‘Got on to the plane as white English and landed in London as Black Kenyan’:

Construction and Performance of Kenyanness Across Online and Offline Sites.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, **Kũi Kihoro Mackay** hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: Kũi Kihoro Mackay

Date: 11th September 2020

DEDICATION

In loving memory of our ancestors in the green veld, running forever:

Mum: Our first Dr. Kihoro, you set me on this path, though you never got to see me cross the finish line, I know you have been with me every step of the way.

Cucu: My grandmother, a feminist. Ahead of your time in so many ways. To live, know and be loved by you was a such a blessing.

Tata: The OG Tata, you loved books and earrings and I thank you for passing this on to me.

Guka: You generously funded my love for laddu and jalebi.

Aunty Waithera: With us for such a short time but your presence blessed and changed all our lives.

Tesh: Our youngest ancestor, gone way too soon.

And to all the Black men, women and children who have been taken from us by white supremacy, homophobia, transphobia, and misogynoir.

♥ All Our Black Lives Matter ♥

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I have been incredibly fortunate to be supervised, guided, and supported by three wonderful women. Dorothea, Katie and Ravinder there is absolutely no way I would have made it to the end without your knowledge, wisdom, patience and compassion and guidance especially through my extended periods of unwellness. In all our interactions, I felt seen, heard, and valued as a person. My good ideas were celebrated and my not-so-great ones, were met with kind and useful critique. Thank you all very much for seeing me through one of the most challenging journeys I have ever undertaken.

I was awarded the Reid Scholarship by the Geography Department at Royal Holloway; I cannot overstate how vital this support has been; not just financially. The award was both a recognition of my ability and a demonstration of the Department's faith in what more I could achieve. Thank you for investing in me. The same department has been my academic home since 2012 when I joined the Practising Sustainable Development (ICT4D Specialism) MSc course. It was during this time that I met and learned alongside Alex, Felicity, Derrick, Tatsu, Emile, Yuki, Caitlin Dan, Hannah, Nikos and Maria. I am grateful for all our interactions both within and beyond the classroom.

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I begin with those who have known me the longest (well, aside from parents) my aunties and uncles. In no particular order Wahu Matenjwa, Njeri, Matenjwa, Wambui Mburu, Uncle Bobo, Nish-Muthoni Matenjwa, Baba, you all have loved me and looked after me my whole life and for this I remain forever grateful. Tata, if only I had finished four months sooner, we could have celebrated this moment together.

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Kemi & Hani – all I can think of is, "look how far we've come?" Thank you for continuing to encourage me.

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ABSTRACT

This study sets out to understand how Kenyanness is constructed and performed across multiple sites, both offline and online. Adopting a multimethod approach, the study sought to engage with and learn from people in the UK who self-identify as Kenyan and use Twitter and/or Facebook. Beginning in August 2016, initially with a survey that was completed by 71 people and ending in March 2017 I had in-depth conversations with 20 of the 71 survey respondents. These 20 people also agreed to share tweets and Facebook posts generated on or around 3 pre-determined dates/events. These being the 2016 Olympic games; Mashujaa Day (Heroes' Day) on October 20, 2016; and Jamuhuri Day (Kenya's Independence Day) on December 12, 2016.

Guided by Black Feminist work and Critical Race Theory, this work positions intersectionality and counter-storytelling alongside theories on translocational positionality and performance in order to explore the lived experiences of Kenyans outside of Kenya. To do this, the research is grounded in Kenyan concepts and theories on the process of identification (mwananchi, Wanjiku, wenye nchi/wananchi, and son-of-the soil) along with Kenyan notions of performance (Harambee, and Nyayoism). These concepts that often sit outside white, Western notions of identities and performance expand the current language of identification, belonging and performance. Through an exploration of Black Twitter and #KenyansOnTwitter (#KOT) this research considers the possibility of a Black Twitterverse as a way to push forward research surrounding Blackness online and digital Blackness.

The findings of this study are contained in three empirical chapters. The first explores re-thinking Kenyanness and finds that this is dependent on where (sites), in whose presence (audience) and by whom (self-and/or others) this process of identification is conducted. In this context Kenyanness is presented as an identity in a constant state of motion. In the second empirical chapter the study uses three elements of Kenyanness (the sites, audiences and self/others) to introduce Kenya as Trinity. The main finding being that Kenyan identities are often constructed and performed *in* Kenya, *for* Kenya and *by* Kenya and this can often complicate other forms of identification such as Blackness. The final empirical chapter centres on the idea of (un)-performance as performance. (Un)-performance is used to consider the difference between the absence of a performance and the absence of presence. In relation to expected performances of patriotism, I use un-performance to define a specific type of performance that is premised on the idea of decentralising the majoritarian gaze.

Finally, a theme that runs through this research is the intention to produce a body of work that is rooted in an ethics of care and that acknowledges my own positionality. My positionality being, a Black Kenyan woman in the UK, researching Kenyans in the UK for the purposes of submitting a thesis to a western and predominately white university. I use hooks' concept of marginality to situate my voice and this study. Writing from the margins, has enabled me to produce a thesis that considers new ways of researching identity that allows for the lived experiences of unresearched and minoritised groups to be centred without being essentialised, further erased or tokenised.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In September 2004, in order to document my time as a volunteer in Belize I started a blog[1]. It was publicly accessible, but my intended audience was family and friends (mainly in the UK and Kenya). During my placement I would often refer to myself as, and would blog from, the perspective of a Kenyan in Belize. Upon completion of the three-month placement I returned to the UK and continued blogging, this time from the perspective of a Kenyan in the UK. No longer tied to blogging for a specific purpose, I found myself writing more about my own identity as a Black Kenyan woman, born in the USA and raised in the UK by Kenyan parents.

In response to one such post[2], the author of the blog Kenyan Pundit[3] (a blog that provides political commentary on Kenya) who at the time was studying at Harvard University, left the following comment[4] which I feel illustrates the issues that this study intends to explore,

> As I mentioned in my blog, I had an interesting conversation with Binyavanga Wainaina[5] on the issue of Kenyan identity, particularly as it pertains to Kenyans in the diaspora and around the question of authenticity – much along the lines of 'how Kenyan are you', etc. (or can you really pundit on Kenyan issues from the lofty confines of Cambridge). One interesting thing he said, even if you'd spent your whole life in Kenya or moved back, there will always be a debate by others in the we-want-to-define-you group…so it becomes how Kamba[6] are you? How Nairobian are you? Are you really a mwananchi[7]? How much of [a] Kenyan woman are you? It never ends…like you said you are who you are and that should be enough.

The quote above resonates because of the questions it asks. Who gets to be called (or to call themselves) Kenyan? What makes one an authentic Kenyan, a real mwananchi? In what ways does one's ethnic identity and/or geographical location impact one's

[1] MamaJunkYard's – http://beginsathome.com, [retrieved March 20th, 2020]
[2] "I am…", MamaJunkYard's, entry May 10th 2005, http://beginsathome.com/2005/05/10/i-am/, [retrieved March 20th 2020]
[3] At the time Kenyan Pundit was both the name of the blog and the blog author's pseudonym.
[4] Kenyan Pundit, comment on [4] "I am…", MamaJunkYard's, entry May 10th 2005, http://beginsathome.com/2005/05/10/i-am/comment-page-1/#comment-5250 [retrieved March 20th 2020]
[5] A Kenyan author and activist who at the time was living in South Africa
[6] One of Kenya's ethnic groups
[7] Kiswahili word for citizen.

identity as a Kenyan? Or as Kenyan Pundit states in the quote above 'can you really pundit [online] on Kenyan issues from the lofty confines of Cambridge?' The quote also highlights the tensions and contradictions that emerge when the seemingly disembedded nature of the Internet intersects with the boundedness of national identity.

In order to offer new ways to think about the construction of Kenyanness, this study engages with people who use Social Networking Site (SNS), live in the UK and identify as Kenyan, through survey, interviews and SNS data. Interested in performances of Kenyanness, the project aims to explore how participants express their Kenyanness in relation to moving within and through certain online and offline spaces. I collectively refer to these spaces as sites of performances. Guided by Black Feminist work and Critical Race Theory (CRT), the project centres the experiences of the participants as a form of counter-storytelling on the basis that these stories challenge dominant narratives of Kenyanness. Drawing on hooks' (1989, 1992) work on the oppositional gaze and marginality, the project centres Kenyanness and uses it as a lens to explore identification beyond the current narrow definition of Kenyanness.

In this chapter I start off by introducing the three foundational blocks of this study: Kenya, the UK, and SNS. I provide a brief overview of each while also highlighting where my study fits in. The next section introduces the two research questions and from there I define some of the concepts that are central to this study. Finally, I conclude with an outline of the thesis and a brief summary of each upcoming chapter.

1.1 Mawe Tatu: Foundations

In Kenya, the three stone fire cooking method, relies on three stones of equal height, being placed equidistant in a triangle formation, in order to balance a cooking pot while a fire burns between the stones. In Kiswahili this is called mawe tatu and I use it to convey the interconnectedness of the three parts that make up the foundations of this study. These being Kenya as a country; the UK where the research participants are based; and Twitter and Facebook, jointly, as SNS. The flame represents the participants and Kenyanness is the pot, (filled with conversations, tweets, and survey responses) that sits on top of the stones. The concepts and theories that this study

relies on is the seasoning, because food has to be seasoned. In this section I introduce each foundational stone separately to demonstrate where I locate my work in each.

1.1.1 Kenya

> '… because I am Kikuyu, how much of what I am reading as Kenyan is because I am Kikuyu?' (Kamau, M, Black, 18-29[8]).

According to the 2019 census, Kenya has a population of 47.6 million people (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Kenya is a diverse, multi-ethnic and multi-racial country (Ba, 2017; Githiora, 2008; Mazrui, 1995; Mose, 2017) 'composed of 42 African ethnic groups and significant minorities of Arab, South Asian, and European descent' (Chege, 2008, p. 126). As a percentage of the population, Kikuyu (17.1%) is the largest ethnic group, followed by Luhya (14.3%) and Kalenjin (13.8%) (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2020, pp. 423–424). Nearly every ethnic group has its own language, however the Government of Kenya (GOK) lists English and Kiswahili as the official languages of Kenya (Githiora, 2008). I provide this information to highlight Kenya's diversity and consider what this means with regard to how the term Kenyanness is understood. I also begin this section with an excerpt from a conversation I had with Kamau (a participant in this study) because it illustrates the complicated relationship between these interconnected markers of identity, i.e., ethnic identity, race, language, etc. and the seemingly broader term 'Kenyan identity'.

Within academia there may not be a lot in relation to Kenya and Kenyan identity/Kenyanness, especially in work that is written by Kenyans. However, the scholarship that exists is wide ranging, with certain themes that emerge including; inter-ethnic relationships (Kirui, 2019; Lynch, 2006), violence (Médard, 2009; L. M. Wanyeki, 2008), languages (Githiora, 2008, 2018), belonging (Geschiere & Jackson, 2006; Ndegwa, 1998; Prestholdt, 2014), and gender[9] (Gatwiri & Mumbi, 2016; Ligaga, 2020; L. M. Wanyeki, 2008). Work that centres Kenyanness but that also challenges its dominance however is hard to find; Macharia's (Macharia, 2012a) work stands out in this regard; they consider the possibility of a post-nation Kenyanness and asks,

[8] In the methodology section I explain further why I use the name, race, age structure

[9] This often means women

> questions of how Kenyan-ness might be fractured and re-configured by different cultural and economic demand (2012a, p. 223).

I preface the sentence with 'within academia' because there is and there has been a lot of creative and critical work on Kenya, being Kenyan, and Kenyanness that exists outside of the academy. A lot of which has made it possible for me to write this thesis and it is not my intent to erase these valuable contributions.

In making a case for my work on Kenyanness, I am conscious of and reluctant to be part of what Kenyan Pundit, as quoted earlier in this chapter, described as the 'we-want-to-define-you group'. In Kenyan Pundit's comment it is also implied that spatial proximity to Kenya as a country can function as a determinant of how Kenyan one is. The relationship between the two (the person and the nation), is used to establish a hierarchy that privileges those Kenyans who are geographically/physically closer to Kenya. Following this argument through; those people who identify as Kenyan and live within the physical boundaries of the territory of Kenya are thus constructed as more Kenyan, authentically Kenyan. This argument presents Kenyan identity as one that is inextricably linked to and defined as a national identity, which in turn is shaped by the physical and spatial limitations of Kenya as a country. It is for these reasons that I identify Kenya as one of the three components of this study, because it provides a means to interrogate Kenyanness. Part of this study's aim is to interrogate these claims, and of particular interest is what identities are created and what identities are erased when the nation becomes a site of identity construction? How does Kenya as a nation enable or limit how these identities are enacted? Underpinning all these questions is a much bigger question, in the context of Kenya as a nation, what is Kenyanness? In Chapter 3 I expand on some of these notions of Kenyanness.

1.1.2 Kenyans in the UK (and beyond)

The second stone of my mawe tatu is the UK, or more specifically Kenyans in the UK. A lot of the literature on Kenyans who are not within Kenya is framed as 'Kenyans abroad'; I prefer to describe the Kenyans by the country they are in. At the very least I try to avoid concepts such as 'abroad' because it centres Kenya the country when this study is about people.

The issue of Kenyans not in Kenya has been discussed within academia (Copeland-Carson, 2007; Ghai, 2005; Macharia, 2012a; MPI, 2014; Oyelere, 2007; Yabs, 2014), in non-fictional literature (Kihoro, 1998; Obama, 2004; Wainaina, 2011), the Kenyan and international media (Suilaiman, 2013), and within the Kenyan blogsphere at length (M, 2006; Zulu, 2013). In Chapter 3 I also expand on this. Yet despite these discussions, 'there are hardly any quantitative data on the numbers, trends, and characteristics of Kenyans abroad' (Ghai, 2005, p. 668).

This is not to say there is no data; there are some figures, as well as anecdotal accounts (Oyelere, 2007), which in part contribute to the limited qualitative data on Kenyans outside of Kenya. However, collating all this information is not straightforward. Everyone, regardless of citizenship, arriving in and departing from Kenya, has to complete detailed paperwork. It is therefore assumed that the Government of Kenya (GOK) maintains (or at least gives the impression that it maintains) a detailed record of Kenyans leaving the country. Unfortunately, these figures are not publicly available or if they are, they are not easy to find. Yabs (2014) provides the only mention of a GOK generated figure, citing the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2013 report as recording a total of 4.8 million Kenyans living abroad. Another potential source of data is information collected by countries other than Kenya. However, with the Kenyan population abroad ranking as one of the top 10 among African nations in terms of size (Oyelere, 2007) and with a sizeable Kenyan population in South Africa, the UK, the United States of America (USA), the Middle East, and India (Ghai, 2005; Oyelere, 2007; Yabs, 2014) it becomes increasingly difficult to obtain an accurate count of how many Kenyans are outside Kenya. Additionally there is undocumented evidence that points to a large number of Kenyans migrating within Africa (Copeland-Carson, 2007), further complicating the task of counting Kenyans abroad.

Of the nations that collect and share data on Kenyans, the UK and the USA provide some comprehensive figures. According to the UK's most recent (2011) census there are approximately 140,000 people in the UK who list Kenya as their country of birth; and of that figure around 19,000 list their nationality as Kenyan (ONS, 2012). Meanwhile in the USA, data collected between 2009-13 based on immigrants born in Kenya and USA born individuals with at least one Kenyan born parent, indicates that

there are approximately 105,000 Kenyans living in the USA (MPI, 2014). Comparing the 245,000 people that represent the combined total of Kenyans living in the USA and the UK with the GOK figure of 4.8 million Kenyans living abroad; there are approximately 95% of Kenyans abroad not accounted for here.

The purpose of this section is not to account for or provide evidence in support of the accuracy or otherwise of the figures mentioned, but rather to highlight how difficult it is to obtain an accurate count of Kenyans who are not in Kenya. In Chapter 3 I will reflect on some of the reasons for this and engage with literature cited in this section (in addition to others not cited) that captures the social, political, and economic reasons that has led to some people who identify as Kenyan being in the UK. However, a common theme in the literature cited in this section as well that in Chapter 3 is the framing of Kenyans in the UK as those who have left Kenya, again privileging the nation. There appears to be little room to consider Kenyanness in places other than Kenya or the Kenyanness of someone who identifies as Kenyan and has never been to Kenya. Finally, there is a lot of focus on Kenyans outside of Kenya as a national economic resource and in relation to the economic development of Kenya.

1.1.3 Social Networking Sites

Briefly discussed in the introduction was one example of how blogging raised questions regarding how Kenyan identity is constructed and who is allowed to speak for or about Kenya, especially online. The Kenyan blogsphere has been and still is a vibrant community [10] of bloggers. However, digital interaction has changed significantly since Kenya Pundit's comment in 2005. Online social interaction is now largely made up of Social Networking Sites (SNS). For the purpose of this study, I rely on boyd & Ellison's definition of SNS as,

> web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system; (boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 211).

[10] In 2005 I was co-founder of a Kenyan blogging community, the Kenyan Blog Webring (KBW). KBW had a membership of approximately 240 bloggers who identified as Kenyan or blogged about Kenya. KBW no longer exists, however the Bloggers of Kenya Association (BAKE) formed in 2011 serves a similar function.

Included in this definition are two SNS that form the basis of this study, Twitter and Facebook. Initially I intended to focus solely on Twitter due to the existence of a discursive space known as Kenyans On Twitter or KOT which was named by Kenyans through the use of the #KenyansOnTwitter hashtag (which was eventually shortened to just #KOT) to 'demarcate content geared toward Kenyans using Twitter' (Tully & Ekdale, 2014, p. 71). Attempting to find a single definition of #KOT is difficult, however Digital Strategist Mark Kaigwa, who was one of the first people to use the #KOT hashtag, described it in this way,

> "KOT is a hashtag, it is a phrase that is used to characterise people in Kenya, online, on the social network Twitter" (Danzico, 2015).

I was interested in Kaigwa's description of #KOT as a space for people *in* Kenya. I was also interested in how Twitter/KOT functioned as a site of performance, specifically in relation to those in the UK who identify as Kenyan. While there is growing literature on identity-based Twitter networks, such as the work by Brock (2020) and Florini (2019) on Black Twitter, there is very little on KOT or Kenyans and Twitter in general. I note Tully & Ekdale's work, but it is centred around political and civil engagement. Likewise, and more broadly, Nyabola's (2018) recent work provides valuable insight into the Internet's role in the life of Kenyans but again it is focused on the political. Based on a literature review of studies on identity and SNS I noted that the majority of studies either focused on a single axis of differentiation and most also examined this in relation to just one SNS platform. This study is therefore unique in that it adopts an intersectional/translocational approach and applies these to two different SNS platforms as well as other sites of performance. I return to this topic in greater detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

In the next section I consider the issues raised here as well as those presented in the opening section of this chapter and present them in the form of research questions.

1.2 Research Questions

I present these research questions, in part based on the contents of this Introduction and Chapter 2. As noted in the structure below, Chapter 2 considers the personal

motivations and justifications for this study, so some of the points that feed into defining the questions will be explained further in Chapter 2.

The focus of this study is motivated by the need to centre Kenyanness but also to rethink how it is constructed. With regards to those Kenyans who are not in Kenya, this study wants to remove a construction of Kenyanness based on concepts of 'abroad' or 'remittances' and understand how Kenyanness and related identities are performed within the spaces they occupy. Underpinning all of this, the study wants to centre Kenyanness in a way that does not 'other' or reduce non-majoritarian identities/people to objects of study. Finally, this study would like to consider what can be learned about identification and performance by centring Kenyanness and Kenyans as knowledge producers.

Based on this, the project sets out to answer the following two questions:

RQ1: How is Kenyanness constructed and performed across multiple sites both off and online?

RQ2: In what ways does the use of Kenyanness as a lens contribute to understanding of the process of identification?

1.3 Definitions

In this section I provide a brief overview of some of the concepts that shape this project. All of these will be expanded up in upcoming chapters.

1.3.1 The Sites of Performance

In defining the term sites of performance, I start with hooks' statement; 'spaces can be real and imagined. Spaces can tell stories and unfold histories' (1992, p. 36). While recognising the stories that spaces can tell, this study is more interested in the stories told through these spaces; a narrative of location as defined by Anthias (2002),

> A narrative is an account that tells a story, and a narrative of location, as it is used here, is an account that tells a story about how we place ourselves in terms of social categories such as those of gender, ethnicity and class at a specific point in time and space (2002, p. 498).

Additionally, and with reference to Puwar, I acknowledge that these sites are not neutral; they are locations marked by power, class, gender and race (among other

things) and to this end I am interested in the relationship between these spaces and the people who move within and through them.

1.3.2 Performance

I rely primarily of Goffman's work on the self as performance because it not only speaks to the people centred approach this study takes; Goffman also provides a useful way to theorise SNS. In the context of this study, performance is the staging of one's self in a way that presents the best version of one's self. The performance is therefore an,

> activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants (1956, p. 8).

Those who observe the performance are considered 'the audience, observers or co-participants' (1956, p. 8). Goffman suggests that a performance may be shaped so as to produce an idealized self that meets and confirms the audience expectations. This approach provides a framework to consider issues such as self-identification and authenticity, like those raised in Kenyan Pundit's comment regarding how much of a mwananchi someone really is. A key component of understanding how Kenyanness is enacted in the sites of performances previously identified is who else occupies that space and how does this affect performance? In considering the role of audiences, and how certain performances may be altered to provide an idealised version of self, Goffman's definition provides a way to answer this question. There is more to discuss and analyse in relation to the concepts introduced in this section and its subsections and this will be done in Chapter 2 and 3.

1.3.3 Oppositional Gaze

hooks' (1992) states that oppositional gaze allows us to,

> create alternative texts that are not solely reactions. As critical spectators, black women participate in a broad range of looking relations, contest, resist, revision, interrogate, and invent on multiple levels.

I consider this alongside the idea of performances and centring Kenyanness. Casting an oppositional gaze on Kenyanness and the performance of identities related to

Kenyanness will allow the study to answer the questions asked. This is precisely why I ground my research in Black Feminist work and there is more on this in Chapter 2.

1.3.4 Intersectionality

An intersectional approach stems from a critique of white feminist theory that failed to recognise the interconnectedness of race and gender, and how this impacted the racism and sexism experienced by women of colour (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1991). I am interested in how intersectionality facilitates thinking on identity.

An intersectional lens provides a useful starting point to analyse some of the issues that this project explores, for instance as illustrated in Kenyan Pundit's quote earlier in this chapter, the relationship between a Kenyan identity, an ethnic identity, and one's gender identity and how all these intersect with existing systems of power and discrimination. It also provides a way to address the points made by Macharia with regards to rethinking Kenyanness, which in turn offers a way to answer this study's first research question.

1.3.5 Translocational Positionality

I pair the work on intersectionality with Anthias (2002, 2008) theory of translocational positionality because it addresses some of the shortcomings of intersectional theory. Translocational positionality is defined as,

> The concept of translocational positionality addresses issues of identity in terms of locations which are not fixed but are context, meaning and time related and which therefore involve shifts and contradictions (Anthias, 2008).

Translocational positionality therefore allows for 'social processes; i.e. the multiple situational elements that produce social outcomes' (Anthias, 2008, p. 14). This is important because it speaks to the studies interest in the 'narratives of locations' because it is the social process that gives rise to the stories that emerge for these locations.

As indicated earlier in this chapter, Black Feminist work has played a crucial role in shaping this project. Introducing hooks' 'oppositional gaze' and Crenshaw's theory of 'intersectionality' therefore serves three purposes. Firstly, it allows me to articulate

what each term means and how it relates to the research question. Secondly it is also an opportunity to show how Black Feminist work has informed this study. Finally, by bringing in Goffman's definition of performance, I demonstrate how I intend to incorporate what might be considered more traditional (in the sense of white western academia) theories on performance alongside the works of hooks and Crenshaw. Collectively these concepts anchor this study and provide a framework for me to answer the research questions. Earlier in this chapter (section 1.1), in reference to the mawe tatu metaphor, I refer to the concepts used in this thesis as the seasoning that is added to the contents of the pot i.e., conversations, tweets, and survey responses. Staying with that metaphor; seasoning is about adjustments, knowing what spices and herbs to add, in what quantity and when, to enhance a dish. In this vein, while I introduce these concepts as a list, this does not denote hierarchy or importance. Throughout the thesis these will shift in and out of focus; when and how these concepts appear depends on their relation to the other elements discussed in section 1.1.

1.4 Thesis Structure

In Chapter 2 I build on the section that opened this chapter and lay out how the personal has informed this work and how I integrate Black feminist work into this study. In line with the decision to adopt an oppositional gaze as defined by hooks, to claim marginality and to centre Kenyanness, the literature review undertaken in Chapter 3 uses Kenyan concepts as a lens to analyse existing literature. Starting with Mwananchi (as a term that denotes citizenship, a child of the nation and the ordinary Kenyan) and Wanjiku (a popular Kikuyu female name that is often used to describe the ordinary Kenyan), I analyse these in relation to work on citizenship. I also introduce Mwenye Nchi (owners of the land), Wenye Nchi (people of the land) and son of the soil to discuss belonging and autochthony. I also introduce the concept of Harambee (the notion of working together to build the nation) as a form of performance that ties Kenyanness to the nation. Finally, I revisit the discussion on Social Networking Sites in more detail. In Chapter 4 I lay out how this research was designed and implemented and provide the rationale for the methods adopted including counter-storytelling. I follow this with a detailed explanation of how I designed and carried out each stage

of the research (the survey, the interviews and the SNS data) and how I analysed the data. I conclude by discussing the ethical implications of the methods I have relied on and their limitations.

In Chapters 5, 6, and 7 I present the findings and answer the research questions. Chapter 4 is focused on the construction of Kenyanness and presents Kenyanness as an identify that is in motion and always under construction. This is because its construction relies on three intertwined aspects: where (site) the construction is taking place, whom (audience) the construction is for, and who (self) is doing the constructing. I also examine how Kenyanness can reflect or overrule ethnic identities and how majoritarian identities play a role in this process. In Chapter 6 I argue that Kenya can exist as site, audience and as an entity that ascribes identity, and I introduce the notion of a Kenyan Trinity to reflect this. I then examine conflicting identities and how Kenyanness interacts with Blackness and when and how different aspects take priority. Finally, I identify the notion of hardship and suffering as playing an important role in Kenyanness and how this is performed. Chapter 7 introduces the idea of (un)-performance as performance and how emphasising or hiding certain aspect of one's identity can be used across sites of performance. I then explore the notion of Kiswahili as Shibboleth, and how this can be used to include or exclude certain audiences. Finally, I discuss the use of silence as a central part of Kenyanness, and where it is employed as a strategy. I conclude the thesis in Chapter 8 where I summarise the response to the questions, I highlight the contributions made and identify future research based on the findings of this study.

2 PERSONAL AS THEORETICAL

2.1 Introduction

> The personal is theoretical. To bring personal experience into the text does not require assumptions of truth or authenticity (as decades of feminist scholarship in the social sciences as well as humanities has shown). The personal brings theory back to life (Ahmed, 2016, p. 10).

At the start of Chapter 1 I begin by recounting an online interaction I had with another Kenyan blogger regarding Kenyanness to highlight part of what motivated this study. Having outlined the theoretical that underpins this work; in this chapter I return to the personal. I have opted to include this chapter as opposed to, for example, writing about it only in Chapter 4 as positionality, because the personal has significantly shaped this study. I am connected to this study not just as researcher, but as a researcher who could also be a participant. In the first part of this chapter, I declare and situate my identities.

2.2 Situating my Identities

When I speak of the identities I claim, I often refer to myself as a Black Kenyan woman. This is a truncated expression of my identities. Legally, I am a citizen of Kenya (acquired through my Kenyan born parents) and a citizen of the United States of America (acquired by birth). The first time I came to the United Kingdom (UK) was in 1982 and I was about four years old. My father was enrolled as a law student and the intention was to move back to Kenya once he graduated. In that time my brother was born in 1982 and, in accordance with the law at the time, he became and still is a British Citizen. My sister was born in May 1984, five months after the UK had amended the law and discontinued birth right citizenship (British Nationality Act 1981) and thus through our parents, my sister also acquired Kenyan citizenship[11]. During our time in the UK, as a young Black child attending a predominately white school, I became aware of my "otherness." At home, we would routinely wake up to racist graffiti drawn on our door by the National Front (a far-right party). I may not have had the language

[11] For the sake of completeness, I do have another sister who was also born in the UK, in 1992 and who is also a Kenyan citizen. Her inclusion as a footnote should not be read as a measure of the value, I place on her (no doubt, she will still complain, as last-borns are wont to do).

to fully understand this at the time, but I was definitely aware that because of my race and my gender, my existence within certain spaces was contested.

In 1986, once my father had finished his studies, we moved back to Kenya. At the time Kenya was under the rule of its second post-independence president, Daniel arap Moi. In 1982 Moi who had survived an attempted coup four years into his presidency, was an authoritarian who used a combination of violence and incarceration (amongst other things) to suppress any form of dissent. My father, on account of his association with what Moi described as political dissidents[12] whilst living as a student in the UK, was arrested six months after our return to Kenya and detained without trial for nearly four years. During my father's detention my mother returned to the UK while we remained with my maternal grandmother. Being a child of a political detainee also brought with it a certain stigma; a belief that my father was unpatriotic and by extension so were the rest of his family. So yet again I found myself in a position where my identity (a supposedly unpatriotic Kenyan) in relation to the space I occupied (being in Kenya) was being reshaped and contested. Having only recently moved to Kenya, I spoke very little Kiswahili and my accent, which while living in England was not deemed sufficiently British, was now considered by my peers and teachers to be distinctly non-Kenyan, providing yet another marker of my non-Kenyanness.

In 1990 soon after my father was released our parents realised that it was still unsafe to live in Kenya, so we returned to the UK again, this time as asylum seekers/refugees. My family were subsequently granted indefinite leave to remain (apart from my brother who was/is a British Citizen). Between 1990 and the present a lot has changed within Kenya; the atrocities of Moi's regime, which the Kenyan government had concealed from the public, were eventually revealed. Individuals who had previously been considered enemies of the state are now regarded as freedom fighters and national heroes. Likewise, in the UK there have been significant changes in relation to race and immigration. At the time of writing, England is under the leadership of a Conservative government that continues to enact its hostile environment immigration

[12] In 1982, soon after our arrival in England, my mother and father along with other UK based activities co-founded the Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners in Kenya (CRPPK). It is activities such as these that the Kenyan authorities used as evidence of unpatriotic behaviour by Kenyans outside of Kenya.

policy. Alongside this, the development of the Internet and the introduction of Social Networking Sites (SNS) has, as evidenced by Kenyan Pundit's comment, created new spaces for identities to be constructed, performed and contested. This reconfiguring of identities as I, and others like me, move within and through different spaces, is the foundation of this project.

I choose to include my lived experience precisely for the reasons stated in Ahmed's quote at the start of this section. My life as someone who identifies as (amongst other categorisations) a Black Kenyan woman in the UK has helped bring some of the theoretical underpinnings of this study to life. When speaking specifically about sexism, Ahmed notes that we often experience sexism before we name it and "if a name can lag behind what is named, we too can lag behind; we can lag behind ourselves" (2016, p. 10). I extend Ahmed's argument beyond naming sexism and apply it to the way my identity (a Black person, a woman, a Kenyan, a refugee, etc.) has been shaped by the various spaces I have occupied. For instance, it was not until my second year as an undergraduate student that I learned of the term intersectionality. As a result, I was able to better understand and articulate that sense of shifting identities and shifting privileges/discrimination that I experienced as my family moved between the UK and Kenya. Indeed, as Crenshaw in 1991, (who is credited with introducing the phrase 'intersectionality') notes, 'intersectionality was a lived reality before it became a term' (Crenshaw, 2015, p. no page). In the same way intersectionality has helped me make sense of my own identities and their relationships with power, I use it to guide this study. By reflecting on my own experiences, I recognise that there are parts of my life that align with the 'dominant [1980s-2000] image of the Kenyan abroad as a politically engaged exile' (Macharia, 2012a, p. 220). However, there are also parts of my identities and experiences that do not fit into this narrative and could perhaps be considered un-Kenyan or foreign. Macharia provides examples of this;

> Kenyans in the blogo-sphere frequently identify themselves as 'left-wing liberals' or 'social conservatives,' categories that do not, for the most part, circulate as part of mainstream Kenyan discourse (2012a, p. 223).

These forms of categorisations may be considered foreign and Macharia suggests that, 'rather than read these foreign-based practices as foreign practices, we might

read them as ways of extending and modifying Kenyan-ness' (2012a, p. 223). As noted earlier, current constructions of Kenyanness outside of Kenya rely heavily on notions of exiled Kenyans and economic/national development, and one of the contributions of this study is to extend and modify the meaning of Kenyanness to include experiences that have been excluded. Additionally, missing from existing literature, is what happens in between these two positions (i.e., existing definitions of Kenyanness and extended/modified meanings of Kenyanness) and it is in this gap that I situate this study.

In 2012 I undertook a taught post-graduate course in Sustainable Development, and I found myself reflecting on my own existence as a Black Kenyan woman, attending a UK university and learning about development in what is often termed the Global South. To compound matters, Nairobi, Kenya's capital, named the Silicon Savannah due to the number of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) related innovations and initiatives, was often cited as a case study. This created a range of conflicting internal responses. On one hand I felt that I was, as Fanon (2008) describes, 'laid bare' under the glare of academia's white gaze. It was jarring to see selective moments of Black Kenyan existence presented as research material and objects of study. Yancy, speaking on the white gaze states that it is a form of,

> white spectatorship, a generative gazing that violates the integrity of the Black body. The white gaze defines me, skewing my own way of seeing myself (2005, p. 230).

This resonates, more so when contrasted against Collins' (1999) summary of what it is like to be a Black woman in academia;

> Much of my formal academic training has been designed to show me that I must alienate myself from my communities, my family, and even my own self in order to produce credible intellectual work (1999, p. viii).

Yet on the other hand I was aware of the distance that separated me from the Kenya/Kenyans that were being studied, not just spatially but temporally. The feeling of being in the spotlight as a minority has been theorised by Puwar (2004a, 2004b) who coined the phrase 'space invaders' and gave me the language to name my

experience. Puwar (2004b, 2004a) asserts that space is never neutral. In reference to the British Parliament that Puwar defines as a White male space, her work addresses,

> the socio-spatial impact of the presence of bodies that are not the norm in a space heavily marked by historically located and shifting masculinities (2004b).

As a result of their 'space invasion' Puwar discovers that women and people of colour in parliament experience what she refers to as 'double-exposure' because their difference makes them highly visible and despite their relatively low-numbers their presence is amplified and at times deemed a threat (2004b, p. 72). At the same time their high visibility means that they are subject to the 'burden of doubt' because 'they are not automatically expected to embody the relevant competencies' and as such their actions are subjected to greater scrutiny and judgement (2004b, p. 73). With this greater scrutiny comes the 'burden of representation', such that everything a woman or person of colour does or says is deemed to be representative of their entire race and/or gender. Paradoxically, though the MPs are 'incredibly visible as different, they are also under assimilative pressure to conform to the behavioural norm'. Puwar refers to this as the 'erasure of difference' (2004b, p. 76). She concludes that the presence of these newcomers does not imply that these spaces are now multicultural and that by virtue of being considered space invaders, 'the expectation that their mere presence will be enough to transform political styles is unrealistic' (2004b, p. 77). Leur & Ponzanesi (2012; 2014) expand on this idea of 'space invaders' and use it as a way to conceptualise the presence of Moroccan Dutch youth in 'privileged positions' not reserved for them across digital spaces; thus framing the Moroccan youths as digital space invaders.

There are two points that emerge from this perspective that have contributed to the project. Firstly, while both the analogue and digital identities of Kenyans in the UK remain an under-researched area, there is also the danger of hypervisibility or incorrectly presenting the participants of this study as representative of all Kenyans in the UK. This project at its core is a people centred study, I am interested in individual perspectives on Kenyanness and it does not seek to make any generalisations. Secondly while the concept of 'space invaders' provides a useful perspective it relies

on centring the dominant gaze/perspective which in turn 'others' the non-dominant identities/people. What this project aims to do is to both centre and challenge Kenyanness as a form of identification and function as the lens through which identity, performances and sites are studied. Kenyanness is therefore presented not as an 'other' identity nor is it, for the purpose of this study, considered as secondary to categorisations such as race and gender. By centring Kenyanness I am attempting to address the issues raised at the start of this section with regards to simultaneously being reduced to an object of study while also being mindful of the fact that, as Collins stated, for Black women the message is that it is only by separating myself from my lived experiences and community that I am able to "produce credible intellectual work" (1999, p. viii).

2.3 Naming our realities

In attempting to answer these research questions I am mindful of my own personal connection to this study and I want to safeguard against centring myself at the expense of the participants. In addition to this, while the participants of this research may not be considered (collectively) as part of academia, I am also mindful of being Black and researching minoritised groups. Johnson accurately sums up this anxiety when she says,

> I was (and am) acutely aware of the absence of Black (and/or) Muslim women from these academic spaces. This is felt viscerally as I attended conferences and seminars with more pictures of Black and Brown people on the presentation slides than Black and Brown scholars present in the room (Johnson, 2020).

All of these factors have presented an ongoing struggle and I have doubted whether it was appropriate to document this struggle. Ahmed notes that in relation to academic writing 'we have been taught to tidy our texts, not to reveal the struggle we have in getting somewhere' (2017, p. 13). Instead Ahmed suggests resisting the urge to 'eliminate the effort of or labor from the writing' but instead to 'stay with the difficulty, to keep exposing and exploring the difficulty' (2017, p. 13). For Ahmed, the specific struggle she seeks to address is the tension that exists between doing conceptual work versus doing descriptive work. She argues that 'too often conceptual work is understood as distinct from describing a situation' (2017, p. 13). By staying

with the difficult and trying to describe something that resists being fully comprehended in the present, Ahmed generates what she refers to as 'sweaty concepts'. She refers to them as sweaty because 'sweat is bodily' and is produced as a result of hard work.

> More specifically a sweaty concept is one that comes out of a description of a body that is not at home in the world. By this I mean description as angle or point of view: a description of how it feels not to be at home in the world, or a description of the world from the point of view of not being at home in it (Ahmed, 2017, p. 23).

When Ahmed talks of a body not being at home, I consider this in reference to myself and not the participants. This is why I employ 'sweaty concepts' as a way to think through how I refer, collectively, to the people who have agreed to take part in this study. I begin with identifying what factors connect the participants. All the participants (i) self-identify as Kenyan; (ii) are in the UK (iii) use Twitter and/or Facebook. This is a list of descriptive terms which may not rise to the level of conceptual thinking. However, I have also been deliberate in compiling this list. I opt for the "identify as Kenyan" rather than referring to the participants as Kenyan because the concept of "Kenyanness" within the context of this study is contested and forms part of the research question. I prefer the phrase "identify as" because it suggests an action on the part of the participants, i.e. they have chosen to identify as Kenyan.

The second list item 'in the UK' is perhaps the one I struggled with the most. Firstly, I deliberately steered away from language that focused on their absence from Kenya, specifically Kenyans outside of Kenya. I also did not want to use language that privileged Kenya as a 'home' nation or presented the UK as a temporary home. To do so, I believe, presupposes how the participants think of their relationship to Kenya and the UK. For this reason, I also avoided words such as 'immigrant' or 'migrants' and the term diaspora. Aside from its reliance on the 'home' vs 'away' narrative, diaspora is a term that has expanded in meaning to the extent that it has almost been emptied of its original meaning (K. D. Butler, 2001; Safran, 1991). By this I mean concepts of diaspora that make reference to 'scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return' (Hall, 1990,

p. 235). Gilroy (1993) does provide an alternative approach to diaspora specifically in relation to Black people in Europe, advocating for the use of hybridity and double-consciousness to describe the dual-identities of Black people in Europe, Gilroy employs the phrase Black Atlantic to describe the cultural and intellectual transnational formation amongst Black people. This approach however centres the Atlantic Ocean as the point of Black interconnectedness and in doing so excludes Black people who identify as East and/or Central African (2020). This is not to say that I disregard the work of Gilroy and similar Black scholars who have written extensively on connections and relationships between Black people around the world. However, at this stage, when the primary concern is how to name and describe the people who have taken part in this study, I prefer simpler, descriptive terms. Finally, Macharia (2012a) states that,

> Within the Kenyan context, the term diaspora is used in at least three inter-related ways. I use the passive voice deliberately, because the term diaspora functions in different ways for Kenyans abroad, the government, and Kenyans in Kenya (2012a, p. 222).

Macharia argues that one of the ways diaspora is used is to essentialise the Kenyans outside of Kenya.

> Unlike other diasporas that often rely on traumatic histories of departure to define them- selves, in the Kenyan context the circumstances under which one becomes a Kenyan abroad are trumped by the fact of being abroad (2012a, p. 222).

As a result of this, little attention is given to the reasons why Kenyans are outside of Kenya and they are all viewed 'through the same economic-driven lenses' (2012a, p. 222). Secondly, citing former President of the USA Barack Obama, whose father is Kenyan as an example, Macharia states that diaspora provides a 'useful strategy through which to include multi-generational Kenya-affiliated groups and individuals, especially those who are of Kenyan descent but are not citizens.' Stating further,

> In claiming multi-generational Kenyan descendants, the term diaspora attempts to solve the political problem of allegiance, one in which Kenyan descendants who are foreign nationals experience no necessary connection to Kenyan history or politics. In solving the problem of allegiance, the term diaspora attempts to cultivate an ongoing economic relationship between Kenya and those abroad (2012a, p. 222).

Finally, Macharia concludes,

> The rubric of diaspora privileges the economic relationship above all others: Kenyans abroad, no matter their actual social class or legal status, are considered economic migrants and, consequently, economic resources (2012a, p. 222).

In subsequent chapters I will engage further with Macharia's argument but for now I agree that diaspora, specifically as it relates to the scope of this study and its participants, is an inadequate term. On the one hand it is too broad (K. D. Butler, 2001; Safran, 1991) and on the other it is an essentialising term (Macharia, 2012a) and this is why I opt for the descriptive. Referring to the participants as people in the UK who identify as Kenyan and use SNS (Twitter and Facebook) is not only accurate but reflects the realities of the people who agreed to be involved in this project. Of course, relying on appropriate names and descriptions is not enough to ensure that I deliver a project that accurately conveys the realities of the people who choose to take part in it, and in the next part of this chapter I will discuss some of the methods used to overcome this.

2.4 A Black Feminist Approach

As previously outlined, this project is concerned with identification and performances within and across certain sites. It is also a study that is rooted in the personal and as discussed, this presents a number of challenges. I have noted how my closeness to the subject, while beneficial, requires me to safeguard against centring my own narrative. I have expressed concerns about being a minority who is researching minoritised people, I am aware that I may often be the only Black woman presenting my research to a predominately white audience. Finally, I want to ensure that I do not essentialise or erase participants' experiences. In this section I outline how relying on Black Feminist work has both provided me with the tools to address these concerns and shaped this project.

2.4.1 Researching from and within the margins

> Despite becoming a part of the academe as researchers and doctoral students, we know ourselves as apart from these institutions as our bodies trouble the expectations associated with knowledge holders. Our presence within these institutions marks a deviance from the bodies that

> are seen to occupy the academe as well as the way in which knowledge has been produced (Johnson & Joseph-Salisbury, 2018, p. 149).

It is against this backdrop of exclusion, hypervisibility and being Othered that I situate not just this study but myself as a Black woman undertaking research within a UK based university. I reflect on a question posed by Johnson (Johnson & Joseph-Salisbury, 2018, p. 253) in relation to Black women in academia, '*How do we claim our voices within a space that is and was in no way built with our bodies in mind?*' [emphasis in the original] and I present this study as a potential response to Johnson's question. As discussed in previous sections I have a deep and personal connection to the subject of this research; but this is also true of many other things. Part of the reason I undertook this study was because I wanted to (and still want to) claim my voice, to conduct research that reflects my reality because people like me are often not viewed as knowledge creators. However what has emerged during this process, is another question, *where* do I locate my voice? hooks speaks of the 'politics of location' (1989, p. 15) reminding us that if we seek to engage in the act of countering and opposing existing narratives we must 'identify the spaces where we begin our revision' (1989, p. 15). Given that this study is about locations and the performances that take place within them I believe there is a need for me to articulate where I am writing from; where my voice is located. Initially I considered addressing this in the Methods chapter in relation to my positionality. However, I believe identifying where my voice is located also speaks to a broader issue; it allows me to articulate how this body of work contributes to existing knowledge.

I am acutely aware that to exist as a Black woman, a Kenyan, in the UK, and a student member of a British university is to exist within the margins (Collins, 1999; Crenshaw, 1991; hooks, 1989). One of the consequences of existing within the margins is that often times we are addressing those in the centre; the mainstream. In doing so we alter how we speak, how we write, how we present our bodies so that we can be understood (Collins, 1999; hooks, 1989). There is often pressure on those of us in the margins to move towards the centre, but as Puwar's work shows, one's presence within the mainstream does not make this space any more welcoming or

accommodating. hooks offers an alternative by first re-defining what marginality means; she makes,

> a definite distinction between that marginality which is imposed by oppressive structures and that marginality one chooses as site of resistance - as location of radical openness and possibility (1989, p. 23).

