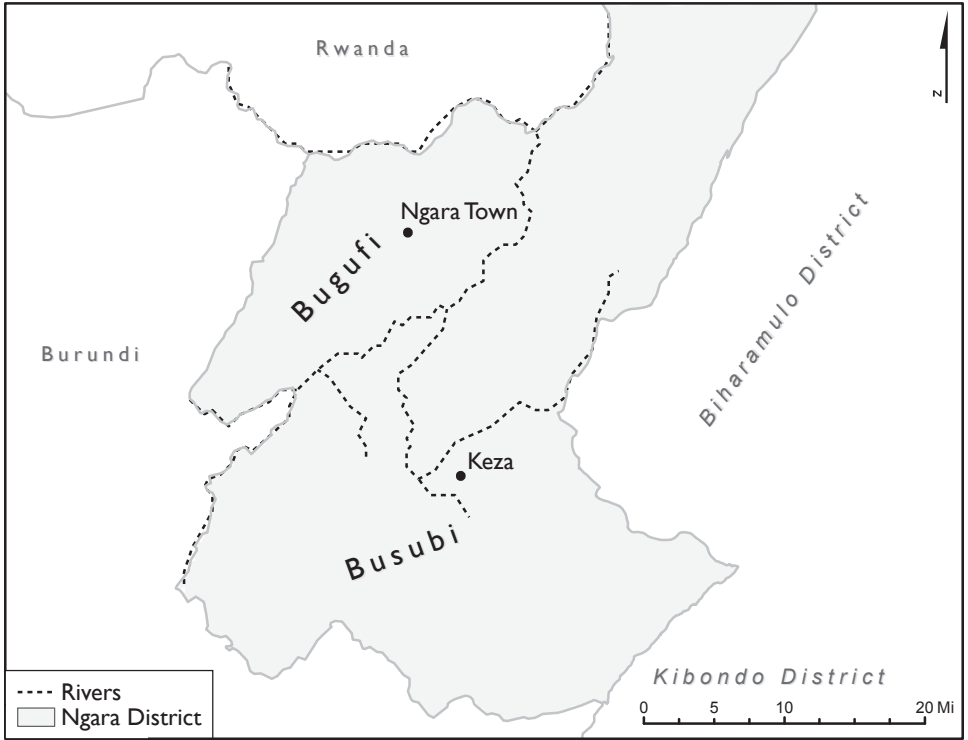
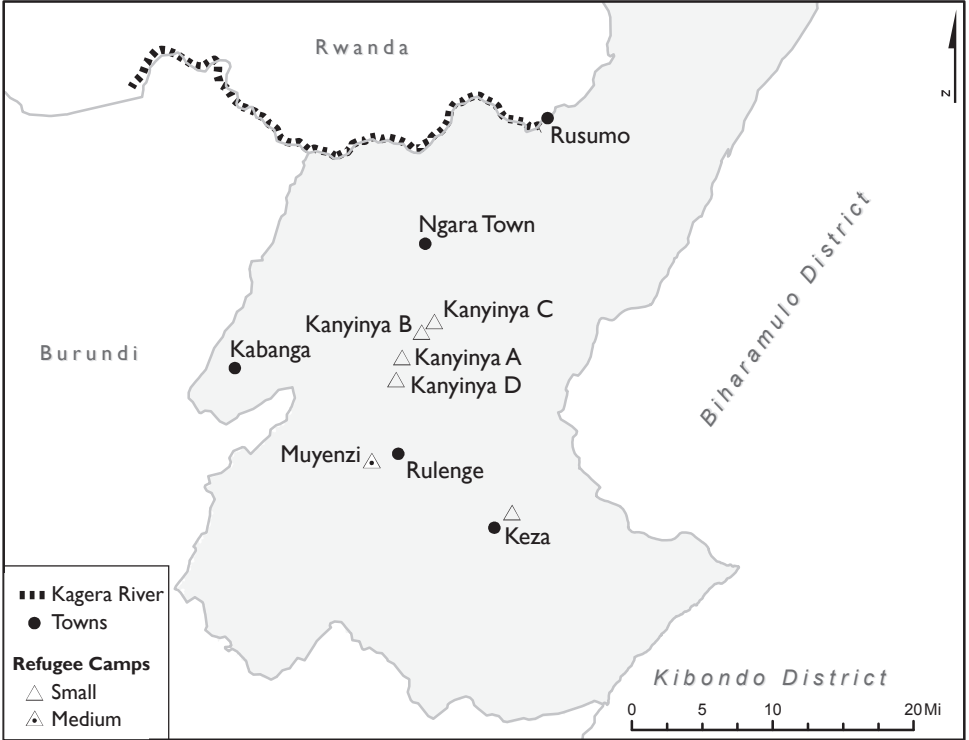


