Building Futures through Refugee Education

Aspirations, Navigation, and (Non)-citizenship

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I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my mother, whose constant love, support, and encouragement have been my guiding light throughout my academic journey. Mom, thank you for all the sacrifices you have made for me and for inspiring me to be resilient in difficult times.

Abstract

This study explores how Somali secondary school and graduate-level youth in Kenya's Dadaab camps attempt to build their futures through education, despite challenges posed by their non-citizen status. Using ethnographic data, the study specifically analyses the educational journeys, aspirations, and experiences of these refugee youth, shedding light on the everyday practices and dynamic strategies they employ to pursue their goals and manage obstacles. The study demonstrates how secondary school youth actively pursue educational aspirations, which they believe can enable them to exit the camps and potentially overcome their non-citizen status – through routes such as the resettlement-based scholarships for post-secondary education in Canada. Anchoring in their hopes in education, these students leverage various social resources, networks, and strategies to cope with challenges facing their education and aspirations, while simultaneously reflecting on various pathways to navigate post-graduation crossroads.

Graduate-level youth, faced with limited opportunities, often adjust their aspirations to align with the available options to move forward, such as scholarships or incentive- (as opposed to wage-) paying jobs in the camps. More and more graduate youth opt to return to Somalia in seek of better employment opportunities, despite the potential security risks. The study also underscores the intergenerational solidarity and support system that emerge as academically successful refugee youth establish and manage nationally accredited schools, significantly contributing to students' performance in national exams and the quality of education overall. By examining refugee youths' enterprise of future-building through education within the context of long-term camps – characterised by perpetual precarity and uncertainty due to inhabitants' exclusion from citizenship rights, freedoms, and advantages – this study provides theoretical insights into the complex and dynamic interplay among aspirations, navigational strategies, and non-citizenship status.

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1
Introduction

At the beginning of every year, secondary schools in Kenya's Dadaab camps admit several thousand Form One[1] students who have successfully completed the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) exams.[2] Students approach this transition from primary to secondary school with great excitement because they are starting a new school, joining new friends from other schools, meeting new teachers, and wearing "new" school uniforms that symbolise their status in the community as both grown-up and educated. The passage of time, changes in the school setting, and achievement of this status mark the start of a four-year journey for young people that will formally culminate with the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) exams.

Like many other young refugees worldwide, those in secondary school in Dadaab camps have strong educational aspirations. Young refugees around the world regard their education as an opportunity to create more secure, stable, and prosperous futures for themselves, their families, and their communities (Bellino 2018; Dryden-Peterson 2017; Wesley Bonet 2022). The schooling journey taken by students in Dadaab camps is beset by numerous interacting structural challenges, including insecurity, scarcity of learning facilities, overcrowded classrooms, limited numbers of trained teachers, and a lack of professional career guidance and counselling provision. These conditions jeopardise refugees' access to quality education, impede the development of necessary skill sets to navigate the uncertainties inherent in their futures, and inhibit their ability to attain good scores on national exams (KCPE and KCSE).

The negative experiences that students in Dadaab camps have with regard to their education are exacerbated by limited access to meaningful

[1] Form One, equivalent to the ninth grade, is the first year of high school in the Kenyan education system.

[2] Nationally, the admission period has been interrupted by the COVID-19 crisis.

opportunities for transitioning effectively after completing secondary school, such as higher education, wage-paying jobs, or other means to exit the camps, often making young people feel stuck and in a state of desperation. These challenges are intimately connected to Kenya's strict citizenship regime, which does not allow refugees to leave the camps, work as wage earners, and/or enjoy other opportunities available to Kenyan youth, such as government subsidies or loans to study at university. Despite young refugees' commitment to their education and struggles, their non-citizen status results in legal-political marginalisation. This in turn deprives them of the access to rights and freedoms necessary to translate their education into substantial social, economic, and physical mobility. These challenges, embedded within the citizenship regimes of modern nation-states, remains a central paradox in young refugees' schooling in exile, particularly in the context of Global South countries (Bellino 2018; Dryden-Peterson et al. 2019; Zeus 2011).

Previous studies conducted in various parts of the world have highlighted young refugees' high educational aspirations (Bellino 2018; Molla 2021; Morrice et al. 2020; Soong et al. 2022; Wesley Bonet 2022). Many of the studies reflecting on refugees' educational aspirations and experiences are conducted in the context of resettlement destinations in the Global North (Molla 2021; Morrice et al. 2020; Shakya et al. 2010; Soong et al. 2022; Stevenson and Willott 2007). A few newer studies on this topic have emerged in the context of the Global South, where most refugees live, particularly in refugee camps (Bellino 2018, 2021; Dryden-Peterson 2017). Across all contexts, studies reveal a consistent *gap* between refugees' educational aspirations and the structural opportunities that can enable them to achieve the futures they envision (Lee 2021:790). Refugees across all contexts often experience significant challenges regarding their education and other aspirational endeavours, yet the extant research has not fully explored the spatial-temporal implications of non-citizen status on refugees' aspirations and the navigational strategies employed by both individuals and their communities to cope with citizenship-related exclusions during long-term displacement, particularly in protracted camp settings. This thesis seeks to fill this research gap by examining young refugees' aspirational endeavours in the context of individual actions and strategies, as well as community-based initiatives, with an emphasis on the critical role of refugee-led education initiatives in supporting the education and aspirations of young refugees.

Education, structural marginalisation, and uncertain futures

Rhetoric abounds on the view that schooling is a means to prepare young people "for 'their future'" and "'our future'" (Bateman 2012:15). Globally, this vision of the future is being propagated by the neoliberal ideology that has dominated the global educational imagination: a vision of a global knowledge economy powered by global competition and sustained by digital networks, which promises young people and nations that their futures will be secure with adequate knowledge, creativity, and new technology (Facer 2011: x). This vision of the future through education is invariably replicated in schools through formal and informal curricula and is often difficult to challenge by envisioning and creating alternative futures (Hicks 2012; Milojević and Izgarjan 2014). It is argued that education has the potential to expand the social, economic, and political freedoms that people desire (Nussbaum 2009; Sen 2001). Yet, not everyone and every community have the same privilege or the resources to translate their acquired educational capacities into real freedoms to live the kind of life they desire (Sen 2001:10).

Globally, and especially in the Global South, young people face a significant disjuncture between the possibilities that have been associated with education for decades and the current opportunities available to them due to structural barriers such as limited access to employment opportunities (Bellino 2018; Huijsmans, Ansell, and Froerer 2021; Naafs and Skelton 2018). The structural challenges that generate such tensions often disproportionately affect people who face socioeconomic and legal-political disadvantages, such as refugees, stateless people, aliens, indigenous peoples, and racial and ethnic minorities (Bellino 2021; Bhabha, Giles, and Mahomed 2020; Mkwananzi and Wilson-Strydom 2018; Zipin et al. 2015). Refugees are often at a greater disadvantage than persons who live within the borders of a state of which they are a national. Refugees' situations are often characterised by extreme vulnerability, insecurity, and protracted uncertainty (Horst and Grabska 2015; Loyd, Ehrkamp, and Secor 2018), and those living in camps in Global South contexts are among the most disadvantaged of all. They face unique legal-political challenges that strictly limit their physical mobility outside of camps, an uncertain timetable for moving out of the camps, and the lack of any prospect of accessing wage-paying employment (Bellino 2021; Hanafi 2008; Rueff and Viaro 2009).

A growing corpus of research from across the world has explored the future-orientated values that refugees associate with education, demonstrating

refugees' strong aspirations in education and their hopes of leveraging it to create more secure, stable, and prosperous futures (Bellino 2018; Molla 2021; Morrice et al. 2020; Soong et al. 2022; Wesley Bonet 2022). In camp settings, research has shown how refugees perceive schooling as a means to navigate the insecurity inherent in their futures and achieve spatial, social, economic, cognitive, and temporal mobility (Bellino 2018; Dryden-Peterson 2017). Drawing on the experiences of Congolese and Somali youth in Uganda and the Kenyan Dadaab camps, respectively, Dryden-Peterson (2017) argues that, in the face of "an unknowable future", young refugees believe their education might enable them to achieve physical and cognitive mobilities that would enable them to build a more secure future (Dryden-Peterson 2017:15–16). Cognitive mobility implies the ability of young people to use their education across time and space. Bellino (2018) explores the aspirations and fears of young refugees in Kenya's Kakuma Camp as they graduate from secondary school. She demonstrates how young refugees perceive education as a means to achieve social, economic, and spatial mobility and symbolic capital in a country that has systemically excluded and undervalued them (Bellino 2018: 551).

For decades, the debate over refugees' futures has centred around finding durable solutions to refugees' displacement problems and in doing so has focused primarily on *place-based* solutions. The location-based solutions are premised on a trinity of possible destinations where refugees' futures could take place, namely their country of origin (through voluntary return), a country of first asylum (through naturalisation or permanent residency), and a third country (through a resettlement programme) (Mertus 1998; Stein 1986; Van Hear 2014). Nevertheless, in its 2012–2016 refugee education policy, the UNHCR framed education as a durable solution in its own right and as a crucial means for building further durable solutions (Monaghan 2021: 3). Yet, despite academic discourses implying the potential inherent in this normative framing, it is not evident how education is, or might be used to create, a durable solution for refugees in practice.

Refugees' futures in camp contexts are particularly characterised by radical uncertainty due to the protracted precarity of these locations (Brun 2015; Dryden-Peterson 2017; Horst and Grabska 2015). In recent work, Dryden-Peterson (2021) discusses how the experience of uncertainty places young refugees at the crossroads of future-building and placemaking. Future-building involves a process of envisioning and preparing for a plurality of prospective futures – "here, there, and/or somewhere else entirely" (Dryden-Peterson 2021: 6). Placemaking, or "homemaking" (Canagarajah 2021), is an essential aspect of framing the future. In contexts of a politically induced,

liminal status – such as refugee camps – placemaking can involve the indefinite and perpetual activity of negotiation and re-negotiation rather than seeking a static and linear space, geography, or social condition (Canagarajah 2021; Dryden-Peterson 2021). In such contexts, the futures that young refugees imagine are "complex, non-linear, and bound by opportunity, not geography" (Chopra 2020: 4).

Refugee camps

In recent years, "the camp" has received increased interest as an object of multidisciplinary inquiry and theorisation in light of expanding global humanitarian crises and displacement (Brankamp 2022: 383). Much research has been conducted in camps in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East, and there is now a burgeoning body of research focusing on Europe (Weima and Brankamp 2022: 339). The growing body of research on camps has examined a range of social, economic, legal-political, and emotional aspects. Camps have been discussed in terms of spaces of exception (Agamben 1998; Edkins 2000; Turner 2006), spatiality (Iazzolino 2020; Ramadan 2013), governance (Hanafi and Long 2010; Hyndman 2000; Nassar and Stel 2019; Woroniecka-Krzyzanowska 2017), legal-politics (Bender 2021; Sigona 2015; Singh 2020), economies (de la Chaux and Haugh 2020; Jansen 2018; Montclos and Kagwanja 2000), and emotions and affect (Brankamp 2022; Feldman 2015). Building on this and other work on refugee camps, I will focus on four dimensions of camps: camps as humanitarian spaces, camps' connections with the outside world, internal power dynamics among refugees, and camps as landscapes of despair and hope.

Refugee camps are often set up as humanitarian safe havens to provide refugees with immediate and temporary assistance until a permanent solution to their displacement can be found. The bulk of refugee camps are situated in the Global South and are managed by the UNHCR (for refugees worldwide) and UNRWA (for Palestinian refugees). These agencies are supported by implementing international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) in providing protection services to refugees, such as food, shelter, water, health, sanitation, and education. The UN refugee agencies are also tasked with coordinating efforts to find a permanent solution to refugees' displacement by facilitating refugees' voluntary repatriation to their country of origin, naturalisation or permanent residency in their country of first asylum, or resettlement to a third country.

As of November 2022, about 22% of the world's refugee population, or 6.6 million people, reside in refugee camps (UNHCR 2022). Approximately 2 million people live in self-settled camps, while 4.5 million reside in

planned and managed camps. Refugee camps often last for decades. This is partially due to the protracted nature of the crises and conflicts that initially displaced the refugees and partly due to host countries' unwillingness to end the camps' status as humanitarian spaces and integrate refugees into their societies as citizens. Yet camps become less transient over time, exhibiting characteristics of permanent settlements similar to cities. The implication of protracted encampment for refugees is that they may be trapped in legal-political limbo for generations, with no pathway to leave the camp and become productive members of society, wherever that may be (Knudsen 2009).

The intervention of international humanitarian agencies implies that camps are, in some ways, situated outside of the sovereign power and jurisdiction of the host state. One reason why humanitarian organisations perform state responsibilities is to relieve poor host countries of the financial burden associated with assisting refugees. This is related to the idea of burden sharing between affluent and poor host nations (Agier 2011; Schuck 1997). The intervention from outside benefits refugees because it gives them access to services that they might not otherwise have access to. It also protects them from potential discrimination by states, which may confer differential levels of protection to different refugee groups based on ethnicity, race, religion, and so on. However, the state's withdrawal from its responsibilities can put refugees in a state of perpetual vulnerability, insecurity, and uncertainty, as the effective operation of social protection programmes in camps can be affected by multiplicities of structural challenges beyond the capacity of the humanitarian organisations, such as global security, financial, geopolitical, and health crises. The practical distinction between the state and the international humanitarian system is that the latter is always temporary as it does not operate within its own sovereign space. A state can change the status of refugees from temporary to permanent by granting them citizenship.

Camps are popularly theorised as a geography of power relationships. The starting point for most of this literature is the description of camps as "spaces of exception", popularised by Giorgio Agamben, which situates camps and refugees within the axis of modern politics. In this view, camps are seen to operate outside of the usual legal system, reinforcing the way in which refugees are deprived of citizenship rights and freedoms, and thus reducing them to bare existence (Agamben 1998). Camps are exceptional spaces because they are often set up to deal with populations that disrupt or threaten the national order of things (Malkki 1996). The idea of exception and bare life in relation to refugee camps is widely contested as being a

generalisation, as it conceals the complex reality – especially in the context of long-term camps – in terms of the diversity of actors, exclusionary dynamics, and spatial politicisation involved in the formation of exception (Martin 2015; Oesch 2017; Ramadan 2013; Woroniecka-Krzyzanowska 2017). However, it highlights the political or practical functions that camps may perform for the state and humanitarian organisations, namely the separation of citizens from refugees, thus structuring spatial segregations of those people who are already outside the national order of things – no longer citizens with the protection of their state. Camps are simultaneously spaces of "care and control technology" (Hyndman 2000), using various strategies of headcount, biometric registration, and regular reporting of camp conditions with the goal of regulating refugees' physical mobility and coercing and disciplining them.