It is within this definition of marginality that I locate my voice and my work. To write from the margins for me means that I ground my writing in work undertaken by fellow inhabitants of the margins; what hooks describes as 'a community of resistance' (1989, p. 23). This means that I approach this study from the perspective of a Black Feminist. I rely on Black Feminist theory to inform the method and the analysis undertaken in this study. I also acknowledge hooks' claim that 'language is a place of struggle' (1989, p. 15). It is with this in mind that I use the term Kiswahili to speak about the language as opposed the anglicised version, Swahili. The exclusion of the prefix 'ki' distorts the meaning of the word, it is the prefix that makes it clear that one is referring to the language rather than (for example) the Swahili people. Additionally, I do not italicise non-English words or mark them in any way that presents these words as 'Other' or foreign.

In placing myself and my work in the margins I am also mindful of hooks' warnings that the margin is not a safe space and there are risks involved in embracing marginality. One of the biggest risks for me is that I present this as both a personal and academic piece of work and open myself up to questions of objectivity/subjectivity. Though, in response to this I acknowledge Haraway's work on situated knowledge that challenges the reliance on an objective/subjective binary. I also return to Ahmed's remarks about the connection between the personal and theoretical. Finally, I refer back to Collins' statements on our reality and experiences being deemed intellectually inferior. I contend that this particular study, conducted and presented in this manner, was only possible because of my connection to the subject matter. This is not to say that it is without limitations, there are, and this will be discussed further in chapter 3. I do however seek to position this study as a body of work that can contribute to existing research of marginalised people specifically

conducted by marginalised people and written from the margins. As hooks' summarises,

> I am writing to you. I am speaking from a place in the margins where I am different, where I see things differently. I am talking about what I see (1992, p. 22).

Having outlined where I locate my voice and this work, I now turn to how I have operationalised this and I begin with a question from Audre Lorde,

> what does it mean when the tools of a racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of that same patriarchy? It means that only the most narrow perimeters of change are possible and allowable (1984, pp. 110–111).

I think about this quote alongside hooks' articulation on marginality as existing outside of but still part of a whole. In undertaking this research, I am aware that I am required to conform to certain academic conventions. I am equally aware of (and in agreement with) Johnson's claim that the academy 'was not built with our bodies in mind' (Johnson & Joseph-Salisbury, 2018, p. 253). How then do I conduct research that does not rely on those conventions designed without our bodies in mind? Indeed Lorde warns that 'the master's tool will not dismantle the master's house' (1984, p. 110) and again I pair Lorde's thinking with hooks because it allows me to articulate my position. As outlined above, I claim marginality as the place in which I write from. I have no interest and I certainly do not attempt to present this study as an effort to dismantle the master's house because I have found my space in marginality. Rather than attempt to challenge the white gaze of academia I consider marginality a site where I can look upon my own work and the academy in general through what hooks (1992) refers to as the oppositional gaze, as defined in Chapter 1.

This is precisely why I ground my research in Black Feminist work. It provides new ways for me to design and conduct this study while still adhering to the academic standards that I need to meet. The purpose here is to provide a brief definition and explanation of these tools and in later chapters I will expand my analysis of each one.

3 THEORISING KENYANNESS

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I introduce some of the theoretical concepts that ground, motivate, and inform this project. As noted in the introduction, there is a commitment to decentre the white western gaze in relation to this study on Kenyanness. This informs the structure of this chapter and the citation practices throughout this study that strive where possible to centre Kenyan voices.

The chapter is divided into four sections. I start with Kenya as a country and examine existing literature on how this affects the process of identification. I focus my analysis on four concepts, Kenyan citizenship as a transactional identity; mwananchi and Wanjiku as examples of Kenyan identity as a social construct and finally 'son of the soil' as a form of identification that addresses issues of belonging. In the second section, I introduce the notion of Harambee and the Nyayo Philosophy and their contributions to the act of nation-building which I present as performative expressions of Kenyan identity. In the third section, I move beyond Kenya's physical borders and draw connections between nation-building and leaving Kenya/returning to Kenya; and how these have been co-opted by the state as transnational performative acts of Kenyanness. Relying on literature that highlights some of the reasons why Kenyans are in countries outside of Kenya, I also use this section to critique how other forms of actions undertaken outside of Kenya are considered performances against the state and thus not Kenyan. In the final section, I return to Social Networking Sites as defined in Chapter 1 by firstly situating my work within existing research within this field. I then explore identity-based spaces within Twitter and use Black Twitter as a model to explain and understand spaces such as #KOT.

3.2 Identification

Speaking on identity Anthias (2002) argues that,

> the concept of identity 'is of limited heuristic value' […and…] that it may instead be more useful to deploy the notion of narratives of location and

> positionality for addressing the range of issues normally thought to be about collective identity (2002, p. 491).

At the same time Anthias states,

> I want to make clear that being sceptical of the heuristic or analytic value of 'identity' is not equivalent to saying that the issues it addresses are not important – quite the opposite. It is precisely because these issues have become increasingly relevant that it is so important to interrogate the concepts used by researchers (2002, p. 491).

I begin with Anthias not just because I am in agreement with what is proposed but because these two quotes provide a roadmap for this section. In recognition of the need to interrogate concepts relating to identity, I begin by introducing and analysing three Kenyan concepts related to identity and identification that provide some background on the idea of Kenyanness from a Kenyan perspective. These concepts are Kenyan citizenship, mwananchi and Wanjiku, and the theory of Son of the Soil. From there I move on to broader themes, including the term identities, the process of self-identification using Goffman's theory of the self, and intersectional theory. It is by moving through the concepts in this manner that I arrive at Anthias work on translocational positionality.

3.2.1 Kenyan Citizenship - Transactional Kenyanness

In laying the foundations necessary to undertake this study and answer the research questions I begin with the legal definition of Kenyanness. Existing Kenyan laws do not explicitly provide a definition of Kenyanness, however Kenyan law does define how one becomes a Kenyan citizen. The right to become a Kenyan citizen is codified in the Constitution of Kenya, of which there have been two versions; one in 1963 (Kenya's year of independence) and the second in 2010. In the 1963 Constitution, Kenyan citizenship could only be acquired through 'descent from a Kenyan male—and, in limited circumstances, by naturalisation' (M. Wanyeki, 2010, p. [no page]). This means being born in Kenya would not automatically grant a person Kenyan citizenship. One would have to be born to a Kenyan father, irrespective of whether one was born in Kenya or elsewhere. Furthermore, dual citizenship was not allowed and taking up citizenship of another country automatically invalidated one's Kenyan citizenship. As

Wanyeki (2010, p. [no page]) notes, the pre-2010 citizenship standard was restrictive and excluded many people because,

> our [pre-2010] Constitution does not recognise the multitude of ways in which belonging to, identification with a state (or several states simultaneously) can and does happen. Our [pre-2010] Constitution does not recognise the multitude of ways in which belonging to, identifying with Kenya can and is denied—on a casually indifferent and routine manner.

In the current 2010 Constitution, Kenyan citizenship can now be acquired either by birth or by registration. To qualify for citizenship by birth, one has to be born to parents who are Kenyan citizens, the emphasis on patrilineal descent replaced with a slightly more inclusive process. It does not matter whether the person seeking Kenyan citizenship by birth is born outside of Kenya, just that at the time of birth, one or both parents are citizens of Kenya. For those wishing to acquire citizenship through registration there are two routes: one by being married to a Kenyan citizen for a period of seven years or residing in Kenya as a lawful person for a period of seven years or more. Unlike the 1963 requirements, dual citizenship is also now possible. While these changes may appear to be more inclusive than the 1963 citizenship requirements, they are still rooted in heteronormative practices. This is one of the reasons this study intends to use intersectional theory as an analytical concept, as it offers alternative ways to interrogate what it means to be Kenyan and also provides room to examine the role of privilege and power within competing identities.

Notions of citizenship as a form of identification is not without its critics, (Lonsdale, 2008; Marshall, 2006; Ndegwa, 1997, 1998; Tilly, 2009). Ndegwa is critical of Kenyan citizenship as a marker of national identity stating,

> In Kenya, as in many other African countries, citizenship developed in the modern state in ways that reflect both the colonial heritage and the hasty transition to postcolonial state-society relations. Current forms of citizenship retain some structures of colonial society and continue to confer privilege on the state rather than society (1998, p. 352).

Ndegwa argues that the retention of these colonial structures means that citizenship in its current definition is unable to adequately describe what citizenship in Kenya means. This is because,

> …individuals in a postcolonial state like Kenya operate with dual citizenship, one in an ethnic community and the other in the nation-state. This dual citizenship differs in form, especially in the balance of rights and obligations that each type grants the individual (1997, p. 613).

Ndegwa's arguments highlight the existence of dual and competing identities. However, what is not clear is whether he is considering citizenship in the legal sense and its relationship to Kenya, or as a broader form of identification. The former presents some challenges because it is subject to a fairly rigid definition whereas the latter does offer an alternative. However, if that is the case then a question that arises is, if there is room to consider citizenship as a plurality of identities then there is room, through an intersectional framework, to think beyond this national/ethnic dichotomy. The concern with this however is that, as will be discussed further along, there are perhaps already better suited concepts that can speak to Kenyanness without the need to make citizenship fit a mould that it is not designed for.

Furthermore, at the time of Ndegwa's writing, Kenya was 34 years post-independence and notions of citizenship relied on the 1963 constitution, whereas at the start of this study Kenya is 50 years post-independence and has adopted a new constitution with a different approach to citizenship. Indeed, Ndegwa states,

> Citizenship, however, is never fixed; as a social process, it is constantly and simultaneously being enacted, contested, revised, and transformed (1998, p. 352).

Absent from Ndegwa's statement is the extent to which the notion of citizenship as a marker of Kenyan national identity evolved. Nor does he attempt to consider the concept of citizenship in relation to those who are not in Kenya. Wanyeki does consider this and relays their[13] concerns through the fictional tale of someone who leaves Kenya to study and has,

> …stayed connected to 'home.' You follow the news online. You debate the goings-on passionately with the other Kenyans you have connected to. You plan, at some fuzzy point in the future to return. You send money home dutifully, first to your family, and then to build up some sort of base for your return. You celebrate the recognition of Diaspora

[13] The word 'their' in this context is used as a gender neutral pronoun

> contributions through such remittances to the Kenyan economy (2010, p. [no page]).

However, while Wanyeki suggests that most of these concerns have been addressed by the 2010 constitution, I contend that it strengthens Ndegwa's reference to 'rights and obligations that each type [of citizenship] grants the individual.' Reading Wanyeki and Ndegwa in conjunction with this, Kenyan Pundit's comments that '…even if you'd spent your whole life in Kenya or moved back…' raises questions about whether living in Kenya, and for those who have left, returning to Kenya are some of these rights and obligations that Kenyans must fulfil in order to identify as citizens of Kenya. If this is the case, then what happens to those people who identify as Kenyan who have left Kenya and who may never return; who were born outside of Kenya and have never visited or lived in Kenya? What about the practice of sending remittance and interacting with other Kenyans while abroad, in what way do these actions impact citizenship, and in turn being Kenyan, if at all?

Tilly addresses this, to some extent, by framing citizenship as a 'special type of contract' (Tilly, 2009, p. 8) between people and the state. Tilly further defines citizenship as,

> a continuing series of transactions between persons and agents of a given state in which each has enforceable rights and obligations uniquely by virtue of (1) the person's membership in an exclusive category, the native-born plus the naturalized and (2) the agent's relation to the state rather than any other authority the agent may enjoy (Tilly, 2009, p. 8).

While Tilly is not specifically referring to Kenyan citizenship, some of these 'obligations' Tilly references are evident in the Constitution's definition of Kenyan citizen, and as previously mentioned this includes, amongst other things getting married, specifically to a Kenyan, and remaining married for at least seven years. However, like Ndegwa and Wanyeki there appears to be no room to consider citizenship that is neither transactional nor directly connected to one's physical/spatial proximity to Kenya as a nation. This is perhaps due to the rigidity of citizenship as a legal and political concept. An attempt to consider it beyond the political and transactional is to broaden it, which may require altering the fundamental concepts of citizenship and as stated earlier, this may not be necessary

when there are potentially other forms of identification in use that can address these concerns. In addition to this, citizenship already has a meaning that is understood by most people. While this may be restrictive in terms of ways to conceptualise Kenyanness as a term that can be used to guide this study and inform the methodology, citizenship works well. More importantly, it is not the scope of this study to re-define citizenship, there are already terms that exist within the Kenyan language of identification that function as a bridge between citizenship and may also offer more scope to consider intersectional Kenyanness, and these shall be introduced in the next section.

3.2.2 Mwananchi

I now introduce one of two concepts that play a significant role in understanding how Kenyan identity is constructed by the state and how both these offer an alternative to the rigid constitutional definition of citizenship as a marker of Kenyan identity. The first is mwananchi which was first introduced in Chapter 1. As noted, the Kiswahili word for citizen is mwananchi. The literal translation of the word is child (mwana) of the country (nchi); the plural of mwananchi is wananchi, i.e. children of the country. There are two things worth noting about the phrase mwananchi that makes it more than just the Kiswahili equivalent of the word citizen.

Firstly, the ubiquity and versatility of mwananchi as a concept requires some explanation. Mwananchi is used in many ways and the term often appears in English-language newspapers without translation from Kiswahili to English. Thus, while it is technically correct to state that mwananchi translated from Kiswahili to English means citizen; the best English equivalent of the term mwananchi is perhaps “the man in the street”, but this analogy also has its limitations. Unlike “the man in the street”, mwananchi is gender-neutral and can be used in the singular or the plural without losing its core meaning. Additionally, the subject in both these instances is significantly different; the man in the street implies an adult whose opinions and values are representative of most people. On the other hand, mwananchi suggests a child/parent relation where the ordinary Kenyan is essentially framed as a child and the nation as the parent. When used in the plural; (wananchi), children of the country convey a sense of shared origin, a community.

Anderson (1991) argues that the nation is a 'political imagined community' (1991, p. 6). In this context, Anderson's use of the term 'imagined' implies constructed rather than not real. According to Anderson, the nation is imagined as *limited* because 'it has finite, if elastic boundaries' (1991, p. 7); and as a *community* on the basis that, "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (1991, p. 7). Anderson's definition highlights what Stratton & Ang (1994) term "symbolic artificiality of national identity" (1994, p. 130) because "members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (B. Anderson, 1991, p. 6). This imagination of a collective identity is founded on "individual amnesia and half knowledge [as] people relinquish (to some extent) personal memory for a utopian collective identity" (Silberstein, 2009, p. 322). Echoes of Anderson and Stratton & Ang's work, particularly the idea of a "collective utopian identity", can be found in the Kenyan concept of mwananchi.

The infantilisation of citizens through the notion of mwananchi brings to the fore the issues raised by Puwar who notes,

> As the occupants of elite positions are not imagined to be non-white or female, often they are imagined to be much more junior than they actually are in terms of their institutional position and general competencies (2004b, p. 72).

While Puwar is speaking about infantilisation in the context of the UK, I contend the critique is relevant here because encoded in the word, mwananchi, are certain class-based assumptions. A mwananchi is the average Kenyan, who unlike the elite, does not have access to power or wealth. The use of the world "elite" in this context is similar to the way Ndegwa uses it in his discussion on citizenship. As noted earlier, Ndegwa argues that citizenship in post-colonial Kenya (i.e. the period after colonisation) exists in order to 'continue to confer privilege on the state rather than society' (1998, p. 353). Furthermore, Ndegwa asserts that there are certain rights and obligations that Kenyan national citizenship places on individuals. He further argues that these rights that were to be granted to Kenyans post-independence were 'essentially negotiated among politicians drawn from the "educated, urbanised

political classes"' (1998, p. 353). To advance this argument Ndegwa relies on Mamdani's (1996) work on citizens and subjects in post-colonial Africa, wherein;

> "citizens" (namely, the educated, urbanized political classes) as distinguished from "subjects" (the largely uneducated rural dwellers) operating outside the regime of rights but within the regime of obligations imposed by the colonials and their intermediaries. The so-called citizens had, during the colonial era, acquired some status and limited rights from their participation in urban society or through education as *evolues*, or "evolved ones" (1998, pp. 352–353).

The "typical Kenyan" is, according to Ndegwa, a subject and the interaction between the subject and the state/citizens is not transactional, instead the state/citizens act as elders who "harangued, warned, admonished, advised, directed or forewarned about others or against undertaking particular actions themselves"(1998, p. 354).

Lacking in Ndegwa's extension of Mamdani's work is a critique of how these categories worked during Kenya's colonial period. British people were and still are referred to as British subjects by virtue of the relationship between the Crown/Empire and its citizens. This would have been the case during Kenya's colonial period where white colonialists/settlers would have retained their status as British subjects on the basis that colonised territories were part of the British Empire. The use of subject in this manner would be at odds with Mamdani's and Ndegwa's citizen/subject binary because, in their framing the subjects are subordinate which contradicts the hierarchy of white colonialists in pre-and post-colonial Kenya. Furthermore as intersectional theory illustrates, hierarchies of identities and systems of oppression do not fit into neat dichotomous relationships, instead they overlap and intersect (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 2015). The terminology and the binary that Mamdani and Ndegwa rely on may have their limitations, however, there is merit in their construction of Kenyan identity as one that is dictated by identity markers such as class, race, gender, and by spatial distinctions such as rural and urban. Perhaps a better way to conceptualise this is through the lens of translocational positionality. The people who Ndegwa frames as elite were able to occupy this position and in turn enjoy certain rights or privileges because of what was happening at the time; i.e. a newly independent Kenya. In the context of Ndegwa's hierarchy those he refers to as 'others' (1998, p. 354) would include everyone who is not covered by the label "elite".

However rather than present these as fixed classifications, translocational positionality acknowledges that social processes allow for people's class identities to shift and for new classifications to emerge. It also allows for a construction of citizenship that exists beyond the transactional.

3.2.3 Wanjiku

Mwananchi continues to be the most popular way to refer to 'typical' or 'ordinary' Kenyans, however, in the 1990s President Moi introduced a new characterisation of Kenyan identity: Wanjiku (Gathara, 2013, 2014a, 2014b; Goldsmith, 2020; Macharia, 2011, 2012b, 2013, 2014; Muchiri, 2016). Described as a Mama Mboga, 'a working mother selling vegetables on the roadside' (Goldsmith, 2020, p. [no page]); Muchiri (2016) provides a summary of Wanjiku's origin,

> Moi was clearly exasperated by the calls for a change in the constitution, and even more by the insistence that ordinary Kenyans be involved in the making of the most revered document in the country. He blurted out that Wanjiku, meaning the ordinary Kenyan, could not be involved in the constitutional review process because she is ignorant (2016, p. [no page]).

Muchiri's characterisation of Moi "blurting out" the name Wanjiku belies the sexist and ethnocentric framing of Wanjiku as the average Kenyan. Wanjiku is a popular female Kikuyu name. As part of Agikuyu[14] lore (Karangi, 2005; Macharia, 2007; Muhoro, 2002; Munene, 2019) it is believed that its genealogy can be traced back to one couple Mumbi and her husband Gikuyu and their ten daughters (one who was named Wanjiku). Nine of the daughters (including Wanjiku) are considered the heads of their eponymous clan[15] and collectively the daughters are considered the foundational clans from which all other Kikuyu people stem. Moi's (who ethnically identified as a Kalenjin) tenure was marked by '[the] gradual Kalenjinization of the public and private sectors' (Adar & Munyae, 2001, p. 5), which he began in the 1980s. At the same time, he took steps to "de-Kikuyunize the civil service and the state-

[14] The Collective name for Kikuyu people

[15] Thus, Wanjiku is considered the head and founder of the Anjiku clan. The names of the nine daughters are all common names. For instance, my full name Wangui (of which Kui is the diminutive) is one of the founding daughters' names. My mother Wanjiru, my aunties Wanjiku, Wambui and my sister Wairimu all have founding clan names. Due to Kikuyu naming practices that rely heavily on naming new children after grandparents and grandparents' siblings a lot of names are replicated thus increasing their ubiquity.

owned enterprises previously dominated by the Kikuyu ethnic group during Kenyatta's regime" (Adar & Munyae, 2001, p. 5). There were, in the 1990s, periods of violent ethnic clashes, including state-led ethnic violence (Adar & Munyae, 2001; Odhiambo, 2004). 'Several Kalenjin politicians said their community were ready to take up arms in defence of "their" government' (Odhiambo, 2004, pp. 32–33) which meant attacking non-Kalenjin (predominately Luo, Luhya & Kikuyu) people living within Kenya's Rift Valley province (Moi's home province). Moi's framing of the average Kenyan as a Kikuyu woman who could not grasp the complexities of constitutional reform was not only intended as pejorative (Muchiri, 2016); but it was also a political dog whistle signalling, not only his contempt for non-Kalenjin people in general, but specifically Kikuyu people. It is interesting to note that while Muchiri acknowledges Wanjiku was intended to demean Kenyans, Muchiri also writes that,

> it is understood that she [Wanjiku] is symbolic of all Kenyans regardless of their gender, tribe, occupation, religion, educational background, or any other fields of identity formation and definition(Muchiri, 2016, p. [no page]).

Muchiri bases her position on the fact that Wanjiku has been reclaimed by activists, civil society and Kenyans in general, implying that this reclamation overrides the original meaning and application of the name. As Muchiri puts it, 'Moi's Wanjiku may have been ignorant but today's Wanjiku is very much aware of her rights' (Muchiri, 2016, p. [no page]). Muchiri transforms Wanjiku from a symbol of "the ordinary mwananchi" (Macharia, 2013, p. [no page]) into a representation of a woke[16] mwananchi. Muchiri is correct in stating that Wanjiku has been reclaimed; Wanjiku has also become a meme (Goldsmith, 2020). However, both Gathara (2013, 2014a, 2014b) and Macharia (2011, 2012b, 2013, 2014) draw a different conclusion, arguing that it is this process of reclamation and meme-ification that perpetuates not just the ethnocentric stereotyping but also the misogyny that Wanjiku encapsulates. If Moi spoke life into Wanjiku, then cartoonist Gado drew Wanjiku into existence (Macharia, 2014; Muchiri, 2016). With a career spanning over 30 years, Gado a Tanzanian political cartoonist, is considered one of the "most syndicated cartoonist in Central

[16] Woke is a term derived from African American Vernacular English (AAVE) to describe a person who is alert to and able to confront societal injustices.

and East Africa" (Lambieck, 2020, p. [no page]) and he is regularly featured in Kenya's newspapers (Dahir, 2020; Lambieck, 2020; Muchiri, 2016). Like Muchiri, Gado pushes the woke mwananchi/Wanjiku narrative, claiming that he sought to reclaim Wanjiku from Moi. Initial visual representations of mwananchi by Gado were gendered male. However, after Moi's introduction of Wanjiku, Gado wanted to rebel against this characterisation stating,

> President Moi introduced Wanjiku as a nobody common woman-some sort of a lumpenproletariat-somebody who does not really understand issues, somebody who (leaders/politicians) others should decide for. Very much in line with how we dismiss the village mama mboga, a common woman, and women in general. With time, I fashioned my Wanjiku as somebody who is articulate, smart, funny, and aware of her rights, and knows what she wants.

By way of example, here is one of Gado's (2013) illustrations entitled Greedy Politicians,

Wanjiku stands before Kenyan parliamentarians, having already offered them her arm and her leg, is asked to give her breast too. Through a woke mwananchi/Wanjiku lens we see insatiable politicians placing even greater demands on the ordinary Kenyan; who is still standing up to politicians but is also weary and running out of resources to give. However, I am more inclined to agree with Macharia's description of Wanjiku;

> Wanjiku started as a male political fantasy: an everywomen [sic] to be used by elite political men. A woman traded across spaces, as currency and as a source of currency (2014, p. [no page]).

In this version of Wanjiku she emerges as "Moi's Wanjiku [3rd president] Kibaki's Wanjiku […] Gado's Wanjiku" (2014, p. [no page]). The figurative "to give an arm and a leg" moves beyond metaphor and speaks to the very real violence enacted against Kenyan women (especially working class women, like Wanjiku) by the state and the breast is not merely another body part but a reminder that the violence against women is often both sexist and sexual (Macharia, 2014). Paradoxically, but also in line with how patriarchy functions, Wanjiku is presented as a victim who needs saving and her creators/oppressors/abusers frame themselves as her saviour. Indeed, Gado's own evolution of Wanjiku can be read as his attempt to save Wanjiku from Moi and that is how she in turn becomes Gado's Wanjiku. Gathara (2013) also acknowledges the gendered aspect of Wanjiku's identity and it is his contention that Wanjiku was created as a woman because Kenya does not value women. Further, that Moi deliberately framed mwananchi as a woman through Wanjiku's creation because, "the disdain we have for women mirrors the contempt our rulers have for us" (2013, p. [no page]). Macharia and Gathara's Wanjiku resists the Wanjiku = ordinary mwananchi (woke or otherwise) conflation because at best this comparison only considers class as a point of difference/site of power interaction. Instead they offer a version of Wanjiku that considers the effect of her ethnicity multiplied by her gender multiplied by her class status (Crenshaw, 1991; Harris, 1990; D. K. King, 1988).

I draw on these three concepts; Kenyan citizenship, mwananchi and Wanjiku because they provide a good foundation to explore ways of identification in relation to Kenya/Kenyanness. Of the three, it is easy to point to citizenship as the one that sits apart from mwananchi and Wanjiku. With citizenship there is a top down approach, where the state defines who is and who is not Kenyan. There is a rigidity to this form of identification; one that is encoded in laws that uphold patriarchal and heteronormative systems of identification. It places obligations and expectations on citizens and the state, and in so doing presents a form of identification that is spatially connected to Kenya as a country. The concept of citizenship in this context also leaves no room for self-identification. However, I rely on it because it is an easily recognisable and definable form of identification and one that is familiar to those of us who identify as Kenyan. I rely on mwananchi to contrast this against citizenship but also as a form

of identification in its own right. One that is understood by Kenyans and that brings to the fore how class is used to mark certain Kenyan identities as less than others. Its pervasiveness is also perhaps one of mwananchi's limitations as a marker of Kenyan identity. It functions as both a word for citizen, but it equally sets up a child/parent dichotomy and with it, the problematic nature of infantilization. It is also often difficult to work out which version of the word is being used. Finally, in either application, it focuses on a single axis of differentiation and erases other forms of identification. It is for this reason that I bring in Wanjiku because, while there exists a conflation of Wanjiku with mwananchi and a revision of the term that denies its sexist and ethnocentric beginnings; an intersectional approach resists the idea that Wanjiku represents the woke mwananchi. Instead it provides an opportunity to consider the multiplier effects of gender, class, ethnicity and sexuality.

Where mwananchi and Wanjku seem to fall short, especially in relation to citizenship is when thinking about belonging and in response to this I bring in literature on son of the soil and demonstrate how it is connected to ideas of Kenyanness and belonging.

3.2.4 Son of the Soil

A recent Kenyan example of how notions of son of the soil play within Kenya can be found in relation to how Kenya treats Somali refugees. For over 25 years, Kenya has played host to hundreds of thousands of Somali refugees (Burns, 2010; De Montclos & Kagwanja, 2000; Lambo, 2012). Many of whom live in an area known as the Dabaab refugee camp; though considering the camp has a population of about 200,000 people, one could argue that it is perhaps a town rather than a camp (De Montclos & Kagwanja, 2000). Many of those living in the camp have been born in Kenya, (some to parents who were also born in Kenya) and have lived within Kenya legally (S. Jones, 2015; Lambo, 2012) so could in principle be granted citizenship in accordance with the Constitution. However the Government of Kenya (GOK), refers to them as legal aliens (marking them as non-citizens) and in 2016 ordered the closure[17] of the Dabaab camp and the return of its residents to Somalia (Burns, 2010; S. Jones, 2015; Lambo, 2012). GOK claims that there are social political reasons for its failure to recognise the

[17] In 2017 the High Court of Kenya blocked the closure claiming it was unconstitutional. In 2019 GOK indicated that the closures would go ahead, however this is still undecided (Bhalla, 2019)

refugee camp as anything other than temporary accommodation granted to foreign nationals (Burns, 2010). The reason GOK seems to rely on most frequently is that the camp provides a threat to Kenya's national security. In recent years there has been a spate of attacks across Kenya by a Somali armed movement called *Harakat Al-Shabaab* (commonly referred to as Al-Shabaab) (Marchal, 2009). It is the GOK's contention that Al-Shabaab members are recruiting from within the refugee camp and/or being afforded protection by camp residents (S. Jones, 2015).

To provide an understanding of one of the ways belonging is understood within the Kenyan context I introduce the notion of 'son of the soil'. I begin by engaging with literature that defines and critiques this notion (Geschiere & Jackson, 2006; Lonsdale, 2008; Lynch, 2011; Médard, 2009; Njogu, 2018; Prestholdt, 2014), secondly by considering it alongside mwananchi as used in the literal sense (child of the land), and thirdly by introducing the idea of wenye nchi (dual meaning – either owners of the land or people of the land) that is often used in contrast to wananchi (plural of mwananchi).

Literature on Kenyan identity makes reference to the term "autochthony." The literal meaning of the term being "of the soil" and meaning "by inference a direct claim to a territory" (Geschiere & Jackson, 2006, p. 2). The colloquial use of the term "sons of the soil"; and as Lonsdale (2008) notes, it is always sons, always gendered, has a specific meaning within the context of Kenyan popular culture. From the mid-1980s until his death in 2003, Kenyan writer Wahome Mutahi wrote a weekly column called *Whispers*. This column, a satirical take on life in Kenya appeared (at separate times) in the Sunday edition of Kenya's two leading English language newspapers. Initially Whispers appeared in *The Sunday Nation* which is the largest-selling newspaper in East and Central Africa then in *The East African Standard*, the second most read newspaper after *The Nation* (Ogola, 2006). Mutahi wrote Whispers in the first person and he would "describe himself almost incessantly as 'Son of the Soil', 'Son of Nyaituga[18]' or *Mzee* (elder)[specifically male elder] of the house" (Ogola, 2006, p.

[18] A place in Kenya's Central Province

575). While not wishing to overstate the link between popular culture and how Kenyanness is understood, it is a point worth noting.

The concept of “sons of the soil”; has been used to connect notions of being Kenyan to those who can lay claim to land (Geschiere & Jackson, 2006; Lonsdale, 2008; Lynch, 2011; Médard, 2009; Prestholdt, 2014). The argument being that those who are able to lay claim to a geographic space, a physical location, land, can also lay claim to be of that land (Geschiere & Jackson, 2006) on the basis that they are the original people of that land. Conversely, those who cannot lay claim, do not belong, are strangers, outsiders (Geschiere & Jackson, 2006). This is, as Geschiere & Jackson (2006) argue, a slippery notion and both Medard (2009) and Lynch (2011) point to the essentialising nature of autochthony that denies the existence of multiple and fluid identities. Médrad (2009) describes autochthony in Kenya as an administrative tool, rooted in Kenya’s political past and continuing post-independence to the present. The ability to lay claim to land in Kenya, according to Médrad, has mainly been a political exercise often with violent consequences such as forced evictions. Geschiere & Jackson (2006) state that,

> Autochthony seems to promise a primal security, based as it is on some sort of primordial truth-claim about belonging to the land. Yet in everyday life it seems rather to compound a basic insecurity. In practice, "belonging" turns out to be relative, rather than a given; one can never be sure that one "really" belongs (2006, p. 6).

This perspective, particularly the political nature of “autochthony” is exemplified in a 1970 parliamentary discussion (Hansard, 1970) when Member of Parliament Muturia said,

> Kenya has two classes of people: one class is that of *wananchi* and the other class is that of *wenye nchi*. Therefore, there must be a difference on this, Mr. Speaker. When dealing with the affairs of this country, we must know that there are *wananchi* and there are *wenye nchi* when considering things like employment, things like loans, and also other facilities, this should be born in mind I can see Assistant Ministers just staring at me. I do not know what I have touched on. This one that pains him. Mr speaker, sir, there must be wenye nchi (Hansard, 1970 p.1781).

When asked to clarify Muturia responded with,

> The definition is that; *wenye nchi* are the people who are born in this country from the time this earth was created, *wananchi* are those temporary people who have papers and then call themselves *wananchi*. This is why I say there must be a very thorough selection when trying to give people jobs, because I can see so many *wananchi* trying to snatch the jobs. We want *wenye nchi* to get the jobs or any other facilities first, then *wananchi* come later (Hansard, 1970 p.1781).

This seems to be the earliest record of what would eventually evolve into a Kiswahili saying; 'Kenya kuna wenye nchi na wananchi' which translates to, in Kenya there are those who own the land (or are of the land) and wananchi (which is the plural on mwananchi). The 1970 use of this phrase seems to be at odds with its current usage. Muturia seems to imply that the wenye nchi are the original people of Kenya and should therefore be entitled to the benefits that comes with this (jobs, loans etc). In contrast wananchi are considered temporary (perhaps akin to the residents of the Dadaab refugee camp) which is at odds with how it is commonly used. Neither a direct translation of the word wananchi (i.e. children of the land), nor its use as marker of class and citizenship, aligns with Muturia's definition that it is a word that refers to temporary/late arrivals who are excluded from jobs, etc. Muturia's presentation of the wenye nchi/wananchi has echoes of hooks' (1989) comments on marginality. In this context the wananchi exist in the margins, 'part of the whole but outside the main body'.

In recent years the wenye nchi/wananchi binary has evolved. For instance, Gathara (2011) relies on it when discussing the Kenyan constitution,

> Its [the constitution's] policies, rules and laws only apply to Kenyans, the wananchi (the people of the nation), not to the wenye nchi (those who own the nation) (2011, p. [no page]).

This is a complete revision of Muturia's use of the phrase, with wananchi functioning in the way it has been discussed so far throughout this chapter; as a marker of citizenship and class, in contrast to the wenye nchi. In the next section I move beyond these Kenyan concepts and examine some of the broader themes that inform this study.

Along with my intention to decentre the white gaze as noted at the start of this chapter, I refer back to Chapter 2, where I state that this study seeks to centre and

challenge Kenyanness as a form of identification. It is also the intention of this research to position Kenyanness as the lens through which identities, performances and sites are studied. It is for these reasons that I have chosen to begin this chapter with what may be termed as Kenyan notions of identity. While citizenship itself is a term that exists beyond Kenya, I open the section with this phrase as a way to bring to the fore the way citizenship functions in relation to Kenyanness. Citizenship also provides the foundation required to move on to concepts of mwananchi first, a paradoxical word. On the one hand it has a versatility to it, allowing it to describe more than just citizenship but at the same time it is both limited and limiting, relying on a single axis of difference. Next, I introduce Wanjiku as a uniquely Kenyan way to frame identity, but while it is often meant to describe "the average Kenyan" or "regular mwananchi" it is also a form of identification that is tangled in patriarchy, classism, and ethnic stereotyping. Finally I discuss 'son of the soil' which, like citizenship, is not a uniquely Kenyan phrase but its application speaks to the impact and legacy of colonial rule in Kenya and like mwananchi limits any attempts to consider multiple and fluid identities. I am aware that in starting off this chapter with Kenyanness and Kenyan identity from a Kenyan perspective I have adopted a slightly unconventional approach to a literature review chapter. As mentioned in Chapter 2, part of the process of writing this thesis has been balancing writing from the margins while adhering where necessary and possible to academic conventions. In the next section, I adopt what might be considered a more traditional approach to a literature review by considering these Kenyan notions of identity alongside existing literature on identities.

3.3 Process of Identification

Whereas the previous section took a narrower approach to identities and focused solely on Kenyanness, and Kenyan identity as conceptualised by Kenyans, in this portion of the chapter I expand my focus. I examine existing theories on identity and seek to make connections and highlight any difference between these broader discussions and the concepts introduced in the previous section.

3.3.1 Identities

The existence of identity as a concept in a number of fields, including sociology, geography, cultural studies and social psychology as well as in everyday life has contributed to the term being used and understood in very many different ways (Cerulo, 1997; Fearon, 1999; Gleason, 1983; Holland & Lachicotte, 2007; Stryker & Burke, 2000). Describing the concept of identity as both "elusive and ubiquitous", Gleason (1983, p. 910) addresses this by providing a semantic history of the word. Emerging from Gleason's work and supported by Cerulo (1997) is that within Western identity scholarship Cooley (1902) and Mead (1913) are regarded as the founding fathers, though at the time their work referred to "the self" rather than identity. Since then identity studies has evolved considerably (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Cerulo, 1997; Hall, 1996) with the most notable change (particularly within the social sciences) being a departure from thinking about identity at the micro level (i.e. personal/individual identity) to a macro-level approach to identity that focuses on society and social structures (Cerulo, 1997; Simon, 2008).

In the context of this study, I align my thinking on identity with Fearon's (1999) who recognises that identity is used both in academic spaces and in every-day life, often in different ways. He attempts to bridge this gap by trying to find an every-day language definition of identity that can work in both contexts. One way that Fearon does this is by drawing a distinction between identity, as it is used on a personal, individual level and on a social level. According to Fearon a,

> social category [is], a set of persons marked by a label and distinguished by rules deciding membership and (alleged) characteristic features or attributes (1999, p. 2).

In this case the label would be "Kenyans in the UK"; the rules of membership being fairly fluid, particularly with reference to this study because participants are allowed to self-identify but at the very least, participants would have to identify as Kenyan, live in the UK and use at least one of the two SNS that forms a part of this study. More broadly, it aligns with concepts of mwananchi and Wanjiku to the extent that both are subject to rules that distinguish membership. Some of the rules may be ambiguous and even problematic, which is what this study seeks to address, but they can still be

considered social categories. In relation to personal identity, Fearon speaks of an identity as,

> some distinguishing characteristic (or characteristics) that a person takes a special pride in or views as socially consequential but more-or-less unchangeable (1999, p. 2).

It is, according to Fearon, this category that gives rise to statements such as,

> 'my identity is … ' or 'I could never do that because it would be inconsistent with, or would violate, my identity' (1999, p. 11).

In the context of this study, Fearon's definition of personal identity could be used to explain statements such as 'I would never tweet this because it would be inconsistent with who I am'. However, mwananchi could also function as a personal identity; but one that speaks more to the versatility of the term rather than the limitations of Fearon's distinction. In any event, the term 'identity' while useful still fails to speak to the overall aims of this study which is about the process of identification; how identities are constructed and performed, and the relationship between construction, performance and the sites where these processes take place. Which goes beyond what identity is or is not. I do however rely on it for the precise reason that it means something in everyday life and this study is about the everyday lives of Kenyans in the UK who use SNS.

3.3.2 Self-Identification vs Ascribed Identification

Linked to the concept of identities is who gets to assign these labels; be they social categories, as Fearon suggests, or Wanjiku. One of the limitations of citizenship, mwananchi and Wanjiku is that they do not leave much room for the process of self-identification. Each one is a form of identification that is either ascribed or imposed. It is here that I bring in Goffman (1956) and his work on how the self is constructed. For Goffman, notions of the self are linked to the dramaturgical; whereby an individual will act in a particular way in order to control how they are received by others. Goffman refers to this activity as performance, defined as,

> the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants (1956, p. 8).

In relation to who this performance is for, they are defined by Goffman as the 'audience, observers or co-participants' (1956, p. 8). The ultimate aim of this performance is to present the ideal version of one's self in line with what the audience expects. In order to do this a person splits the location of their performance into a frontstage and a backstage. The backstage is where an individual will conceal actions that may cause them to be viewed in a negative light, or less than their ideal self. The frontstage is where the performance takes place; with the enactment taking place within a setting that, as Goffman states,

> tends to stay put, geographically speaking, so that those who would use a particular setting as part of their performance cannot begin their act until they have brought themselves to the appropriate place and must terminate their performance when they leave it (1956, p. 13).

The setting holds the scenery and the stage props. The person or persons conducting the performance brings to the setting their personal fronts which,

> refers to the other items of expressive equipment, the items that we most intimately identify with the performer […] and that we naturally expect will follow the performer wherever [sic] he goes. As part of personal front, we may include insignia of office or rank; clothing; sex, age, and racial characteristics; size and looks; posture; speech patterns; facial expressions (1956, p. 14).

In the context of trying to understand Kenyanness, Goffman provides a frame of reference to think about the individual. For this project, which is people centered and about their everyday life, Goffman also provides a link between the individual and the performance in a way that implies that identity construction is performance. There is also an acknowledgement that performances are multi-directional; there is a relationship between the person performing and the people who are part of the audience. However, there are limitations here, particularly with regards to the fixedness of certain aspects. For one, the idea that a 'setting' is static is at odds with elements of this study that consider most aspects of identity construction and performance to be fluid. Likewise, with respect to the personal front, Goffman lists items that we assume will naturally follow the performer wherever they go however there is no consideration here of how aspects such power dynamics and systems of

oppressions affect these items that make up the personal front. To complement Goffman, I bring in intersectional theory here as it addresses power dynamics.

3.3.3 Intersectionality and Multiple Consciousness

> The problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite - that it frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242).

Crenshaw's call for an intersectional approach stems from a critique of white feminist theory that failed to recognise the interconnectedness of race and gender and how this impacted the racism and sexism experienced by women of colour (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1991), with Crenshaw's work drawing on the specific experiences of the United States of America (USA).

As mentioned previously, I seek to ground my work in this approach firstly, because it gives me the language to name the reality that I, my work, and the participants live in. I am also interested in how intersectionality facilitates thinking on identity. At the core of intersectional theory is the notion that 'individuals have multiple, overlapping, potentially conflicting, identities, loyalties and allegiances' (Torre, 2009, p. 112) or what Harris (1990) refers to as 'multiple consciousness'. So rather than speak of individual identity in the singular, an intersectional approach considers the possibility that people are composed of a 'welter of partial, sometimes contradictory, or even antithetical "selves"' (Harris, 1990, p. 584). I wish to highlight the references to "multiple consciousness" and why I prefer this approach to Gilroy's double consciousness. This is because,

> The modifier "multiple" refers not only to several, simultaneous oppressions but to the multiplicative relationships among them as well. In other words, the equivalent formulation is racism multiplied by sexism multiplied by classism (D. K. King, 1988, p. 47).

In addition to the recognition of multiple consciousness, intersectional theory is critical of perspectives (particularly white feminist perspectives) (Anthias, 2008; Crenshaw, 1991; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; McCall, 2005; Nash, 2008; Torre, 2009) that politicise lived experiences (specifically of Black women) as existing in mutually exclusive terrains. Instead intersectionality recognises both the differences that exist

within differences and how they intersect with social divisions such as class, race and gender to produce overlapping forms of discrimination, oppression and exclusion (Collins, 1999; Crenshaw, 1991). It is also worth noting however that whilst the phrase 'intersectionality' is often attributed to Crenshaw and the CRT movement, critiques of the essentialising elements of identity politics have been put forward by theorists who fall outside the CRT banner (Walby, Armstrong, & Strid, 2012).

An intersectional lens provides a useful starting point to analyse some of the issues that this research explores, for instance as illustrated in Kenyan Pundit's in Chapter 1, and the relationship between a Kenyan identity, an ethnic identity and one's gender identity and how all these intersect with existing systems of power and discrimination. Concepts such mwananchi that are classed and Wanjiku that are classed and gendered can be understood better though an intersectional lens. It also provides a way to address the points made by Macharia with regards to rethinking Kenyanness, which in turn offers a way to answer this study's first research question.

Taking the concept of intersectionality and applying it to research has been the subject of some debate (Brah & Phoenix, 2013; Davis, 2008; Hancock, 2007b, 2007a, 2013; McCall, 2005; Walby et al., 2012) and in Chapter 3 I will revisit this. For this project I,

> "recognize that concepts need to have their meaning temporarily stabilized at the point of analysis, even while recognizing that their social construction is the outcome of changes and interactions over time and to note the historically varied construction of these categories" (Walby et al., 2012, p. 236).

I however opt for temporary stabilisation even before the point of analysis. For instance, in selecting participants for this study I sought people who identified as Kenyan, I did this while recognising that Kenyan identity and Kenyanness are both forms of identification that "conflate or ignores intragroup differences" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242). However, this stabilisation is necessary as it enables me to set parameters for the study.

3.3.4 Translocational Positionality

I also pair the work described above on intersectionality with Anthias (2002, 2008) theory of translocational positionality because it addresses some of the shortcomings

of intersectional theory. From personal experience as detailed in a previous section, one of the motivations for this study was how my own identity would shift based on location and the social, political factors within these locations. For instance, returning to the UK as a refugee resulted in a different way of identification and being identified compared to being in Kenya as the daughter of a political detainee. These are some of the points of inquiry I wish to explore and to this extent intersectionality does not meet that purpose.

Translocational positionality allows for "social processes; i.e. the multiple situational elements that produce social outcomes" (Anthias, 2008, p. 14). This is important because it speaks to the studies interest in the "narratives of locations" because it is the social process that give rise to the stories that emerge for these locations.

