowly reverted to privileging refugee "crises" nearer the centers of Europe, North America, and Australia.[20] The term *margins*, in this context, frequently has been used to denote the proximate borderlands of the North rather than places farther afield in Africa, Asia, Latin America, or Oceania. While this is understandable, given the deadliness of fortified northern borders to this day, it also reflects an analytical schism in policy and scholarship.[21] Refugees and other forced migrants often come into focus only *if and when* they travel to the North in search of better lives, less so when they remain in their southern "regions of origin." Europe-specific studies are also unsatisfactory substitutes for understanding humanitarian landscapes in other parts of the world, where 84 percent of refugees and displaced people reside. Unlike in the North, aid programs in the South rely more exclusively on foreign funding, exist on average for much longer periods of time, are generally larger in scale, and are staffed (for the most part) by citizens of former colonies, even if the institutional power of agencies such as the UNHCR typically rests firmly "in white hands."[22] But just as in the North, theaters of aid, migration, and asylum

in the South are thoroughly steeped in forms of coloniality past and present.[23] By focusing on refugee encampment in northwestern Kenya, a marginal site even *within* these margins, this book contributes to a body of work that continues to decenter Europe-bound migrations and reexamines refugee mobilities and humanitarianism located squarely within "the South."[24] Once the default settings of displacement, in which logics of aid, development, and postcolonial geopolitics became inseparably enmeshed, southern contexts have since turned into secondary sites of inquiry in critical humanitarian and (forced) migration studies, making them appear like distant outliers rather than windows into *global* humanitarian power.[25]

In fact, not all humanitarian "crises" are the same in the dominant imagination: From the colonial era onward, emergencies, wars, and disasters closer to "home" in the North usually have been seen as momentary ruptures of a "normal" state of affairs that require temporary interventions, while crises in "remote" locations of the South have been imagined as more permanent conditions of life—or, as Sue Estroff notes, they symbolized "the temporal persistence of . . . dysfunction."[26] If the periodic arrival of migrants at European shores required a short-term "fix" in the form of pop-up humanitarian infrastructure, hotspots, and citizen-led aid activities in cities, border areas, and islands, then the humanitarian geographies in the South were imagined to be durative and unresolvable, augmenting Africa's long association with "protracted refugee situations."[27] These are situations of displacement in which large numbers of conationals live in extended exile for at least five consecutive years and are "unable to return home and without the prospect either of a solution in the country where they have sought asylum or of resettlement abroad."[28] In 2021, the UNHCR estimated that as many as 15.9 million refugees fell into this category alone.[29] Further, the division between ostensibly temporary assistance in the North and more entrenched missions in the South loosely maps onto two principal motivations for humanitarian action: first, a short-term or "minimalist" effort to deliver concrete relief and physical protection during acute crises, emergencies, or on battlefields; and second, reflecting humanitarianism's origins in European colonization and Enlightenment thought, a more long-term "developmentalist" approach that seeks to effect the economic, moral, and social uplift of the domestic poor and, subsequently, negatively racialized "others" in colonies or faraway lands.[30] Although this categorization risks creating too neat a binary, refugee assistance in Europe is usually understood to be more limited, contained, or short-lived while equivalent interventions in the Southern Hemisphere are depicted as an unavoidably protracted quagmire.

This makes humanitarian crisis a "glitch" in the normal ordering of liberal modern life in Euro-America, whereas it becomes "normal" and hardly worthy of comment when occurring outside it. As far back as in the aftermath of World War II, relief for displaced people was reserved exclusively for Europeans until the Cold War and the era of decolonization, when UNHCR-fronted refugee operations were extended from postwar Europe to its former colonies.[31] To this day, these "slow emergencies" of forced displacement are differentially racialized. "The (white) liberal subject that anticipates a future of growth, change, development and becoming" is thought of in stark opposition to Black, Brown, Indigenous, or migrant subjects, who are seen to be "suspended in a durative temporality of decline, stagnation, [and] decay."[32] Aid programs in postcolonies have long been framed as acts of managing the outfall of irreversible ruin inflicted by a combination of ethnic conflicts, kleptocratic rule, state failure, and social breakdown that reflect colonial imaginings of southern life-worlds as "uninhabitable geographies."[33] Racially oppressed southern populations were in this way permanently excluded from the possibility of recovery and relegated to a normalized life in unchangeable conditions of crisis.

During the 1960s and 1970s, aid organizations began to flourish globally in response to the new aid emergencies that then predominantly arose in the South.[34] Africa in particular became a key theater of such humanitarian interventions. During the Cold War, the continent was portrayed by Western observers in paternalistic colonial terms as an anarchic place without future, agency, or political reason and, therefore, exclusively as an "object of humanitarian concern."[35] The Algerian war of independence (1954–63), the Congo Crisis (1960–65), the Biafra War (1967–70), Ethiopia's great famine (1983–85), military-enforced aid in Somalia (1992–93), the Rwandan genocide (1994), and successive conflicts in the Great Lakes region (1996–2003), among others, gave credence to the idea that Africa had, indeed, become the modern-day "cradle of humanitarianism."[36] By 2000, the continent hosted no less than a third of the world's refugees, and the European Union (EU) was increasingly concerned about responsibility sharing between rich donors and host countries in so-called regions of origin.[37] In 2010, nearly half of all humanitarian funds were channeled to African field operations.[38] More recently, the EU's Valetta Summit on Migration in 2015 reinforced this commitment to focus resources on providing aid in African countries to stem onward migration. Initiatives like the Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) for Africa echoed this aim and were set up to tackle regional instability, irregular migration, and the challenges of displacement. Today, the UNHCR has allocated 30 percent of its annual budget to refugee assistance in Africa—more than to any other world region—while

some of the fastest-growing forced displacements are occurring, at the time of writing, in Sudan, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, and Burkina Faso.[39]

Recentering refugee aid in these global margins, especially Africa, not only contributes to "provincializing" the landscapes of humanitarian action in the North but, crucially, highlights the ways in which "distance" mediates notions of crisis, care, and violence.[40] Because so-called humanitarian crises seem more "out of place" in the North, spectacular border violence is also more likely to be made "visible" (and condemned) as a transgression. In turn, the seeming ordinariness and geographical remoteness of displacement in the South makes those refugees less threatening to the white social order of Europe and North America and more "worthy" of assistance, but ultimately also less likely to become a public concern.[41] By virtue of not reaching Europe's territorial borders, refugees who are unable to leave Africa are thought to be spared the brutal treatment and premature death experienced by those who travel to the North. This imagined difference marks humanitarian geographies of the South as far more developmentalist in nature while framing the containment of refugees as an act not of *aggression* but of *compassion*—at once "saving" people from a violent European border regime and ostensibly safeguarding their social "progress" on the continent.[42] Displaced Africans who "stay put" in refugee camps such as Kakuma therefore are not only unable to choose their migratory futures but are enveloped in reworked colonial narratives of protectionism that also conceal the violence of refuge within neighboring nation-states of the South.

Violent Humanitarianism: Beyond Malfunction

Being arrested by the Kenyan police was not a shock for Hiywot and other refugees in Kakuma, even though it heightened their fear of physical abuse and financial ruin. What might seem like a spectacular infringement on refugee rights was, for partygoers in the camp, an accepted reality. For many, aid was virtually unthinkable without accompanying threats of extortion and imprisonment. There even was a sense that recurring roundups were preferable to the far more existential danger of expulsion from Kenya that has loomed for several years. This book takes up the question of violence inflicted by, or under the eyes of, those who are officially tasked with offering asylum, relief, and protection. It demonstrates that raids, arrests, and militarized policing are by no means signs of humanitarian malfunction but precisely constitute the ways in which aid is being materialized as an everyday spatial practice.