In some contexts, the physical spaces of camps overlap with cities and non-camp settlements, blurring the boundary between city and camp and between refugees and citizens (Jansen 2018; Martin 2015). As a consequence, a new space (in-between) – referred to by Diana Martin (2015) as "campscapes" – emerges. The "campscape" thus becomes the "threshold where the refugee, the citizen, and other outcasts meet" (Martin 2015: 9). Martin's work refers to the Palestinian refugee camp of Shatila in Beirut, but there are many other similar cases, such as Kenya's Kakuma Camp (Jansen 2018) and the Dadaab camp complex (Horst 2006). For instance, the Dadaab camps where I conducted my research are located within the boundaries of Dadaab town, and it takes less than an hour to walk from the camps to the town.

The "campscapes", or third/in-between spaces, are arguably spaces of productive and creative encounters between refugees and citizens, particularly where refugees and the local host community are of the same ethnic community, as in the Dadaab camps. In such contexts, refugees and locals may have had historical cross-border interactions long before the establishment of camps. As such, it is almost impossible not to establish relationships outside of the camps (Ikanda 2018: 581). Interactions within such spaces can facilitate social and economic prospects, which I would argue is one key feature that qualifies some camps as geographies of *development* while still operating as humanitarian spaces.

Camps are connected to globalised networks, relationships, and processes. They function as sites of transnational relations among local and global actors, including families in the diaspora, humanitarian organisations, donor governments, and governments and people of a country of origin (Horst 2006b; Malkki 1996, 2012; Zetter 2007). Camps can thus be places

where local-global relationships and identities (re)form. The globalised network of relationships may function as a crucial source of livelihood and socioeconomic progress for refugees in protracted situations with no possibility for durable solutions to their refugee status (Iazzolino 2020; Ramadan 2013; Van Hear 2014).

Aside from socioeconomic and power relationships between camps and the outside world, research has also focused on internal power dynamics among refugees. Refugees sometimes establish public authority and exercise power within the camps, contrary to humanitarian agencies' "vision of the camp as non-political" (Turner 2006: 759). The emergence of refugees' systems of internal governance and administration can result in differential distributions of material and non-material goods and privileges, including humanitarian public goods such as food, water, health, and education. A growing body of work has paid attention to the "politics of camps" to question the idea of "exception" and "bare life" in order to highlight the agency and the subjectivity of camp residents as they attempt to negotiate the control and exclusions imposed on them as non-citizens in the social, economic, and political lives of host states (Ramadan 2013; Sigona 2015; Turner 2016). Sigona (2015) introduced the notion of "campzenship" to reflect on the diverse strategies camp residents employ to negotiate rights in their daily lives and the particular and situated forms of political membership that camps produce.

The politics and power dynamics that exist among refugees might evolve due to one group having connections with external actors that facilitate their access to valuable social and material resources, providing them with some leverage inside the camps. Due to power disparity and the resulting unequal distribution of "goods", some refugee groups may experience abject marginalisation or the perpetuation of historical power disparities with opposing groups, even if they have the same ethnic, religious, and national background (Iazzolino 2020).

Gianluca Iazzolino (2020) examines the reproduction of power disparity among the Somali refugees in Kenya's Kakuma Camp. He discusses how Somali entrepreneurs, mostly from the Hawiye and Darood clans, took advantage of their social network (connections to ethnic-Somali Kenyan citizens) to gain better access to and control over valuable social infrastructures through which information, goods, and money circulate inside the camp. Because of this advantage, they were able to dominate the economic sector. Consequently, this reinforced the marginalisation and dependence of the *Somali Bantu*, a group with a history of socioeconomic exclusion within the Somali community. However, I would argue that it is

not simply clan affiliations that account for some refugees' advantages over others, but rather pre-camp trading relationships. Being in the same ethnic community as locals can provide refugees with unique social protections, especially during crises such as insecurity, food shortages, and disease outbreaks, where the humanitarian regime may not take extensive action or may be ineffective in its response.

Although camps are often portrayed as zones of exclusion, abject poverty and despair, and uncertain futures, the fact that modern refugee camps are connected to globalised spaces of social, economic, and political relationships arguably qualifies them as spaces of *hope* for progress. The assemblage of actors, social structures, and institutions associated with refugee camps provides resources that shape refugees' hopes and aspirations for the future and, at times, facilitates their actualisation. As such, in this thesis, I conceive camps as simultaneously "landscapes of hope and despair" (Peteet and Peteet 2005), signifying both the *possibility* of progress and the *perpetuation* of abject exclusion, vulnerability, insecurity, and poverty. This practically implies that camps across geography and time always have different consequences for the futures of individual refugees and refugee groups. Camps may create prospects for some while perpetuating the vulnerability and fragility of others.

This thesis builds on research on *refugee education* and research on *camp studies* to advance our understanding of young refugees' future-building endeavours in the context of long-term camps. Prolonged-duration refugee camps are often characterised by legal and political exclusion, resulting in protracted precarity and uncertain futures (Brun 2015; Dryden-Peterson 2017; Horst and Grabska 2015). As camps often constitute a liminal zone between host and home nations, young refugees' efforts to build their futures proceed amid extreme uncertainty over *where* (geographically) they will be and for *how long* (temporally). Despite the common legal-political limitations that young refugees in long-term camps may experience, the social contexts that shape, facilitate, or frustrate their future-making enterprise and the ways in which they strive to negotiate structural limitations may differ.

The Kenya – and specifically the Dadaab camps – are interesting and unique in their inhabitants' ways of exploring future-building activities through education. First, education in the Dadaab camps has a *unique history.* Refugees in the Dadaab camp complex had benefited from education within the Kenyan national system for *18* years before the UNHCR adopted such a policy as a global guiding principle for refugee education. As such, refugees in Dadaab have long been benefiting from a stable, predictable, and relatively high-quality education system that offers internationally recognised

certification, thereby affording some degree of security for a future-oriented education. Second, Kenya has granted refugees the right to establish and operate nationally accredited schools that are entirely outside of the formal humanitarian regime, referred to in this thesis as *refugee-led* schools.

Research aims and questions

This study aims to explore how secondary school and graduate-level Somali youth in Kenya's Dadaab camps attempt to build their futures through education, amid legal-political marginalisation arising from their non-citizen status, which results in uncertain prospects. Specifically, this study analyses the educational journey, aspirations, and experiences of refugee youth in relation to their schooling and aspirational endeavours, shedding light on their everyday practices and the evolving strategies they adopt to navigate challenges affecting their education and aspirations. In order to address this aim, the study poses the following primary question:

How do Somali secondary school and graduate refugee youth in Kenya's Dadaab camps attempt to build their futures through education, despite challenges posed by their non-citizen status?

I operationalise this broad research question in four research questions, and each of those questions forms the basis of an article (see Table 1 for the title and research questions in the articles).

Table 1: List of articles and research questions

Article	Title	Research question(s)
1	Hope against the odds: Understanding the aspirations of refugee youth in the Dadaab camps for resettlement-based overseas scholarships	Why do young refugees in the Dadaab camps of Kenya aspire to gain resettlement-based scholarships for tertiary education when the odds of getting these are minimal?
2	Working towards educational goals and negotiating hurdles: The navigational strategies of refugee youth	How do refugee youth in Dadaab camps work towards their educational goals and negotiate obstacles along the way?
3	Improving education quality and students' performances through nationally accredited refugee-led schools	What do nationally accredited refugee-led schools in Kenya's Dadaab camps do to improve the existing educational landscape available to refugee youth in terms of the quality of education and their students' performance in national examinations?
4	From refugees to citizens? How refugee youth in the Dadaab camps of Kenya use education to challenge their status as non-citizens	How do secondary students and graduates in Kenya's Dadaab camps use their education to try to challenge their status as non-citizens?

Contributions

This study makes significant contributions to knowledge by advancing our understanding of the future-building endeavours of young refugees in long-term camps through education. On the theoretical front, the study makes contributions in three ways. First, it deepens our understanding of the intersections between future-building, uncertainty, and hope by showing how hope functions as a productive tool in young people's endeavours to create futures under extreme conditions of precarity and uncertainty. It highlights how hope serves as a motivator for action, a coping mechanism against fragility and uncertain outcomes, and a bridge connecting young people's hoped-for and actual futures. Second, this study contributes to our comprehension of the complex interplay between resource structures and human agency with regard to how young refugees pursue their future aspirations and navigate structural and relational constraints. Third, it adds to our understanding of the interactions between education, refugeehood, and citizenship by highlighting what non-citizenship can mean for aspirational futures and how refugees navigate exclusions from citizenship rights, freedoms, and advantages.

Empirically, this study makes four key contributions. First, it enhances our understanding of the high educational aspirations of refugee youth in long-term camps by shedding light on the circumstances that shape and sustain their aspirations. Specifically, it illuminates why refugee youth in long-term camps may pursue difficult-to-achieve educational goals even in the face of less-than-positive odds of success. Second, this study sheds light on how young refugees navigate complex webs of structural and relational challenges that affect their education and aspirations. It highlights the interplay between diverse resources and strategies that young people use in response to various challenges and at different junctures along their educational journey into the future. Third, this study broadens our understanding of how the hopes and aspirations of young refugees change over time because of the diverse opportunities they gain access to (or lack thereof) and their individual choices, especially at critical turning points in their journey into the future. Fourth, this study makes a novel empirical contribution by drawing attention to emerging refugee-led formal actors in refugee education, namely the nationally accredited refugee-led schools in Kenya's Dadaab camps. It explains how these schools have emerged, how they operate, what services they offer, how they are governed, and how they differ from INGO-run schools.

Outline of the thesis

I will end the introductory section of the thesis with a description of the research context. In Chapter 2, I discuss and synthesise the central theoretical ideas that proved helpful in my analysis of the empirical data on which this thesis is based. In Chapter 3, I discuss the research design, data collection and analysis methods, and the thesis writing phase. I will also discuss the challenges I experienced during the research process and the study's limitations. In Chapter 4, I discuss research ethics, my positionalities, and how I managed power dynamics with research informants. In Chapter 5, I provide concluding reflections and a summary of the four articles that comprise this thesis.

Research context: Dadaab camps

The Dadaab camp complex is situated in the arid north-eastern region of Kenya, near the Somali border. It spans a vast area within the Dadaab and Fafi sub-counties of Garissa County. The camp complex comprises three camps: Hagadera, which is located in Fafi, and Ifo and Dagahaley, both of which are in Dadaab sub-county. The Dadaab camp complex is one of the world's five largest refugee settlements, along with Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh, Kakuma in Kenya, Za'tari in Jordan, and Um Rakuba in Sudan (UNHCR 2021a). The Dadaab camps were established in 1991 following the fall of the military government in Somalia, which resulted in a period of anarchy and civil war and caused massive displacement of refugees from Somalia into Kenya and neighbouring countries. The protracted nature of conflicts in Somalia has transformed the Dadaab camps into city-like settlements.

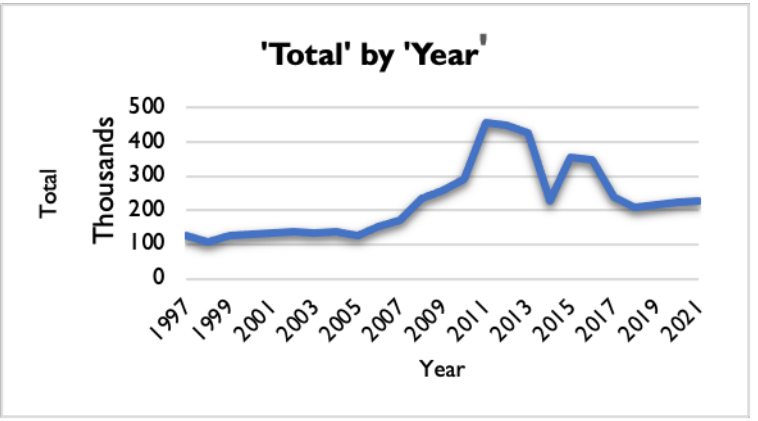
To reach the camps from Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, one must travel through Garissa town, the administrative centre of Garissa County. On leaving Garissa town, one quickly observes the dryness of the region and scorching sun during the day and the roughness of the unpaved roads. The journey from Garissa town to the Dadaab camps covers approximately 107 km. Upon entering Hagadera, the gateway to Ifo and Dagahaley, one can immediately observe scattered, semi-permanent shelters, mainly made of mud and sticks, covered with iron or plastic sheets. On a walk through the various blocks, visitors can realise how overcrowded some blocks are and the smallness of the shelters. The paths within some blocks are extremely narrow, with thorny trees, locally known as "Mathenge", often covering the sides of the roads. Basic amenities such as food, water, proper sanitation, and electricity are in short supply in the camps. Visitors can notice the heaps of

garbage accumulating in the streets, sewage from pit latrines flowing through the small streets, and stagnant water, especially during the rainy season. The weather is also extremely harsh, with day temperatures often exceeding 40 degrees Celsius.

In Dadaab, people live in nuclear and extended households. As of March 2023, the Dadaab camps hosted a total of 240,984 refugees and asylum seekers, with the vast majority (96.6%) having come from Somalia (UNHCR 2023). Smaller groups of refugees and asylum seekers originate from Ethiopia, South Sudan, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Burundi. Many refugees have been living in the Dadaab camps for decades. In fact, some of the children who were born in these camps are now mature adults who have graduated from secondary school and started their own families. This is a clear indication of how protracted these camps have become. Nevertheless, the population of the Dadaab camps has been fluctuating over the years, reflected in demographic changes (see Figure 1). This is due to various factors, including recurrent conflicts in Somalia and droughts and famines, which often result in a mass influx of new refugees and the return of other refugees.