3.4 Building the Nation

3.4.1 Harambee

Post-independence Kenya has been marked by presidents/governments that have perpetuated the narrative of the nation. As a former British colony, Kenya gained its independence on 12th December 1963 and exactly one year later the Republic of Kenya was officially formed. The leader of the Kenya African National Union (KANU), Kenya's only political party at the time, Jomo Kenyatta took office as the republic's first president. In his attempt to forge a unified Kenyan identity out of Kenya's multiplicity of ethnicities (L. Larsen, 2011), Kenyatta emphasised the relationship between a single unified Kenyan identity and nation-building. Kenyatta introduced these ideas through the concept of Harambee (Abwunza, 1990; Muriuki, 1979), a Kiswahili word that means to pull together. As a political and ideological concept Harambee is defined as the "collective and cooperative participation of a community in an attempt to fill perceived needs through utilization of its own resources" (Ngau, 1987, p. 524). Examining mwananchi through the lens of Harambee alters the meaning, application and status of the term mwananchi as it is no longer simply a term used to refer to the ordinary Kenyan. Mwananchi becomes the word that encapsulates the idea of a single unified Kenyan identity; in this application it erases the existence of class difference. Kenyatta therefore uses Harambee to extend the

meaning of mwananchi that goes beyond simply being a citizen of Kenya. To be a mwananchi requires one to adopt the spirit of Harambee which in turn requires one to join fellow wananchi in nation-building. Furthermore, the child/parent relationship implied by mwananchi takes on a more literal meaning when considered alongside the fact that Kenyatta is often referred to as Baba wa Taifa which when translated from Kiswahili to English means Father of the Republic.

The relation between Harambee and mwananchi as constructed by Kenyatta renders mwananchi to be performative. Harambee functions to erase all markers of difference that are contained with mwananchi. Rather than thinking of mwananchi as a marker of Kenyan identity (as previously discussed – citizenship/infantilisation), mwananchi becomes an identity that is always doing; that is always performing (the act of nation-building) through the spirit of Harambee.

3.4.2 Nyayoism

Upon Kenyatta's death in 1978, Daniel arap Moi became Kenya's second president. In a public show of his commitment to Kenyatta's spirit of Harambee, Moi spoke of his presidency as Nyayo. Nyayo[19] is the Kiswahili word for footsteps and the implied meaning, as used by Moi, was that he intended to follow Kenyatta's footsteps. However soon after Moi transformed nyayo from a symbol of continuity to an ideology that he referred to as the Nyayo Philosophy (Abwunza, 1990; L. Larsen, 2011; Muriuki, 1979). In his own words Moi stated that,

> "there are three important factors in the Kenyan style of nation-building: the vehicle, the force and the philosophy. KANU is the vehicle, Nyayo is the moving spirit or force, and Nyayoism is the philosophy". (Moi, 1986 p. 18 cited by Abwunza, 1990 p. 183).

Moi explained further,

> "The fact that the Kenyan socio-cultural mosaic is so complex has been stressed, understood, and incorporated into the nation-building and development process. Such a complex mosaic of socio-cultural fabrics must be guided by a common and realistic philosophy, especially an adjusted and indigenous philosophy which crosses tribal, philosophic

[19] Nyayo with a capital N differs from lowercase n nyayo – a distinction that is explained in greater detail in the next paragraph.

> and socio-cultural boundaries. That is the Nyayo appeal – summarised in peace, love and unity" (Moi, 1986 p. 22 cited by Larsen, 2011).

When Moi first spoke of nyayo (without the capitalised n) it was in the context of carrying on with the principles of Kenyatta's Harambee. However, when he introduced Nyayo (capital N) as a philosophy[20], he simultaneously introduced the idea of Nyayoism. Nyayoism became an "ideology required by governmental edict and legitimized by Kenyan law" (Abwunza, 1990, p. 184). Nyayoism was synonymous with the KANU government, the presidency, the president, and Kenyan identity. In order for Kenyans to legitimise their identity they had to embrace and follow Nyayoism (Abwunza, 1990). As Larsen (2011) points out, under Nyayoism the state, the government, and the president were considered one and the same and as such the act of nation-building soon transformed into building for the president/the presidency. Being anti-Nyayo equated to being anti-Kenya and anti-government, a treasonable offence (Abwunza, 1990). Nyayoism was used by Moi to promote the belief that human rights were Eurocentric and detrimental to Kenya and Kenyans, consequently Kenyan human rights and pro-democracy activists were labelled as disloyal and unpatriotic (Adar & Munyae, 2001). Adar & Munyae (2001) provide a comprehensive account of Kenyans who were considered disloyal;

> Between 1989 to 1991 Kenya saw one of the worst human rights violations in its history. Moi accused advocates of multiparty politics of subversion, and thereby got a fresh excuse for detaining a new generation of his critics (2001, p. [no page]).

The Nyayo Philosophy, just like Harambee affected the definition, understanding and use of mwananchi. The theme of president as father figure extended to Moi's tenure. He was often referred to as "Baba [father] Moi who supplied primary school children with free milk" (Macharia, 2018, p. [no page]) and these children would often be called watoto wa Nyayo[21], Kiswahili for children of Nyayo (the blurring of boundaries

[20] While in descriptive terms it may be an ideology, the phrase "Nyayo Philosophy" is often used because this is its title.

[21] In particular, children who were born in 1978, the year Moi became president. In 1988 Moi wanted a huge celebration to mark his 10th anniversary. As a result, all the children in Kenya born in 1978 (I am one of them) had to spend lunch times, weekends and school holidays learning dances, songs, acrobatic routines and more that would be performed at the National Stadium in Nairobi as part of his anniversary celebrations. At the time my father was still being illegally detained/tortured by Moi's government. I did eventually drop out, I never got to

between the Nyayo Philosophy, the president and the state resulted in Moi often being referred to as Nyayo, and this is the way it is used in the context of the school children). To be a mwananchi under Moi's reign was to exist as a Kenyan in service to a political trinity that framed Moi as the father, the president and the nation.

Under Moi performing Nyayoism also took on a more literal meaning, Magu (2011, p. [no page]) writes of morning school assemblies that involved the raising of the national flag, singing the national anthem and reciting the national pledge of allegiance, the words to which are included below.

> *I pledge my loyalty to the president and the nation of Kenya.*
>
> *My readiness and duty to defend the flag of our republic.*
>
> *My devotion to the words of our national anthem.*
>
> *My life and strength in the task of our nation's building.*
>
> *In the living spirit embodied in our national motto – Harambee!*
>
> *And perpetuated in the Nyayo Philosophy of peace love and unity*

His account mirrors not only my own[22] but those of many Kenyans who grew up during the Moi years. Macharia (2014) recalls the process when the Presidential motorcade passed by,

> Baba Moi presided over spectacle. We lined up on roadsides to wave state-issued paper flags. We drank the free milk he provided to primary schools, or, if paranoid, threw it away in rage. We wore sisal skirts and danced for him. We screamed in excitement as he gave away candy and sodas. He punctuated our days: the news would start and end with him. He was everywhere.(2014, p. [no page])

There are connections to be made between the literal performances that took place under Moi to this statement by Goffman,

perform for Moi. I was the only student at my school to not receive a thank you card (they were distributed during assembly)

[22]I attended two schools while in Kenya (1986-1991) and at both schools our formal flag raising, pledge reciting assembly happened every Friday morning before the first lesson.

> to refer to all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his [sic] continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers (1956, p. 13).

The school assembly pledge/flag-raising and the presidential motorcade drive-through both align with Goffman's definition of a performance. During the assembly we functioned both as performers and observers as we all recited the pledge of allegiance. When it came to the presidential motorcade drive-through performance, the intended observer was the President. In both these situations there was a staging that took place. For instance, for the presidential drive-through we would all be required to wave small Kenyan flags while much bigger flags were on display. It is also worth noting that Moi would also function as audience/observer even in his absence because of state surveillance – which functioned as a way to regulate and ensure they continued to serve the nation/president.

What emerges is a type of performance that is considered to represent Kenyanness because it is done for the nation and also for the President. There is a distinct blurring of boundaries here complicated by the fact that Nyayoism erases the distinction between the two. Performances therefore are done for the country and the President as one (representing the audience). However, the nation is also a site. This shifting of roles further problematises how Kenyanness is performed because if Kenya & Moi as one can function both as audience and location, it continues to connect Kenyanness to the nation in a way that limits its application.

3.4.3 Beyond Kenya's Borders

Moi's presidency ended in 2003 following the election at the end of 2002 that resulted in Mwai Kibaki as leader of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) becoming Kenya's third president. By all accounts the election of 2002 and the NARC victory are considered milestones in Kenyan politics (D. M. Anderson, 2003; Barkan, 2004; Kagwanja, 2006; Ndegwa, 2003; Steeves, 2006). Mwai Kibaki and NARC not only ended Moi's twenty-four-year reign, but this election also marked the first time since Kenya's independence that the KANU party had lost a general election. With approximately 62% of Kenyans voting in their favour, NARC's victory was decisive (D. M. Anderson, 2003; Barkan, 2004; Ndegwa, 2003). On December 30th 2002 an

estimated 500,000 people (Steeves, 2006) gathered at Uhuru Park in Nairobi to witness Kibaki's first address to the nation. While waiting for the inauguration ceremony to commence the crowd chanted in Kiswahili "*Yote yazewekana bila Moi!*" (All things are possible without Moi) and "*Kibaki tosha!*" (Kibaki is all we need) (Steeves, 2006). This moment was more than just a new president taking office; it was an end to over twenty years of Moi's "kleptocracy under which KANU leaders looted with impunity" (Barkan, 2004, p. 88). The NARC victory was being hailed as the dawning of a new era (D. M. Anderson, 2003) and Kibaki's inaugural address was his opportunity to introduce NARC's new vision and ideology to the nation and the rest of the world. As part of this address Kibaki spoke directly to Kenyans outside of Kenya, stating,

> "We invite all those who have been outside Kenya to come back and join in the rebuilding of our new nation. [Loud applause]" – President Kibaki's Inaugural Speech (BBC Monitoring, 2002).

Kibaki does not elaborate further on what he means by "all those who have been outside Kenya"; there is no indication as to how many people are "outside Kenya" or where they are; and he offers no explanation as to why they left.

Kenya's status as a multi-racial and multi-ethnic nation (Nyairo & Ogude, 2003) has and continues to impact the reasons why and how different groups of Kenyans left and continue to leave Kenya. Additionally, Kenyan migration has happened and continues to happen in phases. During the period immediately after independence and leading up to the early 1980s, Kenya experienced two distinct forms of migration. For the middle to upper-class black Kenyans, migrating abroad was predominately done for the purposes of pursuing further education (Copeland-Carson, 2007; MPI, 2014; Okoth, 2013; Oyelere, 2007). The pursuit of education abroad was at the time directly linked to ideas of nation-building and development; the underlying message put forth by Kenyatta (who had also been educated abroad) being, a good education was a pathway to development (Okoth, 2013). As such, Kenyans who went abroad to study were encouraged to return and assist in contributing to the nation's development; and during this period many did return to Kenya. At the same time the

Kenyan-Asian population were fleeing and seeking exile in the UK as a result of the persecution, oppression and discrimination they faced in Kenya (Oyelere, 2007).

By the 1980s and well into the late 1990s Kenyan migration patterns shifted significantly. The corruption, cronyism, increased levels of poverty and human rights violations that dominated the Moi era caused many Kenyans to leave Kenya either in pursuit of a better standard of living in wealthier nations or simply in order to save their lives (Macharia, 2012a). Okoth (2013) provides not just an overview of the political and economic climate during the time but also the type of people who were leaving Kenya, why and where they were headed:

> "The economic hopelessness of the late 1980s and 1990s, as well as violent politically motivated ethnic conflicts around the 1992 and 1997 general elections, catalyzed the massive departure of doctors, lawyers, university lecturers, and other highly skilled professionals to western Europe and countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Uganda, Australia, Canada, and the United States. For instance, the number of Kenyan citizens in Germany was only 576 in 1980 but had doubled to 1,222 by 1990 and ballooned to more than 5,200 by the end of 2001"(2013, p. [no page]) .

Likewise MPI (2014) notes that during the late 1980s, Kenya's trend of "circular migration shifted to one of permanent migration" and that "before this period, very few came to the United States. In 1980, the number of Kenya-born residents of the United States was less than 10,000."

Aside from seeking to contribute to existing literature on Kenyan migration to the UK, this study is also interested in exploring the stories of those people who self-identify as Kenyan but who may not consider themselves as immigrants and those who do not think in terms of "returning to Kenya".

3.5 Social Networking Sites

While many of the themes explored above can be applied to SNS, there are specific issues that arise when identities are performed and constructed within SNS. I recognise that in structuring this section as separate from the previous sections on

identity I run the risk of presenting an offline/online binary. This is not the intention of this section or of the thesis, however there is a growing body of literature that is concerned with SNS and the digital; specifically digital Blackness that is of importance to this study (Brock Jr, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2018, 2020; Florini, 2019; King-Carroll, 2021; Sobande, 2020, 2021). A single definition of Digital Blackness seems hard to find, King-Carroll (2021) offers a short but effective description, and one that I think describes how Digital Blackness is used in this thesis,

> I believe that Digital Blackness is thus an apt means of describing black digital presence—the digital world is no longer the sole domain of whiteness (2021, p. [no page]) .

The works that fall under the banner of "the digital" or Digital Blackness are interdisciplinary and engage with many themes, including identity. However, what they all seem to have in common is the fact that they centre the digital. To fully engage with this literature, I have opted to adopt a similar approach in this section and opted to include a section that centres SNS as a component of the digital. Of particular interest to this thesis is affordances and identity construction and in the next section I explore how Twitter and Facebook enable and/or limit identity creation. I follow this up by focusing on racialised identities online; specifically, Blackness on Twitter in an attempt to contextualise KOT.

3.5.1 Affordances and Identity Construction

As discussed briefly in the introduction I rely on boyd & Ellison's definition of Social Networking Sites (SNS) as,

> web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system; (boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 211).

Included in this definition are two SNS that form the basis of this study, Twitter and Facebook. In this first part I review research on the affordances on SNS with particular reference to identity construction.

> In terms of their affordances, social networking sites enable communication among ever widening circles of contacts, and they invite

> convergence among the hitherto separate activities of email, messaging, website creation, diaries, photo albums, and music/ video uploading and downloading (Livingstone, 2008, p. 394).

Livingstone's list provides a good overview of some of the SNS affordances, however it fails to mention a key affordance (boyd & Ellison, 2007) i.e. the presentation and creation of the digital self (Van Doorn, 2009) through individual profiles and the visibility of personal networks. SNS, in contrast to other forms of Computer Mediated Communications (CMC), "are primarily organized around people, […] are structured as personal (or "egocentric") networks, with the individual at the center of their own community" and thus one of its affordances is the ability to create and enact the self (Marwick & boyd, 2010, 2011; Richter & Koch, 2008).

Scholarship on the construction of the self and SNS relies heavily on Goffman (1956); his work being cited by a number of SNS scholars (boyd & Ellison, 2007; Davis, 2011; N. Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006; Manago, Graham, Greenfield, & Salimkhan, 2008; Marwick & boyd, 2010, 2011; Papacharissi, 2012, 2013; Richter & Koch, 2008; Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008). Applying Goffman to SNS, Richter & Koch consider the creation of the digital body as the "staging of one's self for a particular audience and a particular task", but present a seemingly simple concept of 'particular audience' and 'particular task'.

The relationship between audiences and self-presentation is far more complicated, as highlighted by Marwick & boyd (2010, 2011) and Walther et al (2008). For instance, how does one enact the self when there is a difference between an SNS user's actual audience and who an SNS user imagines his/her audience to be? In addition, while research has revealed that audiences rely on profiles and user-generated content to form opinions of SNS users, it is still unclear what information is relied upon to form these opinions (Walther et al., 2008), further complicating an SNS user's ability to self-present accordingly to his or her audience. Furthermore, given that 'particular task' and 'particular audience' differs across the various SNS; SNS can be considered a 'sites of struggle' (van Dijck, 2013) as users grapple with the challenges of self-presentation across multiple SNS. Due to the differences between various SNS (boyd & Ellison, 2007; Kennedy, 2006) it is perhaps better to think of how the self is created and

enacted within a specific SNS and what role if any does the affordances of a particular SNS play in a user's ability to create and enact the self? Given that this study is focused on Twitter and Facebook it makes sense to explore how the self is created in these two SNS.

On Twitter, along with the creation of a username, twitter handle, and the use of an avatar, the staging of one's self takes place mainly through one's tweets (Marwick & boyd, 2010; Papacharissi, 2012, 2013). The tweets are limited to 280 characters; however, they can contain media files. Twitter users will have a sense of their audience based on their follower list, however unless a Twitter account is protected a person's tweets are visible to anyone with Internet access. Marwick & boyd suggest that it is this "diversity of readership […] that ruptures the ability to vary self-presentation based on audience" (2010, p. 11). Instead it "'requires the crafting of polysemic presentations that make sense to diverse audiences and publics without compromising one's own sense of self" (Papacharissi, 2012, p. 13). Papacharissi's suggestion works on Twitter because it allows users to create multiple accounts, so long as each account is registered to a unique email address. It is therefore possible for a user to create multiple digital selves on Twitter in an attempt to present different versions of their own self to different audiences. For instance, a personal and a professional Twitter account managed by the same person but tweeting different things to different sets of followers; on Facebook however, this becomes slightly problematic.

Facebook users rely on relatively static profiles and "through the process of labelling connections as 'Friends' […users…] publicly articulate connections, thereby enabling them to write their audience into being" (Marwick & boyd, 2010, p. 116). This in turn allows Facebook users to stage one's self in a manner that appeals (or they believe will appeal) to their imagined audience (Marwick & boyd, 2010). The main problem with Facebook however, in so far as creating the self, is its rule on names and multiple accounts. Until November 2015, Facebook had a rigid and controversial profile creation policy that required users to register with real names only (Hern, 2015). Prior to 2015, if Facebook deemed a name to be false a user would be required to submit government issued ID for verification by Facebook, a process that Facebook state is

no longer applicable (Hern, 2015), despite the real name policy still being enforced, albeit this time under an "authentic" name policy (Phillip, 2014, p. n.d.). Facebook distinguishes between the two by defining an authentic name as one that is used in real life as opposed to a real name, this being one that appears on a person's government issued identification (Hern, 2015; Phillip, 2014). There have been many Facebook users whose names do not conform to standard, white, western heteronormative naming conventions which has resulted in Facebook denying these users an account (Hern, 2015; Phillip, 2014). In addition to this, Facebook users are discouraged from creating multiple accounts. Instead, Facebook's profile creation and display section are designed so that participants can include all aspects of their lives/identities under a single Facebook account. The example used above regarding personal and professional accounts on Twitter would be deemed to be a violation of Facebook's policy. Seemingly while some users may be able to create and enact their ideal self, others may not.

In spite of these limitations around identity creation, especially in relation to conveying the fluid and multi-layered nature of identities along with uncertainty regarding audience; SNS users have been able to form homophilic relationships and networks with other SNS users (Brock Jr, 2018, 2020; Florini, 2019; Yardi & boyd, 2010). These relationships are based on SNS users identifying and connecting with other SNS users who share similar qualities. These similar qualities can be based on the content or the identity of the users or a mixture of both. KOT as introduced in chapter 1 and based on definitions provided by Tully and Ekdale (2014, p. 71) as a hashtag used to 'demarcate content geared toward Kenyans using Twitter' (Tully & Ekdale, 2014, p. 71) and by Kaigwa (Danzico, 2015, p. [no page])who states it is used to "characterise people in Kenya, online, on […] Twitter" is an example of a homophilic online network that is made of both identity based and content based similarities. The process of identifying with and engaging in these relationships requires SNS users to have some knowledge of how they construct and perform their own identities online. They also need to have some knowledge of, or rely on assumptions made about, the people and content they identify as being similar to their own. In the next section I

expand on this by focusing on homophilic SNS relations based on racialised identities, specifically Blackness in online spaces.

3.5.2 Black Twitter – Naming and "discovery"

Returning briefly to Chapter 1, I note that while this study is about Kenyans online and that a Kenyan homophilic Twitter network exists in KOT, there is not yet enough literature on this subject. However, what does exist is an ever-growing body of work that can be described as Digital Blackness that I believe can be used as a foundation to explore some of the issues that this study is concerned with. I am, in writing this, also aware of the essentialising and limiting nature of using race and in this case Blackness to contextualise my work. I have already discussed the problems of relying on a single axis of identification and the fact that this is at odds with an intersectional approach. However, whilst recognising the validity of these concerns, there is some merit in attempting to anchor a study on Kenyan identities online in theories of Blackness online. Firstly, race and particularly Blackness is of interest to this study as outlined in the first two chapters. Secondly Kenya while being a multi-racial nation, is a Black majority country. Thirdly, as will be discussed in upcoming chapters, most of the people who took part in this study, be it as survey respondents only or as survey and interview participants, identified as Black. It is for these reasons that I rely on work that can be categorised as Digital Blackness.

Staying with aspects of Kenyanness that overlap with Blackness I begin this section by introducing Black Twitter. Defining Black Twitter is difficult and problematic. Brock (2012, 2020) who has written extensively about Digital Blackness broadly and Black Twitter specifically, offers this definition,

> Black Twitter is Twitter's mediation of Black cultural identity, expressed through digital practices and informed by cultural discourses about Black everyday life. One cultural-digital practice, the hashtag, works to bring Black Twitter to the surface of mainstream visibility (2020, pp. 80–81)

Before engaging with Brock's definition, I note that Brock recognises the difficulty in attempting to define Black Twitter, firstly by referring to the definition cited above as the "short version"(2020, p. 80) and secondly by acknowledging that the answer "has

evolved since I first wrote about Black folk on Twitter in 2012" (2020, p. 80). While, in the context of the digital, 2012 may seem to be in the distant past, and perhaps it is, it is however worth reviewing the history of Black Twitter and particularly its naming and "discovery" as it brings to the fore some of the issues discussed in previous sections of this chapter in relation to self-identification vs ascribed/imposed identities and audiences. In fact, to fully appreciate the evolution of Black Twitter both as a digital space and as a phrase, I begin this review a few years before in 2009. It was around that this time that a white blogger (Sicha, 2009) writing at The Awl posted,

> At the risk of getting randomly harshed on by the Internet, I cannot keep quiet about my obsession with Late Night Black People Twitter, an obsession I know some of you other white people share, because it is awesome (2009, p. [no page]).

Similarly, and around the same time, another white blogger (Douglas, 2009) wrote,

> My friend Micha noticed that the Twitter trending topics attract a lot of tweets from non-geeky people: People who use-text speak and more minorities, women and teens than in the tech geek crowd (white guys with collars and good spelling) His theory: "These people do not have real Twitter friends. So they all respond to trending topics. And that's the game, that's how they use Twitter" (2009, p. [no page])

To provide some context as to what was happening on Twitter at the time these white bloggers posted their observations, in 2008 Twitter introduced its "Trending Topics" feature (Dorsey, 2008). This was designed to highlight what most people were talking about, i.e., which topics were popular at any given moment, with 'most talked about' being determined by Twitter's algorithms (Dorsey, 2008). These Trending Topics would then be displayed in the form of single, phrases, or hashtags. Soon after, Twitter made changes to its algorithms (Brock Jr, 2012; Clark, 2014; Florini, 2019; Manjoo, 2010), offering this explanation,

> Twitter Trends are automatically generated by an algorithm that attempts to identify topics that are being talked about more *right now* than they were previously. The Trends list is designed to help people discover the 'most breaking' breaking news from across the world, in real-time. The Trends list captures the hottest emerging topics, not just what's most popular (Twitter Inc., 2010, p. [no page]).

In addition to this, research at the time showed that there were more Black people, particularly African-Americans, using Twitter than their white counterparts (Smith, 2011). The combination of these two factors meant that around 2009/10 discussions between Black Twitter users began appearing in Twitters Trending Topics list and white Twitter users who had previously been unaware of the presence of Black people on Twitter began to take notice (Brock Jr, 2012, 2020; Clark, 2014; Florini, 2019). The noticing of Black people using Twitter by white people led to several things that are worth exploring because collectively they have shaped the current space that is now referred to as Black Twitter. Firstly, as noted in Chicha's blogpost, there was a naming of this 'new' space as 'Black people Twitter' and this is important because Black people on Twitter did not require a name for the space they tweeted. Dr. Goddess (2013), writing for the Daily Dot explains,

> "Black Twitter" is not a term black people on Twitter created to define ourselves or what we do online—a fact not to be misconstrued as us not being self-reflective or self-defining (2013, p. [no page]).

A second point that emerges from this "discovery" of Black Twitter is the way the two white bloggers discuss *how* Black people are tweeting. In the second of the two blog post excerpts there is no consideration for the fact the Black people could have been the originators of a Trending Topic. In fact, the implication is that the non-white[23] people are not Twitter's supposed true user base and the "minorities, women and teens" are presented almost as trespassers who lack the skills or knowledge required to engage with a Trending Topic. Florini (2019) notes that,

> From its inception, white tech professionals in the platform suggested that Black Twitter users were using Twitter differently or even "wrong" (2019, p. 184).

Douglas, or rather Douglas' friend, even offers an opinion that goes beyond the bounds of Twitter and relies on racist stereotyping that presents non-white and specifically Black people as illiterate, lazy, and/or unemployable. Stereotypes in this context function in the way Hall (1997) describes them; to identify, demarcate and

[23] The use of non-white in this context is deliberate. The blog post quoted does not explicitly identify the racial identities of the people being described. Instead, the word 'minorities' is used and there is also an explicit reference to white, tech geeks who are positioned as the opposite of the minorities. Therefore, I use the phrase 'non-white'; because it is the only clear racial marker that is mentioned in the post.

maintain the differences between people especially when racial categorisation fails to do this. Though I would argue that in this instance Douglas/Douglas' friend decided to do both. They still rely on race as a marker of difference and to maintain a separation between them as the knowledgeable and experienced Twitter users and the non-whites who use Twitter wrong. Then they also invoke the stereotypes as if to bolster the boundaries established by the racial differences. There is also the equally problematic conflation of 'minorities, women and teens' that infantilises whole groups of people while simultaneously upholding white male supremacy. Thirdly these two examples speak to some of the issues raised in Chapters 1 and 2 regarding the hypervisibility of minorities, the concept of space invaders, and the white gaze. It also highlights Hall's notion of the 'spectacle of the Other'; which Hall describes as the mainstream's fascination with difference; which sums up Sicha's "obsession with Late Night Black People Twitter" (2009, p. [no page]). I think it is important to understand the history behind the naming and "discovery" of Black Twitter because, as literature has confirmed, Black Twitter's hashtag domination of the Trending Topics exposed it to a mainstream unconcerned with its prior existence (Brock Jr, 2012, 2020; Clark, 2014; Florini, 2013, 2019; Sharma, 2013). As a result of this the discovery, naming, definition and identification of Black Twitter is problematic (Arceneaux, 2012, p. [no page]).

3.5.3 Redefining Black Twitter

To provide a definition, early Black Twitter researchers (around 2011-2013) opted for something more descriptive and consisting of four components. The first component of Black Twitter recognised the role hashtags played and the emergence of an eponymous #BlackTwitter hashtag and therefore considered Black Twitter to be made up of an assembly of hashtags (Sharma, 2013). These hashtags were identified as Black hashtags, sometimes referred to as Black tags (Sharma, 2013) because "of the use of slang created and popularized by Black American youth"(Florini, 2013, p. 4) for example, #HowYouBalling[24] (Florini, 2013; Sharma, 2013). Secondly, what was being discussed was of equal importance and Black Twitter topics nearly always involved

[24] Balling in this context means living large. This hashtag was ridiculing people who were living as though they are wealthy while at the same time appearing unable to afford basic items and/or necessities.

themes that were of interest to Black people (Brock Jr, 2012; Clark, 2014; F. Jones, 2013; Manjoo, 2010; Williams & Domoszlai, 2013). This ranged from social and racial justice to the annual Black Entertainment Television (BET) Awards (Brock Jr, 2012; Florini, 2013). *How* these topics were being discussed made up the third component of what defined/described Black Twitter (Brock Jr, 2012; Florini, 2013); what Brock refer to as Black Twitter's discursive style. Finally, the *who* of Black Twitter (Brock Jr, 2012; Clark, 2014; Florini, 2013; Manjoo, 2010; Sharma, 2013) was also integral to defining and describing Black Twitter i.e. the "millions of black users on Twitter networking, connecting, and engaging with others who have similar concerns, experiences, tastes, and cultural practices" (Florini, 2013, p. 5).

Looking at this description of Black Twitter one can see why a few years later a revision was needed. For example, if people, and specifically Black people, are a key component, how does one identify and verify a Black Twitter user. More so how can this identification/verification be carried out without infringing on people's privacy, enabling gatekeeping and relying on stereotypes? Did all four components need to present at the same time for a tweet to be identified as a Black Twitter tweet? Brock (2020), in what he describes as his longer answer in response to "what is Black Twitter" shares his revised Twitter definition, explaining,

> "Black Twitter is an online gathering (not quite a community) of Twitter users who identify as Black and employ Twitter features to perform Black discourses, share Black cultural commonplaces, and build social affinities. While there are a number of non-Black and people of color Twitter users who have been "invited to the cookout," so to speak, participating in Black Twitter requires a deep knowledge of Black culture, commonplaces, and digital practices" (2020, p. 81).

This longer definition "acknowledges but does not overly emphasize the contribution of the Black Twitter hashtag to either the formulation or the composition of the community" (Brock Jr, 2020, p. 81). I think this is a crucial step in separating an articulation of Black Twitter by Black people from the 2009/10 discussion that centred whiteness and only considered Black Twitter once it became visible to white Twitter users. The hashtags and trending topics do matter because they "offers participants and viewers topical and cultural coherence and in the process renders Twitter slightly less chaotic" argues Brock (2020, p. 81). However, beyond visibility, these hashtags do

not help to explain what Black Twitter is and what it means to Black people. Brock also addresses the "who" of Black Twitter, acknowledging that there are non-Black people of colour and non-Black people who can take part within Black Twitter but ultimately there is specific cultural knowledge and practices that non-Black people are unlikely to be familiar with. The distinction between "gathering" and "community" serves to demonstrate what Brock describes as the weak-tie relationship between Twitter users and works to dispel notions of Black people on Twitter being a monolith.

3.5.4 Multiple Black Twitters

I am drawn to both Brock's definition and some of the earlier discussions of Black Twitter because there is recognition of Black Twitter not being 'mainstream'. This raises the possibility of exploring the extent to which the concept of marginality can be applied to Black Twitter. I am specifically interested in Black Twitter as existing within the margins in relation to hooks' description as a site of both resistance and repression. In terms of resistance, as discussed previously, Black Twitter has played an instrumental part in resisting oppression, especially racial injustice and police brutality (Brock Jr, 2020; Clark, 2014; Florini, 2015, 2019; F. Jones, 2013). To give just one example of this, Black Twitter has gained significant notoriety as evidenced through the mobilisation of hashtags such #BlackLivesMatter. The existence of Black Twitter as a site of repression however has not necessarily received the same attention. To explore this issue further, I consider what happened in 2013 when Wikipedia was edited to include a reference to Black Twitter. There was considerable backlash to this because a lot of people who identified as Black Twitter users felt that the article was written with Black Twitter's consent, was written by someone who was not a part of Black Twitter and that it mispresented Black Twitter (Clark, 2014; Dr. Goddess, 2013). In a collection of tweets that were critical of Black Twitter's Wikipedia entry were these two tweets,

> Tweet A: *looks at Black Twitter wiki page*.... where the hell South Africa come from? (19 August 2013).
>
> Tweet B: Lol at the fact that this Black Twitter Wiki page has its own a South Africa subsection (19 August 2013)

These tweets were in direct response to a section of the Wikipedia entry that mentioned the existence of South Africa's Black Twitter. Most of the Wikipedia section on South Africa was in reference to a Christian Science Monitor article titled #RainbowNation: The rise of South Africa's 'black Twitter' (Serino, 2013). The article referred to 'the so-called black Twitter, a loose community of black tweeters using the short-form platform to add their own voices to the fray' (Serino, 2013, p. [no page]). Similar to Brock's definition of Black Twitter as an online gathering of Black Twitter users who share a deep cultural knowledge and tweet in a uniquely Black way; South Africa's Black Twitter users tweet about issues and topics that they feel connected to and tweet in a uniquely South African way (Serino, 2013). Serino provides this summary of South African languages and Black Twitter,

> Many in the black Twitter cadre, even when they speak in English, pepper their tweets with words and phrases in languages such as isiZulu, isiXhosa, and Sesotho. Instead of "ROTFL" or "LOL," for instance, tweeters might write 'Kwa!' or "tltltl" for laughter or chuckling (Serino, 2013, p. [no page]).

There is absolutely no denying that the version of Black Twitter that was being discussed in the previously cited blogs, newspapers and academic journals was and still is an African American space. However, the term Black, even in the context of Black Twitter is wider than "African American", as Florini states,

> Black Twitter in particular, includes a significant number of users from Africa and across the African Diaspora. Further, these transnational networks often function as spaces for solidarity between Black Americans and the Global South (2019, p. 25).

Florini points to how within Black Twitter, Blackness functions as a unifying marker of identity further reinforcing the possibility of considering Black Twitter as being in the margins. Yet, Florini stops short of acknowledging the possibility of multiple (and not other) Black Twitters. As the tweets above show however, there are intra-racial differences that impact how the term Black is applied and who gets to claim it. South Africa, like Kenya is a Black majority country, however rather than opt for emphasising its national identity and tweet under the banner of Black Twitter; Black South Africans

on Twitter decided to highlight their Blackness. Serino's (2013) article offers one explanation of why this is the case, pointing to the impact of apartheid and Black South Africans on Twitter specifically wanting to decentre whiteness.

Brock writes that "being Black in the American racial context requires intentionality" (2020, p. 80) and this same intentionality seems to be at work in Black South Africans' approach to Blackness and/on Twitter. However as demonstrated by the tweets reacting to South Africa's Black Twitter, there are intra-racial differences regarding who can use the term Black and in what context. There is a framing of Black South Africans on Twitter as trespassers or appropriators of Black Twitter. Yet, much like trending topics introduced Late Night Black People Twitter to white Twitter users; the Wikipedia entry introduced African American Black Twitter users to an equally valid Black Twitter that they had not previously been interested in. These reactions expose the duality of Blackness in a similar way to hooks' expression of marginality as a site of resistance and repression.

3.5.5 KOT and The Black Twitterverse

The broader point that I wish to make in relation to this study, however, is that existing work on Black Twitter provides a unique way to consider spaces like KOT, especially if the aim is to move beyond the geographical limitations of the current definitions of KOT. Firstly, recognising the way the description of Black Twitter has evolved offers the opportunity to consider if and how the current KOT definition can evolve. I am not attempting to draw parallels between how Black Twitter was named and "discovered" with the naming of KOT; their respective circumstances are not comparable. So far, all the evidence points to KOT being named and defined primarily by Kenyans in Kenya. However, as already discussed, this current definition and description has the potential to exclude Kenyans who but for not being in Kenya would consider themselves KOT. Secondly, and related to this evolution in naming and describing Black Twitter spaces, Brock's definition of Black Twitter foreground's Black identity in combination with a deep knowledge of Black culture, and this description, if applied to KOT enables it to be freed from its ties to Kenya's borders. Thirdly, as South Africa's Black Twitter shows, there is room for multiplicity, so there could for example be a KOT for Kenyans in Kenya and a KOT for Kenyans living beyond Kenya's boundaries.

Finally, there is the room for what I would describe as a Black Twitterverse; a universe of Black Twitter users, existing within the margins of Twitter, made of up of groups of simultaneously overlapping and separate Black Twitters. It is within this context of a Black Twitterverse that I seek to situate this study and explore how Kenyanness and identities in general are constructed and performed. To extend this beyond Twitter, I consider the Black Twitterverse to exist as part of a much wider digital Black universe which I consider to be the foundation of Digital Blackness. Within this context of Digital Blackness recent studies have begun to explore Blackness beyond borders. For instance, Sobande (2020) asks the following questions

> (How) are the digital experiences of Black people bordered, and with what effects? What is a 'global' Black digital 'voice', and does, could, or should one even exist? To what extent might forms of digital Blackness involve online experiences that overcome borders, and politics which is 'inclusive' of all Black lives? (2020, p. 104)

These questions mirror the questions I have asked in relation to Blackness on Twitter, but of greater significance to this study is that they extend the discussion beyond Twitter. In presenting these questions Sobande also states,

> I do not claim to have answers to all of these questions, nor do I suggest that such questions can be neatly answered at all (2020, p. 104).

I too offer the same disclaimer; I do not attempt to provide all the answers to these questions; some of which sit outside the scope of this research. However, Sobande's questions provide insight into some of the themes emerging within Digital Blackness and it is useful to recognise and acknowledge these as it further helps to situate this thesis.

3.6 Conclusion

Chapter 1 is where I first introduced the specific Black Feminist concepts that shape this work; these being intersectionality and the oppositional gaze. It is also in Chapter 1 where I introduced the three stones that make up the mawe tatu metaphor (Kenya, UK and SNS). What Chapter 3 does is to demonstrate how all these elements fit together in relation to identities and SNS. To do this, I first began by providing an account of how identities are understood and constructed by Kenya/Kenyans. I

specifically focused on citizenship, mwananchi, Wanjiku and notions of son-of-the-soil; acknowledging that while citizenship and son-of-the-soil are not unique to Kenya, there is a uniquely Kenyan way that these function within the context of Kenyan identities. I then connected these ways of being Kenyan to how doing/performing Kenyanness is understood, again specifically within the Kenyan context. It is at this juncture that I introduced the Kenyan motto of Harambee to describe a form of Kenyan identity that is performed through collective action. I explored how Nyayoism co-opted and transformed Harambee so that Kenyan identity performed through collective action became less about improving the country and more about being in service to the president/Government of Kenya (GOK). I revisited mwananchi in relation to performing Kenyanness for the president/GOK and considered it alongside wenye nchi. To provide more context and to identify where I situate this study, I then broadened my exploration of identity as a concept, using Fearon and Goffman to draw out the tension between self-identification and ascribed identification.

The underlying theme that emerges from both Kenyan notions of identity and the wider discussions of identities is that most rely on a single axis of identification, e.g. mwananchi and its sole focus on class or son-of-the soil, which is further complicated by its origins as a colonial administrative tool. Some, like Wanjiku do offer the possibility to consider the multiplier effects of gender, class, ethnicity, and sexuality but Wanjiku cannot be separated from its patriarchal roots. Goffman and Fearon offer some scope to think beyond some of these limitations but neither provide room to consider power and how this relates to how our identities are constructed and performed. This is where Black Feminist work on intersectionality and multiple consciousness, coupled with translocational positionality provides the missing components. These theories acknowledge power dynamics, the fluidity of identities, and the fluidity of sites. Through this I can articulate the three-pronged (and interconnected) approach that I will adopt in my analysis of identity construction and performance: the where (sites), in whose presence (audience) and by whom (self- and/or others). I pick up this line of thinking in Chapters 5 and 6. Specifically in Chapter 6 I argue that this approach can be used in relation to Kenya, which I present as a trinity whereby identities can be constructed *in* Kenya, *for* Kenya and *by* Kenya.

4 RESEARCHING KENYANNESS

4.1 Introduction

This study is guided by an ethical commitment to centre Kenyanness and the lives and stories of the people who agreed to participate in this project.

4.2 Overall Rationale

4.2.1 A Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research is "… interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam, 2014, p. 5). Flick offers a similar explanation by describing it as a research method that "uses text as empirical material (instead of numbers), starts from the notion of the social construction of realities under study, is interested in the perspectives of participants, in everyday practices and everyday knowledge referring to the issue under study"(2008, p. 2). The characteristics of qualitative research as suggested by Creswell (Creswell, 2007) include conducting research in the field, relying on multiple sources of data and adopting an emergent and adaptive design. During this process the researcher functions as an instrument on the basis that he/she collects all the data themselves often relying on a theoretical lens, inductive analysis, interpretive inquiry and a holistic account in order to identify the "complex interactions of factors in any situation" (Creswell, 2007).

When deciding whether or not to use qualitative research methods, Flick suggests that the overriding reason for "using qualitative research should be that the research question requires the use of this sort of approach" (Flick, 2014, p. 12). This study seeks to explore the ways in which Kenyan social media users in the UK construct and perform their identities. I am interested in how individual participants understand and define their identities and in how they express these identities both in the online and offline world, and the most appropriate way to find this out is in conversation with participants, listening to their perspectives and observing their social media use. Qualitative research methods such as the one-to-one interviews used in this study provide an appropriate solution to answering this study's questions (Creswell, 2007;

Flick, 2008, 2014; Merriam, 2014; Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2003; Tracy, 2012).

While Flick asserts that appropriateness should guide the research design and methods decision making process, I am also aware of the personal assumptions, bias and worldview that influenced my thinking (Creswell, 2007; Flick, 2008, 2014; Merriam, 2014) and in the next section I will outline these and explain how they impacted the research.

4.2.2 Counter-storytelling

Counter-storytelling is rooted in Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT as a theoretical and analytical approach is an interdisciplinary practice built on multiple theoretical approaches including Critical Legal Studies and Black Feminist work (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, 2002). Counter-storytelling is born out of CRT's commitment to recognise the experiential knowledge of racialised and marginalised minorities (Solórzano et al., 2000; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). This experiential knowledge is considered a strength because it disrupts "majoritarian stories" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 28). Solórzano & Yosso state that, 'majoritarian stories generate from a legacy of racial privilege, they are stories in which racial privilege seems "natural"' [quotation marks in original] (2002, p. 28). Majoritarian stories therefore become a vehicle for white privilege but also a way to privilege gender and class. I introduce counter-storytelling here because it informs the way this project was designed and carried out. The discussions I had with participants, though formally called interviews, quickly transformed into discussions. Participants shared the life stories that informed their identifications and they also asked me questions, about myself and about my identities. In listening back to the transcripts, I note many moments where participants switched between Kiswahili and English without translation or pause. By grounding my work in counter-storytelling my aim is to present the voices of those who have taken part. I do this not to make any general claims or to be representative of all people in UK who identify as Kenyan and use SNS. Instead I present the stories shared with me in order to challenge dominant narratives that have reduced people like us to labels such as "immigrant" "foreign" or that speak

about some of the spaces we inhabit as "developing." I also seek to challenge exclusionary narratives from the Kenyan state.

As a method, counter-storytelling has been employed explicitly (i.e. in studies that actually mention counter-storytelling) to highlight the experiences of Black people within educational institutes (Bissonnette & Glazier, 2016; Cho, 2017; Doharty et al., 2020; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). There have also been studies conducted as autoethnographic projects that reference CRT but not necessarily counter-storytelling (Boylorn, 2016; Hughes, 2020). For instance Boylorn (2016) writes in favour of "Blackgirl autoethnography" as praxis claiming,

> I offer blackgirl autoethnography as a way to talk about embodied, critical, and culturally situated research that begins and/or ends at home, in the bodies we live in, the people we live with, and the social circumstances we live through (2016, p. 46)

Boylorn relies on Blackgirl auto-ethnography "because it has significant potential for helping to voice marginalized and maligned lives" (2016, p. 47). While I do not claim that my project is an autoethnographic project, I cite Boylorn because her use of it as a form of counter-storytelling speaks in part to some of the unease I have felt about my own positionality. As she states,

> Who was I to be putting (our) blackgirl business in the street? At first blackgirl autoethnography felt like a betrayal and intrusion […] I was in a stranger's house (the academy), a white stranger's house, trying to tell my blackgirl truth (2016, p. 47)..

I have asked myself a similar question, 'who am I to be putting our Kenyan business in the street?' and related to that, if I am to do so, how to do it responsibly and ethically. Counter-storytelling enables this. It requires me to centre the narratives of the participants and in doing so I 'honor these narratives rather than marginalizing them' (T. L. Ellison & Solomon, 2019, p. 224). I chose interviews as a way to honour these narratives because this gave the participants an opportunity to 'express their ideas and opinions in their own words' (Esterberg, 2002, p. 87). Expressing their identities in their own words through the conversation allowed for a richer experience. For instance, even though nearly all the questions in the survey allowed for free text responses, most participants kept their responses brief. Yet when we revisited the

same topics during the interview not only did participants expand on their initial survey responses, but participants also shared responses that they had not included in the survey.

4.2.3 Conducting SNS Research

The data collection and analysis related to the participants' SNS activity included analysing participants' SNS biographical data, Facebook status updates and tweets. This type of data gathering falls under the banner of what is often referred to as cyber or digital ethnography (Alun Jones, 1994; Hine, 2001; Murthy, 2008). To improve my understanding of how SNS research is conducted, I reviewed scholarship on SNS research. I specifically sought SNS scholarship with a particular focus on research design and methods in order to inform my own design and methods. I should note that while for my own research I have relied on boyd & Ellison's (2007) definition of SNS, I recognise that this is not a universally adopted definition. There are a number of relevant and useful examples of work that instead use terms such as "social media" or "the Internet" more broadly. While my review of the literature prioritised research that focused on Twitter, Facebook and similar SNS sites, I also included research that did not follow boyd & Ellison's conceptualisation but still focused on some of the elements that this particular study is concerned with; i.e. identifying research methods and tools that could be applied to my own research on SNS and identity.

