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Young, Urban, Professional, and Kenyan?: Conversations Surrounding Tribal Identity and Nationhood

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Young, Urban, Professional, and Kenyan?: Conversations Surrounding Tribal Identity
and Nationhood

A Dissertation by
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Orange, CA

College of Educational Studies

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Education

Culture and Curricular Studies

April, 2016

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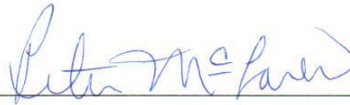
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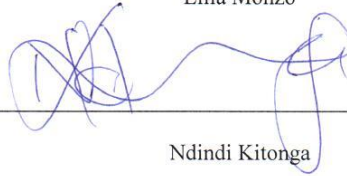
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Peter McLaren

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Lilia Monzó

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Ndindi Kitonga", written over a horizontal line.

Ndindi Kitonga

April 2016

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and Nationhood

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DEDICATION

For Kaki

I am, sometimes, homesick.

*Red roads and ochre dust
washed by constant rains.
Green foliage, verdant with color
rich with hints of light and life.*

*A cacophony of women calling,
or chiding, or singing, rhythmic.
In cadence and out, always rhythmic.*

*The sight of men sitting,
talking, pondering, questioning motives
and agreeing to disparage,
to note, to celebrate.*

I miss home.

*The quiet acceptance of Community
poised to embrace.
The echoing weight of tropical air
full of elusive scents:
earth, spice, promise of better.
What is better?*

*I miss the wisdom of age
and He who harbored it.*

*Gentle,
He explained to me truths and untruths.
He spoke of circumstances I could never grasp.
There, on his lap, he taught me to see.
and when I could not,
He taught me to listen.
He molded me to care for his sake.
For God's sake.
Old Man, Mzee, **Kaki**
I miss you.*

*Age,
I have arrived
I am of age now*

But, what of it?

*my innocence is lost,
my wisdom is not yet gained
I fall in solitude
a drop of rain
unaccompanied.*

*Torrential downpours
where have you gone?*

*Call me back
to my roots of knowledge.
Wrap me in kindness
Shroud me with Love.*

I am, indeed, homesick.

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I acknowledge my familial community who have walked with me these four years. Thank you for your listening ears and your words of sustenance.

Thank you to my CES teachers and peers. Meredith, I truly appreciate your friendship and for being my scholarly companion through this process.

*On this parchment,
Words, like dust, fall
in methodical slope.
If only to create,
for one encapsulated moment,
The fragmented reflection of a world
as it was.
And like dust...
these pages will turn,
flowing into the hope of something new.*

ABSTRACT

Young, Urban, Professional, and Kenyan? Conversations Surrounding Identity and Nationhood

by Charlotte Achieng-Evensen

By asking the question “How do young, urban, professional Kenyans make connections between tribal identity, colonialism, and the lived experience of nationhood?,” the researcher engages with eight participants in exploring their relationships with their tribal groups. From this juncture the researcher, through a co-constructed process with participants, interrogates the idea of nationhood by querying their interpretations of the concepts of power and resistance within their multi-ethnic societies. The utility of KuPiga Hadithi as a cultural responsive methodology for data collection along with poetic analysis as part of the qualitative tools of examination allowed the researcher to identify five emergent and iterative themes: (1) colonial wounds, (2) power inequities, (3) tensions, (4) intersection, and (5) hope. Participant discussion of these themes suggests an impenetrable link between tribal identity and nationhood. Schooling, as first a colonial and then national construct, works to mediate that link. Therefore, there is the need for a re-conceptualization of the term ‘nation’ in the post-Independence era.

Keywords: colonial wounds, indigenous knowing, indigeneity, researcher positionality, KuPiga Hadithi, Sage Philosophy, Kenya, Anticolonial theory, Decolonization, nationhood, poetic analysis, culturally responsive methodologies

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Chapter 1: Introduction

I am a scholar. Descendant from the Luo tribe, within the clan of Uwiny. I am also the daughter of a family who emigrated from Kenya to the United States prior to my adolescent years. In terms of the current, most general definition of education, my ‘formal’ schooling began in the primary classrooms of Mavoko, in the place named after Athi-River. It continued to the middle and high schools of California.

Even though the majority of my academic learning has been in the West, I cannot consider myself separated from my ethnic, Indigenous roots. I am both mired in the soils of my Dholuo- Kenyan heritage, and I am shaped by the context of a United States existence. Therefore, to ask how I locate my cultural center is to broach a multi-layered spectrum that begins with my Luoness, extends to my Kenyanness, and in the context of the West, moves to my Africanness.

The spectrum, however, does not end there. It includes a certain level of ‘Americanness’ in its fluidity. Bhabha (1994) writes, “the question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a *self*-fulfilling prophecy—it is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject assuming that image” (p. 45). As a subject transformed in the migration from a first culture, and then a second one, the question of identity speaks to a dissonant tension found in the middle spaces that border and accompany my dual positions within each culture. That is, I am always a Luo, ‘and’...I am never one and not the other.

Like the ‘hybrid’ spaces (Bhabha, 1994) that I occupy, young adults in Kenya navigate multiple and intertwined identities. They are situated in an urban landscape highly influenced by globalized neo-colonial market ideologies, while at the same time

they remain connected to cultural traditions that have been both *impacted by* and *resistant to* colonization. Thus, my research study is birthed from this tenuous and inconstant ground of shifting cultures. The purpose of this research study, therefore, is to analyze this shift at its most elemental point. I seek to explore the relationship between urban, professional, Kenyan adults and their tribes. Through this exploration, I hope to gain some insight into the ways that these young adults define their tribal identity, and the ways in which they interpret the concepts of power and resistance within their multi-ethnic nation.

This introduction seeks provide a short summation of the dissertation. In this chapter, my aim is to do several things. First, I will discuss the theoretical background that frames this study. Next, I will introduce the purpose of the work as well as its approach to research. I will then introduce the research questions and provide a brief summary of what will be contained in each chapter of the study. Finally, I will conclude the introduction with a re-centering of this study's purpose.

The foundation of this research is articulated by scholarly work on the effects of colonialism upon identity formation. As such, Anti-colonial theory and Sage Philosophy will provide a guide for collecting and analyzing data, for clarifying and unifying ideas, and for justifying my participation in the research process (Henstrand, 1991, p. 31).

Background

Academics in the fields of Critical Studies and of Indigenous Knowledges have interrogated the devastating impact of colonization on Indigenous populations (Bhabha, 1994; Grande, 2004; Morris & Spivak, 2010; Said, 1983; Smith, 2012). African and Pan-African scholars posit that the colonizer has endeavored to annihilate the colonized

through the systematic obliteration of the colonized culture (Dei, 2011; Fanon, 1963; Oruka, 1990; Wa Thiong'o, 1986). Anti-colonial theory begins at the juncture of *resistance against colonizer* and revolution against the *tyranny of colonialism*. It is an ideology grounded within Indigenous Knowledges. Its central tenet holds the Indigene as the center of her knowledge-base and the lived experience. These Indigenous Knowledges allow societies to thrive (Dei, 2011). Anti-colonial theory both discounts and disrupts deficit theorizing of Africa and the diverse peoples and cultures who inhabit the continent. This is a stance contrary to the general Western portrayal of Africa and Africans in academic and in media culture as lacking in civility.

In addition to Anti-colonial theory, this study relies on the tenets of Odera Oruka's (1990) Sage Philosophy to firmly embed the work in a Kenyan context. Sage Philosophy is a framework recognizing both the practical and transcendent philosophical wisdom within Kenyan cultures. Oruka utilized conversation as a tool, and recorded the dialogue between himself and acknowledged Sages. These conversations surrounded both the ontological and epistemological struggles of daily life. Oruka went to the places where the Sages lived and talked with them, philosophized with them, in their context. He was present in the very spaces where the knowledge they imparted was enacted. By doing so, he was contesting the primacy of the idea that external influences determined expertise within local circumstances.

In his seminal work, *Decolonising the Mind* (1986) Wa Thiong'o analyzes this tendency to seek answers apart from the Indigenous knowing that Africans hold. Wa Thiong'o (1986) ponders, "how did we arrive at this acceptance of 'the fatalistic logic of the unassailable position of English in our literature, in our culture and in our politics?'"

(p. 9). He is not merely referring to language as innocuous speech. Rather, he is questioning the assumption that Africans must look to the West in order to find answers to the social and economic difficulties they face. Difficulties, coincidentally, created by the very structures of colonization that the West imposed upon the continent. Wa Thiong'o advocates for a return to *home* knowledge-bases.

Building upon Anti-colonial theory and Sage Philosophy as frameworks, I seek to engage in dialogue with young adults in order to discuss ways in which their ethnic identities can be utilized in expressing ideas about nationhood. Further, I hope that through such dialogical encounters these participating young adults, themselves, can highlight authentic ways of encouraging positive change within their communities. Within the context of the study, participants will interact in conversations that question systems of identity and of power as a means of understanding the influence of these systems.

To mitigate the researcher-participant power inequity, this study will utilize culturally responsive methodologies (CRM) as an ethical frame for appropriately enlisting participant voice and participant knowledge. CRM emphasizes reciprocity in the researcher-participant relationship by underlining the moral obligation and responsibility that researchers bear as they engage with participants. In CRM, the primacy of each individual's humanity is the base for researcher-participant interaction. In acknowledgment of this shared humanity and as a core component of research design and methodology, researcher interactions with participants must be grounded upon culturally relevant and appropriate methods for engagement (Berryman, SooHoo, & Nevin, 2013).

To be culturally responsive, therefore, is to place the participant at the center of decision-making regarding research action and knowledge production.

While the content of this research has its genesis in discourse regarding tribal identity, the context of the study does not aim to be critical of tribes. This is not a work claiming the question of tribal identity as synonymous with the social and economic struggles faced in Kenya. Ngũgĩ (1986) cautions against such a divisive approach to studying African issues. He notes,

the study of the African realities has for too long been seen in terms of tribes.

Whatever happens in Kenya, Uganda, Malawi is because of *Tribe A* versus *Tribe B*... This misleading stock interpretation of African realities has been popularized by the western media which likes to deflect people from seeing that imperialism is still the root cause of many problems in Africa. (p. 1)

According to Ngũgĩ (1986) then, academicians critique of tribes often veers away from the central cause of the deep social and economic struggles that affect African nations. As opposed to focusing on criticism of tribes and of tribalism, the study aims to explore, through discussions, the relationships surrounding tribal identity and the issues of nationhood. Through this study, participants will be able to add to the growing number of African voices authentically contributing to the discourse of nationhood in Africa.

Given the discursive nature of this work, the study will consist of a small group of participants and myself, the participant-observer, as we take part in *Kupiga Hadithi*—a process of using story to convey responses to points of inquiry. During these conversational meetings, storytellers will share their observations, interpretations, interactions, and experiences from within their cultures. With permission, I will record

the conversations. As well, I will ask that participants use the cultural artifact of storytelling to construct narratives about the ways in which important themes are reflected through their tribal identity. As this study follows the tenets of decolonizing research¹ the participants, and not the researcher, are essential in contributing to the process of determining the most appropriate way of sharing findings. These include the identification of appropriate audiences for, and appropriate ways in, sharing of research data.

Research Questions

Wa Thiong'o (1986) and Homi Bhabha (1994) both write of 'colonial alienation': the symptomatic disassociation occurring when persons who have been colonized are forced to cerebrally engage in a world that does not recognize their histories, their 'natural and social environments' (Wa Thiong'o, p. 17), their cultures, their humanity. This study seeks to resist the mantle of colonial alienation by asking Kenyans to speak about Kenyan issues, and from a Kenyan perspective. By doing so, the study encourages participants to use language that communicates their ideologies.

Language, according to Wa Thiong'o (1986), is mediative. It carries with it the historicity of a culture and the unique memory that equips human beings to live into their full humanity. He writes, "a specific culture is not transmitted through language in its universality but in its particularity as the language of a specific community with a specific history" (p. 15). For Wa Thiong'o, systematic subjugation and alienation as expressed by colonialism cannot be possible without language. He asserts, "language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire

¹ Decolonizing research situates the center of knowledge within Indigenous culture.

body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world” (p. 16). In as much as Wa Thiong’o calls for a return to African languages, to our Kenyan-Dholuo, Gikuyu, Kikamba, Baluhya..., the young adults who will participate in this study occupy intersections that hover in their traditional knowledges of self and their knowledges as selves in a globalized world. Within this study, the participants will be the determinants of the language(s) that they choose as a mode of communication even as we dialogue through the subjects of identity and power.

The research questions addressed here only provide an entry point into the study². Using the culturally responsive methodology of *Kupiga Hadithi* to carry out this research necessitates that participants have a role in developing and refining the study’s purpose. This includes introducing of further points of inquiry. As such, these initial questions tentatively address as a subject, participants’ self-definition of tribal identity and nationhood formation. The research questions are:

1. How do young, urban, professional Kenyans define their tribal identities?
2. How does the process of engaging in dialogue through *Kupiga Hadithi* allow participants to make connections between tribal identity, colonialism, and the lived experience of nationhood?

Terms

Anibal Quijano (2000) succinctly articulates a historic progression beginning from colonial occupation of Indigenous lands, to present day globalization. He begins by writing, “what is termed globalization is the culmination of a process that began with the constitution of America and colonial/modern Eurocentered capitalism as new global

² The conversational interview semi-structured interview guide is included in Appendix A.

power” (p. 533). He, then, recounts a geographic and economic timeline in which colonial powers created social order of relations between the haves and have-nots. This new social order was built upon the basis of a labor force separated according to idea of inferiority, and that inferiority was quantified by socially constructing the term ‘race.’ The foundation of the new social order was a market economy system designed to channel resources through the nexus of Western-European control. Resources from all corners of the globe were centralized so that the division of wealth, and thereby labor, was determined by colonial powers. These powers allotted labor, the means to economic safety, according to those deemed as fit. The fit, as a matter of course, were Europeans first and then, those most closely fitting within a Euro-centered paradigm. All other populations were considered inferior. The United States, “America” was the first expression of this new centralized global order. Quijano (2000) identifies this systemic and centralized mechanism that controlled and still controls wealth, labor, and socio-economic opportunities as the ‘coloniality of power.’

In this paper, Quijano’s (2000) concept of the ‘coloniality of power’ acts as a frame of reference for the terms used. Here, *colonization* refers to the unsought establishment of European physical and political dominance on the multiple people groups who lived on the African continent. *Imperialism* refers to the actions that the colonial empire used to ascertain that economic wealth benefitted European as opposed to Indigenous culture. These were the practices and sanctions put in place to systematically control the colonized in an effort to harvest all of their resources. *Decolonization* is used as the physical exit of colonial powers. In other words, it is when Europeans ceased to explicitly govern African nations. It is important to note, that the concept of nationhood

did not exist prior to the colonial government. Neither did the ubiquitous notion of tribes—as they are now termed. People groups in Sub-Saharan Africa governed themselves according to their self-instigated principles. They reached trade agreements with other sovereign groups in their geographical region. Trade and “reciprocity without a market” (Quijano, 2000, p. 536) economy occurred prior to the arrival of Europeans. *Post-colonial* and *Post-exit* refers to the aftermath of colonial power existence. It is when African nationhood first became enacted. Postcolonial is a contested term because economic strings put in place by colonial powers still ascertain that former colonies are beholden to the colonizers. *Neo-colonial* refers to the ways that the West enacts policies that continue to remove resources from former colonies through exploitative economic arrangements. *Tribe* refers to ethnic groups pre-dating the colonizer, and *Tribal* refers to the Indigenous Knowledges of these ethnic groups.

Content

As this study was a query into relationships that young, urban, professional Kenyans have with their tribal groups, I present the content of the work in a systematic progression. First, I spend time delving into the context surrounding the subject matter. Next, I create ample space for participant voice expression. Finally, I conclude with a reflection the implications of this research.

As this work attempts to highlight Kenyan voices discussing Kenyan issues, I provide background pertaining to several areas: 1) The process by which tribes came to be defined as such, and Kenya became a nation; 2) Philosophical thought(s) that uniquely privileges a multi-ethnic Kenyan way(s) of knowing as opposed to discourse about Africa and/or Kenya centered elsewhere; and 3) Appropriate methods for engaging with people

in the field. I have organized the chapters in this work by keeping these three things in mind.

Chapter one establishes a base for Anti-colonial Theory and Sage Philosophy as theoretical frameworks for research. The chapter posits that both Anti-colonial Theory and Sage Philosophy counteract external ideological influences and privilege Kenyan voices as we discourse about the nature of the identity shift occurring among young, urban, and professional Kenyans. Through the tenets of Anticolonial Theory and Sage Philosophy, a space is created for dialogue to ensue regarding the relational ties, or lack thereof, that youth have with their tribal groups.

Chapter two explores the significance of examining the aforementioned relationships. I contend that Kenyan nationhood was a colonial endeavor designed to serve the purposes of the colonizer. Independence, therefore, brought with it struggles to maintain the fledgling nation-state. The chapter proposes that this struggle to maintain a ‘Kenyan’ nation is ongoing. The chapter posits that a reclamation of cultural memory counteracts this struggle.

Chapters three through five discuss research methods used to collect data. Through the culturally responsive methodological approach of using *Kupiga Hadithi–storied knowing* in response to inquiry, participants interacted in dialogue regarding subject of tribal identity and nationhood formation. These chapters also discuss participant grouping, data collection, and analysis.

Chapters six through nine present research findings by including excerpts of participant *hadithi-storied knowing*, in response to semi-structured conversational

interview questions. I contextualize these excerpts by the whole of participant commentary and perspectives regarding the subject matter.

Chapter 10 concludes the study with a reflection on schooling as a mediator for culture. The chapter presents some implications of the findings regarding schooling. In addition, the chapter discusses the limitations of this work and proposes future areas for research. I conclude the dissertation with a poem considering my journey with participants through this work.

Conclusion

By examining the relationship between young, urban, professional adults in Kenya and their ethnic groups, this study explores those middle spaces, interrogation, and proposing solutions for a nation in transition. In seeking voices of participants who consider themselves both at once members of a tribal group, and active in a global community, the study privileges appropriate and relevant voices of those engaged within the transition.

Chapter 2: Literature: Theoretical Framework

In the introductory chapter, I provided a summation of the content within this research study by briefly explaining its theoretical underpinnings, the methodological approach utilized, and purpose as well as the content of each major section. This chapter seeks to delve more deeply into the theories framing this work. In this chapter, I contextualize relevant academic theory and its relationship to Indigeneity. Next, I discuss Anti-colonial theory and Sage Philosophy as they inform the discourse herein. I conclude the chapter declaring my intentions in using both of these stances as the primary theoretical foundations for this work.

Theory as an Imperative

Theory anchors discourse and analysis within a specific context. Because theory attempts to explicate our fundamental ontological and epistemological ways of being, it informs the practicality of day-to-day life. Theory reveals how we come to know and the ways in which those knowledge bases are enacted. In this way, it becomes the anchoring philosophy of an individual or group's existence. hooks (1994) writes, "I came to theory because I was hurting—the pain within me was so intense that I could not go on living. I came to theory desperate, wanting to comprehend—to grasp what was happening around and within me" (p. 59). For hooks, theory is 'a liberatory practice.' It is the root location for understanding life and for exploring the reasons underlying the critical struggle and oppression she experienced in daily living. Not only does hooks identify theory as a base for healing knowledge, but she also conceives it as the understructure for social justice action. Theory is emancipatory. She continues, "most importantly, I wanted to make the hurt go away. I saw in theory a location for healing" (p. 59). By understanding her

theoretical underpinnings, hooks embraces her ability to come to wholeness. Theory, from an individual stance, grounds worldview and individual purpose.

From a more global perspective, theory informs the oppression of non-dominant peoples. It becomes the bedrock upon which ‘othered’ peoples and societies are measured, judged, and subjugated. Indeed, theory defines both what it means to belong and to be marginalized. Smith (2012) notes that Western academic research and research theories have been used to harm and dehumanize Indigenous peoples.

In as much as my research questions focus on generational identity shifts, the importance of exploring the context and foundation (lived theory) of such shifts is tantamount. Not only does such an exercise frame knowledge encountered within the research praxis, but such inquiry is necessarily ethical. Without a background into field, the reader is left, possibly, to arrive at erroneous or disjointed conclusions about research findings. This is a dangerous position; specifically, in research regarding human beings. History, as Smith (2012) has alluded, demonstrates that academic research has been used to degrade entire societies. Therefore, it is my obligation as a researcher to delve into the lived theory preserving a particular context. By doing so, I am allowing the space for the researcher and participants to co-construct knowledge. Additionally, this practice holistically positions the research so that the knowledge produced is protected from exploitation. Of course, in this paradigm, my particular theoretical stance as a researcher carries with it my own subjectivity. Rather than compromising the work, such an explicit stance clarifies and adds to the wider body of knowledge.

Theory and Indigeneity

At this moment in history, undertaking academic research that engages an Indigenous context and with Indigenous knowledge mandates a discussion of colonization as well as a reclamation of Indigenous agency. Clearly, the effects of colonization still ravage former colonies. From political unrest informed by European named nationhood, to economic debt owed to the West, and the legacy of shaky governmental infrastructures, former colonies still struggle to achieve ongoing stability. Dei (2011) comments, “language, cultural memory, and colonization always need to be evoked in a critical investigation of what is Indigenous” (p. 23). The legacy of colonization so thoroughly shrouds those who have been colonized, that it is impossible to talk about the present time without clarifying how it is that we have arrived at the here and now. It is irresponsible for us to be immersed in discourse about present day Indigenous cultures without an acknowledgment the impact of the colonizer on the colonized peoples, their culture, and the ensuing worldviews. Incomplete discourse of this type leaves out generational experiences of domination and alienation. Furthermore, incomplete discourse reaffirms historical injustices in that it simply allows for the repetition of that which has been previously established.

Academic discourse, the way we talk about, interrogate, and analyze a subject, is generally meant to bring about clarity. At its best, academic discourse is meant to interrupt the status quo and this includes historical injustices. However, this process can be problematic since the language that we use to carry out discourse is, in itself, already infused with shades of meaning. McGloin and Carlson (2013) write, “language shapes reality and makes meaning according to cultural consensus; although subject to variation

over time, this consensus assumes meaning through a shared understanding constituted in part by the repetition of certain words, phrases, terminology and frames of reference” (p. 1). Language, even as an incomplete tool, works to bridge the gap between self and culture. In a similar way, it works to bridge the generational gap between ancestor and progeny. Language can be viewed as a tool for conveying the heritage, hopes, and assumptions of a people. Thereby, it implants a full sense of personhood and hope. Language carries with it a sense of hope.

According to Hiddleston (2006) however, language is also a site of loss. In her writing about the anti-colonial leanings of Sartre and Derrida she asserts, “Derrida argues that the colonizer concretised the alienation we all experience in language by imposing a political system of material and linguistic dispossession on the colonised” (p. 34). Summarily, the colonizer—in stripping Indigenous peoples of their language—removed the culturally transitive power of language. No longer could the pure and authentic cultural legacy of a people be transmitted, as originally communicated by ancestral guardians, from one generation to another. A ‘foreign’ and colonial language now mitigates the expression. Hiddleston (2006) clarifies, “the experience of alienation in language is a universal one, language separates all speakers from themselves” (p. 34). That is, full originality of thought cannot be captured within symbolic nature of language. This is the primary alienation of language. This, Hiddleston intimates, is a universal experience.

For the colonized, however, this primary alienation is traumatically compounded. She continues,

what the colonial system did was doubly to alienate the colonised people by forcing a foreign language upon them, a language that the coloniser could then

claim as his own. The colonised are forced to live in a society governed in a language that is not theirs, so their alienation operates on two levels and becomes, at the same time, entrenched by political inequality and oppression. (p. 38)

Not only do the oppressed experience the universal alienation of language but in having to speak a foreign tongue, there is an added void between expression and its intended meaning—that which can be lost in translation. As Dei (2011) has noted, the issue of language must be discussed in a critical exploration of indigeneity.