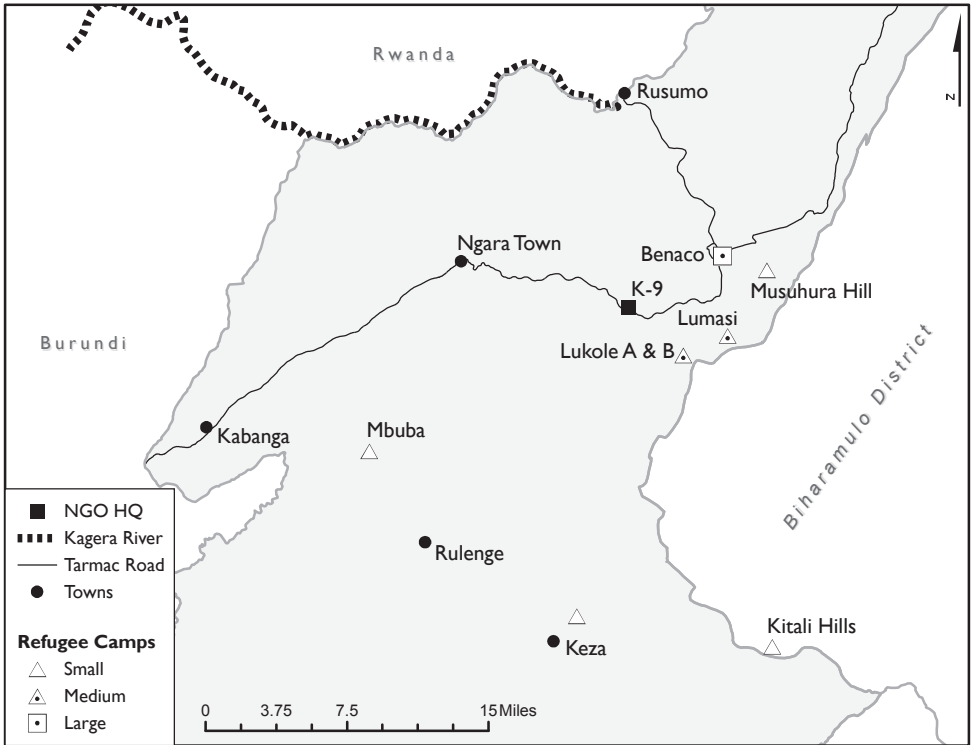
MAP 1. Ngara District, Tanzania. Created by Mathew Bandurchin.



MAP 2. Precolonial Chiefdoms, Ngara. Created by Mathew Bandurchin.



MAP 3. Rwandan Refugee Camps and Main Settlements in Ngara, 1960s. Created by Mathew Bandurchin.



MAP 4. Rwandan Refugee Camps in Ngara District, 1994–1996. Created by Mathew Bandurchin.

Who Qualifies to Be a Refugee? Who Was Barn [*sic*] to Be a Refugee?—Who Has the Right to Be Not a Refugee?
—Lazarus Mezza

Over a twenty-four-hour period beginning on April 28, 1994, the most rapid refugee exodus ever recorded took place.¹ More than 150,000 Rwandans, fleeing the violence of genocide and civil war, crossed the Rusumo Bridge into Ngara district, Tanzania. During the next two years, Ngara became host to one of the largest refugee camps in the world. As aid agencies and media outlets descended on this remote area of Tanzania, they, and the refugees they sought to aid, became crucial elements of the identity politics of the district, a politics embedded in Ngara's long history of migration. For hundreds of years, migrants from Rwanda and Burundi had settled in Ngara, forging cultural, political, and economic linkages throughout the region. It was only in the 1960s, however, with the advent of decolonization and the creation of the first Rwandan refugee camps in Ngara—when national and international actors called such migrants *refugees* for the first time—that the connections among these populations gave way to a politics of difference.

The long and varied presence of humanitarian aid to a specific sector of the Ngaran population—Rwandan refugees—has deep implications for Ngarans as well as for how we understand the history of humanitarian aid and nation-state formation in Africa. Examining this history yields insights into changing international geographies of control and regulation and their effects on local notions of citizenship, nation, and “others.” International aid meant to subdue and control the segment of the Ngaran population labeled Rwandan refugees was often unsuccessful. However, rather than the failures or successes of such programs, this book focuses on the evolving political concepts and competing topographies of authority and control that produced refugee encounters in Ngara district, as they did throughout the

decolonizing world. It also reveals the seminal role that Africans played, as aid workers, hosts, and refugees, in the evolution of refugee policies.

There are two general categories of people who live in Ngara district: those who are Tanzanian citizens and those who are not. Ngarans have an unmistakable pride in their Tanzanian identity, a sense of belonging to a history born of the nation's first president, Julius Nyerere, and the ideals he represented. Perhaps the pride stems from a memory of what people hoped the nation could be—a nostalgia rooted in a legacy of promised development and equality. And yet, there are few signs of development in the district, and rampant inequalities exist between those with connections to the government and those without. Everyone is aware of the corruption endemic to governance in Tanzania—it is an accepted part of life in Ngara. Moreover, state officials' repeated promises to deliver on development goals have remained dramatically unfulfilled. Ngarans remember the bitter hardships that followed the government's failed *ujamaa*, or forced villagization, in the 1970s and 1980s. Many people speak of the violence of *ujamaa*, vividly recalling the state agents who burned their homes and forced them to move to state-run villages. The reach of the state within Ngara has not always been benevolent or reliable, just as it has often been absent.

Driving northwest from the southern tip of Lake Victoria in Tanzania to Ngara district, one passes through a flat land dotted with foothills and forests. Suddenly, on entering Biharamulo district in the Kagera region, the hills get bigger, the slopes steeper. By the time one enters Ngara district, the hills and plateaus have become massive, the drive a constant struggle against gravity. Soon the landscape is covered with the wide green leaves of banana trees, which cluster around each mud and concrete house. The scenery is typical of the African Great Lakes region, an area populated by people who share similar cultures, languages, and political traditions.

There are Tanzanians in Ngara who cannot speak Kiswahili, the mandated national language, while fluency in Kisubi and Kihangaza, the languages of the district's former chiefdoms, abounds. Ngarans frequently violate state immigration laws, passing across the international borders to Rwanda and Burundi to conduct trade illicitly and to visit friends and family. Linguistic similarities facilitate this circulation of people and goods, as do cultural connections rooted in the precolonial and colonial traditions of the Great Lakes region. And yet Ngarans in Tanzania hold fast to a Tanzanian identity, particularly when referring to the "others" who live and work in the district.

"That person is Rwandan," my research assistant, Bernard Gwaho, would whisper to me as we drove along the main street of Ngara town. Ngarans

frequently reference Rwandans by noting the problems they cause in the district. Rwandans and, to a lesser extent, Burundians in Ngara district are not considered Tanzanians. They are viewed with suspicion and, occasionally, fear. In a place where the Tanzanian state has so obviously failed to achieve its promises, in a district that exists on the margins of the nation-state and remains economically and culturally nestled within a regional community, how have people come to identify with the Tanzanian nation-state?