4.3 Research Design and Implementation

4.3.1 Evolving nature of the research

As discussed in the previous sections, qualitative research is emergent and adaptive, meaning "the initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed, and that all phases of the process may change or shift after the researchers enter the field and begin to collect data" (Creswell, 2007). This was certainly the case with this study. Initially the research was focused primarily on Kenyans in the UK and #KOT. However, upon completion of an exploratory phase and within a month of the online survey going live, it became apparent that not only was Twitter usage not as high as I had anticipated but respondents' knowledge of #KOT was limited. As a result, during the fieldwork stage I decided to alter my research significantly. Firstly, I abandoned the

idea of using #KOT as a case study. Secondly, I decided to incorporate a second SNS, Facebook on the basis that it was equally popular if not more popular among certain age groups than Twitter. Finally, I opted to analyse participant SNS content generated on specific dates/events that were deemed to be of national significance to Kenyans.

The diagram below provides an overview of the sample size and research methods I relied upon.

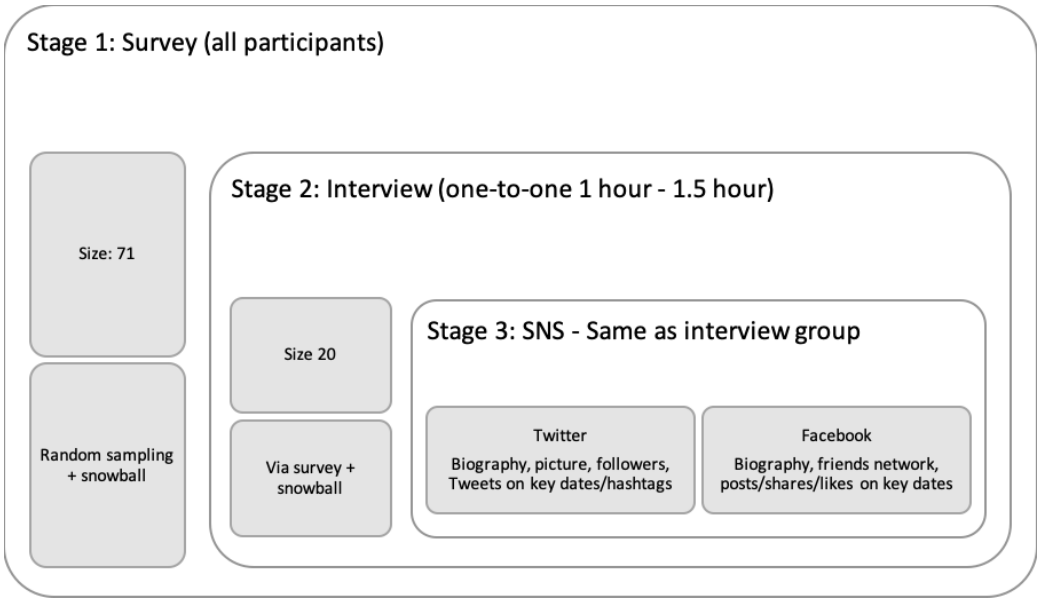


Figure 1 Research Process

4.4 The Online Survey

The SNS scholarship review revealed that that nearly all the studies I reviewed used online recruitment methods and as a result I opted to do the same. Referring to common practice as evidenced in the SNS scholarship review I decided to use an online survey.

4.4.1 Design and purpose

In designing the survey and considering its purpose there were a number of factors I had to consider. I had already established certain parameters; these being, respondents had to identify as Kenyan, they needed to be in the UK, and they need to be users of either Facebook or Twitter. One of the key requirements was to design a survey that could be used in a qualitative research project.

As previously discussed, the decision to design and disseminate an online survey was based on existing SNS research practices as well as the need to reach a diverse and varied group of people who identified as Kenyan and who used SNS. The survey provided an opportunity for participants to self-identify as Kenyans while simultaneously encouraging them to indicate their self-identification criteria. In addition, it presented an opportunity for me to learn more about SNS usage, specifically about knowledge of #KOT in order to determine whether #KOT as a case-study is a valid line of inquiry, and establish a way for willing participants to take part in the one-to-one interview and SNS data gathering phase.

In designing the survey, I was mindful of the need for the survey to be accessible and not take too much time to complete, so the questions had to be straightforward, avoiding ambiguity as it was more than likely that respondents would be completing the survey without additional input from me. Also, all responses had to be optional, as I wanted respondents to understand that every aspect of the process was voluntary. In addition to this, I did not want respondents to have to install third party software or download attachments and the survey had to be in a format that was easy to circulate online to maximise uptake. Finally, I needed to have full control of the data management to ensure the data could be protected, and guarantee the ability to export it to data analysis software so it could seamlessly feed into the rest of my data and could be used to triangulate data gathered from the interviews and SNS information.

Based on these requirements, I decided to use Google Forms as it met the above criteria. I then set about establishing potential themes that I could convert into questions. The end result was a 10-question survey with a welcome screen (figures 2 and 3) the purpose of which was to introduce myself and my research, set out the scope of the survey and provide contact details should anyone wish to contact me.

4.4.2 Sampling and Dissemination

A number of the user-focused studies I reviewed referenced diverse group of participants (Farquhar, 2013; Hargittai & Litt, 2011; Kapidzic & Herring, 2014; Litt & Hargittai, 2016), this was of particular relevance to my research as in keeping with the

study's intersectional approach, I wanted to ensure that the participants were diverse and varied. Furthermore, because my research is focused on SNS users, I considered recruiting from within my own online networks and expanding to a snowball sampling approach. However "past research has demonstrated that social network site usage is not randomly distributed among internet users, and that one's demographic background and socioeconomic status can play a role in specific SNS adoption" (Hargittai & Litt, 2011, p. 827). The implication being that recruiting from within my own network of Twitter followers and Facebook friends would result in selection bias. On the one hand, given that I identify as a Kenyan in UK there was a case to be made that recruiting from within my network, should, according to Hargittai & Litt, mirror my own demographic background and could potentially result in attracting a significant number of people who fit the research criteria. Conversely, the diversity of the sample could be limited in terms of socioeconomic status and more so in terms of Facebook, there was a greater chance of encountering people who on account of familial or close friendships would be considered ineligible for the study.

To signal that the survey was live I composed and pinned a tweet and a Facebook post stating that I was looking for Kenyans in the UK to complete a survey, with a link (bit.ly/2bhLHWg) to the survey and asking people to share it. The retweet function on Twitter and the share option on Facebook worked well in terms getting people to circulate the link to the survey.

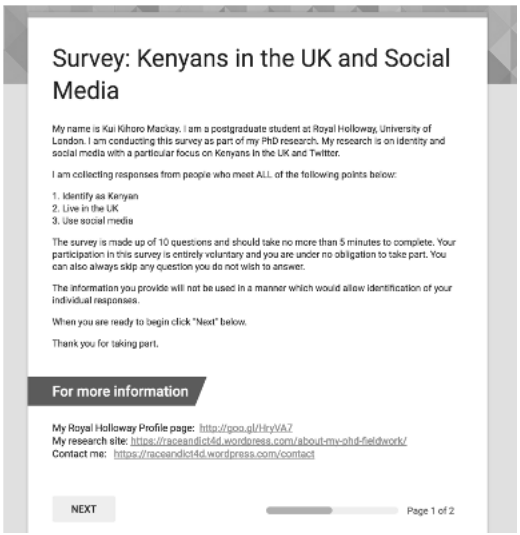


Figure 2 Survey Welcome Page

Figure 3 Survey Pinned Tweet

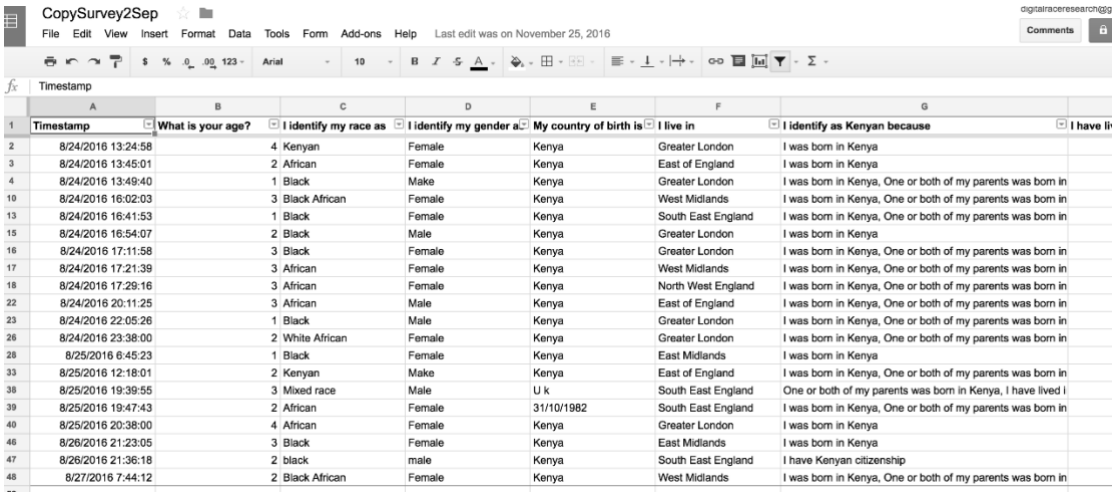
Research showed that Twitter was popular amongst people who identify as black/African American (boyd & Ellison, 2007; Brock Jr, 2012; Florini, 2013; Hargittai & Litt, 2011) and Kenyans in Kenya (Tully & Ekdale, 2014). Hargittai & Litt suggested that SNS users formed networks based on their similarities. I considered there was a good chance that Kenyans in Kenya who used Twitter would be connected to other Kenyan Twitter users who may not be in Kenya. Based on this, I shared details of the survey on Twitter and specifically tweeted high profile Kenyans on Twitter with a request that they share the information with their followers and this in turn could lead to details of my study reaching Kenyans in the UK who were outside of my immediate

network. To increase visibility, I used the hashtag #KOT and I asked specific people in my networks based on their SNS activity and profile to share the link.

As a result, a total of 71 respondents completed the survey. I had initially set a target of 100 people however despite periodic retweeting and Facebook sharing the rate of responses slowed down significantly.

4.4.3 Managing the Data

Between the end of August and for most of September 2016, as people began to respond to the survey, I identified some limitations with how the Google Form was feeding results into the Google Docs spreadsheet. For questions that contained multiple answers, the form would simply place all answers in the same column. For example, in the screenshot of the spreadsheet, in Figure 4, Column G corresponds to the question "I am Kenyan because _____" and respondents could select any/all of the options (including writing in their own response). If more than one response was submitted for that question, all responses were recorded within the same column and separated with a comma. In order to make the data management easier to analyse, I exported the Google Docs spreadsheet to Excel and assigned each response its own column codes for responses. I also assigned numerical codes to all other responses. The partial screenshot (Figure 5) shows the disaggregated and coded version of the spreadsheet.


CopySurvey2Sep

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Form Add-ons Help Last edit was on November 25, 2016

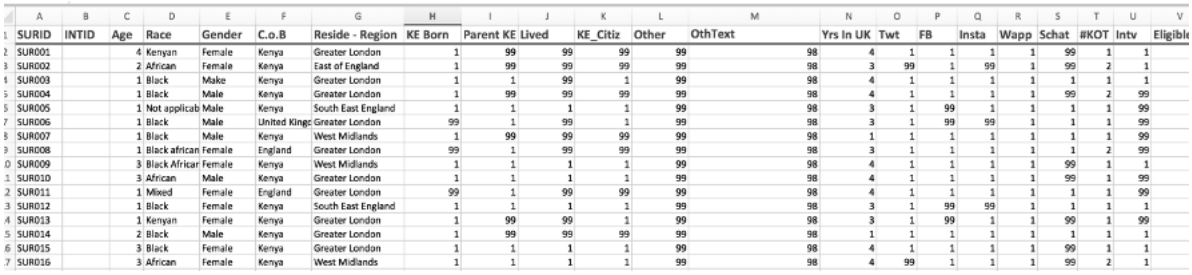
Comments

Timestamp

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Timestamp	What is your age?	I identify my race as	I identify my gender a	My country of birth is	I live in	I identify as Kenyan because
2	8/24/2016 13:24:58	4	Kenyan	Female	Kenya	Greater London	I was born in Kenya
3	8/24/2016 13:45:01	2	African	Female	Kenya	East of England	I was born in Kenya
4	8/24/2016 13:49:40	1	Black	Make	Kenya	Greater London	I was born in Kenya, One or both of my parents was born in
10	8/24/2016 16:02:03	3	Black African	Female	Kenya	West Midlands	I was born in Kenya, One or both of my parents was born in
13	8/24/2016 16:41:53	1	Black	Female	Kenya	South East England	I was born in Kenya, One or both of my parents was born in
15	8/24/2016 16:54:07	2	Black	Male	Kenya	Greater London	I was born in Kenya
16	8/24/2016 17:11:58	3	Black	Female	Kenya	Greater London	I was born in Kenya, One or both of my parents was born in
17	8/24/2016 17:21:39	3	African	Female	Kenya	West Midlands	I was born in Kenya, One or both of my parents was born in
18	8/24/2016 17:29:16	3	African	Female	Kenya	North West England	I was born in Kenya, One or both of my parents was born in
22	8/24/2016 20:11:25	3	African	Male	Kenya	East of England	I was born in Kenya, One or both of my parents was born in
23	8/24/2016 22:05:26	1	Black	Male	Kenya	Greater London	I was born in Kenya, One or both of my parents was born in
26	8/24/2016 23:38:00	2	White African	Female	Kenya	Greater London	I was born in Kenya, One or both of my parents was born in
28	8/25/2016 6:45:23	1	Black	Female	Kenya	East Midlands	I was born in Kenya
33	8/25/2016 12:18:01	2	Kenyan	Make	Kenya	East of England	I was born in Kenya, One or both of my parents was born in
38	8/25/2016 19:39:55	3	Mixed race	Male	U k	South East England	One or both of my parents was born in Kenya, I have lived i
39	8/25/2016 19:47:43	2	African	Female	31/10/1982	South East England	I was born in Kenya, One or both of my parents was born in
40	8/25/2016 20:38:00	4	African	Female	Kenya	Greater London	I was born in Kenya
46	8/26/2016 21:23:05	3	Black	Female	Kenya	East Midlands	I was born in Kenya
47	8/26/2016 21:36:18	2	black	male	Kenya	South East England	I have Kenyan citizenship
48	8/27/2016 7:44:12	2	Black African	Female	Kenya	West Midlands	I was born in Kenya, One or both of my parents was born in

Figure 4 Survey Data 1

In the Excel version, I also added a column for a unique survey ID (Column A) which corresponded with the unique timestamp generated by Google so I could cross reference this version with the Google version at any time. Along with this I also included a unique interview ID column (Column B) which would correspond to the interview ID assigned to the MP3 files of the recorded interviews. Finally, the Excel version of the spreadsheet did not include the contact details of anyone who opted in for the interview and SNS data analysis stage. Instead, the spreadsheet contained codes denoting whether they responded to the question, and whether they were eligible to take part in the later stages (see Table with codes for responses).



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V
1	SURID	INTID	Age	Race	Gender	C.o.B	Reside - Region	KE Born	Parent KE	Lived	KE_Citiz	Other	OthText	Yrs In UK	Twt	FB	Insta	Wapp	Schat	#KOT	Intv	Eligibl
2	SUR001		4	Kenyan	Female	Kenya	Greater London	1	99	99	99	99	98	4	1	1	1	1	99	1	1	
3	SUR002		2	African	Female	Kenya	East of England	1	99	99	99	99	98	3	99	1	99	1	99	2	1	
4	SUR003		1	Black	Make	Kenya	Greater London	1	1	99	1	99	98	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
5	SUR004		1	Black	Male	Kenya	Greater London	1	99	99	99	99	98	4	1	1	1	1	99	2	99	
6	SUR005		1	Not applicab	Male	Kenya	South East England	1	1	1	1	99	98	3	1	99	1	1	1	1	99	
7	SUR006		1	Black	Male	United Kingc	Greater London	99	1	99	1	99	98	3	1	99	99	1	1	1	99	
8	SUR007		1	Black	Male	Kenya	West Midlands	1	99	99	99	99	98	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	99	
9	SUR008		1	Black africar	Female	England	Greater London	99	1	99	99	99	98	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	99	
10	SUR009		3	Black Africar	Female	Kenya	West Midlands	1	1	1	1	99	98	4	1	1	1	1	99	1	1	
11	SUR010		3	African	Male	Kenya	Greater London	1	1	1	1	99	98	4	1	1	1	1	99	1	99	
12	SUR011		1	Mixed	Female	England	Greater London	99	1	99	99	99	98	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	99	
13	SUR012		1	Black	Female	Kenya	South East England	1	1	1	1	99	98	3	1	99	99	1	1	1	1	
14	SUR013		1	Kenyan	Female	Kenya	Greater London	1	99	99	1	99	98	3	1	99	1	1	99	1	99	
15	SUR014		2	Black	Male	Kenya	Greater London	1	99	99	99	99	98	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
16	SUR015		3	Black	Female	Kenya	Greater London	1	1	1	1	99	98	4	1	1	1	1	99	1	1	
17	SUR016		3	African	Female	Kenya	West Midlands	1	1	1	1	99	98	4	99	1	1	1	99	2	1	

Figure 5 Survey Data 2

Table with codes for responses

Question ID	Text Response	Assigned Number
Age	18-29	1
Age	30-39	2
Age	40-49	3
Age	50-59	4
Age	60+	5
Yrs in UK	0-5 years	1
Yrs in UK	6-10 years	2
Yrs in UK	11-19 years	3
Yrs in UK	20+ years	4
Other Codes	Yes (or positive response)	1
	No	2
	Did not answer/select	99
	Not Applicable	98
Interview Opt	Yes	1
Eligible	Yes	1
	No	2

4.4.4 Summary of Respondents

A total of 71 people completed the survey. Geographical distribution, Greater London, 33; NW England, 3; East Midlands, 4; East England, 4; Scotland, 3; SE England, 12; SW England, 2; West Midlands, 6; and Yorkshire and Humberside, 4. 48 identified as female, 22 as male and 1 as woman. In terms of age 30 were in the 18-29 category; 20 in 30-39; 17 in the 40-49; and 4 in the 50-59. SNS use Twitter, 51; Facebook, 61; Instagram, 44; WhatsApp, 69; and Snapchat, 30. Knowledge of #KOT, Yes, 40; and No, 31.

When asked to self-identify race, the responses were more varied. Black as a standalone category was the most popular response at 26 followed by Black African[25] 13. 12 described themselves as African and 7 wrote in Kenyan. For those who identified as mixed race, 3 wrote either mixed or mixed race[26] while 4 provided more information[27] (Mixed-Kenyan/English; Mixed race - Kenyan; Mixed- Black African & Chinese; Mixed Kenyan/English). There were 6 responses that only appeared once, and all are attributed to non-interview respondents. These were[28]; Indian; Human; Black?[29]; Nubian; white African; and Race is a social construct

4.4.5 Reflection

Within the first few days of the survey going live, I contacted anyone who expressed an interest in taking part in the interview and SNS data analysis stage. I had initially wanted to prioritise those who used Twitter; however, it became apparent that not everyone who completed the survey wished to be interviewed (about a third of respondents completed the optional interview contact section). Furthermore, just because a respondent expressed an interest in being interviewed it did not necessarily mean that an interview took place. For some people there were scheduling issues while others did not respond to my communication. To counter this, I decided to contact everyone who had responded irrespective of what SNS they used. I

[25] No participant hyphenated it.
[26] Each response unhyphenated.
[27] Responses are recorded exactly as the participants wrote them.
[28] Responses are recorded exactly as the participants wrote them.
[29] The question mark was included in the response.

anticipated that once I started to interview people, I could ask them to refer me to people they knew would be interested in taking part in my study.

An unexpected outcome of the sampling was that while I had anticipated that everyone's first point of contact with my research would be the survey, which could then lead to an interview, there were a number of research participants, primarily friends and acquaintances of other research participants, who contacted me directly, mainly via WhatsApp. In instances such as this I found it easier to take a laptop to the interview and ask participants to complete the survey at the start of the interview usually as I set up. This way I was able to mitigate against duplicate or mismatched survey/interview data. I noticed however that asking participants to complete the survey in my presence did change the interview dynamic. For example, during one session a participant asked me to clarify the question relating to number of years lived in the UK. Like me, the participant's time in the UK had been interrupted by a long period of time in Kenya and as such they were unsure whether to put the total number of years lived in the UK or the length of time since their return from Kenya. I explained that they were free to pick whichever response they deemed appropriate and if they wished they could use the interview time to clarify further. This experience highlighted one shortcoming that I should have anticipated both in terms of designing the survey but also in terms of how my presence affected the way in which participants completed the survey.

The other notable change was that in situations when the survey had been completed prior to the interview I was able to review a participant's response and tailor the interview questions to the information they had already provided. Not wanting to spend time reading a participant's survey response during the interview meant that I would occasionally ask questions they had just answered in the survey.

4.5 Interviews

A total of 20 people were interviewed and in this section I provide the details of the interview process.

4.5.1 Design and purpose

The interviews were either conducted face-to-face and in person or via Skype video. Each interview was recorded using a digital voice recorder or in the case of the Skype video a third-party application that recorded both audio and video. In wanting to maintain a conversational style I refrained from taking notes during the interview opting instead to write down my observations at the end of the interview.

One advantage of having survey responses prior to the interview was that it provided me with some foundational knowledge of the participant on which I could base my interview questions. I used the survey response to create a participant snapshot and together with my interview guide I identified key themes I wished to explore, as shown in figure 6. This often meant that rather than approach each interview with identical questions for all participants, I established a set of topics that remained constant throughout the interview process and under each topic I listed potential questions related to a participant's survey response

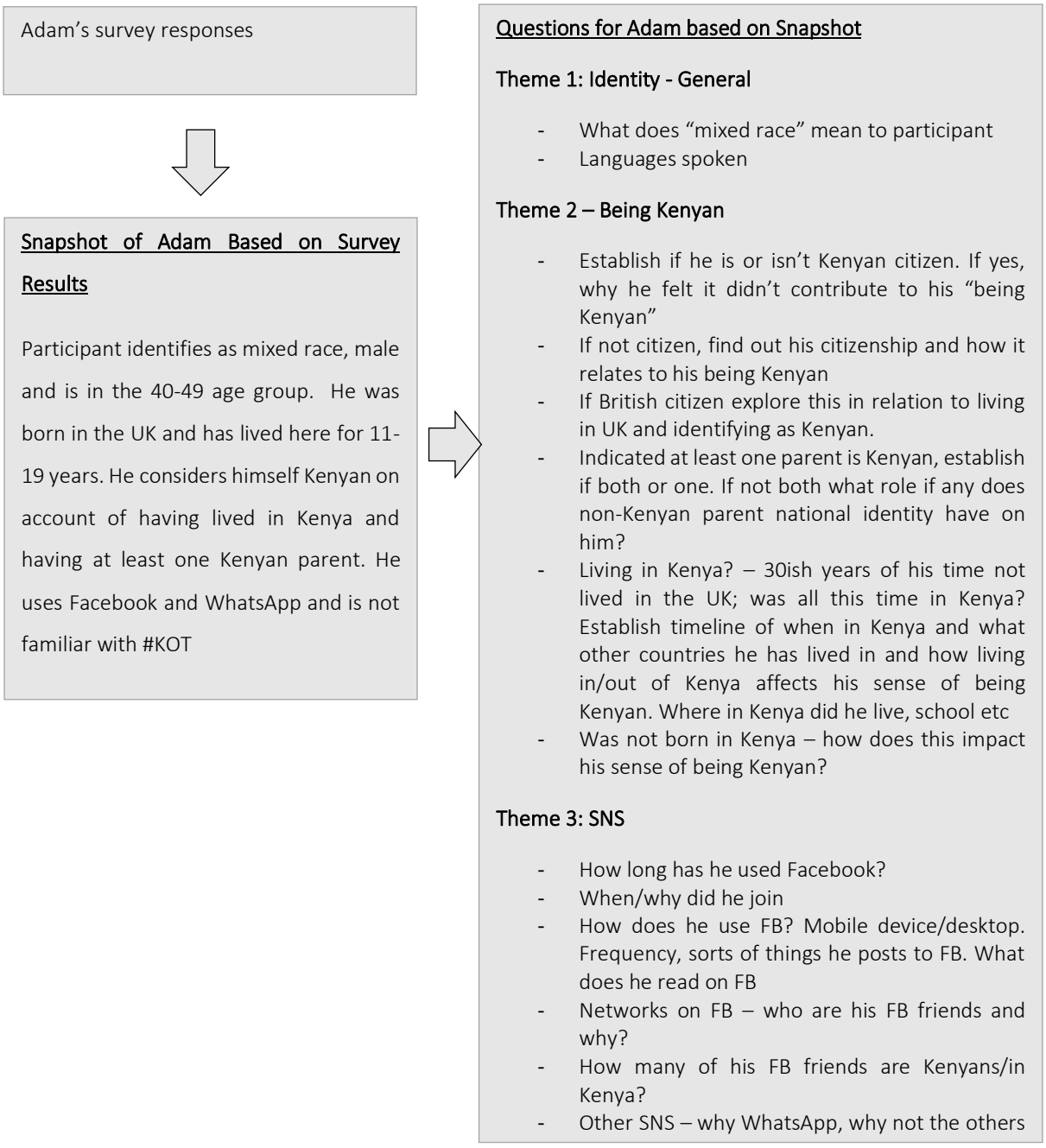


Figure 6 Interview Guide

4.5.2 Sample size

As previously stated, I interviewed 20 participants, and these interviews took place between August 2016 and March 2017.

4.5.3 The Process

All interview participants were offered the opportunity to choose a time, date and location that was convenient for them. Initially I did not offer Skype interviews

because I felt that computer mediated communication could adversely affect the interview process. However, as my selection criteria was not limited by geography, I found that not only was a disproportionate amount of time spent travelling; last minute cancellations or delayed starts had the potential to disrupt the interview schedule. I did adopt strategies to minimise this including allowing at least two hours for interviews, scheduling no more than 2 interviews in a single day and scheduling interviews within the same geographic location on the same day. Participants were also keen to minimise disruption, and, in most cases, participants suggested meeting at cafes near or within train stations. However, scheduling interviews still required a bit of back and forth and for some participants it proved impossible to arrange a suitable time or date. In the end, I offered the option of Skype video interviews. The video option helped reduce the sense of distance that I was concerned about and I found that more participants were willing to interview over Skype.

Each interview was scheduled to last an hour; however, I allotted a two-hour time frame to account for any delayed starts or interviews that extended beyond an hour. Nearly all the interviews lasted between an hour and an hour and a half with a few lasting two hours. This is in part due to the nature of the topic as the snapshot included in this illustrates. Every single participant had a unique and fascinating story. In trying to understand what it means to be Kenyan (or in some cases what separated participants from feeling fully Kenyan), nearly every participant recounted their life story, drawing links to parents and grandparents, partners, ex-partners, siblings, friends. Participants described in great detail the towns, villages, cities and countries have lived in. The schools they attended, the jobs they have had, the places they have fled from, the homes they have settled into. Before concluding the interview, I asked each participant if there was anything that they had wanted to speak on that I had not asked them about. Nearly every participant accepted this offer with many using the opportunity to ask me questions about myself and my research. Others used it to express their pride in being Kenyan and their love for Kenya. Reflecting on this later I began to consider the interview itself as a site of performance.

4.5.4 Managing the Data

The interview recordings that were captured using the digital voice recorder were uploaded to my laptop and assigned unique interview numbers. Those conducted by Skype video were converted to audio only format and also assigned unique interview numbers. In the Excel spreadsheet that I used to record the survey data, I matched the unique interview number to the relevant survey responses, this ensured that during the triangulation process I could view the interview responses in conjunction with a participant's survey response. The audio files were then uploaded to data management and analysis software NVIVO for transcription. For each interview file I also created case notes that I populated with individual survey responses thereby keeping each person's information together.

Finally, I assigned pseudonyms for anonymity. When assigning names, I made sure anyone who had a Kenyan name I assigned a Kenyan pseudonym that was identical in terms ethnicity. Likewise, respondents with anglicised names were given anglicised pseudonyms that were similar in nature to their given names.

4.6 Reflection and Limitations

Having not limited the interview process by geography it was difficult to manage the process; however, offering online interviews made it easier. The one concern I had was the lack of racial diversity. Most if not all the people I interacted with in my immediate circle are Black Kenyans so that was a limiting factor.

With hindsight I should have conducted a follow up interview after the SNS data process as it would have been useful for the triangulation.

Due to the centrality of the interview the other reflections are contained throughout the thesis in the relevant sections.

4.7 SNS Data Collection Phase

4.7.1 Design and purpose

Single or Multiple SNS

Throughout the research design phase and in the early stages of the data collection/field work phase, the question of whether to focus on a single SNS or multiple SNSs was a recurring theme. A key outcome of the SNS scholarship review was the information it provided on the number of SNS platforms different studies used. According to Snelson's (2016) study of SNS publication trends between 2007 and 2013, most studies focus on one only with Facebook being the most researched platform. However, aside from YouTube, which has seen a decline in peer-reviewed studies, Twitter specific and combined SNS research (where more than one SNS is the subject of the study) has also increased steadily at a rate similar to Facebook focused research. As is discussed in the "Evolving research" section further along in this chapter, this outcome played a pivotal role in my decision to alter my research focus and design as it provided a context and rationale for expanding my research to two SNS platforms.

Determining who counts as an SNS user

A key challenge in designing this research was determining who counts as an SNS user (particularly on Twitter) for the purposes of my research. Marwick & boyd's (2010) addressed this issue in their own research. They tweeted questions to their followers by sending "@ reply questions to a sample of users whose tweets appeared in their public timeline, every person in the 300 most-followed accounts (249 total), and a subset of users with 1000–15,000 followers" (2010, p. 117). They received 226 responses from 181 Twitter users but were unable to determine how many people saw their Twitter questions. This is because anyone, irrespective of whether they have a Twitter account or not, can access tweets shared on a public Twitter timeline. Furthermore, tweets can be shared in various ways and across a range of platforms, for instance third party tools allow tweets to be posted directly to Facebook, tweets can be emailed and they can also be embedded in external websites. The majority of Twitter users have public accounts (Marwick & boyd, 2010) which means that most

tweets are available to be read, reproduced or altered by those who do not have a Twitter account. Speaking of Twitter users as only those who have a Twitter account potentially rules out a vast number of people who are not registered Twitter users but nonetheless engage with, share and reproduce Twitter content.

Theoretically it would be possible to find out who these unregistered Twitter users are, however because my research is concerned with the individual and how they presented and wrote themselves into existence on Twitter, it made little sense to include those who do not have Twitter accounts. Facebook does not pose the same concerns because it is a bounded network and while Facebook users can set their post visibility to be as public as possible, Facebook has recently made it impossible to access content unless one is registered as a user and signed in.

In order to ensure uniformity in data collection across the two platforms I decided to collect SNS data specific to a particular event/date (see figure 7). The first being the 2016 Olympics. The second being the October 20th Kenyan National holiday, a controversial holiday that was declared by former President Moi as Moi Day. However, upon Moi's departure from office the day was renamed to Mashujaa Day (Heroes' Day) to honour Kenya's pre and post-independence freedom fighters. The final one being 12th December 2016 which is Kenya's Independence Day.

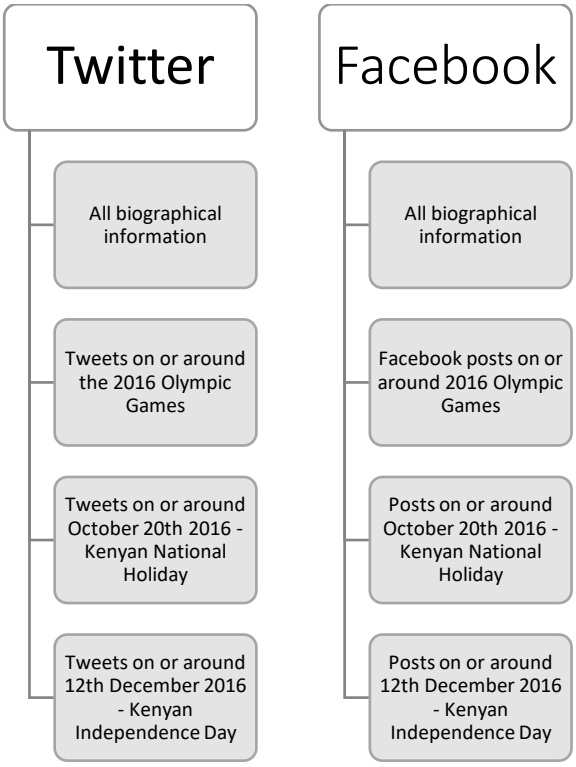


Figure 7 Twitter and Facebook Data

Opting to go for specific events rather than aiming for a specific number of tweets/posts means that on or around any of those three events participants should have posted something. Most participants did not have a lot of information on or around the dates identified. This was initially a concern however in conjunction with the interviews; the absence of SNS data led me to consider how silence or the absence of performance may in itself be a form of performance.

4.7.2 Process and Data Management

To collect the Twitter data, I used the Twitter search function in conjunction with an NVIVO Google Chrome plugin that exports the relevant tweets into NVIVO. The tweets can be exported as a spreadsheet or it can embed the actual tweets in NVIVO. I prefer and therefore used the latter as it captures the tweets exactly as they appear on Twitter whereas exporting via spreadsheet strips the tweets of any images associated with it. However, the embedding process only functions for as long as the tweet is not deleted. To safeguard against this, I also took screenshots of the relevant tweets. For Facebook and Twitter biographic information I took screenshots of relevant content and then uploaded these as images to NVIVO.

4.7.3 Analysis and Presentation

The process of analysing the data began as soon as the first few survey responses arrived. This was initially to keep track of which SNSs were popular amongst the survey respondents in order to determine the direction of this research. However, the bulk of the analysis began once the interviews had been transcribed. I decided to transcribe the interviews myself for a number of reasons, firstly, as part of my data storing and management considerations was the issue of data safety and anonymity. Secondly, through listening and transcribing I was able to hear the interview anew and pick up on things that I may have not noticed initially, this helped me connect more with the material. Once the interviews were transcribed and the SNS data uploaded to NVIVO I began thematic coding. Starting off with a list of words drawn from the themes that guided the survey design, and interview questions that were discussed in Chapter 2. The second round of coding focused on themes that emerged from the data that I had not initially considered, for example pride (see Chapter 5 for a discussion of this) or when Kiswahili words were used without translation (see Chapter 6 for a discussion on language). From there I began to identify and analyse patterns relying on the concepts discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

As part of the process of presenting the data in the upcoming chapters I rely on Boylorn (2016) again who argues that as part of Blackgirl autoethnography, it is important to both show *and* tell. The practice of telling and explaining "how and why your race-gender specific story is important" because "it offers an alternative epistemological standpoint, another way of knowing how I know what I know as a black woman" (2016, p. 56). I extend this aspect to my own analysis and discussion of the findings; as a Black Kenyan woman there are moments throughout the next three chapters that I offer insight based on what I know because of my identities. In those instances, I do make it explicit that I am relying on experiential knowledge.

4.8 Ethics

Prior to commencing the data collection phase of this project, I completed the relevant University risk assessment forms and all participants completed consent forms.

4.8.1 Commitment to an Ethics of Care

Throughout every stage of this project, I have been guided by a commitment to an ethics of care(Edwards & Mauthner, 2012; Luka & Millette, 2018). Luka & Millette provide a summary of things to consider while undertaking research that is rooted in care, noting that;

> Key among these include identifying and respecting diversity, paying attention to how our research may affect those under study, and articulating and acknowledging our intent as researchers and participants, including whether and how we aim to generate potentially transformative engagements (2018, p. 4)

Some of the considerations presented by Luka & Millette have already been discussed in previous chapters. For instance, in Chapter 2 where I reflect on my positionality and consider the implications of researching Blackness as a Black researcher in a predominately white institution. In this chapter, that is concerned with how undertook the research, it is equally important for me to articulate how an ethics of care has informed my methodology. In this content, an ethics of care means that I value my participants, their time, and their stories. For example, in weighing up how to write about the people who took part in this research I wanted to ensure that I presented whole people without compromising their anonymity. As a result, I made the decision not to include the exact wording and/or screenshots of participants' tweets, and Facebook posts in this thesis. This is because the information, when typed into a search engine, can be used to identify the participants directly. Having guaranteed the participants anonymity this would be a violation of our agreement and trust.

4.8.2 Twitter and Tweets in the Public Domain

Brock (2012) and Florini (2013) in their respective research adopted similar approaches to Marwick & boyd's study in that they focused on the content of the tweets and hashtags used with very little reference to the individual other than to identify race and gender. For both Brock and Florini, the focus was on the language and style of the tweet and through the analysis of individual tweet content they were able to draw inferences with regards to racial performativity. I found this approach interesting in that, like my study, they both sought to explore issues relating to identity

and Twitter, yet they managed to do so without prior engagement with the individual Twitter users. While I did not intend to replicate any of these three studies, it did provide an opportunity to think through some of the ethical considerations involved in gathering SNS data. Both Brock and Florini, quoted entire tweets and while it is possible to anonymise a Twitter username; public tweets are indexed by search engines and therefore entering the content of the tweet into a search engine could lead a person directly to the Twitter user who tweeted it (Dennis, O'Loughlin, & Gillespie, 2015). There was also no indication of whether or not consent was sought from the Twitter users the studies cited, though it could be argued that since the tweets were in the public domain there was implied consent. The issue of consent has already been addressed and all participants who took part consented to being included in the SNS data collection process. Due to the fact that public tweets are indexed and searchable I have decided to refrain from posting screenshots of participant tweets.

4.8.3 The Ethics of Facebook Friending

At the outset I only considered privacy and anonymity with regards to my participants and I had identified ways to ensure that their data was safe and not identifiable. In relation to Twitter, this remains the same for the survey and the interviews. However, because Facebook requires a mutual friending, I had to consider my privacy concerns along with the concerns of the participants on the basis that I was granting participants access to my Facebook world. In thinking about how to ensure the safety and privacy of all concerned I adopted the following steps.

(a) Treat the mutual friending as I would if I were meeting a participant for the first time: Prior to any interview I made sure to have at least one phone conversation with potential participants. Where possible I also read their tweets. While it was impossible to determine what a person is like from a single phone call or from their tweets, I could at least get a sense of how I felt when I spoke with them/read what they post. If I felt uncomfortable or unsure, I simply did not proceed with the interview. This was in line with the mitigating factors that I included in my risk assessment. I adopted the same strategy for Facebook i.e. I would not "friend" any person on Facebook who I was not

comfortable meeting. If this decision was reached at the end of the interview, I would not include the participant in the SNS data gathering stage of the process if this stage involved being Facebook friends.

(b) Unfriending after the data gathering phase. In the written consent form, I requested permission to friend people for a fixed period of time. I considered how the process of friending and unfriending can create a degree of awkwardness; however, I explain that for the purposes of the study there had to be a clear indication of when I started to gather data and when I completed gathering data; just as there is a clear indication of when the interview is in progress and the interview has concluded; the process of unfriending marks the conclusion of the SNS data gathering stage.

4.8.4 Survey/Interview as site of identity construction & performance

To request that participants complete an online survey requiring a person to state their race, gender, place of birth and reasons why they identify as Kenyans is essentially asking them to (re) construct their identities digitally. Some of the questions asked in the survey were not too dissimilar from those asked by Social Networking (SNS) platforms. This is especially true of Facebook which invites us to create digital biographies by listing where & when we were born, countries/places we have lived in and schools we have attended. The main differences between populating an SNS profile and completing the survey are purpose and audience. Participants completing the survey were made aware that the information provided was to be used as part of a study on SNS[30] users in the UK who identify as Kenyan. I provided my details, so participants had some indication of who I am; my first name in particular marking me as someone with a Kenyan name that would be familiar to most people who identify as Kenyan. It is for this reason that I consider the online survey not just as a neutral tool to facilitate my research but as a location where participants constructed a version of themselves.

Likewise, with regards to the interviews, hooks states, that "spaces can tell stories and unfold histories" (1989, p. 59). In the very literal sense, the interview as a location is

[30] As discussed in Chapter 3 I use the term social media instead of SNS

a space where stories are told, and histories unfold. My presence within that space affects the stories told and on more than one occasion a participant was interested in my story and there were also occasions where participants and I shared similar stories. As this unavoidable, in the discussion of these findings I also reflect on how my presence may have shaped certain responses.

5 (RE)-THINKING KENYANNESS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first of three dedicated to presenting and discussing the findings. In this chapter I respond to the first research question (RQ1); How is Kenyanness constructed and performed across multiple sites both off and online? This chapter primarily engages with findings that are related to the construction of Kenyanness, with the issue of performance being discussed in greater detail in Chapters 6 and 7. I begin this chapter by introducing the participants; initially relying on survey responses. Then, throughout the rest of the chapter and in subsequent chapters (6 and 7), I build on these responses by introducing excerpts from participant interviews, and participant Twitter and Facebook profiles and feeds.

The title of this chapter is in reference to Macharia's (2012a) call to rethink Kenyanness. Macharia suggests that Kenyanness can function as a post-national identity; opening up the possibility to imagine and construct Kenyanness that is disconnected from Kenya the country. In order to do this, I begin by trying to understand how participants define and construct their Kenyanness. The question 'I identify as Kenyan because _____' is the foundation of this chapter. Participants first encountered and responded to this question when it was presented to them in the survey in the form of a multiple option question. Participants had the opportunity to select any or up to all four options; these being, I was born in Kenya, I have lived in Kenya, my parents are Kenyan, and I have Kenyan citizenship. There was also an option to write in a different response. For those who took part in the interview process, we were able to discuss individual survey responses in greater detail. These responses, especially when analysed from the perspective of translocational positionality and intersectionality reveal that rethinking Kenyanness is dependent on where (sites), in whose presence (audience) and by whom (self-and/or others) this process of identification is conducted. To support this notion this chapter is divided into three main sections. In the first section I introduce the responses to the survey in order to provide an overview of the participants.

The second section considers the extent to which Kenyanness is used to privilege majoritarian identities and to exclude non-majoritarian identities. Beginning with Kikuyuness, a majoritarian Kenyan ethnic identity, I discuss how during the interviews my dual presence as audience and researcher in conjunction with my Kikuyu identity may have informed how participants who identified as Kikuyu interacted with me. This section also brings into focus some of the methodological and ethical considerations raised in Chapters 1, 2 and 4 with regards to potentially amplifying majoritarian identities in a study that is committed to counter-storytelling. It is also in this section that I consider the tensions between self-identification and ascribed identification and how this impacts one's sense of Kenyanness.

The third section considers how Kenyanness and its dual relation to Blackness and coloniality results in misidentification and erasure of certain identities, especially for participants who define their racial identity as 'mixed-race'. It is in this section that I also consider the limits of the language of race both in the UK and in Kenya and how these impact how Kenyanness is constructed.

Throughout this chapter and as part of the analysis I draw on the four ways of conceptualising the process of identifying as Kenyan as discussed in Chapter 3. These concepts being; (i) citizenship (as a transactional form of identification), (ii) mwananchi (both as a social construction of citizenship that incorporates class and as an infantilising category) (iii) Wanjiku (as an intersectional form of identification that considers the multiplier effects of various forms of identification and their relationships with systems of oppression/power) and (iv) Son of the soil/autochthony (as a concept that privileges narratives of 'original people'). In addition to this, the discussion in this chapter (and subsequent empirical chapters) is also shaped by Black feminist work that argues in favour of including my own personal experiential knowledge. As mentioned in Chapters 1, 2 and 4, I do so on the basis that the 'how and why of your race-gender specific story is important' because 'it offers an alternative epistemological standpoint, another way of knowing how I know what I know as a black woman' (Boylorn, 2016, p. 56).

5.2 Survey Responses

The survey was completed by 71 respondents; out of this total 20 people also took part in the interview and agreed to Social Networking Sites (SNS) data being gathering as part of this study. In presenting the responses to the survey below, the first figure represents the interview participants only and the second figure in parentheses denotes all 71 respondents. As explained in Chapter 4, I was unable to match 4 interview participants to their survey data. This means that in the disaggregated figures the interview participant-only figures represent the 16 I was able to identify within the survey data. In presenting the survey data below I follow the order in which the questions appeared in the survey.

5.2.1 Age, race and gender

Beginning with age distribution, 4(30) were in the 18-29 category; 7(20) in the 30-39 category; 4(17) in the 40-49 group; and finally, 1(4) in the 50-59 age range. When asked to self-identify race, the responses were more varied. Black as a standalone category was the most popular response at 8(26), followed by Black African[31] 3(13). 1(12) described themselves as African and 0(7) wrote in Kenyan. For those who identified as mixed-race, 2(3) wrote either mixed or mixed race[32] while 2(4) provided more information [33] (mixed-Kenyan/English; mixed-race - Kenyan; mixed- Black African & Chinese; mixed Kenyan/English). There were six responses that only appeared once, and all are attributed to non-interview respondents. These were[34]; Indian; Human; Black?[35]; Nubian; white African; Race is a social construct. In terms of gender distribution, there were 10(49) participants who indicated they identify as female and 6(22) as male.