As discussed earlier, language is a tool for carrying forward cultural legacy. In this way, it solidifies values, traditions, and societal mores. Language carries cultural memory, and cultural memory generates the structural construct for Indigenous autonomy. Autonomy is here defined as the capability for democratic self-governance. The burden of colonialism is cemented by the fact that the colonizer denied the colonized their right to self-governance. Indigenous autonomy begins with a reclamation of democracy. Simpson (1971, p. 98) lays out the tenets for democracy as:

1. belief in human nature as fundamental good and trustworthy.
2. belief in the ability of the individual to control his environment.
3. belief in the ability of the individual as capable of choosing rationally for himself.
4. belief in the validity of the experiences and opinions of others.
5. belief that the rights of other human beings are to be respected,

These tenets speak to the ability of a people to live out their full human potential. This is not potentially confined to the narrow terms of achieving economic well-being, although such well-being is fundamental. As Maslow (1943) intimates, it is imperative that foundational needs be met in order for higher order needs to come into fruition.

Rather, this potential can be defined holistically. As a human being fully participating in the action of *Being*—without the stifling of external or externally—caused oppression. This is the potential for a human being to be free. Fromm (1941/1969) asks, “what is freedom as a human experience...is freedom only the absence of external pressure or is it also the presence of something—and if so, of what” (p. 4)? Simpson (1971) with her five tenets signals an answer to Fromm. Freedom is the presence and acknowledgement of the democratic personhood of all. In order to be free, the individuals must hold the belief that they are ‘fundamentally good and trustworthy.’ This statement, according to Simpson, is generalizable to all human beings. Simpson’s comprehensive perspective allows for dynamic and transformative growth. However, such growth cannot occur if a people do not assume the capability to ‘control her environment.’ More than physical, this type of control pertains also to the psychological, spiritual, and social.

Simpson (1971) continues, freedom and its maturity in democratic personhood is informed a belief in ‘choosing rationally for herself’ (p. 98). She adds that the belief in the ‘validity of the experiences and opinions of others as well as the rights of other human beings to be respected’ are core to democratic personhood. As such, they are core beliefs to the development of human freedom. Freedom then, in response to Fromm (1941/1969) and according to Simpson, is the development of democratic personhood into democratic citizenship.

The path to Indigenous autonomy has not been linear nor has it been simple. Ogude (1997) discussing Wa Thiong’o’s call to negate and reframe colonial discourse on history interrogates “the ambivalent relationship between the colonial state and the loyalists” (p. 99). Ogude troubles the notion that autonomy is a battle fought only by

outsiders. He suggests that there is an internal struggle that occurs after the colonizer has exited. Referring to William Ochien'g (1972), he contends that this struggle has to do with not only with “personal economic greed,” but also with the “struggle for progress and dignity in the face of acute political and economic difficulties” (p. 100). Perhaps these factors contribute to nationalist movements that continue to create separatist factions within Indigenous contexts.

Goswami (2005) commenting on modern day nationalist movements writes, “the felt stigmata of derivativeness, the longing to overcome the “mirage” of Europe expressed itself in a self-understood anticolonial epistemology that privileged acts of conceptual innovation over those of appropriation” (p. 202). Reclamation of an Indigenous identity characteristically involves a longing to return to non-Western ways of knowing. However, this longing does not automatically guarantee a realization of the much longed for freedom. Goswami concedes, “the estrangement of thought forms and subject constitution wrought by colonialism was indistinguishable from the European/Western intellectual genealogy of certain modern concepts and projects” (p. 202). Despite nationalist attempts to recover a non-colonized state, the influence of the West replicates itself within former colonies. Goswami adds, “nationalism, in this view, could only ever be a spectacular act of colonial ventriloquism, the bastard child of European hegemony” (p. 202). Goswami's observation strengthens Dei's (2011) comments regarding the explicit examination of “language, cultural memory, and colonization” when engaging in discourse regarding indigeneity. Without cultivating knowledge beneath and beyond the legacy of European occupation, Indigenous cultures

can only draw from the murky waters of occupation. It is the solid foundation of cultural memory that establishes the chronicled truths of survival, capability, and triumph.

My research seeks to encounter and interact with Indigeneity from an Indigenous knowledge standpoint. As such, anti-colonial theory as an analytical position, informs and contextualizes the work. A discourse into the theoretical foundations of indigeneity, then, must include discussion centered around ‘language, cultural memory, and colonization,’ and the interplay of these arenas. Dei (2011) continues, “fundamentally, the Indigenous should be perceived as mostly about place-based knowing, an understanding of a traditional sacred relationships between peoples and their cultures and cosmologies” (p. 23). He concludes that these “relationships offer a holistic knowledge base to operate” (p. 23).

Anticolonial Theory as a Framework

The Anticolonial Context

Colonization was the persistent, invasive action of European encroachment into Non-European lands. Strang (1991) notes, “in many cases, European states regarded non-European lands as unoccupied or unclaimed by a legitimate ruler” (p. 433). Therefore, the resources human, non-human, and environmental were considered to be available for European utility and exploitation. In other words, colonized lands were seen as a blank, open, and permissive slate upon which the colonizers could dictate, at will, their authority. Smith (2012) referencing “Said’s notion of ‘positional superiority’” (p. 63) regarding the ravages of colonization writes, “Knowledge was also there to be discovered, extracted, appropriated and distributed. Processes for enabling these things to occur became organized and systematic” (p. 61). Thus, European colonization did not

only physically plunder non-European lands, but it also attempted to despoil the cultural wealth of the colonized. Among these were the rights to traditional ways of knowing and notions of selfhood. Smith (2012) adds, “colonized peoples have been compelled to define what it means to be human because there is a deep understanding of what it has meant to be considered not fully human, to be *savages*” (p. 28).

Smith (2012) is not alone in her assertion that in the processes of establishing colonies, European nations sought to legitimize their oppressive practices by reaffirming their own right to rule. Strang (1991) writes, “Western states therefore created many dependencies without reference to existing polities, organizing a colonial government directly or chartering private individuals or corporations to do so” (p. 433). Following this strategy, the colonizers could then institute hegemonic control over a ‘territory’ or ‘protectorate’ and begin the work of acculturating its ‘citizens’ toward a unified acceptance of imperial sovereignty.

The history of colonization in Africa assumes the virulent pattern of a voracious and violent European claim to diverse peoples and their lands. European nations descended upon the continent and sought to plunder, pillage, and violate its resources. Nothing was sacrosanct. Not the land, not the environment, nor the peoples. Indigenous cultural knowledge, practices, and artifacts were not exempt. Sium, Anamuah-Mensah, and Dei (2014) maintains

by the mid-twentieth century, Britain had shifted its colonial research from Africa’s physical geography to cultural geography. Much like the contemporary African state, colonial officials feared traditional culture and institutions as rival

sites of political, social, and economic power. To effectively infiltrate and control the ‘native’ colonialists had to first study them. (p. 181)

The results of such study included methods for inculcating a European superiority complex upon the continent so that European languages and cultural practices became the assumed modes of daily life. As this paper deals particularly with Kenya, the general task of tracing its colonial burden lays the base for the use anti-colonial theory as foundational framework.

Decolonization as an Anti-Colonial Agenda

Decolonization is the systematic act of deposing the vestiges of colonial rule. It is a holistic process which ranges from the personal to the social. Within this range, there is a tangible, physical, and political action. Strang (1991) in his article about rates of global decolonization discusses political declarations of independence. He observes that “three broad perspectives on international relations are counter posed as explanations of the rate of decolonization” (p. 429). These include:

1. a world economy perspective focusing on global cycles in hegemony and economic growth
2. a Marxist analysis interpreting political change in light of social structural change
3. an institutional account emphasizing the cognitive dimension of politics and the impact of dominant models of political organization (p. 429).

Summarily, nations seeking and obtaining sovereign rule occurred because of the weight of economic pressure upon the colonizers, internal social pressure causing dissention in the political social order of colonial government and colonized territories,

and internal as well as external political pressure diligently applied to colonial overseers. According to Strang (1991), these conditions functioned collectively transgressing the supposed ‘imperial sovereignty’ of colonial rule, and systematically dethroned its physical authority. Given the length, breadth, and depth of European colonization, the insurgence of Indigenous resistance required continual, unrelenting efforts over the course of the colonial project.

In Kenya, the history of Western colonization begins in 1593 when Portugal declared the coastal area of Mombasa its territory. With a brief respite between 1698-1728, this colonial domination was held intact. From 1887 until 1963, the United Kingdom claimed Kenya as its imperial territory from which cash crops and labor could be extracted. In the early 1950’s, Kenya’s utility in Western consumption became mired in Cold War politicking. Nissimi (2001) highlights “three phases” of British “strategic thinking about Kenya.” The country could be used to “revitalize the empire” as a world power. It could provide a base for protection against the rising Middle East and Soviet Union, and it could continue to be part of “Africa as a reservoir of manpower from which they could create a new imperial expeditionary force to replace the Indian Army” (p. 827). Britain was not alone in its exploitive perspective. Nissimi (2001) discusses a memo to the U.S. State Department under Eisenhower declaring that Kenya had become an “increasingly important strategic area...[which] the Free World cannot afford to lose” (p. 824).

This subjugation was not without resistance. Notably, the MauMau rebellion (1953-59) disrupted and disordered British influence over the territory. Tragic events like the Hola Massacre in 1959 and socialist influence over the immoral and unethical

colonialist governance added to the hastening of British departure. Furthermore, the economic cost of managing this territory led to rapid decolonization of the territory (Nissimi, 2001).

In 1963, Kenya gained its independence from the Imperial government. By the next year, the nation was ardently working to reform its political structure from colonial rule to a self-governing republic in which Jomo Kenyatta was the president and Oginga Odinga, the vice president. This began an eighteen year period of national political formation where the inclusive structure of governance moved from a multi-party state to single party rule. Thus, from 1964 to 1982 political and “ethnic unrest” (BBC, 2015) plagued the nation’s democratic processes. Contestations to the single party state reached a climax in 1982 when Kenya’s Air Force attempted a coup to overthrow the government after the National Assembly officially declared the country a “one-party state” (BBC, 2015).

Subsequent years, 1982-1990, were rife with political arrests, suspicious deaths of oppositional political figures as well as rumors of impending deaths for those who challenged the state. Prevalent as well, were human rights abuses as experienced by the supposed defiant and as reported by external organizations. By 1991, international economic sanctions forced the political leadership to re-establish itself as a multi-party state. Although the establishment of a seemingly inclusive, democratic space occurred, ethnic conflicts agitated by political influence broke out in various places. One of the most troubling examples being in Western Kenya where in 1992, 2,000 people were killed in clashes. These types of unrest highlighted the simmering tension underlying a seemingly unified national structure. These tensions continued with internal and foreign

calls for “democratic reform” (BBC, 2015). In 1997, “widely-criticized” elections re-seated Daniel arap Moi as the continuing second president of the nation (BBC, 2015). Moi remained in a presidency fraught with political tension and suffering until 2002, when Mwai Kibaki assumed the presidency. Kibaki’s eleven year leadership struggled with issues of over-extension of political power and corruption including the inability to respond to ‘natural disaster’ for various reasons including the result of misappropriate funding. In 2004, the government failed to enact a new constitution limiting the president’s power and expanding power-sharing. In the next year, the Kenyan populace rejected the proposed constitution on the basis that it does not equalize and democratize national governance. These issues of power reached a climax when ethnic violence ravaged the nation following contested 2007 ballots. More than 1500 people died in the difficult aftermath of the post-election (BBC, 2015). As a means of calming the nation, Raila Odinga of the opposition, enters into a power-sharing agreement with Kibaki. As well, several political leaders are implicated as alleged instigators of the ethnic violence including the future president, Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto. The cases are sent to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for hearing.

Kenya’s presidency changes again with the 2013 election when Uhuru Kenyatta assumes the seat with “just over 50%” of the vote (BBC, 2015). In 2014, he becomes the first sitting president to appear at the Hague in front of the ICC. Meanwhile, the country continues to be plagued with corruption schemes that limit its ability to counteract: natural disasters, increasing terror attacks from Al-Qaeda linked groups protesting Kenya’s involvement in Somalia and its allegiance with the United States, and internal economic struggles. The tension established among ethnic groups within the structures of

Imperial governance continue to bely the Kenyan Republic's national structure. The work of decolonization, then, is to delve into the roots of the tension and imagine an alternate way forward.

Anticolonial Theory

Anticolonial theory situates itself as both a base for social justice action, and position from which to act. As a base, anticolonial theory explicitly names the cause(s) of coloniality. Furthermore, it names the perpetrator of colonialism. Freire (1970) writes, “human existence cannot be silent nor can it be nourished by false words, but only by true words, with which men and women transform the world. To exist humanly is to *name* the world, to change it” (p. 88). The act of naming the causes of colonization and naming the colonizer is an act of defiance, of reclaiming one's humanity. Simmons and Sefa Dei (2012) write, “the ‘anti’ identifies the ‘bad guy’ and carries with it a radical critique of the dominant, as the colonial oppressor whose antics and oppressive practices continue to script the lives of the subordinate and colonized” (p. 68). Much more than critique, the ‘anti’ works to transform beyond present reality. Freire (1970) continues, “humans...because they are aware of themselves, and thus of the world—because they are *conscious beings*—exist in a dialectical relationship between determination of limit and their own freedom” (p. 99). The ‘anti’ then, is a conscious fight for autonomy as a birthright of humanity.

Within anticolonial theory, there is a succinct mandate to address the clear ethical and moral social injustice that colonization represents. An anticolonial position is a revolutionary stance. Simmons and Sefa Dei (2012) continue, “the anticolonial gives us a position that is implicating and revolutionary in its thinking” (p. 68). It is a reclamation of

knowledges that colonialism works to marginalize. The authors (2012) continue, “an anticolonial education allows us to dialogue with important questions of identity affirmation, yet at the same time bring to the discussion relevant issues specifically concerning the interconnections of power, difference, and resistance as augured in colonial geographies” (p. 68). One of the goals of assuming an anticolonial position is expand one’s hopeful imagination beyond the restrictions of current realities. Dalleo (2012) notes that anticolonial stance offers “radical oppositionality” (p. 139). Thus, the binary created by such positioning brings into sharp relief oppressive spaces for disruption, interrogation, and action.

This research delves into the dynamic nature of this discourse. Mired in the present legacy of colonialism, this work engages lived and ongoing narratives about the current nature of identity, five decades after Kenyan independence, from the perspective of young adults. The research asks participants to consider the question, what informs the shift in relationship between themselves and their tribes? Furthermore, this research invites participants to interrogate the nature of these relational shifts. An anticolonial theoretical stance factors colonial oppression and burden as influential to identity discourses “even as we resist such dominance” (Simmons & Sefa Dei, 2012, p. 68).

Although Kenya gained independence in 1963, Simmons and Sefa Dei (2012) argue, “the ‘colonial’ still exists and failing to include the anticolonial in the current neo-colonial moment is very problematic and limiting to intellectual discursive practices to seek liberation and decolonization” (p. 70). James Ogude (1997) affirms this continued observation when he writes, “the path to meaningful social change in Africa cannot ignore the internal contradictions and the specific social dynamics of the post-colonial

state” (p. 105). These dynamics include his discussion of the struggle for economic safety for those impoverished by the organizational structures left in place by colonization, the complexity of ethnicity ideologies, and the complex multi-faceted role religions adds to the dialogue.

Simmons and Sefa Dei (2012) add, “the challenge for the anti-colonial framework is extricating these deeply embedded reservoirs of knowledge as embodied historically through a particular time and space by the colonial engendered body” (p. 71). As a stance, anticolonial theory excavates beyond and beneath the veneer of colonial history into the foundational roots of Indigenous cultural knowledge as passed down generationally into the present. Simmons and Sefa Dei (2012) “situate anti-colonial discourse as that which de-reifies colonial socio-cultural spaces as they come to reside within schooling and education and through the myriad of hegemonic institutions of society” (p. 72).

Sage Philosophy as a Contributory Framework:

Contextualizing Sage Philosophy

Sage Philosophy was birthed from Odera Oruka’s (1990) commitment to African discourse about African issues. Specifically, it was Oruka’s response to the Western academy’s position that Africans—communally and individually— had no legitimate knowledge bases. The Western canon presumed that African societies held no historically established methods of meaning-making, no patterns of ontology. Added to this African knowledges, like other Indigenous knowledges, were considered to be infantilized approaches to epistemological understanding. This presumption was expressed both in artistic and intellectual depictions of Africa and its diverse peoples as the ‘dark continent’

whose culture, though exotic, had an inability for autonomous rule or essential philosophical expression. Morris and Spivak (2010) notes,

in the constitution of that Other of Europe, great care was taken to obliterate the textual ingredients with which such a subject could cathect, could occupy (invest?) its itinerary— not only by ideological and scientific production, but also by the institution of the law. (p. 75)

Morris and Spivak (2010) was referencing the way in which the colonizers infiltrated the physical, social, and intellectual culture of those colonized. Systematically, the colonial machine moved to obliterate any memory of pre-European existence by demonizing knowledges that were un-European. The ferocious intensity with which these traditions and values were attacked was both fractious in intention, and violent in action. The continent was carved up to suit European preferences, and forms of political controls were instituted to ascertain colonial rule.

In his discussion of Frantz Fanon (1963), Nesbitt (2012) writes, “every colonial site has its own degrees and forms of violence, and the logic of violence in each context determines the dynamics of violence and counter-violence” (p. 397). Certainly, freedom fighters struggled for political independence. But, the battle for autonomy was and is broader than physical occupancy. There was also a social and intellectual war to be fought. From within their areas of expertise, scholars joined in the effort. African philosophers like Oruka (1990) sought to reclaim and transcend the deeply pervasive social and intellectual injustices of colonial rule. They reacted to the violent attempt at erasure of their ancestors, and themselves, as knowing, sentient, and intelligent human beings. In their own terms, they commanded voices with which to interrogate the

Western assumption of African ineptitude, ignorance, and stupidity. These philosophers were working to affirm their cultural legacy and they looked to cultural memory to do so.

In their work, such philosophers were armed with a breadth of knowledge informed by their cultural roots. They looked into the crevices of resistance against Western oppression that had been passed down generational. However, they were also conditioned by Western educational practices; and therefore, could easily become part of the institutionalized oppressive system. Subsequently, there was a need to ensure their work would be of benefit—as opposed to concretizing colonial discourse about indigeneity. As a non-Western scholar, Morris and Spivak (2010) cautions those engaged in this type of work,

it is impossible for contemporary French intellectuals to image the kind of Power and Desire that would inhabit the unnamed subject of the Other of Europe...everything they read, critical or uncritical, is caught within the debate of the production of that Other, supporting or criticizing the constitution of the Subject as Europe. (p. 76)

According to Morris and Spivak (2010) then, the authentic work of restoring Indigenous knowledge is an arduous and necessarily reflexive process. It is a work fraught with the tension of allegiance to one's own cultural identity without falling into the seduction of the colonial conquest.

For Indigenous scholars, this work is a birthright and it is a means of ongoing struggle. Morris and Spivak (2010) conveys 'epistemic violence' as the ostracizing of those who have been oppressed, the 'subaltern.' Within the academy, within the arts, within culture, indeed within history, the subaltern voice has been delegitimized. As a

break from oppression and to overcome what Morris and Spivak describes as ‘epistemic violence’ their cultures, African philosophers returned to their indigenous knowledges. Odera Oruka’s (1990) Sage Philosophy situates theory in an African context. As a Luo, his work is positioned in an explicitly Kenyan context; and therefore, fittingly informs my research.

Tenets of Sage Philosophy

Sage Philosophy requires three components: (1) a wise individual—known as a Sage—who is well-versed in the historical, cultural, and spiritual knowledge of his or her people; (2) continual practice of critical analysis to cultural matters; and (3) a dynamic and critical application of reflective thought to lived contexts. Sage Philosophy is curated wisdom as communicated by discerning elders. It is a means of shaping ontological meaning and epistemological understanding. Oruka in Ochieng’-Odhiambo (2002) defines this philosophy as

the critical and reflective thought of sages...it is both individualistic and dialectical: It is a thought or reflection of various known or named individual thinkers not a folk philosophy and, unlike the latter, it is rigorous and philosophical in the strict sense. (p. 22)

While Sage Philosophy was designed to communicate an account of philosophic tradition within the African context, it does hold additional goals. One of these goals is to create a space for Africans to engage in thoughtful dialogue about African issues. According to Presbey (2007), Paulin Hountondji (1970) in his critique of African ethnophilosophy urges philosophers to produce works in which Africans “addressed each other or focused on topics of mutual concerns to themselves” (p. 146). Sages work

alongside members of their community. They are the advisors and commentators of cultural issues. In this way, they are immersed in the immediacy of context. Oduka (1990) in his lifelong work to record and relate the work of sages created an academic forum for Africans to discuss appurtenant subjects. Presbey (2007) writes, “Oduka Oduka went to great lengths to design a research project in African philosophy that could meet all of Hountondji’s challenges” (p. 146).

As an additional goal, Sage Philosophy is designed to remain current. Presbey (2007) notes that Oduka’s writing regarding Sage Philosophy insists “that the sages should be part of the heritage of the younger generations of Kenya” (p. 146). A new generation of Kenyans is tasked with the duty of moving the nation onward. They have inherited the history of colonialism, and since independence, three presidential leaders. This new generation is laboring to stabilize a struggling economy, buoy an overtaxed social system, negotiate the space between traditions and globalization, and maintain nationhood. According to Oduka (1990), the knowledge of the Sages can speak to these shifting dynamics by hearkening back to foundational cultural memory.

Criticism of Sage Philosophy

Sage Philosophy is critiqued for attempting to forge a ‘middle ground’ in anchoring African philosophical thought between two contesting poles. Azenabor (2009) observes, “one of the challenges that Oduka’s philosophic sagacity [Sage Philosophy] attempts to meet is the need to buffer between two extreme views in contemporary African philosophy” (p. 76). The first perspective holds that African Philosophy is “folk philosophy” (Oduka as cited in Azenabor, 2009, p. 76); therefore, Sage Philosophy as an African Philosophy, does not meet academic criteria. It is condemned to the margins of

knowledge production. As a ‘folk philosophy,’ it is not imbued with the rigor that accompanies the true philosophical contribution. The second critical position charges that African philosophy is not a “written, critical, reflective discourse” (Oruka as cited in Azenabor, 2009, p. 77). As it is birthed from oral tradition and is communicated orally, Sage Philosophy does not align with Western philosophy’s academic practice of literacy. Consequently, it contains no “sustained, discursive, enquiry,” the flagship of philosophical practice (Azenabor, 2009, p. 77). In forging a ‘middle ground,’ Sage Philosophy is challenged for not exhibiting the erudite standards of scholarship.

Another critique of Sage Philosophy has to do with its utility of language. Because the dialogue of Sages are translated from Indigenous languages to English, critics have questioned the authenticity of the interpretations. Azenabor (2009) writes, “when indigenous languages are translated, there are still the problems of correctness in translation” (p. 81). This is added to a problem that may arise from “the imposition of the translator’s own conceptual apparatus on the culture of the philosophic sage” (p. 81). In recording the wisdom of the Sages, critics would argue that their meaning is lost.

Sage Philosophy, a Relevant Choice

Presbey (2007) contests the argument of Sage Philosophy as a ‘folk philosophy.’ She asserts, “first, the sages’ thoughts are critical, reflective, rigorous, and dialectical. Second, sage philosophy presents ideas of named individual thinkers who share their personal thoughts” (p. 133). These distinctions are important in that they center higher order processes of thought and philosophical knowledge-making with the Sages. ‘Folk Philosophy’ indiscriminately administers popular sayings ubiquitously.