Against popular perceptions of humanitarianism as a morally pure quest that embodies "what is good about the world" and that connotes all manner of "doing good," it is closely entangled with the waging of violence.[43] At their core, humanitarian acts are palliative: They are responses to harm experienced by people in the wake of conflicts, wars, and disasters. As such, they mobilize a moral politics to be able to give assistance to, and ease the suffering of, the destitute, dispossessed, and displaced in the name of a "common humanity."[44] Didier Fassin traces this sensibility and compassionate mode of governing precarious lives to Enlightenment ideas about what binds human beings together, calling this moral sentiment of care for one another, quite aptly, "humanitarian reason."[45] Moral obligations to help in the uplift of orphans, the disabled, the injured, the poor, and the homeless developed into an integral part of the political and moral fabric of Western modernity and imprinted how Europeans came to see themselves on the world stage. However, ideas of caring for "distant strangers" necessarily sat in tension with instrumental compromises that were to be struck when actually providing support, shoring up funds, or governing those in need.[46] Relief interventions themselves tend to triage the neediest, the poorest, and the most vulnerable against "others" who are not deemed to be suffering just enough to receive aid, revealing not the inviolable value of life but, rather, the "inequality of lives and hierarchies of humanity," as Fassin writes.[47] An array of humanitarian technologies, from English workhouses and Indian famine relief camps in the nineteenth century to modern-day refugee camps, were not only sites for housing recipients of care, enlisting them into (forced) labor or providing welfare, but also of incarceration, stigmatization, and, of course, physical discipline. Rather than proof of a "broken" aid system, the organized violence of penal technologies is—more often than not—simply part of how the humanitarian system "works."

Colonial histories continue to imprint the geographically differentiated manifestation of this violence. Humanitarianism morally justified, underpinned, and propelled colonial conquest of non-Europeans with the aim of "civilizing" or "saving" the colonized from their own cultures and "protecting" them from what was viewed as the destructive onslaught of modernity. Though historically often understood as a dual product of antislavery movements in the eighteenth and nineteenth century and campaigns to give medical aid to wounded soldiers on the battlefields of Europe—notably associated with Henri Dunant's life and his cofounding of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)—humanitarian reason also deeply shaped the politics and spaces of colonization. A sixteenth-century dispute in the Spanish city of Valladolid saw the missionary Friar Bartolomé de las Casas debate with the theologian

Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda about the "right" treatment of Indigenous populations by Spanish colonizers in the Americas. While both supported colonization, De las Casas contended it should be conducted "justly" and in the spirit of Christian evangelization to save the souls of "natives," rather than as a pure function of worldly imperialist expansion.[48] Similar thinking has since infused British and other European efforts to violently usurp, govern, and "develop" new areas for settlement in the Americas and the Pacific.[49] Though colonizers routinely invoked the trope of "protection" and in this way expressed a will "to govern colonial space humanely," the violence of genocide, dispossession, and capitalist plunder were testimony to the inherent double-edgedness of these superficial claims.[50] Far from concealing the "true" aims of empire, the historian Ann Laura Stoler writes, this liberal rhetoric of compassion was always "based on imperial systems of knowledge production enabled by and enabling coercive practices." "Social hierarchies," she writes rather revealingly, "were produced and nourished by sympathy for empire's downtrodden subjects."[51]

Colonizing the African continent was justified by Europeans with similar humanitarian principles—to suppress the slave trade, advance Christianization, and realize what became known as the "civilizing mission"—while Africans were forced into dependence under a capitalist economy whose levers of power lay in Europe.[52] Feelings of compassion, pity, and piety, though drivers of colonization in their own right, acted as a moral lubricant for all sorts of violent undertakings in the service of white supremacy, land seizures, and extraction. By colonizing the continent and enslaving Africans in Caribbean and North American colonies, Europeans defined the narrow ontological boundaries of "humanity proper" to which colonized Black, Brown, and Indigenous people were not (or were only conditionally) admitted.[53] Liberal humanitarian ideals of protecting "life" and having sympathy for the plight of all of humanity, often thought to have universal appeal, therefore have to be read against the grain of duplicitous moral claims to save *certain* lives while abandoning negatively racialized *others*.[54] Humanitarianism was not opposed to colonial expansionism or racial domination per se but, in many cases, advocated for a "fairer" kind of colonization or simply offered short-term relief to cushion its destructiveness. In a 1932 anticolonial essay, the surrealist André Breton and his collaborators memorably observed that the colonizer, "with his psalms, his speeches, his guarantees of liberty, equality and fraternity . . . seeks to drown the noise of his machine guns."[55]

Achille Mbembe surmises that, because the nature of colonial enterprises was integrally "humanitarian," their violent effects also "could only ever be moral."[56] This articulates the essence of colonial difference: Colonized subjects

were "worthy" of charity and salvation when it served the consolidation of colonial power but were deemed expendable when this order came under threat. Thus, empire was the founding act in the emergence of liberal violence that cemented racial order and extractive economies and unleashed physical brutalization while paying mere lip service to equality, democratic rights, and freedom. The civilizing mission, once the ideological bedrock of Europe's rationale for subjugating the non-European world, meanwhile underwent a new crisis of legitimacy between the world wars as colonized people were becoming increasingly disillusioned with their diminishing prospect of ever being considered "modern."[57] After formal decolonization in the mid-twentieth century, the imperial yardstick for improving society based on white superiority had also become more indefensible in a liberal world order, with its normative commitments to equality, making it necessary to reinvent and relegitimize an updated version of the "civilizing mission" through the languages of development, democracy, and, increasingly, aid.[58]

In the present, humanitarianism continues to be troubled by the same tension as it uses a moralizing rhetoric of protection, peacemaking, and psychosocial recovery while authorizing the brutalization of aid recipients. This instates a hierarchy of acceptable harm deployed in the service of the "greater good" of aid delivery: a project of proportionality, if you like, that "uses violence to subdue violence."[59] The history of aid is strewn with attempts not only to reduce suffering ex post facto but also to regulate the kinds of violence deemed legitimate during conflict. The Geneva Conventions were one historic codification of this that formed early building blocks of the nascent international humanitarian order.[60] Humanitarianism has in this way always legitimated *and* mitigated violence by creating codes of moderation by which warring factions could abide, even if this benefit was not extended to colonized or racially subjugated populations. Nevertheless, in establishing a formal rulebook to determine the limits of violence, humanitarianism shed its transformative potential, marking its rise as a liberal technology of rule.[61] Making the use of force acceptable (if not imperative) under particular circumstances turned into a discursive device through which to frame issues as "humanitarian" morally shielded them against critique. Rather than restricting state violence, this boosted the legitimization of force within the bounds of liberal humanitarian laws. Eyal Weizman argues that the merging of humanitarian logics with apparatuses of military or police power since the late 1990s is characteristic of our current politics, which he identifies as the "humanitarian present."[62] One of its unique epochal hallmarks, according to Weizman, is the stipulation that violence supposedly can only be attenuated but never fully ended, rendering aid efforts merely liberal

instrumental means "by which the economy of violence is calculated and managed."[63] This has bred a number of practical collusions in the form of military personnel conducting aid work, the militarization of humanitarian search and rescue, humanitarian justifications for armed interventions, military practices that are distinctly "humanitarian," and using aid as an imperial ethic.[64]

Away from active combat zones, however, refugee aid and migration enforcement are the most salient fields in which humanitarian violence is inflicted today. People seeking a better life by embarking on dangerous journeys across the Mediterranean, the US-Mexico border, or Australia's maritime frontiers have overwhelmingly been met with militarized responses aimed at their containment. Border patrols, interceptions at sea, detention, high-tech surveillance, disappearances in offshore prisons, deportations, and the legal shrinking of asylum space each symbolizes a global system that affords unequal access to safe mobility and protection.[65] The coexistence of humanitarian actors and agents of state violence in many of those spaces has indeed created a phenomenon that some call "humanitarian borders."[66] These borders emerge when border crossings along the fringes of global North territories become "a matter of life and death" and provoke humanitarian operations "as a way of governing . . . the social violence embodied in the regime of migration control."[67] The growth of aid infrastructures, multiagency partnerships, and search-and-rescue operations in European border zones in recent years are testimony to this paradoxical condition of aid coinciding with violence. By making migrants' deaths appear as the unfortunate outcome of a well-intentioned aid effort rather than a deliberate deterrent, this violence is profoundly "liberal" in its pretentions to uphold democratic rights, human dignity, and liberty while actively concealing the harm it inflicts on racialized "others."[68]

Nevertheless, once again, the character of humanitarian violence seems to change when it occurs at greater distance from these northern humanitarian borders. Because southern places are *already* imagined as protracted landscapes of "naturalized" crisis, aid here is seen not only as a minimalist stopgap intervention or emergency response but, crucially, as a developmentalist project to foster long-term "progress," prosperity, and protection of racialized "others"—a form of "solidarity as salvation."[69] In the transition from idealistic mission to help suffering strangers to becoming a material system of governance, modern humanitarianism itself took on the contours of a form of colonization in the South. Beginning with the UNHCR's engagement during the Algerian War of Independence and the Congo Crisis in the 1960s, global North–based aid organizations progressively usurped large swaths of land as settlement areas for the displaced populations they vowed to serve. While these humanitarian

operations in the twentieth (and twenty-first) century imparted a blend of redemptive ideologies of human rights, peace building, and liberal democracy onto their refugee "beneficiaries," alongside material aid such as food rations, shelter, and education, they simultaneously needed the help of military and police of independent African nation-states to retain "order." In Kakuma, the imposition of this police control is framed as a technical precondition for successfully delivering aid but has itself also become the target of liberal reforms to strengthen police accountability, professionalism, and the "rule of law." While this may not be limited to African, or even to southern, contexts, there the political ground had been so thoroughly prepared by the succession (and effective merging) of the colonial civilizing mission, democratization, and development thinking that their impact has proved disproportionately severe.