At its peak in 2011, the population of the Dadaab camps was estimated to have reached half a million residents, largely due to a terrible famine in Somalia. However, the population has decreased over the years since, as many refugees have returned to Somalia on their own or through UNHCR-supported repatriation programmes, and the situation in Somalia has improved in the last decade. Additionally, some people have left the camps to resettle in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe, or by relocating to other parts of Kenya in search of a more sustainable living situation for themselves and their families. Despite these movements, the population of the Dadaab camps has been relatively stable since 2018, with some refugees leaving and new refugees and asylum seekers arriving.

(Figure 1) Demographic trend in Dadaab camps.[3]



Formal education in Dadaab camps

As of 2023, there are 55 nationally accredited primary schools and 22 nationally accredited secondary schools in Dadaab camps. Of these, 22 primary and six secondary schools, which are tuition-fee free, were established and are funded by the UNHCR and managed by INGOs on their behalf. The rest, comprising 33 *integrated academies*[4] (primary schools) and 16 secondary schools, are tuition-fee-paying schools established, funded, and managed by Somali refugees. There is no standard school fee across all refugee-led schools and grade levels. For instance, in integrated academies, lower classes (nursery to sixth grade) usually pay between 800 Ksh and 1000 Ksh, while upper classes (sixth to eighth grade) pay between 1200 Ksh and 1500 Ksh. In the case of secondary schools, fees for Form One and Two students often range between 2000 Ksh and 3000 Ksh, whereas for Form Three and Four students, it is between 3000 Ksh and 4000 Ksh. The vast majority of students attending refugee-led schools are from families with some source of income, including small businesses, incentive-paying jobs inside the camps, or support from relatives in Kenya, Somalia, or overseas.

Of the UNHCR-funded schools, the Lutheran World Federation manages the primary level, while Windle Trust International (WTI) manages the secondary level. The INGO-run primary schools were established early on

[3] Drawn from different secondary sources: 1997–2013 from Smith n.d.:100; 2014–2016 from the UNHCR Kenya statistics package (UNHCR 2016); and 2017–2021 from the UNHCR statistic package (UNHCR 2021b). Combination of different data sources in this way was necessary because not all the relevant information could be located in the UNHCR database.

[4] Integrated academies are primary schools that offer both secular and religious education in a unified system.

during the emergency phase; secondary schools were first established in 2000, with one secondary school in each of the three camps. It was only in 2008 that the first refugee-led schools at primary level were established, and five years later, in 2015, the first refugee-led secondary school was established in Hagadhera camp. While the UNHCR collaborates with the Kenyan government to supervise the overall educational programmes, the implementing INGOs are responsible for delivering the educational services. The private schools directly consult with the Kenyan Ministry of Education on all administrative issues through the offices of the Dadaab and Fafi Sub-County Directors of Education. This indicates that they are entirely independent of the humanitarian system and accountable only to the Kenyan government.

Since 1994, schools in Dadaab camps have relied on the Kenyan national education system for curricula, examinations, and certifications. The actors who were originally responsible for integrating refugees' education into Kenya's national education system were well ahead of their time, as such a strategy – to base education in refugee camps on the host country's national education framework – was only adopted as the UNHCR's global education policy in 2012. Before adopting the Kenyan curriculum, schools in Dadaab camps implemented the Somali curriculum in the hope that refugees would soon return to their country. As conflicts in Somalia persisted and more refugees moved to Dadaab, the UNHCR and the Kenyan government transitioned these students from the Somali curriculum to the Kenyan curriculum. The transition period lasted from 1994 to 1998, when the first ten refugee students passed the KCPE examination, which is conducted at the end of the eighth grade. As there was no secondary school in the camps in 1999, students in this cohort who qualified for secondary education were given scholarships to study at Kenyan regional schools outside the Dadaab camps (Dryden-Peterson, Dahya, and Adelman 2017:1020). This cohort was the first to graduate from secondary school, and those who scored a B or higher on the exam were the first to be awarded a university scholarship within the WUSC programme, which provides resettlement scholarships to study in Canada at the tertiary level.

In 2000, the UNHCR established the first of three secondary schools in the Dadaab camps: one school each in Ifo, Dagahaley, and Hagadera. In 2008, the first two nationally accredited, refugee-led, integrated academies – namely Bushra Integrated Academy in Hagadhera and Liban Integrated in Ifo Camp – were established, providing private, primary-level education. In 2015, Bushra High in Hagadhera Camp was established, becoming the first refugee-led, fee-paying secondary school. Since then, the number of refugee-

led schools – both primary and secondary – has increased exponentially. The refugee-led schools supplement the UNHCR-funded schools in terms of increasing access to education for refugees and enhancing the quality of education in the camps.

Access to tertiary education for refugees in Dadaab camps has been expanding through the WUSC, DAFI, and BHER scholarship programmes. However, they are still too limited to meet the demand of the fast-growing number of secondary-school graduates each year. Access to higher education opportunities, jobs (including incentive-paying employment inside the camps), and the possibility of moving out of the camps – either through resettlement, return to their home country, or self-driven integration into Kenya – are all options that can enable young refugees to *move forward* with their lives. These opportunities can mitigate the negative emotions that may result from a period of inactivity following graduation from secondary school and the absence of potential prospects. Without engagement, young people may experience physical, cognitive, economic, and social immobility, hopelessness, despair, and shame.

The current Kenyan education system consists of eight years of primary school, four years of secondary school, and four years of tertiary school (8–4–4). However, the implementation of a new curriculum, popularly referred to as a "competency-based curriculum" (CBC), has begun and will replace the old curriculum by 2028. The last cohort to use the 8–4–4 system will take the KCSE in 2027. The CBC system is structured into four levels: two pre-primary years, six primary years, six secondary years (subdivided into three junior-secondary years and three senior-secondary years), and three years of higher education (2–6–6–3). The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), which is part of the Ministry of Education, oversees the development of the national curricula, while the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) is in charge of conducting and marking examinations and provides certification to students at the end of primary and secondary education. The KNEC is also responsible for the examination and certification of students at public universities and colleges (KNEC 2023).

2
Theory

This thesis investigates the future-building endeavours of refugees in long-term camps through education. The theoretical aim is to advance our understanding of how young refugees plan and act on prospects through education and navigate challenges of structural marginalisation and uncertainty that affect their future orientation. This section discusses and synthesises the key theoretical ideas that proved valuable in my analysis of the empirical data on which this thesis is based. First, I discuss the idea of future-building and its connection to uncertainty and hope. Second, I address the relationship between hope and aspirations, highlighting the utility of hope as a bridge that connects imagined and actual futures. Third, focusing on the interfaces between resource structures and human agency, I discuss how people pursue aspirations and navigate structural and relational constraints to achieve them. In the final section, I discuss citizenship and refugeehood, underscoring what refugee status can mean for aspired futures and how refugees may negotiate exclusions from citizenship rights, freedoms, and privileges.

Future-building, uncertainty, and hope

"Future-building" is understood here as practices in which "ordinary" people design, plan, and act on possible and desirable futures (Appadurai 2013: 267) in order to attain a goal or set of goals and manage negative adverse effects. It may involve multiple interconnected processes, actors, and strategies. The "future" is characterised by a multiplicity of possible changes that can either be positive or negative (Bengston 2018: 198) relative to the current state of affairs. Creating futures is a socially embedded activity that involves interacting with other people and within social structures that are complex and densely interconnected. People's actions towards their aspired future are shaped by the physical, social, and political contexts that form their emotional and material needs, hopes, and fears (Pain and Smith 2016; Tize

2021). People may pursue individually desired goals (e.g., scholastic achievements) (Behnke, Piercy, and Diversi 2004; Bellino 2021), group ambitions (e.g., gender equality and membership of a polity) (Bellino 2018; Hingston 2016; Müller 2022), or universally shared aspirations (e.g., peace, justice, and prosperity) (Kamau, Chasek, and O'Connor 2018; Kioupi and Voulvoulis 2019).

Making futures is connected to the idea of belonging – the desire for some form of attachment to particular places (placemaking or homemaking), formal membership to a community, and attainment of a particular material, emotional, social, and political status (Lähdesmäki et al. 2016; Van Liempt and Staring 2021). The practice of belonging creates the negative experience of non-belonging, characterised by marginalisation, dislocation, and disruption (Horst, Erdal, and Jdid 2020; Huot, Dodson, and Rudman 2014; Huot et al. 2014). As such, inclusion or exclusion in society has practical implications for individual and collective future-making activities. Whether individuals or groups will attain their aspired futures depends on the opportunities and resources that are accessible to them through their position within the larger social, cultural, economic, and political structures of society. The resources necessary for achieving desirable futures are unevenly distributed in society (Appadurai 2013; Moensted 2021). The conceptual implication of this understanding is that it challenges the view of the future associated with neoliberal political-economic ideology, in which individuals are made responsible for their success and blamed for their failures in achieving their aspired futures (Zipin et al. 2015: 229).

In society, an uneven distribution of power and resources confers disproportionate advantages, resulting in unequal capacity for action and goal achievement. Goals that affluent persons can attain with minimal effort and time may require more effort and time from underprivileged individuals, or they may never be realised regardless of how much time and resources they sacrifice. Nonetheless, given the mystery and uncertainty of the future (Bengston 2018; Hänsch, Kroeker, and Oldenburg 2017), as well as the fact that people's hopes and aspirations are embedded in a complex, chaotic, and interconnected network of social relationships and structures, it is difficult to predict with certainty whether individuals will attain their aspired futures, regardless of their position in society. What is unequivocal, however, is that marginalised people face a greater level of uncertainty and have fewer resources to navigate that uncertainty (Ansell, Froerer, and Huijsmans 2022; Højlund et al. 2011).

Uncertainty over the future can cause individuals to experience doubt, fear, anxiety, and indecision. Yet, in a context where the present is

unpleasant, uncertainty over the future could hold the possibility that the future might still be better. Indeterminacy can provide people with a sense of hope and possibility to realise their future aspirations, "mediated through the material assemblages that underpin, saturate, and sustain everyday life" (Cooper and Pratten 2014: 1). As Balen and Merluzzi (2021) noted, the way people evaluate uncertainty, negatively or positively, can induce different cognitive, emotional, and behavioural responses. Cognitively, they can experience threat, vulnerability, doubt, denial, but also a sense of opportunity, confidence, faith, and acknowledgement; emotionally, they can feel worry, fear, indifference, avoidance, despair, as well as calmness, courage, interest, attraction, and hope; and, behaviourally, they can engage in avoidance, inaction, deferral, inattention, as well as action, decision-making, and information seeking (Balen and Merluzzi 2021: 2623).

Hope is one of the various social practices people use to manage the experiences of uncertainty in their everyday lives, which emerge from various domains of social life (e.g., economic, political, and security) and life circumstances (e.g., health) (Zinn 2016) and in relation to aspirational endeavours (Kleist and Thorsen 2017). Hope is learnable through pedagogical and performative acts and can emerge through these practices (Giroux 2004: 38). Hope is understood here as future-oriented, "anticipatory consciousness towards the 'not-yet-become'" (Kleist and Thorsen 2017: 7), characterised by both uncertainty and "positive potentiality" (Turner 2020: 716). Hope fosters people's motivation to act and persist in goal pursuit, even in the face of extreme uncertainty and overwhelming negative odds against success. Ethnographic research in the contexts of crisis and displacement, as well as risky international migration, demonstrates how people mobilise hope as a means to manage an uncertain future. Hope can function as a buffer and mediatory resource against an unknown future (Hernández-Carretero and Carling 2012). Hope has been suggested to be a "driver of action" (Horst and Grabska 2015: 10) or a "generative of action in that it accesses a temporal sense of potential, of having a future" (Brun 2015: 24).

In the face of "despair and a feeling of existential closure" (Turner 2020: 715), where uncertainty yields to the certainty of futurelessness, people may still hold some hope to live for the moment. They may differentiate their hopelessness as human beings from the hope they are obligated to have by their religious faith. Simon Turner (2020) describes the kind of hope that remains when windows of imaginable possibilities that were sustained by social structures (e.g., politics) are blocked as "hope against hope". It could be argued that people may still gain some form of benefit from being hopeful, even amid ontological finality, or as "idle men" who rely on "empty hope"

(Miceli and Castelfranchi 2010: 251). Research in both medical and social science recognises the utility of faith and spirituality as the ultimate remaining source of hope when the structural and material elements that shape and sustain people's hope (e.g., health-related technologies and politics of belonging) lose their motivational value. It has been argued that "hope is the last to die" (Birenbaum 2015; Casarotto et al. 2003). In what follows, I will broaden the discussion to highlight how hope connects aspired and actual futures.

Hope bridging aspirations

I understand aspiration as a generative process involving people's capacity to imagine, desire, express, and pursue alternative goals (Appadurai 2013; Zipin et al. 2015). The goals people perceive as valuable, the pathways they envision as effective for attaining these goals, and whether or not they can motivate themselves to follow these paths are all socially embedded aspects that are not cognitively developed in isolation (Ojala 2017: 81). As such, in this thesis, I see both hope and aspiration as socially rooted processes that are shaped and nurtured through *socialisation* – a future-oriented process through which people internalise societal norms, ideals, expectations, and aspirations through interactive communications and learn to perform their social roles in order to become members of society (as a citizen, co-worker, friend, mother, and so forth) (Colaner and Rittenour 2015; McCabe and Barnett 2000; Trommsdorff 1983).

Hope can serve as a bridge that connects aspirations and actual futures. In this thesis, I explore one approach to analysing the utility of hope for aspirations: the role that hope plays in people's pursuit of difficult-to-attain goals when their chances of success are small, the odds are stacked against them, and their actions may not be sufficient to influence the outcome. In such a context, I argue that hope cultivates and sustains people's commitment, motivation for actions, and resilience – even in the face of extreme difficulties, uncertainty, and a high possibility of failure (Bishop and Willis 2014; Bury, Wenzel, and Woodyatt 2020).

Hopeful people perceive the possibility of success in a positive light without disregarding low odds. They may embrace slight positive illusions, which may influence their vision of reality without necessarily creating a significant reality distortion. As such, they exhibit heightened optimism and a slightly inflated sense of control when faced with adversity (Snyder et al. 1991; Taylor and Armor 1996). The positive conception of oneself and the future is mediated by reality constraints, but it is adaptive because it is associated with a person's coping abilities – particularly sheer tenacity,

sustained goal engagement, and elevated hope (Snyder 2002; Wells and Iyengar 2005; Wright, Crawford, and Sebastian 2007).