Azenabor (2009) argues that African philosophy has “become urbanized and institutionalized” (p. 84). This is in response to globalized interactions through science, technology, and the economy. As such, “this development has affected the traditional African way of life, and is making Odera Oruka’s idea of philosophic sagacity in contemporary African philosophy to become vacuous” (p. 85). Indeed the impacts of globalization are changing the historical nature of daily African life. However, globalization does not bring with it a canvas devoid of transgression. Globalization carries with it the trace elements of colonized oppression and of African subjugation. This history cannot be erased, and it requires an excavation of cultural memory, and cultural rootedness to progress. Presbey (2007) adds Oruka was

interested in philosophy because he viewed it as a tool to expose injustices and to fight for people’s rights in using reason and argument....He saw himself as someone ready to wage “philosophic war’ with factors and values which promote social and economic disadvantage and oppression of people. (p. 151)

Sage Philosophy creates a space for dialogue about the ways in which young, urban Kenyans view themselves. This research will borrow from its methodology. Specifically, it will utilize the processes of interacting in individual conversation about particular issues of identity. Additionally, this research will utilize Sage Philosophy’s dialectic approach in querying the relationships between participants and their tribes. Presbey (2007) notes that Oruka, “saw his goal as being to clear away obstacles to philosophy, wisdom, and justice. He did this by exposing and analyzing three evils: socio-economic deprivation, cultural-racial mythology, and the illusion of appearance” (p. 151). The issues that Oruka battled against are still relevant to this research context.

Conclusion

Forstorp (2008) posits, “contemporary narratives of globalization are often associated with accounts of the role of higher education in a changing world” (p. 227). Besides ‘narratives of globalization’ that give birth to the “vision of the knowledge society” (p. 228), there can be ameliorative purposes to dialogue in higher education. One can carve out a space in higher education for discussion regarding key social issues and such dialogue can—does inform social policy. McGloin and Carlson (2013) assert, “although language shifts and meaning is never stable, terms used to describe Indigenous experience have the power to harm, offend and insult, to affect policy and to affect identity formation. Ultimately, language use can, and does, reinforce colonial discourses” (p. 1). These authors specifically address the usage of language terms, but I extend their meaning to the use of language space within academia. As an Indigenous scholar, the subject of my discourse examines the historical and social injustices of colonization. My aim is to interrogate, with my co-participants, the current effects of the colonial burden specifically as it affects young, urban, and professional Kenyans. Anticolonial Theory with its insistence on contextualizing research in a paradigm that accounts for and recounts colonization is necessary in explicating the roots of this discourse. Sage Philosophy with its particularly African approach into querying cultural constructs ground the work appropriate. With the contextual balance of the two stances, this research study will be framed appropriately.

Chapter 3: On Significance: A Review of Literature

In this chapter, I provide a selective review of research contributing the socio-cultural conversation regarding tribal identity, colonization, and nationhood. Specifically, I explore literature that addresses tribal identity formation as influenced by colonial processes, and generating the birth of a Kenyan nationhood. I conclude the chapter with a discussion about the role of ancestral knowledge.

Literature Inclusion Criteria

As a means of carrying out this selective reviews, I searched the following databases for pertinent content: Academic Search Premier, Academic OneFile, Ethnic NewsWatch, EBSCO, ERIC, Humanities Full Text, JSTOR, and OmniFile Full Text Mega. At first, I limited the search to work published between 2000-2016. This was to include the most recent literature. However, as it became apparent that I needed to provide a foundation for this study, I quickly expanded the research to allow influential work from within the canon. With the goal of focusing this study on young, urban, professional Kenyans and of privileging literature representative of the region, I used search terms that included, but were not limited to the following: anticolonial research, colonization, culture, history, indigenous knowledge, land appropriation, pre-postcolonial research, research-in-Kenya, tribal identity, nation-building, nationhood. Njiraine, Ocholla, and Onyancha (2010) commenting on the publication of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) research and publication in Kenya and South Africa write,

the Kenyan trend does not appear to be progressive; there were no signs of growth, perhaps stemming from obstacles such as the lack of IK legislation and

funding, lack of coordination in terms of the research being carried out, and also the lack of an IK database. (p. 200)

Their infometric study affirms the limited amount of research that I found to inform this topic. The authors also conclude that of the IK studies that are in existence for Kenya, “international databases captured a significant number of publications” (p. 205). My selective search, therefore, focused on these publications as they were accessible in database searches. Njiraine et al. (2010) add, “Kenya has sound existing research and academic institutions that could potentially play a vital role in promoting, recognizing, developing and protecting IKS within national, regional, and international Diasporas” (p. 20).

Engaging the Literature

This chapter discusses the significance of examining the relationship that young, urban, professional Kenyans have with their tribal cultures. However, I cannot begin such an exploration without first analyzing the concept of culture. As culture is the overarching construct housing both individuals and their ethnic groups. Said (1983) writes, “the idea of culture of course is a vast one. As a systematic body of social and political as well as historical significance, ‘culture’ is similarly vast” (p. 8). Within culture, we find the organized components of community, people sharing life together. At its most constitutive element, culture is the methodic way in which we survive collectively. Transcendentally, culture allows us to interact meaningfully within our diverse environments, and with each other. Following Said’s (1983) observation of culture as a historically maintained social and political system, this discourse on culture moves beyond theory, and becomes crucial in situating the relevance of this subject.

Furthermore, it positions this chapter and this study within its appropriate locus, centered in its own specific, Kenyan context.

Said (1983) asserts that there are two aspects of culture. The first conceives of culture as an arena fostering acceptance, growth, and development of human potential. The second is an equally powerful view of culture as a sphere that both subjugates and homogenizes its members. Culture is a parasitic instrument. Feeding on the very organisms that contribute to its continuance. Both perspectives hold culture as an organic, dynamic, and formative agent. Said (1983) notes,

what is more important in culture is that it is a system of values *saturating* downward almost everything within its purview; yet, paradoxically, culture dominates from above without at the same time being available to everything and everyone it dominates. (p. 9)

Culture shapes us. Inescapably, it forms, reforms, and transforms our worldview. For Said (1983), culture is the way in which all knowledge is transmitted presently, and from one generation to the next. This includes hopeful, uplifting, and regenerative aspects of knowing as well as the contrapositive and dehumanizing factors. Said (1983) concludes, “that culture often has to do with an aggressive sense of nation, home, community, and belonging” (p. 12).

For this reason, exploring the relationship between young Kenyans and their tribal cultures leads to an interrogation of the “sense of nation, home, community, and belonging” that Kenyan Youth hold. Herein lies one aspect of this study’s significance. If we can examine the sense of belonging or alienation that Youth hold, then we can begin a

fundamental and authentic discussion about creating a legitimate sense of equity within the nation.

Culture and a Sense of Nationhood

Predating the Colonizer

In Kenya, nationhood began as a colonial project. “The roots of colonial history of Kenya go back to the Berlin conference in 1885, when East Africa was first divided into territories of influence by the European powers (Kenya: Embassy of the Republic of Kenya in Japan, Colonial History, para. 1). Perhaps, it would have been more accurate to name East Africa as “territories for tyranny.” The colonial government, without human regard for the location’s Indigenous peoples, claimed land resources and utilized them for the sake of the empire. “The British government founded the East African Protectorate in 1895 and soon after, opened the fertile highlands to White settlers” (Kenya: Embassy of the Republic of Kenya in Japan, Colonial History, para. 1). Indigenous occupants were not allowed a voice in this government. As a matter of course, neither were the Indians and Asians relocated to Kenya for various manpower purposes including building the East African Railway. From the beginning, this lack of representation within the colonial government was contested as members of different Indigenous groups within Kenya mounted forms of ongoing resistance. First groups fought individually, and then as united factions against oppression.

As early as 1934, Indigenous people fought against domination. David Anderson (1993) writes, “crimes against colonial laws, protest against colonial authorities, and ultimately the aim of a general armed resistance were seen to be linked in a serious challenge to colonial rule in the Western Highlands” (p. 854). Even though these acts of

resistance were organized, the aim was not for the creation of one unified nation. The aim was to reclaim autonomy as it existed prior to colonial rule. The resistance included several ethnic groups all who had different governmental structures and were working to meet the different agendas these structures represented. As we can suppose given the context, the goal and nature of colonial resistance was complex.

David Anderson (1993) continues,

we have to understand ‘resistance,’ if we are to understand it as part of African, rather than merely colonial, history, as an external manifestation of this deeper rhythm of social life. And these rhythms changed as colonial rule create the possibility of a new moral order. (p. 854)

Such acts of resistance are important not only because they detail the reasonable struggle for democracy. They are important also because as we fully comprehend these acts of ‘resistance,’ they remind us of long established histories of self-governance. Run (2013) adds, “African societies had many of what Nader (1997) called ‘controlling processes’ which managed power and conflict, the manner in which these processes functioned before colonization was markedly different from the colonially introduced practices” (p. 30).

It is noteworthy that Indigenous groups could work to resist colonial domination because they, themselves, had already negotiated the terms upon which their societies functioned. They had already ratified rhythms which defined cultural norms, values, and mores. The colonizers did not find a blank space upon which to bring the semblance of order. Parallel constructs were in place.

Europeans found and disregarded ‘rhythm(s) of social life’ that belonged to groups whose traditional knowledges informed extant cultures with varied ways of being. Run (2013) asserts, “when the colonial administrators introduced European laws, they argued that indigenous people had their own laws but they had to be changed for civilisation’s sake” (p. 31). The knowledges that European found was historical and deeply constructive in that societies functioned and thrived under their own processes and organization. These knowledges were passed down from one generation to the next through clearly articulated methods of communication. (Joseph, 2001) writes, “in this dialogue of ancestors and progeny (where communication is revisionist), proverbs, images, and beliefs set claims on a community and are in turn claimed. Tradition, then, is a force that embraces only its own...tradition offers resistance to the outsider” (p. 60). Tradition allows its communicants to draw upon what Dei (2011) calls ‘cultural memory.’ It was this memory that fueled the action of resistance.

The Nation Fabricated

At its colonial inception, the unification of the diverse peoples in East Africa as a nation(s) was a tenuous undertaking. Parsons (2011) writes, “the African tribe was a useful fiction that legitimized the British policy of co-opting local institutions of authority (p. 494). Pre-dating the idea of nations, according to Parsons, was the colonial construction of different ethnic groups inhabiting the continent as ‘tribes.’ These tribes were created to support settler colony exploitation. Parsons continues, “for the past three decades, historians have used the interlinked concepts of manufactured tribalism and invented tradition to explain this phenomenon of identity formation during the colonial era” (p. 406). This argument is not that ethnic groups did not exist. Rather, the contention

is that “the colonial Kenyan state needed neat and sharply defined ethnicities to facilitate native administration and justify its policy of granting rights to collective tribes rather than to African individuals” (Parson, 2011, p. 495). In short, tribes were conceived by the colonizer to assert and maintain power.

Schlee (2013) counters, “to speak of tribes or ethnic groups as a colonial invention, as some fellow deconstructionists who are more radical in their deconstructions that I have done, does not appear to be justified” (p. 858). While he was arguing this stance specifically in the context of Northern Kenya, his perspective does advocate for a more nuanced consideration of tribes. He writes, “ethnicity is not necessarily territorial” (2013). That is, it is possible for an ethnic group to exist historically, as a holistic, socially constructed cultural entity without geographical boundaries. Schlee (2013) continues,

In spite of dramatic historical changes, like colonization and decolonization, the list of ethnic groups from the beginning of the twentieth century read much the same as today’s. But the character of ethnicity and its political and economic implications have changed a lot. The most important form of change, and the root of other changes, has been the territorialisation of ethnicity. Groups that did not have bounded territories now have them (p. 858).

For Schlee (2013), the term tribe is in alignment with the idea of an ethnic group held together by fluid social relations not limited to geographically boundaries. These include both “difference ([language]...husbandry, distinction along interethnic hierarchy) and interaction (co-residence in the same or adjacent areas, sharing of water points,

economic exchange, ritual interdependence)” (p. 860)³. For Parsons (2011), ‘tribe’ is associated with boundaries created to confine, marginalize, and dominate Indigenous populations for the purpose of colonial economic prowess.

The colonial creation of tribes, and subsequently, the nation, required the overt and insidious exploitation of people and their cultures so much so that the necessity for survival and the possibility for flourishing worked to change traditional patterns of life. Parsons (2011) explains, “the most secure people in the colonial era were those who were deeply ensconced within the safe folds of a state-recognized tribal community (p. 493). David Anderson (1993) echoes the same stance. He purports that the new rhythms were ultimately to be shaped by those elders who grasped the opportunities of Christianity who accepted the political authority of the new state, and who turned their energies to economic gain in an increasingly agricultural (rather than cattle-keeping and growing crops) economy. (p. 854)

These were the unfamiliar rhythms of nationhood.

While David Anderson (1993) clearly captures the variegated forces involved in the manufacturing of ‘Kenya’ as a nation, I am not certain that the transition he describes was as superficially clear or linear as expressed. Certainly, Christianity did offer different “opportunities” for grappling with certain cultural issues, and interacting with the colonial government did bring about possibilities for “economic gain.” Paustian (2014) cautions against wholesale assignments. She writes,

implicit here is the Marxist critique of religion as the opium of the masses.

According to this line of argument, missions offered Africa a kind of anesthetic,

³ This study utilizes the term ‘tribe(s)’ in alignment with Schlee’s (2013) conception of ‘tribe’ ethnic groups with shared histories and modes of establishing and maintaining viable social constructs.

facilitating not only the colonization of land or of culture, but the colonization of vision and consciousness, negating the victims capacity to even see the scene of his dispossession. (p. 2)

Paustian (2014) is not arguing for a negation to the exploitative damage and trauma that Empire caused in the name of Christianity. Nor is she discounting “Mudimbe’s account [of Christian missions] as ‘the best symbol of the colonial enterprise’” (p. 2). She is not in thorough opposition with Wa Thiong’o’s declaration of [the Christian Church] as “the greatest opponent of the African struggle for freedom” (p. 2). She is, however, calling for a layered and “multi-faceted” perspective.

Paustian (2014) writes,

this argument—initially a much needed counter-discourse...has become a dominant discourse itself within academic as well as cultural relativist discussions. As such, it has obscured the ways in which missions have been articulated with projects (and related narratives) of anticolonial resistance. (p. 2)

For Paustian, there is an imperative role for individual agency in concert with and beyond economic parameters. Therefore, while some who aligned themselves with Christianity may have done so as a means of gaining haven from socio-political injustice. Others under the same banner carried out the anticolonial projects. She (2013, p. 2) states, “thus, historians J. F. Ade Ajayi and E. A. Ayandele have described the mission school as an ‘incubator for African nationalism.’” (p. 98)

Paustian’s (2014) argument challenges us to recognize that identity formation in terms of tribes and ethnicity was and remains fluid. Wachanga (2015) notes, “as a constructed marker of marginality, ethnicity is, therefore, discursively alterable. As a

relational concept, ethnicity is concerned with categories of self identification and social ascription” (p. 282). Identity formation in all of its iterations, be it ethnicities as tribes, nations, or individuals, can be re-negotiated and re-constructed. Wachanga (2015) continues, “thus, what we think of as our own identity is dependent on what we think we are not (Barker, 2008, p. 249). (p. 282).

Ongoing resistance to both the colonial and national government contest the implication that certain Elders assumed a wholesale acceptance of “the political authority of the new state.” (Caretenuto, 2006) notes, “ethnicity is a continually negotiated and changing cultural process, and identities across Africa are constantly being reinvented, within and beyond the political sphere” (p. 54). The natural processes of dynamic cultural change was and is ongoing. Despite this resilience, Run (2013) adds , “anthropological scholarship augmented the relegation of African thought by lending ‘scientific’ authority to the notions of primitivism and backwardness of the African other” (p. 36). This image of a dehumanized, anti-intellectual, uncivilized African is still pervasive. The trauma perpetrated by the colonial government as it attempted to stamp its authority on all aspects of Indigenous culture certainly interrupted the organic nature of cultural flux. Economic practices instigated by the colonial government most obviously reflect this trauma.

In addition to seizing farm land for the cultivation of cash crops such as coffee and tea, the colonial government labored to curtail the movement of pastoral communities and consolidate land rights. Langat (1986) in Ng’ethe (2011) observes “the opening of the Kenya-Uganda railway line in 1901 provided adequate communication for the development of inland freehold and long-term leasehold land grants for ranch

development by White farmers”(para. 6). The railway meant that White settlers could now organize more easily from the highlands into the interior. Although the settlers alleged that consolidating land rights afforded economic sustainability for all Ng’ethe (2011) notes, “before the advent of the colonial government the life-style of most pastoral groups was spatially designed to provide a stable ecological foundation for their economy. This economy was neither stagnant nor isolated” (para. 6). Without colonial structures, Indigenous communities were able to communicate, trade, and co-exist within the context of their own governance.

Despite this, Ng’ethe (2011) notes, the British government through the African Land Development Board (ALDEV) “organized several grazing schemes” which later became “the concept behind the group ranch” (para. 6). Group ranch was the colonial government’s idea that “land registration in pastoral areas should be on a group rather than on an individual basis.” This parliamentary sanctioned act laid an even stronger foundation for land to be seized from Indigenous people. It “legalized ownership and occupation of land by a group of people and enabled participants to acquire funds for development and operation from local financial institutions” (para. 13). Ultimately, this meant that what had been negotiated by Indigenous peoples as a shared, communal resource became the institutionalized bedrock for exploitation.

Those individuals who could organize according to the colonial government procedures did so. One speculates that it was for the sake of survival. Ng’ethe (2011) suggests,

most pastoral groups viewed the colonial administration with suspicion and believed that the colonial government did not understand the real nature of

pastoral cultures with their many attendant problems. Pastoralists were not committed to the success of grazing schemes; they were ready to accept short-term benefits and moved out of the schemes during periods of any hardships.

(para. 10)

These uneven power relationships laid the foundation which later became the Republic of Kenya.

On Being a Nation

Joseph (2001) referring to Bhabha (1994) and Debray (1977) states, “on the one hand the nation is defined as a unifying entity” (p. 57). Much like Said’s (1983) observation of culture, it is a systematic body that encapsulates peoples’ social, political, and historical significance. Unlike culture, ‘nation’ in the African aftermath of colonial hegemony is not a singular vast entity. Joseph (2001) continues, “and yet the various representations of the nation reveal division and disruption at strategic junctures so that the definition is rendered either meaningless or controversial” (p. 57). The African development of a nation encapsulates different ethnicities and their cultures ‘united’ by colonial mandate. Joseph asserts that this mandate has consistently been “challenged by event of ‘independence struggle,’ ‘civil war,’ and something simple—the memory of home” (p. 57).

According to Joseph (2001), the presupposition of common national unity wars against the cultural experience and cultural identity of ‘difference’ that diverse tribal groups within African nations claim. She adds,

the present study [of African nations] often encounters the paradox of mobile national boundaries and fluid cultural demarcations and argues that the

contradictions and differences that a nation attempts to remove are in fact constitutive of the concept of the nation. (p. 57)

In other words, the Kenyan nation is a nation precisely because of the diversity of its ethnic traditions. Wachanga (2015) comments,

Smith (1990) differentiates political from ethnic constructions of nations, stressing how single states can constitute more than one national or ethnic culture. But the nation is the sum total of stories, images, rituals and symbols, which represent and sustain the imaginary relations to and the shared meanings of nationhood (Anderson, B., 1996/2001). (p. 282)

These shared meanings are sometimes the socio-political landscapes of solidarity, and other times, they are geographies for contestation. These regions require individual agency if nationhood is to incubate. Kofi Anan (2007) states, “no one is born a good citizen: no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime” (Wainaina, Arnot & Chege, 2011, p. 179).

With the exit of a common colonial enemy, ‘these imaginary relations’ became more transparent and the differences of these ethnic groups becomes apparent. This is because the colonizer both fabricated the unification of Kenyan tribes physically through governmental mandate, and *ideologically* unified these same tribes as the object of colonial resistance. In the current circumstance of national self-governance and without the tangible enemy of European occupancy, these cultural differences now rise to the forefront. Without the colonial state, the question for Kenyans then becomes, what constitutes the nationhood?

Forstorp (2008) referring to Appadurai (2003) offers a brief foray into the beginnings of this discussion. He “identifies the foundational concept of the nation-state as the “embryonic principle of sovereignty” (p. 229). In his context, nationhood occurs in relationship or counter-relationship to colonialism. Accordingly, without the colonial government grouping different ethnicities and their appertaining cultures together, the nation of Kenya as it stands, is unlikely to exist. Forstorp (2008) continues, “he [Appadurai] admits that not only territory, but also ideas about language, origin, ethnicity, and race play important roles in the formation of cultural identities, although territory seems most crucial” (p. 229). More than ideas, these factors into cultural identity formation, I would contend, are important in the upholding of nationhood because they are historically experienced. Schlee (2013) reminds us,

the term ‘nation-building’ [used] to denote a political programme makes clear that there was no nation when Kenya was founded as an independent state. While national emancipation in Europe...assumed the existence of nations prior to the time when they achieved statehood of their own, Kenya at independence had the shell of a ‘nation state’ yet to be filled with a ‘nation,’ a process some people are still waiting to occur. (p. 872)

Therefore, the historical experiences that pre-date colonial hegemony carry onward the ‘cultural memory’ of their peoples. These experiential factors also contribute to the disenfranchisement that marginalized citizens within Kenya currently encounter.

As the new nation-state was formed, Joseph (2001) observes, a new form of domination rose to replace the colonial government. It came in the form of a nation-state controlled by a majority group thoroughly interested in maintaining its power. Akech

(2011) asserts, “African politics can largely be explained by reference not to formal but to informal institutions, and above all to neopatrimonialism” (p. 96). His position is that governance, within the continent, is brokered by ‘informal systems’ that are not ordained by legal jurisdiction. The informal systems are both opaque and oppressive. Akech clarifies (2011),

the Big Man [president] often stays in power until the end of his life, distributes public-sector jobs and resources to his followers, and makes little distinction between public and private funds. His lieutenants act as patrons to lower-level power brokers. Politics become a matter of clientelism, patronage, and ‘corrupt, *lawless*, personal rule’ (Diamond, p. 247). (p. 97)

According to Akech (2011), neopatrimonialism utilized ‘extraconstitutional means’ to maintain power. This was expressed through the un-democratic actions and subsequent legitimizing language of power utilized by the state.

Language, Joseph (2001) states, clearly demonstrates how the new government carried out its dictates. In laying out her argument she recognizes the seditious and harmonizing potency of language. She writes, “language carries an ideological burden that interpellates communities” (p. 59). Language calls to the essential factors that hold identities within, and of a community together. It is a reaffirmation of those things to which one belongs and has been formed. Joseph (2001) referencing Wa Thiong’o, one of Kenya’s cultural revolutionists against western hegemony, cements the importance of language. She suggests, “as Ngũgĩ’s tool of communication, language offers both the ‘inward dialogue and space’ of ‘the individual African’ (Harris 33), as well as the expression of ‘an imagined political community’” (p. 59). As a democratic tool, language

allows the individual free expression. Alternately, as a weapon of political machination, language is the arbiter of control. Akech (2011) citing the 2007 elections in Kenya demonstrates the use of language as a locus of political control.

Kenya's bungled 2007 presidential elections can also be attributed to presidential manipulation of the rules governing the electoral process. Here, although an informal 1997 agreement of the so-called Inter-Parties Parliamentary Group (IPPG) had stipulated that all major political parties would thenceforth be represented on the Electoral Commission, subsequent governments ignored the accord, arguing that it was not legally binding. Thus President Mwai Kibaki opted to unilaterally appoint members of the Electoral Commission in the months preceding the 2007 elections. As authority for this, he could cite the constitution, brushing aside the IPPG agreement that he thought less likely to aid his quest for a second term. (p. 99)

It is in the very real and often fractious enactment of an imagined, utopian community that language is used for subjugation. Within the newly formed nation-state, where the goal is no longer to seek affirmation of the sovereignty of "the individual African," language becomes the weapon of the prevailing nation. Joseph (2001) continues, "Language in this instance functions as an Ideological State Apparatus (*Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy* 136-38) that naturalizes internal relationships of domination" (p. 59).

Within the politics of Kenya, revisionist utilization of language displays systematic repression. Ogude and Ojwang (2011) warrant, "Kenyan governments since the mid-1990s have explicitly sought to harness ethnic-language media houses, either to build solid ethnic voting blocks, or to break potential multi-ethnic coalitions that would

pose a challenge to the political party in power” (p. ix). Language, in this instance, has been used to veil the unjust exercise of power. This begs the question, who then does the nation-state seek to serve when the colonial oppressor has gone?