While the areas of "friction" between North and South are where contradictions between *restrictive* border control and *productive* aid work are most obvious for Western observers, the violence of refugee aid programs in the global South is often perceived as less intrusive, direct, and spectacular. Jennifer Hyndman and Alison Mountz, for example, claim that in the majority of postcolonial settings, "a quieter, geographically more distant and dispersed war against refugees [is] taking place."[70] Protracted refugee situations hence have seemingly produced conditions in which swaths of refugees are exposed to aid dependence, chronic ill health, sexual and gender-based violence, and ontological insecurity that fuels anxiety about missed life chances and stalled futures.[71] Read in this way, humanitarian violence is not just the product of practical collusions between life-giving aid actors and life-taking agents who enact physical force. It importantly encompasses structural and symbolic forms of violence that filter through governing institutions, strategies, technologies, and discourses, with detrimental effects.[72] Seemingly decoupled from the brutal migration control at the borders of the global North, refugee aid in the South is thereby, above all, seen as productive of "slow violence" in Rob Nixon's sense—namely, "a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all."[73] It is akin to what Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois called "the routine, ordinary, and normative violence of everyday life" and Johan Galtung famously termed "structural violence" because it lacks clearly attributable harm-inducing action or subject-object relations and instead is "built into structure."[74]

In this book I argue that a binary between slow-moving, invisible, and illegible violence of debilitatingly protracted exile and more spectacular, explosive, and visible forms of death-dealing cruelty unleashed at the global

North's borders does not hold. Again, the marginal position of southern places in global geopolitics not only determines whether slow violence that occurs within them is recognized as destructive or detrimental in the first place; it, in turn, also determines whether harm is automatically relegated to the realm of the structural. Yet it is clear now that "slow forms of violence imbricate with the fast, and the fast inescapably shapes the slow."[75] Even the social production of group-differentiated vulnerability to "premature death," as a key feature of violence, is not tied to a particular speed but can unfold across different timelines, locations, and social sites.[76] What appears as a quieter war against refugees in the global South, then, is only ever truly "quiet" when looked at from the North. Acknowledging this, *Occupied Refuge* goes beyond critiques that render the structural harm of humanitarian refugee aid programs in the global South "illegible" or necessarily "slow" and instead traces the human agents whose actions produce violence in the everyday. Exploring this geography in refugee camps requires attending not only to humanitarianism as a colonizing ideology, system of global governance, and set of imperial legacies, but also to the fact that the authority of aid organizations on the ground—as "governors of people"—is ultimately rooted in their exertion of brute militarized force by proxy. Given Kenya's salience as home to one of Africa's most protracted refugee situations, and two of the continent's largest camps, Kakuma is an especially insightful place from which to consider how humanitarian aid enacts violence by effectively colonizing space, discourses, and people.

Continent of Camps: Policing Black Life

In the opening pages of his book *Managing the Undesirables*, the anthropologist Michel Agier invokes the pitiful sight of hundreds of refugee camps that litter the African continent today. This includes a variety of dwellings commonly subsumed under the label "camp," their physical appearance ranging from clusters of tarpaulin tents with UNHCR branding to quasi-cities built virtually unaided by refugees from scrub, corrugated iron, and brick. For Agier, this proliferation of camps is not so much a forlorn conclusion than a puzzle, "as if Africa had no other option of survival except that of becoming the twenty-first century's continent of camps."[77] As stereotypical as it may be, this characterization captures not only the proliferation of refugee camps today but also the role camps have played historically in African landscapes of aid and colonization: military camps, detention camps, mining camps, sanitary camps, famine relief camps, reeducation camps, labor camps, death camps, and refugee camps. One

is even tempted to argue that camps are symbolic of the constraints imposed on the freedoms and mobilities of Black and African life writ large.[78]

Much scholarship on camps has traced their rise as "political technologies" to colonial modernity and attempts by (state) authorities—empires in particular—to exert totalizing control over space, people, and their wayward mobility.[79] As nodes of a power that police, usurp, and racialize, camps seem to mark the spot where "empire touches down in space."[80] Even beyond colonial contexts, camps were deployed to control those who are imagined as threats to state power by containing them in bounded spaces: temporary sites where civic liberties could be summarily suspended.[81] Drawing on the philosopher Giorgio Agamben and his analysis of Nazi concentration camps, scholars have commonly understood the camp as the spatialization of sovereign power where collective identity groups are exposed to extralegal measures by invoking an emergency or "state of exception." This opens up the possibility of arbitrary coercion and dehumanization, effectively blurring the boundary between what actually constitutes "the exception" and what constitutes "the rule."[82] By virtue of exercising this insidious power, Agamben maintains, the camp is capable of stripping people of their "full" personhood in the form of liberal democratic rights, political agency, and legal status, leaving behind but a bodily shell that camp authorities administer as "bare life."[83]

But not all camps are designed to *extinguish* life: Refugee camps in particular are meant to actively foster it. Michel Foucault's writing has offered relevant reflections on this *productive* aspect of government. Departing from mid-eighteenth-century notions of sovereign power that was invested with an unfettered ability "to take life or let live," Foucault diagnoses a broader transformation in the modern workings of sovereignty that is now increasingly aiming "to foster life or disallow it to the point of death."[84] It is what he calls "biopolitics," which is concerned not just with disciplining *individual* bodies but with managing *populations* as a whole and that has, in his understanding, "brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life."[85] It is easy to see the resonance this analytic register has had with contemporary camp studies. Writing on Burundian Hutu refugees in Tanzania, Liisa Malkki uses this Foucauldian frame to characterize refugee camps as a "standardized, generalizable technology of power in the management of mass displacement."[86] In fact, the reliance of aid workers on mobilizing statistics, documents, and headcounts as managerial practices of ordering a perceived "disorder" is now widely recognized and has been noted as one of the key features that mark refugee camps as explicitly biopolitical technologies.[87]

In recent years, however, these conceptualizations have come under fire and have been revised along two lines of critique: First, scholars have noted the insufficiency of Agambenian exegeses of camp geographies that tend to deemphasize, if not preclude, political agency among the encamped and have instead foregrounded the inevitability of politics arising within camps.[88] Empirically, this line of critique goes, camps always contain within them multiple, complex, and ever shifting claims to sovereignty that trouble or challenge the power of camp authorities.[89] Those who inhabit camps are not powerless but appropriate and refashion their topographies, subvert existing power relations, or repurpose resources to meet their own needs. The Christmas party at Abby's, sketched at the beginning of this chapter, speaks to this uncontainable will to carve out life-affirming spaces of joy even when it contravenes official regulations. Second, labeling refugee camps "biopolitical" is based on understanding them as interventions of care or aid that generally are afforded only to white liberal subjects and erase the fact that, within a Western colonial modernity, "racialized subjects are deemed *ineligible* for biopolitics and thus subject to gratuitous, sovereign, or necropolitical violence."[90] In a similar vein, the notion of "bare life" tends to mask the racialization that a priori structures the subject position of those prone to be encamped—namely Black, Brown, Indigenous, and "foreign" populations, whose personhood is questioned or denied even before encampment.[91] Death camps such as Shark Island in German Southwest Africa, *regroupement* camps in French Algeria, the Italian concentration camps for Bedouins in Libya's Cyrenaica, *aldeamentos* in Portuguese-ruled Angola and Mozambique, and the British "pipeline" of detention camps for anticolonial insurgents in Kenya in this sense simply formalized in barbed wire, brick, and mortar what was already a dehumanizing reality of racial apartheid before camps were built.