5.2.2 Country of birth and being in the UK

When asked about country of birth 12(61) people were born in Kenya; 3(8) in the UK; 0(1) in South Africa and 1 participant incorrectly responded with their date of birth. In order to determine how long people had been in the UK, the survey asked

[31] No participant hyphenated it.
[32] Each response unhyphenated.
[33] Responses are recorded exactly as the participants wrote them.
[34] Responses are recorded exactly as the participants wrote them.
[35] The question mark was included in the response.

respondents to select one of four time spans and the results were as follows; 2(24) had been in the UK for more than 20 years; 7(25) for 11-19 years; 4(9) for 6-10 years; and finally 3(13) indicated they had been here for 5 years or less. In terms of where in the UK participants were located, the majority were based in Greater London 5(33); South-East England was the second most popular location with 6(12) selecting this option; 3(4) were based in Yorkshire & Humberside; 1(6) and 1(4) in West Midlands and East Midlands respectively. While there were no interview participants from the following regions, 4 people responding to the survey alone selected East England; 3 were based in North-West England and a further 3 in Scotland.

5.2.3 I identify as Kenyan because

As previously mentioned, this question comprised of four options and a space to include more information. While being born in Kenya was slightly more popular 11(59), particularly amongst survey only participants, there was little variation across all four options. 10(44) selected having one or more parent(s) who were born in Kenya as one of the reasons they identify as Kenyan, while living in Kenya was selected 10(40) times. 9(40) ticked Kenyan citizenship as the reason they identify as Kenyan. Two survey only participants also used the text box to provide additional information. One person said they identify as Kenyan because they 'only moved to the UK because of marriage' while another person wrote they 'watch [The] Churchill Show' (a Kenyan TV show).

5.2.4 SNS use and knowledge of #KenyansOnTwitter/#KOT

WhatsApp was the most popular SNS application used by 14(69) participants; this was followed closely by Facebook 12(61); 9(51) people reported that they used Twitter; Instagram was used by 9(44) people and finally 6(30) people used SnapChat. When asked about #KenyansOnTwitter/#KOT, 9(40) indicated they knew about it while 7(30) had not heard of #KenyansOnTwitter/#KOT.

The survey data was never intended to be representative of all those in the UK who identify as Kenyan and use social media. Instead, the survey provided an opportunity to test the scope of the thesis, specifically in relation to social media platform use by

Kenyans in the UK and their knowledge of #KOT. As discussed in previous chapters, the initial responses led to the inclusion of Facebook alongside Twitter and a departure from making #KOT the focus of the study. Secondly, by triangulating all the information collected (survey responses, interviews, and social media data) the survey provides another layer of depth to the data. Finally, and this became more apparent once I began to analyse the surveys alongside the interviews, the survey data, especially in relation to race, seemed to skew towards Kenyan majoritarian identities (i.e., Black, Black African). In the next section I introduce conversations from the interview phase to extend this discussion on the relationship between Kenyanness and majoritarian identities.

5.3 Kenyanness and majoritarian identities

The phrase majoritarian identities in this section refers to those identities that benefit from social, political and/or economic privileges. As the section demonstrates the term is not fixed, instead majoritarian status is dependent on the prevailing systems of oppression and discrimination that exist within a given time and/or place. Furthermore, an intersectional approach acknowledges that it is possible for a person to simultaneously claim majoritarian and non-majoritarian identities. This section revolves around Kikuyu ethnic identity, which in the context of Kenyan ethnic identities, is a majoritarian identity and introduces three participants, Kamau, Lydia and Esther who all identify as Kikuyu.

5.3.1 Saying the quiet part out loud

Kamau, based on his survey responses has been in the UK for less than 5 years, uses every SNS listed in the survey apart from SnapChat, identifies his gender as male, his race as Black and is in the 18-29 years age group. He invited me to his home in North London for the interview portion of this study.

I began the interview by asking Kamau about some of the responses in the survey;

> Kui: So, when you filled out the survey you said you were Kenyan because, you [were] born in Kenya, you lived in Kenya, at least one of your parents is Kenyan….

Kamau: …yes, I chose all of them

Kui: So, what is it say, about being born in Kenya, that makes you say you are Kenyan?

Kamau: I haven't really thought about it in that way, other than your [National] ID and your passport tells you are Kenyan or like when need to travel to other countries you are like "oh yeah" you are very Kenyan, based on all these hoops you have to travel through, based on your nationality

Around 5 minutes into the interview, Kamau returns to the question of how and why he identifies as Kenyan and says,

> Because I am Kikuyu, how much of what I am reading as Kenyan is because I am Kikuyu? So, I didn't know how to bring this up when you first asked me the question, because I would say, I am Kikuyu first and then I am Kenyan, but that sounds like you are some kind of ethno-nationalist, to prioritise your ethnic identity over your national identity. But I think it works that way for a lot of Kenyans, even if they don't say it. (Kamau, M, Black, 18-29)

In response to this I ask Kamau whether he would have the same apprehensions about identifying as Kikuyu first if he was not from a majority ethnic group, or as he described it an ethnic group 'that is kind of politically...not oppressive...that is a bad word, dominant'?

He responds with,

> My Nigerian friends say "Yoruba this, Yoruba[36] that"[…] if I had a substantial following on Twitter[37] which I don't, I wouldn't say it, bombs would drop all over the timeline, so I do feel maybe I am not proud of being Kikuyu, because my Kikuyuness is based on superiority, people around me are proud to be Kikuyu because they see themselves as superior to other ethnic groups. (Kamau, M, Black, 18-29)

In this section I am primarily interested in the last two quotes both in terms of how they relate to the first response and also in terms of how my presence as researcher/audience may have influenced the response. At the very beginning of the interview, Kamau thinks back to his survey responses and states that he has not really

[36] A majoritarian Nigerian ethnic group.

[37] The reference to Twitter is worth noting because I hadn't at this point asked about SNS, but I met Kamau through Twitter and he was aware of what this study was interested, so this could by why he used Twitter as an example.

thought about why he cites being born in Kenya as one of the reasons he identifies as Kenyan beyond the limitations of a Kenyan passport[38]. A short while later when he returns to the issue of why he says he is Kenyan he makes it clear that he was initially uncertain about how to bring up his Kikuyu identity. I did not ask him what changed and why he felt comfortable to speak about it now, however, the more we spoke, it became apparent that Kamau had some concerns regarding the privilege that has been and is conferred on Kikuyu people. The root of this privilege is twofold, firstly Kikuyus in Kenya make up 17.13% of the population, making it the largest ethnic group. Secondly out of Kenya's four presidents, three have been Kikuyu including our current president (Uhuru Kenyatta) who is also the son of our first president (Jomo Kenyatta). In a newly independent Kenya, there were many Kikuyu people who formed part of what Ndegwa (1997, 1998) described as the elite. Under Jomo Kenyatta's rule he 'Kikuyunized the civil service and the state-owned enterprises' meaning 'they were dominated by [members of] the Kikuyu ethnic group' (Adar & Munyae, 2001, p. 5). When Kamau speaks of 'ethno-nationalism' this is part of what he is alluding to. Kamau's mention of Kikuyu ethnicity as one that is marked by dominance and feelings of superiority in relation to other ethnic groups, is in recognition of the fact that 'the ethnicization of politics in Kenya lies at the nexus of economic interest and unequal socioeconomic development' (Okech, 2013, p. 32). Kikuyu people have and continue to be beneficiaries of this system.

The reference to 'bombs would drop all over the timeline' is Kamau expressing the fact that he is aware that a public declaration of Kikuyu pride would not be well received by people who follow him on Twitter. The way Kamau explains this is of interest because he does so by firstly referencing his Nigerian Yoruba friends. Kamau's position is that his Nigerian Yoruba friends are able to easily mention their Yorubaness. Kamau is of the view that if his Twitter audience was 'substantial' he would not be able to tweet about his Kikuyuness the way his Nigerian friends talk about their own ethnic identities. When Kamau speaks about his Nigerian friends it is implied that Kamau is included as part of the audience, but it is not clear who else is present and where these conversations take place. It is also not clear what reaction these

[38] I return to this issue of Kenyan identity/citizenship as limiting further along in this study.

conversations receive. One reading of Kamau's statement is that his Nigerian friends can reference their Yorubaness and this is not met with any pushback or bombs dropping. An alternative reading suggests that his Nigerian friends are impervious to any reaction they may receive. In relation to his declaration of Kikuyu pride, there is a level of specificity in terms of the location of this discussion i.e. Twitter. When speaking about audience, Kamau is a little less clear; he states that if his following on Twitter was substantial he would refrain from tweeting about his Kikuyuness. Substantial is subjective and the only figure that can be attached to this is 245 which represents the current (at the time of interview) number of followers Kamau has. I draw out these aspects of Kamau's statement because while he seems to be making a direct comparison between discussions on majoritarian Nigerian ethnic identities and Kenyan majoritarian ethnic identities there is insufficient information to determine if this is the case. This, however, does not alter Kamau's underlying argument. His argument being, given Kikuyu dominance and the systems of oppression it has upheld, to publicly express Kikuyu pride can be perceived as condoning these systems of oppression. It is unclear whether when Kamau says a lot of Kenyans think about ethnicity before nation, 'even if they don't say it', he is speaking of Kikuyu people (and perhaps other majoritarian ethnic groups) or if he is speaking about Kenyans more broadly. He does however suggest that there is an element of not saying the quiet part out loud which is the reason this exchange is of note.

In the part of our conversation that is quoted, I note that Kamau moves from being uncomfortable talking about his ethnic identity; to describing it as an important part of his identification; then on to recognising the privilege his Kikuyu identity affords him; before suggesting that he may not be proud of it. Relistening to our discussion it is interesting to see Kamau think and rethink his identities. I am interested in this transition especially because Kamau acknowledges that most people would not vocalise their ethnic pride, yet he does so in my presence. During the transcription process I reflected on the significance of this moment and the role I may have played in facilitating Kamau's response. As mentioned across the first 4 chapters of this thesis, I would be classed as a Kikuyu person. I phrase it this way because of all the identities

I claim, Kikuyuness is the one I feel the least connected to. Yet, because my first and middle name are both Kikuyu names; my first name in particular being a very popular Kikuyu name (see the discussion in Chapter 3 on Wanjiku and the Kikuyu origin story), Kenyans will often identify me as Kikuyu. As I analysed the transcripts, I noticed a pattern emerging; all the participants who brought up their ethnicity unprompted also identified as Kikuyu. This prompted me to reflect on my dual role as researcher/audience; to question the extent to which participants were attaching meaning to my names, potentially as signifiers of what they considered to be my Kenyanness/Kikuyuness. And what impact this had on the way participants articulated and (re)constructed their identities in my presence. Most importantly, because it speaks directly to the question that this thesis seeks to answer, how does all of this contribute to an understanding of how Kenyans construct Kenyanness?

Recognising that my interaction with Kamau on its own is not enough to provide a full answer to the question, there are a few things worth highlighting because they reappear in my interactions with other participants. Firstly, the site where the construction takes place matters and secondly so does audience. One theme that connects location and the audience in this situation is the familiar. My conversation with Kamau takes places at his house[39] in his living room, a space that is familiar to him and presumably one where he feels at ease. This setting is almost a literal application of Goffman (1956) who, when discussing the frontstage, likens it to the front/living room in one's house. I, on the other hand, am a visitor, an outsider who has been invited into Kamau's space. In stating this I am mindful of the power dynamics that exist between a person conducting the research and the person who is being interviewed. I am also aware of how our respective ages and gender identities impact power relations in this setting e.g. I, as a lone woman, in the house of a man I have never met before. I do not wish to overstate the importance of one over the other, but I think it is important to acknowledge how Kamau being at home may have influenced his decision to talk about something that he was initially reluctant to mention. Prior to meeting Kamau we had interacted very briefly on Twitter, at most

[39] I highlight the home as the place where the interview takes place however I also recognise that it is a site within site. In this instance it is a home, in London, in the UK and that too affects the process of identity construction

we knew of each other through a series of tweets and following/being followed by some of the same people. I therefore cannot state with certainty whether or not I was familiar to him. I do think that my first name, at the very least was familiar to him, in the sense that he had probably heard my first name used in reference to other people. Using this information Kamau is able to construct in his own mind an idea of who I am; or more specifically who he thinks I am. Part of this may include him relying on my Kikuyu name to ascribe a Kikuyu identity to me. Kamau then adjusts and re-adjusts the version of himself that he shares with me. As a result a number of things occur, firstly it reinforces the idea that this process is not unidirectional. I may be there as a researcher to learn more about Kamau's Kenyanness but Kamau is also considering how I present myself to him and potentially using this to inform our interaction. I therefore exist as researcher, audience and subject (of identity construction). Secondly, when Kamau states, 'So, I didn't know how to bring this up when you first asked me the question' I consider this moment as a blurring of boundaries between the frontstage and the backstage, as defined by Goffman. Perhaps because of the familiar, made possible in part due to my perceived Kikuyuness, Kamau feels comfortable to reveal momentarily what has influenced the construction of his Kenyanness. This moment then makes it possible for Kamau to speak openly about Kikuyu privilege and the tensions between his Kikuyuness and his Kenyanness.

In the next section I introduce Lydia (F, Black African, 40-49). I rely on my conversations with her to advance this idea of familiarity and the relationship between site, audience and the person doing the identity construction in the upcoming sub-section.

5.3.2 I am a Kikuyu and land is something we identify with

Lydia who lives in South-East England scheduled our meeting so that it would coincide with her visit to London. When I met her, she was checked into a bed and breakfast in Ilford, London. There were no meeting rooms available, but we were granted access to the bar which was not scheduled to open until later on in the day. Based on her survey responses Lydia has been in the UK for about 6-10 years, uses Facebook and WhatsApp and had no prior knowledge of #KOT. Like Kamau, Lydia selected all four

options in relation to why she identified as Kenyan. When I asked why she selected citizenship she told me,

> Citizenship means to me the government recognises me as a participating individual in the government or in the country. So, to me as much as I would feel Kenyan if I wasn't a citizen, I wouldn't feel the whole complete package, so citizen for me gives me confirmation that I am a Kenyan. (Lydia, F, Black African, 40-49)

Further along in her response she said,

> coming from my cultural background, I am a Kikuyu and land is something we identify with. And owning land is done through citizenship. (Lydia, F, Black African, 40-49)

In her response Lydia seems to identify strongly with the transactional nature of citizenship (Tilly, 2009) and the government recognition that goes along with it. She considers citizenship a completion of her Kenyan identity. Lydia feels a sense of inclusion as a 'participating individual' and this in turn gives her the feeling of being a complete package. This stands in contrast with the symbol of Wanjiku [40] as demonstrated by Gathara (2013) and Macharia (2012b, 2014). An intersectional approach, recognising the existence of multiple and often contradictory versions of ourselves (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1991; Harris, 1990), would suggest that perhaps the privilege that is conferred upon Lydia as a Kikuyu person allows her to feel complete despite any gender discrimination she may be subjected to. Alternatively, it could mean that Lydia does recognise the existence of gender discrimination and she considers this as part of what comes along with being a complete package. Lydia makes the connection between how she identifies as Kikuyu and Kenyan citizenship in a series of steps. She mentions Kikuyu as her 'cultural background' while using the word 'we' and it is unclear whether I am included in this or whether she is using the term more broadly. Then she talks about the importance of land to Kikuyu identity before stating that 'owning land is done through citizenship' (though it is not clear whether she owns land at the moment).

[40] I am mindful here of pitting a real and embodied person who identifies as a Kikuyu woman against Wanjiku; a male creation with negative class, gender and ethnic connotations.

It is also unclear whether Lydia is making a distinction between an association with land and actually owning land. This distinction may seem slight but is nonetheless an important one. A connection to and identifying with land can be construed as a reference to autochthony, especially when considered alongside Kikuyuness and its status as a majoritarian identity. As introduced in Chapter 3, autochthony is often invoked in order to exclude those who are not deemed sons of the soil (Geschiere & Jackson, 2006; Geschiere & Nyamnjoh, 2000). This exclusion often means denial or loss of citizenship and/or a sense of belonging (Geschiere & Nyamnjoh, 2000). A discussion on sons of the soil in the Kenyan context leads me to revisit Muturia's 1970s comments, as discussed in Chapter 3, on wenye nchi (direct translation: owners of the land/those who belong to the land) and wananchi (plural of mwananchi). Muturia asserts that, 'Kenya has two classes of people: one class is that of *wananchi* and the other class is that of *wenye nchi*' and provides further clarification by claiming that,

> *wenye nchi* are the people who are born in this country from the time this earth was created, *wananchi* are those temporary people who have papers and then call themselves *wananchi*.

Muturia wants this distinction noted because,

> I can see so many *wananchi* trying to snatch the jobs. We want *wenye nchi* to get the jobs or any other facilities first, then *wananchi* come later

At the time Muturia was making these remarks; Kenya was 7 years post-independence and under Kenyatta's presidency. During this period, as mentioned earlier, Kikuyu people became the post-colonial elite, dominating the civil service and state-owned enterprises (Adar & Munyae, 2001; Ndegwa, 1997, 1998). It is against this backdrop that I consider Lydia's assertion that 'I am a Kikuyu and land is something we identify with' because when contextualised in this way, especially in conjunction with her comments on citizenship, it seems to be advancing a majoritarian narrative around belonging. In this framing the idea of identifying with land can be seen as the enactment of Muturia's definition of wenye nchi. The implication being that there is an automatic entitlement to land by virtue of being a Kikuyu person. In this situation entitlement trumps ownership; the documentation that proves land ownership can be understood in the same way Muturia speaks of the temporary wananchi and their

papers. The land ownership may be legally sound, but autochthony predates the legal system.

Just like my interaction with Kamau, Lydia introduces her Kikuyuness without prompting; but unlike Kamau she does not seem conflicted about the relationship between her Kenyanness and her Kikuyuness. Again, I contemplate what it is about our interaction, my presence, and the focus on Kenyanness that facilitates this discussion on Kikuyu ethnicity. The sense of that which is familiar, such as my name may have played a part in the same way it may have influenced my interaction with Kamau. In addition to this, Lydia and I are both women so this too could have created a sense of sameness and familiarity that caused Lydia to bring up her Kikuyu identity. It could also be that Lydia's clarity in speaking about her Kikuyuness stems from a strong sense of self. Again, as with Kamau I am hesitant to attach more meaning than is necessary but these two instances lead me to consider the limits of Kenyanness as a form of identification, particularly in the context of this study that centres counter-storytelling and intersectionality. Perhaps Kenyanness is too broad a category resulting in certain forms of Kenyan identification being privileged while others are overlooked. It could also be that the privileges attached to certain Kenyan identities are so far reaching that it almost eclipses the idea of Kenyanness.

5.3.3 How can you be Kenyan and have never gone to the Coast?

The final participant I introduce in this section is Esther, a postgraduate student living in West Yorkshire. Identifying as female, Black and in the 30-39 years age group, Esther and I had a lot in common. We not only both identified as Black feminists but we were also using it as part of our research. It also turns out that we attended the same primary school in Kenya though I was there for less than a year, and I was probably a year or two ahead of her. The only SNS she uses is Twitter and she is familiar with #KOT. Speaking about her Kenyanness Esther told me,

> my Kenyan identity has always been contested by others [other Kenyans], like how can you be Kenyan and have never gone to the Coast? Yeah, but as a family we couldn't afford that, and we had really good Christmases despite the fact that we didn't go to the Coast. (Esther, F, Black 30-39)

When Esther speaks of 'going to the Coast' she is referring to the practice, predominantly amongst middle class Kenyans, of travelling to the coast of Kenya during the Christmas holiday season. Esther told me that though she lived in a rural part of Kenya on the outskirts of Nairobi, her parents worked hard to send her to a private Kenyan system school[41] in Nairobi. She said she was bullied a lot by the other students who told her she 'smelled like farmland' and who also made fun of her because her family did not spend Christmas in the coast of Kenya.

Esther, describes feeling as though;

> I was kind of being dissected into pieces. You are a Kikuyu? A woman? Are you a Kenyan really? But I am all these things and much more. The issue is not my Kenyanness in as my much as it is my Black Africaness, my Black African womaness. (Esther, F, Black 30-39)

The fact that Esther experiences this dissection at school is not coincidental; as previously stated location plays a key role in the process of identification and identity construction. Historically schools in Kenya were directly linked to colonialism, with missionaries establishing schools in order to produce 'colonial subjects trained to work for a range of colonial institutions' (Macharia, 2019, p. 101). In addition to these schools, white settlers also established white only schools. A lot of the older private Kenyan system schools that exist today, including the school Esther attended, are examples of the latter. I attended two schools in Kenya between 1986-1990 (from around the age 8-11 years old) and both of these were former European-only schools. One of the schools was previously known as Westlands European School. At both schools I attended it was standard practice to have the names of all former and current Head Teachers, Head Boy/Head Girls and House Captains recorded and put on display. These items forming what Goffman would consider the setting; marking the school as a site where the legacy of coloniality is enacted. After independence these schools became desegregated and Kenya's post-colonial elites (Ndegwa, 1997, 1998) began enrolling their children in these schools. Over time the white people who remained in post-independence Kenya, and who would have previously attended schools like the ones Esther and I attended, had moved on to other more exclusive private schools. By

[41] I say this to distinguish both from non-private Kenyan system schools and private schools in Kenya that rely on curriculums from other countries; e.g. English system schools

the mid to late 1980s (when I attended) the demographic had transformed to a more middle-class school and most of the children and staff were Black Kenyans or Kenyan Asians.

This background is provided in order to contextualise the school Esther attends as one that has been shaped by Kenya's past as a former British colony. Historically it is a site where exclusion on the grounds of race and class was practised. Furthermore as Salem notes, 'capitalism [is] a key feature of colonialism' (2019, p. 3) and an intersectional approach acknowledges that 'under colonialism class, race and nation are equally sources of oppression' (2019, p. 4). For Esther specifically her experience positions the school as a site where she was subjected to class discrimination by her fellow students. Due to the intersecting nature of identities and oppression, Esther's classed identity is further deployed by her schoolmates in order to contest Esther's Kenyanness. The logic behind the students' actions being, Esther has never been to the Coast because her family cannot afford a trip and because she has not been to the Coast, she cannot be Kenyan. One of the reasons I have chosen to highlight Esther's experience is because, in comparison with Kamau and Lydia's, there is an inversion of who is doing the work of constructing an identity. Kamau and Lydia both discuss with me how they (re)construct their own identities. Esther on the other hand is sharing with me her self-identification process while also recounting her experience of having her identity deconstructed by her peers. The fact that Esther is being discriminated against in this way, for an activity that is firstly out of her control and secondly one that happens outside of school, specifically during the school holiday, speaks to the pervasiveness of both class as a category of identification and as a source of oppression. In section 5.4 I return to the idea of contested identities and being the subject of others' construction of your identity.

However, remaining with Esther's experience, I re-introduce mwananchi as used to describe 'the ordinary' Kenyan. Those who attended schools like Esther's and who travel to Coast for the holidays would probably consider themselves to be representative of mwananchi. This is because in the class hierarchy they would be considered secondary to those who can afford, for instance, to attend a private British system school in Kenya, and who holiday outside of Kenya. Yet, the same students at

Esther's school do not consider her Kenyan enough and possibly not mwananchi because she is too poor to perform a certain type of classed Kenyanness. Outside of the boundaries of Esther's school there are many Kenyans who cannot afford to attend a private Kenyan school (like Esther's). Nor can they (if they live outside of the Coast area) afford to travel to the Coast of Kenya. Yet it is arguable they too would identify as mwananchi. Already limited in its failure to include other forms of differentiation except class; when faced with intra-class differences amongst non-elite Kenyans, mwananchi becomes an inadequate descriptor. It also points to the ambiguity of mwananchi that allows people to attach their own meanings to it. As a result of this, middle-class Kenyans can consider themselves to be wananchi (while simultaneously erasing the Kenyanness of people they deem lesser). Likewise, people who would, if the UK language of class was applicable in Kenya, be considered working class can also describe themselves as mwananchi. The combination of mwananchi's ambiguous and paradoxical nature presents a word that exists both with meaning and without meaning. However, once it is invoked by a group that identifies with a specific class category, a meaning is attached to it. Once this meaning is attached it ceases to be ambiguous and paradoxical; instead it functions as a way to give the group that claims it legitimacy while also denying other groups the right to lay claim to the term. This is perhaps why the word 'ordinary' is often used alongside mwananchi. Acting as some quantifier of what cannot be quantified, ordinary mwananchi is perhaps intended to underscore the fact that mwananchi may be too broad a word. Therefore, to refer to the ordinary mwananchi is to give it a specificity that allows room for the general mwananchi to exist along the ordinary mwananchi, distinguishable by the fact that they both belong to different classes. However, because mwananchi already exists as a classed form of Kenyan national identity, the word ordinary may provide a temporary fix but its use ultimately confirms the limits of relying on mwananchi.

In the second quote from Esther she speaks of being dissected and there are connections that can be made to Macharia's (2012b, 2014) description of Wanjiku as a disposable, disembodied creation. Macharia's position on Wanjiku is that she was originated as a 'throwaway comment' an 'everywoman to be used by men' and because of this,

> Wanjiku could never own herself. Women could never own Wanjiku. They might incarnate her, but she was so saturated with male fantasies of using Wanjiku, saving Wanjiku, speaking for Wanjiku, building a nation for Wanjiku that she could not exist (2014, p. [no page]).

During Moi's presidency, Macharia describes Wanjiku as disembodied and,

> Attempts to enflesh Wanjiku—to give her a body, a face, a life story, a will—encountered the banality of violence against women, of state violence against where any possible Wanjiku lived or worked (2014, p. [no page]).

Under Kibaki's presidency (Moi's successor), Macharia argues that Wanjiku was disappearing and 'her most material form was in Gado's comics [as a] generic everywoman […] who could question the state' (2014, p. [no page]). This version of Wanjiku could not exist during Kibaki's 'ethnopatriarchal regime' (2014, p. [no page]). Kibaki's Wanjiku 'could never be a feminist; she could never critique the patriarchal state' (2014, p. [no page]).

Macharia concludes that,

> Wanjiku, thus, incarnates an impossible woman, the impossibility of women within the state's political imaginary, and the feminization of a Kenyan resident 'who could only be imagined as impossible within the neoliberal state (2014, p. [no page]).

It is within this context that I draw parallels between Wanjiku and Esther[42]. When Esther (who already recognises that class is used to contest her Kenyan identity), attempts to (re)claim her Kenyan and Kikuyu identities while also simultaneously acknowledging her Black Africanness and Black African womanness, it causes an issue[43]. She becomes an 'impossible woman' because her identities do not fit in with certain socio-economic imaginations of what it means to be Kenyan. These imaginations include constructions of mwananchi that consider Esther's class status to be less than and thus outside of any characterisation of Kenyanness. Esther's impossible identities lead to her being 'dissected into pieces'; Wanjiku as an impossible woman exists as disembodied (under Moi) and disposable (under Kibaki),

[42] Again, as with Lydia I am mindful about drawing comparisons between Esther a real person who identifies as Kikuyu and Wanjiku, a socially constructed and problematic label.
[43] Esther did not specify with whom this caused an issue; in the context of our conversation I took it to mean Kenyans she had engaged while living in Kenya.

the end result being that both Esther and Wanjiku struggle to be viewed as whole/complete.

It is also worth noting that while simultaneously identifying as Black African and a Kenyan Kikuyu woman may cause an issue for those who seek to strip Esther of her Kenyanness and Kikuyuness; this form of identification is made possible because of her Kenyanness. Perhaps part of the reason why some people may take issue with this is because Esther's identification does not privilege the nation of Kenya. Rather than turn to the Kikuyu privilege afforded to her in order to counter those who try and erase her Kenyan Kikuyuness, Esther considers other forms of identification. In doing so, Esther does what Macharia calls for; a rethinking of Kenyanness as a post-national identity. In Esther's case Kenyanness is more than just an identity that connects her to a country, it is a form of identification that enables her to consider identities beyond Kenya. Through this she is able to claim her Africanness and her Blackness and these identities sit alongside her Kenyanness and her Kikuyuness despite the resistance she faces in relation to those who try to limit her forms of identification.

In section 5.3, Black, as a marker of racial identity emerged as the most popular response amongst survey respondents, which on its own is perhaps unsurprising given that within Kenya, Black is a majoritarian identity. However, as the interviews revealed, there are multiple Kenyan majoritarian identities, with the Kikuyu ethnic identity being one of them. The conversations highlighted in this section provide an opportunity to problematise the relationships between certain majoritarian identities, for example, Kikuyuness and Blackness. The further introduction of multiple axes of identification, such as age, gender and class and the consideration of sites and audience, especially when viewed through an intersectional lens, tests the boundaries of Kenyanness, and exposes its limitations and its capacity to be used as a way to exclude and/or minoritise people. Simultaneously it also reveals the fluidity of Kenyanness and, particularly in relation to Kamau, introduces the idea of Kenyanness as an identity in motion as people (re)configure and (re)construct their Kenyanness in relation to sites and audiences.

5.4 Self-identification vs Misidentification

In this section I continue with this theme of constructing the self for a specific audience however the focus of this section is on Kenyanness and its relationship with the visibility of race. Through the experiences of three participants who describe their identities as mixed/mixed-race I explore what it means to self-identify as Kenyan and to have this contested on the basis that one does not look Kenyan or Kenyan enough.

5.4.1 Kenyan as the rest of you

My conversation with John takes place over a Skype video call, who (according to the survey) identifies as male and mixed Kenyan/English. He is in the 30-39-year age group and has been living in the UK since the age of 18. Early on in our conversation he shared with me what it was like living and growing up in Kenya,

> …I am obviously half-caste, and everyone associates you as white boy and you put on a front, I am Kenyan as the rest of you… (John, M, mixed Kenyan/English, 30-39).

John illustrates how his outward appearance is constructed as white, which is at odds with how he racially self-identifies and how this construction as white is used to contest his Kenyanness. John later clarifies that when he speaks of 'everyone' and 'Kenyan as the rest of you' he is referring to his Kenyan school friends. Similar to Esther's experience, John's school became a site of identity contestation. However, the school John attended while in Kenya is a private international school that caters mainly to expatriate families. With annual school fees ranging from US$ 16,243 (pre-kindergarten) to US$ 31,142 (Grades 11-12) according to the school's website, the demographics of John's school are very different to Esther's. While at Esther's school it was her social class that was used to contest her Kenyanness, for John it is the combination of his appearance and his mixed-race identity that his peers use to challenge his claim to Kenyanness. His use of the term 'obviously' speaks to the fact that it should be clear from looking at him that he is mixed-race, though in the quote he uses the word half-caste, a problematic and derogatory term that I return to further along in this section. Firstly however, I want to focus on John's use of the word obvious. John uses 'obviously' to refer to the process of racialisation that he goes

through and how this is at odds with how he racially self-identifies. Racialisation is described as,

> the assignment of racial meaning to real, perceived, or ascribed differences among individuals or groups, produces hierarchies of power and privilege among races (Burton, Bonilla-Silva, Ray, Buckelew, & Hordge Freeman, 2010, p. 445).

For John, one area of difference between him and the Kenyans who seek to contest his Kenyanness is his skin tone/complexion. He uses this difference to racialise himself as mixed-race but also acknowledges that some people in Kenya racialise him as white. Being racialised as white is itself noteworthy. Often times whiteness is deemed to exist outside of racialisation and it is whiteness that often forms the lens through which 'other' people become racialised; hence the white gaze (Fanon, 2008; Yancy, 2005). The inversion that takes place in John's situation may have to do with the fact that he is speaking about his racial identity within the context of a Black majority country. In this instance he is the 'other' in relation to Kenya's Black population. Though this is further complicated by the fact that this othering is taking place in a school that is markedly different from the rest of Kenya. In explaining and racialising his appearance John offers two possibilities, mixed-race or white and uses 'obviously' as a means to co-opt others (again, I am not precisely sure whether this includes me or if it is strictly in relation to the Kenyans he interacts with) into this binary. It is not my intention to question John's self-racialisation or his experiences of how he has been racialised by Kenyans. I do however want to highlight what is obscured by the word obvious. The first thing that obvious glosses over is the problematic nature of the term half-caste.

> The term "half-caste" has a complex social evolution as both a term used by officialdom and as a group identifier. It had its origins in Britain's colonial project, census agencies and official data collectors in the late nineteenth century thereby seeking to capture those in their populations who were the offspring of mixed ethnic/racial unions (Aspinall, 2013, pp. 509–510).

Aspinall also points out that it is often used in reference to 'mixed ethnic/racial' identities that frequently encompass white identities. It is not surprising that the term is connected to whiteness. It reinforces racist notions of whiteness existing outside of race; the racialisation that takes place occurs as a result of whiteness becoming

intertwined with non-white identities. When this happens whiteness is interrupted, rendered incomplete hence the use of phrases such as half-caste. Given Kenya's colonial past it is also not surprising that the word found its way into Kenya's language on race. What is surprising is to hear the phrase used in 2016/17. In the UK, the term is now considered derogatory however there have been instances of the term being reclaimed. In Kenya, the situation is a bit more complicated because while half-caste may not be used regularly, it is common to hear non-mixed-race people refer to mixed-race people using the phrase 'point 5' (i.e. meaning 0.5/half) or 'pointy/pointee'.

The word 'obvious' and the mixed-race or white binary also fails to take into consideration what Weekes (1997) refers to as the various shades of Blackness. Terminology such as light-skinned and dark-skinned plays a significant role in the language of race as spoken by and between Black people. Recognition of this diversity in terms of appearance also provides a framework for critiquing colourism and light-skin privilege. With this in mind it would be wrong to automatically assume that a person who presents as light-skinned is either mixed-race or white.

Finally, 'obvious' limits any consideration for the fluid nature of racial identities particularly as people move between and through different spaces and as they interact with different people/audiences. This is a point that came up in conversation with Adam who is introduced in the next section.

5.4.2 Why are you a slightly different colour?

Adam's survey responses indicated that he identifies as male and mixed-race, and his reason for identifying as Kenyan is because his mother is a Black Kenyan woman. We met at a coffee shop opposite the train station in Adam's hometown in the South East of England where he shared more details about his identity.

> I identify as Kenyan, here [in the UK] you are not allowed to identify as anything else "So where do you come from?" "I was born in Bradford; my dad is English" but of course "why are you a slightly different colour?" "My mother is Kenyan" "Oh so you are Kenyan?" After a while you stop banging your head against the wall and say, "yes I am Kenyan". (Adam, M, mixed-race, 40-49)

To follow up on this I ask,

> Kui: So, it is partly a choice on your part, but also, an…. imposition?
>
> Adam: It is an imposition. Same as in Kenya, as I wasn't classified as Kenyan by many Kenyans. So, it was "oh, your mum is a Mluhya and your dad is English, so you're English?" So, I was one of those people who got onto the plane as white English and I landed in London as Black Kenyan.

Adam sums up this part of the discussion by telling me that,

> I personally identify as mixed race of Kenyan and English extraction. I identify as both of them personally, but people will put you in the boxes they feel most comfortable to talk to you. (Adam, M, mixed-race, 40-49)

In Adam's account of the questions he is asked about his racial and national identity, he explains that in the UK ''you are not allowed to be anything else.' Adam does not specify who does not allow him to identify as Kenyan. However, being in the UK, a white majority country, it is possible that Adam is expressing the effect of normative whiteness. Adam begins his response with 'my dad is English' but that answer is not acceptable because it does not explain why Adam 'looks a slightly different colour' and he is required to explain this difference. Like John, Adam recognises how his skin tone/complexion is used by others to racialise him. The phrase '*slightly* different coloured' is perhaps a reflection of the fact that he is not fully coloured. Much like the word half-caste, coloured was used commonly in the UK but is now for the most part considered a derogatory term[44]. There may not be any mention of percentages or halves, as in John's case but the implication is the same. 'Slightly' as opposed to 'fully' coloured; the suggestion being that those who ask Adam the question do not consider him to be 'fully' white. The word 'different' in this particular context suggests the people in the UK that Adam is speaking of are considering his colour in relation to their own. This is yet another example of the white gaze that considers whiteness and by extension white people as unmarked and unracialised while simultaneously marking

[44] While living in Lancaster, in the North West of England, around 2001 a co-worker referred to me as coloured and had no idea that the word was offensive. We had a brief discussion about this, in the presence of other co-workers, all white, and a few of them were also unaware of the term's racist connotations. They considered 'Black' to be offensive. I mention this because it illustrates some of the complexities surrounding the language of race and the regional variations that impact this language.

and racialising everyone else. In so doing rejecting the idea that Adam could be anything other than foreign (Black/Kenyan). It is for this reason that the questions Adam is asked stop once he mentions his Kenyan mother because it is incorrectly assumed that to be Kenyan is to be Black. Hall (2000), referring to the construction of Black-British identity describes it as a two-part process. The first part involves identification, and the second involves recognition. In the absence of recognition, people who self-identify as Black 'may feel British, but will not be publicly recognised to be so' (Hall, 2000, p. 1). Hall is specifically referencing Black people in the UK and I recognise that while he used the phrase Black-British, Adam speaks of himself as English. Also, while Hall's statement may explain what Adam experiences in the UK; Adam's experiences are not limited to the UK. When in Kenya Adam is faced with similar questions regarding his appearance and his racial/national identity. This time however, the situation is inverted; leading with his mother's identity, he says Kenyans acknowledge that she is a 'Mluhya' (i.e. a person who identifies as Luhya, one of Kenya's ethnic groups) but it is his father's identity that Kenyans decide to prioritise. For Kenyans, Adam's 'slightly different colour' is perceived the same way as John's appearance and like John, Adam too is racialised as white.

In Adam's response there are two stories taking place; one is his retelling of how others impose an identity on him and the second is how he articulates his own identities. In both these stories the boundaries between race, nationality and ethnicity are blurred. In relation to his father for example, Adam implies that people who question his identity consider Englishness to be synonymous with white racial identity and that Kenyanness is the same as Blackness. He also suggests that for some, to identify ethnically as a Mluhya is to identify as Kenyan and Black. Part of this blurring of categories is perhaps rooted in the fact that Adam is aware of the socially constructed nature of the identities imposed on him and how these identities change as he moves through different spaces. He demonstrates this when he says,

> So, I was one of those people who got onto the plane as white English and I landed in London as Black Kenyan. (Adam, M, mixed-race, 40-49)

A translocational positionality approach acknowledges 'lives as located across multiple but also fractured and inter-related social spaces' (Anthias, 2008, p. 15). In Adam's

case his life is located in the UK and in Kenya and as a result his identities are 'situational, temporal and subject to different meanings and inflections' (Anthias, 2008, p. 15). At the same time the audience that Adam is interacting with is also fluid; in Kenya his racial identity is considered in relation to a Black majority country and in the UK this same identity is considered in relation to a white majority country.

5.4.3 Identity Squared

I met Amrita at a train station coffee shop in West Yorkshire. She has lived in West Yorkshire since she moved to the UK, from Kenya, 15 years ago with her husband at the time. According to her survey responses she identifies her gender as female and her race as mixed. When we talked about some of the reasons she identifies as Kenyan she told me,

> My great-grandmother was Kenyan Kikuyu and that was from my mum's side, she was my maternal great grandmother. So, for me I identify more as Kenyan than an Indian *Indian*[45]. So, when anyone else asks I say I am a Kenyan Indian. My identity comes from Kenya first. It is motherland, really. (Amrita, F, mixed, 40-49)

I asked her about her paternal lineage and her response was,

> my father's side, my paternal, they were all from India and Pakistan and they all moved to Kenya quite early 19th Century, my dad was born in Kenya, so I am very much Kenyan. (Amrita, F, mixed, 40-49)

When I asked her what she meant when she said, 'Indian *Indian*', she replied with,

> Amrita: …I look Indian, most people will say you are Kenyan Indian, and I have to tell them I am more from Kenya than I am from India. Many people say that I am from India and I say no.
>
> Kui: Is that here [the UK], or in Kenya, when you say, 'many people'?
>
> Amrita: Here [the UK]. In Kenya it is not as much, people didn't bother. […] Wherever you go [in the UK] there is always a question, race, gender, race, you know, nationality, forms we fill every other day and that is the first thing on race and diversity so that question always comes up.

[45] I italicise the second 'Indian' because there was a change in tone and greater emphasis placed on the second 'Indian'

Amrita starts out by tracing her maternal lineage and she refers to Kenya as the motherland. This gendering of Kenya as female is not unusual, when speaking of Kenya 'we speak of the motherland and ascribe a feminine gender to our national collective. Kenya is a 'she' and has 'her' interests, we say' (Gathara, 2013, p. [no page]). Amrita uses the phrase 'very much Kenyan' and later on she says, 'I am more from Kenya than I am from India.' This could be one reason why she places more emphasis on her matrilineal lineage because it is through this particular genealogy that she is able to assert her Kenyanness, not just as a standalone identity but in relation to her Indian identity. Amrita also acknowledges that how other people see her may not align with how she self identifies. Unlike John and Adam, while in Kenya Amrita did not have to explain her identity. This is something that she experienced once she moved to the UK. What Amrita speaks of can in part be described as double consciousness;

> It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity (Du Bois, 2008, p. 2).

I say in part because double consciousness was originally used by Du Bois in relation to Black people (specifically African American people). I want to be careful to avoid conflating Black identity with the identities of non-Black people of colour, because while both are racialised minorities they are not identical in terms of identification and in terms of lived experiences. However, with regards to Amrita having to consider how she is viewed by people and then having to be prepared to correct any assumptions is something that she only experienced once she came to the UK, a white majority country. It is this point, the location of where this happens, that leads me to reference Du Bois. In both Amrita's experience and Du Bois point of reference, the white gaze is what causes this sense of having to see one's self through the eyes of others.

I include Amrita's comments on the form filling in the UK because it is also a moment for me to reflect on the survey and the process of filling it out. In Chapter 4 I draw parallels between the survey and completing an SNS profile, I also acknowledge that the UK language regarding racial and ethnic categorisation may play a role in how participants responded to the question on race. Amrita remarks that every day we are required to fill out forms about who we are. When listening back to my discussion with

Amrita I wondered if any of the participants considered the survey as yet another identity form and how, if at all, it affected their responses. I also think about the assumptions I made about Amrita based on her survey responses particularly because she says 'people in Kenya didn't bother' to question her about her identities. When I met Amrita, I did not consider there to be a difference between her survey responses, especially in relation to race and how she presented in our face to face interaction. As a racially and ethnically diverse nation, Kenya is home to many people who identify as both Asian and Kenyan. This is also perhaps why in Kenya people 'didn't bother' to question Amrita's identity. What I had not expected was her Kikuyu heritage and the different ways Amrita's full identity was erased/contested. In the UK this was done in the form of questioning/vocalising incorrect assumptions or as Amrita phrased it, 'Many people say that I am from India and I say no'. Whereas in Kenya it was done through silence whereby people (like me) may not consider that Amrita has 'a great-grandmother [who] was Kenyan Kikuyu'[46] instead we probably incorrectly assume that she is Indian, *Indian*.

Amrita's use of the phrase 'Indian, *Indian*' in the way that she did resonated with the multiplier effect of intersectional identities (Crenshaw, 1991; Harris, 1990; D. K. King, 1988). Amrita used the same word, but she was referencing two separate forms of identification. One was in relation to Indian as a national identity and the other (especially as used in Kenya in relation to Kenyan Indians) was in reference to Indian as an ethnic identity. As a multiplied identity it also drew on Kenyans' use of home squared, a phrase used to 'describe an autochthonous relationship to a space' (Macharia, 2012a, p. 225). An example of its use and meaning is contained in this quote, taken from (former) President of the United States of America, Barack Obama's (pre-presidency) autobiography, *Dreams from my Father* (2004),

> Home Squared – "It is something the kids in Nairobi used to say," Auma explained […] there is your ordinary house in Nairobi. And then there's your house in the country, where your people come from. Your ancestral home. [...] So, when we were at school and wanted to tell somebody we

[46] Despite Amrita mentioning her Kikuyu heritage unprompted I did not include in the previous section because of how it was phrased; firstly, she was not describing herself as Kikuyu, it was in reference to her great-grandmother who Amrita described as 'Kenyan Kikuyu'. A small but important difference; Amrita felt the need to specify Kenyan as well as Kikuyu whereas the Kikuyu participants I discuss in the previous section did not need the Kenyan qualifier.

were going to Alego, it was home twice over, you see. Home Squared" (Obama, 2004, p. 369).

In the excerpt quoted Barack Obama, whose father was Kenyan, is travelling with his (half) sister Auma Obama from Kenya's capital city, Nairobi to their paternal ancestral home in Alego. As Auma explains, most young Kenyans who are born and have grown up in Nairobi will often have a home in the countryside (Macharia, 2012a). To distinguish between these two homes and to signify the importance of one's ancestral home, the phrase home squared is used, because 'it is your home twice over' (Obama, 2004, p. 369). It is through this explanation of home squared that I consider Amrita's 'Indian, *Indian*' as a squared identity. Amrita is acknowledging that there are some people who are Indian twice over. These people could be considered Indian squared. This differs from how Amrita self identifies because while she recognises her Indian identity when she lists her lineage, she prioritises her Kenyan Kikuyu side suggesting that Kenya is her ancestral home/nation. This is perhaps also the reason why she uses the phrase 'more Kenyan' when she speaks of her identity.