This book analyzes the history of how the “nation” came to be actualized in the popular imaginations of people living on the border of the Tanzanian nation-state. I am concerned with the processes through which the people of the Busubi and Bugufi chiefdoms of Ngara district became Tanzanians—how the borders of a colony were operationalized to become the boundaries of a state and a citizenry. The presence of Rwandan refugees and the actions of international humanitarian organizations were integral to the ongoing process of national identity formation in Ngara. I argue that transnational aid to Rwandan refugees in Ngara unfolded as part of a broader project of nation-state formation and regulation—one that deeply affected local narratives of community and belonging.

While *From Migrants to Refugees* is geographically centered in Ngara district, it is also a history of the creation and maintenance of the world of nation-states during and after decolonization. During the late colonial and early independence eras, Ngara became a testing ground for novel forms of migrant containment and, later, refugee aid as the Rwandan refugee crises of the 1960s and 1990s offered humanitarian agencies new opportunities to experiment and expand their operations in sub-Saharan Africa. Ngara history is thus entwined with that of the international humanitarian community, a group of people and organizations that created the bureaucratic category of “refugee,” and with the actions that led to the sedimentation of this identity for those who live along the borders of the nation-state.

In our current historical moment, it seems that refugees are everywhere: in the news, in academia, and in politics. Refugees as a discursive group are demonized by some, exalted by others. Similarly, host communities are valorized or victimized in the press and academic literature. This book does neither. Rather, I show that host communities in Ngara responded to the refugees in their midst from the 1960s through the 1990s in myriad ways, including with generosity, with animosity, and with prejudice. As the postcolonial era progressed, however, it was the figure of the official refugee—the dangerous person who needed to be controlled in internationally funded refugee camps—that became the “other” against which Ngarans came to define

themselves as Tanzanians.² Rwandan refugees never appear in this book as a homogeneous group, except as they were configured in international and national discourses. The refugees in this book comprise a diverse group of peoples, with all the attendant political and economic rivalries inherent to *agentive individuals*, a fact that international refugee agencies were unable and, as self-described apolitical agencies, unwilling to comprehend. It was in this part of the African Great Lakes region that transnational initiatives, beginning with the League of Nations, emerged to control the political futures of migrants. And it was in response to the politics of the local people who became citizens and refugees in Ngara that such initiatives evolved into the global governance regime on display today.

The following chapters reveal the hard reality of who gets resources and why in the world of humanitarian aid. It is a history of who mattered to aid agencies and the state, and who did not, in a peripheral region that neither colonial nor postcolonial governments cared much about. Some Ngarans resented the aid given to those labeled Rwandan refugees, others profited from working with aid agencies, and still others were indifferent. None could ignore, however, the changes that aid agencies and refugees brought to Ngara district over the last sixty years. While scholars have written about the Rwandan refugee crisis following the genocide in the 1990s, until now, there has been no comprehensive study of the history of migration and asylum in the area. This book reveals how shared histories and cultures between Rwandans and Ngarans gave way to separate sovereign nation-states, both politically and ideologically, during the twentieth century.

Scholarship on the Edge

Ngara district falls on the western edge of Tanzania, just within the triangle of borders that demarcate the nation-states of Burundi, Rwanda, and Tanzania under international law. The district's landscape, as seen from the ground, consists of large hills and valleys that extend relentlessly past state boundaries. Today, as in the past, Ngarans are aware of the borders that separate Tanzania from its neighbors.³ Rather than preventing travel, this knowledge serves as a conduit for the widespread circulation of people, animals, and goods in the area.⁴ Regional laborers, traders, and herders, as well as entire sports teams, cross state boundaries daily. Borders, then, cannot be conceived of as barriers for Ngarans. Rather, during the second half of the twentieth century, there developed what Paul Nugent and A. I. Asiwaju

have called the “mental space” of “difference between communities across the line.”⁵

In his study of autochthony and belonging in contemporary Africa, Peter Geschiere writes that “it is high time . . . for a return to the topic of nation building,” particularly since we have “surprisingly few studies of what nation-building meant on the ground.”⁶ For Geschiere, current politics and violence around notions of belonging cannot be divorced from the “specific trajectories that nation-building took” during moments of decolonization.⁷ And, as Frederick Cooper has shown, the nation-state was only one of many political forms possible in Africa during decolonization.⁸

To understand how different versions of nation and citizenship gained traction locally, it is necessary to examine how people came to imagine their place in the world and who they came to include and exclude within that imagined space. In other words, we have to denaturalize what Agamben calls “the trinity of state-nation-territory.”⁹ And if historians are to take seriously the challenge of analyzing the processes of nation building, we have to acknowledge a discursive population that has remained in the shadows of historical writing—the figure of the refugee.

New discursive formations of the refugee emerged alongside those of the nation-state. Only a decade prior to Tanzanian decolonization, events in postwar Europe had propelled the leaders of the great powers to create a system of global governance based on a notion of inviolate, sovereign nation-states.¹⁰ In 1951 a definition of *refugee* became solidified in international law for the first time.¹¹ Concurrently, nation-state representatives developed an international apparatus to police and “aid” those rejects of the nation-state system whose unauthorized migration was “a threat to territorial security.”¹² These events occurred on the cusp of decolonization, itself a refugee-generating project that separated the “natural” inhabitants of new states from those who did not belong.¹³