Hope makes goal achievement possible because of its power to inspire action and function as a productive strategy for coping with negative emotions associated with unknown prospects. As Folkman (2013) argues, hope is both a *problem-focused coping* strategy that allows individuals to evaluate and deal with the problem at hand and an *emotion-focused coping* tool:

The belief that the hurricane is coming frees the person to prepare for the hurricane (problem-focused coping). The expectation that the hurricane will veer off course regulates anxiety (emotion-focused coping). By combining both expectations, the person is also likely to continue attending to information about the hurricane's path (problem-focused coping) (Folkman 2012: 905).

This excerpt highlights that hope, as a positive emotion, is inextricably linked to negative emotions such as fear or even anxiety. The implications of this for people's aspirations are that by first accepting the problem at hand (e.g., poverty, insecurity, unfreedom, and climate change) and then embracing the negative emotions associated with these problems and focusing on changing or influencing them, goal-orientated hope and action are elicited. Research has shown the dialectical relationship between fear and hope because both are linked to events occurring in society and to the future (Gulyas 2015; Ojala 2007; Saunders and Jenkins 2012). It is through the expression of fear that people better respond to and actively prepare for the future with hope and creativity (Saunders and Jenkins 2012: 494). Fears and hopes are essential components of subjective wellbeing because they make a difference to whether or not a person in a difficult circumstance is hopeful and optimistic about escaping it. The prospects of getting out of it are higher for people who are hopeful and optimistic than for those who are fearful and pessimistic because the latter will not have the power to influence change in their situation (Gulyas 2015: 875).

Aspirations involve two clear outcomes: success or failure. Hopeful people may not only focus on how to achieve the preferred outcome, but they also prepare for possible failure by envisioning contingency pathways that can be used to navigate towards a desired goal or alternative goals (Snyder et al. 1991). Imagining the prospect of failure prepares hopeful aspirants' psychology, enabling them to adapt quickly rather than being trapped in the state of failure and experiencing negative emotions for an extended period of time without making any desirable progress. The role of hope in mediating navigation against failure also sheds light on how hope builds people's

resilience – the ability to bounce in the face of adversity such as failure (Ungar 2008: 225), especially when trying to reach hard-to-achieve goals.

How might aspirants legitimise their hope in relation to difficult-to-achieve goals? Aspirants may motivate their hope by evoking the positive social and material values that achieving high-level goals might have not only for them as individuals but also for their greater society. For example, young people may frame their educational aspirations not only to attain personal gains but also to contribute to their nation and the world at large. The use of collectivistic logic as a motivator in working towards a difficult-to-achieve goal may imply at least two things. First, such goals may be harder to give up compared to individualistic goals because doing so may mean giving up on the values they represent, including individual and collective wellbeing, identity, faith, rights, and freedoms. Thus, it may be argued that people's proclivity to persistently pursue difficult-to-attain goals can be explained by their belief that accomplishing such aspirations may fill a particular void in their individual and collective lives.

Second, a collectivistic vision may make aspirants also develop an understanding that they are not alone in their journey and that they have people they rely on for various forms of support (practical, financial, or emotional) to navigate obstacles. Collective hope and aspirations are often invoked across different domains of society – social, political, and environmental – to solicit other people's support, collaboration, and participation in collective actions for collective goals (Braithwaite 2004; Cohen-Chen and Van Zomeren 2018; Ojala 2017). At times, individuals may also come together to work collectively so that they foster and facilitate the hope of individuals, such as young people in their community who are no longer succeeding in schooling and who are not having a chance to go to university because of the poor-quality education. They may focus their intervention on creating private tuition to boost young people's performance or establishing an alternative school. Such intervention may target individual hopes and aspirations but, in effect, it may also create collectively beneficial outcomes for the larger community.

Besides the outcome-focused justifications, people may also motivate their hope based on the confidence that they have in their ability to navigate challenges to succeed in their goals, as well as the confidence that they have in other actors and social institutions connected to their aspiration, which can enable them access to the resources they need to navigate hurdles. Personal confidence can be shaped by the progressive improvements that individuals make in activities related to their end goal. The confidence towards other actors and institutions might emerge from pre-existing experiences in society

regarding where and from whom to seek support and some level of guarantee that it will be offered. If the hope is connected to globally orientated aspirations (e.g., sustainable peace, gender equality, and curbing climate change), then the pool of interested people may expand, adding to the confidence of aspirants (Kamau et al. 2018; Kioupi and Voulvoulis 2019; Ojala 2017). When it comes to challenges that have collective impacts, people trust the resourcefulness of human beings and the power of collective effort to find solutions to shared problems.

While hope has positive implications for people's aspirations, it is often viewed as a *double-edged* sword. Hope could be a productive coping mechanism against harsh reality, but it could also be a means of avoiding this reality and the obligation to act (Ojala 2017: 78). Hope in relation to difficult-to-attain aspirations can even have more adverse impacts, as some people may experience failure of aspirations with a sudden lack of social and structural resources as well as the psychological ability to deal with failure – particularly among individuals on the margins of society, such as refugees. The resulting negative experiences may lead to toxic psychological strain, which is a precursor to mental illness or suicidal behaviour (Horst 2006a; Zhang et al. 2013).

In the next section, I will expand the discussion on the intersections between individual and collective capacities to highlight how people navigate structures of constraints and opportunities in pursuing their aspirations.

Navigating towards aspirations: *Resource–agency intersections*

The capacity to navigate towards goals requires material and social resources to explore, practise, conjecture, and refute the future (Appadurai 2013:189). Privileged members of society have access to the resources they need to explore and experience the future more frequently and, consequently, develop the capabilities to envision alternative pathways that are flexible and have strategic value. Though the less privileged members of society have the cognitive ability to aspire, they lack access to the quality resources they need to act on the future effectively. As a result of their material and social disadvantages, their envisioned pathways to the future are likely to be fixed, less flexible, and have a more fragile horizon of aspirations (Appadurai 2013: 188–89).

The challenge of unequal distribution of resources does not necessarily prevent disadvantaged members of society from aspiring and working towards their goals. However, their social, economic, and legal-political disadvantages can make it harder for them to navigate critical junctures of the journey into the future compared to their more privileged peers. They may

experience obstructions at different spatial and temporal stages of their journey. For example, in relation to young people's educational aspirations, such barriers could be located at the *transition* point where they move from one level of education to another (e.g., secondary to higher education) or in the *conversion* phase, where they attempt to translate educational success into economic and social upward mobility or one aspiration into networks of aspirations and capabilities (Bellino 2021; Bourdieu and Richardson 1986; Hart 2016; Mkwananzi and Melis Cin 2020).

Understanding the temporal position at which obstacles to aspirational endeavours emerge is critical for both analysis and policy formulation for practical interventions to support disadvantaged people. Nonetheless, by focusing too much on constraints, we risk losing sight of subtle structures of opportunities and different practices and strategies that marginalised people use to navigate structural barriers. Arguably, to gain a more nuanced understanding of how people navigate towards their desired goals, we should regard social structures and the resulting constraints as fluid and ever-changing, as opposed to a solid reality (Giddens 1984; Vigh 2009). The continuously changing social conditions can give rise to dynamic practices and capabilities. As such, "navigation" into the future can be better understood as an *emergent* act within constantly changing space and time – "motions within motions" (Vigh 2009: 420). Henrik Vigh (2009) describes the strategies people use to navigate unstable, risky, and changing social environments as "social navigation".

The core ideas in Vigh's concept of "social navigation" resonate with what sociology scholars such as Anthony Gidden and Norman Long describe as "human agency" to explain how social structures and agency interactions affect social change. Long (2003), who builds on Giddens (1984), describes the notion of *agency* as the capacity of individuals to process social experiences and develop strategies to cope with life, even in the face of the most severe forms of "coercion… limits of information, uncertainty, and other constraints (e.g., physical, normative, or politico-economic)" (Long 2003: 16). Individuals seek to solve challenges, establish ways to affect the movement of social activities, keep track of their own actions, observe how other people react to their acts, and take note of the many different possible outcomes (Giddens 1984; Long 2003).

In this thesis, I conceptualise aspirants' capacity to navigate towards goals as an emergent capacity that is dependent on the intersection between their social *resources* and *agency*. Economic, cultural, social, and legal-political leverage, for example, can foster and facilitate people's ability to act and achieve their goals. At the same time, their agency enables them to

reflect on challenging circumstances and mobilise the social and material resources available to them to address these challenges. In the context of structural marginalisation, people may use strategies relevant to their particular context to negotiate, challenge, and claim access to social and structural advantages. They may, for example, use advocacy and self-organisation to claim recognition and redistribution of resources, belonging and membership, durability in the face of temporariness, and dignity in the face of victimisation (Appadurai 2013: 126). As such, people can develop the ability to manoeuvre towards their aspirations by utilising their inherent human agency.

The consideration of resource–agency intersections can enable us to appreciate how people's actions and reactions in a particular space and time can potentially generate changes that can create new social structures and actors. Under such circumstances, people who were powerless in the past can gain some form of power and create some degree of progress. In the final section, I will discuss citizenship and refugeehood, underlining what refugee status can mean for aspired futures and how refugees may negotiate exclusions from citizenship rights, freedoms, and privileges.

Citizenship, refugeehood, and spatial-temporal liminality

In the modern state system, the notion of "citizenship" denotes legal status and political membership in a polity. It functions as a facilitator of access to rights, freedoms, and benefits associated with being a citizen, such as participation in a state's social, political, and economic activities. It also defines the legal obligations of citizens towards the state (Bauböck 2009). As the dominant actor in structuring social relationships (or non-relationships), the state governs who can be included or excluded, how non-members can gain membership, and how much access non-citizens have to the rights, freedoms, and advantages associated with citizenship (Bloemraad and Sheares 2017). Citizenship exists in practice because it is a means for the state to legitimise its sovereign power over its subjects – through inclusion/exclusion and distributions of rights and resources, including allocating differential benefits among citizens (Lochery 2012). Moreover, the citizenship idea is used to legitimise the protection of citizens against security threats and non-citizen competitors in a world of intense competition for limited spaces, resources, and opportunities (Daley 2013).

Citizenship magnifies the relationships between a citizen and "citizen's other" – a subject position that is often used to describe refugees, stateless people, aliens, and second-class citizens (Macklin 2007: 337). As Macklin (2007) asserts, being a citizen's other reflects not merely being an alien with

respect to a specific state but also being "*alienated* from the global regime of territorially sovereign states as such" (Macklin 2007: 339, emphasis added). Experiencing alienation or a sense of not belonging anywhere can increase people's feelings of vulnerability, insecurity, and uncertainty over their future. On the other hand, the social construction of citizen and citizen's other is a social practice that is aimed at creating a dichotomised image of people: good and bad, desired and undesired, active and passive, deserving and undeserving of citizenship and its associated rights, freedoms, and privileges (Andreouli and Dashtipour 2014; Horst et al. 2020).

Beyond the state, the concept of citizenship has been applied to other levels of relationships that are below and above the state: below the state (commune and region), between states (transnational), across states (supranational), beyond states (global and cosmopolitan), and de-territorialised spaces (terrorists and criminal networks) (Macklin 2007; Martin 2009). The broadening of the *spatiality* of citizenship can be attributed to a number of global phenomena that are driven by globalisation processes, including migration, human rights regimes, technology and communication, and neoliberal capitalism. These processes have increased the mobility and connectivity of people, resources, and ideas, reducing the state's autonomy and power and establishing additional decision-making areas outside of the state's formal control. It might be argued that the globalisation process has weakened state-centric national citizenship as people begin to belong to numerous places and relate to persons beyond the geographical boundaries of the state (Appadurai 1996; Falk 2000).

The extension of citizenship levels below and beyond state-bounded relational spaces is analytically important because it can help us explain "acts of citizenship", whether political activities (e.g., protests, occupations, and marches) or non-political activities (e.g., volunteering work by non-citizens) that may go beyond conventional citizenship practices and may challenge socio-historical relationships (Artero and Ambrosini 2022; Isin and Nielsen 2008). Acts of citizenship can have emancipatory and transformative power when manifested by citizens claiming their rights to recognition and inclusion (Horst et al. 2020: 78) or demonstrating solidarity with other citizens or non-citizens to challenge the norms of political community, belonging, and social inclusion and exclusion (Nyers 2008; Schwiertz and Schwenken 2020). Some studies use the notion of "lived citizenship" to describe the everyday acts of resistance performed by asylum seekers, irregular immigrants, ethnic minorities, young people, and other marginalised groups against social exclusion (Kallio, Wood, and Häkli 2020; Lister 2007; Lister et al. 2003; Wood 2022). Through citizenship practices, non-citizens may gain

recognition and inclusion. They may also claim rights through performing familiar civic acts such as resistance, occupation, strikes, and demonstrations (Isin 2017). Acting like a citizen, performing citizenship obligations, or claiming citizenship does not always necessitate legal and political membership of a state.

In this thesis, I use "citizenship" to mean both legal-political membership of a polity and "acts of citizenship". This *dual* meaning helps us understand the impacts of modern state-centric citizenship practices for non-citizens, particularly refugees, and how the disadvantages caused by non-membership are negotiated. The status of being a refugee – *refugeehood* – denotes a distinct social category and legal-political subject that constitutes a unique set of challenges (Bradley 2014; Gibney 2015). Refugees were once citizens of a state, but the political contract between them and the state collapsed. This has translated to a loss of membership and access to other citizenship freedoms. Becoming a refugee terminates citizenship; regaining it in turn terminates refugeehood.

What implications might being a non-citizen have on refugees' future-building efforts, hopes, and aspirations? Being a non-citizen puts refugees in a state of extreme vulnerability, insecurity, and protracted uncertainty (Brun 2015; Horst and Grabska 2015), thus making their homemaking and placemaking practices critically difficult (Sengul 2022; Van Liempt and Staring 2021). The state that hosts them is under no obligation to provide refugees with full rights, freedoms, and social protections, nor to facilitate for them opportunities to realise their future aspirations. This implies that several generations of refugees may live in an extended legal-political liminality that is characterised by abject poverty and socio-spatial destitution and destabilisation. The long-term exclusion that many refugees across the world experience can be understood as a practice in which the state has "weaponised time" (Rainey 2019: 138) with the objective of rendering them passive, devoid of productive agency, and fixing them "temporally and spatially" (Brun 2015: 22).