5.5 Conclusion

The main aim of this chapter was to explore the construction of Kenyanness and, if possible, rethink what Kenyanness means and how it is applied. What emerged from these discussions is that Kenyanness may inadvertently function as a category that privileges majoritarian identities. This was not only apparent in my discussions on Kikuyuness with Kamau, Lydia and Esther but also in relation to race as documented in the conversations I had with John, Adam and Amrita. Attempts to apply an intersectional approach alongside concepts such as mwananchi highlighted both the ambiguity and limits of mwananchi as a way to consider the relationship between Kenyanness and class. Likewise, Wanjiku, was also limited, especially when considered alongside ways of identifying that extend beyond Kenya. Because Kenyanness is connected to both Blackness and Africanness it did provide an avenue for constructing identities that did not privilege the nation. However, Kenyanness and its relationship with coloniality did also function to limit certain forms of race-based identification.

Underpinning all of this is the fact that sites and audiences are fluid and individuals are made up of overlapping and at times contradictory identities. Additionally,

identification and identity construction are not unidirectional processes. There is often tension between how a person chooses to identify and the identities imposed upon them by other people. As translocational positionality and intersectionality indicates, all these elements are in a constant state of flux. The process of constructing Kenyanness sits at the intersection of these three elements and therefore Kenyanness becomes a form of identification that is always in motion. In terms of what this means in relation to rethinking Kenyanness is that the prefix 're' in 'rethinking' is crucial because it conveys the in-motion aspect of Kenyanness. It is a never-ending endeavour because of all the many moving parts it relies upon. The other point worth noting is that re-thinking need not mean coming up with new ways of thinking about Kenyanness; it could simply mean a re-focusing or re-adjusting depending on the site, the audience(s) and the people involved in the (re)-construction of one's Kenyanness. This is why I refer to it as (re)-thinking.

In the next 2 chapters I build on this discussion by taking the concept of Kenyanness as an identity that is in a constant state of being (re)thought and explore how this affects its performance. In Chapter 6, I consider Kenyanness as performed for the nation of Kenya, where Kenya at various stages functions as location, audience and as a body that imposes identities on others. In Chapter 7, I focus on three themes that emerged in the data analysis process; these being language, silence and respectability; I present all three as types of performances and though the lens of Kenyanness I explore how these are enacted across various locations and in the presence of a range of audiences.

6 IN FOR AND BY KENYA

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5 I considered the relationship between the three elements necessary to the (re)-construction of identities in general and Kenyanness specifically. These elements being where (sites), in whose presence (audience), and by whom (self- and/or others) this process of identification is conducted. The central argument being that these elements are fluid, they often overlap, boundaries become blurred, and the process of identification is not unidirectional. I position Kenyanness as an identity that is in motion and in a constant state of (re)-construction as a result of the instability of these elements. Responding to RQ 1, this chapter extends the arguments made in Chapter 5 by considering how Kenyanness and identities in general are both constructed and performed in relation to Kenya.

As a starting point, I consider the same elements necessary for the construction of identities as being of importance to the performance of identities. That is to say sites, audience, and self-and/or others (involved in identification/performance) are central to the performances of identities. In addition to this I consider Kenya to exist in three forms; as a location where identities are constructed and performed; as audience/observer that people orient their performances towards; and as an entity that can ascribe (and impose) identities on people. In other words, there are moments when identity construction and performance take place in, and is done for, Kenya. In terms of ascribing identities and defining performances this is also done by Kenya. There are times when these elements are intertwined to the extent that it is difficult to separate one from the other. In those instances, I refer to them collectively as the Kenyan Trinity and I will return to expand on the concepts introduced here in section 6.1. However, I am also mindful of implying consistency and homogeneity between the elements of the Trinity and therefore will only use this term when I consider the three to be inseparable.

With reference to the discussions in Chapter 3 regarding Harambee, the Nyayo Philosophy, and the Pledge of Allegiance, this chapter frames the idea of the Kenyan

Trinity as a deliberate post-independence endeavour to, firstly, blur the lines between the country, the government and the head of state. Secondly it seeks to ensure that those who identify as Kenyan perform a specific type of Kenyanness that privileges nation building and servitude to the nation. Since performance and identification are connected, the type of performances required by the Kenyan Trinity impacts how individuals (re)construct their Kenyanness and related identities. This is of course further complicated by the argument made in Chapter 5 that Kenyanness is an identity that is constructed in perpetuity.

The relationship between Kenyanness in motion and the idea of in Kenya, for Kenya and by Kenya (either as Kenyan Trinity or as individual elements) is the primary focus of this chapter. Divided into four sections, the first section defines the elements of the Kenyan Trinity. This section is anchored around a 2016 tweet by Kenyan activist and politician Boniface Mwangi that recounts his experience at a Kenyan cinema. Cinemas in Kenya play the Kenya national anthem between the end of the trailers and the start of the main feature. In his tweet Mwangi explains how he shouted at the movie-goers to stand up for the anthem. It is through this tweet that I am able to expand on the themes that are briefly mentioned above and demonstrate how they shape and inform the rest of the chapter. The second section of this chapter considers how identities or forms of Kenyanness may be at odds with the types of identities and performances that Kenya/the Kenyan Trinity expects of people. In this section Blackness is the primary identity that is considered alongside (both in harmony and in conflict with) Kenya/the Kenyan Trinity specifically and/or with Kenyanness and related identities. The third section of this chapter explores the centrality of inconveniences, hardship, and suffering with regards to Kenya/the Kenyan Trinity's notion of Kenyanness and what sort of performances it demands of those who identify as Kenyan. In the final section I consider the idea of purposeful and successful forms of Kenyanness and the ways Kenyans in the UK are expected to perform a type of Kenyanness that goes beyond trivial social interaction and does not disrespect or embarrass Kenya as Trinity.

6.2 The Kenyan Trinity Defined

In 2016, the Kenyan political and social justice activist, Boniface Mwangi tweeted (figure 8) about an experience he had at a Kenyan movie theatre,

Figure 8 Screenshot or Boniface Mwangi's tweet

The playing of the Kenyan national anthem just before the start of a movie in a privately-owned cinema in Kenya is common practice. From my personal experience, I have seen some people stand during this moment. I have also witnessed movie-goers stay seated. There have been times when all conversations have stopped once the anthem starts, presumably as an expression of respectful silence. In other situations, the members of audience barely seem to notice the anthem at all. I have also sat in Kenyan movie theatres where a combination of some or all of these aforementioned things have happened at the same time. I mention this because, while there is a protocol attached to witnessing the anthem being played or sung which includes, at a minimum standing motionless for its duration; this expectation does not seem to extend to movie theatre audiences. Or, if it does, I have never witnessed it being enforced and this is part of the reason why I begin this chapter with Mwangi's tweet. It is the first time I have ever heard of an audience member insist that others stand for the anthem. However, the main reasons I begin with Mwangi's tweet are twofold. Both the tweet and Mwangi's actions highlight how central the Kenyan national anthem is to the performance of a certain type of Kenyanness.

The incident Mwangi tweets about takes place in a location designed for the primary purpose of watching performances. The people congregated in this space constitute an audience in the literal sense of the word. Yet, at the same time there is a meta-drama unfolding, as noted in the tweet that introduces a new performance. This occurs because Mwangi, who on the one hand is a movie-goer and an audience

member, becomes invested in the national anthem as performance and becomes what Goffman (1956) refers to as a team member. Teams consist of individuals who bond over the familiar in order to present a unified performance. Team members are required to be loyal to the performance, particularly with regards to what is presented on the front stage. As a result, team members will set aside their own interests in order not to disrupt the team performance. The team Mwangi joins is the Kenyan Trinity. When Mwangi makes explicit his shift from audience to team member he upends the relationship between, and the structure contained within, the elements (location/audience/subject) that make up the primary performance that is supposed to be taking place at the cinema. Mwangi's actions as meta-drama firstly shift the focus from the primary (and literal) performance; the movie; and introduce a new performance. He also reconfigures the people in the room, initially there as an audience, they are now considered subjects of a performance; or rather subjects who have refused to perform. Owing to this, two 'new' things come into focus; a different location and a different audience.

One of the reasons why the Kenyan national anthem is played at the cinema Mwangi attends is because the cinema is located in Kenya. The role of Kenya as a location, a site where identity (re)-construction and performances take place is one of the arguments this chapter advances. As mentioned briefly at the start of this chapter, Kenya as location is one of the elements that make up the Kenyan Trinity. When I describe Kenya as location, I am speaking of it as a nation with clearly marked borders. I am also relying on the hooks' definition of space (see Chapter 1) that recognises that locations can be 'real or imagined' and they 'can tell stories and unfold histories' (1992, p. 36). Kenya as location also functions as a holder for meta-sites of performances; i.e. a site within a site. Mwangi's tweet and actions as meta-drama illustrate this because the cinema, which initially was the primary location, now exists as a meta-site.

In relation to audiences, a shift occurs when Mwangi insists that the movie-goers stand up in order to literally engage in a performance of Kenyan national identity. As the audience become performers, a new audience emerges: Kenya. I argue that Kenya can exist as audience/observer (and the second element of the Kenyan Trinity) on the

basis that if, as hooks claims, locations can tell stories and unfold histories; these spaces can also observe stories and histories unfolding. Kenya exists as a location where performances take place and as an intended audience of performances. Discussions with participants who spoke of orienting their performances towards Kenya, or doing things for Kenya, bolster the point that Kenya can exist both as a location where performances take place and as an intended audience of these performances. Finally, when Mwangi refers to the movie-goers as 'the comfortable middle class' he ascribes an identity to the audience-turned-performers. Mwangi's authority to (re) define the identities of the movie-goers stems from the fact that his identity as team member is inextricably linked to Kenya. The framing of Kenya as an entity that can ascribe (and impose) identities (and third element of the Kenyan Trinity) is first considered in Chapter 3. These identities include legally defined forms of Kenyan identity such as citizenship but also socially constructed identities like mwananchi and Wanjiku; this chapter advances these discussions further.

The fact that this tweet itself also constitutes a performance is worth addressing because of the type of performance it contains. Mwangi is known both in Kenya and internationally as a campaigner for social justice and human rights. Most of his work involves challenging and holding the Government of Kenya to account. As a former photojournalist, a key component of his activism involves using art to stage protests. His form of activism is designed to disrupt and interrupt. A summary of Mwangi's activism informs us,

> He started by setting up guerrilla galleries in public spaces around the country, displaying there his 2008 photographs—of hands cut off by mobs allied to one candidate or another, of charred bodies torched in two months of violence that saw about 1,200 killed. The goal: to launch a discussion about election violence and accountable leadership before Kenyans returned to the polls five years later (Baker, 2015, p. [no page]).

He also works in solidarity with activists from around in the world, including DeRay McKesson, an African American activist aligned with the Black Lives Matter movement established in response to and to protest American police murdering Black people (G. F. King, 2019). I provide this background information to illustrate not just the type of activism Mwangi is involved in, but also to demonstrate how he maintains connections

with those whose politics align with his. Around the same time Mwangi tweeted about standing for the anthem in a Kenya cinema, American football player Colin Kaepernick began his protest. In solidarity with Black Lives Matter, he decided to no longer stand for the American anthem that is played at the start of every game (Boykoff & Carrington, 2019). I do not equate the American flag and anthem to the Kenyan flag and anthem here, however, given Mwangi's political stance and style it is difficult to reconcile the two positions. Particularly when he firstly insisted everyone else should stand with him and then secondly when he took to Twitter to tweet about it. On the other hand, part of this reaffirms what this chapter argues; constructions and performances that are linked to what I frame as the Kenyan Trinity are highly problematic because as was discussed in Chapter 3 and reiterated in the next section, there is little distance between the nation, the government and the head of state.

6.3 Conflicting Identities

In Chapter 5, Esther (Esther, women, Black 30-39) recounts how in addition to identifying as a Kenyan Kikuyu woman and perhaps because of her Kenyanness being contested, she also claims Blackness, Africanness and womanness as forms of identification. She further states that people often take issue with these identities, especially alongside her Kenyanness and Kikuyuness. I argue that while it is her Kenyanness that paves the way for her to claim Blackness and Africanness, the fact that she does not privilege her national and ethnic identities is perhaps part of the reason why she is met with resistance. Esther's ability to self-identify may have resulted in resistance from other Kenyans but ultimately, she has been able to claim all her identities. What this section discusses is the relationship between Blackness and the Kenyan Trinity. Primarily it shows how notions of Kenyan unity (which I argue is both central to the Kenyan Trinity and resistant to forms of identification that do not centre Kenyanness) do not exist in servitude to the nation and are not committed to nation-building.

The concept of Kenyan unity relied upon in this section was first introduced in Chapter 3. I trace the origins of Kenyan unity back to Kenyatta's Harambee (which is also Kenya's motto), introduced soon after independence and designed to foster a sense of community spirit in order to promote nation-building. This policy was continued

and expanded by his successor, Moi who vowed to follow in Kenyatta's footsteps. This gave rise to the concept of nyayoism (from the Kiswahili word nyayo which means footsteps). Over the course of Moi's reign nyayo evolved from an intention to a philosophy, and from lower case n to capitalised N. The transition from nyayoism to the Nyayo Philosophy was intended to signify that the philosophy and the person were the same; and indeed, Moi was routinely referred to as Nyayo. Moi summed up the Nyayo Philosophy as 'peace, love and unity' a concept purportedly intended to promote a harmonious existence between Kenya's ethnically, religiously and racially diverse population. The idea being that peaceful coexistence encouraged cooperation, which in turn encouraged nation-building. This message was (and still is) reinforced through the Pledge of Allegiance and the national anthem, both of which are recited and sung often in public. When Kibaki became president in 2013, he also reiterated the importance of nation-building by encouraging Kenyans who were outside of Kenya to return (the subtext being, it is safe now, Moi is no longer in office).

This section argues that the idea of unity as described above has only served to essentialise Kenyan identities; it has also, seemingly paradoxically, served to elevate certain Kenyan ethnic identities while also erasing others. Depending on who is in government, the identities that are privileged changes (see Chapter 5, discussion on Kikuyunisation of the Kenyan government under Kenyatta's presidency). The idea of Kenyan unity also does not seem to make room for identities that are not considered Kenyan and this has implications for how some of the participants in this study define their identities. With Blackness being the main focus, this section relies on two racialised and gendered terms introduced by the participants; #BlackGirlMagic and ratchet to explore how participants construct and perform their identities in relation to Kenyan unity as constructed by the Kenyan Trinity. In doing so this section argues that the Kenyan Trinity with its commitment to unity and nation-building presents an essentialised notion of Kenyanness that obscures intra-Kenyan differences, unduly privileges Kenyanness and limits the ways people who claim Kenyanness can identify. This becomes more of a concern for people who find elements of their identities at odds with the versions of Kenyanness privileged by the Kenyan Trinity.

6.3.1 "It is a bit conflicted but for the most part I would say I am Kenyan"

Mary lives in South-East England and agreed to meet me at a coffee shop in central London. Her survey responses indicated that she identified as Black and female and was in the 18-29 age group. In response to why she identified as Kenyan she selected all four options (born in Kenya, one or more parent born in Kenya, lived in Kenya and has Kenyan citizenship). Her SNS use consists of Twitter, WhatsApp and Snapchat and she was familiar with #KOT. Having lived in the UK all her adult life she explained how this impacts how she identifies,

> For me 'cos I have lived there for half of my life pretty much, 12 years there, 12 years here. I am a bit conflicted. I do identify as Kenyan, if someone asks me where you're from, I am not going to say I am British. I am not gonna say that. The first thing I am going to say, I am Kenyan. But at the same time, because I grew up there; in Kenya, for my younger years, my identity hadn't quite formed yet. Then I moved over here for half of my life as well. This is when identity forms, as a teenager then you get your identity. I identify as Kenyan, but because I have lived here just as much as I have lived in Kenya. It is a bit conflicted but for the most part I would say I am Kenyan (Mary, F, Black, 18-29).

In speaking about her identities Mary links her Kenyanness to Kenya as a location. Specifically, the place where she was born and where she lived for the first 12 years of her life. Though she states that she does 'identify as Kenyan' she also indicates that she is conflicted, partly because she has lived in the UK for as long as she has lived in Kenya. It is interesting to note that Mary indicates that if she is asked where she is from, she is certain she is not going to say she is British. Bhabha in conversation with Rutherford states,

> that identification is a process of identifying with and through another object, an object of otherness (Bhabha & Rutherford, 1990, p. 211),

while Haynes notes that,

> when you claim an identity for yourself, you also label those who are othered since identity is identified by what it is not, rather than what it is (2003, p. 54).

It is interesting to see 'other' used in this context given Mary's statement whereby she is marking a majoritarian identity as other. This may be because of how strongly she identifies as Kenyan and with Kenya as a location. For Mary her gaze may be Kenyan,

and it is through this that she looks upon non-Kenyan identities as other. Mary also speaks of an identity that has not quite formed, suggesting that for her it is a process. This aligns with the idea of Kenyanness as an ongoing endeavour, a way of identifying that is always being (re)-constructed. What is noteworthy in Mary's account is how she introduces and engages with time and location. She provides examples of clear points in time where she has had to (re)-think her Kenyanness. The first being when she turned 12 and moved from Kenya to the UK. No longer being in Kenya requiring her to consider what it means to be Kenyan away from Kenya. The second moment she mentions is the present (or at least the time of the interview) when she notes that she has lived outside of Kenya for as long as she has lived in Kenya. These timespans may be identical in length, but Mary does not attach the same weight to each. On the one hand, there is Kenya where she was born, where her parents were born and she has Kenyan citizenship, however for her she was at the time too young to consider her identity as having formed. In the UK she considers her time as a teenager instrumental to her understanding of her identity; but as she admits she is conflicted because she still identifies as Kenyan. There is a binary that Mary seems attached to, be it terms of age, young versus old(er), or place; Kenya versus UK or identification Kenyan versus not British.

A little later Mary recounts what it was like when she first arrived in the UK,

> I would wake up every morning 'I wanna be in Kenya' the change was too drastic, and then, the weather, it was winter. It was straight deep end. When you grow up in a predominantly Black country like Kenya, race is not pronounced, but when you come here it is obvious, I am Black, not just Black, Black African, Kenyan. It is not something I thought of before I came here. […] I don't feel I need to identify as all three. I just identify as Kenyan. Race doesn't come up as an issue. I identify as Kenya. Non blacks don't see us as African or Caribbean. They just see us as Black. I don't want to be seen as just a Black person (Mary, F, Black, 18-29).

Mary's sense of Kenyanness, at least when she first arrives is inextricably linked to Kenya as a physical location; made clear when she says would wake up wanting to be in Kenya. Mary becomes aware of her Blackness, once she is outside of Kenya and in the UK; reminding her again of how different the UK is from Kenya and makes the argument that as a Black majority country, race is not as apparent. While I understand

the argument, she makes me wonder if what is implied here as Blackness (rather than race) is not as pronounced because Blackness in Kenya for the most part, does not exist in contrast with any other race in the way it does in the UK. This framing also allows for consideration to be given to people like Amrita who identify as Kenyan Indian.

In the UK however, Mary is aware of her Blackness and how other people identify her as Black African and/or Black Kenyan. For Mary the white gaze on one hand imposes on her identities that she does not necessarily want to claim while also denying any specificity in relation to intra-Kenyan identities. It is however worth noting that the message of 'unity' that is central to a specific form of Kenyan identity also limits specificity and distinctions beyond Kenya as an identity category, though this does not seem to be a concern for Mary. What she is concerned about is the sense that she has to identify with all three identities, despite the possibility that these categories may function as a way to describe different aspects of her identity i.e. being Kenyan is a national identity and her race is Black. It seems that part of the reason she does not wish to use the word Black to talk about herself is because she recognises that as a Kenyan in the UK, Black has an essentialising quality. Mary makes this point when she says 'non Blacks don't see us as African or Caribbean. They just see us as a Black.' Again, just as she did in the first quote, Mary inverts the othering process in her use of non-Blacks.

What emerges from Mary's comments is the location where the identification takes place, the audience and the person(s) doing the identifying matters. In Kenya for example, where Kenyanness is essentialised, Mary does not seem to mind, perhaps because in this context her Kenyan identity is centred. She is in the same location, geographically as other Kenyans and she is not under the gaze of non-Blacks, to use her phrasing. In the UK however Mary adopts a very different position, rather than lean towards Blackness the way Esther does, she rejects this because to her it erases her Kenyanness[47]. This may have to do with the fact that she considers Blackness as an identity that is being imposed on her by people in a country that she does not

[47] A key distinction here is that Esther embraced her Blackness partly because her Kenyanness was being contest by Kenyans. This does not seem to be Mary's experience.

identify with. Another reason for Mary's reluctance to be identified as Black in the UK could be because she has been away from Kenya for a long period of time. Having already indicated a close connection to Kenya as a location, Mary may be concerned that the combination of time away from and the physical distance between the UK and Kenya may over time make her less Kenyan.

Aside from introducing Mary in this section, I have used it to push forward the issues raised by Esther. Emerging from this are two very different approaches to Kenyanness and Blackness. While I have made comparisons between these two situations, I do wish to draw attention to a significant difference between the two participants. Esther embraced her Blackness partly because her Kenyanness was being contested, while in Kenya by Kenyans. This does not seem to be Mary's experience. In the upcoming section I stay with the themes of Blackness and Kenyanness but consider how this is affected when a person's sense of Kenyanness is disrupted while in Kenya by both Black and white Kenyans.

6.3.2 "I didn't know I was Black until I went to Laikipia"

It was in a city centre coffee shop in the Midlands where I met Lily who has been living in the UK for less than 5 years. As noted in her survey responses, Lily identifies as Black and female and is between 18-29 years old. She is a post-graduate student who uses all the SNS listed in the survey and is familiar with #KOT. In response to 'I identify as Kenyan because' Lily states she was born in Kenya. When I spoke with her, she indicated that though the other responses to this question were applicable she only selected 'born in Kenya' because that is the main reason she identifies as Kenyan. She clarified further by telling me,

> It is all I know, born, raised, lived there that is why I am Kenyan. And, I guess you could say I don't know any other kind of identity. (Lily, F, Black, 18-29).

Lily begins by introducing Kenya as a location, an actual physical place, where she was born, raised and has lived. It is Kenya as location that informs Lily's feeling of Kenyanness along with the fact that she does not know any other kind of identity. She follows this up by saying,

Lily: I mean, both my parents are Kenyan, but it is like hmmm…yeah…I mean it's just the default

Kui: So, your parents being Kenyan has no impact on how you identify as Kenyan or…

Lily: No, it's like how they say, for example, and I don't know if this will be helpful so I will try to keep it short. I used to tell people, so I worked in Laikipia for a while and I used to tell people I didn't know I was Black until I went to Laikipia. For me it was just, I didn't know I was Black until I went to Laikipia.

Asking Lily to explain further she tells me that in Laikipia,

> there is a huge white settler, I don't know if 'settlers' is the right word to use. There is a huge like, descendants of white settlers' community in Laikipia. So, I didn't know, I just knew I was myself and I was born in Kenya and I was Kenyan. So, when I went to Laikipia I was like, ok, I am Black (Lily, F, Black, 18-29).

Having started the conversation by saying she identifies as Kenyan because she doesn't know any other kind of identity and then 3 minutes into our conversation acknowledging her Blackness reminds me of the way Kamau (Chapter 5) transitioned through his Kenyanness and Kikuyuness. It is these moments that reinforce the usefulness and appropriateness of conversation in a study like this. When Lily speaks of Laikipia she is referring to Laikipia County which is located about 160 miles north of Kenya's capital Nairobi. Lily indicates that Laikipia has a significant white settler population a notion that is supported and explained by Fox (2018),

> Formerly a segment of Kenya's 'white highlands,' and now a mecca for safari tourism, Laikipia is the only region of Kenya where foreign actors or Kenyan citizens of European descent own substantial tracts of ranchland (2018, p. 474).

Lily, who prior to going to Laikipia 'just knew I was myself, and I was born in Kenya and I was Kenyan,' finds herself in a new location. It is in this new environment that Lily notices her Blackness. There are echoes of poet Zora Neale Hurston's words in relation to the way Lily realises and claims her Blackness. In How it Feels To be Colored Me, Hurston (2000) writes,

> I remember the very day that I became colored. Up to my thirteenth year I lived in the little Negro town of Eatonville, Florida. It is exclusively a colored town (2000, p. 95).

Lily, like Hurston, moves to a different part of the country and in this new place, discovers that the racial demographics of Kenya are inverted. As a result of this Lily becomes aware of her Blackness. This, as Hurston notes, is because,

> I feel most colored when I am thrown against a sharp white background (2000, p. 96).

If Kenya as location is the place that leads Lily to identify as Kenyan then Laikipia, which is part of Kenya functions as a meta-site that reveals Lily's Blackness to herself. Further along in our discussion Lily talks about what it feels like to be Black in Laikipia specifically. She mentions that in relation to white customers she will often receive slower service and waiters assume that she cannot afford to pay for drinks in a café or bar. The type of discrimination she experiences rests on the assumption that whiteness equals wealth and conversely Blackness is synonymous with poverty. Noting that Lily does not mention this, an intersectional approach would also consider Lily's age and gender. This is not raised to dismiss what she rightly identifies as racism but to illustrate how intersectionality helps our understanding of the compounding effects of oppression.

The process of realising her Blackness, the history of Laikipia's whiteness and the reality of discrimination that Lily encounters resonates with Butler's theory on gender performativity.

> The act that one does, the act that one performs, is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene. Hence, gender is an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again (J. Butler, 1988, p. 526).

While Butler is talking specifically about gender, I extend the meaning and application of Butler's theorising as a way to contextualise and explain Lily's experience. Laikipia remains connected to whiteness both historically and in the present. These connections make themselves known through (for example) racist enactments and microaggressions because as Butler notes, the script survives. Lily arrives at this

location, an individual actor, identifying as Kenyan, stepping into an ongoing performance of race and it is this that brings to the fore the reality of her Blackness.

I ask Lily how her Blackness relates to her Kenyanness. By way of example, Lily recounts two conversations she has had with Black women in the UK. In the first example she recalls listening to a woman describe herself as magical Black Girl. In her second example she recalls a Black woman speaking about Beyonce's album Lemonade and its single Formation as a call for Black women to unite and get into Formation. She connects to and identifies with both these examples. She tells me that it is because of her Blackness, her Black Kenyanness, that she is able to feel a sense of 'Black Diasporic unity.' The phrase 'magical Black girl' is attributed to CaShawn Thompson who first used it on Twitter in 2013 (Halliday & Brown, 2018; Thomas, 2015). Frustrated by the negative portrayal of Black women both online and offline combined with the downplaying and erasure of Black women's successes, Thompson began tweeting with the hashtag #BlackGirlsAreMagic (Thomas, 2015). This was Thompson's way to recognise Black women's achievement despite all the adversity we face (Halliday & Brown, 2018; Thomas, 2015). Since then,

> 'Black girls are magic' has been used as a unifying celebration of Black women; shortened to #blackgirlmagic, the phrase connotes a love and celebration for the unique experiences of Black women.

I cautiously recognise the unifying aspect of #BlackGirlMagic because as with discussions in Chapter 3 regarding Black Twitter,

> Black people's digital experiences are affected by issues regarding language, interpretation and translation, censorship and control, access to the internet and digital technology, as well as the continued globally dominant position of much North American, European, and Anglocentric discourse in relation to ideas about Black identity and Black diaspora (Sobande, 2020, p. 104).

#BlackGirlMagic, particularly in its infancy both as a phrase and hashtag, celebrated the success of women such as Michelle Obama, Viola Davis, Serena Williams and Beyonce. All of these women undoubtedly worthy of recognition and praise, identify as African American. Their success is often entwined with fame, wealth and superhuman abilities (Epperson, 2018; Flake, 2017; Toliver, 2019). This is not to say

that it is only the fame, wealth and perceived superhuman ability of these women that is celebrated. When Lily references her conversation with a Black woman about Lemonade and Formation, what they are celebrating and recognising is that,

> The release of 'Formation' was perfectly timed, bringing a new wave of energy, encouragement, and excitement to black people fighting for justice, and fighting for their lives. The release of *Lemonade* seemed to affirm black women who have endured countless personal struggles in addition to the political and social warfare inherent in existing in white-dominated spaces (Wallace, 2017, p. 191).

However, this still does not do away with the fact that social status, accumulation of wealth and celebrity are often considered successes in and of themselves. Indeed, part of the criticism of Beyonce is that she often,

> places her stamp of approval on the same capitalist system that has oppressed generations of the same black people the song is said to empower (Wallace, 2017, p. 192).

The final words Beyonce utters in Formation are,

> You know you that bitch when you cause all this conversation.
> Always stay gracious, best revenge is your paper.

The implication being, even when people are saying negative things about you, do not stoop to their level, instead focus your attention on getting rich. This essentially underscores the other criticism levelled at #BlackGirlMagic; that it is rooted in a world view that polices how Black women conduct themselves, rewarding respectability while denigrating behaviour that is considered "hood" or "ghetto", both terms imbued with classism, racism and sexism. Four years after its introduction Thompson addressed these concerns regarding #BlackGirlMagic perceived lack of inclusivity in a 2017 interview with Blavity (Flake, 2017). Thompson asserts that #BlackGirlMagic is,

> '… not just for women who have line sisters and women who go to brunch and graduated from college; I need everybody to understand that the Black Girl Magic movement was created by a woman who didn't finish college, and had babies young, and grinded in menial jobs for years. This movement is for every black woman – the ratchet girls, the hood girls, the trans girls, the differently-abled girls. Black Girl Magic is for all of us' (Flake, 2017, p. [no page]).

In the types of girls who may have previously been excluded from celebration Thomas references 'ratchet girls' which is a,

> messy [word], meaning it has no straightforward definition; it is contradictory, fluid, precarious, agentive, and oftentimes intentionally inappropriate (Love, 2017, p. 504).

Rooted in African American Vernacular English (AAVE), ratchet 'has clear indexical links to hip hop, and, especially in relation to gangsta rap, it indexes ghettoness' (Pichler & Williams, 2016, p. 568). Besides its class implications, it is a racialised and gendered term and is often used in a derogatory manner to describe Black women who are considered working class and/or sexually promiscuous (Love, 2017; Pichler & Williams, 2016; Pickens, 2015). I revisit this word in greater detail in the next section.

Even after Thompson's inclusive clarification, Toliver concludes,

> Ultimately, Thompson's term sits in a space of tension, where contradictory interpretations create boundaries around what Black girl celebration means as well as who gets to celebrate Black girl magic (Toliver, 2019, p. 2).

There is little work that has been done to explore how Black Kenyan women or even more broadly how Black African women engage with #BlackGirlMagic. Mahali (2017) considers #BlackGirlMagic in the context of South Africa, anchoring it to a politics of recognition on the basis that 'recognition and identification can promote justice and self-determination' (2017, p. 29). This aligns with Sobande's statement that,

> Black digital diasporic dialogue is contoured by Black people's disconnections and differences, as well as connections and commonalities (2020, p. 104).

This is perhaps how Lily is able to connect to and identify with not just #BlackGirlMagic but also what she calls Black diasporic unity. She does this by focusing on the familiar and commonalities. That said, questions still remain regarding how Lily understands and uses unity and how unity is deployed in and by Kenya as discussed in Chapter 3 and in the introduction to this Chapter. Ostensibly introduced to promote harmony, unity as defined and used in and by Kenya essentialises Kenyan identity. To be Kenyan as understood by Kenya is to not acknowledge any other racial, religious or ethnic identity. This limits any form of specificity or distinctions beyond the label Kenyan. In

reality what Lily's experience reveals is that, despite efforts to promote the idea of a homogenous united Kenyan identity, the differences still emerge. It is in Kenya where Lily becomes aware of her Blackness as a result of being in the company of white Kenyans and being treated differently by (presumably Black) servers at bars in Laikipia. It is the dis-unity in Kenya that leads her to seek unity in Blackness not just within Kenya but outside of Kenya. This is where translocational positionality offers an explanation, because it,

> opens up not only thinking of relocations but also of the multiplicity of locations involved in time and space, and in terms of connections between the past, the present and the future (Anthias, 2008, p. 15).

This again aligns with the idea of Kenyanness as an identity that is constantly in motion. Lily is able claim a Black identity that bridges a gap between the feelings she experienced in Laikipia, (that are rooted both in the colonial past and the racist present) and her sense of Kenyanness. This enables her to circumvent the essentialising nature of 'Kenyan unity' and she is able to rely on her identity as a Black woman to connect with Black women in Kenya, the UK and beyond. As an identity in motion, and Lily herself moving through and between spaces, some connections may only become salient at certain moments; for instance, Lily's sense of #BlackGirlMagic may come into focus when she is engaging in online discussions about Beyonce. For her this does not mean that she is any less Kenyan because at a particular moment her Blackness is more prominent; Lily has found a way like Esther to be Black, to be a woman and to be Kenyan. The next section continues with the relationship between Blackness and Kenyanness, but this time considers whether or not Blackness erases Kenyanness.

Mary and Lily both express very different relationships with Blackness. In this next section I continue with the theme of Blackness and I also return to the notion of ratchet as a form of performance.

6.3.3 "I was ratchet…if people unearth my tweets in 2010, they will close their eyes"

Emmanuel is living and studying in London as a post-graduate student. In response to the survey he identifies as male, Black and is between 30 -39 years old. He has been in the UK for less than 5 years. He uses Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and

Snapchat and is aware of #KOT. According to the survey he selected being born in Kenya as the only reason he identified as Kenyan. When we met, I learned that he was a Kenyan citizen, had lived in Kenya (all his life) and his parents are Kenyan. I asked him why he had only selected one option and he told me,

> Being born in Kenya is an experience, in terms of the way people live their lives. I was born in the village. […] Where everyone who is the age of father you call father (Emmanuel, M, Black, 30-39).

Like many of the participants I interacted with, for Emmanuel, Kenya is identified as location that enables him to identify as Kenyan. However Emmanuel also introduces the village he was born in as a meta-site of identity construction. In contrast to Amrita (Chapter 5) who connects her Kenyan identity to maternal lineage, Emmanuel points to a male centred form of communal parenting. Emmanuel explained further that the village he was born and grew up in is in a rural part of Western Kenya. He did not move to Nairobi until he started his undergraduate degree. So, for most of Emmanuel's life, what would eventually become his home squared when he moved to Nairobi, was his only home. On more than one occasion he referred to the sense of community as being fundamental to his upbringing. The village as meta-site and the community as both audience and people with the ability to ascribe/shape Emmanuel's identity has a far-reaching impact as demonstrated in his discussion on his Twitter identities.

Emmanuel tells me,

> I joined Twitter in 2010, by then I was just finishing campus, I was ratchet, in fact if people unearth my tweets in 2010, they will close their eyes, I was misogynistic, I was all manner of things. [….] I was still tweeting under my real name […] And then some of my relatives started joining Twitter and then I sanitised it more. So, it evolved. Then I started carving a niche on what I tweet about. I focus on African issues, 99%, African issues on issues of peace and security, issues of governance, a little bit of technology health care and stuff generally societal issues. Then I tweet about football a lot. I started…as my friends told me…I started tweeting serious things (Emmanuel, M, Black, 30-39).

When Emmanuel says he was just finishing campus he means he had just completed his undergraduate degree in Kenya. Having joined Twitter in 2010, Emmanuel's present-day Twitter presence is very different from his early days on Twitter. A change

brought about once his family members started to use Twitter, on the basis that he was easily recognisable because he tweeted using his real name. Having sanitised his tweets, he now tweets about 'serious' things such as Africa and governance. Emmanuel seems to have in his mind at least, a sense of who his audience was in 2010 and he altered his tweets in order to perform a version of himself that would be acceptable to his family. It is not clear if Emmanuel's family would object to his tweets. However, an aspect of presenting one's self involves anticipating what audiences would or would not like then amending one's performance accordingly (Goffman, 1956). The main problem with this however is that context collapse suggests that it is almost impossible to know who the entirety of his audience is.

In making comparisons between his 2010 Twitter identity and his present-day Twitter identity Emmanuel is engaged in a very specific type of performance that is rooted in respectability as defined by himself and his Kenyan family. A performance that privileges what he defines as 'serious' tweets; hinting at the value placed on what is perceived to be intellectual tweets. In contrast, when speaking about his 2010 self he says he was ratchet[48] and as previously discussed 'ratchet' is a complex term that insists on policing, and demanding respectability from Black women. There is, however, Black Feminist work that has been done and continues to be done,

> 'to recuperate the derogatory term ratchet as a performative strategy Black woman deploy to secure liberatory space for themselves' (Glover & Glover, 2019, p. 74).

This reframing and reclamation of the term has been labelled as Black Ratchet Imaginary (BRI) (Love, 2017; Stallings, 2013). BRI,

> accepts expressions of Blackness that are unregulated by a White gaze, unfettered by the policing of behavior by Black community members, and unbothered by the artificial need to maintain a 'respectable' version of identity to ensure dominant comfortability (Toliver, 2019, p. 4).

[48] Though discussed in greater detail in the Methods Chapter, here is an example of how my positionality as a Black Kenyan woman affected how participants spoke with me; beyond the use of Kiswahili. Emmanuel did not offer to translate or explain the word ratchet; he (correctly) assumed that I would be familiar with its meaning.

Brock uses the word 'ratchetry', which he defines as 'the enactment and performance of ratchet behaviour and aesthetics', to discuss its centrality to Black digital culture. He argues that,

> To be ratchet in Black culture is not always intended as a compliment but is always indicative of agency. In online spaces, ratchetry should also be understood as the willingness to intentionally be Black and perform Blackness in spaces that are still uninterested in recognizing Black agency.

Returning to Emmanuel's comments, it is clear his use and interpretation of the word ratchet, could not be any more different from the examples quoted. In speaking of his early days on Twitter he characterises his tweets as misogynistic claiming he has since 'evolved' and no longer considers himself a misogynist. However, even in his evolution he fails to notice the misogyny or more specifically the misogynoir (a specific form of gendered anti-black racism that black women are often subjected to) (Bailey & Trudy, 2018) contained in the term ratchet and how problematic his use of the word is. Ratchet, like #BlackGirlMagic is a phrase that originated in North America and in as much as these words can be useful in forging what Lily calls Black diaspora unity, they also reveal the rifts that exist between and amongst Black people particularly in relation to 'shared' spaces such as the Black Twitterverse or living in UK. Mary for instance expressed the fact that she did not like prefacing her Kenyan identify with Black because she felt that in the context of being in the UK, Black would obscure her Kenyanness.

The rift was made even clearer as my conversation with Emmanuel continued,

Kui:	Where does Black or African fit in with your Kenyan identity?
Emmanuel:	I identify as Kenyan, the rest doesn't feature.
Kui:	Oh, is it because of something you have experienced here?
Emmanuel	Yes, I have attended parties, West African and Caribbean parties and there is very little apart from skin colour that connects us.

During another exchange he talked about the difference between white and Black drivers,

> The white bus drivers will treat you very nicely get on the wrong bus and they explain to you let's go. The Black bus driver will say 'get off my bus'.

At least once during the conversation Emmanuel when speaking about Black people uses the term 'the blacks' claiming that,

> The saddest part, the people who share some colour identity, the black, the blacks who've naturalised and live in the UK. I found them more discriminative to us, people who have come late, more than the white people (Emmanuel, M, Black, 30-39).

I highlight these parts of our conversation because I want to connect it to Emmanuel's use of ratchet. What does it mean to adopt a word rooted in a very specific form of Blackness, misusing this word, distancing one's self from Blackness in general while at the same time disparaging Black people? To begin to answer this I return to Emmanuel's reason for identifying as Kenyan, which is very much grounded in the spatial, as Kenya as location (and by his village as meta-site) and his commitment to performing a certain kind of Kenyanness for his family in Kenya, who on some level may function as team members in relation to Kenya. The combination of all these factors may explain why he identifies strongly with being Kenyan. Furthermore, there is a case to be made that Emmanuel as a man and as someone who has not indicated that his Kenyanness has been contested has enjoyed a certain amount of privilege. He does not have to contend with the racial and national misidentification that Amrita, John and Adam experience every time their location, audience, or identifiers change. At the point at which he arrives in the UK, Emmanuel does so unmarked by categorisations such as 'migrant' 'refugee' 'exile'; there is no language barrier to contend with. He distinguishes himself from those who have been here for a long time. He is not one of those 'naturalised blacks' who will be in the UK indefinitely. He is here for a specific purpose, as a post-graduate student, a purpose that also comes with its own set of privileges. The final consideration is that in addition to all of the above Emmanuel, perhaps like John, may be using language of race that is out of sync with what would be considered acceptable. This is demonstrated by his reduction of race to colour and by his use of the phrase 'the blacks'; a phrase that does not sound

quite right. Perhaps the most striking comment is Emmanuel's claim that white bus drivers treat him better than Black bus drivers. In the conversations highlighted so far most of the participants have had to consider not just race but racial discrimination, be it overt racism or microaggression. Even Mary, who like Emmanuel does not wish to identify as Black, acknowledged the essentialising nature of the white gaze.

The primary focus of this section has been the relationship between the Kenyan Trinity and forms of identity construction and performance that are at odds with what the Trinity expects. With a specific focus on Blackness, there emerges an almost paradoxical relationship between this and Kenyanness (as defined by the Trinity). The notion of unity is central to how the Trinity defines Kenyanness and how it expects it to be performed. For some participants Kenyan unity and Black unity exist in harmony with each other as is the case for Esther. For others, such as Emmanuel and to some extent Mary, there is a clear distinction between Blackness and Kenyanness. Emmanuel in particular positions Blackness, (specifically Blackness as constructed and performed by African Americans and Black people who have lived in the UK for a long time) as antithetical to Kenyanness. There is an argument to be made that in Emmanuel's pro-Kenyanness, which in some respects mirrors the Trinity's notions of Kenyanness, there are elements of anti-Blackness and misogynoir. This then opens the possibility for further questioning, for instance is it possible to be Black and pro-Kenyan while still being anti-Black? Does the Kenyan Trinity inadvertently encourage anti-Blackness? How does this shift our understanding of anti-Blackness? I mention these questions here, recognising that they fall outside of the initial scope of this thesis, with the intention that I will return to them in the concluding chapter.

6.4 Kenyanness as Inconvenience, Hardship and Suffering

Reintroducing Mwangi's tweet, I draw attention to him describing the cinema goers as 'comfortable middle class' with emphasis on the world 'comfortable'. Mwangi interrupts this comfort by shouting at the movie-goers to stand up for the anthem; as though their perceived disrespect for the anthem is compounded by the fact they

were comfortable while being disrespectful. Not overlooking the class element too, Mwangi identifies them as middle class which may also be a contributing factor to their comfort; not just inside the cinema as meta-site, but in the wider context of Kenya. This interruption of comfort in order to serve the nation is what this section explores. The central theme being inconvenience, hardship and suffering are all performances that the Kenyan Trinity seems to require.

Earlier in this thesis I reference Macharia who states,

> Within the Kenyan context, the term diaspora is used in at least three inter-related ways. I use the passive voice deliberately, because the term diaspora functions in different ways for Kenyans abroad, the government, and Kenyans in Kenya (2012a, p. 222).

To provide context for this section I rely on two blogposts both written by Kenyan men in Kenya, both significant not just for their content but their virality within Kenyan online spaces. As I articulate throughout this section, these two posts provide a 'Kenyans in Kenya', perspective, which is necessary in order to understand the relationship between inconvenience, hardship and suffering and the Kenyan Trinity. The first of the blog posts that this section draws upon was published in 2006 by M 'a popular and influential [Kenyan] blogger' (Macharia, 2012a) entitled, Having cake and eating it (2006). It is premised on the idea that there are two types of Kenyans; Kenyan Tourists (KT), who have been privileged enough to study and find work outside of Kenya. They visit Kenya periodically (hence the name), send remittances but remain more or less detached from the realities of life in Kenya. Kenya Roots (KRs) on the other hand have never left Kenya, they have lived through all the inconveniences such as power cuts, hardships brought about by unemployment and suffering due to governments, past and present, who do not care for its citizens. M makes the case that in order to really contribute to Kenya's development, KTs must return, permanently to Kenya. Around 7 years later, A Letter to Kenyans Abroad (2013) was published by Biko Zulu on his blog. In this letter, Zulu chastises Kenyans abroad who visit Kenya periodically for behaving like tourists in their own country. According to Zulu, while in Kenya, Kenyans abroad complain about things not working, they worry about security and safety yet, Zulu states, white backpackers move around, fearlessly. In relation to the Kenyan Trinity I argue that, like Mwangi, both M and Zulu appear to

have taken on the role of teammates. It is in this capacity that they position themselves in contrast to Kenyans who are not in Kenya. Furthermore, they remain committed to nation building as a performance of Kenyan identity. Both consider nation-building something that can only be undertaken by people who are in Kenya.