During the Cold War, great powers and leaders in Geneva, New York, and Africa became intent on maintaining the boundaries of the colonial state within the nation-state form.¹⁴ Those borders of the colonial state that had remained largely “operationally nonexistent” for the majority of their history needed to be actualized.¹⁵ This domestication of borders became crucial to nation building and “the creation of novel sources of legitimizing political membership.”¹⁶ Such actualization was necessary to begin with, however, because the model of the sovereign nation-state did not comfortably align with realities on the ground. Indeed, in their travels, Ngarans and Rwandans

blurred the lines of borders and thus citizenries, which are assumed to be natural and permanent under the sovereign nation-state system. The fact that some Rwandan refugees were able to self-settle in Ngara during decolonization, while others were forced into internationally controlled camps, underscores the gap between the idea of the nation-state, with its well-defined borders, citizenries, and “others,” and the much more entangled, contingent, and “slippery” categories of refugee and citizen.¹⁷

However, although scholars have increasingly called attention to the role of refugees in the processes of nation-state formation, we know little about the relationship between refugees and nation building during decolonization.¹⁸ Historians have been slow to examine the significance of refugee experiences.¹⁹ This “structural” exclusion of refugees from the historical canon, according to Tony Kushner, is due to historians’ emphasis on “continuity of presence rather than temporariness, flux and statelessness.”²⁰ Yet historians have interrogated topics of migration and instability in relation to issues such as slavery, colonialism, labor, and development. Particularly in the African Great Lakes region, where migration myths legitimize political claims, historians have explored migration and change in cultural, economic, and political contexts.²¹ Scholars have also examined the histories of border regions in Africa, exploring their historical roots as well as more contemporary economic patterns.²² It is therefore peculiar that the role of refugees in African history has been neglected until recently, as historians are uniquely situated to counter dominant representations of displaced people that often strip individuals of history and agency.²³

Just as historians have excluded refugees from their purview, scholars of forced migration studies have neglected history.²⁴ History was not included among the “novel multi-disciplinary approaches” advocated by early proponents of refugee studies.²⁵ This inattention to the longer histories of refugee populations is due, in part, to forced migration studies’ early emphasis on the immediate humanitarian concerns of refugee populations, as well as the influence of aid policies and agendas.²⁶ However, as scholars in this field are beginning to note, history is integral to understanding current refugee crises.

Writing on the conceptual deficits in forced migration studies, Philip Marfleet posits that “forced migrations have a long half-life,” affecting later forced migrations as well as myths of belonging and citizenship.²⁷ For Marfleet, understanding recent refugee crises necessitates analyzing historical context and precedent. Such studies are of particular importance in northwestern Tanzania, where scholars examined the 1994 Rwandan

refugee crisis almost entirely without reference to previous refugee crises.²⁸ Scholarly inattention to the longer history of refugees and aid in the region obscures not only past interactions and regional connections between Ngans and refugees, but also the evolving and formative relationships among aid agencies and states.

Recent historical scholarship on refugees illustrates the seminal role that such groups played in the formation of nation-states.²⁹ This literature reveals that the creation of the nation-state in early modern Europe depended on new techniques of territorially “fixing people and places.”³⁰ The displacement of “others” who did not fall within accepted (re)definitions of national citizenries was critical to nation building, as “people *rejected* by the new nations were in fact integral to them.”³¹ Such rejections often entailed violent processes of mass displacement, and these movements were most visible in border areas—where populations at the geographic edge of one vision of nationalism encountered those expelled from another. And, as Mbembe and Randall note, this “polarization with regard to culture and identity,” which is so intrinsic to nationalism, becomes most visible within the space of the refugee camp.³² Historical inquiries into refugees are therefore integral to understanding ongoing processes of nation-state territorialization.³³

Rwandan refugees first entered Ngara district in 1959, just as the international community began to pay attention to refugees in sub-Saharan Africa. Examining the improvisation of policy and implementation occurring during and since the 1960s—the “watershed period,” when attempts to control the movement of people became “inescapably global”—is crucial to understanding how and why the current international refugee regime operates as it does and how it affects sites of aid implementation.³⁴ It was precisely during, and as a consequence of, decolonization of the “third world” that transnational bureaucracies such as the United Nations (UN), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and Lutheran World Federation (LWF) widened their mandates and programs to intercede in the regulation of African borders. Created in part to control and stabilize nation-state boundaries, UN agencies became major donors and administrators of refugee aid. In so doing, they became entangled with identity politics on the ground.

There has been a relative dearth of historical scholarship on Ngara district, yet political analyses have flourished.³⁵ The peripheral location of the district, in terms of both the Tanzanian state and the wider region, has likely contributed to this lack of historical attention.³⁶ However, shifting our gaze to the edge of historiography, to the peripheral places outside the central

kingdoms and places that are more easily accessible and prone to attract attention, reveals much about the social, political, and economic processes that created the center. And, as David Newbury notes, peripheral status is always bestowed by outsiders and is therefore subject to change.³⁷

The Rwandan genocide is not the focus of this book, yet it looms over much of the relevant history. The genocide is glimpsed in the blithe divisions that came to demarcate who became Tanzanian and who became Rwandan—and in some cases, who would live and who would die sixty years after British and Belgian representatives first marked the border's course. More concretely, the genocide and its aftermath came to Ngara in the form of the refugees who entered the district in 1994, including those who had perpetrated, witnessed, and suffered the genocide in Rwanda. Much has been written about the arrogance and shortcomings of the international community during the Rwandan refugee emergency in the Great Lakes region.³⁸ However, no work takes into account the long history of migration and refugee hosting in Ngara. Through such an analysis, the evolution of international refugee policy, itself rooted in the region's colonial migrant containment camps, becomes clear.³⁹ In tracing this lineage, I reveal the competing sovereignties that dominated refugee camps in Ngara, both during decolonization and during the 1990s. Transnational, national, regional, local, and refugee actors all competed to control the political futures of refugees in Ngara. These legal, ethical, and political confrontations resulted in distrust and animosity. Such conflicts also exposed the basic contradictions of a refugee system that claims jurisdiction over refugees' lives while simultaneously proclaiming itself to be outside of politics.⁴⁰