Freire (1970) in his oppressor/oppressed dialectic argues that without a critical awareness of his or her human existence, the oppressed in turn becomes the oppressor. Oppression, here is defined in terms of the misuse of power, specifically with the use of violent force. We can think of oppression in terms of military might brought against opposing forces, or police brutality against minority voices. We can also conceive of oppression in terms of economy, where one group(s) is denied equal access to economic security. For Freire (1970), oppression accounts for external causes and reaches a far more intrinsic level. In terms of Freireian thought, oppression affects the oppressed (and oppressor) at her most elemental, love. It encompasses as well as inculcates violence. Oppression is a damaging act destroying an individual’s humanity by suppressing her ability for critical awareness. Oppression, according to Freire, is dehumanizing. Freire (1970) writes,

but while both humanization and dehumanization are real alternatives, only the first is the people’s vocation. This vocation is constantly negated, yet it is affirmed by that very negation. It is thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression, and the violence of the oppressors; it is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice, and by their struggle to recover their lost humanity. Dehumanization, which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (although in a different way) those who have stolen it, is a distortion of the vocation of becoming more fully human. (p. 43-44)

For Freire (1970), this distortion of humanity is not a natural state. It includes the physical catastrophes perpetuated by oppression and encapsulates a deeper more inherent pain. The distortion causes a core disequilibrium within the self thereby engendering a consistent tension of being. Freire (1970) asserts, “because it is a distortion of being more fully human, sooner or later being less human leads the oppressed to struggle against those who made them so” (p. 44). He maintains that such disequilibrium is not sustainable and will lead to a revolution. In the instance of Kenya, where colonized oppression devolved into nation-state oppression, Freire warns that the felt disequilibrium will lead to a demise. A holistic transformation is necessary.

It is essential to note that Freire (1970) is not advocating for a revolution where the formerly oppressed becomes that oppressor. This would replicate the abuse of those who have used their powers to coerce and crush humanity. Rather, he insists on a cultural change that maintains justice and equity. He insists, “this, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well” (p. 44). Freire’s goal is to usurp hegemonic power dynamics by insisting that those who are oppressed advocate for their own freedom. As well, he is concerned with the challenges that arise in the journey toward freedom. He warns that the oppressed, “will not gain this liberation by chance but through the praxis of their quest for it, through their recognition of the necessity to fight for it” (p. 45). However difficult this process becomes, Freire is insistent that the oppressed must enact it because it is a necessary battle as human beings work to achieve their full potentiality. He continues, “and this fight, because of the purpose given it by the oppressed, will actually constitute an act of love, opposing the lovelessness which lies at the heart of the oppressors’ violence”

(p. 45). According to Freire, the only mechanism that will bring about social justice is the love enacted by the oppressed as they seek liberation.

Indigenous identity and knowledge is key in this act of liberation because it reaffirms individual and cultural identity. By design, it holds a “regional or even continental quality that makes it conform more to the geographical and related environmental needs of the populace” (Abdi, 2011, p. 82). It is relevant to the peoples’ experiences. Importantly, it is a knowledge base that is not static.

As Semali (1999) pointed out, traditional African education also had an effective knowledge and scientific repertoire that allowed it to effectively respond, not only to social and governance needs of the community, but as well to the ecological literacy, and to the agricultural and medical needs of people. (Abdi, 2011, p. 82)

This knowledge provides the philosophical wisdom crucial to seeking liberation. It makes this wisdom explicit by offering examples (passed down through the millennia of Indigenous existence) of how to enact it.

As mentioned earlier, the concept of nationhood has always been challenged. The first challenge was against colonial rule. The current challenge is with stabilizing the growing nation-state. Forstorp (2008) posits, “the idea of the nation-state...is in a period of crisis given the isomorphism of people, territory and legitimate sovereignty is under threat from commodity flows, mobility and human movement” (p. 229). In exploring the relationship between young, urban, professional Kenyans and their tribes, I hope that we can underscore the importance of indigenous knowledges to the task of nation-building. Wainaina et al. (2011) referring to Harber (1997) observe, “the study of citizenship education is characterized by its close relationship to Western European political

philosophy, with little attention given to the significance of this tradition to non-Western, often postcolonial, educational systems” (p. 181). The authors contend that nation-building requires African, Indigenous knowledges for the social construction of governance.

Culture and a Sense of Communal Belonging

On Belonging

Said (1983) maintains that culture provides a sense of belonging. As social beings, belonging is an inherent human need. Kunc (1992) affirms this perspective, “Abraham Maslow (1970), in his discussion of a hierarchy of human needs, pointed out that belonging was an essential and prerequisite human need that had to be met before one could ever achieve a sense of self-worth” (para. 10). Apart from the self, belonging to a people group ensures survival. Human beings endure and thrive together. In the context of Indigenous autonomy, the discussion surrounding ‘a sense of belonging’ moves beyond the personal, through the communal, and into the national. The dialogical question becomes, ‘to whom do we belong?’

Within the boundaries of culture, Said (1983) posits, hierarchies working to secure structures of dominance as well as marginalization are maintained. As Kenya continues to build upon its nationhood, these structures are at play. The significance in exploring the relationship between youth and their tribes then, is found in interrogating these hierarchical constructs. Wainaina et al. (2011) add, “youth citizenship is now on the international agenda with African countries increasingly interrogating their national perspectives on citizenship and citizenship education” (p. 179). Therefore, this discussion continues by investigating the in-between spaces of belonging. Coombes et al. (2013)

ponder the constitutive elements of this in-betweenness within the context of geography and Indigenous politics. They postulate

Geographers quickly adopted that retrospective, discursive mode of post-colonialism, but they skirted the prospective implicit in Bhabha's (1994) third spaces, interstices and enunciatory moments. In that second mode, postcolonial theory speculates that hybridity in the contact zone will generate excess creative diversity, contradictions for the patronizing hierarchies of colonial discourse and, thereby, scope for subaltern agency to displace neo/colonialism. (p. 692)

The 'space in-between' lies suspended within the jarring beginning reaction and the definitive next step of a primary condition. That is, *condition A* exists. The space in between, is the reaction to *condition A* before full attainment *condition B*. In terms of colonization, the creation of the nation-state was/is a rejection of the colonialism. It was, in effect, the beginning reaction to the primary condition of the colonial imposition. This act of forging a nation was the nascent step in decolonization. Of course, the terms 'first,' 'primary,' 'initial' and so forth, are used here to capture waves of evolution from one step(s) within a process(es) to the next. Furthermore, these terms are not meant to convey linearity. They are, however, meant to draw attention to the ongoing evolvement of decolonization.

Coombes et al. (2013) recognizes that decolonization occurs in phases. The call for a unified, autonomous nation comes within the initial phase of rejecting the colonial government. In Kenya, *Harambee* (coming together as one) became the rallying call for the newly formed nation. *Harambee* included the forging of a national identity, a sense of belonging for the Indigenous citizens of Kenya. If *Harambee* constitutes the first phase of

nation-building, then subsequent phases must emerge within the dynamism of cultural histories.

Wainana, Arnot, and Chege (2011) add a multi-faceted and nuanced perspective contesting a single, national identity. They write, “African scholars challenge the assumption that citizenship refers to a single political community, and mainly, if not only to the relationship of the individual to the modern democratic state” (p. 181). A national identity, therefore, includes plurality within the spaces of belonging. They are what the authors (2011) refer to as “duality(ies) of citizenship.”

The socio-political division (which has its roots in the colonial period) is reinforced by a second duality of citizenship, which according to Ndegwa (1998), distinguishes between those citizenships rights and obligations individuals and groups hold in relation to their ethnic communities, and those rights and obligations that they hold in relation to the nation state. (Wainaina et al., 2011, p. 181)

The processes of decolonization continue beyond the founding of a nation. Following this initial phase of unity, is a reconnection with the language (or hierarchies) of cultures of origin. Decidedly, the cultural legacies pushed aside by the colonizers during colonial occupation and set aside by local communities during nation-building emerge. This is where the deepest sense of belonging is situated. Joseph (2001) notes, the sense of belonging is created by dint of a common past that is as real as it is imaginary. The studied collection of ancestors, what Anderson refers to as the ‘museumizing imagination’ (178)...the focus in all this is not the continent of

Africa [or in this case the nation of Kenya], but the local, the ethnic community.
(p. 61)

While the colonial government dismantled the construct of Indigenous governments, they could not erase the cultural memory innate to colonized peoples. These memories carried the knowledges that fueled resistance and triumph.

To cement their power, the colonial government organized a structure whose primary purpose was to serve their needs. In the aftermath of their departure, it was necessary for the governmental systems to rally into nationhood. Presently, some of these nations, like Kenya, are in the second phase of post-departure. Coombes et al. (2013) urge,

we maintain that the second mode of postcolonial inquiry provides insight into Indigenous agency and permits deeper understanding of currently important topics within human geography – reconciliation, belonging and responsibility. In particular, it provides optimism and prototypes for the geographies of hope.
(p. 692)

This research brings to the forefront the subject of belonging as a fundamental component of nationhood.

Cultural Memory and Common Unity

Joseph (2001) states, “the *nasci* of nations, the argument that a nation is made up of people who belong together by birth (Hameso 31) can be ratified under the theory of tradition and ethnicity” (p. 61). Consequently, she is arguing that belonging to a nation is preempted with membership to a tribe—the acknowledged bearer of tradition and ethnicity. Quoting (Bhabha 45) she continues, “the *nation* that is a ‘condition of

belonging” (p. 61). In other words, she views tradition and ethnicity as the center of belonging and therefore, the carrier of essential components of nationhood.

Underlying this theory is a suggestion that those who hold the same traditions and have the same ethnicity are bound together by a communal sense of belonging.

Carotenuto (2006) writes, “it has become commonplace to argue that cultural components such as a common language, religious and social traditions, a shared historical memory, and place of origin may all be important foundations of ethnic solidarity” (p. 55).

Therefore, primary allegiance as the most basic sense of belonging is first attributed to one’s tribe and then to one’s nation. Carotenuto (2006) punctuates, “scholars now argue that many contemporary African ethnicities are socially constructed phenomena that were drastically shaped by the colonial encounter” (p. 55). He is contending that Indigenous identity preceded the advent of colonial authority. However, these identities had to be negotiated within the constructs of foreign dictate.

Grievously, these identities had to be re-contextualized to fit into the oppressor mold. Carotenuto (2006) continues, “foreign impositions radically altered African identities from top down, by imposing foreign borders, altering local authority, and codifying and reworking cultural traditions” (p. 55). The claim, here, is not that Indigenous identities would have remained pristine and stagnant; rather, it is that colonization counterfeited the naturally fluid processes of cultural dynamism. Lee (2011) charges, “our languages, rituals, ceremonies, protocols, and ways of life have been disrupted and disheveled” (p. 212). Given this traumatic rupture, traditions and ethnicity allow Indigenous peoples access to the knowledges of cultural co-existence that were mediated before the impositions of foreign structures.

In this light, traditions and ethnicity become the key elements in a socially constructed governmental framework. In turn, this allows for continual stability and communal acceptance of the now aptly named nation. Essentially, Joseph (2001) argues that nationhood in Kenya exists because it gains its strength from the differences that the multiplicity of cultures within Kenya bring to it. As cohesive and elegant as this position sounds, it seems naïve. Certainly, it appears to be disconnected from the brutal reality of the 2007-08 political crisis. During these elections, ethnically targeted violence accompanied election outcomes. In the aftermath of such violence, it seems not only naïve but also somewhat irresponsible to argue that tribal differences are the fundamental elements of nationhood. Especially with the uncertain tensions that accompanied the most recent presidential elections (in 2013), Kenyans remain tentative regarding conversations that highlight ethnic differences.

Despite initial appearances, a more analytic viewpoint recognizes that these differences are enduring. They are part of cultural identities. Additionally, they transmit humanizing power of cultural memory and the knowledges formulating these memories. These knowledges have been the understructure for surviving into present day. I am not advocating for wholesale re-adoption of what Said (1983) calls the ‘hierarchies’ of the past. I am, like Carotenuto (2006) asserting that “ethnically based associations [have the possibility to] continue to balance cultural and economic development with the continued construction of the Kenyan nation” (p. 68). Ethnic differences have the potential to weaken and disorient. Ogude and Ojwang (2011) observe that this is the argument often used by the state to advance an “ethos of nation building and thus national unity” (p. ix). However, this argument does not expose the complete picture. Referencing George Ogula

(2011), Ogude and Ojwang (2011) write, “to the extent that this unity has been obtained, it has been achieved through a ‘manufactured consensus’—one that has sought, through ‘coercion and co-option,’ to stifle oppositional voices in the name of safeguarding a fragile national fabric” (p. ix). This sort of brittle structure cannot hold because it is easily fragmented. A democratic solution, one that allows all voices to solidify the union, is to authentically craft ways in which these differences can be utilized as a means of demonstrating the strengths of each culture. Wainana et al. (2011) quoting Avoseh (2001) comment on

the relationship between culture and citizenship [as being] centered on the basic elements of obligations to the community and interpersonal relationships where such relationships are ‘sensitive to values such as the sacredness of human life, mutual help, generosity, cooperation, respect for older people, harmony and the preservation of the sacred’ (p. 483). (p. 181)

Conclusion

Certainly, Western knowledge—which shored up colonialism—worked to dehumanize and exploit the colonized subject. The act of humanizing, then, must take into account much more than Western formulations of knowing. Lee (2011) observes that we ought to “utilize Indigenous knowledge to promote ways to re-build” (p. 213). The idea that cultural differences are the bedrock of nationhood holds within it what Freire (1995) would call a pedagogy of hope. He writes, “without a minimum of hope, we cannot so much as start the struggle. But without the struggle, hope, as an ontological need, dissipates, loses its bearings, and turns into hopelessness” (para. 2). It is in re-learning the ways that our ancestors negotiated their differences that we can learn to

navigate the common unity of nationhood. Joseph (2001) asserts, “the surfacing of ethnic and tribal differences, like Freud’s return of the repressed, is simultaneously a process in the journey toward healing as well as a stage of the illness itself” (p. 61). The journey of nationhood in Kenya, likewise, is undergoing the pain of illness. The emergence of ethnic differences can be seen as threatening to stability. I argue, that the discourse of difference needs to be reframed as a discourse of hope in which cultural multiplicity is acknowledged and ancestral foundation reteach us how to navigate onward, together.

Chapter 4: Casting Nets: A Methodology of Research Praxis

At the End of My Telescope

By Senghor (1998)

*“At the end of my telescope, fishermen and the net,
Fishermen singing together and walking rhythmically
In asymmetrical parallel, fishermen on the beach
And in the great sea where there are fish of every kind.*

*At the end of my telescope are naked fishermen
Standing side by side and their long muscles
Are rhythmic and beautiful like basalt statues.*

*And the praise-singing women and the vibrating women
Are curved hills whose little valleys have more fragrance
Than the gorges of Tyamassass.*

*Oh, if only we were, you were, here in the clear nudity
Of prehistory so the muscles of our legs and chest can play
And our pure passion flame like night brushfires
In the transparent beauty of our musky hearts,
Our bodies of amber and bronze.*

Leopold Sedar Senghor (1998), a poet, theorist, and Senegal’s first president, calls forth two seemingly opposing images in this poem. The first image is that of an observer narrowly looking backwards and down into the extended length of history. He is removed, both in time and space, from the interconnected communal existence which he looks upon. He stands alone. The second image is that of a vibrant, harmonious community engaged in a holistic work. This work is holistic in that the senses along with the physical environment are fully incorporated into the process of those who are working. As the poet contemplates what he views ‘at the end of his telescope,’ the community is not exhibiting a sense of alienation from self, time, environment, and task. The speaker in the poem, though an observer of this community, participates in a dual role. He is immersed in both worlds.

Definitively, he inhabits the stance of the observer, somewhat distant yet still undertaking the work of surveying a world that functions with its own rhythms and patterns. A world that is encapsulated in the bonds of its own time and space. However, in the process of his observations, the poet also takes part within the world of his rumination. He has knowledge of the songs of the fishermen and the sea to which they walk. Otherwise, he could not name them so intimately. He understands that the women are singing praises and acknowledges that their curvatures reflect the melodic landscape. This is a connection he cannot make unless he has known the land; and therefore, can demarcate praise from sorrow. He is, self-admittedly, swayed by the clarity of passion and of work that all exhibit. The euphonious tension of this poem, even with its nostalgic lamentation, is an appropriate starting place for discussing the methodology that I will use.

Casting the Net: Frameworks for Inquiry:

Kupiga Hadithi: Storied-Knowing

Schwandt (2007) in *The Sage Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry* (3rd ed.) posits that methodology is “a theory of how inquiry should proceed. It involves analysis of the assumptions, principles, and procedures in a particular approach to inquiry (that, in turn, governs the use of particular methods)” (p. 193). “At the End of My Telescope” by Senghor (1998) paints a holistic picture of a relational, reciprocal methodology. This is a methodology borrowing from the oral tradition of telling and learning from stories around the fire, in sitting rooms, along the marketplace, during work and gathered in community. These stories are life lessons, interspersed with proverbs, song, humor, tradition. Within this knowing, the speakers become listeners, and the listeners also speaking. There is both

a centripetal and centrifugal space of sharing. In Swahili, we call this type of storied reciprocity, *hadithi*. In utilizing the principles of *hadithi* as a methodology, I am the observer returning to a communal space imbued with its particular rhythms and patterns. I am joining Senghor's (1998) fishermen walking in 'asymmetrical parallel' as they cast out their nets into 'the great sea.' I am 'praise-singing with the vibrant women' as they meld into the landscape. As a researcher, the conversations have already begun, the current is bubbling and I am asking that we—myself together with the participants—can stand “here in the clear nudity of prehistory so the muscles of our legs and chest can play and our pure passion flame like night brush fires in the transparent beauty of our musky hearts” (Senghor, 1998, p. 185).

Schwandt (2007) further defines methodology as “a particular social scientific discourse (a way of acting, thinking, and speaking) that occupies a middle ground between discussions of method (procedures, techniques) and discussions of issues in the philosophy of social science” (p. 193). He goes on to articulate that the relationship between method and philosophy is both symbiotic and non-linear. He states, “there is no direct, unbroken, logically necessary link between various positions on issues in the philosophy of social science, methodologies, and methods” (p. 193). According to Schwandt (2007) then, the way in which research is carried out must correspond to the principles that are fundamental to that research field. The research methodology used here will: intertwine the reciprocity of *Kupiga Hadithi*, storied-knowing; utilize the principles of culturally responsive methodologies; and query status social assumptions using decolonizing methodologies.

Decolonizing Methodologies

Decolonizing methodologies requires that Indigenous scholars undergo a three-part process: first, the work of self-identification as casualties of colonization; second, a re-learning of self as an Indigene; third, a re-engagement with the academy from a self-determined, equal stance. Smith (2012) asserts, “decolonization is a process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels. For researchers, one of those levels is concerned with having a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values which inform research practices” (p. 21). Therefore, researchers utilizing decolonizing methodologies to frame their inquiry must ask key questions regarding the ultimate benefit of the research. Who will the research benefit, to what end, and for what purpose? In the process of asking such questions, researchers are obligated to evaluate individual and personal drives, beliefs, and worldviews. As a method of inquiry, decolonizing methodologies pushes beyond the barriers of objectivity into a relational, reflexive, emancipatory process of research.

Linda Tuhawai Smith (2012) writes, “method is important because it is regarded as the way in which knowledge is acquired or discovered and as a way which we can ‘know’ what is real” (p. 166). Smith’s articulation of “method” as it is conventionally used in research is troubling because it brings to the forefront culturally dichotomous perspectives on the nature of knowing, and of reality. One perspective holds that reality is confined to what we ‘know’ or can somehow observably quantify. The second position assumes that reality is included within, but not limited to what we ‘know’ and what can be measured. This ontological struggle elucidates an Indigenous-Western dissimilitude about the nature of ‘being’ and of knowledge acquisition within the world. The struggle

is further chasmatic when either one of these perspectives insists upon the subjugating dominance of its rightness.

As an indigenous scholar, I work within the assumption that knowledge and its acquisition cannot be confined to that which is quantifiable. Furthermore, I would argue that “what we ‘know’ and what is real” are not necessarily congruent. There can be things that are real that we do not know. Alternately, there are things that we come to know as reality, but our knowledge is incomplete. For example, we know that life on Earth undergoes a process of change and adaptation. Simplified and generally, this is called evolution. What we don’t know are all of the inflections causing that change. Certainly, there are scientific data that inform our understanding, and there is also adequate space for mystery of unknowing. Moreover, we don’t know all that we don’t know. Our knowledge is confined to the boundaries of time, of space, and of the lack of accessibility to the knowledge that lives beyond our temporal comprehension. In other words, our knowledge is confined to the historicity of our existence. Method then, as a traditional process of inquiry, supposes that we can completely quantify and verify the way in which knowledge in a given field of research has been and will be acquired. Herein lies the troubling problem with method. Not everything within one’s experience or relationship is quantifiable. Yet as researchers, we bring both the elusive and specific experiences into the work and to our findings. As such, research method(s) can be colonizing in its attempt to gain knowledge. Specifically, when it brings it the assumption that there is only one right approach within which to engage in research. Method is a way, is an important way, of coalescing, documenting, and articulating the processes of research, but it isn’t the penultimate way.

Smith (2012) continues, “social science fields of inquiry are dependent on the way society is viewed, and the body of knowledge which legitimates that viewpoint” (p. 166). Research practice as defined by method, is subsequently related to *a priori* assumptions of the researcher. There is no objective alienation of self as one enters a field, there is a knowledge-base that fuels a researcher’s entry, process, and findings. Research within Indigenous contexts is particularly emblematic of *a priori assumptions* enacted by scholars. As Smith (2102) consistently articulates in her book *Decolonizing Methodologies*, research, historically, has been the long arm of the colonizer. Research was harvested from indigenous peoples for the purpose of furthering an economic and social agenda of the colonizer. Its purposes were to ascertain the hierarchical wealth of dominant powers. Decolonizing Methodologies then encompasses the revolutionary response of indigenous researchers who are interested in usurping these unjust processes. Smith (2012) writes of such researchers,

these people were indigenous activists rather than Marxists, but were asking similar sorts of questions about the connections between power and research. Such questions were based on a sense of outrage and injustice over the failure of education, democracy and research to deliver social change for people who were oppressed. These questions related to the relationship between knowledge and power, between research and emancipation, and between lived reality and imposed ideals about the Other. (p. 166)

Decolonizing Methodologies theoretical informs my approach to the questions as well as the analysis of data that will result from the questions. Necessarily, this means the research questions should have their genesis within my field of study. As well, I need to

engage in a reciprocal process of research questions, co-construction has to take place so that the work is appropriately relevant to the field. As a framework for inquiry, Decolonizing Methodologies will inform the purposes and platform used to share findings with co-participants within the field. Together with participants, we will define the emancipatory purposes of the work.

Culturally Responsive Methodologies as a Research Praxis

As a researcher using Culturally Responsive Methodologies (CRM) as praxis, I understand that my approach to research has to be holistic and appropriate to the specific context in which I am situated. CRM presumes a ‘togetherness’ between the researcher and participant that is centered on the wellness of the participant. It is a research praxis highlighting reciprocity in the researcher-participant relationship. As a CRM researcher, I am neither the genesis nor the center of the research; therefore, my interactions with participants are to be based on culturally appropriate methods for engagement. Additionally, CRM supposes a social justice agenda within the research framework. Research, therefore, has an action component. A dedicated purpose of enacting social change. As a CRM researcher, I bear a certain responsibility to my participants.