I begin this section with accounts of participants who came to UK to study, exploring the reasons why they choose institutions outside of Kenya. With reference to Chapter 3 I consider this movement, from Kenya to UK, in relation to post-independence practices that privileged seeking a 'good' education outside of Kenya in order to use the knowledge gained to build the nation. I position this alongside current practices of studying outside the UK and consider what new performances are being enacted, what performances are interrupted or avoided and how this is viewed by those who have never left Kenya. From here I consider the act of 'returning' to Kenya, both in terms of temporary return and permanent return and its relationship to the Kenyan Trinity. It is also here that I introduce and explore the concept of joyriding. This term was introduced to me by a participant and relates to the act of returning to Kenya once all the difficult work of nation-building has been done.

6.4.1 "I would have done a PhD back at home but there is a time element"

Coming to the UK to study, particularly to study at university as either an undergraduate or post-graduate emerged as a common reason for being in the UK. Of the participants I have introduced so far, Emmanuel, Esther, Lily, Kamau, and Noah, all stated that they came to the UK[49] either in their late teens or as adults to study. Esther also has close family ties to the UK as her older brother lived in the UK for some time before her arrival. Kamau, Emmanuel and Noah however were in the UK alone in so far as they did not have close familial ties to the UK, and both Emmanuel and Noah expressed a desire to return to Kenya once they completed their studies. On the topic of what to do after he completes his studies Emmanuel said,

> I want to teach at university level. I would have done a PhD back at home [Kenya] but there is a time element. I have friends who started before me and they haven't finished (Emmanuel, M, Black, 30-39).

[49] These are not the only participants who told me this, but they are the ones who have been introduced so far. I did not to simply insert the names of participants that I have not taken the time to introduce properly.

When Emmanuel speaks about a time element, he is referencing that completing a course of further education in Kenya, especially at one Kenya's 33 government funded institutions often takes considerably longer than it does to complete the same course in a UK institution. A combination of factors have contributed to this, including staff shortages, over subscription, and inadequate infrastructure, to name a few (N. A. Owuor, 2012; Wanzala, 2018). Studying outside of Kenya may be an option but only for those who can afford it. For those who are self-funded, the ability to afford a plane ticket and to cover the costs of living and studying abroad requires a certain degree of economic privilege. Furthermore, being able to enrol in an undergraduate or post-graduate degree programme relies on having attained a certain level of education. M's perspective of this appears to gloss over this fact,

> They can afford to. What they want to study is not offered here. To say the magical sentence 'I'm flying out.' They've gotten a chance to study at a good school. Just because (2006, p. [no page]).

In contrast to this Esther told me that coming to the UK was a 'big deal' for her because she grew up in a rural working-class family and this statement seems to echo Ndegwa's (1997, 1998) argument that the term citizen is reserved for the 'urban' and educated members of society. Recalling Esther's experience at school where she was bullied for being too poor to go to the coast of Kenya; the way her class was used to erase her Kenyanness and I revaluate what this means now. Esther who has never been to the coast of Kenya is studying at a UK institution for the second time, and unlike some of the participants in this study, she is not in the UK 'alone'. Esther's situation underscores that firstly, categories such as class are not just about money or lack of it. Even as she attended a private Kenyan system school, which by her own words was more expensive than the non-private Kenyan system schools, her peers reminded her that they were in a different social class. Years later she is living and studying in the UK which requires financial support, amongst other things. Secondly, class is not fixed. Reflecting on what it means to be Kenyan, Esther tells me,

> Sometimes to be Kenyan means laughter. But sometimes it means inconvenience…sometimes it just means all sort of bullshit things. A ka[50]-weird patriotism (Esther, F, Black, 30-39).

Esther acknowledges that there are moments of joy associated with being Kenyan. However, she also recognises that there are times that one has to deal with the inconvenience of being Kenyan. It is when considering these inconveniences and 'all sort of bullshit things' that Esther states that 'Kenyans have to endure.' Esther does not say whether this is applicable to Kenyans in the UK, Kenyans in Kenya or both. She does however bring to the fore two things, one, that neither joy nor suffering are static; instead she implies that people move between these two moments. Secondly, she connects all of this, especially the 'bullshit' to a weird-ish form of patriotism. In considering what this would mean, I refer back to Mwangi's tweet, which perhaps exemplifies what Esther is describing. If, Mwangi's actions are a form of patriotism (and his subsequent tweets indicate that he thinks it is); it does invite at least one question. What sort of patriotism motivates a person to shout at strangers in a cinema and insist that they and their children stand up for the Kenya national anthem? Furthermore, what sort of patriotism inspires the same person to recount this moment on Twitter? Beth's idea of a 'ka-weird patriotism' is a potential response.

Interestingly enough none of the participants nor the blog posts I rely on seem to question why the act of leaving Kenya (and of returning) is still linked to nation-building. During Kenyatta's presidency the pursuit of education abroad was at the time directly linked to ideas of nation-building and development. Kenya was a new nation and the underlying message put forth by Kenya's first president (who had also been educated abroad) was that a good education was a pathway to national development (Okoth, 2013). In the period immediately after independence the rationale was that Kenya as a new nation did not have the same long-established academic institutions that other nations had. This is what the idea of a 'good' education was based on. However, 57 years post-independence, people are *still* leaving Kenya in pursuit of a 'good' education in order to return and rebuild the nation. Yet from what Emmanuel implies little progress has been made especially in relation to Kenya's universities.

[50] "*Ka*" – is a Kiswahili prefix that has many purposes but, in this instance, it fulfils the same role as the English suffix "-ish" – so in this instance the English equivalent would be "weird-ish"

University students in Kenya have to contend with various social, political and economic factors that disrupt their ability to graduate.

6.4.2 "I don't want to be a joyrider"

Confirming Emmanuel's summary of the challenges faced by students at Kenyan universities, M argues that the act of leaving Kenya means that Kenyan Roots (KR) and Kenyan Tourists (KT) experience the realities of Kenya and being Kenyan very differently. The KTs rely on Western media, and 'memories of conversations with ambassadorial staff', as sources of news on Kenya. These sources of information provide KTs with an image of a country that 'has grown leaps and bounds' a nation where 'things are looking much better under Kibaki's able leadership.' Meanwhile, the KRs who have been living in Kenya this whole time,

> have medical bills and numerous physical and emotional scars and memories of conversations with gangsters [and] wonder which economy is it that grew, and why its mother keeps it indoors because we have never seen it (2006, p. [no page]).

M's KRs are essentially the wananchi, who lack the means to leave the suffering behind. While the KT are the elite who engage with a fictional version of Kenya and remain oblivious to the hardships that KRs face.

Speaking to Esther however she provides a different perspective. She begins by referring to the Kenyan presidential election that took place at the end 2007 and the two months after that was marked by post-election violence (PEV) rooted in politically motivated ethnonationalism (Mäkinen & Wangu Kuira, 2008; L. M. Wanyeki, 2008). At the same time, Esther was in the UK, in the final year of her studies. She recalls relying on Facebook for information on what was happening in Kenya. It was while watching the violence from afar she decided,

> the minute I finish, I am heading back home […] I literally handed in my Masters' thesis on 1st September [2008] and by 2nd September [2008] I was home, 'cos I had to go back and be part of the whole process […] I felt I had to go back, we [her and other Kenyan students] just used to sit on the stairs and just cry….I had to do something, I felt helpless (Esther, F, Black, 30-39).

Differing from M's portrayal, Esther is relying on SNS for information and is not under any illusions about what is going on in Kenya, it is precisely because of this that Esther goes home immediately after handing in her thesis. Though one can analyse this further and note that this PEV was a unique time for Kenya. It was hard to escape the news and for people like Esther it was also hard to resist the urge to go to Kenya.

However, while discussing her decision to return to Kenya she also introduces me to the phrase term joyriding, which she explained as the practice of staying outside of Kenya and then going back 'when things are nice, riding on other people's efforts.' In this statement she seems to confirm part of M's arguments.

In Esther's statements there are two concerns that she expresses, one is feeling helpless because she is in the UK and the second being that she does not want her return to be mistaken for joyriding. This second concern is perhaps what drives this sense of urgency and why she leaves the day after she submits her post-graduate thesis. The overall sentiment however is that Esther feels compelled to be part of the process and she can only do so while being in Kenya. Here she seems to be confirming the Kenyan Trinity's approach to performance; i.e. that it revolves around nation building and one has to physically be in Kenya to do this. M also makes this same point when he states,

> Money does not build countries. People working does. Do not for half a second delude yourself otherwise.
> You can't have your cake and eat it.
> There is only one way to build Kenya.
> Come back and work (M, 2006, p. [no page]).

When he talks about money not building countries, he is referring to the practice of sending remittance. Remittances play a significant role in the development of Kenya, with amounts sent to Kenya,

> increasing from US$934 million in 2011 to an estimated US$2.7 billion in 2018, or 3.0% of Gross Domestic Product [….] Kenya is one of the top five highest remittance-recipient countries in Africa […] as per the World Bank estimates in 2018. Remittances to Kenya have consistently increased, with higher levels recorded than foreign direct investments and portfolio equity flows. However, these statistics only reflect remittance flows through formal channels and are believed to be grossly

> underestimated, as migrants send money through informal channels and in-kind transfers, and these are often unrecorded (Misati, Kamau, & Nassir, 2019).

I include the above as a counter to M's point not to agree or disagree with the idea that the only way to build Kenya is though working in Kenya, but more so to contextualise his statement regarding money. Jane (who came to the UK as a student 25 years ago and is now settled here) told me that if she were to go back it would initially be on a trial basis, for about six months. Her two main concerns are that she is worried that she may not fit in with her friends who have been living in Kenya while she has been away. She doesn't want to be "that outside friend" and she is concerned about "that electricity thing, there is electricity going on and off" a reference to the constant power outages in Kenya.

Both Mary and Jane are relying on an 'us over here and them over there' distinction. It may sound similar to the KR/KT dichotomy. This is one of the reasons I bring in M's post. There are perspectives with M's post that participants seem to share. The KR/KT binary is very similar to the mwananchi/elite divide in that it assumes that everyone in what would be M's KR category experiences the same level of economic hardship which is not the case. If KR is the collective term for all Kenyans who have stayed in Kenya to, 'tough it out' for want of a better phrase, then it is a misleading title. There are people who remain in Kenya but by virtue of their class privilege do not experience the issues that M refers to.

Furthermore, an intersectional framing recognises that owing to the many ways people identify, there are other forms of discrimination/oppression that those in Kenya will experience. Likewise, the KT category does not take into account the fact that there are other reasons to leave Kenya (Macharia, 2012a). For example, in my case, we first lived in the UK while my father was studying, so in that sense we would be KTs according to M. However, we returned to Kenya (M's general argument is that it is only a permanent return to Kenya by KTs that matters) but then soon after we had to leave again, this time as refugees because it was too dangerous for us to live there. So, we ended up in the UK again and like the KT in M's post, we occasionally visit Kenya during the holidays though we no longer met the rest of the KT definition. Finally, the

theme that runs through all of this and what connects this to performance in relation to the Kenyan Trinity is that it makes 'development the axis around which shared Kenyan-ness revolves' (Macharia, 2012a, p. 219).

6.5 Purposeful, Intentional and Successful Kenyanness

In the previous section I refer to the disruption of comfort that Mwangi creates when he orders people in the cinema to stand up for the anthem. In this final section I expand on this through the idea of fun and how a loyalty to Kenyanness as constructed by the Kenyan Trinity involves the curtailing of fun. This may not rise to the level of suffering and hardship, but it is still a way of removing those moments of joy and laughter Esther refers to. The interruption of fun in most cases is not as explicit as Mwangi's national anthem moment. I argue instead that it is presented in a more subtle way. Framed as either refraining from performances that may be considered as disrespecting or embarrassing the Trinity or prioritising performances that are purposeful and intentional, often with a focus on Kenya.

6.5.1 "I love Kenyans but they just like to have a good time"

I return to Mary who was introduced earlier in this section, this time she is talking about her father, who also lives in the UK,

> My dad loves to play golf. It is a hobby. He loves it. He had a golf game with Kenyans. The main reason for them to play golf is to go to socialise and have nyama choma and drink. I love Kenyans but they just like to have a good time. It is all about having a good time, no balance. He [Mary's father] doesn't like playing Kenyan golfers, they are there for what comes after (Mary, F, Black, 18-29).

Nyama choma means barbecued/roast meat and plays a central role in how Kenyan's socialise; giving rise to what is often referred to as Nyama Choma Culture (NCC),

> The dish has lent its name to the cultural phenomenon, Nyama Choma Culture (NCC), which revolves around consuming more red meat (mostly beef and goat) as well as alcohol to show a higher social status (Gorski, Chung, Herr, & Mehta, 2016, p. 96).

According to Mary her father does not like playing golf with Kenyans because the Kenyans he plays with are only there for what comes after. i.e. nyama choma and

socialising. Encoded in this response are a number of race based, gender based and class-based statements. Golf has been and still is an exclusive sport,

> The game of golf has a history of discrimination against minorities. From the exclusive practices of private country clubs to the high costs associated with playing the game, the realm of golf favors White male participation (Rosselli, Cunningham, & Singer, 2017, p. 2).

In Kenya, golf can be traced back to pre-independence (Gacheru, 2018), as the Kenyan Tourism Board (KTB) notes in one of its tourist brochures,

> In 1906, just seven years after the East African Railway arrived in the swampy Maasai country known as Enkare Nyrobi, Kenya's first golf course opened in what is now Upper Hill. The Nairobi Golf Club – which would become the Royal Nairobi Golf Club.

In more recent history, The Windsor Golf Hotel & Country Club built in 1992, is one of Kenya's most exclusive golf clubs. Presumably named for Prince Edward Duke of Windsor or Windsor Castle, its brochure highlights its Victorian style buildings. To play golf in Kenya is to communicate a certain message about one's status. It also complicates the idea of 'Kenyanness' due to golf's (in Kenya at least) relationship with whiteness and coloniality. This is even more apparent when it is used to firstly distinguish itself from what would be considered a Kenyan activity/performance such as going out for nyama choma. The situation may however seem less complicated when one considers audience; nyama choma as a social activity and performance is often done for the benefit of other (individual Kenyans); like going to the cinema. In the hierarchy of audiences this sort of activity is not considered important enough because it is not being done for Kenya. In the same way the Kenyan Trinity interrupts the fun people are having at the cinema in order to centre Kenya, refocus the audience and performance, the same can be said of Mary's father and post-golf socialising with Kenyans. Golf may be a form of socialising and fun but due to class hierarchy it ranks as a respectable form of fun. It may not necessarily link to any specific nation-building performance, in the same way that standing up for the national anthem does not link to any specific nation building performance. Not standing for the anthem though is seen as disrespectful and this is perhaps what explains the distinction that Mary's father is making. When Mary speaks about her father's golf playing she makes a

distinction between playing golf and 'socialising' which is what she says Kenyans want to do. The implication being that there is something undesirable about 'socialising'; and perhaps part of the performance that the Kenyan Trinity asks of Kenyans. To engage in activities that have a purpose (e.g. golf is exercise but also about performing a certain type of desirable class-based activity) and not behaving in manner that is seen as disrespectful (do not sit while the anthem is playing).

Later in our discussions Mary mentions Kesho Bora (Kiswahili for a 'better tomorrow') which is an initiative established by three young Kenyans[51] in the UK in order to provide networking and social interaction opportunities between young Kenyans in the UK and the United States of America. On Kesho Bora Mary said,

> '[There] is a vision behind it [Kesho Bora]. Getting young Kenyans in the diaspora together. That sort of thing, I am going to be for that. Not just a good time.' (Mary, F, Black, 18-29).

Mary is making the case that her interactions with Kenyans in the UK should be purposeful and intentional. When she states it is not 'just a good time' this implies that doing something just for the enjoyment of it should be a secondary consideration.

Related to this, more than one participant mentioned watching the Kenyan team take part at the annual Rugby 7 event at Twickenham in London and it was often framed as going to support the Kenyan team. Similarly at the time of the interview a Kenyan band, Sauti Sol, was touring England and attending their concerts was described to me as supporting a Kenyan band. The fact that these two events were presented as instances of showing support for Kenyans rather than simply socialising, reinforces the idea that in relation to Kenya as Trinity, performances that centre Kenya, in a way that is deemed positive by Kenya, are prioritised and encouraged. Furthermore, and perhaps because of the distance between the UK and Kenya, there is more pressure placed on Kenyans in the UK (perhaps by themselves, or other Kenyans, or Kenya as Trinity) to not just centre Kenya but to make it be known to other Kenyans that one is centring Kenya.

[51] This is the same group of people who assisted in the exploratory stages of this study

6.5.2 "You are a matatu driver"

The pressure on Kenyans in the UK to perform a certain type of Kenyanness that centres Kenya, is purposeful and is not disrespectful or embarrassing is articulated in this anecdote told to me by Emmanuel,

> the image he [Emmanuel's friend] has created back at home [Kenya] is that he owns a transport company. He is able to send home quite a substantial amount of money, but he won't admit what he is doing, 'you are a matatu driver' (Emmanuel, M, Black, 30-39).

Emmanuel is talking about a friend of his who lives in the UK and works as a van driver. Despite making enough money to send some to his family in Kenya, Emmanuel's friend pretends that he owns a transport company. Still on the same topic of his friend Emmanuel asks,

> If I came here from home and start painting [houses], and people knew I was painting, 'then [they would ask] why did you go abroad?' (Emmanuel, M, Black, 30-39).

Emmanuel's friend does not want his family in Kenya to know that he drives a van because in the Kenyan context he is a matatu driver. The matatu is a form of public transport that is common throughout Kenya but more so in urban settings.

> *Matatus* date back to the 1960s. After Kenya won independence in 1963, colonial restrictions on living in Nairobi were lifted. The rural poor, seeking bright lights and cash wages, moved to Kenya's capital in large numbers. Ramshackle suburbs soon encircled the city, and the city's residents needed a way to get to work. The matatus, then essentially dilapidated private taxis […] arrived to fill this need. These taxis were owned largely by middle-income people, and the passengers literally paid three cents[52] for a ride to the city – thus the term matatu (which means three in Swahili) (Mutongi, 2006, p. 549).

As a form of public transport matatus continue to be affordable and incredibly popular. Mutongi points out,

> At least 70 per cent of Nairobi residents depend on these minibuses for daily transportation; overall, they transport at least three million people throughout Kenya every day (Mutongi, 2006, p. 550).

[52]Some sources list the original fare as thirty cents (Chitere & Kibua, 2004)

Perhaps in line with the notion that to suffer is to be Kenyan, matatus are known for (amongst other things) dangerous driving and being incredibly overcrowded (Mutongi, 2006). They do however also function as 'public sites where gossip is exchanged, fashions are displayed, politics are disputed' (Mutongi, 2006, p. 550). A matatu is in so many ways a symbol of working-class Kenyan identity. There is an ordinary mwananchi aspect to matatus. It is also one of the reasons why Emmanuel's friend seeks to distance himself from this. To leave Kenya only to live the life of an ordinary Kenyan is considered a waste of a trip. Emmanuel alludes to this when he talks of leaving Kenya to paint houses in the UK. The class aspect of certain kinds of labour is one of the reasons why being a 'matatu driver' especially in the UK is considered undesirable. However, matatu driver as an occupation is also subject to its own set of negative connotations. Mutongi writes that in the 80s,

> as the matatus became more conspicuous, their operators became rowdier. And matatu crews were increasingly referred to as manambas, or thugs, out to exploit passengers and to destroy anyone and anything that was unfortunate enough to be in their path (2006, p. 556).

It is around this time that the figure of the 'notorious matatu man' (Mutongi, 2006, p. 559) entered the public imagination. That image still persists, to the extent that matatu drivers are often considered separate from mwananchi. Though classed as working class, matatu drivers are often framed as taking advantage of and harming ordinary Kenyans, creating a them/us binary (Mutongi, 2006). It is a combination of all these factors that may contribute towards Emmanuel's friend deciding to describe his occupation as the owner of a transportation company.

This example also speaks to the wider issue of expecting those who are outside of Kenya to perform in a way that suggests not just being purposeful but also successful. A point Mohan (2006) noted in his study on Ghanaians in the UK wherein he concludes,

> the pressure for migrants to succeed, whether in order to repay kin for their support or to save face, can affect their relationship with the hometown (2006, p. 878).

Noting that Mohan states that success can either be through repaying kin or to save face; the example of Emmanuel's friend suggests that saving face outweighs other

performances of success. Emmanuel's friend sending money to relatives may on its own count as a form of success, however the source of his income is also considered as part of this package. This is why he presents a version of his employment that fits this narrative of success while in the UK. This pursuit of success may also explain why so many of the participants I spoke to came to the UK to study. The image of the economically successful Kenyan abroad as imagined by Kenyans in Kenya can also explain M's characterisation of KTs as people who are employed in good jobs, socialise with ambassadors and can afford to send money and to travel to Kenya frequently. There is however a disconnect between this image and what life is like for Kenyans in the UK. Within awareness that Small (2018) is speaking of Black people in Europe and that both these terms are significantly broader than the 'Kenyans in the UK' category that my work is concerned with, I cite this perspective because it speaks to some of the realities of being Black and Kenyan in the UK.

> To begin with, in all of Europe, black people are over-concentrated and hyper-visible at the lower ranks of every major political, economic and social hierarchy, from political representation, in business, educational and medical occupations, in the non-profit sector, and in the illicit activities of sex work. They are over-concentrated in the ranks of the unemployed, and the confines of prisons. They receive wages rather than salaries, do work that requires little or no educational qualifications or specialized training, and in part-time and insecure jobs (Small, 2018, p. 1185).

Part of the reason for this disconnect may be explained by Emmanuel's friend; Kenyans in the UK understand what Kenyans in Kenya think of life outside of Kenya. There is pressure to maintain this image otherwise it calls into question the purpose of being in the UK. It also speaks to a form of Kenyanness that is concerned with class identity at the expense of all other forms of identification. It is also because the conceptualisation of Kenyan identity especially in relation to the Trinity is very much centred on Kenya as location.

6.6 Conclusions

A recurring theme throughout this chapter is that the Kenyan Trinity relies on constructions and performance of Kenyanness that leaves little room to consider its fluidity. The Kenyan Trinity privileges Kenya as a physical location, in its capacity to

observe performances it relies on a Kenyan gaze that polices and restricts performances that are not in service to the nation. This is illustrated by the idea of leaving Kenya to get a 'good' education in order to return and help in building the nation. This staticity does not pose a problem for those who align themselves with a Kenyan identity that is identical to the one constructed by the Kenyan Trinity. In fact, in this situation those who feel included in the idea of the Kenyan Trinity often consider themselves teammates and in turn remain loyal to the Trinity. Problems arise however for those who either identify with more fluid notions of Kenyanness or who decentre Kenyanness in the process of identification and/or performance.

Blackness and Kenyanness seem to exist both in harmony and in opposition to each other depending on the three elements of identity construction. This raises questions on how notions of Black unity are understood especially in situations where those who identify as Kenyan occupies the same sites as those who identify as Black but who do not identify as Kenyan. Similar to the issues raised in Chapter 5, in situations where Blackness risks decentring Kenyanness, especially for those who identify strongly with Kenya as Trinity, those tensions are not just more apparent, they also appear to align with racist notions of Blackness. Where Blackness provides an alternative form of identification especially for people who have experienced exclusion or rejection by Kenyans or Kenya as Trinity, there are still concerns about presenting Blackness as monolith and trying to locate Kenyanness within Blackness can be difficult. Unity as a term, whether it is describing Kenyans in Kenya or Black people around the world may require rethinking or reframing.

The belief that to suffer is to be Kenyan seems to be one thing that Kenyans in the UK and Kenyans in Kenya seem to agree on. The difference is in the responses to this suffering. Kenyans in Kenya consider that to live through the suffering is a Kenyan trait; it is how the wananchi live. Kenyans in Kenya may consider those who have left (especially those who leave and never return) to be less Kenyan. For the participants of this study, they do not consider living outside of Kenya as an act that makes them any less Kenyan. However there does seem to be an effort to portray identification and performance of Kenyanness in the UK as one that recognises the importance of Kenya or Kenya as Trinity.

This chapter started with Mwangi and the flag and, to conclude, I return to this moment because it addresses not just the issues in this chapter but it also lays the foundation for the matters to be discussed in the next and final empirical chapter of this study. Throughout this chapter there has been emphasis on performance as something that is done. For instance, standing up for the flag as an act of performing patriotism. Conversely 'doing nothing' such as remaining seated in the cinema while the anthem plays is not constructed as performance. There appears to be, at least in relation to Kenyanness, Kenya and the Trinity the privileging of that which is done or said as opposed to that which is not done or said. However, as Kaepernick's refusal to stand for the USA anthem demonstrates, not doing can also function as a performance. This is what the next chapter considers; the relationship between (un)-performances, Kenyanness and Kenya as Trinity.

7 (UN)-PERFORMANCE AS PERFORMANCE

7.1 Introduction

During the SNS data collection stage of this study I remember feeling extremely disappointed and discouraged by the fact that there were 'not enough' tweets or Facebook posts generated during the time frame specified and in relation to the topics I had prioritised. As I reviewed the interviews and corresponding transcripts this quote from Esther stood out,

> When you talk about Jamhuri Day. Should I tweet Happy Jamuhuri Day? But I didn't tweet cos what does it mean […] If you look at my tweets, I have Flint[53] water and nothing to say about Jamhuri Day (Esther, Woman, Black, 30-39).

I considered what it meant to choose not to tweet about something when there is an expectation to tweet and what this meant in terms of performance.

A performance, as explained by Goffman (1956) is the presentation of one's ideal self; the emphasis being on presentation. While one may choose not to reveal certain aspects of one's self, there is still a version of it that is present. The implication being a performance involves presence. This chapter considers what happens in the absence of presence and argues that there is a difference between the absence of a performance and the absence of presence. For example, returning to a point made in Chapter 6 regarding Kaepernick's refusal to stand for the anthem of the United States of America (USA). Standing for the anthem is a form of performance and when Kaepernick sat down while his teammates stood, he essentially removed himself for that performance. He was in the background, but he was absent from the line-up. However, it would be wrong to consider his absence as not being a performance too. His absence was the performance.

For clarity, (un)-performance in this context is not to be mistaken for non-performativity as defined by Ahmed. In reference to anti-racist diversity and inclusion

[53] A reference to the Flint Water Crisis, where the local/state government's 2014 decision to change the water supplier has left the inhabitants of the city of Flint, Michigan without clean/safe water, resulting in an ongoing public health crisis.

measures taken by institutions, Ahmed considers how speech acts, and 'not just spoken words but writing and visual images' (Ahmed, 2006, p. 104) give the impression that something will be done when in fact nothing gets done. This is because,

> Such speech acts do not do what they say: they do not, as it were, commit a person, organization, or state to an action. Instead, they are nonperformatives (2006, p. 104).

(Un)-performance is still performance; though initially it may appear as though there is no performance at all.

The idea of (un)-performance is presented as response to RQ1: How is Kenyanness constructed and performed across multiple sites both off and online? The emphasis in this chapter being on the performance element. The chapter is divided into three parts. Firstly, I begin with (un)-speaking as performance. To (un)-speak is not to be silent. I deliberately distinguish this from silence because an (un)-speaking performance does involve speech or conversation. It is the act of refusing to speak in a particular way, or a particular language. It requires knowing one's audience in order to identify what will be (un)-spoken and why. It also relies on an understanding of the sites or meta-sites where (un)-speaking is located. In this section I draw on two separate instances that were shared with me by the same participant, Adam (M, mixed-race, 40-49), first mentioned in Chapter 5. Both these instances revolve around language, Kiswahili and English and the decisions he makes about when to (un)-speak certain languages. I argue that for some people, particularly those like Adam who are often misidentified, (un)-speaking allows for the reclamation of one's voice(s).

For the second form of (un)-performance I explore the practice of obscuring. Recognising that performance is about observing and being observed, I introduce Noah and his use of Kiswahili as Shibboleth on Facebook in order to obscure certain aspects from his non-Kiswahili speaking friends. Shibboleth is a test as mentioned in the,

> Book of Judges, and refers to a language test […that…] uses language as a means of detection, through identification(McNamara, 2005, p. 352).

I then consider how Kiswahili functions as a Shibboleth through the use of memes. This practice is contextualised by introducing #AskRachel; a 2015 hashtag started in response to Rachel Dolezal who resigned as president of the Spokane, Washington branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) after her parents revealed that Dolezal was a white woman pretending to be a Black woman (Stevens & Maurantonio, 2018). With reference to hooks' (1992) oppositional gaze I argue that obscuring is (un)-performance, firstly, by decentring the majoritarian gaze obscuring allows for the creation and sharing of information for, by, and between minoritised people. Secondly, obscuring refuses to perform/(un)-performs the necessary labour to explain or justify the information to the majoritarian audience.

For the final section, I rely on Kenyan author Yvonne Odhiambo Owour's assertion that Kenya's third language is silence and analyse three ways that silence functions as (un)-performance and is marked as a performance of Kenyanness. The first of these examines silence particularly within SNS as a means of protecting one's reputation and audience. The section then moves on to expectations of silence as (un)-performance and the ways in which these expectations are subverted. The relationship between silence and suppression/erasure of ethnic identities is the focus of the final part of this section.

7.2 (Un)-Speaking

> I have been working to change the way I speak and write, to incorporate in the manner of telling a sense of place, of not just who I am in the present but where I am coming from, the multiple voices within me (hooks, 1989, p. 15).

I begin with hooks because her words highlight the relationship between speaking and conveying who you are, or where you are from; that speaking, or writing can be done in a way that conveys the multiple voices within you. I connect this to the notion of (un)-speaking as performance. To (un)-speak is not to be silent. Though, as will be discussed further along, silence can also function as performance. The idea of (un)-speaking is built on the conscious decision to change the way one speaks. To recognise the multiple voices within one's self and the stories they tell and to deliberately decide to alter one of these voices, so they tell a different story. In this section I provide two

instances of (un)-speaking both based on a discussion I had with Adam about how and when he decides to pretend he cannot speak Kiswahili or English. We first met Adam (M, mixed-race, 40-49) in Chapter 5 and it is his experience of being (mis)identified both in the UK and in Kenya because of his mixed-race identity that provides the quote used in the title of this thesis,

> I am one of those people who got onto the plane as white English and landed in London as Black Kenyan.

In the first example Adam recounts what happens when he arrives in Kenya (from the UK) and has to interact with the Customs Officers at Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA). The second example is centred around Adam's interactions with Kenyans in the UK and his decision not to speak English once he discovers the person he is interacting with is Kenyan.

I argue that part of the reason Adam is able to successfully (un)-speak is in part because of his mixed-race identity; where despite attempts by people to impose rigidity to his identities, Adam recognises and uses the fluidity of his identities to navigate situations. Additionally, the knowledge of his audience and location allows him to (un)-speak in different locations and to different audiences, in order to stage different versions of himself and elicit two very different responses.

7.2.1 When I get to Nairobi airport, the Swahili stops

Earlier in the thesis (Chapter 5) I asked Adam how he identifies, with regards to his racial and national identities and he told me,

> I personally identify as mixed-race of Kenyan and English extraction. I identify as both of them personally, but people will put you in the boxes they feel most comfortable to talk to you. (Adam, M, mixed-race, 40-49)

When I asked him how he deals with these imposed and constantly shifting identities and how he manages the tension between his self-identity and the identity imposed upon him by other people, Adam states,

> Everything is in compartments, you put everything into compartments so when I get to Nairobi airport, the Swahili stops. I put on my best telephone accent. There is a survival mechanism there, cos if say you make the mistake of switching into Swahili, the first thing they will do is

> go through your suitcase to see what you have brought. That is a defence mechanism, so you pretend to be completely foreign. Don't understand Swahili and have a complete straight face… (Adam, M, mixed-race, 40-49)

Adam's statement is insightful because it contains all the three elements that impact identity construction and performance (where, for whom, by who). The reference to compartments is an acknowledgement of the different audiences he encounters and the roles they play in placing upon him an identity that he may not claim for himself. His phrasing is interesting because he says he 'put[s] everything into compartments' which is similar to how he describes what people do to him when he says, 'people will put you in the boxes they feel most comfortable to talk to you…' Both of these statements are in relation to audiences; he is put into boxes by people (audience) so that they (audience) can feel comfortable talking to Adam. He in turn says he puts 'things' into 'compartments' where the word 'things' means audiences; so that he can find a comfortable way to communicate with the people he has compartmentalised. These compartments and boxes essentially function as a place that allow the person who creates them to feel comfortable. At the same time, they can also function as a place that makes the person who is being compartmentalised uncomfortable. I use the term place but I also consider Goffman's use of the word 'settings' to describe the items 'which supply the scenery and stage props for space' (1956, p. 13) where the performance takes place. Goffman explains further,

> A setting tends to stay put, geographically speaking, so that those who would use a particular setting as part of their performance cannot begin their act until they have brought themselves to the appropriate place and must terminate their performance when they leave it (1956, p. 13).

These compartments/boxes have a static quality about them. They seem to stay put just long enough for the person who requires them to complete that specific performance. So, for instance, those who place Adam in say a 'Black Kenyan' box; they may place him there for as long as they need to interact with him. However, I am of the view that meta-sites is perhaps a more useful phrase for this because sites are where the performance is staged and I consider these compartment/boxes to exist more as meta-sites than settings. Meta-sites in this capacity also serve to illustrate one of the themes that run through this thesis; sites of performances are not always

easily defined, physical spaces with clear boundaries. Their existence is more complicated, some sites are physical, while others may be virtual. Sites may overlap in parts and be out of sync in others. For example, as Adam's situation indicates; aware that he is in conversation with people who compartmentalise his identities, he does the same; each person places the other in their own self-defined compartments. They then interact with each other across these meta-sites.

The airport, JKIA also serves as a meta-site (within Nairobi, which functions as a primary site), that enables a specific type of class and racialised performance. Aware of how he is incorrectly racialised as white when he is in Kenya, Adam deliberately downplays his Black Kenyanness so that his perceived whiteness comes into focus. He does this, firstly, by refusing to speak Kiswahili in order to present himself as a white foreigner; (he also has a British passport, so this further supports his 'foreigner' identity) this is where his (un)-speaking starts. When Adam states that he will use his 'best telephone accent', he is referring to a particular class and race performance that equates the use of formal, grammatically correct, professional sounding English to whiteness and non-working-class identities. This is a literal reading of hooks' statement on changing how one speaks; Adam takes that beyond (un)-speaking Kiswahili; he makes sure there is no trace of Kenyanness in his accent. This particular practice, known as code-switching, can occur both face-to-face as in Adam's case, but is perhaps more likely to be successful when performed as part of an audio only telephone conversation where the intended audience is unable to rely on visual clues that may make them doubt the sincerity of the performance. When Adam says 'the first thing they will do is go through your suitcase' he is referring to the practice of Kenyan Customs Officers who insist on checking the suitcases of certain people, irrespective of whether the person has entered through the 'Nothing to Declare' lane or not.

To briefly provide some context to this, I recount a 2017 experience I had arriving at JKIA as a Black Kenyan woman, and I contrast this with my white English husband's experience at the same airport two weeks after my arrival. Having collected my luggage, I proceeded to leave the airport via the 'Nothing to Declare' lane when a Customs Officer stood in the 'Items to Declare' lane called me over to them. I complied

and the Customs Officer took my passport and asked me to place one of my suitcases on a table in front of them. They wanted to open and inspect it. I conducted my conversation with the Customs Officer in Kiswahili and told them I was a student returning home. At which point the official decided against opening my suitcase and indicated that I was free to proceed. When my husband arrived at the same airport not a single Custom Officer stopped him or asked him any questions. One of the reasons for these differing experiences is because while the checks may ostensibly be about regulating what items are brought into Kenya; the process is marred by corruption. The Customs Officers will often make assumptions about a traveller's identity in order to determine whether or not to search the contents of the person's suitcase. For instance, the Customs Officer may have stopped me because they assumed that if I could afford to fly out of and back into Kenya, then I may have a certain amount of wealth. Furthermore, they may also have assumed that I was likely to be in possession of goods that should have been declared. The decision to search a person's suitcase is done in the hope that a Customs Officer will find goods that should have been declared and in so doing 'fine'[54] the person. Alternatively, they may not find any contraband but may identify items they would like to keep for themselves. By stating I was a student, the Customs Officer may have concluded that I was not as wealthy as they initially thought. My husband was not stopped because even though there is an assumption that white people in Kenya are significantly wealthier than most Kenyans, there is also the assumption that a white person may be of great power/importance. Working under the knowledge that some of their checks are improper; Kenyan Customs Officers avoid stopping anyone who they believe wields more power than them.

Listening to Adam it is apparent that he is aware of the improper actions of Custom Officers at JKIA. This is made clear when he says 'they will go through your suitcase to see what you have brought' acknowledging that while it may be about legality it is also about corrupt practices and abuse of power. Adam also recognises how enactments of race, class and gender identity impact a person's interactions with a Customs

[54] I place 'fine' in quotation marks because oftentimes the fines do not relate to any legally defined penalties; the amount paid to the Custom Officer is often arbitrary and it is essentially a bribe or extortion.

Officer. This is why, in an attempt to avoid having his luggage searched and/or having to hand over money or items from his luggage Adam (un)-speaks his Kenyanness. Part of the reason why Adam decides to (un)-speak Kiswahili may be because he recognises that,

> The ex-colonial language English remains the language of prestige purposes in areas of education, science, big business, law, parliament, better-paid employment, etc.; it is therefore the language of power, whose deployment often serves to establish formality and social distance between interlocutors (Githiora, 2008, p. 236).

This in combination with Adam relying on his telephone accent is part of his attempts at convincing the Customs Officers that he is not merely a 'slightly different colour' but he is actually a white man. To speak Kiswahili would rupture this performance and mark him as an ordinary mwananchi, running the risk of subjecting him to the same process I underwent in 2017. One of the main reasons I decided to speak Kiswahili also and why it worked for me is because as a (visibly) Black woman travelling on a Kenyan passport, I would have been unable to present as a foreign middle-class person. Furthermore, speaking in Kiswahili for me was not an act of (un)-speaking English because the Customs Officer would not have believed I did not know English. I could not rely on difference to help me through the process so I instead chose to rely on the similar and familiar. Had Adam chosen this approach it would have undoubtedly brought his Kenyan/Black identities into focus, however, it would not have been to his advantage. The Customs Officers could have decided that Adam, on account of his mixed-race identity could afford a 'fine' but not necessarily be powerful or well-connected enough to avoid being subjected to a questionable customs search.

7.2.2 The Queen's Kiswahili

Continuing with Adam and his compartmentalisation, he mentioned that,

> when I am in the UK and I meet another Kenyan, it doesn't matter where we are, I switch to Swahili and we will speak in Swahili (Adam, M, mixed-race, 40-49).

Firstly, it is noteworthy to hear Adam, who earlier had spoken about the imposition of identities, speak in such absolute terms about his interaction with other Kenyans. His remark that it 'doesn't matter where we are' may actually mean he doesn't let the

location he is in change his approach to speaking Kiswahili to Kenyans. However, given the importance of location, I would argue that it is precisely where he is that makes this possible but it is specifically because these encounters take place in the UK where Kenyans/Kiswahili speakers are in the minority. Adam relying on common ground between two people in a place where this commonality is uncommon is what makes this particular performance possible. It could also be that the 'it doesn't matter where we are' remark relates to meta-sites as Adam has already prefaced his statement with 'when I am in the UK.'

Adam also assumes that everyone who identifies as Kenyan speaks Kiswahili and that is not the case. For instance, one participant, Aisha told me she did not speak Kiswahili. Having been born and lived her whole life in London, Aisha, identifies as female and lists her race as mixed – Black African and Chinese. She is in the 18-29 age group, uses four SNS applications, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp and is not familiar with #KOT. In response to the 'I identify as Kenyan because' survey question, Aisha indicated that one or more parents were born in Kenya. We had our conversation via Skype where Aisha elaborated more on her identity. She told me her mother is Asian and her father, who died some time ago, was Kenyan and he had been in the UK since the late 1960s and early 1970s. Her connection to Kenya comes from her father's pride and love for Kenya. Aisha said her father would speak often about Kenya, even though he had left when he was quite young and he had been involved in the Kenyan independence struggle. She told me that she felt that Kenya 'is in my blood' because of her father and that she hoped to visit as an adult. Aisha's surname is Kenyan and Kikuyu, leading people to rightly identify her Kenyanness but then incorrectly assume she could speak Kiswahili or Kikuyu. Adam's 'I switch to Swahili and we will speak in Swahili' remark when considered in relation to people like Aisha can be problematic. It has the ability to alienate someone or perhaps lead someone to feel as though their Kenyanness is being contested. Again, it is interesting to hear this from Adam who, on the one hand, understands the limiting aspect of having other people impose an identity on you.

I consider what Adam is doing in this situation to also constitute (un)-speak because he is deliberately refusing to speak in English once he is in the company of a Kenyan

in the UK. Whereas in the previous section (un)-speaking was done to create distance between himself and the Customs Officers, in this situation he does so to establish a connection. It is not clear whether Adam is talking about meeting a Kenyan he already knows or bumping into a stranger he identifies as Kenyan; and if so, how he is able to do so.

He did however recount an experience he had with a stranger who he now considers a friend. Adam was at work in Harrogate, trying to get something out of a vending machine; the item was stuck in the machine,

> …and I was swearing and all of a sudden I hear in Swahili "Is that how your mother taught you to speak?" and I turned round and I looked and there was this guy with the most brilliant blue eyes and little dinky bow tie, I mean he was so English[…]and I was like, he was talking to me in Swahili and I was talking to him back in English, I said "Are you actually speaking to me in Swahili" Then I found out he spoke really good Tanzanian Swahili, really classy, we used to call it the Queen's Swahili (Adam, M, mixed-race, 40-49).

Reflecting on his expression of disbelief in his white friend's ability to speak Kiswahili, Adam stated it mirrored his experiences in Kenya, as a mixed-race man speaking Kiswahili. The use of the phrase 'Queen's Kiswahili' to describe Tanzanian Kiswahili is a reference to the grammatically correct and standardised Kiswahili spoken in Tanzania (unlike Kenyan Kiswahili). Kiswahili as a language is spoken in,

> Eastern Africa and in parts of Central Africa in countries which include Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi parts of the Congo, the Comoro Islands, southern Somalia and northern Mozambique (Topan, 2008, p. 253).

There are of course national and regional variations and with that comes a hierarchal system. In Kenya, significant value is placed on grammatically correct Kiswahili; often referred to as Kiswahili sanifu, meaning standard Kiswahili (Njoroge & Githinji, 2018). Coastal Kiswahili is often ranked as the standard in part because it is 'natively spoken amongst some communities at the coast (Njoroge & Githinji, 2018, p. 11). Throughout the rest of the country, Githioria notes that,

> linguistic, regional and historical factors […] have helped shape a distinct form of 'Kenyan Swahili' what has identifiable characteristic features. Certain markers make it stand in clear distinction to, for example,

> Tanzanian 'Swahili' which is characterized by a high degree of universality of speech behaviour, competence and near universal use of the language in national territory (2008, p. 249).

It is also a distortion of the phrase Queen's English. This phrase describes a specific form of written and spoken English that is often associated with those who have the wealth and the privilege to attend good schools where 'proper' English is taught. Presumably this is also what Adam was referring to as his 'best telephone accent'. In the context of Kenya and Tanzania which are both former British Colonies, the Queen's Kiswahili is an oxymoron since it was through colonisation that English became one of Kenya's primary languages at the expense of other Kenyan languages. In Tanzania, there is another layer of irony to this phrase. Tanzania's first post-independence president Julius Nyerere's development policies were underpinned by the concept of Ujamaa, which means extended family and community (Topan, 2008). As part of Ujamaa, Nyerere sought to foster a sense of Tanzanian identity that transcended ethnic identity and instead focused on national identity (Githiora, 2008; Topan, 2008). One of the ways this was done was through adopting Kiswahili as an official language (Githiora, 2008; Topan, 2008).

The two instances of (un)-speak here reveal the importance between the site of performance and the person doing the performing. The (un)-speaking of English in the way Adam used it at JKIA airport was made possible because of his own racial and national identity that is often (mis)identified. This gave his performance greater credibility in the eyes of the Custom Officers who believed that Adam does not speak Kiswahili. Yet it was precisely because of his identity as Kenyan combined with his knowledge of Kenya that enabled him to know how to perform in a way that would be advantageous to him. In the UK, again Adam relies on (un)-speaking English when he encounters other Kenyans. In this situation Adam is interested in forging connections with other Kenyans and he considers English to be a barrier. Perhaps because of his awareness that he is often considered not to be Kenyan by other Kenyans, he (un)-speaks English to compensate for any (mis)identification. In the next section I continue to focus on Kiswahili and (un)-performance however this time I consider the process of simultaneously making something visible while also obscuring it.

7.3 Obscuring

In addition to the presence/absence aspect of performance, there is also the observed/observing relationship. Again, that which is to be observed, takes place on the front stage; and the audience engages in the process of observing. In this section, consideration is given to the fact that it is possible to place something on the front stage but do so in such a way that, though it is visible to everyone, it is also obscured for some.