Sovereignty is, more than anything, an ideal that never matches the power realities in national and international spaces. As an idea, it has many components: that states control their borders, which are clearly defined; that the sovereign holds a monopoly on violence within its borders; that the nation-state is recognized as a legitimate and equal member of an international community; and, perhaps most important, that other nation-states agree not to interfere in the internal operations of sovereign states. At all these levels, the concept of sovereignty is threatened by lived realities (most famously, by the fact that no state exerts complete control over its borders or the use of violence therein).⁴¹ At the international level, the makeup of the UN Security Council, with its five permanent members, privileges the power of some nation-states over others. In other words, if the end of empires and the division of the world into separate, connecting nation-states were the beginning of something new (as Kelly and Kaplan assert), that

new world order would be filled with unequal sovereignties. Nation-states with more economic and military power have frequently impinged on the internal affairs of those with less power. Humanitarian and development organizations similarly intercede in the legal and economic spaces of “less-developed” nations. So perhaps it is best to understand sovereignty as a “set of claims”—directed both internally over a demarcated space and citizenry and outwardly within the international arena.⁴²

Similarly, citizenship, like any identity, is linked more to emotion than to a fixed concept of rights and duties. The creation of a citizenry out of a colony centers on the building of a shared identity—based on loyalty to an “imagined community.”⁴³ Ideally, citizens have certain rights derived from their birth within a national family, one that is married to the political bureaucracy of a state (including the right to peace, the right to a certain standard of living, and the right to political participation—to name a few). These rights are balanced by the citizens’ duties to the nation-state: to pay taxes, to obey laws, to be loyal. And yet, like sovereignty, these are not absolutes but ideals that citizens negotiate in their lived, everyday experiences, just as negotiations over who belongs in a nation evolve over time.

Ngaran history reveals that the image of the nation-state, its benevolence and its power, can clash with lived realities but still hold political-ideological sway. Indeed, the failure of the territorial sovereignty of the Tanzanian nation-state—its inability to control its long borders—created practical, physical, and ideological effects that helped shore up the idea of the postcolonial nation among those living along its margins. The failure to contain migrants, in the form of refugees, and their movements led to the imposition of an international humanitarian and legal community that was frequently at odds and in contest with the power of the new state, locally and nationally. However, as refugees were contained and made into a privileged “other” within internationally funded and run refugee camps, the notion of regional closeness gave way to a perception of national strangers—a notion that slowly percolated through Ngaran communities. As this process unfolded, another failure of the new state became clear—its inability to protect the livelihood of its citizenry. As a result, Ngarans continued and increased their illicit trading across international borders, thereby sustaining themselves and their communities when the state could not. These tangible rifts at the margins actually helped the center to hold.

Overall, this was a process of becoming a perceived nation and a citizenry—one in which the rights of the citizen often conflicted with the realities of life in Ngara. The process was aided by the failures of new nation-

states in the region: failure of the Rwandan state to protect and control its borders and new citizens (the rejection of some clarified an ethnically defined citizenship for the rest); failure of the Tanzanian state to control its borders and protect citizens' livelihoods; and failure of the humanitarian community, which attempted to control migrants and national laws. Ironically, the very unevenness of state power in Tanzania helped instill some ideas about the duties of the citizen—who turned away from the violence linked to regional affiliations and toward a perceived benevolent and peaceful central government. The duty to work hard and develop the nation was present, if not the rights that would have made this possible (e.g., the right to clean water, education, democratic representation). These duties of the citizen did not extend to obeying all the laws of the new state—whose failures necessitated their transgression. But it did extend to the idea of being Tanzanian, an idea embodied in the conflicting failures of the local, national, and global regimes.

The Colonial Origins of Refugee Aid: The Refugee and Human Rights

In attending to the history of Ngara and identity formation, this work analyzes not only the critical role of refugees in Ngaran political imaginations but also that of the agents and agencies that worked to control migration and actualize colonial borders under the auspices of the postcolonial nation-state. Ngaran history therefore contains traces of the long evolutionary process that led to a humanitarian system devoted to aiding, segregating, and protecting refugees. Such a history reveals the colonial origins of refugee protection, as well as the fraught link between human rights and the sovereign world of nation-states, as represented by the United Nations. As a former UNHCR official said of the challenges involved in protecting Syrian refugees, “Humanitarian work is not supposed to be political, but the reality is political.”⁴⁴ This book delineates the ways in which aid to Rwandan refugees has shaped this humanitarian politics.

To understand the evolution of this politics, it is necessary to examine the long history of regional circulation and shared histories across what became an international border. Separated from the Belgian mandate of Ruanda-Urundi following World War I, as described in chapter 1, Ngara district became part of the Tanganyika Territory, a mandate colony governed by the British under the oversight of the newly constituted League of Nations. Paradoxically, under colonial rule, regional integration only increased as people ignored the newly delineated international borders to migrate into Ngara. Men from both colonies also traveled north to work in Buganda, thereby

ignoring colonial labor opportunities to the east in Tanganyika. As shown in chapter 2, the British responded by attempting unsuccessfully to direct and “canalize” migration in the Tanganyika Territory, creating the first migrant control camps in the region. In its efforts to manage and control migration in Ngara district, the colonial government utilized a discourse of protection, a rhetoric that elided the economic motivations of such measures.⁴⁵ This humanitarian language itself had a long history, rooted in the “civilizing mission” that empires had long used as an excuse to extend their control over people deemed less civilized. Thus, the “advent of humanitarianism” and the “tension between . . . compassion and repression” are not late twentieth-century adaptations, as Didier Fassin contends, but are deeply rooted in the logic of colonialism.⁴⁶

When the League of Nations’ system of global regulation collapsed during World War II, it was followed by a rhetoric of paternalistic development as the territory became a British “trustee” under the newly formed United Nations. What both the mandate system and the trust system had in common was the ranking of colonial possessions according to European logics of civilization. With decolonization, the United Nations, and its great-power leadership on the Security Council, became the arbiter of a new object of protection: the nation-state system.⁴⁷ Unregulated circulation within this system came under the auspices of a new organization, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), formed in 1950. The global governance initiatives of migrant control started during imperialism therefore continued and evolved during the postcolonial era in the form of the United Nations and its refugee agency.