What does it mean to be “culturally responsive and culturally responsible” in my research? As my research field is located and contextualized among a people with living tribal heritages, there are customs and traditions governing social interactions and knowledge exchanges. Of these, communal practices of relationship-building and knowledge-bearing hold primacy. Te Arani Barrett (2012 as cited in Berryman, et al., 2013) writes, “indigenous research methodology involves gathering and representing tribal understandings in ways that are culturally responsive and culturally responsible”

(p. 230). Therefore, to be culturally responsive and responsible in the context of my research requires that I establish communal relationships that will guide and inform the relevancy of the research content. In the book *Culturally Responsive Methodologies* Berryman et al. (2013) discuss myriad possibilities of enacting CRM. I highlight eight below as appropriate for informing my research methodology. In carrying the processes of research, I will work to:

- Ascertain that my research isn't siloed—that is carried out in isolation from the participant community and my academic community.
- Ensure that the topic of research is initiated and validated by participants.
- Utilize research questions that have under-gone a co-construction process.
- Gain permissions and accession within the field mediated by co-participants and insiders.
- Report back data analysis to the field for participant checks.
- Return the research outcomes, findings, etc. to the field in an appropriate and accessible manner.
- At each step, check in with committee members for the purposes of academic integrity and to honor their mentorship.
- Present overall findings to participants.

This list, though appropriate to my research context, is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. I include it as a self-reflexive guide to guide my research in culturally appropriate praxis.

Weaving the Nets: Elements into a Research Methodology

*There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
Shakespeare (Hamlet, 1.5.167-8)⁴*

In my traditional custom when one enters a communal space, there is a relational exchange that must happen. This is the ‘greeting ceremony’ and it occurs both at first entry, and at subsequent meetings. It is important to note, too, that an individual does not enter a communal space alone. If he or she is new to the gathering, she is brought in by the physical presence of an individual known to the community, a guide. Thereafter, she is accepted on the basis of prior knowledge, of already established engagement. Once she enters the space, a relational dialogue ensues. It begins with the acknowledgement of personhood and the carrying out of introductions. The guide has to establish, for the visitor, mutuality. This is first done by the process of greeting, of which there are variances (in accordance with tribal status) in offering the right hand of peace or embracing. The guide, then, continues to this initial dialogue by bridging the relational gap through establishing commonalities in ancestral lineages, friendships, and legacies.

As the conversation progresses, members of the community engage the visitor in further foundational discussion about relational ties. Eventually, food is offered and eaten. For the community, the offering of food is a gesture of welcome, of acceptance, of togetherness, and an offer of trust. For the visitor, the eating of food is an acknowledgment of the welcome and an acceptance of the relationship. It is the establishing of mutual trust.

⁴ Source: Literature Network. (2014). William Shakespeare: Hamlet, Act I. Scene 5.

In seeking to answer my research questions, I am entering a communal space. As I am the one seeking to enter this space, I cannot appropriate process with customs that are foreign to customary praxis. This would be detrimental to the work, but most importantly, it would be a colonizing practice in which I would be exploiting the research context primarily for my scholarship. It is imperative, therefore, that I engage in the customary practices that are in place. For this reason, the processes of *Kupiga Hadithi* are key. Even in the process of entry as described above, one can see *hadithi* in practice. The community, the guide, and the visitor all share stories of how they have come to be in that particular context at that particular time. They build common foundation of ancestral knowing and present trust. They have a starting place of how future encounters will continue and along the way, there is a co-construction of new knowledge, a new way of being together.


As a stance, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, informs my academic position as I engage in conversations within this shared space. The common history of both past and neo-colonization affects the social existence of those with whom I will work in the field. From the colonial creation of Kenya as a nation-state, to changes in traditional naming practices as a result of Christianity, to the infiltration of technology as a global tool of influence, the understanding of colonial impact upon Indigenous existence is paramount. This knowledge will allow for an expansive depth as the work drills further into social complexities. As a result, CRM is necessary as a reflexive framework for ensuring that research methodology remains appropriate to the field.

CRM encourages research and participants co-construction of the research process. Utilizing this approach ascertains that the questions asked and course of dialogue

as well as all other research interactions really do belong to the field. Table 1 highlights the ways in which each of these frameworks for inquiry pertain to overall methodology used. The ways in which their individual approaches to content, data collection and analysis, and resultant actions work to buoy this study's research questions.

Table 1

Methods of Inquiry

Framework	Approach	Data Collection and Analysis	Action
<i>Kupiga Hadithi</i>	Storied-knowing Highly Communal Teaching  Listening Way of being	Conversational, metaphorical Key Question: How does our knowledge inform our being?	Shared, communal knowledge
Decolonizing Methodologies	Academic Epistemology self-identification as casualties of colonization re-learning of self as an Indigene a re-engagement with the academy from a self-determined, equal stance	Academic methods of Inquiry Key Question: Who benefits from the research?	Emancipatory, actionable knowledge
Culturally Responsive Methodologies	Engagement Praxis Highly-Relational Centered on participant social praxis Supposes a social justice agenda	Highly contextualized to specific research site Key Question: Is engagement appropriate and relevant to the specific context?	Shared, Emancipatory, actionable knowledge

At the End of my Telescope: Questions for Research

Research Statement and Questions

Elechi, Morris, and Schauer (2010) write,

African people believe that individuals and the community can be reformed through education and the teaching of morals. Again, people with strong connection to their family and the community are more likely to conform to societal norms and value their relationships, as opposed to those who are disconnected and feeling alienated. (p. 74)

These authors contextualize their discussion within the topic of justice, and more significantly, restorative justice. The word ‘reform’ then, carries with it the meaning of a re-welcoming, a re-entry into a tightly knit society. In their paper, the authors suggest that African communities, though not monolithic, share a similar communal world view. Individual cultures on the continent move together in terms of customs and legacy. Each holds its own unique and unified identity. The goal of this study is to explore this notion of a unified tribal identity particularly with the context of young, urban, Kenyan professionals. Initial conversations in the field have allowed me permission to query this subject of a shifting tribal identity as well as its impact. As I embark upon this path, Smith (2012) cautions, “I have one consistent message for students I teach and the researchers that I train it is that indigenous research is a humble and humbling activity” (p. 5). Keeping her words in mind, I reference discussions with participants in Kenya and I ask the following research question: *how do young, urban, professional Kenyans define their tribal identities?* Within the context of this question, I will seek to explore the nature of the relationship between participants of their tribes. I will ask how and why this

relationship may be changing. Additionally I wonder if we, co-participants in the study, can engage in reflexive discourse about our current perspectives on tribal identity and discuss potential lessons that may emerge.

Singing Together – Genesis of Research

In conversation with a Kenyan peer reflecting on the 2013 Kenyan presidential elections, she made the comment “my children will have nothing to do with being a Luo. In fact, they will not speak the language. They will not eat the food. They will have no tribal affiliations.” I was somewhat surprised with her statement and asked why she felt this way. As a Luo, myself, this perspective was quite surprising as tribal identity is integral to the formation of self-identity as well as the formation of identity in relation to others. Dei (2011) writes,

indigenous knowledge is about past, present, and future and suggests a continuum, and our understanding of the past must be rooted in local cultural knowledges of such past which offers a connection of material, physical, metaphysical, and cultural and moral concerns. (p. 31)

This knowledge is both personal as it is extrinsic and cultural. Therefore, the nature and passion of her words shifted the equilibrium of general discussion into a more reflexive dialogue about her social and economic circumstances. The young woman informed me that her “Luoness” presented a barrier to her life as a Kenyan. In her current experience and by virtue of her tribal identity, she had systematically encountered discriminatory practices, and she did not want her children—should she have them—to struggle through the same circumstances.

Our candid discussion was the genesis of this present research. In view of our dialogue, data collection will be based in Kenya and with young, adult professionals. These will be individuals who have journeyed through the national education system, and have completed enough of their university studies to gain access to a professional degree as recognized in our increasingly global setting. Specifically, they are people who have entered into careers and are well versed in the national urban and political landscape. As such, it is imperative that study participants live in urban or mid-urban settings as opposed to those who spend the majority of their time in their villages. The village is a nexus for the tribe, where tribal memory is expressed through the genealogy of a physical landscape that has been constructed in historical lineage patterns.

Additionally, the village houses a closely-knit group of elders who have remained or returned to their traditional dwelling spaces and actively participate in, host, and share the legacy of tribal practices. Wane (2011) notes,

the colonial government in Kenya, despite their emphasis on colonial education, did not succeed in uprooting the Indigenous ways of knowing, nor did the neo-colonial government succeed in masking the philosophical foundations of these knowledges. The ordinary citizens and their local Indigenous sage formed formidable invisible walls of resiliency and forms of resistance that were evident.... (p. 281)

Considering this nexus and given the nature of the conversation from which this research arose, an exploration of whether or not a tribal identity shift is occurring is better suited to those who are on the periphery of the village nexus or those who dwell in urban locations.

Researcher Positionality

The Transparent Beauty: Vibrating Woman Looking into the Great Sea

“Indigenous philosophies, spirituality and folklore are infused into everyday activities such as planting, fishing burials, and religious and ceremonial events. But folkloric production (as in proverbs, story forms, folk music, dance, art, etc.) is about the totality of a people’s experience, a way of life that speaks to the cultural, political, economic, social, and spiritual interconnections of human life and/or psycho-existential existence”
(Dei, 2011, p. 8).

In my undergraduate thesis, I wrote a poem called “memory.” The words of the poem tied me to the land of my village...the ochre red of the soil, the verdant greens of the foliage, the intensity of the stream passing below my boma...the still of the noonday sun, the quietness of a sometimes passing breeze...and the bleating of goats, and the rhythm of the air...its tropical weight often mitigated by the song of rain. When I wrote this poem, I was filled with heaviness. My Kaki and my Dani (Grandfather and Grandmother) had died. I was in Oregon and I felt disjoined and disconnected from my roots. I was soul-weary and I was not home. There is a congruency of depth, a spiritual tie that bonds me to the landscape that is of my people. There is an encompassing embrace that rises up and calms me. It is from these origins both physical and spiritual that I come. It is from this temporal space, the communal space that I make my way forward. I have not yet found home like this, like then. And, in my quiet moments I am sometimes overwhelmed by a sadness for home that I cannot quantify. I am the connective ligament from one temporal space to another, the product of my ancestors through the carriage of my parents. I think, though, that this particular journey stops with me. And perhaps, this is why I am sometimes mired in the paths that are rootless. In actuality, the land is not stagnant, neither are we, neither am I.

Mayuzumi (2005) writes, “indigenous knowledge...is also transmitted from generation to generation, though some changes occur over time, because no tradition is static” (p. 9). I am the embodiment of this dynamism. From Got Osimbo (my village), to Athi-River (my Nairobi suburb), to Los Angeles (the American metropolis) to Amapyka (the Papua New Guinean village) and back to Los Angeles. The experience of this journey as it intersects from one wandering to another, one shore to another is continual but I wonder if it progressive. Perhaps there is a cyclical lesson to be learned. “Some changes occur over time, because no tradition is static” (Mayuzumi, p. 9). What does it mean to be a young, tribal Kenya? One who is transported from the core tribal lands, the specific locations and re-oriented to the urbane conglomeration of Nairobi? What does it mean when a generation has been killed off because of disease and the ligament between grandparent and grandchild is no longer the parent, the space of generational connection is still empty? Is there a way of going backward or is there a “liminal space” an in-between that bears interaction but not definition?

Mayuzumi (2005) writes that “identity is not static but fluid; thus the focus of my identity has changed over the course of my education...I therefore continue to feel that I have been misrepresented by the voices of others” (p. 14-15). What then is my voice? More importantly though, what is the voice of my people and what if this voice is “not static but fluid?” Furthermore, what if this voice is changing with the current new generation? The ravages of colonialism make transparent the ravages that human beings perpetuate one upon another. That is, there is no history of humans interacting with each other where the politics of the “other” did not lead to a domination, or attempt at a domination of the “other.” What the hegemonic prevalence of colonization does with

accuracy, is that it makes its reach global and the pressure for conformity that it exerts is continual. Within its colonial boundaries, human agency is decomposed into the service of economic franchises...and this is a dual-edged sword.

In the western discourse of identity, there is a discussion of self and/or other. This emphasis is prevalent in a socio-anthropological dialogue in terms of oppressor vs. oppressed (Freire, 1970) as well as the I-Thou discourse of Buber and Kaufmann (1970). Within the circle of an indigenous community, this binary is not emphasized. Rather, significance is placed upon the interrelatedness of each member of the community. As Smith (2012) notes, “to be connected is to be whole” (p. 149). To be connected is to be part of a community in which individual roles function toward the outcome of everyone thriving. The bifurcation of self and self, self and another member of the community, self and the environment, self and nature, is counter-intuitive. Smith (2012) adds, “connecting is related to issues of identity and place, to spiritual relationships and community well-being (p. 150).

Within an indigenous community, belonging is a birthright. There are cultural norms, traditions, values, identifications, and social constructions that cements one’s place as a member of a particular tribe. Such ties are not diluted by distance or migration—at least not from the perspective of the collective identity of the tribe. I am a Luo because I was born into the Luo tribe. Regardless of my migratory experiences, my Luoness still remains. Syntactically, the core of my selfness is Luo. Even though I have lived in the USA, in the South Pacific, and in Southern California—the grounding of my identity (from the Luo vantage point) is that I am deeply formed and rooted in my Luoness. So, what is it to be a Luo? Does Luo change or is it a static occurrence?

Indigenous peoples across the world have other stories to tell which not only question the assumed nature of those ideals and practices that they generate, but also serve to tell an alternative story: the history of Western research through the eyes of the colonized. (Smith, 2012, p. 2)

Smith (2012) both challenges and supports what I have identified to be ‘my’ research agenda. I place the “my” in quotes because the story I will attempt to tell is partially of myself, but mostly it is the story of my relatives in the broader sense. The challenge, then, lies in identifying the ways in which colonialists’ ideals have both shaped and affected me even as I work within the field. The support the research guide provides is an articulation of the platform from which the research agenda grows. I really want the research agenda that I undertake to be both meaningful and impactful. I don’t want to work on an academic piece merely for the purpose of graduating. Furthermore, I don’t want anything that I write and offer to the world to be used for harm. How can I ensure that I honor my heritage in this process? Smith (2012) further challenges me by asserting, “the problem is that constant efforts by governments, states, societies and institutions to deny the historical formations of such conditions have simultaneously denied our claims to humanity, to having a history, and to all sense of hope” (p. 4). In reading this, quote it seems to me that the task that I have is to reclaim this sense of history and hope in any way that I can. However, I still question this perspective, what gives me the right to attempt such a task? This is the constant question with which I struggle, and it is a question of trust.

This question of “self-trust” must be problematized in order to engage authentically in a highly-relational research context. Belying this question is an

assumption that I lack confidence about the importance and necessity of undertaking research. If I engage in the question of whether or not I have the culturally pedigree to engage in this research regarding tribal identity shifts, then I am questioning the shifts within my tribal identity. If this is the case, then I am indeed undergoing similar processes that gave rise to the initial research questions. This position allows me an element of insider knowledge. In conjunction with the issue of trust is the reality of “overwhelmedness.” There is a great body of knowledge with which to interact. How can I, in reality, engage with and contribute appropriately to a body of knowing that is so vast? The goal seems impenetrable.

Bloomfield (2013 as cited in Berryman et al., 2013) writes, “I sought ways to collect data in culturally mediated ways. After tapping into my own cultural intuition, I was able to see something as plain as the nose on my face” (p. 188). These issues of confidence and trust are better navigated from a CRM approach which encourages knowledge interaction through “culturally mediated” ways. In this regard, I do hold certain knowledges. As a daughter of the Luo tribe and acculturated in cultural traditions, there is a holistic sense of self that I will take with me into the field. I do hold cultural context and history. I share commonalities in lineage, beliefs, worldview, and social mores. In these ways, I operate with the cultural intuition of an insider and I am welcomed into the situation and context of the culture. I can, from such a perspective, engage with data relevantly and with nuanced propriety. Additionally, my connection to the field ascertains that I am not entering the research in prodigal isolation. I will be working with co-researchers, and guides along the way. These co-participants, too, bring

with them culturally imbedded knowledges that shore up, contextualize, and ultimately inform the research.

Keeping in mind the relational processes of *Kupiga Hadithi* and the anti-colonial stance of *Decolonizing Methodologies*, it is necessary to query the issues of confidence and self-trust as a means of engaging in authentic research. However, using the stance of whether or not I am in the position to ‘know’ enough in order to enter the research context is problematic. Given that my research questions rise from the field and are ongoing points of discussion among Kenyan youth, an insistence of wanting to ‘know’ and to prepare for every eventuality within the research context is a praxis of control. I don’t mean control in terms of discipline, the honing of skills, but control as means of domination. My intention of “knowing so that I can trust myself as a researcher” represents a bifurcation in thought regarding the subject of research, knowledge acquisition. More specifically, questioning my ability to be confident in and to ‘trust’ the research process as well as my relationship with co-participants, indicates a worldview which holds that knowledge must be captured, or else lost. As an Indigenous knower, I realize that considering myself, as an assumed locus of control, is an inauthentic stance that does not align with my research methodology. *Kupiga Hadithi*, for instance, focuses on establishing and maintaining relationships. Knowing, here, is a natural outcome of joint interaction. *Decolonizing Methodologies* challenges my need for certainty as I undertake the research questions. Knowing in this framework reasserts the rights of the participants. CRM questions the appropriateness of myself of the genesis of trust and confidence. Knowing, within the CRM context, is a relational, co-constructed endeavor.

As an Indigenous scholar working in a Kenyan context, it is imperative that I come to the work holistically and authentically. Thus looking inward, gazing ‘into the transparent beauty’ that situates my researcher positionality isn’t a question of having and not-having knowledge, and simultaneously of owning and not-owning knowledge. It is a reflexive discussion of the ways in which I will go about building relationships that work to co-construct knowledge. As this is a process, I understand that there is a *graduation* into knowing. That is, we gradually enter into knowing. Therefore, my researcher identity, my researcher stance, and my researcher knowledge are organic—in constant growth. As a beginning researcher, this means that I have to be patient and progress systematically in order to be apprenticed into the journey of knowing. As a neophyte researcher, I carry with me my position as a Luo and as a scholar. These are inclusive relationships. In this concept of inclusivity, I am part of the ‘everyone’ who is allowed a certain level of participation; however, there must be a base relationship between the knower and knowing. During this work, I will certainly find myself somewhere on the spectrum of this relationship. I understand that the relationship is both parallel and dynamic. Nothing is usurped; therefore, knowledge becomes a communal action. This, I believe, is the organic bed of humility and it is here that authentic research begins.

Chapter 5: Walking Rhythmically: Methods into the Research Setting

When Kenya claimed its independence from Britain in 1963, the nation's Indigenous population of approximately 8,365,942 was under the political rule of 55,759 Whites (Learning Network, 2011, p. 1). Of that number around 8% or 716,059 people resided in urban areas (Index Mundi, 2013). A majority of the people lived in non-urban, tribal lands away from the British center of governance. By 2011, the percentage of those living in municipalities away from their ancestral tribal lands rose to nearly 24% of the overall population (United States Central Intelligence Agency, 2014). According to a 2010-15 estimation of the most recent data reports urbanization increasing at a 4.34% annual rate of change. More concretely, 25.6% of the nation's 45,010,056 people reside in two major urban areas: the coastal region of Mombasa which has roughly 1.04 million people and Nairobi, Kenya's capital, which houses 3.91563 million residents (United States Central Intelligence Agency, 2014). Simply put, Nairobians are nearly 7.5% of the nation's population and they densely inhabit an area that is only about 267 square miles. Because they dwell together in such close proximity to representatives from all of Kenya's 43 tribes, Nairobians engage with each other in a wide range of cultural, intellectual, and social interactions.

As the nation's capital, Nairobi houses the majority of Kenya's colleges and universities. Additionally, it is the center for technology and global business transactions. Nairobians, therefore, carry with them diverse cultural heritages and histories even as they participate in the processes of globalization. Because this research centered on the exploration of tribal and national identity, participants living in Nairobi are uniquely situated to offer insightful perspectives. As Nairobians, participants continuously interact

with a wide representation of members from different ethnic regions in Kenya. Additionally, their lived experiences imbed deep ties to both tradition and modernity as they study, work, and engage in their communities.

Participants

Both the subject matter of this work as well as the culture(s) involved are collective in nature. This is to say that participant involvement in the discussions, conceptions, and design was integral to the work as a whole. Necessarily, participant selection evolved into a co-constructed process narrated and directed by a research guide from within the field. Under her auspices, a community of Nairobians formed around the research content. As a collaborative group, their goal was to participate in, guide, and inform the research processes. By immersing themselves into the study in this manner the participating group, nicknamed “the collective,” hearkened back to historical lineages of communal involvement. Reflecting on “the African idea of community,” Ikuenobe (2006) writes that it “has metaphysical, conceptual, and normative implications....The community is at the center of every thought, activity or practice; it shapes one’s ways of life attitudes, ways of seeing things, and methods of doing this” (p. 118). The Collective, in embracing the work of a research community worked to shape the setting, mode, and direction of the research conversations. Ultimately, their conceptions and design shaped the ideas that have arisen from this work.

As a researcher, I understood that the relational practices inherent Kenyan Indigenous societies required me to reposition the assumptions laid out by the research protocol that I carried into the field. Initially as I discussed and conceived

this work with the research guide, I imagined that participant selection would occur once I arrived in Nairobi. However, because the research guide shared our discussions, criteria, and justifications for the research within her wider community, participants self-selected prior to my arrival in Nairobi. As a result, participant selection occurred in a contextually authentic manner. Monzó (2013) notes, “increasingly in qualitative research it has become imperative that we engage in fieldwork with respect for participants and acceptance of our limited knowledge their lives, such that they may be encouraged to pave the path to our understanding” (Lofland & Lofland, 1995, p. 372 as cited in Berryman, et al., 2013). This respect extended to the processes of recruiting individuals who fit the parameters of the study and were interested in the work.

Although I am Kenyan by birthright and I can claim familial, cultural, and social relationships with individuals currently residing in Nairobi, I am also a member of the African diaspora. I am not engaged in the daily realities of living in Kenya’s capital city. Therefore, the need to establish rapport and connection in the field could not have occurred on my own un-encountered merit. Relationship-building with prospective participants was a process requiring a person known to the people with whom I would work. This individual would need to speak on my behalf and represent the nature of my work to the community. She would become both my facilitator in the navigation of psycho-social circumstances surrounding the work and my guide in the processes of collecting research.

Bailey (2007) writes, “a key actor might be someone the researcher knows prior to undertaking the research...this person can help the researcher gain entrée,

establish rapport, provide explanation, and perform a host of other useful tasks” (p. 68). In the course of this research, the key actor became, in many ways, a co-researcher who informed, advised, consented to, and shaped the work. Bailey continues, “one drawback is that key actors have their own perspectives, biographies, and agendas that influence what they see, think, and feel” (p. 70). Because I entered the field under the auspices of the research guide, her biases were explicit to both the participants and myself from the onset. As my host, she necessarily shared her perspectives regarding the work so that I could be openly and authentically accepted into the community for the purpose of conducting a research study. As my host, she also excused herself from the individual meetings with participants, choosing instead to negotiate introductions, scheduling, and facilitation of communication. By carrying out these actions she was not only representing myself as a researcher, but she was also fulfilling her role as a member community in cultivating an atmosphere within which participants could authentically represent themselves. seeks to explore the possibility of tribal shifts, and the key actor, in conjunction with other participants, will be involved in the co-construction of interview questions, her voice is essential. In addition, she will be the individual who introduces me to initial participants. Thus, my conversations with the research guide in conjunction with her conversations with members of her community yielded recommendations and introductions to a base of people who would eventually become research participants. For this study, then, I utilized snowballing as a method of recruitment.

The Introductions

As a methodological praxis, *Kupiga Hadithi* inculcates certain societal rhythms and rituals. McLaren (1999) observes, “
a ritual must be understood as ‘phasing process, not as a set of systematic grids’ (Grimes, 1982a, p. 151). Nor does a ritual simply reflect measureable societal values but ‘holds the generating source of culture and structure’ (Grimes, 1982a, p. 150). (p. 22)

When individuals come *Kupiga Hadithi*, or storied-knowing, a continuum of dialogue is created whereby ideas are offered and juxtaposed, accepted, and challenged. Silence is evoked and thoughts both intersect and diverge. Foundational to this, are the physical symbolic acts of greeting, the protocols of speaking, the appropriateness of waiting, and the relevance of eating. In this matter, it is imperative that I follow these rituals, this phasing process, if only symbolically, by introducing the participants who contributed to this research study.