Obsessed with hygiene, order and segregation, maintaining purity, and preventing leakage against the reality that this was always futile, the camp operates both as a spatial technology to prevent people's motion and as a metaphor for the modern projects of colonization and, later, nation building.[92] In trying to squash insurgencies, contain the spark of resistance, and cut off lifelines of dissent, camps sought spatial solutions to the impossibility of making Africans pliable for empire and, subsequently, colonization by the postcolonial state. In their attempt to "care for" and "control" residents, enact control, reduce social disorder, and reinforce state power, camps were—and continue to be—essentially a technology for policing Blackness and other racially inferiorized bodies.[93] While Africans are seen as sources of productivity (laborers), potential threats to state security (terrorists or insurgents), and survivors of displacement and destruction (famine victims or refugees), their lives, if not contained, are

FIGURE 1.1. Entering Kakuma from the A1 Highway, 2016. Photograph by the author.

imagined as an unmanageable "excess" and perilous for the rest of society. A colonial observer in Kenya's frontier town of Isiolo who visited British humanitarian camps for the Ethiopians fleeing Italy's invasion of Abyssinia (1935–39) spoke in paternalistic terms about colonial officials, doctors, and nurses who turned the fate of refugees who had "invaded" the colony in a diseased, malnourished, and "verminous" state.[94] Remote spaces of refuge restrict the mobility of the displaced; suspend their lives spatially, legally, and temporally; and prevent any "leakage" or contamination to the outside.[95] Africa as the "continent of camps," then, is best understood not as a purely geographical but also as a racial descriptor that marks the camp as an anti-African technology—a precursor of present-day forms of Black containment.

Fast-forwarding to the present, the geographies of encampment remain unbroken on the continent. South Africa's mining compounds, the famine relief camps in Ethiopia, Rwandan reeducation camps, and Kenya's city-size refugee camps are only some examples that embody an institutional preoccupation of postcolonial states with care and control of African lives.[96] Except, while white European colonizers introduced the camp as a technology to police colonized subjects, it is independent nation-states under African leadership that

disproportionately make use of it today to control "non-native" migrants with weaker claims to autochthonous belonging. Eighty percent of African refugees live in camps, compared with only a third outside the continent.[97] Despite a period of "open door policies" during which many displaced Africans enjoyed relatively free mobility until the 1980s, including in Kenya, camps continuously have been put to work on the continent.[98] Postindependence transfers of power extended not only to the police force, military, central bank, and core government bureaucracies but also to the camp as a spatial artifact of colonization to enact compassionate carcerality and capture segments of the populace, especially those deemed "alien." Camps are then, to paraphrase Stoler, in this sense moveable "archives" that join the shifting circuits of power over space and people, and whose legacies of racial othering and immobilization intermittently resurface "here" and "there" as both physical formations as well as logics of rule.[99] The policing of Black life in Africa did therefore not end with decolonization. Alongside ideas about race, ethnicity, culture, and differential capacities for rule, postcolonial African states such as Kenya "nativized" the coercive arms of the colonial state by adopting its tactics of encampment and enclosure to control mobility.[100] It is on this foundation of state violence that contemporary aid programs could build in their quest to discipline, contain, and administer displaced people seeking humanitarian protection.

Humanitarian Colonization Is Not a Metaphor

I sat with Girma and his friend Yerosan in one of the many Ethiopian cafés in Kakuma 1.[101] Both men were in their mid-thirties and had fled Ethiopia during a bout of severe government repression against Oromo dissidents in 2009. Girma was short and slender, with the hint of a beard, and could talk for hours, while Yerosan was tall, lanky, and of much quieter disposition. "If you had asked me before I came here," Yerosan told me as we drank *bunna* (coffee), "I would have imagined the camp to be a place where everybody lives in safety, with enough food, no violence, and prospects for the future, but unfortunately it is not." The two men were unemployed when I met them. Girma had given up his position as a teacher in one of the camp's primary schools because he felt unfairly treated by his Kenyan colleagues, who were paid several times as much for the same job. Yerosan could make ends meet only because he received support from his brother in the United States. When Yerosan spoke, Girma nodded vigorously in agreement, moved closer, lowered his voice, and added, "Some people fled here after having lost all of their family and huge amounts of money and property. . . . They are still in pain, and the camp worsens their

situation. I thought our African neighbors would take care of us in any condition, but that's not true. We are stuck." I could hear the naked despondency in their voices and the sense of betrayal they felt at the turn their lives had taken. As students at Addis Ababa University, they had once dreamed of a family, a career, and a chance to do something with their higher education. This dream was cut short by an Ethiopian police state that relentlessly cracked down on its own youth and, after they fled into exile, a country of asylum that seemed hardly better at realizing the freedoms they desired. "'This is Kenya,' they always say, as if we should be grateful just to be here, and the UNHCR is helping them with their eyes closed," Girma complained. "If you go to the bush outside the camp," he said with a bitter grin, "you won't see wild animals, because even animals don't like this place. We have left our homes, our families, only to be harassed and kept in this camp by the Kenyans. We are not free."

In Girma's and Yerosan's telling, Kenya bore much responsibility for their situation and was colluding with aid organizations to keep them trapped. When I began research in Kakuma, I expected to find what Amy Slaughter and Jeff Crisp, in a much cited article on the UNHCR, have described as "a surrogate state." For them, the UN refugee agency often mimics state power by exerting authority over refugees as quasi-citizens while underpinning its legitimacy with talk of human rights, peace building, and gender equality.[102] In Kenya, this is said to have diminished the role of the *actual* state that supposedly abdicated its responsibility for refugees long ago to foreign aid actors. During the 2000s, Barbara Harrell-Bond and Eftihia Voutira wrote that, in Kenya's camps, "the law of the host country virtually ceased to be applied."[103] Joy Maingi and Kenneth Omeje recently have reinforced this point, arguing that the country has "lost" territorial control and that in Kakuma, and in the northwest as a whole, there was "hardly any state presence."[104] But hearing Yerosan and Girma explain their side of the story raised questions about this humanitarian surrogacy. Was Kakuma really just a place where aid agencies headquartered in Geneva and New York infringed on, and supplanted, the territorial sovereignty of Kenya with their "colonialism of compassion"?[105] While the two Ethiopians spared no criticism for the UNHCR, whose officials they accused of leading a lavish lifestyle while failing to protect their fundamental rights, they were emphatic that their "African neighbors" not only demanded but also *enforced* their encampment.

While colonial metaphors abound in critical scholarship on humanitarianism, their usual focus on the usurpation of sovereign control by foreign aid organizations risks foreclosing a more differentiated analysis of postcolonial orders. Metaphorizing colonialism, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang warn, serves to evade responsibility and forestall justice, and it enables a "move to innocence"

that relegates colonization to discursive, epistemic, or wholly abstract domination rather than material control over land, labor, and resources.[106] In short, at the heart of any colonizing project lies a relation of political domination, physical coercion, social stratification, and patterns of economic dispossession. In Kakuma, the Kenyan state has *not* simply been superseded by foreign aid agencies under the leadership of the UNHCR; nor has humanitarianism evolved into a metaphorical empire whose coloniality is reducible to racial paternalism and the biopolitical management of people deemed to be in need of "uplift." In fact, while services in health care, education, food distribution, water supply, and the construction of shelter in the refugee camp have indeed long been outsourced to organizations such as the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and the World Food Program (WFP), among others, the Kenyan authorities have actively facilitated the physical growth of camps on their own soil by underwriting aid programs with infrastructures of security to maintain state-defined order. Throughout the book, I use the term *state* alternately to denote both the abstract "idea" of a unitary institution organized around the monopoly over violence and a more disaggregated bundle of people, grounded practices, and social relations that actually "inhabit" this institution in the everyday.[107]