The state of prolonged precarity and uncertainty that characterises refugees' situations places them not only *spatially* (between home and host nation) but also *temporally* (between present and future) in both imagined and actual futures, the immediate and the long-term. Spatial-temporal liminality can operate both as a zone of vulnerability and fragility and as a zone of creativity and introspection that can generate togetherness and "hold the potential for subversion and transformation" (Lucas 2014: 199). Refugees, like other marginalised groups, actively and persistently attempt to generate progress, stability, and sustainability in their lives (Hammond 2018;

Jansen 2018). Although they act in a context of profound marginalisation and prolonged uncertainty, they often attempt to navigate these conditions and employ a variety of practices, strategies, and globalised networks of social resources. As such, refugees are neither vulnerable and without agency nor are they entirely free agents with unlimited power to influence and control their futures and transform the structures of citizenship that constrain their effort to create their aspired futures (Brun 2015; Ikanda 2018). This hybrid status necessitates that we pay attention to both refugees' strengths and their weaknesses without slipping into oversimplification. It highlights both the potential of refugees to influence the direction of their futures and achieve their desired goals, as well as the limitations that structural constraints, such as citizenship regimes, beyond their control, can impose on their progress and success.

3
Research design and methods

This study explores how Somali secondary school and graduate refugee youth in Kenya's Dadaab camps attempt to build their futures through education, despite challenges posed by their non-citizen status. The study relies on ethnographic data (including interviews with students, graduate youths, teachers, and parents) and observations (classroom and home-based) of student learning and interactions among students and teachers outside of the classroom (school-setting). The data were drawn from two distinct school settings: one UNHCR-funded and the other a refugee-led private school.

The study relies on an ethnographic case study design that draws empirical information from particular social and cultural experiences of refugees and schools in Dadaab camps (Atkinson 2007) as situated in a specific empirical setting or system over a long period through in-depth data collection and from multiple sources of information (Creswell and Poth 2016: 77). Given that Somalis constitute the majority of the Dadaab camp population and have resided there the longest, this study focuses on the education and future-making endeavours of Somali youth. Considering the protracted nature of conflict in Somalia, and the recent focus on return from the region and beyond, the focus on the Somali case allows us to better understand the long-term impacts of refugee education on the futures of individuals and communities in both Kenya and Somalia. I chose a single case study to provide a deeper understanding of the subject and the question(s) in this study (Seawright and Gerring 2008; R. K. Yin 2013). This study does not aim for generalisability based on "sample-to-population logic" (Robert K. Yin 2013: 325), but rather aspires to analytical generalisation, which implies abstraction based on conceptual ideas that can be relevant to other cases (Robert K. Yin 2013). I selected Dadaab camps for three reasons. First, as noted in the introduction section, education in the Dadaab camps has a unique history as refugees there had been receiving education within the Kenyan national system for 18 years before the UNHCR adopted such

practice as a guiding principle for refugee education globally. The stable, predictable, and relatively high-quality education system, which provides some degree of security for a future-orientated education, makes the Dadaab case an interesting one to explore how education shapes refugees' future-building efforts.

Second, Kenya is the only country that allows refugees in camps to establish and run accredited schools outside of the formal humanitarian system. Referred to as "refugee-led schools" in this thesis, these schools can contribute significantly to our understanding of how refugees act on the difficulties and opportunities within their context to minimise risks of undesirable futures and influence the direction and the outcomes of their futures in positive ways. Third, my extensive experience with and connections to education in Dadaab camps informed my case selection as I believe that, in the endeavour to make significant empirical and theoretical contributions, a longitudinal insider experience provides crucial complementary knowledge that enhances research efficiency, speed, and cost-effectiveness. However, the "insider" position is not without its own potential shortcomings; I will describe my positionality and how it influenced the research process in the next chapter.

Fieldwork: Pilot and main study

The data in this study are drawn from ethnographic fieldwork I conducted in two phases: an exploratory pilot phase and a main phase in 2019. I also conducted several virtual follow-ups in 2020 and 2021. During the fieldwork, I stayed in Ifo Camp and visited schools daily, focusing on two secondary schools. One was independently established, funded, and managed by refugees. The other was established and funded by the UNHCR and managed by WTI.

The pilot was a learning phase and a trial-and-error process. During this time, I assessed my proposed research ideas, identifying possible problem areas, and evaluated the feasibility of my research design and instruments before embarking on full-scale fieldwork. A pilot study before major fieldwork is recommended because it can help to identify flaws in the proposed plan and tools. Pilots can be used as an opportunity to improve research methods or instruments that are too complicated or unsuitable for the intended research. Furthermore, a pilot study allows for the consideration of critical issues in the research process, such as ethics, research validity, and security and health in a research context. As such, this pre-work reduces risks that could lead to failure of research projects (Sampson 2004; Williams-McBean 2019). The pilot phase was my first practical engagement with ethnographic research and tools, and with educational research. I was new to

many of the data collection elements and had much to learn through experimentation and identifying what methods and tools would be most appropriate.

During the pilot phase, I explored students' and teachers' perceptions and experiences of life and education in the camps, and students' experiences of education in public and private schools, their future aspirations, sources of support, and the constraints that confront their schooling. I conducted 22 classroom observations, focusing on history and Islamic religious studies, and interviews with three teachers and six students. In the classroom, I wanted to familiarise myself with the space where actual educational activities are taking place in order to develop an understanding of the learning content, teaching strategies, learning resources, and the physical and relational elements of the classroom. Some of the classroom events, behaviours, and atmosphere that I observed were crucial eye-openers for me, and I was able to follow up on these observations with students and teachers in the subsequent interviews. One such observation that provided insight into the learning practices of refugee students was that, in most of the sessions I observed, the students hardly asked any questions. James, a history and Kiswahili teacher, told me this in an interview:

> *Most of these students them their mind is exam oriented. They want the teacher to teach them what will come in the exam. When you are teaching something that will give them general knowledge about life, general knowledge about the outside world, they will see that as irrelevant. You know, most of the time in history, you have to go beyond the books so that the student is supposed to know about how the world is going and the economy of the world. But most of the students want you to define for them terminologies and what will come in the exam. That is why most of them do not ask questions.*
> *(James, interview, Dadaab, 19 July 2019)*

The teacher highlighted the special importance that students ascribe to getting a good grade in the examination, which they saw as connected to their chances of achieving opportunities for the future.

Throughout the pilot period, I contacted my supervisors on a regular basis to solicit advice on different interview strategies and feedback on interviews conducted. During the gap between the pilot and main fieldwork, I did not leave Kenya: I spent about 20 days in Nairobi. While in Nairobi, I attended a conference on refugee education co-organised by the KICD, the UNHCR, Windle Trust International, and the Kenya Equity in Education Project. In separate meetings, I also had the opportunity to meet refugee youth studying at different universities in Nairobi through the DAFI programme and others who had managed to establish themselves and work in Nairobi. Furthermore, I attended a three-day debriefing and training session on data collection and analysis with my colleagues in a project researching education for urban

refugees in Nairobi. The training was conducted by my supervisor, Cindy Horst, and provided me with a crucial learning moment.

By the time I returned for the main phase, I had gained confidence and practical strategies to manage some of the challenges related to data collection. One of the challenges I encountered during the pilot phase was that the interviews were usually 30–50 minutes long and not detailed enough. Through reflection and discussion with colleagues, I ascertained that the interviews were too short and lacked detail because I was overly reliant on the interview guide – not actively listening to the conversation – and was often nervous, even with students. I managed these interconnected challenges in the main fieldwork phase by breaking down interview sessions with refugee youth into three broad themes to be conducted in phases: 1) personal and educational background and life history; 2) relationships; and 3) future orientation. Such clear but broad themes allowed me to be more open in my approach. This strategy not only improved the effectiveness and substance of the interviews, but also significantly enhanced the value of the information provided. The first phase of the interview was a crucial confidence-building stage so that my informant and I could feel more at ease.

Another issue I experienced during the pilot stage was that, despite spending a great deal of time in the classrooms, my observations were not yielding any substantial eye-opening information. Teaching in refugee schools is top-down and the teachers dominate the class, with very little interaction on students' parts. For example, in observing a lesson of 40 minutes, the only thing you might see is the teacher explaining the topic of the day, writing notes on a blackboard, or dictating them for students to write. To avoid wasting time in this way, I decided to interact with students and teachers outside of the classroom. I interacted with teachers in the staff room and with students during their break times and observed and participated in in extracurricular activities outside the classes. This made a difference because it allowed me to interact with students and teachers in a less informal way and in lesser hierarchical settings than the classroom.

During the main fieldwork, I also decided to focus more on interviews with teachers, students, and parents as I found the information elicited in the pilot interviews exciting, but too brief. I conducted 30 interviews with 13 ethnic Somali Form One students (seven male and six female); 14 interviews with eight male refugee teachers; four interviews with four Somali parents (three female and one male); and six interviews with six Kenyan national teachers (three male and three female). The students in the study ranged in age between 18 and 25, which is a high age bracket for Form One students, considering the average entry age to secondary school in the Kenyan

education system is 14–15 years. I conducted some interviews with male students and teachers in the evening after school or at weekends and at my place of residence. However, for girls, all the interactions I had with them and interviews I conducted with them took place during the day and at their schools.

Two practical considerations prevented me from engaging with girls in the evenings and outside of school. First, girls often assist their mothers in the evening with household chores, and their parents may not be receptive to organising after-school meetings. Second, since my informants were Somalis, girls, and Muslims, they may not have felt safe and comfortable engaging with unfamiliar and non-family members in the evenings, given the security challenges in the camps. I gained access to all students, including girls, through our daily interactions during school hours and scheduled appointments with students whom I wish to interview. In the next chapter, I will discuss in more detail some of the practical challenges pertaining to access and power dynamics and how I managed them.

Data analysis

The data analysis carried out in this study builds on a combination of *inductive* and *reflexive iterations*. An inductive iterative process means that themes and patterns emerge from the data instead of the data being actively categorised into pre-defined themes, which is common in deductive approaches (Thomas 2006). Reflexive iteration calls us to move back and forth between empirical data and theory and to link evolving concepts, categories, and themes to develop insight (Arsel 2017; Srivastava and Hopwood 2009). Reflexive iteration was crucial in both the early phase of data collection and the post-data-collection analysis. During data collection, this approach allowed me to gradually refine the interview guides based on emerging observations and findings. In the post-fieldwork analysis, reflexive iteration enabled me to identify new themes and interesting insights every time I revisited the data, while also leading me to adjust codes during the data analysis.

The practical data analysis process took place in two phases: during and after fieldwork. While in the field, I gradually reviewed fieldwork notes, listened to interview recordings, and read interview transcripts. I appreciated the data analysis in this phase because it allowed me to feed new insights into the interview protocols, to seek answers from informants in subsequent interviews, and to conduct follow-up interviews with previous informants. The data analysis in the post-fieldwork phase proceeded in several stages. First, all interviews in Somali were transcribed and then translated into

English and interviews conducted in English were also transcribed. Some of the transcriptions and translations of interviews were done by research assistants. Second, I reviewed the transcripts to ensure they were accurate. During the review process, I took notes on emerging themes and interesting quotations.

Third, the themes identified in the review process were used to create a codebook, which was later used to develop NVivo codes (themes). The codebook provided the foundation for systematically coding all interviews. Coding the interviews with NVivo enabled me to manage the data efficiently, access information quickly, identify key themes in the data, and cross-compare different themes. Although the initial development of the codebook served as a building block, I continued to change the overall framework of major themes and sub-themes in the coding process. After completing the coding, I prepared to write essays for this thesis, conducting several rounds of reading through themes, taking notes on my reflections, and interpreting the information. The process of writing the essays for this thesis involved progressive interpretation of data.

4
Research ethics and positionalities

Positionality, reflexivity, and power dynamics

The concept of "positionality" encourages researchers to reflect on their situated knowledge, power dynamics, and actions (Rose 1997; Simandan 2019). Both our perspectives on the world and the actions we take are influenced by the social, cultural, intellectual, and spatial conditions that shape our identity, social status, and lived experiences. We perceive ourselves, and are perceived by others, through a dynamic and intersectional process touching on factors such as race, class, age, gender, sexuality, and socio-political status (e.g., alien, refugee, or citizen). Our social, cultural, intellectual, and spatial positions, as individuals and as members of diverse social groupings, situate us in distinct positions within well-established social, political, and economic power hierarchies (Fisher 2015). As such, it is crucial to acknowledge and affirm our positionality in academic research, and to constantly reflect on our relationships with informants, the existence of power dynamics, and the objectives of our study. Self-reflexivity – the "active engagement of the self in questioning perceptions" (Van Heugten 2004: 208) – helps us appreciate the situatedness of our knowledge. Thus, it allows for in-depth research and the ability to identify and counter biases that might propel findings towards predisposed directions (Chavez 2008; Corlett and Mavin 2018).

Reflecting on our positionality as researchers matters for several reasons. First, our position can "affect both substantive and practical aspects of the research process—from the nature of questions that are asked, through data collection, analysis and writing, to how findings are received" (Carling, Erdal, and Ezzati 2014: 37). Second, it can influence our decisions, power dynamics, expectations, intentions, and subjectivity (Chavez 2008; England

1994; Starkey et al. 2014). Third, reflecting adequately on positionality can have an impact on the amount of time and financial resources we devote to our research. For example, researchers who are not culturally, linguistically, or historically connected to the community under study may require more time and resources to gain a comprehensive grasp of socially and culturally complex processes than those who are connected. Recognising how my position could influence the research process, I have been reflecting iteratively on my positions before, during, and after fieldwork. In this section, I present some of these reflections, focusing on my positionality – its advantages and challenges, my self-reflections, and my assessment of the power dynamics at play. This reflection matters not only for ethical reasons, but also for academic transparency.

My positionality

I regard the Dadaab refugee camps as my "native hometown", especially Ifo Camp where I lived until I was 20 and where I attended primary and secondary school. I was also fortunate to have served as a teacher in the primary and secondary schools for two years after graduation, before accepting a resettlement opportunity in Sweden. I lived in Sweden for eight years before returning to Dadaab to conduct this research, and I still have many relatives and friends in the camps. During my fieldwork, I had the privilege of living in one of the blocks in Ifo Camp, where I could visit the schools daily, observe lessons in Form One classes, and interact with students and teachers during break times. I also visited some students' homes in the evenings to observe their evening schoolwork.