The UNHCR emerged to accommodate and protect refugees in Europe after World War II; however, the violence of decolonization quickly turned the organization’s attention to sub-Saharan Africa. From the beginning of the UN’s refugee protection initiatives, there existed a distinction between refugee protection in the “developed” states of the North and that in the global South. In the North, refugees generally underwent asylum hearings as individuals. In the South, refugees were admitted as groups, placing incredible economic burdens on host states that were themselves engaged in nation-building projects.⁴⁸

In many ways, the UNHCR and the nation of Tanzania grew up together. The agency’s interventions in northern Africa began only a few years prior to the first influx of refugees in Ngara. For the next sixty years, the UNHCR would work intensively in sub-Saharan African nations. It was in Tanzania that the UNHCR experimented with a new solution to the problem of refugees.

As a senior UNHCR official noted in 1963, “I think that the Rwanda refugee situation will offer us a welcome opportunity to find out in practice what the office can usefully do” to aid refugees.⁴⁹

In some ways, the UNHCR itself functions as a state, with its large bureaucracy, standard operating procedures, and legislative section devoted to implementing the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol.⁵⁰ However, instead of appealing to and relying on a citizenry or tax base for its functioning, the UNHCR is accountable only to its external donors, which do not directly experience the effects of the agency’s operations. Additionally, although its legal base confers a mandate to protect refugees, the human rights questions implicit to the idea of humanitarian aid were explicitly separated from the UNHCR’s mandate and left within the realm of citizens’ claims on nation-states.⁵¹ Like the UN itself, the UNHCR was created not to secure a just or equal world but rather to maintain the sovereignty of a network of independent states.⁵²

It is perhaps more accurate to understand the power wielded by the UNHCR, in its dealings with both host states and refugees, as a police function. The “problem” of refugees threatens the world of sovereign nation-states.⁵³ The three durable solutions created by the agency to address the refugee problem testify to this function. All three solutions (repatriation, integration in a first asylum country, and resettlement in a second asylum nation) are predicated on the idea of “settling” the refugee, of extracting the individual’s and group’s anomaly within the world of nation-states by recasting the refugee as a returnee and settler, thereby upholding the trinity of nation, territory, and citizen.⁵⁴ In this way, the organization maintains the international status quo ante, on the surface at least.⁵⁵

In the post-World War II era of nation-state formation and refugee regulation, other agencies with separate, yet ostensibly parallel, interests began providing refugee relief as well. In Tanzania, the major agency involved in refugee aid from the 1960s through the early 1990s was the Tanganyikan Christian Refugee Service (TCRS). The history of this agency, its successes and failures, and its dynamic and, by 1996, tumultuous relationship with the UNHCR reveals how the policies and implementation of transnational refugee aid have changed over the past half century. The TCRS’s archival and oral testimonies demonstrate that the international refugee community has altered its approach to balancing the protection of human rights and the achievement of institutional interests over time, with the latter becoming increasingly important in the realm of transnational refugee aid.

In the context of refugee camps, claims of sovereignty are frequently in conflict, as different groups seek to assert their own legitimacy and control over refugees' lives and the camps where they live. The legal apparatus created to govern refugees' lives exists simultaneously at the nation-state and transnational levels, which can lead to ambiguity, resentment, and confusion. On the ground, a host of representatives actively attempts to govern refugees' lives: local, state, and transnational actors all impose bureaucratic categorizations, expectations, and promises.⁵⁶ What is singularly missing from this analysis is the fact that refugees themselves are political actors and subjects in their own right. As refugees contemplated their political futures in Ngara, they frequently came into conflict with the local, national, and transnational officials who sought to order their lives. Humanitarian governance is thus not a straightforward endeavor but one shot through with competition and resistance, processes that contour both host and refugee notions of citizenship and belonging.⁵⁷

In the absence of any clear demarcation of protection responsibilities within the international community (for both states and aid agencies), relief agencies have inconsistently called for the protection of populations based on their own evolving "willingness to be accountable."⁵⁸ More cynically, humanitarian agencies have invoked human rights discourse to legitimize interventions and to discredit those who obstruct and criticize their actions.⁵⁹ This book reveals the distinct difference between *humanitarianism* and *humanitarian aid* by historicizing the strategic interests underlying the business of aid interventions. From the League of Nations to the post-Cold War UN regime, I reveal the continuity with which humanitarian discourse has obscured economic and political motives.⁶⁰ As Scalettaris notes, the term *refugee* does not define "a relevant sociological group"; it reveals more about "the system that produced the label" than the people it refers to.⁶¹ This system built on earlier colonial incarnations of migrant control to segregate those deemed "in need" of relief from the "natural" inhabitants of Ngara, thereby furthering the construct of the nation-state within Ngaran notions of belonging.

Deconstructing Refugee Aid

Over the past twenty years, scholars have examined the aid apparatus predominantly from the viewpoint of institutional discourse and policy analysis, revealing the depoliticizing discourse of aid institutions and the

international politics that inform refugee policies.⁶² We know much less about how humanitarian institutions function on the ground. Scholarship on international assistance has cited the need to “study up” aid institutions, as policies and practices cannot be divorced from the people who form and implement them.⁶³ However, to date, few works address the experiences of those who give, negotiate, and experience aid.⁶⁴

It is through representation, and representatives, that transnational policies become entwined with circumstances at the site of policy implementation (the local). The linguistic metaphors scholars use to describe and analyze refugee organizations tend to revolve around such tropes as *agency*, *organization*, *state*, and *bureaucracy*. What often gets lost is the almost too obvious fact that organizations are made up of people, of individuals.