I argue that one of the functions of obscuring is that it decentres the majoritarian gaze and on SNS, the majoritarian gaze is often the white English (speaking) gaze. This is rooted in the idea of the oppositional gaze as defined by hooks (1992) to,

> create alternative texts that are not solely reactions. As critical spectators, black women participate in a broad range of looking relations, contest, resist, revision, interrogate, and invent on multiple levels (1992, p. 128).

Building on this, I consider obscuring an (un)-performance because it functions in a manner similar to the oppositional gaze i.e. it serves as a way for minoritised people to engage in observing each other and being observed by each other without concern for the majoritarian gaze. Secondly, while the majoritarian gaze can look on and observe the (un)-performance, they are unable to fully engage in it because either its meaning or intention is obscured to them. One of the consequences of existing as a minority in majoritarian spaces is the expectation that whatever we do is done in service to the majoritarian gaze. If, for whatever reason, we orient our actions and performances to a different audience or if we do something that is unclear when viewed through the majoritarian gaze, then we are required to explain or clarify. This places undue demands on our time, especially when the thing we are explaining may not have been created with the majoritarian gaze in mind. Obscuring as (un)-performance is a way of resisting this pressure to explain and clarify our performances to a majoritarian audience when the performance is of no concern to them.

7.3.1 This is a Kenyan thing and we need to laugh.

> [I post on Facebook] Mainly in English but once in a while in Kiswahili. That is, my friends in the UK, I am totally shutting them out. This is a Kenyan thing and we need to laugh. (Noah, M, Black, 30-39yrs)

Noah is a member of the medical profession who is in the UK to undertake further studies in his field. This is his first time in the UK and at the time of our discussion he had been in England for less than a year. He identifies as male and Black and is in the 30-39 age group. In terms of SNS use, he listed Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp and has knowledge of #KOT. Despite being born in Kenya, having one or more Kenyan parents and living in Kenya, he only selected Kenyan citizenship as a reason he identifies as Kenyan. In our discussion about his social media use, he told me he primarily uses Facebook. Nearly all his post-UK arrival Facebook friends are people he has met through his professional/student life whereas his pre-UK Facebook friends are a combination of family, childhood/long-time friends and professional friends. In the quote at the beginning of this section, he tells me that he will occasionally post in Kiswahili because he is saying something that he only wants his Kenyan friends to know. He does so on account of the makeup of his Facebook audience. He is very careful about sharing anything that could either be understood as medically incorrect or adversely affect how his professional Facebook friends view him. Noah therefore uses his knowledge of audience and location in such a way that he is able to, through the process of obscuring, create meta-sites. In these meta-sites, he is able to perform his Kenyanness and his non-professional self in a way that does not jeopardise his professional self.

He described the items he posted in Kiswahili as,

> …a Kenyan thing when we need to laugh. There is a catch phrase, "sipendi ujinga" […] there was one time I made up a post quoting that. I just like making fun. My Kenyan friends will totally understand. But the UK guys won't and from a Dr point of view it didn't clash. (Noah, M, Black, 30-39yrs)

When speaking about 'sipendi ujinga' (a Kiswahili phrase, which translated to English means 'I don't like stupidity'), Noah is referencing a 2016 meme that was popular across various Kiswahili speaking SNS spaces. On Twitter and Facebook the meme exists in two forms, either as #SipendiUjinga or #SipendangiUjingaMimi (both phrases mean the same thing). The origins of the meme are unclear, though as a phrase outside of meme culture, it is supposed to function as an admonishment. It is

commonly used as a picture captioning meme or a conversational meme[55] as is the case below. In this instance, it is used in a self-mocking, ironical way to describe something that is actually incredibly ridiculous and possibly stupid.

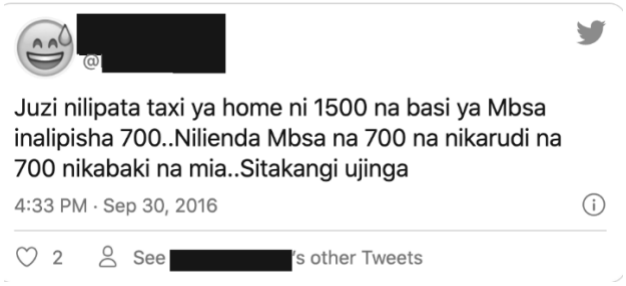


Figure 9: Screenshot of 'sipendi ujinga' meme in a tweet.

The tweet (figure 9), which is written in Kiswahili is translated to;

> Yesterday I found out a taxi ride home would cost me [KSH] 1,500 while a bus ride to Mombasa costs [KSH] 700. I paid KSH 700 to go to Mombasa, and another KSH 700 to return. I still had KSH 100. I don't like stupidity.

When Noah posts in this manner it is visible to his entire audience. He does not use the Facebook function that allows you to restrict who can see specific posts. This means that both his Kiswahili and non-Kiswahili speaking Facebook friends can see the post. Even though Noah says his intention is to 'shut-out' his non-Kiswahili speaking friends, they can presumably find a translation of what Noah has posted. It is my position that Noah's intention is not to obscure the actual post itself. It is the reason behind the post that Noah does not wish to communicate to his non-Kiswahili Facebook friends. He says he posts these sorts of posts because, 'it is a Kenyan thing when we need to laugh' he follows this by saying 'I just like making fun. My Kenyan friends will totally understand' and this implies a number of things. Firstly, Noah could easily post the meme in Kiswahili and caption it with something like 'to my non-Kiswahili friends, I am just having a laugh with my Kiswahili speaking friends', but he does not do this. He simply posts it without explanation on the basis that his 'Kenyan friends will totally understand' what he is doing; having a laugh with Kenyans about a Kenyan meme. He is uninterested in explaining what he is doing – and this is where I

[55] Noah's use of this meme fell outside of the agreed dates that I would focus on as part of the SNS data collection portion of this study. To illustrate the meme, I have relied on public tweets as reported in Kenyan media (with identifying information obscured).

situate the 'obscuring'; because his reason is only apparent to those who speak Kiswahili. In this situation this (un)-performance decentres the non-Kiswahili speaking gaze (and possibly the white gaze too). It allows Noah to post freely, unconcerned about whether a non-Kiswahili speaking person can translate the post because he knows that its contents will not affect his professional life.

Noah's use of a Kiswahili meme to obscure and in his words to 'shut out' his non-Kiswahili speaking Facebook friends functions as a linguistic Shibboleth (Khan & McNamara, 2017; McNamara, 2005, 2020). McNamara provides an overview of what a Shibboleth is;

> The Shibboleth test is mentioned in the Book of Judges, and refers to a language test used to distinguish members of two warring communities who spoke very closely related varieties of a language, which could be distinguished by some relatively minor differences in pronunciation (McNamara, 2005, p. 352).

Explaining further McNamara states,

> This test was perhaps then what we would call a performance test, where the test is naturalized or disguised in the context of an apparently casual conversation. But unlike more familiar language performance tests, the Shibboleth test uses language as a means of detection, through identification (McNamara, 2005, p. 352).

The test in Noah's case is not whether or not his non-Kiswahili speaking audience will understand the meme; it is whether his Kiswahili speaking audience will understand why he posted it. The 'sipendi ujinga' post that Noah published on Facebook and its framing as a Shibboleth is comparable to a discursive practice that exists within the Black Twitterverse. As Brock states,

> In discursive identity construction, such as that found on Twitter, homophilic associations are reinforced by the use of cultural commonplaces (Brock Jr, 2012, p. 537).

It is these cultural commonplaces that can serve as a Shibboleth as demonstrated by the #AskRachel hashtag that emerged on Twitter in 2015. The hashtag was in response to the resignation of Rachel Dolezal 'from her post as president of the Spokane chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) amid allegations that she had been lying about her race' (Stevens & Maurantonio,

2018, p. 179). A few days prior to this Dolezal's white parents had revealed that Dolezal had been lying about her identity, presenting as a Black/African American woman when in fact she was a white woman. Shortly afterwards the #AskRachel (figure 10) hashtag was introduced, its purpose being to test Dolezal's supposed Blackness by asking questions that were considered common knowledge amongst Black people (Stevens & Maurantonio, 2018). Some examples included:

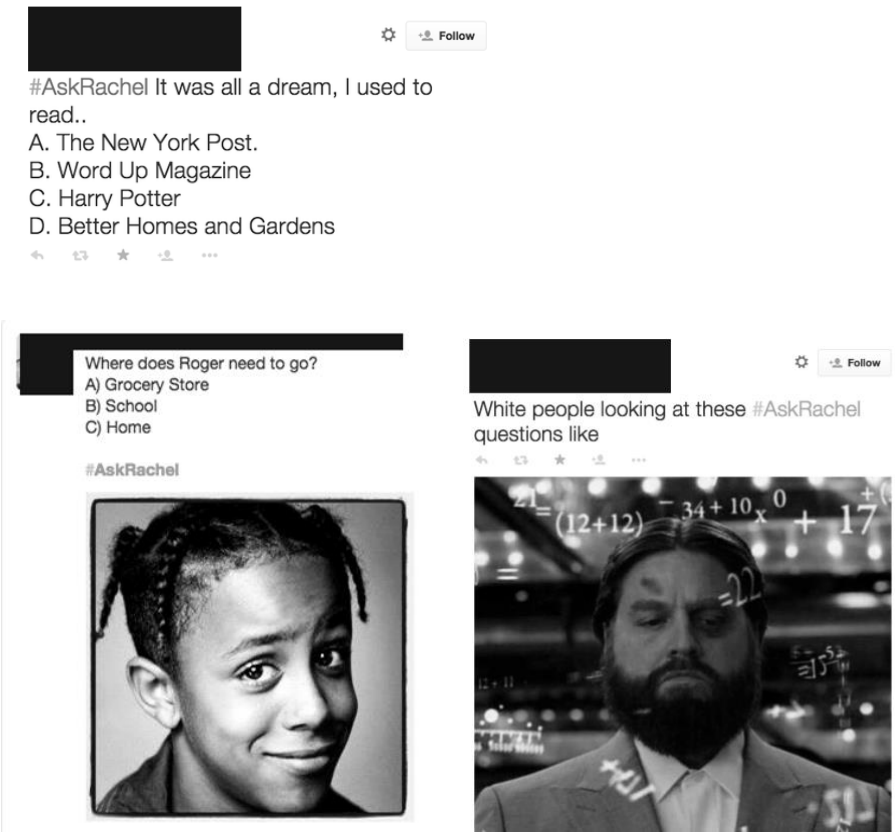


Figure 10: Screenshots of '#AskRachel' tweets

Stevens & Maurantonio state that 'the patterns of the #AskRachel tweets' were used to identify 'the cultural competencies deemed lacking for Dolezal to claim Blackness as her identity' (2018, p. 192). However, and perhaps as an unintended consequence of these tweets, the #AskRachel hashtag also served as a way to identify the cultural competencies lacking for white users to claim entry into Black discursive spaces on Twitter. I say unintended consequences because these tweets were being shared without concern for the white gaze. Furthermore, anyone interested could search online for the correct responses to these questions and then be 'in' on the joke. The intention was never to purposefully exclude white people from knowing what the

answers were. It is the extra work that is required, (e.g. having to explain a joke or even having to explain what the Dolezal situation was and why it was controversial) that the Black Twitterverse refused to engage with. It is for this reason that I consider Noah's publishing of 'sipendi ujinga' to be similar to #AskRachel.

Returning to Chapter 3, obscuring as (un)-performance also challenges the theory of context collapse (Marwick & boyd, 2010) which rests on the notion that owing to the multitude of audiences a social media user may interact with and the absence of visual clues present in face-to-face interaction, users resort to imagining their audiences. Unable to imagine every single type of audience, social media 'flattens multiple audiences into one' (2010, p. 121) and it is this flattening that is known as context collapse. Noah, for example does not need to imagine every single type of audience, he already has two specific audiences in mind; his Kiswahili speaking audience who he is generating content for and his non-Kiswahili audience, who he is less interested in. As a bounded SNS, that requires mutual friending it is a lot easier to identify your audience on Facebook as opposed to Twitter, however even in the context of the Black Twitterverse; Black people were tweeting at and for Black people without concern for whether non-Black people were able to keep up with the jokes.

7.4 Silence

Kenyan author Yvonne Odhiambo Owour, in her book Dust writes,

> After Mboya, Kenya's official languages: English, Kiswahili, and Silence... (2015, p. 273).

Tom Mboya, Kenya's first post-independence Cabinet Minister for Labour was assassinated in 1969 and when Owour writes 'After Mboya' she is referencing his murder. His death was and still is considered to have been politically motivated but as Owour suggests, this is not often spoken about. To speak publicly about Mboya and the circumstances surrounding his death could be seen as speaking against Kenya. Kenyans, to protect themselves, chose silence as protection and self-preservation and Owour considers this silence to be a performance of Kenyanness.

Thinking back to Chapter 5, I discussed how Kikuyu participants would often bring up their Kikuyu identity unprompted. I reflected on the fact that both my first name and

middle name mark me as Kikuyu and it perhaps encouraged those who identify as Kikuyu to speak openly about their ethnic identity. In one of these conversations, Kamau was candid in his acknowledgement that proclaiming Kikuyu ethnic identity before or over Kenyan national identity is not something that is said out loud. I reflect on the different ways silence is invoked. Firstly, by people who did not speak to me about their ethnic identity, unless explicitly asked, particularly those belonging to non-majoritarian ethnic groups. In this instance, I wonder if they chose silence in order to protect themselves from the tension that often accompanies engagement with majoritarian identities. Perhaps, as a result of being discriminated against and ignored on account of their ethnicity, some participants decided not to risk exposing themselves to any more negativity. Secondly, silence may be invoked by those from majoritarian ethnic groups who wish to publicly declare pride in their ethnic identities, but decide not to do so. For example, as Kamau explained, part of what caused him to pause before he spoke about his Kikuyu ethnicity was the understanding that to do so could be seen as endorsing the ethnonationalism that Kikuyu people have practiced and benefited from since independence. Also, in both instances there is some consideration of power; as in this case or that of Kenyans not speaking about Tom Mboya's murder. In this section, I consider how silence as an example of (un)-performance interacts with power in three very different ways and the performances it produces.

7.4.1 "I jipanga for the sake of the other person"

> Noah: When I am posting there has to be in mind there is an audience. Let me make sure that this statement makes sense to whoever. To whoever is consuming this. I have to jipanga. You speak Kiswahili?
>
> Kui: Yes, to jipanga…
>
> Noah: But for me I jipanga for the sake of the other person.

I return first to Noah who, as discussed earlier in this chapter, was concerned about what he posted on Facebook, especially as it related to his professional reputation. Aside from relying on Kiswahili to limit who can engage with his Facebook posts, Noah also self-censors what he publishes. It is in reference to this self-censorship that he uses the Kiswahili word jipanga. The literal translation of jipanga means to organise.

However, when most Kenyans use jipanga it means to prepare and protect one's self from a future and often foreseeable challenging event, such as in relation to financial issues. For instance, if I was going out to eat at a restaurant, I may try to find an online menu so that I can figure out how much it will cost me, and I can jipanga (i.e. make sure I have enough money). Noah who says 'I jipanga for the sake of the other person', inverts the meaning of this word; for him, to jipanga involves consideration for the other person and this is where I locate the start of Noah using silence as (un)-performance. I say this because the expected performance is to stay silent to protect one's self; but what Noah suggests is the opposite of this in staying silent to protect others.

Thinking about audience is a running theme in my discussions with Noah and, in this particular instance as quoted above, his thinking does seem to align with the theory of context collapse (Marwick & boyd, 2010). When Noah says 'there has to be in mind there is an audience' followed up with 'Let me make sure that this statement makes sense to whoever […] is consuming this' he is demonstrating how he manages the,

> tensions between public and private, insider and outsider, and frontstage and backstage performances (Marwick & boyd, 2010, p. 130).

According to context collapse theory, the individual is doing this in order to present themselves in the best way possible. However, Noah also explicitly says that the reason he is doing this is because he is thinking about other people. One of the things Noah stressed throughout our discussion was his commitment to never give out medically incorrect information because it could harm someone. Noah's approach is not too dissimilar from this statement,

> Context collapse creates an audience that is often imagined as its most sensitive members: parents, partners, and bosses.

The problem here however is that this does not recognise the power balance in Noah's situation. Noah is not concerned that his posts will embarrass his Facebook friends or his parent, which would, for example, be in line with Emmanuel's decision to delete his 'ratchet' tweets. For Noah, he considers himself (in the context of his profession and how it relates to his audience) to be in a position of power or at the very least he considers what he posts to carry a certain amount of weight because of his profession.

This is where I locate the second part of this (un)-performance. The silence through self-censorship in this context may be a performance intended to present one's best self. However, I contend this silence, enacted through the notion of to jipanga, not only reverses the purpose of to jipanga, it also reverses the power dynamic between imagined audiences and the person creating the content. A silence, as (un)-performance; rooted in an inverted notion of jipanga, is a performance of power.

7.4.2 Nothing to say about Jamhuri Day

In the years I spent in Kenya as a child, national public holidays, especially Jamhuri Day on 12th December (the day Kenya became a republic), were always considered to be significant occasions. It was around the same time as Kenyan system schools closed for the end of the academic year and it was also our longest school holiday. With Christmas approaching this was the unofficial start of the holiday season for most people in the country. The day before Jamhuri Day, both public and private establishments would hang up large Kenyan flags inside and outside the buildings. On the day itself the president (at that time it was Moi) would visit the stadium at the Moi International Sports Centre; more commonly referred to as Kasarani Stadium or simply Kasarani, in Nairobi and watch while people performed for him. There would be military parades. Brownies, Girl Guides, and Scouts all marching around the stadium and saluting the president. Songs by choirs, acrobatics and more would also be included. This was performance in the very literal sense and the event would be televised. Over the years as leadership has changed so too has the type of events; but the expectation that the day will be celebrated, or at least recognised by Kenyans, remains the same. This is one of the reasons I chose it as a SNS moment to observe. Over time, there has been a noticeable decline in the public celebration related to Jamhuri Day. In 2017 for example, then President Uhuru Kenyatta arrived nearly 2 hours late and Kasarani Stadium was virtually empty; all of which was noted by #KOT (Kasujja, 2017).

Previous mentions of Esther in this thesis (Chapter 5 and briefly in Chapter 6) reveal how having her Kenyanness and Kikuyuness contested led her to rethink how she self-identifies. This resulted in her engaging more with her Blackness and Africanness; not at the expense of her Kenyanness or Kikuyuness but alongside this and her other

identities. When I talked to Esther about Jamhuri Day, as noted in the beginning of this chapter, she told me this,

> When you talk about Jamhuri Day. Should I tweet Happy Jamhuri Day? But I didn't tweet cos what does it mean […] If you look at my tweets, I have Flint water and nothing to say about Jamhuri Day. (Esther, Woman, Black, age 30-39).

In Esther's remarks there are two types of performances taking place. One is a form of activism that requires presence and visibility, which Esther does through the writing of tweets posted in solidarity with the people of Flint, Michigan. The other performance is through silence, out of frustration with the current situation in Kenya. The silence as (un)-performance in this instance is as a result of these two performances together, i.e. posting about Flint while not posing about Jamhuri Day. Often protest is framed as 'speaking up' or 'using one's voice' and this is what Esther's Flint tweets represent. In the context of SNS, especially Kenyans and Twitter, there is an acknowledgement of the power in collective digital political engagement and participation (Tully & Ekdale, 2014). There is an expectation amongst Kenyans that Jamhuri shall be recognised. How this happens depends on many factors. In Kenya, as summarised above, the day is celebrated in a big and public way. Outside of Kenya however, for instance in the UK, there is no special time off to celebrate the day, no national centralised location like a stadium where Kenyans can gather. The existence of SNS has therefore provided an avenue for Kenyans to mark this day, alongside other Kenyans (albeit virtually), and so it is expected that there will be some exchanges of 'Happy Jamhuri Day' or even discussions on why it is not a day to be celebrated (Kasujja, 2017).

Thus, Esther's silence regarding Jamhuri Day may appear to be counterproductive because Twitter provides the opportunity to voice one's frustration, and celebrating Jamhuri Day and this something that Kenyans do. However Gatwiri & Mumbi (2016, p. 14) argue that,

> An African woman's unassuming silent protest may reveal a deep and proactive understanding of her oppression ridden situation and how it can subtly, but effectively and non-confrontationally, be changed.

While presenting this form of silent protest as both gendered and African, Gatwiri & Mumbi caution against blurring the lines between those women who have the privilege to choose silence and those who are forced into silence. It may also appear to be in direct contrast to Lorde's position on silence. However Lorde has also stated that,

> Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.

Esther's silence on Jamhuri Day can be considered an act of caring for herself; an opportunity to take a break from having to engage with Kenyan politics. As a Kenyan woman because she probably has a 'deep and proactive understanding of her oppression ridden situation' and rather than be framed as 'doing nothing' or even at odds with Lorde's statements on silence; her lack of tweets on that day can also be considered an act of political warfare. However, this is just one half of the (un)-performance/performance and as suggested earlier, it is the combination of tweeting for Flint and remaining silent on Jamhuri Day.

Flint is a city in the United States of America (USA); the situation has been considered a case of deliberate poisoning and a form of capitalist driven environmental racism (Pulido, 2016). As such, Esther tweeting about this is a performance of Black solidarity (amongst other reasons). Taking into account how her Blackness and class status[56] have been used to contest her Kenyanness over time, the fact that Esther chooses to remain silent on a celebration linked to Kenya and national identity while choosing to be vocal about injustice in the USA is the reason why I consider this act of silence to be a form of (un)-performance. Esther not only defies expectations linked to the performance of Kenyanness, she does this knowing that her Kenyanness is already contested. This is where I locate the silence as (un)-performance in Esther's actions. She is demonstrating her commitment to her Blackness, while also, in line with Black African feminist practices, silently conveying her frustration with Kenya.

[56] Chapter 5 discusses how her peers at school would consider her un-Kenyan her for not being able to afford a trip to the coast of Kenya

7.4.3 Never Speak Tribal

The last form of silence, (un)-performance, and power that I consider is how Kenya as Trinity (discussed in Chapter 6) can affect how Kenyan ethnic identities are performed. Whereas before, the silence as (un)-performance has been performed by the person staging the performance, in this section I consider how silence can be imposed on someone, causing them to (un)-perform aspects of their identities. For this I revisit the idea that Kenya when considered as a Trinity can function as location (and 'holder' for meta-sites); as audience and as the imposer of identities.

> When we first moved to [name of] School, it was an international school […] you never revealed your tribe. You never spoke in tribal. I can remember one of my classmates, by mistake her mum dropped her [at school] and she spoke in Kale[57] and everyone called her a mshamba for a whole term, it was considered shameful to speak in tribal and [name of] School didn't encourage you (Adam, M, mixed-race, 40-49).

I also attended the school Adam is speaking of and, like the school that Esther and I went to, Adam's school is also a former colonial, whites only primary school[58]. Post-independence, the admission rules were again changed to make it racially inclusive, however the school fees and other associated costs (this particular school was both a day and boarding school) meant that it remained accessible only to upper/middle class Kenyans. So, while the student population may have been racially and ethnically diverse, from a class perspective it remained fairly exclusive. When Adam uses the word 'tribe' he is referring to ethnic identity and he positions the school as a site where ethnic identity is suppressed. This appears to align with national educational policies that discouraged the use of mother-tongue languages in primary school (Mose, 2017). It also fits in with the notions of unity that seek to essentialise Kenyanness and erase certain identities. When he begins to recount what happened to the student who spoke in Kalenjin to her mother, the suppression of ethnic language is reframed as a class and rural/urban issue. This is denoted by the use of the Kiswahili word 'mshamba' which in the literal sense means a farm person, where 'shamba' is Kiswahili for farm and the prefix 'm' denotes that it is in reference to a person. To call someone a mshamba is to imply that they are country and therefore

[57] Kale is an informal way of saying Kalenjin, one of Kenya's ethnic groups
[58] Primary school in Kenya generally is from around age 5 to age 14

'synonymous with un-cultured, hence un-civilised or un-sophisticated person' (Saleh, 2009, p. 205). The English equivalent would be a rube or a country bumpkin. The term mshamba however also speaks to class as it is often used in urban settings in reference to working class and/or poor people. It is also, as evidenced in Adam's quote, nearly always used in a derogatory manner. In this case, the school environment becomes a meta-site where Kenyan ethnic identity performance through language is silenced. The choice to speak this language is taken away, not just by the educational institutions but also by fellow students who ridicule and shame those who speak Kenyan languages other than English and Kiswahili.

A number of things mark this situation as interesting. The school referenced in this incident is located in what was formerly known as the Rift Valley province which is the home of Moi, who was president of Kenya at the time. Furthermore, Kalenjin is a majoritarian language both in terms of numbers and social, economic and political power, especially at the time that this occurred; because ethnically, Moi identified as Kalenjin. As noted in previous chapters, as national leadership passed from Kenyatta; a Kikuyu, to Moi; a Kalenjin, then back to a Kikuyu president and currently another Kikuyu present who is the son of the first president of Kenya; so did the power and wealth shift back and forth between these ethnicities. Given all these factors; location, time in history, power dynamics within the country and ethnic dominance, it is notable that silence was imposed upon the student.

One explanation could be that the school, though affected by power structures within Kenya, as meta-site was able to create its own power structure. I can attest to some of this because the school elected students to certain roles of authority, including prefects, upper and lower house captains. There were also hierarchies in terms of age and school year and based on end of year exam results, with students being ranked within their year group. These numerical rankings would be displayed on notice boards within the school, for everyone to see. In addition to this each year group was divided into 3 sets of 30[59]. Students who placed between first position (i.e. attained the highest score within their year group) and position 30 would be assigned to set A

[59] Numbers would vary but each year group had between 80 – 95 students

and that would be their class group for the rest of the year. Similarly set B and C consisted of students who ranked between 31-60; and 61-90 respectively. Within the classroom, seating and desks would also be assigned according to one's ranking. Those ranking highest sat closest to the front and those ranking lower sat closer to the back of the room. These rankings and class/set assignments would all be changed at the start of the new academic year, again based on results. Finally, if a student ranked below the pass mark, they would not be allowed to advance to the next year and would repeat that same year until they were deemed to have passed. This practice was not unique to this school, but repetition has since been eradicated. I retell all of this to illustrate the complex power systems that were embedded in the school system; for children who were aged between 6-14 years old. Depending on who the student was and where they fitted in with regards to the power structures within the school; any perceived or real privilege gained by being Kalenjin could have been erased by the school's structure.

In any event the message to this particular student as well as the other students was that performance of one's ethnicity through language would not be accepted. Kenya, perhaps in conjunction with the school as a meta-site, used silence to force students to un-perform aspects of their Kenyanness.

7.4.4 People just keep quiet. If you don't want to fight a losing battle

I include this final point on silence for two reasons, firstly because Emmanuel (M, Black, age 30-39) was the only participant to expressly link silence to Kenyanness. However, it was after I began transcribing and analysing the interviews that I realised this silence and (un)-performance can also be misrepresented and misunderstood, and this is the second reason why I include it here.

Emmanuel mentioned silence as survival when speaking on LGBTQ+ rights in Kenya in comparison to LGBTQ+ rights in the UK. As Mwangi (2014, p. 100) states,

> Homosexuality is illegal in Kenya, with convictions for homosexual activities or attempted homosexual acts carrying penalties of five to fourteen years.

This is what leads Emmanuel to conclude,

> LGBT [people] in Kenya will continue operating in silence (M, Black, age 30-39).

I should note that I did not ask Emmanuel or any participant about their sexual orientation beyond asking participants general questions about the identities they claim. I did this for a number of reasons; the overriding reason was that this study was ultimately about self-identification and the freedom to decide which identities to foreground and which not to. As indicated in Chapter 4, beyond asking why they identify as Kenyan, every question was optional and questions relating to socially construed identities like gender and race were listed as optional text boxes. Furthermore, as indicated here, Kenya is a legally homophobic country; it is also a culturally homophobic country too. To ask someone if they identify as a member of the LGBTQ community is to potentially place that person in danger. Even though these interviews were taking place in the UK; as stated many times throughout this thesis, location is not just about the physical and Kenya can exist in many forms and across many sites. In addition to this, recognising my own privilege as someone who identifies as a cis-gendered and heterosexual woman, I was mindful of the power dynamics. I was a stranger and none of the participants owed me any part of their identity that they did not feel comfortable with and it was not my place to ask.

Emmanuel then goes on to explain that while the church he attends in the UK has 'a rainbow flag' and that he has 'no problem with this' he cannot discuss it with his parents or his peers in Kenya. He tells me,

> I just keep quiet. It comes up a lot, even amongst my friends, in WhatsApp groups, the things they share. It is one against ten. You don't want to engage in such a fight.

Later on, while still on the same topic he remarks,

> Silence is a very good language in Kenya. People just keep quiet. If you don't want to fight a losing battle (Emmanuel, M, Black, 30-39).

Emmanuel references silence in a number of different ways and each deserves to be unpacked. The first type of silence is similar to Owour's construction of Kenyan silence i.e. members of Kenya's LGBTQ+ community rely on silence to keep themselves safe. However, Emmanuel's statement treads a fine line between silence and erasure

whereas Black LGBTQ+ activists have a long history of speaking out. Audre Lorde wrote specifically about the importance of speaking out as a Black queer woman,

> I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood (1984, p. 40).

Lorde emphasises speaking out because, 'my silences had not protected me. Your silence will not protect you' (Lorde, 1984, p. 41).

LGBTQ+ rights activists in Kenya, particularly in comparison with other neighbouring countries, have been vocal and visible (Mwangi, 2014; Oloka-Onyango, 2015). The extent to which Emmanuel's comment is a reflection of the mainstream's failure to acknowledge instances of LGBTQ+ visibility is unclear but worth highlighting because these are the types of 'erasures that are all too common when masculinist, patriarchal versions of history become the master-narrative' (Dlakavu, Ndelu, & Matandela, 2017, p. 105). In the next iteration, Emmanuel uses silence to avoid difficult conversations and again, there is uncertainty as to whether this is an instance of protecting one's self from homophobic views or whether it is a performance of privilege that gives one the ability to avoid that which does not concern them.

I include this use of silence here because there is potential for majoritarian narratives to either accidentally or intentionally distort the performances of minoritised people. This can include claiming silence in order to erase the work being done by minoritised groups.

7.5 Conclusion

Having considered performance as something people 'do'; or something that requires one to be present in the previous chapters, this chapter turns to the idea of (un)-performance as performance. The chapter began with (un)-speaking as the deliberate decision not to speak in a certain way or certain language; or to not use one's voice in a particular way.

Centred around the notion of hooks' oppositional gaze, obscuring as (un)-performance is premised on the idea of decentralising the majoritarian gaze. This chapter next explored how this provides an opportunity for minoritised people to

disengage from the labour required to inform, explain, or clarify their performance to a majoritarian audience. For Kenyans, particularly those who make use of SNS dominated by English speaking and/or white audiences, languages such as Kiswahili can operate as Shibboleth. The discussion on Shibboleth and obscuring also served as a moment to revisit the themes of Blackness and Kenyanness within digital space; finding similarities in their relation to majoritarian gazes and performances of cultural commonality.

Finally, silence as a form of (un)-performance that is linked to Kenyanness was the focus of the third section and how this relates to power. Notions of jipanga provided an opportunity to invert the power dynamics implied in the theory of context collapse and imagined audiences. In addition, this section explored the use of silence as a form of protest, how it can be imposed to reinforce notions of Kenyanness, or used as a form of survival.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

The final chapter consists of three parts. The first is a summary of the thesis, recapping what has been written so far. The second part revisits the research questions and highlights what the key findings were and how these answer the research questions. Finally, the third part is more forward looking in that it identifies the key contributions this study makes and outlines avenues for potential future research based on what has emerged from this study.

8.2 Thesis Summary

At the start of this thesis, I outlined the way both the theoretical and personal have informed this study and how this in turn informed the questions that the study answers. This thesis has been motivated by two primary goals. Firstly, wanting to expand and rethink Kenyanness and secondly, a desire to consider new ways of researching identity that allows for the lived experiences of unresearched and minoritised groups to be centred without being essentialised, further erased or tokenised.

The mawe tatu, the three foundational stones central to this study were introduced in Chapter 1. Starting with Kenya, I discussed how narratives of the nation perpetuated the idea that those who identified as Kenyan and lived within the physical boundaries of the nation of Kenya are thus constructed as more Kenyan, authentically Kenyan in a way Kenyans living outside of Kenya are not; making the case that there was a need to expand thinking of Kenyanness that did not rely on Kenya the nation. The second foundational stone was the UK, more specifically, Kenyans in the UK. By framing the focus on people and identifying the lack of research on Kenyans outside of Kenya, I made the case for rethinking how terms such as 'abroad' were used arguing that these, again, limited notions of Kenyanness excluded those who self-identified as Kenyan but were not connected to Kenya as a nation. Social Networking Sites (SNS), the third foundational stone was identified as a site of performance because of identity-based networks such as Black Twitter and Kenyans on Twitter (#KOT). In the same chapter I defined the key concepts that framed this study.

In Chapter 2, I focused on the personal, outlining my own personal connection to research. I also used this chapter to articulate how Black Feminist work provided me with the tools to conduct this research. Finally, I outlined how claiming marginality and writing from the oppositional gaze allowed me to centre Kenyanness and the participants of this study without feeling restricted by the white gaze of academia.

It is this approach that gave me the grounding to structure Chapter 3 around Kenyan theories of identification, belonging and performance. Introducing and critiquing mwananchi, Wanjiku, wenye nchi, Harambee and the son of the soil theories.

The justification for the approach adopted by this project and the design and implementation of the research was detailed in Chapter 4. It is here that I introduced counter-storytelling as a tool to centre participants' voices. It is in this same chapter that I discussed ethical concerns that arose while undertaking this research. The findings were discussed across three empirical chapters. Chapter 5 focused on the construction of Kenyanness, while Chapter 6 focused on Kenya as Trinity and 7 discussed (un)-performance as performance. The summary of these findings below will expand more on these 3 empirical chapters.

8.3 Findings

As noted, the findings of this study are contained in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 and in order to introduce these I first restate the research questions.

8.3.1 Research Questions

The two questions that this study sought to answer are;

RQ1: How is Kenyanness constructed and performed across multiple sites both off and online?

RQ2: In what ways does the use of Kenyanness as a lens contribute to understanding of the process of identification?

8.3.2 Finding 1: Kenyanness as Identity in Motion

(Re)-thinking Kenyanness is a never-ending endeavour because of all the many moving parts it relies upon. Recognising that sites and audiences are fluid and individuals are made up of overlapping and at times contradictory identities, together with the idea

that identification and identity construction are not unidirectional processes, there is often tension between how a person chooses to identify and the identities imposed upon them by other people. As translocational positionality and intersectionality indicates, all these elements are in a constant state of flux. The process of constructing Kenyanness therefore sits at the intersection of these three elements and therefore Kenyanness becomes a form of identification that is always in motion.

8.3.3 Finding 2: (Re)-Thinking does not have to mean new

(Re)-thinking need not mean coming up with new ways of thinking about Kenyanness; it could simply mean a re-focusing or re-adjusting depending on the site, the audience(s) and the people involved in the (re)-construction of one's Kenyanness. One of the ways I (re)think Kenyanness is by framing it as a Trinity and I expand on this more in the section dedicated to contributions and new research.

8.3.4 Finding 3: Kenyanness and majoritarian identities

An unforeseen theme that emerged during the course of this study was how Kenyanness inadvertently privileged majoritarian identities. In Chapter 5 I note that nearly everyone who identified as Kikuyu initiated discussions on Kikuyuness without prompting. I reflected on why this was the case, including whether or not my name (a popular Kikuyu name) led participants who identified as Kikuyu to feel a sense of familiarity. This was also the case when it came to racial identities. This finding was unexpected because while I was aware of the relationship between power and identities, I had not expected to experience it in this way; especially because I rarely think of my Kikuyu identity.

8.3.5 Finding 4: Kenyanness and Blackness

Blackness and Kenyanness seem to exist both in harmony and in opposition to each other depending on the three elements of identity construction. This can cause tension particularly when occupying the same sites. Blackness risks decentring Kenyanness, especially for those who identify strongly with Kenya as Trinity; those tensions are not just more apparent, they also appear to align with racist notions of Blackness.

Where Blackness provides an alternative form of identification especially for people who have experienced exclusion or rejection by Kenyans or Kenya as Trinity, there are still concerns about presenting Blackness as monolith and trying to locate Kenyanness within Blackness can be difficult. Unity as a term, whether it is describing Kenyans in Kenya or Black people around the world, may require rethinking or reframing.

8.3.6 Finding 5: (Un)-Performance as Performance

The concept of (un)-performance provides a response to RQ2. This concept evolved as I struggled with a lack of participants' social media posts. Frustrated I began to notice that during interviews participants would inform me of those moments when they performed in a manner that was different to what was expected. As outlined in Chapter 7, I began to consider the difference between the absence of a performance and the absence of presence. What emerged was a specific type of performance that is premised on the idea of decentralising the majoritarian gaze. (Un)-performance provides an opportunity for minoritised people to disengage from the labour required to inform, explain, or clarify their expected performance to a majoritarian audience. For Kenyans, particularly those who make use of SNS, dominated by English speaking and/or white audiences, languages such as Kiswahili can operate as Shibboleth. I discuss how (un)-performance can function beyond Kenyanness in the section on Key Contributions, section 8.4.

8.4 Key Contributions and Potential for Future Research

8.4.1 How does the 'Kenya as Trinity' Concept contribute to work on identities?

In Chapter 6 I argue that Kenya exists in three forms.

(i) a site of identity construction and performance.

(ii) an audience that people orient their performances towards and,

(iii) as a body that can ascribe identities on others.

I summarise this as, *in* Kenya, *for* Kenya and *by* Kenya. As evidenced in the first few chapters in this thesis I was interested in a conceptualisation of Kenya that made apparent the power dynamics, the fluidity and multi-layered nature of identities, the tension between self-identification and imposed identities and the role of audiences.

I also wanted to acknowledge the limits of boundaries while recognising that Kenyanness can be constructed beyond Kenya. The Trinity provided the language to convey this. While initially focussed on Kenya, I consider the Trinity as an idea that can be used to analyse identities connected to any nation. That is to say, I deem "X as Trinity", where X is replaced with a (any) place or nation-state as a novel way to think about national identities.

Connected to this is, as discussed in sub-section 8.3.4, there is more to be learned by exploring the relationship between the Kenyan Trinity and Blackness. I was able to note this as a finding, but I was unable fully engage with it because it was beyond the parameters of this study. There is, I believe scope to explore this further; to develop and undertake research that considers the relationship between themes such as misogynoir and anti-Blackness in relation to Kenyanness.

Finally, this theme can be extended by exploring how The Trinity functions in relation to those Kenyans who are in Kenya. It can also form the basis of a comparative study between the two groups; i.e., Kenyans in Kenya vs Kenyans in the UK.

8.4.2 How can (un)-performance be extended and applied to research on Blackness/identities?

The (un) in (un)-performance is intended to draw a distinction between the absence of a performance and the absence of presence and to challenge mainstream/majoritarian notions of gazing. In this thesis I consider (un)-performance in relation to Kenyanness and focus predominantly on silence. I use it to critique patriotism and relationships between individuals and Kenya as Trinity. However, I believe that the use of (un) and (un)-performance in this context can be extended beyond Kenyanness and beyond silence. There is potential to consider how, if at all, (un)-performance is enacted across a range of non-majoritarian identities (not just national identities) and what other types of (un)-performances are performed.

8.4.3 Can the Black Twitterverse serve as a useful way to explore global/universal Digital Blackness?

I first discussed the Black Twitterverse in Chapter 3 as a way to think about how multiple Black Twitters can co-exist within the margins of Twitter. I return to Sobande's (2020, p. 104) questions and to one question in particular; 'what is a 'global' Black digital voice?' I use this to reflect on what has emerged from this study and I note that current studies on Blackness online generally, and Blackness on Twitter specifically, are dominated by work focused on digital identities and practices of African Americans and Black British people. There has been work on KOT, however this been limited to Kenyans in Kenya, and it has centred on development/political engagement. What is missing is a study that considers global or universal Blackness on Twitter. This thesis has highlighted how the boundaries between KOT, and African American Black Twitter can on occasion overlap. The study has also shown that there are moments when there is tension between one or more Black Twitter. I proposed the term Black Twitterverse to refer to what can be defined as a global Black Twitter voice or a global Black Twitter space; and I presented it as existing in marginality. This line of thinking builds on existing work within the field of Digital Blackness. The phrase 'Black Twitterverse' invites further research to understand what it truly means. I consider a study on the existence and identity of a Black Twitterverse in an attempt to answer the question posed by Sobande and as a way to advance our understanding of Digital Blackness.

8.4.4 Can Critical Race Theory work in the context of non-Western Black identities?

At the time of writing, Critical Race Theory (CRT) is under attack both in the UK and the USA. It has been misrepresented as an academic theory that oppresses white people. I want to be clear that whatever criticisms I may have, or whatever limitations I highlight in respect of CRT, I still consider it to be an invaluable framework for those of us who are committed to dismantling white supremacy and who seek racial equity, equality and justice. In relation to this study, I successfully used counter-storytelling to centre the lived experiences of the participants. This approach differed from how research on Kenyans in the UK is conducted. I focused on individuals; guided by an ethics of care I presented participants as whole people and not just data. To date there

is not much research on Kenyans in the UK that adopts this approach or that presents Kenyans/Kenyanness in this way. Through CRT, counter-storytelling provided an alternative methodological approach that has hitherto been limited to studies that have not included Kenyans.

My main concern with CRT is that in its current form it cannot be used to adequately explore and analyse race in the context of Kenya. As has emerged in this study, the language of race in Kenya is different. In addition to this, CRT does not make room for the consideration of race and oppression in the context of countries such as Kenya that were formally colonised by the British. There were moments in this study that I had to look beyond CRT. However, rather than abandon CRT, I would be interested in exploring how CRT can be expanded or modified in a way that enables future research on non-Western Black identities.

8.4.5 What contributions/future work emerges as a result of claiming marginality and centering 'Researching Blackness while Black'?

In Chapter 2 I document how my positionality has shaped this study. I also express my interest in claiming marginality and writing from the margins. In writing that Chapter I was acutely aware of two things. Firstly, there are not many Black women in UK institutions researching Blackness. Secondly, I was able to voice my own concerns about researching while Black because Black women like Dr. Azeezat Johnson (2020) had written about their own experiences. Acknowledging and giving voice to my own experiences as detailed not just in Chapter 2 but throughout this thesis, means that I have produced a body work that offers a unique perspective on identities, Kenyanness, and performances. This unique perspective is connected to and rooted in my Blackness, my identity as a woman, and as a minority within academia. By situating myself and committing to remain within the margins I position this work as a project, which while intended to meet academic standards, is equally concerned with writing for people who exist within the margins. This decision to decentre whiteness in my work has enabled me to introduce concepts such as mwananchi and Wanjiku to an audience that may never have come across these concepts otherwise.

When speaking of audience in this context I am referring to those who work within fields such as migration studies, race and ethnicity studies, cultural/human geography and digital Blackness.

Furthermore, in undertaking this work there were methodological decisions that I had to take that were directly influenced by my positionality. There were times when I was unsure how to proceed or how to resolve some of the concerns I have. For example, what became Chapter 2 was initially supposed to be small section within Chapter 4. There are many books on how to do research but almost none on how to undertake research as a Black person, researching Blackness. It was not until I read Johnson's (2020) experiences of researching Blackness while Black, that I felt more confident about writing a full chapter outlining where I situate my work in relation to my identities. I believe that there is a need for a collection of writing dedicated to researching Blackness while Black. I would consider submitting Chapter 2 of this thesis for inclusion in a collection of work that addressed this topic. I am of the view that this type of work would be of interest to Black people, particularly Black women who remain underrepresented in academia.

8.5 Final Remarks

As an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary thesis, I believe this work can find a home in a number of disciplines. I have, for example, at various points throughout the study identified how this work fits into digital Blackness. I do believe that this work can find a home in a number of other disciplines; including geography and African studies to name a couple. However, what I am interested in is, *who* gets to engage with this work. People remain at the core of this study, specifically Kenyans and Black people. I would like what has emerged from this work to make its way into publications that centre Blackness and Black people.

I also want to highlight my commitment to marginality and what this means. Early on in this thesis I relied on an Audre Lorde quote 'the master's tool will not dismantle the master's house' (1984, p. 110). I followed this up by stating that I have no interest in dismantling the master's house, meaning I have no desire to dismantle the white gaze of academia. Not because I do not want to see a change, but because I have already

found my place within marginality. There are already a growing number of academics and researchers who work from within the margins. When I think about where my work fits it; it is here. In the margins, building on existing work that has been created by those who have chosen marginality. For me, this is perhaps more meaningful than identifying a specific discipline. To be in the margins, to write from the margins and to write for people in the margins – this where I locate my voice, my work and my contributions.

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