I share a culture, nationality, and language with the Somali community, which comprises the majority population in the Dadaab camps and which is the primary focus of my research. These shared features gave me the confidence to live among the refugees and conduct my research with greater freedom. My connection to the context and informants offered me several advantages. First, given my familiarity with the research context, different government institutions, humanitarian organisations, and local networks in the Dadaab camps, I was able to access the field much faster and to gain the trust of key gatekeepers, including school administrators and teachers, and key informants, namely students.

Second, it has enabled me to make well-informed decisions on matters that are critically important for my safety, wellbeing, and research quality. One such critical decision involved where to live during my fieldwork – the UNHCR compound or inside the camps. While I was conscious of the fact that my safety and psychological wellbeing were essential for the success of

my research, I was convinced that I would be able to live inside the camps without any fear. At the time of my visit, the security level in the entire north-eastern province where Dadaab is located was ranked as security level 4, according to the UN six-level security system. Because of the security reality in the region, a curfew was imposed from 6 pm to 6 am, and UNHCR staff, partners, and guests were required to stay in the UN compound. Visiting the camps required armed security escort, and free movement to the camps by visitors was restricted.[5]

By living inside the refugee blocks, I could avoid these logistical hassles and re-establish myself well inside the community enabling me to conduct research at any time of the day in the camps. I did not need any gatekeeper, a security guard, a translator, or a research assistant. Thus, I was practically independent in executing my research. I was able to join students in their evening preps at home and observe them as they engaged in their reading, dialogue, and support for each other in completing their assignments. Additionally, I was able to conduct most of my interviews with students in the evenings as they were often too busy during school hours.

Apart from my research, I also immersed myself deeply in other social activities in the camps. I attended several burials, prayer rites, and marriage ceremonies, and I joined friends and teachers for coffee in the evenings. All these activities would have been difficult had I been living in the UNHCR compound. While I always felt safe inside the camps, I was still cautious not to overexpose myself because gangsters and drug addicts in the blocks could pose a threat to my safety. As a result, I adopted several safety measures, including plain dress, walking around town with company, avoiding interaction with known gang members, and ignoring phone calls from unknown numbers.

Despite the benefits my insider status afforded me, accessing the field was not without its challenges. First, as is common for anyone returning from abroad, I experienced a great deal of tension about meeting the financial expectations of relatives and friends, especially during the first month of the fieldwork. My first month in the field was highly intense and exhausting, as I was receiving visits from family members and friends almost every day. Male and female elderly relatives, especially, visited me in groups, taking up a great deal of my available work hours. In my society, it is customary to be patient with elderly people, regardless of how busy one is, and to give them gifts upon their departure – regardless of how small the sum may be – particularly when one has come from abroad. Giving is associated with

[5] As a visitor myself, I was only given the option to stay inside the camps because I used to live there and had family still in residence.

gaining a "blessing" and preventing the "evil eye". Whether or not I subscribe to such beliefs is irrelevant here, but I strove to conform to the norm and always have "change" at hand when at home.

Second, my status as an insider did not exempt me from the formal authorisation needed to gain access to and conduct research in the camps. As a foreign citizen with a foreign university affiliation, I was required to comply with legal procedures regulating foreign researchers doing fieldwork in Kenya and the special rules that apply to the context of Dadaab camps. First, I was required to apply for a research permit from the NACOSTI – the National Commission for Science and Innovation – and I had to pay the standard fee for researchers from Europe. In conjunction with this application, I was expected to be affiliated with a local university or research institution in Kenya. Second, I was required to apply for security clearance from the Refugee Affairs Secretariat at the Ministry of Interior and Coordination – the Kenyan government agency in charge of refugee camp management. Third, I was always required to carry around my yellow fever vaccination card so that I could prove that I had received the compulsory vaccination before entering Kenya. Complying with all these regulations required more time and resources than a local researcher would have needed.

Self-reflexivity

A researcher's self-reflexivity – an active commitment to questioning one's perception and power in relation to the people of study is critical to the research process and findings (Van Heugten 2004: 208). Self-reflexivity is crucial for an in-depth exploration of data and for confronting biases that might propel findings towards predisposed directions. As someone doing ethnography at "home", I was always aware of the opportunities and challenges that my insider experiences could present to the research process. On the positive side, my long-term experience with the educational system in Dadaab camps as a student and teacher may have enabled me to bring in a longitudinal perspective and new insights that outsiders may need a longer time and more resources to access (Chavez 2008). Negatively, my insider positionality could deprive me of the curiosity advantage that an outsider enjoys – the ability to question and become interested in almost everything critically. An insider's vision is often regarded as blurred since everything appears normal to him/her (DeLyser 2001).

In order to manage the risks of my insider subjectivity and maximise the potential advantages, I adapted several strategies. First, I decided to focus my research on two different school systems: refugee-led and INGO-run schools. I was familiar with the INGO-managed school since it is the same school I

attended in my secondary education and later worked in as a teacher. The refugee-led school was established in 2018, and no private secondary school existed in the camps when I lived there almost a decade ago. Second, I engaged in deep self-reflection regarding my experiences and perceptions of refugee camps and education systems. Third, I relied on a methodological triangulation by using multiple methods of data collection, including interviews, observations, mapping exercises, small talks, and others. The aim was to increase the diversity and the richness of the data. Fourth, I used an inductive method to analyse the data instead of a deductive procedure because I wanted to understand the research problem through the data I collected. Fifth, my coding structure (analytical units) was reviewed by my supervisors after I compiled it independently.

Managing power dynamics

Reflecting on and recognising how power dynamics affect one's perception, behaviour, and knowledge production is crucial for conducting ethical and humane research (Lokot 2019). Though ten years ago I was in the same socioeconomic circumstances as my informants, today I am in a more privileged position compared to refugees in Dadaab camps. Thus, our differing socioeconomic and civic-legal statuses could be a source of ethical dilemma if not reflected upon iteratively. As Bourdieu (1996) notes, when the researcher occupies a privileged social position, he/she could subject research participants to *symbolic violence*, as it is the researcher who initiates the process without any prior negotiations with participants. This implies that the researcher's privileged status could reduce participants to objects of research rather than equal partners in the study (Bourdieu 1996: 19). This section discusses some of the research elements relating to power dynamics, and how I managed them.

Informed consent of research participants is a central ethical principle that is founded on respect for human agency, individual freedoms, and the right to self-determination (Hugman, Bartolomei, and Pittaway 2011). Given that refugees, particularly young people, are a marginalised group, it is imperative to ensure that no harm is caused during the research process. Therefore, I took extra precaution not to take their first consent for granted. Instead, I relied on an "iterative model", continually negotiating and renegotiating consent throughout the fieldwork process, instead of merely requesting it once and assuming its existence for subsequent interactions (Mackenzie, McDowell, and Pittaway 2007). I found this strategy particularly useful when dealing with students on at certain times. For example, on some occasions, students who had agreed that I could use their personal information (e.g.,

names or other identifiable features) in my writing, went on to decline consent for the same thing on a different day.

Managing power dynamics requires shrinking the distance between researcher and informants and building trust (Liamputtong 2007; Lokot 2019). To achieve this, I interacted with students during their breaks and at prayer times. For the first three weeks of my visit to a new school, I focused on creating familiarity and friendliness. Thus, my data collection in this period consisted primarily of unstructured observations of what was happening in the school through interactions with students and teachers during free time.

Apart from the power asymmetry between researcher and participating students, the role of teachers and senior student government members in a school setting may also compromise the informed consent of young people. For example, in the school where I conducted my research, I noticed a clear hierarchical relationship between students and teachers and among the students themselves. Among students, elected members of student governments occupied a powerful decision-making position and were often highly respected by their peers. Thus, negotiating access to students through influential teachers or school prefects may breach students' rights and freedom to make an independent decision about participating in the research. Aware of these potential ethical risks, I decided not to rely on teachers or students as "fixers"; instead, I approached the students personally.

Besides the ethical challenges, relying on teachers and student leaders as gatekeepers also posed some methodological challenges. As I noticed during the first phase of my study, most of the students I interviewed that had been recommended to me by teachers were high-performing students. Thus, I was concerned that this data might not be representative in terms of student experience across different levels of performance. To manage this situation, I used the score sheet of the most recent exam results to select students from across a range of attainment levels. This reduced the information biases that would have emerged had I continued to interview only top-performing students.

Besides carefully managing informed consent, I adhered to the "do-no-harm" principle by implementing several precautionary measures to protect the identities of my informants throughout the research process. First, I assigned carefully chosen pseudonyms to all informants in the interview recordings and transcripts. I adhered to this approach constantly, even when informants had permitted me to use their real names and identifying characteristics. By doing so, I provided an additional layer of protection and minimised any potential harm that exposure may cause the informants.

However, during the writing phase, it became apparent that in a few cases anonymisation would be impractical due to the high profile of certain informants within the camp context, such as one of the school managers in one of the refugee-led schools. In such cases, anonymising the informant could render the information unreliable to readers familiar with the context. As such, I used the actual names of these informants after obtaining further explicit consent to do so. Second, in addition to the anonymisation, I securely stored interview recordings and transcripts on a hard drive and cloud-based platform, safeguarding access with a strong password in both cases.

5
Summary of articles

Hope against the odds: Understanding the aspirations of refugee youth in the Dadaab camps for resettlement-based overseas scholarships

This article examines the logic that underpins refugee youths' persistent pursuit of difficult-to-achieve educational goals, even when their chances of success are slim. The article focuses on Dadaab youths' aspirations for resettlement-based scholarships for tertiary education by analysing ethnographic data, including semi-structured interviews and future-aspirations mapping exercises with Form One students. While the article focuses on one educational pathway that refugee youth use to seek to achieve their aspired futures, it provides critical insights into what they aspire to achieve with their education and into the social and cultural contexts that shape and sustain their educational aspirations. It shows how young refugees regard education as a means to achieve physical, economic, social, and cognitive mobility. Young people hope that success in education will grant them access to overseas scholarships and give them a chance to achieve a better life than the one they currently lead. This hope keeps them motivated to work hard and do well in school. Nevertheless, no matter how hard they work and how determined they are to succeed, only a few will obtain the resettlement-based scholarships they desire at the end of their secondary school journey.

The article empirically contributes to a growing body of research from across the world studying young refugees' educational aspirations, the challenges facing their schooling, and their hopes for their desired futures through education, especially in protracted camp contexts. It fills an empirical gap by explaining why young refugees in long-term camps may persist in pursuing difficult-to-realise educational goals, even when obstacles appear insurmountable and failure may lead to despair and toxic psychological strains. This paper is empirically novel because it is the first to

analyse the phenomenon of young refugees' aspirations to resettlement-based scholarships for tertiary education from students' own perspectives. It deepens our understanding of the rationales that shape and sustain young refugees' hope and motivation to pursue their aspirations despite a complex web of constraints. This is crucial both empirically and theoretically because it allows us to better grasp the imaginative power of young refugees – their ability to envision and prepare for futures despite uncertainty, precarity, and exclusion from citizenship rights and freedoms. By extension, we gain a greater understanding of young people's sense of agency, their resilience, and their coping strategies in the pursuit of difficult-to-achieve aspirations in a context of precarity and uncertainty. Furthermore, the findings in this study challenge the institutionalised global discourses and practices that represent young refugees from a deficit-based point of view.

Theoretically, the paper adds to the literature on the connections between hope and aspirations by shedding light on how hope might function as a source of motivation to pursue aspirations against all odds, which can sometimes lead to success. It argues that, contrary to the literature on "false hope", high hope can have positive values in the context of crisis and uncertainty. High hope can facilitate the development of critical social capacities such as effective planning, risk management, coping skills, and a strong sense of resilience – all of which can not only boost the possibility of success but also serve as productive resources to move forward and adjust to aspirational failure. However, this does not imply that we should disregard the double-edged effects of high hope. Some aspirants may experience failure due to a sudden lack of social and structural resources as well as the psychological ability to deal with it, particularly among people on the margins of society, such as young refugees. As this article shows, this can lead to toxic psychological strain, which is a precursor to suicidal behaviour.

Working towards educational goals and negotiating hurdles: *The navigational strategies of refugee youth*

This article examines how refugee youth in Dadaab camps work towards their educational aspirations and navigate the complex web of constraints affecting their schooling and aspirations. Drawing on the concept of navigational capacity and ethnographic data, including semi-structured interviews with Form One students and secondary school graduate youth, the article presents three overarching strategies that refugee youth deploy in pursuing their educational aspirations and negotiating constraints at different stages of their educational journey: (1) persistent commitment to succeeding in and through education; (2) resisting socio-cultural expectations; and (3) seeking out relational interventions. The article highlights young refugees'

resilience and ability to cope with adversity; exercise their power to influence situations threatening their education and aspirations; and define their future, beliefs, and preferences. The findings presented in this article highlight the numerous ways in which young refugees manifest their agency, resilience, and resourcefulness while pursuing their educational goals and navigating institutional, sociocultural, and relational constraints.

This article empirically contributes to emerging research examining how young refugees pursue their educational aspirations and negotiate the everyday challenges affecting their education and the possibility of achieving their aspirations. Earlier research has explored young refugees' experiences and navigational capacities as they transition from secondary school to university or work in both camp and non-camp settings. However, we know too little about how refugee youth themselves, especially those who live in protracted camp contexts and are still in secondary schools, deal with the everyday challenges that threaten their schooling and aspirations. This article deepens our understanding of the various strategies that graduate youth deploy to transition to the next stages of their lives. However, it specifically adds to our understanding of the navigational capacity of still-in-school refugee youth in camps, particularly those in the first year of secondary school. This latter contribution is significant because the contextual circumstances affecting young refugees' education and aspirations at the secondary school stage differ from those affecting them in post-secondary education spaces. Furthermore, the secondary school level is arguably the formative phase in which young people's educational aspirations take shape. The first-year secondary school youth are much younger than their graduate peers and thus largely depend on adult relationships for support.