What follows here are miniature narrative biographies as shared by the participants through our individual conversations. As well, I include poetry⁵ that I have written as means of capturing the essence of my dialogues with each of the participants. These general introductions are structured to include participant age, schooling history, current profession, and the expressed worldview he/she brought to the project. Age is included as a descriptor in order to confirm that each participant placed within the parameters of the research. Schooling information is included as a point of connecting the impact of education processes with the central question of

⁵ Poetry included was reviewed and approved by participants.

this project, namely, what role does education play, if any, in the relationship between young, urban, professional Kenyans and their tribes? These miniature biographies also include the participant's worldview as articulated and demonstrated by the content of our conversations. Information herein was gleaned explicitly from the transcripts and clarified by a demographic data table (see Appendix B) which I sent to the participants during the crafting of this chapter. Additionally, participants affirm their specific biographies through electronic communication with me. Each of these have been reviewed by participants prior to the completion of this work.

Research Guide. Deborah is a 30 year old Luo female. Her formative years were spent in different urban areas in Kenya. Her primary schooling was through the Kenyan national system. She attended boarding school from the ages of 14-18. After which she attended university in Uganda where she earned her Bachelor's degree in Library and Information Science. Upon graduation, she relocated to Nairobi where she still lives. Currently she works in aeronautical logistics and is considering pursuing a graduate degree so that she can become more marketable in the constrained Kenyan job economy. Deborah's inaugural questions about the subject matter both shaped the scope of the research and facilitated the content of discussions.

Hadithi

*In your hand, vibrant petals
twist and unfurl
uncertainly from careful fingertips.*

*You speak of knowledge and experience
colluding desperately,
in hazardous anger, like a vicious desert wind.*

Sages and wise men

*have spoken to me of this wind
of this power unearthing each secret
with a whisper,
a growl, a rampant, hungry howl.*

*Philosopher queens and elders
Have painted life-giving stories
visions of a remnant silence,
the restrained hiccup
heralding a sudden, passionate burst.*

George. George is a 31 year old Kisii man who has spent the majority of his professional adulthood in Nairobi. At the age of 10, he began his residency in boarding schools⁶ where he remained until he completed his secondary education. He gained his undergraduate degree in Social Science in Uganda. Professionally, George is a Social Scientist and has held positions as a lecturer. Currently, he is both a graduate student completing a degree in Armed Conflict and Case Studies and is seeking full-time employment. George's personal and academic background in pre-colonial, colonial, and current history informed his interest and contribution to the research.

Of Revolution
*An oracle, you speak.
ideas pouring out in a haunting tenor
the air trembles, and silence tremors.
how is it that you see
through the eyes of history to a present
suffocated with ancient blockades?
The choking smoke of a jiko
lit inside congested slums.*

*I see you,
marching in staccato confidence
heralding the voice of
a sharp-eyed wise man.
These are the things you have known*

⁶ Attendance of boarding school is a general practice for Kenyan students.

*untold stories spoken, and re-told.
“this kind of wisdom...was the communal one”
you calmly affirm.*

*Where do your treasures lie?
Is it in excavating the knowledge
of a spreading wasteland?
Is it in contesting truths
washed in the blood of innocent hands?*

*You laugh,
your voice carrying the mirth
of a tested strength.
freedom, movement, home.*

*These are the reciprocal experiences
you espouse.
Ideas, unfurling, one against
the other. jostling. intersections
vibrating within an open sphere*

*You speak,
and the march onward continues.*

Juma. Juma has lived in Nairobi for 15 years. He is a 33 year old Luhya male whose schooling was completed through the Kenyan national system. He entered boarding school at 10 years old and remained from the completion of his secondary schooling. Following this he earned his undergraduate degree in Computer Technology from Jomo Kenyatta University. Currently, his career is in marketing and he holds a position as creative director for a progressive marketing company. Juma spoke of returning to graduate studies in order to complete a Master’s degree in business. Eventually, he hopes to run his own advertising firm. Self-identifying as a creative, Juma’s globally connected perspective imagined a more explicitly defined Kenyan nationhood. His marketing experience informed his engagement with the research questions.

Branded

*Words that flow carefully
water to the shores of Victoria.
a mirrored visage of what could be,
stories shaped and re-shaped
“we need a brand,” you state.*

*Your voice crafting a picturesque land
risen up from the strength of a certain people
But we, we are in this place,
medicine men employing
the game of reflection
water and sand, image and sky.
we watch awkward ripples
punctuate each closed memory,
the unspoken pain of history.*

*Charming and impossible
you are the maker of guile.
tempting, and provocative,
fluidly crafting a narrative of possibility
space. leave out the practical
space. factor in the improbabilities.*

*This is your land
you, who has been crowned
with a burdened legacy,
you, who boasts of an ancient,
elegant tongue.
an aphrodisiac as potent
as the red clays of Western province*

David. David is a 31 year old husband and father. He is a Kisii man who matriculated through the Kenyan system for his formative schooling. From the ages of 10-20, he attended boarding school. He completed his undergraduate degree in Business Statistics in Uganda. When this study was conducted, David was a business owner with several ventures. His stated goal was to remain economically stable in order to continually provide for his wife and son. David participated in the research

from a deeply reflexive stance. His interest both in national and international politics informed the nature of his queries and conversation.

Full Circle

*You bring forth ideas
in a pendulum
waves of thought and emotion
pushing back and forth,
back and forth.
these are the melodic cadences,
the rhythm of our storied-knowing*

*Depth,
you are painting a life for me
the hope of lived narratives,
the experiences and privileges,
the swallowed up query
and choked down inquisition
of this present generation.*

*"These are very hard questions," you say
"and we never even think of them
We never even talk of them"
Yet, you carry them with you- these questions-
and you ponder, and sway upon this obstinate shore*

*Joy,
speak to me deeply
of things that will be better
speak to me freely
of this feeling of home
carry us again to that dance back and forth
to the waves contemplation, the birth of action*

*Then, turn back your attention
to answer these questions
for the next generation*

Full circle

*You've named the struggles
of political injustices:
children carrying the burden of education
a nation ingesting its suffocating corruption
poverty that peels away the fullness one's soul.*

*Think of these things deeply, My friend
and ask your triumphant questions.
how do we begin to acknowledge where we are now
how are we to carry that brush stroke of hope
across a disillusioning political landscape?*

*“This was our place,” you cry
this, indeed, was our place.
we build the stories,
and yet we never talk about them
we pattern the songs
and yet we do not complete the vital dances*

Indeed, dear one, these, are very deep questions.

Rachel. Rachel is a 31 year old Kalenjin woman. While she did complete both primary and secondary schooling through the national education system in Kenya, she is the only participant who did not attend boarding school. After graduating from university in Uganda, she relocated to Nairobi where she continues to work in a real estate brokerage firm. Currently, she is completing a Masters degree in business administration. Rachel’s egalitarian perspectives about the role of youth, of women, and the possibilities for a holistically unified nation informed her participation in research conversations.

Daughter

*Laugh, with that graceful urgency
that accompanies your unmeasured steps
the rush of youth acted out amidst buzzing city streets.
You are brilliant, a jewel.
even the shadowy footbridges and
dank passageways that you walk alight for you.
offering today’s present and troubling circumstances
tinged with a cloud of mirth.
“Habari ndiyo hiyo” – this is the news.*

*This is the newness of this moment
Its distracting façade cannot disarm you
You are hopeful.*

*Daughter,
I know you've embraced
this new womanhood
neutral in choice,
actively and resolutely
removed from a limiting past.*

*Like the echo of a beaten drum
you've traveled beyond mountainscapes
through the open and gaping walls of the Rift
into a yawning still valley,
the prize that is this moment.*

*Your rhythm un-does me.
turn after turn
you dance beyond the flames of history
and then... you stop
"pause, that, pause. We go to the next one"
you state, undulating with simmering laughter.*

*And when you stop to breathe,
when you stop
Don't look back.*

Isaiah. Isaiah is a 30 year old Kisii man currently living and working in Nairobi. He completed his schooling through the Kenyan nation system. He attended boarding school from the ages of 11-20 after which he completed his undergraduate studies at Makerere Univeristy in Uganda. There, he earned a Bachelor's degree in Telecommunications Engineering. Professionally, Isaiah works as a telecommunications specialist for a higher education institution. During our conversations, He spoke of pursuing a doctoral degree in engineering. Isaiah's scientific background informed his engagement with the research.

*At first principle
there's an understood order to things,
an accepted purpose
an accepted sense of
this is how it must be.*

*The questions veer out, and away
from the economy of words
Knowledge of self,
Identity of land, march together
in syncopated rhythm
soldiers to a history which
holds unclear paradoxes
receptacles.*

*Where is the space
for your passion against injustice?*

*These words are an economy,
chosen to highlight, but never to replicate.
we are at an intersection
an ancient passageway juxtaposing
the old track against the new
modern.*

*Such words are an economy,
and we, we use them to shore up
this middlespace.*

*At first principle,
there is linearity,
a bounded order that
we hardly contest,
and dare not cross.*

*Where is the economy
in these words?*

Naomi. Naomi is a 31 year old Kikuyu woman who matriculated through the Kenyan national school system. She attended boarding school from the ages of 10-18 after which she pursued her undergraduate degree in Uganda. After completing her Bachelor's degree in Procurement, she re-settled in Nairobi establishing herself as a mother, wife, and business woman. Naomi's advocacy for independent self-sustainability and unrelenting perseverance in the face of economic struggle informed her interaction with the subject matter of this study.

The Bearer of Fruit

*She tells her stories
the teachings she will carry on
the learning she chooses to accept.
She is the planter of fruit,
bearing potent gifts
the hope for regeneration.*

*Her voice moves beneath
and beyond a cold wind.
A wind crying through the Rift
“people suffered, people really suffered.
It was a good lesson.”*

*Which lesson was this?
that life has to continue giving and we,
her workers, must work on. incessantly.
and without rest?*

*It is difficult, yes.
but difficulty, does not matter
“You have to grow. You have to
learn to survive,” she urges.*

*This is the vision she narrates,
the lessons passed down from that generation
to this next.
These are the seeds she will choose to carry.*

*For--she is the bearer of fruit,
the tiller of opportune soil.
“you cannot oppress me” she says.*

*No, her words
breathe us onward.*

Josephine. Josephine is a 25 year old Meru woman who works as a marketing professional. She completed her primary and secondary schooling within the Kenyan national system attending boarding school from the ages of 15-18. Josephine spent her first years of university studies at the EOM State Technical University in Russia before returning to Kenya to complete an undergraduate degree

in Commerce Marketing. Josephine's confidence about Indigenous national identity and optimism about the future of Kenya's economic capabilities and opportunities informed her participation in the research project.

African Woman

*Succulent nectar, heavy fruit
stolen from the mango tree
ripe and pregnant and replete
with flavor
I come to drink at your well.*

*Me: whose pain is locked
behind a shaded looking glass
boarded from the outside in
I am desperate,
revive me.*

*Pungent blossom, silken petal
floating from gnarled, aged branches
fall over me.
like the weight of a poignant caress
fluttering over an ancient soul*

*Me: whose passion is diffused
in the drab mundanities.
overwhelm my senses
I am lost,
give me rest,
revive me.*

Sarah. Sarah is a 30 year old Luo woman. By profession, she is an administrator for a research institution that works with community healthcare issues at an international organization based in Kenya. She completed her primary and secondary schooling through the national system. She attended boarding schools from the ages of 14-18 after which she earned her undergraduate degree at Daystar University in Nairobi. Sarah's passion for her Indigenous heritage and the ways in

which Indigenous identities inform personal, social, and national politics informed her participation in this project.

She sings

*And in these songs are words,
woven strings of pain.
blood-soaked sisal that
threads back and forth
back and forth
into the tapestry of an unclaimed history.
a pathway, a memory she does not trail down.*

*But, she carries the melody
and she hears the ululation.
Clear notes thrown across a harsh, dry wind-
the broken skin of a generation.
Callused wounds formed to fulfill murky prophecies.
the broken back of tradition,
heavy with injustice and unmerciful tendencies.*

*These are ancestral decrees
cast aside for an ambiguous new road
progress, but at what cost.
“whose way do we follow,
and whose do we reject?”
She asks, a quiet plea to the unknown.*

*Disappointed,
She waits,
and she seeks knowledge,
the echoes of music bubbling soul-deep.
Chords that balance and maintain
dreams of passion, dreams of harmony
She sings,
Her voice raised to unborn children.
Her hope sown to an unveiled future.*

Closing the Ritual

Achille Mbembe (2001) in his book *On the Postcolony*, indicts the predominant Western narrative about the African continent and its multi-ethnicited peoples. He contends, “first the African human experience constantly appears in the

discourse of our times as an experience that can only be understudy through a *negative interpretation*” (p. 1). Mbembe (2001) is focusing attention on the dehumanizing nature of global discussions and understandings surrounding the continent and its peoples. His argument lays a foundation for critiquing stories about African nations and Africans decontextualized from the totality and actuality of day-to-day living in the continent. The holistic experience of differing peoples on the continent is much broader than the hyper-critical, deficiencies painted by the West. “More than any other region, Africa thus stands out as the supreme receptacle of the West’s obsession with, and circular discourse about, the facts of “absence,” “lack,” and “non-being,” of identity and difference of negativeness—in short, of nothingness” (Mbembe, 2001, p. 4).

Contrary to this deficit perspectivising, a more truthful, complete, and realistic view and acknowledgement of the continent, in its particulars and entirety, requires sustained focus upon and engagement with both individuals and communities who live within the region. After all, one cannot imagine that discourse about Europe would have each of the countries fall under a monolithic identities simply because they are grouped within the same geographical landmass. Neither should one assume and project the continued and incomplete story of a unilaterally mono-Africa. Such a perspective is neither humanizing nor is it egalitarian. In that vein, this research project does not aim to prescribe either to the damaging descriptors of a bedraggled, cursed continent, or the anthropological misrepresentations of its various peoples. Rather, this work seeks to feature the voices of a specific group of participants within a defined East-African, Kenyan,

urban context. Moreover, the research attempts to present a more holistic view through structures utilizing storied-knowing as well as the rhythms and concise abstractions of poetry.

Mbembe (2001) reminds us “that what passes for social reality in sub-Saharan Africa is made up of a number socially produced and objectified practices” (p. 6). By engaging with participants through Culturally Responsive Methodologies (Berryman et al., 2013) as delineated in *Kupiga Hadithi*, this study fully immerses itself in the processes of producing a ‘social reality’ that speaks against the narrative of ‘nothingness.’ “These practices are not simply matters of discourse and language...the constitution of the African self as a reflexive subject also involves doing, seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling, and touching” (Mbembe, 2001, p. 6). The use of storied-knowing and poetry is meant, in a limited way, to bring the reader along into more of a sensory-rich Kenyan social reality. In this way, the reader can resist against the dominant narrative recognizing as Mbembe (2001) notes that “the African subject is like any other human being: he or she engages in *meaningful acts*...[and that such social practice and acts are intentionally] *imbued with meaning*” (p. 6). Until this resistant discourse within the academy supersedes and counteracts deficit narratives of African Indigenous peoples, then the perpetual battle to present Indigenous knowledges will continue.

As with actual physical introductions, these biographical miniature introductions and poetic synopsis aim to ground the context of the work. The poetry, too, will be utilized to anchor each of them that arises from data collection.

Consent

Maxwell (2013) asserts, “in qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument of the research, and the research relationships are the means by which the research gets done” (p. 91). Beneath this paradigm, there is a tension which creates a wide distance between the researcher and her participants. Linda Smith (2012) reveals,

from the vantage point of the colonized,...the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism...When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful. It is so powerful that indigenous people even write poetry about research. (p. 1)

For these reasons, the chasm between research and researcher had to be navigated in culturally appropriate ways. This required establishing prior social relationships before formal consent could even be requested.

The research guide was instrumental in facilitating such relationships. Prior to my arrival in the field, she shared the subject of the study as well as the story of its inception to her wider community. She introduced my intentions in pursuing the research as well as the academic purposes for the work. Then, she issued an open and oral invitation for a community gathering about the subject to individuals, within her sphere, who were interested in face-to-face dialogue once I entered the field. Upon my arrival in Nairobi, the research guide, a group of interested individuals, and myself gathered together for an informal afternoon tea at my temporary residence. We shared familial background and social niceties until the atmosphere was appropriate for research ‘talk.’ Only then, was I as a researcher, able to formally introduce and discuss the research questions. This was

also the juncture where we read, explained, the finite points of the research protocol.

Both the Kenya's national board for research NACOSTI, and my university IRB approved my usage of a passive consent form⁷ which I distributed to future participants.

This organic process of relationship building, introduction, discussion, and then, permission helped to bridge the participant-researcher divide. The process helped to narrow the research chasm so that participants could speak more freely in the research process. Cohen and Odhiambo (1987) extend this idea of the chasm between researcher and participant by highlighting the tension between insider and outsider of culture.

Writing to a Luo-Kenyan context they state,

people in Siaya, western Kenya, say that the weak and awkward are those whose placentae were buried outside the homestead and, in particular, away from the lands of familiar people. They refer to these individuals as *jookoo*, the 'outsiders.' Indeed, people thought of as weak and clumsy may be called *biero* ('placenta'), as in the remark '*Nene oyik dhano to owe biero*' (We buried the human being and left alive the 'placenta'). In contrast, those whose placentae are buried within the homestead are seen to belong, to be upright, to be secure (p. 269).

Within the scope of this study, my status as a researcher presented as an awkward and foreign intrusion. I was an outsider. Therefore, the question of consent became a matter of relationship. More succinctly, it became a matter of securing relationships of trust between the researcher as an external 'instrument' and participants as 'those holding the key as to how the 'instrument' should be used. Cohen and Odhiambo (1987) continue, "*Biero* then becomes part of the constitution of boundaries between individuals born and

⁷ A passive consent form is a document participants sign indicating that they agree to take part in the research project by continuing to attend meetings.

raised on familiar ground and those unrecognized, or coming from outside lands of familiar people. Doubt is cast on the claims of people not traceable to the homestead” (p. 269). The research guide, as one *born within* and *known within* allowed me to gain participant consent by introducing me to those who welcomed the conversations. Once relationships were established, consent became an informal signing of agreements that were previously negotiated.

“And the Net:” Data Collection

Collecting research authentically and holistically, required that I situate myself in Nairobi. Additionally, in order for the actual data collection process to occur, I needed to undergo the process of establishing relationship prior to entering the field, As such the initial phase of data collection was not the actual physical task of gathering information from the field. The initial phase of data collection was allowing myself to become known to potential participants through the hospitality of a local host. Thus, the initial phase of data collection took place in the two years prior to actual data gathering. Relational exchanges during this time occurred over video chat, social media, and through email with various people who were just getting to know me. These individuals were interested in my studies and thus informed the creation of the research project. Particularly, the woman who later became the project’s research guide—a term she settled upon—engaged with me in co-constructing the research questions, and the protocol for data collection that I later used once I arrived in the field. I would present my thoughts and ideas about the topic to her, and she would counter with suggestions or affirmation. During this time period, I utilized a research journal with reflective poetry, email trail, as well as notes to capture this progress.

Once in the field, conversations revolved around one key question: is there an identity shift occurring between young, urban, professional Kenyans and their tribes—if so why? Several questions accompanied this fundamental discussion point: (1) What is the relationship between young, urban, professional, Kenyans and their tribes? (2) How and why is this relationship changing? (3) What is the relationship between young, urban, professional, Kenyans and their nation?

As a means of facilitating the discussion, I utilized a semi-structured interview approach through the culturally responsive methodology of *Kupiga Hadithi*-storied knowing, to allow a space for dialogue regarding these ideas. Maxwell (2013) observes, “less structured approaches, in contrast, [to structured approaches] allow you to focus on the *particular* phenomena being studied, which may differ between individuals or settings and require individually tailored methods. Less structured methods trade generalizability and comparability for internal validity and contextual understanding...” (p. 88). Most importantly, discourse as a highly valued mode of cultural operation, necessitated a less structured approach. Appendix A contains the questions used.

Data Collection Procedures

Data gathering and collection in Nairobi was carried out over a six-week period of time which began June 2014 and ended in August 2014. Within the field, eight individuals completed the study by participating in an average of three conversational interviews. These included two whole-group discussions and two individual conversations where I was face-to-face with each participant. The research guide facilitated both group conversations by scheduling dates, escorting participants to the venues, and generally remaining in the vicinity.

Group Conversations

Both group conversations were informal and recorded only by my hand-written observations and field notes after the fact. The discourse was carried out over a 4-6 hour period where food allowed for a shared communal experience. The first of the group conversations took place in my central Nairobi apartment where the research guide called all of the interested parties together and formally introduced me to each individual. The second group conversation occurred in a restaurant within the greater Nairobi area. The meeting was a celebration of our shared labor and community building.

Individual Conversations

Individual conversations took place over a 3-4 hour period. These conversations occurred in the seclusion of my apartment over a morning-afternoon tea, or meal that I had prepared in keeping with KuPiga Hadithi and Culturally Responsive Methodologies (Berryman et al., 2013). The location for these conversations were chosen in conjunction with the research guide and participants both as a means of hospitality, and for ensuring an uninhibited space for communication as each individual wished. Of the total time spent in conversation, 90-120 minutes were audio recorded. The remnant time was used for informal conversation unspecific to the research and within the context of relationship-building.

Follow-up Communication

Upon my return from the field, ongoing conversations with participants continued through a variety of mediums including telephone video conferencing, social media, and email communication. The purpose of follow-up conversations was both to maintain established relationships and to clarify points within the research data. Additionally,

continued contact enabled me to send both the transcripts of the data and my analysis of concepts to participants for commentary, criticism, and or addendums. As a co-constructed project, participants in this study maintained the right to offer critique, insight, or veto the ways in which they are portrayed within the content.

Memos and Reflections

As a researcher, I used memos and reflections in three phases. Prior to my arrival in Nairobi and even before I finalized my topic of research, the first set of memos were written as means of conceptualizing the project. From the onset of this work, I was uncertain about the appropriateness of questions to ask or even the initial queries to make about this topic. I knew, based on conversations with family members and journalistic reports, about the tension points vibrating around the social happenings in Kenya. However, I could not definitively name these points or even what my interests were. Neither could I confirm the validity of my perspectives as well as the feasibility of carrying out research generated merely by my own diasporic curiosity. Initial memos and reflections came from my readings, conversations, and research regarding the subject matter of socio-political tensions in the country. Once I arrived in Nairobi, memos and reflections were an appropriate way to capture memories, thoughts, and details about what I observed, and the relevant conversations that had occurred. These writings allowed ideas to permeate, generate, and percolate as I interacted in social settings with participants. After data collection was complete and I returned to my studies, memos and reflections became the avenue for drawing ideas together, theorizing, and noting connections between themes.

Ethical Concerns

Suzanne SooHoo (2013) in delineating the role of culturally responsive methodologies as foundational to research practices contends, “Research should serve public good (AERA 2012). What constitutes good should be co-determined” (p. 216). As a researcher, my primary ethical concern during data collection revolved around the question of appropriate, respectful, protocol and bias. I did not and do not want to replicate research endeavors that have colonized Indigenous populations by demeaning their humanity either through assumptions or a condescending attitude of knowledge superiority. That is, I did not want to use disrespectful processes for engaging with participants within the field, neither did I want to impose my theoretical perspectives in a context that did not allow for intellectual reciprocity. To mitigate these conditions, my research guide helped to facilitate relationship protocols.

My secondary ethical concern rose from the continual tension of whether or not to name the research guide as a co-researcher in the project. As a facilitating participant, she claimed and wanted anonymity within the pages of the work. SooHoo (2013) adds, “related to this process [of co-constructing good] is also a prevailing research ethic of trust that the knowledge one gained in co-construction would never be used against anyone (Pirsig, 1991)” (p. 216). As a researcher, I needed to respect and trust the research guide’s decision. In the same way, I needed also to respect and trust the ways in which participants wanted to interact, both as a community and as individuals within the community, during the course of data collection.