By “deterritorializing” the nation-state—thinking of the past and the present beyond taken-for-granted categorizations—scholars utilize notions such as contingency, affect, and heterogeneity.⁶⁵ This scholarship can also be applied to our understanding of humanitarian organizations and actions. It is in the testimony of organizational representatives that historians begin to understand the process of aid policy implementation.⁶⁶ Humanitarian aid was, and continues to be, a confusing and even contradictory business involving states, host populations, donors, recipients, and aid representatives. Policies and budgets created in Geneva and New York are filtered through national, regional, and local government and aid agency officials. In the process, agency representatives are almost constantly confronted with unexpected events and challenges, forcing them to improvise in the field. Such actions have consequences for future aid policies as well as for the inhabitants of the field itself.

How does the aid project look different if we privilege the voices of individuals in the voluntary, state, and refugee bureaucracies?⁶⁷ Instead of one UNHCR, refugee group, or state, we are confronted with myriad individuals involved in policy negotiation and implementation at several levels, each with their own perceptions, biases, and agendas.⁶⁸ In doing so at a particular time and place, such as northwestern Tanzania during and after decolonization, actions become de-situated from the corporatized space of the UNHCR, the state, and refugees.⁶⁹ The resulting history is a messy entanglement of individuals and their ideas, personalities, and influences on outcomes and policies.⁷⁰ Such analysis reveals the pivotal role of refugees and host communities in not only the processes of nation-state formation but also the evolution of humanitarian policies.

Methods

I was interviewing a man in Keza village in Busubi when he brought out a thick iron chain. This man was at least sixty years old, had lived his entire life in Ngara, and had walked to our interview without shoes, but he *had* brought the chain. Speaking Kisubi, he explained that slave traders had used this chain to enslave his grandfather and take him to the United States. It is extremely unlikely that a man from this part of Africa would have ended up as a slave in America. What was I to do with this information? Did this lapse in accuracy, which came at the end of our interview, discredit the hour preceding it?

Working with oral histories requires care. Perhaps this man's story about his grandfather had more to do with current perceptions of American hegemony or the visibility of an African American US president with family links to eastern Africa. What the chain signifies for me is the importance of taking subjectivity into account, both my own and that of those I interview. This is particularly important when considering how more recent events, such as the 1994 Rwandan refugee crisis, affect people's memories of earlier instances of migration and identity.

This work is based on more than one hundred interviews conducted in Ngara district, in addition to archival research in international and national archives.⁷² In Ngara, I conducted interviews in 2012 with the assistance of Bernard Gwaho, my research assistant, who helped me ask questions in Kiswahili, Kisubi, and Kihangaza, the three local languages.⁷¹ Bernard was more than an assistant; he became integral to my research process. I wanted to know how Ngarans had understood different forms of migration since the late colonial era, so Bernard helped me find people to interview throughout the border villages in the two subsections of Ngara: Busubi and Bugufi. Through his contacts, I was also able to interview village and town leaders throughout the district. We spoke with men who had been village officials during the first Rwandan refugee influx in the 1960s, as well as those who led villages during the massive Rwandan refugee emergency in the mid-1990s. We interviewed former lorry drivers who had transported migrant laborers to Buganda during the 1950s and economic migrants who had returned to Ngara, to an imagined "home," during decolonization. I met men and women who had never left their district and families that had traveled all over Tanzania and occasionally the world. I never forgot that I was an outsider.

In Ngara I am *mzungu* (white), in a place where white connotes not only a stranger but also suspicion and opportunity. In the villages where I conducted

many of my interviews, my skin color provoked excitement, curiosity, and occasionally outright fear. As an American expatriate armed with a car, a *mzungu* partner, and a research assistant, how would I understand what the people I talked to were trying to explain? Was it hubris to believe that I could?

Most of these interviews were conducted either in people's homes or in village centers. To get there, Bernard, my partner Brian, and I traveled on roads that were little more than cattle paths, often walking the final kilometers through the bush to reach a homestead. The district continues to suffer from a lack of infrastructure, particularly in the Busubi area to the south. The banana groves that cover the landscape always seemed to extend more in the direction of Rwanda and Burundi, across the invisible borders of the district, than east across the mountains to the rest of Tanzania. On family *shamba* (farms), respondents often pointed out the border's location just over the hill or across a field. On the rough roads, we frequently came across day laborers who crossed the borders to work in Ngara.

Bernard assisted in identifying many of the people I interviewed, each individual then locating friends and acquaintances who lived in the area and might be interested in speaking with me. This "snowball" research technique was essential, particularly in identifying elders who remembered the late colonial period and decolonization. I also relied on the advice of Father Lazarus, a priest in Rulenge, who has lived and worked in Busubi since the 1950s. Another invaluable resource was *Bwana* Rwagaba, who worked with international agencies aiding Rwandan refugees during both the 1960s and the 1990s.

It was difficult for me to conduct interviews in Busubi, where the state and the UNHCR had settled Rwandan refugees during the 1960s and again in the 1990s. Brian and I resided in Ngara town in Bugufi, in a shipping container left over from the 1994 refugee emergency on the TCRS compound. To get to Rulenge, we had to travel over an alarmingly steep and curving "road" to reach villages such as Muyenzi, Keza, Kanyinya, and Mbuba—the places that became refugee settlements and later *ujamaa* villages. Even though I had fastidiously arranged my research documents and residency permits, my first days in Busubi were spent with the subward government administrator arranging my interviews and listening in on them. Luckily, the administrator seemed to grow bored with our work and was reluctant to travel the long distances along poor roads to many of the interview sites.