Theoretically, this article advances our understanding of the intersections between resource structures and human agency by highlighting how diverse strategies and resources (economic, social, and human capital) that young people deploy might shape their capacity to navigate structural and relational challenges affecting their education and aspirations. I argue that an effective alignment of young people's agency and their various valuable social resources might influence how well they are able to navigate obstacles and potentially achieve their educational aspirations. Even though unequal access to crucial social resources may result in a differential capacity to navigate structural barriers, access is insufficient without the individual and collective capacity to mobilise essential resources in a timely manner and use them effectively for their benefit, regardless of context or socioeconomic conditions. This insight challenges the dominant academic and political assumptions about the aspirations of young people from disadvantaged

socioeconomic backgrounds, which underscore unequal access to structural resources as the major threat to their capacity to aspire and successfully realise their aspirations.

Improving education quality and students' performances through *formal* refugee-led education initiatives

This article explores what nationally accredited, refugee-led schools in Kenya's Dadaab camps do to improve the existing educational landscape available to refugees in terms of quality of education and their students' performance in national examinations. The article is based on ethnographic research conducted in 2019 and virtual follow-up data collected in 2020–2022. It presents several interconnected factors that led to the establishment of refugee-led schools, including the rising deterioration of the quality of education at the UNHCR-funded schools, low performance levels, and massively recurrent cancellations of students' national exams, especially the KCSE. The study also demonstrates how refugee-led schools are succeeding in improving the overall quality of education as well as their students' performance in national examinations, through the practice of strict *administrative oversight*, direct *accountability* to parents, a strong *student voice* in their learning and in the school administration, and *active collaboration* and *efforts* of key stakeholders – teachers, school administration, parents, and students. The article puts forward the case of the nationally accredited, refugee-led schools in Dadaab camps as a strong argument that direct support to the state and the refugees themselves – as opposed to the provision of education via intermediary INGOs – could lead to a higher quality of education and better results in national exams.

This article is empirically novel because it initiates a new academic and policy discourse on nationally accredited refugee-led schools, a phenomenon with which scholars in refugee education, refugee studies, and the humanitarian field are less familiar. It makes a significant contribution to the evolving academic and policy discourse on the localisation of humanitarian aid by presenting new information that challenges the dominant misconceptions and misrepresentations about refugee-led organisations and their humanitarian and development activities. This study shows how refugee-led initiatives and organisations can sometimes be more effective than international humanitarian and development organisations in terms of service delivery and bridging power imbalances between aid providers and recipients. The study also underscores the importance of taking local capabilities seriously. People in crisis and displacement contexts always attempt to navigate social challenges in some way, despite how marginalised and vulnerable they are.

From refugees to citizens? How refugee youth in the Dadaab camps of Kenya use education to challenge their status as non-citizens

This article explores how refugee youth in Dadaab attempt to challenge their status as non-citizens through secondary education. The article draws on ethnographic research, semi-structured interviews, and life-history interviews conducted with secondary school pupils and graduates in the Dadaab refugee camp and secondary school graduates from Dadaab who have relocated to Mogadishu. Refugee youth in Dadaab camps hope that education can enable them to access citizenship rights and freedoms – particularly those of physical mobility and the right to work – allowing them to build a future for themselves and their families and to be members of and participate in society. The article highlights that attaining citizenship rights, civic participation, and belonging are key aspirations for these young people, whether they are in Dadaab or Mogadishu. However, their ideas about what these key aspects of citizenship actually are and how to achieve them depend on their geographical location.

Empirically, this article contributes to a better understanding of refugee youths' efforts to resolve their legally and politically induced precarity and uncertain futures through education, and thus to achieve a more secure and sustainable future. It highlights the various structural barriers preventing refugee youth from achieving their future aspirations, as well as how their aspirations may shift over time and space and the various implications of such changes. This empirical contribution is crucial in informing policies and practices that aim to promote the education and aspirations of refugee youth and enable them to regain their citizenship rights and freedoms – so that they can better convert their knowledge and skills into meaningful livelihoods for themselves and their families.

Theoretically, this article contributes to the literature on the intersections between education, aspirations, and (non-)citizenship. It provides insight into how refugees attempt to navigate their legal status as non-citizens and how education may be an avenue for contesting the legal-political boundaries of the modern state-centric citizenship regime. It also highlights how the precarious legal status of refugees influences their educational experiences, their pursuit of their future aspirations, and the outcomes they may achieve through education.

6
Conclusion

Drawing on ethnographic research, this study explored how Somali secondary school and graduate refugee youth in Kenya's Dadaab camps attempt to build their futures through education. The study focused specifically on young people's educational journey, aspirations, and experiences in relation to their schooling and aspirational endeavours, in order to highlight their everyday practices and the evolving strategies they adopt to navigate obstacles affecting their education and aspirations.

Young people's efforts to build meaningful futures through education in Dadaab camps are arduous, as is the case for many young refugees in protracted camp situations around the world. It is a challenging journey on which the path to the future is filled with enormous hurdles. Some of these constraints emerge during schooling, while others arise after secondary school graduation. Low-quality education and poor performance on national exams, particularly the KCSE, are among the most significant challenges students face while schooling that may have an after effect (life after school). After graduating from secondary school, refugee youth face constraints on the possibility of converting their education into meaningful economic gains and freedom of mobility, as well as limited access to tertiary education and vocational training prospects. In general, these constraints are inextricably connected to the legal-political marginalisation that characterises their position as non-citizens. The non-citizenship status renders young refugees' futures through education highly unpredictable in terms of what kind of futures schooling may give them and when and where such futures will take place (Bellino 2018; Dryden-Peterson 2017). In spite of this extreme uncertainty surrounding their futures, secondary school youth in Dadaab camps do not often evaluate their prospects negatively. Instead, they often express hope and confidence that they will succeed in and through education.

One common strategy among secondary school youth in Dadaab camps that they use to attempt to shape their futures is working hard in order to get

good grades on the KCSE exams. They hope that such grades will allow them access to a resettlement-based scholarship for tertiary education in Canada, opening up a pathway out of the camps and potentially towards regaining full citizenship rights and freedoms (see article 1). It is often challenging for most students to graduate from secondary school with good enough grades to qualify them for WUSC scholarships. However, I argued that the hope young people place in their education sustains their motivation to pursue this difficult-to-achieve goal, despite the extreme uncertainty of whether they will succeed.

While most young people perceive the possibility of success positively, they do not often disregard the low odds, nor do they fix their ideation of the future into a single pathway. Instead, they prepare for possible failure by imagining contingency pathways that can be used to navigate forward if their preferred route out of the camps is blocked (Snyder et al. 1991). Alternative pathways that students reflect on and that they may later pursue include seeking nationally or camp-based tertiary education opportunities or returning to Somalia (see articles 1, 2, and 4). The implication of this capacity to envision alternative futures is that it may enable young people to adapt quickly rather than being trapped in a state of failure and experiencing negative emotions for an extended period after graduating from secondary school without making significant progress. As such, hope for the future strengthens young people's resilience – the ability to bounce back in the face of adversity, including failure (Ungar 2008: 225).

Graduation from secondary school represents a critical juncture in young refugees' efforts to build their futures through education. It is a point characterised by a gap in young refugees' access to valuable opportunities and divergent navigational strategies as they seek to progress forward. In terms of opportunity, they arrive at this crossroads equipped differently for their onward journey. One crucial finding highlighted in this study that explains such differences is the increasingly widening gap between secondary school graduates from UNHCR-led and refugee-led schools in terms of capacity and performance in the KCSE exams. Good performances and strong competencies are critical for young people to navigate uncertain futures. More students from refugee-led schools qualify for university studies in Kenya and resettlement-based scholarships for tertiary education in Canada than those from UNHCR-led schools (see article 3). This disparity is not solely attributable to differences in structural resources at the school level that may facilitate quality education and good performance but also to the differential financial resources at the family level that can impact on young people's success in education.

How young people navigate the post-graduation crossroads depends on structural opportunities that may open up for them (or not) and their choices. As demonstrated in articles 2 and 4, refugee youth adjust differently to the reality of post-graduation, which is characterised by limited tertiary education opportunities and a lack of rights for wage-paying jobs. Some who qualify for tertiary education opportunities attempt to seek access through different scholarship programmes. Others return to Somalia soon after graduating in search of better jobs – a strategy that often leads to enhanced financial opportunities and expanded freedom of physical mobility. Yet, considering the persistent security threat that the Al-Shabab terrorist group poses to the safety of civilians and the stability of Somalia, this can sometimes be a destructive adaptive strategy. Young people's dynamic attempts to progress forward can be regarded primarily as an emergent act shaped by the intersection of opportunity structures, constraints, and their individual agency (Giddens 1984; Long 2003). It is a movement within constantly changing social and relational spaces and time – "motions within motions" (Vigh 2009: 420).

Given the protracted legal-political limbo that is characteristic of the Dadaab camp, and just like many other refugees globally, many refugee youths ultimately may not be able to secure an opportunity to leave the camp and become productive members of society, wherever that may be (Knudsen 2009). In such circumstances, some refugee youth may choose to project their unfulfilled hopes and aspirations onto subsequent generations by, for example, seeking to support the younger generation to succeed in and through education. Such intergenerational solidarities and supportive relationships are exemplified by the evolution of the nationally accredited refugee-led schools – established, managed, and funded by refugees. The emergence of these schools was primarily motivated by dwindling quality education – and, consequently, poor student performances – in the UNHCR-run schools (see article 3). The development of these schools is being spearheaded by a small group of academically successful youth who have completed bachelor's and master's degrees while in the camps but who perhaps have not yet found a secure prospect to leave the camps. The consequence of prolonged legal-political marginalisation, namely causation of an "unknowable future" (Dryden-Peterson 2017), may introduce a strong intergenerational element to the future-making enterprise of young refugees through education – a perpetual and timeless project.

Limitations and recommendations for future research

This research has a number of empirical and theoretical limitations that present a potential for future research. To the best of my knowledge, this study is the first to report information about both nationally accredited refugee-led and UHCR-funded schools in Kenya's Dadaab camps. However, due to the limited scope and the design of the study, a comprehensive comparison of education within the two systems was not feasible. As such, future research may benefit from conducting a comparative study of these two systems. First, it would be interesting to explore the similarities and differences across refugee-led primary and secondary schools in terms of governance structure and principles, school culture, students' learning experiences, and other relevant aspects. Furthermore, it would also be interesting to conduct a comprehensive quantitative study comparing the UNHCR-funded and the refugee-led schools to investigate how they are similar and different in terms of governance, service delivery, quality of education, students' performance in national exams, parents' and students' perceptions and experiences, and more. Second, given the financial hardships in the camps, it would be compelling to investigate where the large number of students who attend refugee-led schools receive financial support to cover their school fees. Finally, it would be interesting to investigate what motivates parents to send their children to fee-paying schools when there are free UNHCR-funded schools. Further study on refugee-led schools can also advance the debate on the localisation of humanitarian aid, creating possibilities for more effective policy- and practice-related interventions for refugees.

Theoretically, this study excluded two exciting bodies of literature that may have been pertinent to explore in relation to future-building and the associated issue of uncertainty. I did so for methodological and practical reasons, particularly considering the limited scope of the thesis. The first set of literature relates to the diverse ways people may cope with uncertainty. Besides hope, as explored in this thesis, people could use rationality, spirituality, faith, avoidance, emotion, practical reasoning, or a combination of multiple means (Anderson 2010; Zinn 2008, 2016, 2021). The second set of literature I have omitted that is closely linked to futures and uncertainty is the scholarship on *risk* and how people might prepare for or attempt to manage future risks. Given the significant fragility that often characterises young people's future orientation in contexts of prolonged crisis and displacement, subsequent research must pay attention to the risks associated with young people's future-building efforts and coping strategies, which can be either constructive or destructive.

Svensk sammanfattning

Denna studie undersöker hur somaliska ungdomar som både går gymnasiet och de som har en avslutad gymnasieexamen från Dadaab-lägret i Kenya och som strävar efter att bygga sina framtider genom utbildning, trots de hinder som deras avsaknad av medborgarskap medför. Baserad på etnografisk datainsamling analyserar denna studie dessa flyktingungdomars utbildningsbanor, ambitioner och upplevelser. Studien synliggör deras vardagliga metoder och dynamiska strategier som de tillämpar för att uppnå sina mål och överkomma de utmaningar de ställs inför.

Tidigare studier utförda i olika delar av världen har belyst unga flyktingars höga utbildningsambitioner (Bellino 2018; Molla 2021; Morrice et al. 2020; Soong et al. 2022; Wesley Bonet 2022). Flera av dessa studier som reflekterar över flyktingars utbildningsambitioner och erfarenheter har genomförts i samband med vidarebosättningsdestinationer i Globala Nord (Molla 2021; Morrice et al. 2020; Shakya et al. 2010; Soong et al. 2022; Stevenson och Willott 2007). Senare studier om detta ämne har dykt upp med fokus på även Globala Syd där de flesta flyktingar bor och då oftast i flyktingläger (Bellino 2018, 2021; Dryden-Peterson 2017). Oavsett om det rör Globala Nord eller Syd så visar dessa studier en konsekvent klyfta mellan flyktingars utbildningsambitioner och de strukturella möjligheter som kan göra det möjligt för dem att uppnå den framtid de föreställer sig (Lee 2021:790). Flyktingar i alla sammanhang upplever ofta betydande utmaningar när det gäller sin utbildning och andra strävanden. Den befintliga forskningen har dock inte fullt ut utforskat de rumsliga och tidsmässiga implikationerna av icke-medborgarstatus på flyktingars ambitioner och navigationsstrategier. De används av både individer och deras samhällen för att klara av medborgarskapsrelaterade uteslutningar under långvarig förflyttning särskilt i mer de facto permanentade lägermiljöer. Denna avhandling syftar till att bidra till att fylla detta forskningsgap genom att undersöka just unga flyktingars strävanden. Det görs genom att studera både individuella åtgärder och strategier såväl som samhällsbaserade initiativ med betoning på den kritiska rollen av flyktingledda utbildningsinitiativ för att stödja dessa utbildningssträvanden hos unga flyktingar. För att uppnå studiens syfte besvaras har följande övergripande frågeställning formulerats: Hur försöker somaliska gymnasie- och flyktingungdomar i Kenyas Dadaab-läger bygga sin framtid genom utbildning trots utmaningar som deras status som icke-medborgare innebär?