Against unhelpful tropes of "absent" or "weak" African states, the Kenyan authorities are constantly at work through multiple registers, even in the otherwise externally funded domain of humanitarian relief.[108] While the UNHCR held disproportionate sway over Kenya's asylum procedures for almost two decades, the state has slowly reclaimed control over refugee management, especially since the country's first ever Refugee Act was passed in 2006 (see chapter 1). But state involvement had never truly ceased, because street-level agents of the state were always deployed to administer and enforce the law, even in areas under humanitarian stewardship, such as Kakuma. While camps are often thought of as spatial technologies designed to "economize" on actual police officers and guards by virtue of enclosing populations with material barriers rather than manpower, human agents of state violence are indispensable to producing the exclusionary effects of encampment.[109] The UNHCR itself has no jurisdiction or capability to decree laws, enforce laws, or physically sanction refugees. When the refugee agency seeks to prohibit certain kinds of conduct, tackle crime, and restore its idea of "peace," it automatically turns to the Kenyan state in form of the police to enforce its will. This allows humanitarians to sidestep the moral complications of ruling in the name of the displaced while also meting out punitive justice to them. We may infer that a core feature of humanitarian power is not just its financial largesse and an ideological commitment

to the "greater good" but, crucially, also its ability to discipline beneficiaries by proxy. Refugees in Kenya have never been solely the UNHCR's responsibility, but Kenyan police officers have always acted as the loyal foot soldiers of the aid regime who are called on when humanitarians struggle to fulfil their role as governors of people. By rendering the state not only an abstract authority but a concrete force of flesh and blood, the "police are," as Micol Seigel writes, "the translation of state violence into human form."[110]

As an institution, the police are essential for states, or any system of rule that is based on organized violence, because they act as armed guarantors for securing property, excluding undesirables, disciplining labor, enforcing territorial integrity, and cementing political power.[111] In colonial regimes, the police as "violence workers," in Seigel's words, also constituted a vital tool for upholding racially differentiated access to space, rights, land, and resources. Frantz Fanon famously charted this geography by writing about the colonial world as divided in two. "The dividing line, the border," he observed, "is represented by the barracks and the police stations."[112] Kenya's colonial police, even during the twilight years of British rule, were hard to distinguish from military garrisons, not least in the thinly populated frontier of the country's north and the "African reserves," where colonized subjects constantly had to be kept in check with military might.[113] By embodying the always partial (and ill-fated) attempts of colonizers to "pacify" and "order" what they conceived of as a dark and anarchic world of African "disorder," the police served as the street-level enforcers of the colonial state: the personification of a foreign occupation. "It is the policeman and the soldier," Fanon opined in this regard, "who are the official, instituted go-betweens, the spokesmen of the settler and his rule of oppression."[114] Therefore, it is helpful, as Lisa Marie Cacho and Jodi Melamed do, to think of them as the "street administration" of colonial racial orders whose normalized discretionary violence challenges the liberal pretension that powers are, or ought to be, separated.[115] At its root, the colonial order was always essentially a police order. In Kenya, as in other parts of the continent, enforcing the law continued to be synonymous with ensuring the survival of ruling elites, privileged minorities, and state organs well into the postindependence era.[116] Even after white-dominated colonial regimes had departed, their African successors continued to fiercely police ethnoracial identities, class divides, and landownership and crack down on threats to private property. But under the cloak of nationhood, the mobility of minoritized citizens and inferiorized noncitizens was increasingly thought of as the new primary peril to state security and "national unity."

However, in writings on humanitarian refugee governance the question of police power is often readily omitted. This is perhaps the result of the uncom-

fortable tension that arises when policing enters the analytical frame. After all, the purpose of police institutions is to "distribute harm and death according to hierarchies of difference and belonging," while aid work is supposed to achieve its opposite: *alleviate* suffering and *reduce* harm.[117] But this opposition is perplexing only if we think of the Foucauldian shift from "raw" sovereign power inherent in colonial brutality to a more liberal biopolitics as clear-cut. Instead, coercive state power and forms of organized violence have continued to coexist with, and complement, what we can call the "biopolitical empire" of humanitarian aid institutions.[118] It is through this simultaneity of the productive biopolitics of governing refugees and the negative power to police, punish, sequester, and immobilize them that a form of colonial difference comes to be expressed in the present. We know that all liberal orders, including liberal democracies and their aid regimes, tend to allow free movement only for those they consider "proper" subjects or "rational" actors and reserve illiberal techniques of rule for others regarded as "uncivilized" or "unfit" to enjoy those wide-ranging freedoms.[119] While the liberal edifice of international refugee law formally entrusts states such as Kenya with the protection of displaced noncitizens, their overtly hostile policies are reflections of a postcolonial order more broadly in which minoritized or poor populations are hardly considered rights-bearing actors but are "rightless subjects" who are still being treated as if they were colonized. Humanitarian encampment of refugees is in this sense one symptom of a much wider "planetary renewal of colonial relations."[120]

In this book I argue that a key locus of this renewal is humanitarian colonization. Rather than a metaphor for the biopolitical ordering of "disorderly" subjects, or the mere continuation of global North interference in Africa through foreign aid, this colonization is driven by a spatial process of domestic occupation at the hands of postcolonial states that has included land taking, the expansion of camps or settlements, the imposition of extractive economic relations, and the militarized policing of "non-native" migrants who are thus interpellated as a new colonized class. "Colonial occupation," for Mbembe, is quite literally "a matter of seizing, delimiting, and asserting control over a physical geographical area—of writing on the ground a new set of social and spatial relations." A prerequisite for inscribing this colonial geography in space, he writes, is "the production of boundaries and hierarchies, zones and enclaves; the subversion of existing property arrangements; the classification of people according to different categories; resource extraction; and, finally, the manufacturing of a large reservoir of cultural imaginaries."[121] In the past, camps have been put squarely in the service of colonial projects and the control of undesirable mobility under the auspices of empire. After independence, many colonial

relations persisted under the mantle of sovereign nationhood by infiltrating economies, institutions, cultures, politics, and mentalities of the formerly colonized.[122] A time-warped "colonizing structure," as the philosopher Valentin-Yves Mudimbe notes, kept the colonial condition partially alive inside the postcolony.[123] Asserting physical control over territories and populations therefore remained a priority for independent African states such as Kenya, not least imposing their national "will" on internal peripheries. Half-hearted reforms meant that while some agricultural land changed hands from white farmers to new Black political elites, the property of many white settlers was simply preserved. Although the quest for self-rule increasingly entailed othering aliens and strangers, who were imagined to be outside the new national polity, this did not affect settlers but was targeted primarily at ethnoracially subjugated citizens and precarious noncitizens from neighboring countries who were deemed a risk to Kenya's stability. Postcolonial nationalism, Nandita Sharma argues, thus often replaced demands for an end to white foreign rule with a demand for an autochthonous national sovereignty: a "right to home rule" that required, at least in theory, a strongly bordered nation in which noncitizens, or those denied full citizenship, were unable to spoil—or even partake in—the national wealth.[124]

Third Colonial Occupation

The arrival of refugees in the 1990s, despite its generally unsettling effects on Kenya's national order, turned out to be an opportunity for the state to shore up support for its unfinished post-*uhuru* project of national integration. Kenyan administrators had been moved into the northern districts but sustained budgetary constraints, and a prioritization of development in the South, had done little to counterbalance a disjointed geography. Colonial policies had left Kenya unevenly integrated, with the fertile southern Rift Valley and the central highlands as centers of political power and infrastructural networks, and the north as a chronically underdeveloped frontier yet to be *fully* occupied by the new state.[125] There was a precedent for this national drive to recolonize the periphery. After World War II, the British colonial government rolled out a suite of policies aimed at rebuilding the Kenyan economy, and those of its other colonies, to reenergize its colonial activities after wartime austerity. Due to the extraordinary influx of funding, material assets, staff, and new developmental schemes at that time, D. A. Low and John Lonsdale describe this period as a "second colonial occupation."[126] Africans, the colonial state reasoned, still required significant investments before they could be truly "ready" for

self-government. Urbanization and unending land dispossession further meant that they were thought to "detribalize" at an alarming rate, potentially dissolving the bonds of ethnic solidarity that had served as social glue in the past. Colonial officials regarded the new development plans as a way to penetrate into the farthest corners of their colonial possession and avert unrest through social programs: a self-styled colonialism beyond coercion that proved short-lived until the outbreak of the Kenya Emergency in 1952. Several decades later, the refugee emergencies of the 1990s constituted a similar watershed moment that created the impetus for infrastructural growth and independent Kenya's renewed colonization of its northern hinterland. Expedited by unprecedented levels of foreign aid and a liberal world order intent on reshaping geopolitics after the end of the Cold War, this can be thought of as a *third colonial occupation*.