A final ethical concern surrounded the issue of bias; specifically, my bias. Certainly, my conception of the subject was and is shored up by the particular theoretical

stance. My lens into this work calls for a decolonization of systems and of peoples. Given that my entry into the work was through the vehicle of culturally responsive methodologies as is typified by *Kupiga Hadithi*, my theoretical stance could not be the singular driver of knowledge construction. As a culturally responsive methodologist, I was committed to co-construction of research and relationship-building of trust. SooHoo (2013) notes, “adhereing to these ethics may compromise some research agendas as there is a powerful institution need for researchers to publish” (p. 216). While I made my subjectivity obvious—first, to my participants, and next, the readers—those within the field re-shaped and challenged the questions and perspectives that I offered. They were the active knowledge producers.

Data Analysis Procedures

A goal of this project was to employ methodology allowing for the co-construction of knowledge by both participants and researcher. Along with input from the field ascertaining culturally responsive methodologies (Berryman et al., 2013), I utilized *Kupiga Hadithi* as a narrative inquiry methodology in order to: elicit a contextual definition for the data collected, encourage participant self-representation through the use of story, and embody the unified experiences of participants by the utility of metaphors and narrative unity (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Hence, data collection was multifaceted, investigative procedure.

First, I gathered conversational data based on group and individual meetings. Next, I undertook segmented observations of daily participant life. These were recorded in ongoing field notes. In addition, I interacted with relevant national social media platforms as well as studied various forms of journalistic reports including television

news and newspapers. Finally, I communicated electronically with participants as an outcome to previous discussions.

Following the data collection phase, I reviewed the information gathered by using several in-depth methods including the active listening to audio recordings, and the contemplative writing of reflections. Through this reflexive process, a system of poetic analysis emerged as a means of capturing and conceptualizing inherent ideas. The data was then transcribed and organized into generative codes that organically flowed into categories and themes. At each of these analysis junctures, I sought input from the field by interacting with the research guide and participants in the field. Therefore, the holistic and thick data collection methods that I used structurally flowed into data analysis procedures necessitating multiple avenues of meaning-making. The task of analysis, much like data collection, required time for both, myself as a researcher, to identify emerging themes and for participants, as knowledge contributors, to interact with, clarify, corroborate, and critique findings. Mary Lichtman (2013) observes, “data analysis is a process” (p. 244). While the process itself is iterative, non-linear, and requires some abstraction to authentically represent participant knowing, “writing about the analysis process is linear” (Lichtman, 2013, p. 244). This section, counter to the work of analysis, discusses in a systematic manner the methodological complexities that were involved.

Poetic Analysis

Prior to delving into what Lichtman (2013) identifies as the “inductive strategy” of qualitative research, I utilized poetry as a way of representing an integrated picture of the individuals who took part in this project. Moreover, poetic reflection allowed me to feature the context under which conversational interviews occurred. As a component of

introductory participant biographies, not only did the writing of poetry allow me to make meaning of the data, but it also extended the process of inquiry. The poems, as co-accepted creations, cultivated a space for participants to contribute further to the research by negotiating the narrative that I presumed to put forward. Galvin and Prendergast (2016) note,

The mission of poetic inquiry strikes at the heart of a call for a turning in qualitative inquiry whereby a ‘crisis of representation’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3) requires some mediation. Often the perspectives and voices of participants have been fragmented, rendered in analyses that could be considered as lacking depth, or characteristically ‘over summative’...as a consequence participants’ voices are at risk of being appropriated, over-shadowed or even silenced. (p. xi)

In the Western academy, traditional modes of report research are both colonizing and incomplete (Smith, 2012). They neither included the context of participant experiences nor their authentic voices into research processes. These oppressive modes do not make explicit the researcher’s positionality as it intersects with the research content. While I crafted the poems and utilized dialogue from participants, the entirety of the message put forward to a reading audience was subject to veto by participants. Poetic analysis allowed me to obviously address the subjectivity that I brought to the task of data analysis.

Specifically, participants were able to temper my subjectivity given that they reserved the ability to negate each poem’s theme and image representation. In this way, they engaged in the “mediation” of data reporting. Galvin and Prendergast (2016) continue, “poetry has also been used to engage participants in aspects of a range of qualitative methods and analyses, to bear witness, and finally poetry has usefully

enlivened professional and public engagement with research findings” (p. xiii). In the flow of conversations back and forth from the field, we discussed the imagery used. We interrogated the nominal markers that I used as descriptors. We concurred upon the quotes inserted into each poem as an anchoring mark for each individual. All of these acts of divergence and convergence served to build a holistic representation of the work in the field.

As a mode of analysis, writing the analytical poems was both a reflexive and contextualizing act. Soutar-Hynes (2016) quoting Atwood (2012) posits, “if the act of writing charts the process of thought, it’s a process that leaves a trail, like a series of fossilized footprints (Atwood, 2002, p. 158)” (p. 78). As scholars, we often conceive of imprints as permanent, as always existing. Fossilized imprints are not merely permanent, they carry with them the weight of time, of history. Thereby, conveying an air of ‘truth.’ Historically, research that was not culturally responsive, like colonizing beliefs about sieged populations, acted as fossilized imprints because it seemingly validated both dehumanizing and in-humanizing ‘truths’ about indigenous peoples. Poetic analysis permitted me to counter these fossilized footprints of essentialist analysis, while simultaneously ‘leaving a trail’ of data authenticating participant experiences and voices. Soutar-Hynes (2016) continues, “and if life is a text and we create our own story, then poetry is an attempt to render, translate, and make sense of that life” (p. 78). As a data analysis procedure, the writing of analytical poetry grounded the context of the study even as it works to present a holistic picture of participants.

Coding Methods

Within the data analysis process, coding occurred in two major cycles. Each cycle included several processes of meaning-making. In the first cycle, initial coding transpired after poetic analyses of each data point as contributed by the eight participants.

Observational field notes, as recorded in memos, also contributed to this specific analysis process. After completing these analytic poems and following transcription, I used a grounded theory approach to generate codes for “Initial Cycle coding” (Saldaña, 2013).

That is, codes were not determined a priori, but rose from a meticulous reading of the transcripts. As I moved through the data chunk by chunk, I identified words, phrases, metaphors, and ideas that participants repeated. These ‘In ViVo Codes’ (Saldaña, 2013; Strauss, 1987) became the foundation for the emergent categories and themes encapsulated in my findings. Saldaña (2013, p. 92) notes “In Vivo Codes” can provide a crucial check on whether you have grasped what is “significant” to the participant and may help “crystalize and condense meanings” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57 as cited in Saldaña, 2013). The duteous work of coding individual transcripts allowed me to have an in-depth knowledge of where data points coalesced, and where they diverged as I moved from participant to participant. Additionally, I was able to identify the points at which the data affirmed and contradicted the literature.

The second cycle of coding allowed me to group initial codes into categories based on repeated words and phrases. Saldaña (2013) advises, “the primary goal during Second Cycle coding is to develop a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and/or theoretical organization from your array of first cycle codes” (p. 207). In keeping with his

suggestions, identified categories were then captured into five connective themes. These became the framework distilling the findings for this study. However, Saldaña cautions, in Vivo Codes could be used as a sole coding method for the First Cycle of data analysis, and the sole method of choice for small-scale studies, but that may limit the researcher's perspective on the data, a perspective that can contribute to more conceptual and theoretical views about the phenomenon or process. (p. 94)

Heeding his words, it is important to mention that coding procedures used herein were not the only contributors to the themes. In addition to the two coding cycles, poetic analyses completed during the first review of the data and approved by the participants, informed the overarching ideas threading through the data. These major themes are colonial wounds, power inequities, tensions, intersection, and hope. Chapter six is a discussion of each theme according to participant invocations of the concepts. The chapter also includes contextualization of the ways in which literature addresses these conceptions.

Sharing Research Findings

"In culturally responsive research methodologies, there is not only an understanding of mutually determined dissemination but also a goal to contribute to the public good."
(SooHoo, 2013, p. 216)

The eight participants who took part in this study represent members of the Kenyan population who are situated within a unique crossroad. Their economic circumstances attest to, and acknowledge the ongoing impacts of both colonization and globalization. As working professionals interacting in the greater global context, their experiences demonstrate an effort to move beyond the damaging limitations of a destructive colonial legacy. These individuals find themselves in liminal spaces

connected to their indigenous heritage, and pulled into a Western existence. Their inherited identities are both-at-once formed and dynamically re-formed. They are simultaneously working to understand how they can access their particular cultural legacy in order to provide ongoing hope for the future generations while delving into a generalized global culture. Issues of identities, do not define the scope of this work.

My initial exploratory conversations into the research affirmed that young, urban Kenyans are deeply aware of, and inhabit their cultural identities. Rather inquiry, here, is shaped by implications and consequences arising from participant navigation of the power structures that define living at the intersection of globalization and indigeneity. The goal of this work then, was to engage this particular population in an active discourse that began to tie the past into present in order to imagine and carve an equitable path forward.

Data Reporting

In sharing findings from the field, I privileged participant voices. I arrived at their responses to the research topic by using semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix A). In the conversations that I held with participants, I asked these questions and listened as the answers unfolded through stories that exemplified, explained, and clarified their knowing. In reporting the findings, I included long excerpts of their stories knowing in order to highlight the how their meanings unfolded. Furthermore, I contextualized participant responses through a process to explain their responses. I based these explanations in the wholeness of participant responses. That is, my explanations of participant perspectives were based *on the whole* of the conversation rather than merely on the excerpt included. Thus, data reporting as shared within the findings include

interpretation weaved into and between participant excerpts from the transcripts. The findings were sent back to the field for input and response.

In Asymmetrical Parallel: Cultivating Relationships

In the Clear Nudity-Relating Transparently

Smith (2012) reminds us that “the ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world’s colonized peoples. It is a history that still offends the deepest sense of our humanity” (p. 1). As a researcher trained in Western scholarship, I acknowledge that traditional research has been used to exploit Indigenous communities. It is with this disturbing legacy that I entered the research field. The fullness of my scholarship, however, began long before my forays into the halls of academia. Formatively, it began anchored within the foundation of my Indigenous cultural knowledge. This is the basis for the work I am undertaking. Elechi et al. (2010) writes, “although African cultures are diverse and, moreover, have been tempered by external cultural influences and colonialism, there remain certain tenets of African culture that have survived, to which we can refer to as *African culture*” (pp. 73-74).

These tenets of ancestral legacy and shared customs, allowed me to hold some common understandings with participants. This was the fertile ground for our academic engagement.

Even as an academician, these tenets opened up an avenue of common trust. Elechi et al. (2010) continue, “again, no culture is static, and African societies have had to borrow from others to enhance their viability and adaptability to technological and economic changes” (p. 74). While I carried with me some elements of Western

scholarship practices, the woven inquiry framework of *Kupiga Hadithi*, *Decolonizing Methodologies* and *CRM* will anchored me to my ancestral knowing. In addition, utilizing these methods authenticated the research so that the work could move beyond a curious and cursory exploration of the research questions. Thus, this project became a step into social justice praxis. Elechi et al. (2010) note, “the goal of justice as a practical matter in Africa is the restoration of relationships, peace, and harmony within the community” (p.74). In the liminal spaces between indigeneity and globalization, the participants in this study were engaged in the processes of reconciling painful incongruities carved and cemented by colonization. While this research works to interrogate these processes, it attempts to do so without a colonizing agenda.

Ferguson and Ferguson (2000) write, “there is no one way to do qualitative research; there are nonetheless, wrong ways of doing it” (p. 18). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the discourse of a right and wrong binary presupposes a chasmatic framework of understanding. Thus, there is one side of holding unquestionable ‘truth’ and another side with an unshakeable ‘false.’ This objectification of knowing leaves those on either side without a way to mitigate the great distance between, and those in the middle working to construct meaning from lived experiences uneasy. My research did not seek to find an objective truth. Rather, I collaborated with participants in discourse as a means of relating to, relaying, and of unearthing the dynamic transitions occurring within a particularly Kenyan context. Ferguson and Ferguson (2000) continue, “the process of contextualizing... does not depend on breaking data part, but finding the overarching story in a more holistic approach” (p. 182). The overarching story (ies) explicated in the processes of *Kupiga Hadithi* became the key narrative informing its results.

At the start of this process, I engaged in reciprocal conversations with participants and together we wondered what would emerge as encapsulating ideas. Moreover, I wanted to know what could be identified as a trigger point of praxis and of trust so that participants could authentically participate in the work. I understood, and still realize, that research must be contextualized and blessed by participants. Therefore, our work had to be a co-constructed process. While in the field, I learned that an explicit iteration of my purposes and intentions allowed for transparency. Subsequently, such positioning led me to accept the mandates that were inevitably expressed by participants. They told me what was respectful, and what was not. Harkening back to the constructs of *Kupiga Hadithi*, as I clearly stated my research intentions and work alongside participants to recraft and hone the purpose of the work, I engaged in the relational exchange of the ‘greeting ceremony.’ As a result, we continually entrenched relational trust and opened authentic spaces of discourse. In other words, my research methodologies cultivated a dialogical habitat for research.

Harrison, MacGibbon, and Morton (2001) comment, “reciprocity, the give and take of social interactions, may be used to gain access to a particular setting” (p. 323). As a point of clarification, the authors are not defining reciprocity as *quid pro quo*, an exact exchange of services rendered. Reciprocity is, and was, the relational back and forth naturally occurring as we in the study interacted communally, in good will. Reciprocity was us communing together, learning together, and sharing life together. More than the limitations of “gaining access,” the concept of reciprocity referred to humanizing the participant-researcher relationships. In the greeting ceremony of *Kupiga Hadithi*, there is in-built reciprocity. According to Harrison et al. (2001), reciprocity may also “be

employed to build more useful theory; through collaborative theorizing with participants, it is possible to both advance emancipatory theory and empower those researched” (p. 324). Did reciprocity, then, become a tool for eliciting participant cooperation? No. It was, in fact, the opposite. Reciprocity required that I, as a researcher, incorporate participant voice throughout the varied aspect of the research process. Reciprocity demanded that I include participant checks as a means of finding multiple ways of triangulating information and that I accept, with humility, participant authority in the knowledge-transactions. Ultimately, as a culturally responsive researcher, reciprocity ascertained that I constantly affirm the foundational co-constructive purpose of the work. I did this through a continual reiteration of the question, for whose benefit is the research conducted?

In discussing an African conception of justice, Elechi et al. (2010) write about Ubuntu. They state,

Ubuntu, a relational worldview, which expresses ‘our interconnectedness, our common humanity, and the responsibility to each other that deeply flows from our deeply felt connection’ (Nussbaum, 2003, p. 2). It is a prescription for treating others as we would like to be treated. Ubuntu is a command [mandate] to care for each other and to embrace the principle of reciprocity and mutual support. (p. 75)

Accordingly, developing trust becomes an issue of justice and even more, of social justice. The reciprocal development of trust ensures that research benefits those who share their knowledge, the participants.

I opened these methodology chapters with Senghor’s (1998) poem, “At the End of My Telescope.” In his verse, he crystallizes the harmonious vision of a community

working together transparently through various juxtapositions and alignments. Senghor (1998) crafts a vision of individuals communally celebrating life and fully embracing their humanity within the tasks at hand. I close the chapter with a poetic response to Senghor (1998) entitled “In the Clear Nudity.” I am answering his call with a methodology hearkening back to the past as a journey for re-building the present. In the same vein participants, in the next chapters, offer their voices to the research task at hand. Their words speaking to the murky liminal spaces they inhabit.

*In the clear nudity,
children cast their dreams
and the women sing songs of recompense
their ululating voices reverberating
down the cavernous halls of history*

*In the clear nudity, children cast their dreams
and the dust gathers from smoking ash,
remnants of burning, and blackened embers
Hope that has fallen, triumph that has risen*

*Oh, the visions these young ones see
the fresh waters of Nam Lolwe pouring out its tears
into an endless river, the course of a journey yet begun.
This dance that we breathe, You and Me,
our bodies like reeds bending along the ancient sea.*

*In the clear nudity,
We are the voices of our ancestors
cultivating this red-earth borderland.*

Chapter 6: Colonial Wounds

In Chapter five, I discussed research methods as they informed interaction with participants, data collection, and data analysis. I highlighted poetic analysis as a holistic means of introducing participants and focused on data analysis procedures allowing for multiple ways for making meaning from the data. In addition, I describe data reporting as an ongoing process of contextualizing meaning within participant stories. In the upcoming Chapters six through nine, I present findings from the research by privileging participant voices through excerpts explaining their responses to questions that I have posed. Along with these excerpts, I include interpretations based on the whole of their statements. The goal is to contextualize and accurately represent their commentaries.

This chapter is a focus on the first major finding of this study, colonial wounds. Colonial wounds are the deep injuries caused by the exploitations and sanctioned injustices of the colonizer. As with all injuries that break connective, living tissues, colonial wounds have broken the ways in which Indigenous peoples know themselves, their world, and their societies. And like all wounds when healing occurs, the remaining scars though temporarily detached from nerve receptors, mark the damages that have taken place. These scars are susceptible to re-injury. Certainly, things are not as they were. This chapter includes discussions of the participant conceptions of these scars, these colonial wounds. Within the chapter, I focus on the ways in which participants utilize storied-knowing to exemplify colonial wounds. In the first section, I include participant voices explaining their conceptions of colonization and its overarching effects as discussed within the scope of this work. The second section presents a discussion of wounds that affect the individual as well as the family in their constructions of meaning.

The third section features participant commentary which illustrates colonial wounds that have deeply dismantled the foundational structures of society. I conclude the chapter reflecting on the effects of colonial wounds as they pertain to the three research questions of this study.

Presentation of this theme is shaped by the methodology of *Kupiga Hadithi*. Participants shared their perspectives in storied-knowing, weaving examples, and building contexts around particular points of discussion so as to make it clear. Subsequently, within this chapter, I interact with the data in a conversational manner. Much like a dialogue, I engage with the data in a back and forth manner. As I include the whole of a participant's comment, I pause within the sections of their storied-knowing to feature, clarify, and connect the content. These moments of clarification and connection are based on the entire body of my conversations with the participants. Thus, the conversation flows and extends even as it teaches.

Wounds Opened: Acknowledging the Scars

The framework for discussing colonial wounds was generated by discourse. Within their discussions, specific topics, areas of disappointment, pain, and struggle consistently emerged as salient points for active reflection. These topics included: the acknowledgment and reflection of the colonial roost of the nation's currently vulnerable political and economic system, as well as, the sense of distance from one's community and ancestral home. Sarah's commentary captures the way participants discussed these overarching effects of colonization.

Sarah: Yes, so I think they are coming, um, as much as anything that comes in houses, positives and negatives. I think the negatives outweigh, because

until today, Kenya has never really, really healed from colonization. Until today, the greediness was brought about by them because they're the ones who were taking people's lands, they're the ones who made the resources scarce. They're the ones who changed the whole system in terms of how we used to do better, how we treated each other that was backwards. You know? They raped our people. We did not have things like rape. They brought with them some foreign things that have now had lasting effects on us. Because... That's okay. So you see like, when, I think they were in part which is known as racism, because I think racism is not very key in Kenya, but it's there. Because when you are an, when they raped some of the Kenyan women and, who got kids that were a mixed race, these kids were considered outcasts, because first of all the way they came to be— It brought bitterness and anger over a long period of time. It, it, it brought about, uh, self hate and feeling worthless, because the system before that knew we were all equal, we were all beautiful, we were all the same. So them coming in mixing with the, with the Blacks and all of that [01:25:21], but it also brought about with the rapings and all that, and making us slaves. Meant that if, they made us feel inferior. Because can you imagine going to someone's home, kicking them out of that home and making that home yours and telling them, you know you can squat there, because that's what they did, they moved me to a different place and told me, 'You can squat here, because anyway, this land belongs to me now.' And then all of a sudden you tell me, 'How you used to run your house is so bad. Let me

show you the new way you should run this house.’ That’s what they did exactly (2.25-26⁸).

According to Sarah then, colonization disrupted the political and economic system by confiscating indigenous lands and restricting communal methods for economic redistribution. Her observation “they are the ones who made the resources scarce” (2.25) codifies the genesis of a wound. This is the colonial wound on the nation’s economic infrastructure and it still bears healing.

In her commentary, Sarah also underlines the concept that colonization disrupted Indigenous self-knowledge and meaning-making because it marred the ways in which people constructed their identities both as individuals, and individuals within a community. Her utility of the terms ‘backwards’ ‘racism,’ ‘self-hate’ ‘feeling worthless,’ ‘inferior,’ emphasize identities compromised by external oppression. Additionally, her words encapsulate the way in which colonization cast aspersion upon the intellectual capacities of the individual and her community.

Her closing statement, “you can squat here, because anyway, this land belongs to me now. And then all of a sudden you tell me, ‘How you used to run your house is so bad. Let me show you the new way you should run this house.’ That’s what they did exactly” (2.26), explains the encompassing colonial wound as discussed by participants to Indigenous sovereignty. She is articulating the struggle for land rights. She notes the idea of “home” and of being usurped from that home. Her explanation is visceral in that

⁸ When quoting participants, the first number indicates each person’s individual interview session. The number(s) following the period denotes the page number(s) within the transcript where the information may be found. For example, within this note, the number 2 clarifies that this quote is from the second interview session with this participant. The number 25-25 registers the page number in the transcripts where this quotation may be found

by calling upon the lived experience of home, one can imagine what it means to be forcibly removed from that protective, nurturing place. Sarah is emphasizing how colonization dehumanized Indigenous populations within the boundaries of their own lands, their own historical spaces, and attempted to make these populations powerless.

Wounded Self, Scars on the Community

The knowledge of self, and self within a historical community has been curtailed and reshaped by the colonial severance of Indigenous people from their histories. In her comment, Josephine dramatizes this point and her realization of a lacking connection as she recounts a visit to her ancestral lands.

Josephine: My grandma didn't speak English. Very little Swahili. So yeah. I'm like, "Grandma, grandma, grandma." And it was like heh, yeah. Who says grandma? Here we don't grandma, we say Shosho]. So she answers and then she says like 10, 50 words in Meru and I am looking at her like, "no, come slowly" cause I was really young. I maybe be like 4, 5. But by the time I left, I had all the interest in the world to learn Meru and talk to my grandma. Yeah. I wanted to ask her all this you know, storybook questions. Grandma, where is the porridge, where is what not?...and I've never been so terrified to have breakfast. Because it's like a full meal. There's meat. There's, there's, oh my God. There's everything. Everything. Chapatis, meat, um, tea, porridge, soup, everything. (1.2)... You know, I woke up in the morning. I'm looking at the table. A small table. A coffee table in the kitchen... they have chapatis, a whole bowl of meat and then, the soup is there, and then fruits and then stew, what not. (sigh) So I'm like, 'Mom, you know what

time is it? Like this is breakfast.’ And maybe you do not eat, at least there’s everything. But don’t leave anything, heh! So I look at some of like... So, you start with some of the porridge. By the time we were getting to the other end? And then you know, my grandma is, she’ll look at me like, ‘Uh-huh, You, you’re not gonna refuse to take that.’ Yeah. So, that was that. So, I didn’t know anything. Okay. I need to learn this language that I don’t know. I mean, I was going to see my grandma. And um, that was that. But now, after I left the land. Okay. I need to learn this language so I could communicate with my grandma. And so I learned. Not everything, I, I hear everything. But of course, when I speak, you can just tell the accent is not there fully. (2.2-3)

Her vivid explanation not only highlights an inability to communicate with her Grandmother and the loss of knowing that comes from that, but it also demonstrates an immersion into a schooling curriculum divorced from her Indigenous traditions. Her conceptions of ‘porridge’ and of a ‘light breakfast’ are foreign to her Grandmother and have been assumed because of her exposure to the West. That she cannot call her Grandmother by the proper term, ‘Shosho’ does not only reflect a lack of language skills but also an unfamiliarity with the processes of home. Josephine through this visit comes to an awareness that, “I didn’t know anything” and embarks on a journey to learn from her Shosho about her metaphorical and specific lineage.