Unga flyktingars ansträngningar att bygga meningsfulla framtider genom utbildning i Dadaab-läger är mödosamma. Det är fallet för många unga

flyktingar i mer permanentade och långvariga läger-situationer runt om i världen. Det är en utmanande resa för dessa ungdomar där vägen till framtiden är fylld av enorma utmaningar. Vissa av dessa begränsningar dyker upp under skolgången medan andra uppstår efter avslutad gymnasieexamen. Utbildning av låg kvalitet och sämre studieresultat på nationella prov, särskilt KCSE, är bland de viktigaste utmaningarna som eleverna möter under skolgången. Dessa kan ha en direkt inverkan på livet efter skolan. Efter att ha tagit gymnasieexamen möter flyktingungdomar begränsningar när det gäller möjligheten att omvandla sin utbildning till meningsfulla ekonomiska vinster och frihet att röra sig. Det ger också begränsad tillgång till eftergymnasial utbildning och yrkesutbildningsmöjligheter. Generellt sett är dessa begränsningar oupplösligt förbundna med den rättspolitiska marginalisering som kännetecknar deras ställning som icke-medborgare. Icke-medborgarskapsstatusen gör unga flyktingars framtid genom utbildning mycket oförutsägbar i termer av vilken typ av framtid som skolgång kan ge dem samt när och var sådan framtid kommer att förverkligas (Bellino 2018; Dryden-Peterson 2017). Trots denna extrema osäkerhet kring deras framtid bedömer gymnasieungdomar i Dadaab-läger inte så ofta sina framtidsutsikter som negativa. I stället uttrycker de ofta hopp och tilltro till att de kommer att lyckas med och genom utbildning.

En vanlig strategi bland gymnasieungdomar i Dadaab-läger som används för att försöka forma sin framtid är att arbeta hårt för att få bra betyg på KCSE-proven. De hoppas att bra betyg kommer att ge dem tillgång till ett vidarebosättningsbaserat stipendium till högre utbildning i Kanada. Det öppnar en väg ut ur lägren och potentiellt mot att återfå fullständiga medborgarrättigheter och friheter (se artikel 1). För de flesta elever är det ofta utmanande att ta examen från gymnasiet med tillräckligt bra betyg för att därmed kunna kvalificera sig för WUSC-stipendier. Jag hävdar dock att unga människors förhoppning om sin utbildning upprätthåller deras motivation att nå detta svåruppnådda mål trots den extrema osäkerheten om huruvida de kommer att lyckas eller ej.

Även om de flesta unga människor ser möjligheten till en positiv framgång bortser de inte ofta från de låga oddsen och de fixar inte heller sin föreställning om framtiden på en gång. I stället förbereder de sig för ett eventuellt misslyckande genom att samtidigt skapa föreställningar om alternativa beredskapsvägar. Dessa kan användas för att navigera framåt ifall deras föredragna väg ut ur lägren blockeras (Snyder et al. 1991). Alternativa vägar som eleverna reflekterar över och som de senare kan följa. De inkluderar att söka möjligheter till nationell eller lägerbaserad eftergymnasial utbildning eller att återvända till Somalia (se artiklarna 1, 2 och 4). Innebörden av denna förmåga att föreställa sig alternativa framtider är att den kan göra det möjligt för unga människor att anpassa sig snabbt snarare än att

bli instängda i ett tillstånd av misslyckande och uppleva negativa känslor under en längre period efter att ha tagit examen från gymnasiet med sämre studieresultat än väntat. Som sådant stärker hopp om framtiden unga människors motståndskraft – förmågan att studsa tillbaka inför motgångar, inklusive misslyckanden (Ungar 2008: 225).

Att ta examen från gymnasiet utgör en kritisk tidpunkt i unga flyktingars ansträngningar att bygga sin framtid genom utbildning. Det är en tidpunkt som kännetecknas av en lucka i unga flyktingars tillgång till värdefulla möjligheter och olika navigationsstrategier när de försöker gå framåt. När det gäller möjligheter kommer de fram till detta vägskäl med olika förutsättningar för sin fortsatta resa. Ett avgörande fynd som lyfts fram i den här studien som förklarar sådana skillnader är den allt större klyftan mellan gymnasieutexaminerade från UNHCR-ledda och flyktingledda skolor när det gäller kapacitet och prestation i KCSE-proven. Bra prestationer och goda kompetenser är avgörande för att unga ska kunna navigera i osäkra framtider. Allt fler studenter från flyktingledda skolor kvalificerar sig till universitetsstudier i Kenya och vidarebosättningsbaserade stipendier för högre utbildning i Kanada i jämförelse med UNHCR-ledda skolor (se artikel 3). Denna skillnad beror inte enbart på skillnader i strukturella resurser på skolnivå vilka kan underlätta utbildning av hög kvalitet och bädda för goda studieresultat. Det är också skillnader i familjers ekonomiska resurser som kan påverka ungdomars framgång i utbildningen.

Hur unga navigerar i vägskälet efter examen beror på strukturella möjligheter som kan öppna upp för dem (eller inte) och deras val. Som framgår av artiklarna 2 och 4 anpassar flyktingungdomar sig på olika sätt till verkligheten efter examen. Det kännetecknas av begränsade möjligheter till högre utbildning och brist på rättigheter för lönebetalande jobb. Vissa som kvalificerar sig för möjligheter till högre utbildning försöker söka sig till olika stipendieprogram. Andra återvänder till Somalia strax efter examen på jakt efter bättre jobb – en strategi som ofta leder till förbättrade ekonomiska möjligheter och utökad frihet för fysisk rörlighet. Men med tanke på det ihållande säkerhetshot som terroristgruppen Al-Shabab utgör för civilbefolkningens säkerhet och stabiliteten i Somalia kan detta ibland vara en destruktiv adaptiv strategi. Unga människors dynamiska försök att ta sig framåt kan i första hand betraktas som en framväxande handling formad av skärningspunkten mellan möjlighetsstrukturer, begränsningar och deras individuella handlingskraft (Giddens 1984; Long 2003). Det är en rörelse inom ständigt föränderliga sociala och relationella rum och tidsramar - "rörelser inom rörelser" (Vigh 2009: 420).

Med tanke på det utdragna rättspolitiska limbo som är kännetecknande för Dadaab-lägret, och likhet med många andra flyktingar globalt, kanske många flyktingungdomar i slutändan inte kan säkra en möjlighet att lämna lägret och

bli produktiva medlemmar av samhället, oavsett var det befinner sig (Knudsen 2009). Under sådana omständigheter kan vissa flyktingungdomar välja att projicera sina ouppfyllda förhoppningar och ambitioner på efterföljande generationer genom att till exempel söka stödja den yngre generationen att lyckas i och genom utbildning. Sådan solidaritet mellan generationerna och stödjande relationer exemplifieras av utvecklingen av de nationellt ackrediterade flyktingledda skolorna – etablerade, förvaltade och finansierade av flyktingar. Framväxten av dessa skolor motiverades i första hand av att utbildning av hög kvalitet har minskat – och följaktligen resulterar i elevers försämrade studieresultat i de UNHCR-drivna skolorna (se artikel 3). Utvecklingen av dessa skolor leds av en liten grupp akademiskt framgångsrika ungdomar som har avslutat kandidat- och magisterexamen medan de levde i lägren. De har kanske ännu inte hittat en säker möjlighet att lämna lägret. Konsekvensen av utdragen rättspolitisk marginalisering - orsaken till en ”okänd framtid” - (Dryden-Peterson 2017) introducerar ett starkt inslag av inter-generations hjälpande i unga flyktingars framtidsskapande företagande genom utbildning – ett evigt och tidlöst projekt.

Denna forskning har ett antal empiriska och teoretiska begränsningar som utgör en potential för framtida forskning. Så vitt jag vet är denna studie den första som ger nya insikter om både nationellt ackrediterade flyktingledda och UHCR-finansierade skolor i Kenyas Dadaab-läger. På grund av studiens begränsade omfattning och utformning var en heltäckande jämförelse av utbildning inom de två systemen dock inte genomförbar. Som sådan kan framtida forskning dra nytta av att genomföra en jämförande studie av dessa två system. För det första skulle det vara intressant att utforska likheter och skillnader mellan flyktingledda grundskolor och gymnasieskolor. Fokus kunde vara styrningsstruktur och principer, skolkultur, elevers lärandeupplevelser och andra relevanta aspekter. Vidare skulle det också vara intressant att genomföra en omfattande kvantitativ studie som jämför de UNHCR-finansierade och de flyktingledda skolorna för att undersöka hur styrning, serviceleverans, utbildningskvalitet, elevers prestationer i nationella prov, föräldrars och elevers uppfattningar och erfarenheter med mera för att förklara skillnaderna i studieresultaten. För det andra, med tanke på de ekonomiska svårigheterna i lägren skulle det vara bra att också undersöka var det stora antalet elever som går i flyktingledda skolor får ekonomiskt stöd ifrån för att täcka sina skolavgifter. Slutligen skulle det vara intressant att undersöka vad som motiverar föräldrar att skicka sina barn till avgiftsbelagda skolor när det finns gratis UNHCR-finansierade skolor. Ytterligare studier om flyktingledda skolor kan också främja debatten om lokalisering av humanitärt bistånd, vilket skapar möjligheter för effektivare policy- och praxisrelaterade insatser för flyktingar.

Teoretiskt uteslöt denna studie två spännande litteratursamlingar som kan ha varit relevanta att utforska i relation till framtidsbyggande och den associerade frågan om osäkerhet. Jag gjorde det av metodologiska och praktiska skäl, särskilt med tanke på avhandlingens begränsade omfattning. Den första uppsättningen litteratur relaterar till de olika sätt som människor kan hantera osäkerhet. Förutom hopp, som utforskats i denna avhandling, kan människor använda rationalitet, andlighet, tro, undvikande, känslor, praktiska resonemang eller en kombination av flera medel (Anderson 2010; Zinn 2008, 2016, 2021). Den andra uppsättningen litteratur jag har utelämnat som är nära kopplad till framtider och osäkerhet är stipendiet om risk och hur människor kan förbereda sig för eller försöka hantera framtida risker. Med tanke på den betydande bräcklighet som ofta kännetecknar unga människors framtidsorientering i sammanhang av långvarig kris och förflyttning, måste efterföljande forskning uppmärksamma de risker som är förknippade med unga människors framtidsbyggande insatser och anpassningsstrategier. Riskbedömningar som antingen kan vara konstruktiva eller destruktiva.

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Appendix A

Interview guide sample

Life story

1) Can you tell me about yourself, beginning with where and when you were born?
2) Tell me about your memories and experiences in primary school as far as you can remember.
3) How was your transition from primary to secondary school? What were some of the successes and challenges you experienced during this period?

Current education and schooling

1) How did you feel about joining the secondary school? What are your favourite subjects?
2) Tell me about the education in your current school. What do you like most about it?
3) What are your thoughts about the school environment and available resources?
4) What are your thoughts about the teachers and the school administration?
5) Are you involved in any extracurricular activities or clubs? Tell me more about it.

Future aspirations

1) Can you give me an idea of what you are aiming for or hoping to achieve in the future when you complete your education? Why are these aims important to you?
2) How do you think education can help you reach your goals?
3) What steps or efforts are you taking to achieve your visions or goals?
4) Are you aware of any opportunities that could help you attain your goals?
5) Do you know of any obstacles that might prevent you from achieving your goals?
6) Do you seek or have you sought advice from anyone about your future plans and goals? Can you tell me more about that person?
7) Do you have a role model who inspires you to achieve your goals? Can you tell me more about that person?

Education-related decisions

1) How do you make decisions regarding your education and future? What factors do you consider?
2) Have you ever faced difficult decisions concerning your education? How did you manage them?
3) What advice would you give to someone facing a similar challenge?

Education and civic engagement

1) Do you participate in any community service or volunteering activities? How has this influenced your educational experience?
2) In what ways do you think your education has shaped your understanding of civic responsibility?
3) Are there any particular issues or causes about which you are passionate? How has your education contributed to your interest in these issues?

Relationships of support/constraints

1) How has your family supported your education throughout your school years?
2) Are there people in your life who either help you or threaten your education and progress?
3) How do your friends influence your education?
4) What kind of resources or support would you wish to have to improve your learning?
5) Could you tell me about any challenges or difficulties you have experienced during your schooling? How did you overcome them?

Appendix B

List of interviews

Interviewee ID	Status	Sex	Phases	Date (dd-mm-yyyy)
1	Refugee teacher	M	1	05-07-2019 20-11-2019
2	Refugee teacher	M	1	09-07-2019
3	Student	M	1	13-07-2019
4	Student	M	1	16-07-2019
5	Refugee teacher	M	1	18-07-2019
6	National teacher	M	1	19-07-2019
7	Student	F	1	26-07-2019
8	Student	M	1	01-08-2019
9	Student	M	1	09-07-2019
10	Student	M	1 2 3	08-09-2019 16-11-2019 16-11-2019
11	Student	M	1 2 3	08-09-2019 15-09-2019 15-09-2019
12	Student	F	1	08-09-2019
13	Student	M	1	15-09-2019
14	Student	M	1 2 3	15-09-2019 09-10-2019 09-10-2019
15	Student	M	1 2 3	15-09-2019 20-09-2019 20-09-2019
16	Student	F	1 2 3	20-09-2019 20-10-2019 20-10-2019
17	Refugee teacher	M	1 2	08-10-2019 09-10-2019
18	Refugee teacher	M	1 2	07-10-2019 08-10-2019
19	Refugee teacher	M	1 2	09-10-2019 09-10-2019
20	Student	F	1 2 3	14-10-2019 14-10-2019 20-10-2019
21	Student	F	1	20-10-2019
22	Student	M	1 2 3	20-09-2019 15-11-2019 15-11-2019
23	Student	M	1	01-10-2019

			2 3	17-11-2019 17-11-2019
24	Student	M	1 2	06-11-2019 07-11-2019
25	Student	F	1	01-10-2019
26	Student	M	1 2 3	01-10-2019 17-11-2019 17-11-2019
27	Parent	F	1	15-11-2019
28	Parent	F	1	08-11-2019
29	Parent	F	1	10-11-2019
30	Parent	F	1	08-11-2019
31	National teacher	F	1	22-10-2019
32	National teacher	F	1	23-10-2019
33	National teacher	F	1	08-10-2019
34	National teacher	M	1	25-10-2019
35	National teacher	M	1	14-10-2019
36	Refugee teacher	M	1 2	31-10-2019 31-10-2019
37	Refugee teacher	M	1 2	30-10-2019 30-10-2019