Colonization is often understood as a process exclusive to empires, imperial companies, or foreign settlers seeking to establish relations of domination over new places with the aim to extract wealth, subjugate "native" peoples, and reorganize social relations based on racialized hierarchies. However, colonial thinking and paradigms have also infused nationalist projects of postcolonial expansion and domination that are frequently omitted from this frame. The third colonial occupation in Kenya took place long *after* independence and used a moment of "crisis" to further incorporate territorial fringes populated by ethnoracial minority populations who, in the eyes of the state, often barely qualified for national citizenship. It was propelled by extraordinary levels of international humanitarian aid mobilized for the benefit of hundreds of thousands of refugees who had newly arrived in Kenya's north. Land was set aside for the construction of internationally funded camps that were settled with refugees, supplied with food by aid organizations, and policed by Kenyan security forces (see chapter 2). Like regular colonial projects, this process was heavily predicated on beliefs in moral progress and superiority, and, given their asylum status, the "rescue" of the colonized. Humanitarian colonization thus created a codependence, a concessionary space of aid, in which the Kenyan state machinery anchored and enforced humanitarian protection by violent means while relief organizations advanced the state's militarized occupation of its own borderlands that hitherto had been beyond its firm reach. It is, in essence, an internal colonial occupation within the national frame that uses a combination of territorial expansion, spatial zoning, segregationist policies, emergency policing, and uneven access to resources in the name of refugee protection, social progress, long-term economic prosperity, and nation building.[127] As part of the imposition of nationalized rule, Kenya folded its territorializing

agendas of development, graduated citizenship along ethnoracial lines, and security into what would soon become protracted humanitarian operations.

The camp has turned refugees into occupied subjects who, as noncitizens, are excluded from the power to which they are subject but are also unable to escape from it due to the constraints imposed on them: Their everyday lives are regulated, monitored, criminalized, and disrupted at will.[128] Once it is framed in these terms, we begin to detect Kakuma's family resemblance to other sites of colonization, in which police and paramilitaries act like an "occupying army" on their own national territory, as the Black Panther leader Huey Newton put it.[129] Kashmir, Xinjiang, Palestine, West Papua, Kurdistan, and Western Sahara are among the most recognizable spaces where these colonial paradigms of dispossession, domination, and militarized rule are in action today.[130] Notably, across all these theaters, the camp resurfaces as a means of punishing, concentrating, economically exploiting, protecting, and "reeducating" colonized populations, making it a microcosm of modern colonial relations of rule. "Colony and camp," Stoler therefore notes, structurally "feed off each other" in creating and re-creating enclosures, containment, and systems of ethnoracialized difference that are altered through the course of nonaligned or disparate histories.[131] The end of European empires merely displaced the camp's properties onto new national geographies of colonization aimed at repossessing domestic margins and controlling their minoritized residents. In Kenya, the slippage between occupation, economic development, and humanitarian protection rendered refugees neither "fit" for inclusion in their host society nor fully "eligible" for more humane treatment as liberal citizen-like subjects. They were neither imprisoned nor fully free.

With this in mind, Kakuma camp transpired not as a "safe haven," where refugees could feel protected from the harm they left behind in their countries of origin, but as a place where they were exposed to a new economy of violence. In contrast to scholars who have argued that violence in Kakuma is the result of proliferating crime and "rebel actors," I foreground the originary violence of forced displacement coupled with a militarized occupation that treats refugees as *colonized subjects* forced to live under mobility restrictions, curfews, pass laws, and extractive economic relations, and with threats of imprisonment for daring to dream of a freer and safer life.[132] Aid agencies such as the UNHCR actively bankrolled this system to retain their physical presence in the country and facilitate the delivery of aid. Kenyan nationals and international staff reworked discriminatory imaginaries that organized refugees in colonial fashion as ethnoracial others who are "reticent" to progress or a danger to the national polity. They expressed concerns about the moral fitness of refugees: their capacity

to raise children, cultivate loving relationships, engage in peaceful religious practices, or become "modern" members of society who readily disavow "old" cultural beliefs (see chapter 3).

Nonetheless, camp officials also heavily relied on unpaid (and underpaid) refugee labor in health, education, water, sanitation, shelter, and community policing to keep aid programs afloat. This has amounted to a reinvented system of indirect rule in which power was decentralized only when it served the camp's colonial order, always combining "a capacity to implement central directives with one to absorb local shocks," but was left ultimately in the hands of camp authorities (see chapter 4).[133] Refugees were not only deputized as proxies, exposed to physical harm from the police, and robbed of their lifetime by being kept in perpetual "limbo"; they also experienced literal extortion from aid workers, government clerks, and other administrators. This extractive side of encampment became even clearer after cuts to global aid budgets galvanized the introduction of more market-based approaches to humanitarian relief, with a mixture of (neo)liberal policies promoting entrepreneurialism, work schemes, and financial literacy and seeking to "open up" the camp to investors who could capitalize on refugee life and labor. While humanitarianism had long been boosting local economies in Turkana with money and subsidized services, further concessions to capital under the banner of "marketization" were now on the horizon to render the camp and refugees more "productive" (see chapter 5).

Kakuma thus sits at the intersection of claims to protect refugees, harness the forces of racial capitalism, and guarantee planetary mobility control. Rather than acting as "prison guards of the West," the Kenyan authorities are themselves invested in using the camp as a border technology that can separate migrants from its national citizens, address the country's vexatious security question, and create opportunities for rent-seeking from global North donors.[134] Through UNHCR-subsidized salaries for its own security forces and donations in the form of vehicles, materiel, and infrastructure, Nairobi has been able to secure an increasingly strong foothold in—and, in this sense, colonized—the marginalized border areas that historically have slipped away from colonial and, later, postcolonial state control. Encampment, though crippling to the lives of refugees, has nevertheless benefited the state's security ambitions, inflated the power of humanitarian agencies such as the UNHCR, and turned Kenya into a regional bulwark of global mobility apartheid. But like any colonized space, the camp should not be misunderstood as a totalizing form of oppression that produced "bare life" but was marred by profound incongruities, disobedience, and even cracks that sometimes allowed for practices of refusal, manipulation,

and defiance to emerge. Rather than outright resistances, these practices were more akin to forms of connivance, opportunism, makeshift maneuvers, noncompliance, and quiet repudiations of life as a confined refugee. If we are indeed at a point where colonial relations are being renewed on a planetary scale, then the story of Kakuma may serve as an urgent warning against putting the movable archive of the camp to work in the service of carceral aid.

Notes on Methods and Ethics

This book is the result of more than fifteen months of ethnographic research conducted between 2015 and 2017, and subsequent engagements over several years with people whose stories lie at the heart of this work. It is part of a long line of scholarship in political geography that has embraced ethnography to use the filigree of everyday life to shed light on processes and structures of power that underpin social relations on a far larger scale.[135] I combined an inductive approach of being immersed in everyday scenes as they unfolded with detailed questions that I asked in follow-up interviews. My study comprised recorded in-depth and semistructured interviews with 110 interlocutors, including official and unofficial "refugee leaders," refugee members of the community police (Community Peace and Protection Teams [CPPTs]), Kenyan police and paramilitary officers, civilian government officials, Kenyan and foreign aid workers working for the UNHCR and its nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners, as well as unaffiliated camp residents. These interviewees were chosen based on their positions within these organizations or their lived experiences (and knowledge) of humanitarian camp rule since the mid-1990s. Depending on each participant's preference, interviews were conducted in English, Kiswahili, or (colloquial) Arabic, sometimes switching between languages as we talked. The book also draws on extensive observations, informal encounters, and what Renato Rosaldo called "deep hanging out," which took place in restaurants, shops, offices, cafés, police stations, markets, and homes, among other places. I met with my interlocutors at roadsides, compounds, roadblocks, and football pitches and accompanied them on security patrols.[136] After these meetings, I usually reconstructed people's narratives, stories, or anecdotes the best as I could and made notes in my journal. While the voices of refugees are always key to this endeavor because they offer us glimpses of humanitarian rule from those at the receiving end of its violence, they are now also increasingly mobilized by aid agencies as "authentic" sources to attest to particular aspects of camp life in the service of institutionalized power. I am more interested in uncovering what the humanitarian system seeks to conceal through applying a

"disobedient gaze" that not *only* looks at the lives of refugees—who are usually the subjects of studies on encampment—but, crucially, *also* those authorized to administer them.[137]

This research process was, above all, an exercise in patience—tedious, time-consuming, nonlinear in its course and sometimes taking unexpected turns. Or, as Omod, a young Anuak from Ethiopia, put it when trying to console me during my periodic confusion: "To get a good thing requires a long process; a bad thing you will get immediately."[138] I tried to countervail the paucity of available (and reliable) official information on matters of camp governance, policing, and aid-sponsored militarization in the camp by methodical triangulation with alternative accounts from multiple people, media reports, and internal documents. Due to the sensitivity of the issues discussed, I have withheld the names of respondents or used pseudonyms.