To show my appreciation, and to acknowledge that many of my informants had forgone work (agricultural or other) to meet with me, I always

paid them. The remuneration was usually 5,000 Tsh, the equivalent of about US\$3 at the time and a substantial sum to many Ngarans.⁷³ I waited until the end of the conversation to offer money, after asking whether the interviewee had any questions for me. Occasionally, respondents would ask me to help them buy sugar or coffee. More common were questions about how I could help the people of Ngara who suffered from a lack of *maendeleo*, or development. When I asked what Ngara district needed to “develop,” answers usually included access to clean water and to electricity and, perhaps most frequently, the ability to send their children to school. I responded honestly, admitting that I was not there to help, nor did I have the means to do so. I felt it was important to make no promises, revealing my own incapacity and deficits—a frustration that endures.

This work is also based on innumerable conversations I had in Ngara over soda or *pombe* (beer), bought locally or illegally or made in homes. Some of these conversations were later recorded as interviews. I was lucky to make friends in the district, although my privileged position was never far from my mind and undoubtedly affected the stories I was told. At times, extended families sat nearby during my interviews—excited to see *wazungu* (plural of *mzungu*) and equally excited to hear the memories of their elders. I was sometimes met with hostility, particularly by some female elders who no doubt wondered what I was doing on their *shamba* and rejected my privilege by choosing to reveal little of their lives. It was difficult to find older women to interview in the district’s more remote areas, particularly in Busubi, where local administrators and others questioned what utility their memories could have. I was often treated as an informal man due to my white skin and monetary advantages—it always raised eyebrows when I asked to interview women about their experiences, as well as when I attempted to help the women of the households we visited cook or serve meals. Younger women, those who had lived through and worked with aid agencies during the Rwandan refugee emergency, however, were more eager to speak with me, likely due to generational differences in how women are perceived and the increasing number of women entering the formal workforce as teachers and aid workers.

In addition to interviews, I conducted research in seven archives. In Geneva, I examined the archives of the primary refugee agencies active in Ngara over the last sixty years. These holdings provided invaluable materials, including letters and reports from field officers in Ngara to their various headquarters in Geneva. Such holdings revealed the often experimental nature of refugee policies, as policymakers and practitioners confronted unforeseen problems

with often emotional and chaotic responses. These documents also revealed the limitations of aid agencies that were unable to consider host communities' needs due to their strict mandates.

Research in the Dar es Salaam and Mwanza branches of the Tanzanian National Archives and the British National Archives added important colonial, state, and African voices to the examination of the transnational production of borders and refugee aid. These collections revealed the chaotic and arbitrary creation of the international border between Ngara and Rwanda (then Ruanda-Burundi). I also discovered letters from colonial officials that expressed concerns over uncontrolled labor migration in this area, concerns that led to the first migrant containment schemes in Ngara.

By juxtaposing oral histories with archival material, I reveal the discrepancies between official visions in London and Geneva and realities on the ground. This attention to local and transnational gazes, and the distance between them, produces new insights into key questions of agency and responsibility in humanitarian action. It also provides a holistic account of how historical identities shifted as transnational agents divided the Ngaran population into locals and refugees over the course of the twentieth century.

The Road to Nation Building

The following chapters untangle how Ngarans came to conceptualize themselves as Tanzanians, despite the cross-border circulation of people in this region and the disappointments of independence. Crucial to this process of ideological nation building was the parallel process by which Rwandan migrants became refugees in Ngara. This is the story of how the people of Ngara district came to see themselves as part of a nation-state. It is a history of migrants who became citizens and migrants who became refugees. It is also a history of the colonial, national, and transnational agents who endeavored to aid, protect, and rule refugees over time.

The politics of difference that refugees came to represent in Ngara can be understood only in light of the regional ties Ngarans shared with Rwandans during the precolonial and colonial periods. Part I (chapters 1, 2, and 3) traces the haphazard construction of international borders and explores migration and development during the precolonial, colonial, and early postcolonial eras in Ngara district. These chapters argue that regional circulation and affiliations increased during this time, as Ngarans and their neighbors in Ruanda-Urundi utilized time-tested strategies of migration to navigate the changes brought by colonial and postcolonial rule. This deep history of

migration and cross-border cultural and economic connections is essential to understanding the effects of refugee movements and humanitarian aid examined in subsequent chapters.

Part II (chapters 4, 5, and 6) analyzes the processes through which Ngarans began to see themselves as Tanzanians, despite their historical connections to the Great Lakes region and the disappointments of independence. I argue that by segregating Rwandan refugees and giving them preferential aid in refugee camps—aid that refugees frequently subverted—Ngarans began to view Rwandans as inimical to Tanzanian nationalism. Further, this section reveals the competing sovereignties at work during decolonization as various groups attempted to control and rule Rwandan refugee camps.

Part III (chapters 7, 8, and 9) argues that citizenship in Ngara became predicated not only on one's place of birth, but also on one's relationship to international organizations. As Ngarans continued to migrate across the region and progressively adopted the mantle of "Tanzanians," local leaders denied refugees who had lived in internationally run refugee camps access to citizenship. The section ends by exploring the contradictory effects of the Rwandan genocide and refugee emergency in Ngara district, which produced both extreme hardship and novel opportunities for Ngarans, while simultaneously cementing local attachments to the Tanzanian nation-state.

Throughout this work, I show that, at the Ngaran edge of the African Great Lakes region, the evolution of transnational techniques of border control translated into containment policies for tens of thousands of people who were transformed from migrants to refugees by independence. At the edges of the colony, authorities struggled to be relevant to a population on the move. During decolonization, new transnational entities emerged to alter the balance of power and the meaning of identities in the region. Throughout the period I examine, the borders created by the League of Nations and the region's colonizers remained. In the decades that followed decolonization, people, goods, and ideas continued to flow, illegally and unabated, across the borders. And yet the border became a potent signifier of identity for Ngarans who became Tanzanians during a time when Rwandans became refugees.