Although the primary focus of my research was Kakuma refugee camp in northwestern Kenya, I also took shorter trips to Nairobi, the Dadaab refugee camps in Garissa County, Ongata Rongai, Lodwar, Murang'a, Nadapal, Lokichoggio, and Kiambu. The purpose of going to these sites was to follow specific research leads, interview former officials, and—in the case of the Dadaab camps—get a cursory sense of how what I later called humanitarian colonization might function differently across aid programs in the country. In Kakuma and Dadaab, the faith-based LWF, which has been working in Kenya since the early 1990s, provided me with accommodation in its compounds, including access to its offices and staff. As I explain in chapter 1, doing this research was a notoriously difficult task at that particular juncture, as Kenya's regional "War on Terror" in Somalia and the domestic front was fresh in the public's mind and shaped people's perceptions of refugees and humanitarian engagements.[139] The high-profile terror attacks on the Westgate Mall in 2013, Mpeketoni town in 2014, and Garissa University College in 2015, and recurring improvised explosive device (IED) explosions in and around Dadaab dominated media headlines and sometimes influenced the kind of access or goodwill I was able to get.

The camp is a peculiar environment for research. Refugees are subject to tight regimes of control, registration, biometrics, spatial organization, enumeration, and distribution of food and shelter. In turn, they are expected to disclose intimate details about their flight history and vulnerabilities to bureaucrats who handle their cases, often from the comfort of air-conditioned offices that are located behind the barbed wire and perimeter fences of securitized aid compounds. This is often done with the understanding that refugees "need someone to speak for them," a role that aid agencies readily assume by treating testimonies, statements, and experiences of refugees in an almost fiduciary

capacity.[140] My entry into this world was bumpy, as I was critically eyed by aid workers and government officials who felt that their work had been misrepresented by researchers like me in the past. As a white man affiliated with a prestigious university in the United Kingdom but who spoke fluent Kiswahili and was well versed in the social context, I gained the trust of *some* interlocutors while raising suspicion among *others*. When I first arrived in the camp, one Kenyan official told me point blank that, in his view, "many researchers, especially the whites, have damaged the name of Kakuma refugee camp," an accusation and note of suspicion toward me that I found remarkably difficult to rebut.[141] Among refugees, by contrast, my presence would often "arouse expectations of help or be seen as a way of effecting change."[142] Consultants frequently visited the camp to do studies commissioned by NGOs or the UNHCR that implied a search for technical "fixes" to the problems of camp dwellers. This kind of policy-driven research usually promised an immediate improvement in the lives of refugees and affected the hopes my own work raised. Further, doctoral researchers, as I was at the time, sometimes act "like scavengers searching for hidden treasures," as the late Barbara Harrell-Bond once snidely remarked—an image I was keen to disprove. However, this required honest and difficult conversations with people about the distant (and uncertain) "good" that a critical analysis of the injustice and violence of encampment could potentially do. Whether my work has succeeded in doing so, or whether I have simply become yet another scavenger, remains open for debate.

As a researcher, I occupied a fragile in-between position that allowed me to spend time in the homes of refugees while aid workers were strictly forbidden from doing so under their codes of conduct. However, I was given an agency-issued "gate pass"—a coveted document—that equipped me with comprehensive access to the aid compounds that refugees could enter only with prior permission. This unique position, compounded by my whiteness, afforded me the flexibility to defy at least some of the social "laws of gravity" in the camp by having breakfast at a refugee's house, eating lunch with officers at the police canteen, and having dinner with UNHCR officials, all within one day. Out of all social contacts during fieldwork, Kenyan police officers' openness toward me perhaps surprised me the most. They had never been of direct interest to researchers in Kakuma before, and their responses were often far less polished or cautious than those of aid workers, who were painfully aware of their role in managing not only the camp but also its public relations. The intensity of these day-to-day encounters meant that I was inevitably pulled into emotional force fields, often touched nerves, and stirred anxieties with unpredictable effects.[143] The camp's affective geography differentially structured access, mobility, and

social relations for everyone who resided in it. Near the end of my fieldwork, institutional anxieties around my suspiciously long-term stay in the camp boiled over and led to accusations of espionage leveled against me by the Kenyan authorities that subsequently restricted my access. In a last-ditch attempt to regain the trust of these officials, I contacted the German Embassy, which advised me to speak to an officer from Germany's Federal Criminal Investigations Department (Bundeskriminalamt [BKA]) in Nairobi. The irony was not lost on me that, as a scholar passionately critical of the police and state power, I had to bite my tongue in a moment of crisis and seek help from those very institutions. The BKA officer acted as my advocate to try to mend relations with the Kenyan police, who were among my most important interlocutors. The officer eventually wrote a letter to the Directorate of Criminal Investigation (DCI) in Nairobi to underline that I was *not*, in fact, a German spy. Ironically, days after I had overcome the disquiet around this episode, the officer who had intervened on my behalf invited me to a meeting at the German Embassy to ask, now that my rapport with Kenya's police had been restored, whether I would be able to share my "raw data" with his agency—a request I politely, but firmly, declined.

By doing this project, I had to confront the ethical dilemmas of mingling with violence workers *and* the refugees they criminalize. I also had to acknowledge that refugees themselves can become violence workers and local proxies for oppressive systems of rule. As my research progressed, I slowly came to terms with the fact that research can never be "pure" and that my role as a researcher needed to reflect this constant negotiation of muddling through.[144] In fact, the insights I could gain into the violence work that lay beneath the surface of the humanitarian operation could ultimately be useful for its undoing, making my temporary (and comparatively minor) discomfort, trials, and tribulations worthwhile. Although refugees often appear in these pages as *targets* of violence and structural forces outside their control, this is not to suggest a lack of autonomous desires and inaction on their part or, worse still, their reduction to "bare life."[145] In fact, this book illustrates that refugees in Kakuma are simultaneously *surviving*, *resisting*, and *participating in* a system of colonization that is the camp.

Outline of the Book

At its core, *Occupied Refuge* is a study of how humanitarianism and postcolonial nation-states continue to be acutely imbricated with colonial forms of rule. It offers critical insights into the underbelly of humanitarian operations whose existence paradoxically relies on the exertion of militarized force by proxy. Examining specific locations at the global margins provides us with an opportunity

to understand the colonial nature of not only displacement, the aid industry, and planetary mobility control, but also of sovereign states seeking to "capture" their own populace and territories. Empirically, the book focuses on Kakuma refugee camp in northwestern Kenya which historically contingent phases of frontier colonization, postcolonial marginalization, and renewed occupation by Kenyan state and aid actors have turned into a contemporary occupied refuge. The empirical chapters each outline one of the four building blocks that underpin this colonial geography of the humanitarian camp: militarized occupation and policing, ethnoracial imaginaries of domination, indirect rule and, last, forms of extraction.

Chapter 1, "Refuge," situates Kakuma in Kenya's political history and geography. As a cosmopolitan refugee camp that has weathered many bouts of securitization, counterterrorism, and militarization over its three decades-long existence, Kakuma has recently become a donors' darling in narratives around refugee resilience, economic opportunities, and entrepreneurialism. The chapter opens with the media spectacle of TEDxKakumaCamp that took place in 2018, throwing Kakuma unexpectedly into the global limelight, and draws out how its polished image as a "poster child" humanitarian camp clashes with the harsh reality of its ruling order.

Chapter 2, "Occupation," traces the everyday geographies of occupation and militarized police control that furnish humanitarian rule in Kakuma. Read against the backdrop of a longer history of frontier colonization in Kenya's northwest, it follows the daily work of police officers in charge of maintaining "public order" in the camp but also hears out the refugees who are exposed to the violence of incarceration, raids, beatings, and curfews. By recounting the stories of both street-level enforcers of the state *and* the refugees they police, the chapter shows that humanitarianism, despite its promises of protection, is made possible only by an architecture of colonial occupation that consists of roadblocks, police stations, a bureaucracy of permits, and the use of collective punishments.

Chapter 3, "Dis/order," moves from this material side of occupation to its cultural text by showing how refugees are routinely subjected to discriminatory discourses that portray them as ethnoracially inferior "others" in need of institutional control. Drawing on my engagements with camp administrators, the chapter illustrates the geographical imaginaries of humanitarian encampment as they transpired in conversations, off-stage behavior, and attitudes that would be deemed unacceptable in more official discourses. It unpacks how racialized tropes of refugees as "criminals and crooks," "sexually deviant," and "uncivilized" not only seemed to validate the urgent moral mission of humanitarianism but inadvertently helped to forge a Kenyan sense of national superiority at the frontier.

Chapter 4, "Community," shifts our gaze to refugees actively recruited by aid and state actors to help administer the camp. Focusing on the lives of these residents tasked with keeping their community "safe," by working for a community policing program called the CPPTs, the chapter reveals how the militarized camp always, and perhaps increasingly, relies on the violence work of refugees themselves. The chapter exposes the contestation over the meaning of "the community" by government officials, aid workers, and refugees, arguing that, rather than strengthening local protection or democratic participation, community policing is a humanitarian iteration of "indirect rule" that effectively undermines the ground on which relations of togetherness, safety, and kinship can flourish.

Chapter 5, "Extraction," focuses on extractive geographies that have emerged through, and structurally underpin, humanitarian colonization. It looks at ordinary inhabitants of Kakuma who feel their lives and resources are slowly draining away and humanitarian workers entangled in the delivery of aid but who are disillusioned at the ineffectiveness and waste of their efforts. The chapter contends that, in contrast to our understanding of camps as institutions that provide resources *to* refugees, they are instead part and parcel of global capitalist circuits through which value is also constantly extracted *from* them in the form of time, wealth, labor, and publicity.

Given the ubiquity of colonizing logics in Kakuma's landscape of humanitarian aid, the conclusion considers what it may mean to *decolonize* such spaces of aid. The book points to the similarities of camps and other places where precaritized citizens also experience state violence, emphasizing a wider quest for reappropriating mobility and the means of a freer life. It grapples with the implications of having normalized the camp as a preferred mechanism for governing minoritized noncitizens in the postcolonial era and the fact that institutionalized aid continues to provide cover for a technology that is so easily weaponized against present and future enemy "others." Linking Kakuma's humanitarian camp order to contemporary demands for mobility and decarceral justice, it concludes by looking toward a radical abolitionist future in which encampment, driven by both colonial and national relations of rule, is dismantled so that more liberatory futures can become a possibility.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

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2. Dyke, "Public Health Aspects of a Refugee Camp"; Easton-Calabria and Herson, "In Praise of Dependencies"; Hyndman, "Refugee Camps as Conflict Zones"; Kibreab, "Myth of Dependency Among Camp Refugees in Somalia 1979–1989"; Krause, *Difficult Life in a Refugee Camp*; Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries*; Milton et al., "Radicalism of the Hopeless"; Mogire, "Refugee Realities"; Muggah, *No Refuge*; Noji, "Public Health in the Aftermath of Disasters."

3. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Operational Protection in Camps and Settlements*, 38.

4. De Genova, "Spectacles of Migrant 'Illegality.'"

5. Besteman, *Militarized Global Apartheid*; Tesfahuney, "Mobility, Racism and Geopolitics"; Walia, *Border and Rule*.

6. Agier, *Managing the Undesirables*; Duffield, "Governing the Borderlands"; Gazzotti, *Immigration Nation*, 11; Hyndman, "To Help or Not to Help?"

7. Andersson, *Illegality, Inc.*; Lemberg-Pedersen, "Manufacturing Displacement"; Zaiotti, *Externalizing Migration Management*.

8. Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*.

9. Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 13.

10. Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*, 28.

11. This was true for many emerging postcolonial nation-states around the world. I borrow this phrase from Dirik, *The Kurdish Women's Movement*, 5.

12. Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa*; Stoler, *Duress*; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind*.

13. Pfingst and Kimari, "Carcerality and the Legacies of Settler Colonial Punishment in Nairobi," 699.

14. Besteman, *Militarized Global Apartheid*; Nevins, "Policing Mobility."

15. Sharma, *Home Rule*.

16. Jenkins, "Ethnicity, Violence, and the Immigrant-Guest Metaphor in Kenya."

17. Mountz, *The Death of Asylum*, xix.

18. Das and Poole, *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*; Cons and Sanyal, "Geographies at the Margins"; hooks, *Feminist Theory*; Tsing, "From the Margins."

19. Comaroff and Comaroff, "Theory from the South," 114; Connell, *Southern Theory*; Santos, *Epistemologies of the South*.

20. De Genova, *The Borders of "Europe"*; Jones, *Violent Borders*; Mainwaring, *At Europe's Edge*; Squire, *The Contested Politics of Mobility*; Tazzioli, *The Making of Migration*; Vaughan-Williams, *Europe's Border Crisis*; Vradis et al., *New Borders*.

21. Albahari, *Crimes of Peace*; Boochani, *No Friend but the Mountains*; De León, *The Land of Open Graves*.

22. Benton, "African Expatriates and Race in the Anthropology of Humanitarianism"; Daley, "Towards an Anti-Racist Humanitarianism in a Post-Liberal World," 360.

23. Lemberg-Pedersen et al., *Postcoloniality and Forced Migration*; Picozza, *The Coloniality of Asylum*; Rodríguez, "The Coloniality of Migration and the 'Refugee Crisis'"; Tascón, "Refugees and the Coloniality of Power."

24. Dragsbaek Schmidt et al., *Refugees and Forced Migration in the Horn and Eastern Africa*; Falola and Yacob-Haliso, *African Refugees*; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, "Introduction"; Nawyn, "New Directions for Research on Migration in the Global South"; Pasquetti and Sanyal, *Displacement*.

Although the binary of "global North" and "global South" is an imperfect, if not problematic, signifier that may seem discursively to cement rather than reduce global disparities, it serves as useful shorthand for recognizing the politically, socially, economically, and epistemically unequal global distribution of power that was largely produced (and continues to be shaped) by global geographies of colonization, empire, and capitalist exploitation. See Besteman, *Militarized Global Apartheid*; Sud and Sánchez-Ancochea, "Southern Discomfort."

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26. Estroff, "Identity, Disability and Schizophrenia," 250. See also Vigh, "Crisis and Chronicity."

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30. Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*; Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*; Skinner and Lester, "Humanitarianism and Empire."

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34. Betts et al., *UNHCR*, 32.

35. Mangala, *Africa and the New World Era*, 7.

36. Rostis, *Organizing Disaster*, 69.

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45. Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*.

46. Calhoun, "The Imperative to Reduce Suffering."

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48. Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom," 269.

49. Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*; Lester and Dussart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance*.

50. Lester and Dussart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance*, 14.

51. Stoler, *Duress*, 188.

52. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*, 33; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa*; Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind*.

53. Walcott, "The Problem of the Human"; Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/ Freedom."

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56. Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason*, 12.

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81. Ek, "Giorgio Agamben and the Spatialities of the Camp."

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132. Crisp, "A State of Insecurity"; Jansen, "The Refugee Camp as Warscape."

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144. Van Maanen, "Epilogue," 346.

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CHAPTER 1. REFUGE

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3. "Behind The Scenes—The Making of TEDx Kakuma Camp," video, posted February 13, 2019, accessed November 23, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwxRrubJfpQ&t=523s.

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