Sarah: In the village, they were supposed to teach the younger ladies on what is acceptable...I think that is something that is lacking right now because we do not have such mentors. Most of our grandparents are not taking that role

very seriously, and also because maybe we go to see them less often. So the little time they have with us is not enough to bond and allow them ... to become so free with us...But you see in the old culture, it would be, it would come out very freely and that way it would also help one caution even a child when they're going wrong. But nowadays because there are no such conversations and we have it among ourselves who are also very lost most of the time. Age peers and you know, you have questions you want to ask. I'm going through this, but you don't really have someone with the experience to hold your hand... So I think it's something that we've lost that ... I wish it could come back. And then the other thing that I think that that way, um, that, that communication between us like the generation and our grandparents would ... it'd keep the culture going. (1.17) Because they would always teach you about, "This is what we used to do, this is why we used to do this." Or, "This is how we do this." You know?... It would, it would become like, something that is handed down. Everybody knows that when they become grandparents, they must teach, they must teach, they must. So that would keep it going, but because that was broken somewhere, you find that that's why the culture is you know fading away because there's no one to continue it. Um, I think maybe it got broken with our parents (1.15-17).

Sarah's deliberation brings into sharp relief the idea of endangered epistemologies. Her comment of "something lost" and "something broken" is a referent to the knowledge of self and of self within the context of one's culture. One of the things

that has been lost is the ability to deeply understand the ancestral knowledge of how to *be* and consequently, how to *become*. Her supposition that her parent's generation has not continued the legacy of ancestral knowledge transference is further affirmed by Isaiah who both contextualizes these and reflects as to their future.

Isaiah: So my dad is a love of those [traditional metaphors and proverbs]. He can tell them on and on and I don't... Something I don't understand. I'm like, 'What, what is that dad?' But those are thingss which are not really being passed forward, because people who used to speak them died and there was no, there was no recording or archiving that kind of information. So the greatest challenge we are going to have is in a few generations to come... If we'll still be here... We shall not be having the authentic Kisii that we used to have then. Because most of the things would have died with the people who died. You know this tacit knowledge or indigenous knowledge that was never recorded or never picked from the, from the people who have it now. The ones, the generations that come after them, it's us now we, we don't... I mean it's not, it's not something that... Very few people who may be interested to have that and carry it on as a legacy. Because I, I barely know it. So I may not be able to tell them much of what I do not know really. Uh, it's from my parents literally. I mean they used to take us home to our grandparents to visit, you know. And, and that's what the language was, I mean my parents, my grandparents never used to speak any other language beside that. And my parents always insisted on speaking mother tongue to us. So we learnt that first... My parents insisted in teaching us (1.17).

For Isaiah, the “tacit knowledges or Indigenous knowledges” he has garnered from his Grandparents and Parents is disappearing. The knowledges, for him, were difficult to access. His Parents had to make specific effort to return to ancestral lands in order that he may have meaningful contact with his Grandparents and his traditions. While he can admire and appreciate his Father’s mastery of this knowing, he acknowledges that these knowledges will be compromised when transmitted to his children.

Isaiah: I will. I will take them home [to ancestral lands]. But I don’t think I’m going to you know, stress myself teaching them Kisii as the first language. Because of the kind of, where I find my situation. Like I was telling you where I live, where I work now. The people around. There is much more of the kids they play with, you know. It’s a little bit difficult... Well, I will try and teach my kids that language even with my parents, you know. But it may not really be their first language because of their surroundings. But I would love them to know the language, because it’s important that they get to know who they are at least to identify themselves that way, besides you know, saying you are Kenyan; yes, you are Kenyan, but you are from the Kisii. So you at least need to know your language. (1.18)

Indigenous knowledge is tied to the knowledge of one’s identity. This ‘tacit knowledge’ will be further diluted for Isaiah’s children because of the necessary interactions and engagement in a more globalized context. For Isaiah and other participants, this is an accepted reality. Therefore, the colonial wound opened by the

colonizer imbuing a sense of inferiority for one's own Indigenous history, as discussed by Sarah earlier, is now exacerbated by a globalized influx of expanded cultural interactions.

Land, the Seeping National Wound

Participants identified the scarring caused by the colonizer's reconstruction of Indigenous geographies. Sarah emphasizes this point as she comments upon current East-African political boundary issues which include Kenya's tension with Uganda and Somalia. Additionally, she notes intra-national governance difficulties that pit differing people groups within the boundaries of Kenya against each other.

Sarah: So, like, when I look at Kenya, Kenya was not Kenya until it was colonized. There was nothing like Kenya. There was just, we come from the same region. An African, when we're talking about we come from the same region, is knowing that we come from this side of the lake, and it's here until the... We didn't know that there was all Western that there was Kakamega, there was nothing like that. And uh, when you look at some of the divisions, you'll see, even within neighboring countries, we still have a bit of challenge with the demarcation of where Kenya ends and where Kenya begins. We've had this recent Mgingo. We have this area uh, bordering Uganda. And Kenya, whereby we are still wondering who does this Mgingo land belong to? Is it Kenya? Is it uh, Uganda? We also have- Yes. Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah? So it, it, it brings a lot of controversy. What is that? Is it some no-nomad's land? Is it Kenya? Is there the Kenyan government there, is the Ugandan government there? Who governs that place? The other thing is down to the coast, we have Mombasa people

claiming that some parts of Mombasa is not Mombasa, it actually exists on its own. Um, and we had, even like the clashes in Mombasa and a bit of the first internal terror, terror attack was when there's, when, when the people from there were saying they don't want to be governed by Kenya anymore. Because they are not Kenya. Uh, we add to this Somali side. They claim that we took part of their land. (2.18)

Sarah's questions, "is it Kenya? Who governs that place? (2.18) articulates a crucial nexus between the nation's geography and its current political landscape. Her commentary also establishes that these issues are at the forefront of participant consciousness. They are grappling with the inherited effects of geography boundary issues. Moreover, they are linking current issues with how the nation's infrastructure was built.

Sarah: So Kenya, I think, when colonization took place, and uh, the different countries were popularizing, we have the French, the British, the... I think... the Portuguese. I think they were just trying to find amicable ground of, 'Okay, we'll stay here, and you guys just go on that side, so that you don't intrude on our side,' you know? Or it was the place that they were able, the territory that they were able to colonize, and they are like, 'No, now, this is our region, so draw something that comes from this point to this point. And I think that there's some things that were overlooked. So I think that's the way Kenya be, ended up becoming Kenya. Uh, if you ask me, that's what I know, or that's what I've read. (2.19)

As she concludes her point, she hints at the way in which the Imperial disruption of physical geographies within the continent has led to a dilution of Indigenous culture. From her stance, there has been influence from the “French, the British...the Portuguese” (2.19). And these are influences still reflected in the systems of schooling, the organization of government, as well as modes according to which the economy functions.

In addition to mentioning foreign influence, Sarah’s rumination exposes a colonial wound to pre-colonial social constructions of governmental systems. Before the colonizer, sovereign nations negotiated geographic boundaries with their bordering neighbors. These negotiations created a framework for self-governance and for economic autonomy. As the colonial government usurped the Indigenous population from their land, they also dismantled the economic structures that shored up communal wealth distribution. In the processes of negotiating self-interested peace with their European partners, the Imperial government destroyed the physical construction of space demarcating Indigenous land and creating geographical boundaries for sovereignty.

Reflecting on the struggle surrounding land, Rachel further expounds upon Sarah’s point. She describes the injustices ensuing from the Imperial land grab. For Rachel, the focus of her observations settles on what the post-Independence Kenyan government enacted after the British colonizers left the newly formed nation. Her commentary delineates a link between the actions of the Imperial government and current injustices of unequitable land disseminating practices.

Rachel: Colonization, yes. Yes it had an impact. In terms of land it had... It really did. Because when the Whites came, Whites were not occupying Nairobi. They went to maybe central province. Yeah, and they took those lands. And

you see after that people like Jomo Kenyatta...When they went there, after they chased the Whites they didn't... They, they just went and took those lands for themselves. They did not realize that there was someone living here who was evicted from this place. And these people are still fighting back for their... They still want their land back. (2.13)

Rachel's commentary also introduces the concept of agency—the notion that Indigenous peoples even when oppressed by a suffocating Imperial regime, engaged in acts of social resistance. Individuals within the society, as well as their family and tribal groups labored to break through the barriers of oppression. She notes, “and these people are still fighting back” (2.13). She is asserting that the action of fighting has been and continues to be. While Indigenous peoples did resist colonization, a sharp wound was dealt to the historical and social construction of the individual within society. The Imperial government stole People's rights to their land, and to the legacies attached to that land. In addition to losing wealth, Indigenous peoples lost their tribal sovereignty. David reinforces this perspective by contemplating upon the processes that led to nationhood. He begins by attempting to situate the historical timeline.

David: Uh, do I remember how many years? But it was a long time. Eh, colonized by the British, and then, uh, early 60s, eh, Africans, Kenyan natives started feeling that we have, we need to, you know, control our own nation. So- They felt... I think, either disenfranchised or disillusioned by the, the current state of affairs. The White men, they had the best lands. They had the, the largest pieces of land. The Black men were working for them, paid peanuts. And you see, they, even then they knew that this was our land. I

mean before they came, this was our land, and these guys have come and we're working for them, peanuts. Uh, on top of that they were, uh, restricted in many things. For example, you know, moving around, freedom of travel. They couldn't travel anywhere without a specific badge. There was a badge or an ID, uh, that shows you're from a certain place and you have been given permission to go to a certain place. Eh, of course all those things came to..., they couldn't intermarry with the Whites or, or even be friends with them. So they were only regarded as maybe slaves or workers. (2.14-15)

David's retelling of a 'disenfranchised and disillusioned' peoples is reflective of the historical pain that has been passed down from Grandparents to Parents, and to this current generation. The narrative that he recounts is living. It is not an alienated experience without ongoing felt impact and it speaks to the current disillusionment observed by participants as they work to maintain viability in contentious economic space.

David: And you know, in the back of their mind they always thought, this was our place, eh, this was our place. We're here working for these people. So they started fighting the Whites. And, uh, they came up with Mau Mau, that's, uh, in Swahili meaning Mzungu Aende, eh, eh, Ulaya. Yeah. Mwafrika-Mzungu Aende Ulaya Mwafrika Apate Uhuru. That's the acronym, I think so, yeah, the explanation. Yeah. Mwafrika Apate Uhuru, the last part. So they, they, they, they, they started fighting the Whites and, uh, the, the war went on until 1963, that's, that's when we were given, eh, independence by the British. Oh, that's when we are, we took independence. That's true,

that's when we took independence from the British. Eh, and we started,
that's when even Kenya, the nation Kenya was born. (2.14-15)

David's recollection of the slogan naming the MauMau movement for national Independence, "Mzungu aende ulaya, Mwafrika apate uhuru" loosely translated to 'foreigner return to your place, African, find your freedom,' articulates a narration against the colonial wound to Indigenous autonomy.

Sarah further extends discussion regarding colonial historical enactment of land appropriation from Kenyan Tribal groups also notes a disruption to social structures as crafted by the Indigene. She indicates that pre-colonial historical ways of being—which had previously informed both the individual's and her society's processes for constructing meaning—were deemed unviable by the colonizer. In Sarah's words, these processes were "considered inferior" (1.11). Her observation describes the roots of a widening chasm fostered by Imperial occupation and created between the self and her history, as well as, the self and her own ontology.

Sarah: There was colonization. And colonization, they were just, um, ... you'd be asked to stop doing some things. I, I mean you were literally told if you were found praying under a tree. You know, like if you look at the Kenyan history, you'd find that the Mau Mau people used to go praying and before long, they started discussing about liberation. 'We don't want to be under the White man anymore.' You'd find that even that praying under a tree was considered inferior by the White person. So even going to just pray under that tree was deemed, um, wrong. And so you find that the, the, the African

people were finding themselves being punished for things that they used to natural do. You know? (1.11)

Sarah's observation is imperative in that it exemplifies the ways in which People groups were institutionally forced to conform to foreign ways of being. In turn, her observations lay the groundwork for discussing the reasons why young, urban, professional Kenyans may be, in some ways disassociated from the specifics of their Indigenous histories. If the ways that Grandfathers and Grandmothers constructed meaning were subject to punishment, as not by Sarah, then presumably, the passing on of such legacies would be curtailed so as to spare the next generations. Subsequently, the disconnect between ancestral knowing and the present generation would become an observable phenomena.

Isaiah contemplates his lack of knowledge about the chronologies of his history. In his conversation, he ponders the origins of Indigenous societal constructs. His questions negate the Western anthropological narrative assertion that Indigenous peoples required direction for self-governance and knowledge construction. Isaiah's commentary disrupts a narrative reiterated when media reports of continental disasters both natural and human-made are contextualized by suppositions of Indigenous populations unable to maintain functioning infrastructures. His reflection trouble such deficit assumptions.

Isaiah: It is. I would love to know really. Maybe I would, I would love to know what really, what was before the, the, the, before the White people came to settle here and divided and you know, what was there. To know how it all began, who owned the land. In terms of land to know you know, we just want to know from the beginning. So they came and then, and then what?

What happened before them? Like you need to know... I like to follow things from first principle. (1.11)

As a nation, Kenya bears the colonial wound created Imperial dismantling of Indigenous sovereignties. As discussed by participants, established systems of governance were torn apart by the confiscation and re-distribution of Indigenous lands and resources. Isaiah's idea of "first principle" understanding calls for a return to the core of Indigenous knowing about land and about social governance apart from, and tied to the utility of that land. The idea reverberates through Naomi's commentary as well. She utilizes phrases such as "the dark continent," "superiority," "survive," "adapting," and "worked out" to illustrate a dichotomy between the narrative of deficit as established by the colonizer and the historical factuality as enacted by Indigenous populations in Kenya.

Naomi: Because I think that from, from, since they called Africa the dark continent or there's that superiority with the White people. They're give the, I think they just came and brought new things. They brought our, their way of life to us and made, made, made it seem like it's the way of life we should be living. So, there's always since they came, since they invaded Africa or every other place they went, they, they made sure or created a mentality that their, their way of life is better than ours. Which I think is wrong, but it's the way it is. Because we used to survive even before they came. Because if you, if, if we, we, if it was so wrong, we would not be here. Yeah. We used to survive. We've grown or we were made, since we were born, we found them already adapting their way of life. So, most of the time we tend to believe it's how we should be living. But uh, I believe, whether they came

or didn't come, people would have found a way of coping with their own lives somehow. Yeah. Somehow, like it would have worked out, somehow it would have (2.4-5).

Naomi's first stance upholds the capable autonomy of Indigenous sovereignty. She is certain that Indigenous populations are and were fully capable of engaging current historical contexts. Juma's comments below add nuance to the discussion. While he identifies the oppressive tactics of Imperial governance, his discussion pinpoints the causal factors of colonial wounds on the "African Lords" who followed the colonial government. For Juma, the newly formed, post-Independence national government propagated the disparities created by the colonizer. As such, the oppression of the post-Independence Kenyan national government begins to move in the direction of that outweighs the impact of the colonizer's dominance.

Juma: Yes. Yeah, definitely. Uh, because... Let me just tow the landscape for you so that you can understand better. The White settlers who came to Kenya took huge, huge chunks of land and they pushed the indigenous people to areas that were either semi-arid or arid and these guys, the settlers took the arable land. So, land that was communal became personalized by these White people. So, they... they found the lands, they developed road networks, they brought crops, planted, they made the harvest for commercial purposes (2.11)

Juma's commentary attributes structural, industrial and governmental progress to the colonizer. Even as he acknowledges the confiscation of Indigenous property and economic rights, he observes that the post-Independence government did not redress the

grievances of the Indigenous population, rather the national government continued the tasks of oppression and marginalization.

Juma: But now when independence came, this land was handed over to a board, a land board then which was run by the government. And this land board dished out this land to now individual African leaders... of the day. And by doing this, the people who were pushed to these, uh, arid land or semi-arid. And the ones who just... and the other African, uh, disadvantaged people who worked in these White settlers' farms... they didn't... they didn't enjoy the fruits of independence. They, some of them remained in the arid areas, others remained as, uh, workers in the farms... which are now owned by African owners, African lords. Yeah. So, that didn't empower them in any way. They remained poor. Their children went to the bad schools or others never even went to school at all. Uh, as now, these new African lords, you know, own these huge tracts of land, and went on and watched what the White people were doing, you know, farming, and they became richer while the laborers remained poor. Yeah. In fact, in some cases, the laborers say that they'd prefer the White, uh, lords, they were more... they were more... How should I put it? They are more sensitive to their needs, you know.

(2.11)

Juma's featuring the voices of those who "prefer the White lords' because they 'are more sensitive to their needs' continues to highlight the colonial wound perpetrated upon the self and the community. His discussion taps into the legacy of alienation from self and from Indigenous knowledges as acknowledged earlier in this section.

Land, a Dehumanizing Factor

The colonial wound surrounding land is an ongoing deep bruise continuing to injure national solidarity. George pontificates on the importance of the issue for himself. His words join the voices of other participants as they discussed the formation, struggles, and successes of the nation around the issues of land.

George: Always I'd struggle. I'd struggle, I don't know since when, about the land question. Apparently that one I want to couple them in the injustices or historical injustices. Just if you put them in the historical injustices it will be, it will be louder. The question of land. The question of land has haunted our people. The land was a key question in our colonial struggle. Pre, people used to fight for land. Tribe and another tribe. So the, the quest for land has always been a thorn, and they still are thorn, because solutions seems to be fact. ... That is one problem I know pre-colonialism and post which have disturbed people, the land. (2b.1)

For Indigenous peoples, land cannot merely be relegated to a space of utility. It encompasses multiple histories and multiple knowledges. Within the geographical boundaries of land are also the cultural rights and heritages of a people group as well as the individuals within that group. Therefore, discussions about land become discourses about freedoms, rights, and socio-economic well-being. George clarifies,

George: When you are talking about a tribe, a tribe has to be, has to have a geographical... Let's say a geographical place where they come from. And that geographical place, actually, that's land, eh? So if that tribe is moved, then it goes to a certain place again. You see, there's that gap. So you

creating a, you're moving one problem from this place and creating it in another place. You're moving, you're moving populations from one place to another. And, and those are the sins which are committed by the forefathers of our nation and they are still, they are still haunting us. (1.26)

So, land itself carries the indelible culture of a people. It forms and reforms the genealogy of how Indigenous peoples construct meaning. It holds the community together as a shared resource, even as it reflects their historical way of life. Like other participants, George expresses that once colonizer fragmented the land according to his needs, then the 'forefathers' continued 'historical injustices' that are currently in existence. However, George contextualizes this thought within Indigenous histories as a means of differentiating pre-colonial land struggles and post-Independence contentions.

George: Land, land, land has always been owned communally. Leave alone this thing of title deeds and stuff. Stupid. Land, and then it will be divided equally by— With families. And then they are given land to grow plants. This is land for if you did mix, and this is land for cattle. And this is land where you can go make your homes and stuff. And it was very well divided. Among all the tribes. (1.26)

Because the colonial government forcibly divorced people from their ancestral lands, it divorced communities from the whole of their cultures—their ways of being and knowing. In addition, land appropriation by the Imperial government alienated people from their established processes for economic well-being and curtailed recovery processes by instituting governmental structures ripe for exploitation.

George: In that pre-colonial time when the clans used to associate with others, we had representatives sitting from this when they had conflict over anything. They just sit and Wazees, Wazees, these are the elders, agree that we do this and this and this. This is a shared resource, let's use it together. You use from the other side and we will use from the other side. You don't have to cross over. You see? We all access this and then let's make sure that our environment is clean enough for that... uh... the resource is there for us to use because we depend on it. So there were mechanisms there to tackle issues of resource distribution... Things belonged to the community. As of now, there's the individualism sense of things belonging to a person... Apparently we went wrong from the word—when the colonialists left—from the word “Go.” When the colonialists left, he had alienated [us] from land. He had taken peoples' land. That land should have been returned to the people. Because, people knew this land belongs to these and these people. The displacement of people was done. What the colonialists did, the people who came there [post-Independence government], did not even tackle those things that the people were crying for. ‘Freedom, our land, we want our land back and freedom.’ They continued the same system... People say now they've come up with a question of, we are going to willing buyer, willing seller. But you forget that this land belonged to certain people. Certain communities of people who are displaced. Can we first retribute, or give them back what belongs to them? And then if they are willing to sell, then they let the owners sell. (2b.1-3)

As illustrated by George, historical land issues are tied to present day economic disparities. George's perspective is a notion that all the participants touched upon.

Alienation from land is a deep wound that shakes and will continue to shake the stability of the current nation. Participants recounted the depth of pain by linking struggles over land injustices to the post-election violence following Kenya's 2007-08 elections.

Participants concluded that tribal infighting, rioting, and discord that accompanied the aftermath of the elections cast and continues to cast a disturbing shadow on nation building. David recounts

David: I was shocked. You know, I thought everybody was thinking like me. You know, that level at the university. But the sad part is, not everybody is in that level, not everybody thinks about the country after 5 or 10 years. Not everybody. There are few. But not everybody. So I was shocked that we were fighting. Actually fighting, killing each other because of elections. I was very shocked. And I think that it took me awhile to learn that the election is the trigger. The reason behind the trigger it's very, it's deep rooted. From colonization, to independence and from that President from independence until now. Land question and uh, economic, you know, differences with different communities. There are many things that touched to economic situation and the land. That's why it has degraded to that level. So, elections are only triggers. And because politicians use their tribes to gain power, they use them in a negative way. And so they say those guys are the ones making us not, you know, advanced. 'Those guys have our land,

those guys have our jobs, those guys, you know, those guys.’ So they pit communities against each other. (1b.1)

Clearly, the colonial wound of land remains open and has been re-injured with each attempt at crafting a solidified nation. As a tactic for disrupting Indigenous ways of being and of knowing, removing tribal groups from their lands proved to be an effective mechanism for crumbling Indigenous sovereignty and sabotaging attempts at nationhood. Participants explained how this wound has become entrenched even further post-Independence.

George: But then when we come to the question of trouble during colonial and after colonial then we have the question of power, and nepotism now comes in, then tribalism. You see, tribalism usually follows after nepotism and, and apparently now Kenya’s suffers more from tribalism. It is seen everywhere appointments, the distribution of national resources, opportunities, respected work... And then, now from the question of land to the question of tribalism and nepotism and then to the question of corruption. We are really struggling with corruption, it’s a, it’s a disservice. It’s a disservice. Very much. (2b.1)

George explains a historical chain of injustice linked through Imperial land appropriation to the present exploitation of power and inequitable resource distribution. This chain is held together by a sense of alienation from the very land which, in some Indigenous histories, informed how people constructed socio-cultural meaning and maintained economic sustainability through trade agreements and exchanges.

Schooling and Colonial Wounds

Schooling contributes to legacy in that it serves to cement Western ways of knowing as opposed to the body of Indigenous education. According to Sarah, the core of curriculum that individuals encounter in schools neither affirms nor celebrates traditional ways of knowing. Specifically in the primary schooling years, the content established under the colonial regime to entrench Imperial rule was, until this decade, the same content that children attending schools engaged with on a daily basis. This is the same content referred to earlier in this section by Josephine as she attempted to unlearn her Western expectations of Grandmother and understand what Shosho meant both literally and symbolically.

Sarah: This is a curriculum that was handed over by the British and unfortunately, it's as much um... They have not come up with something that works for the Kenyan system, per se. So you find that what was left back in the days that the British were writing, was just adopted and more books were printed, and it's just up to, I think... When was that? I think in 2008, 2007, while they were reviewing the syllabus and you realize just a bit of it was edited and you'll find that what was geography, history, and civics is now called social studies. Uh, they're learning a bit. It's just been evolved just a bit, but the concept is still, remains the same. I think there's still a lot to be desired, because question is what do you learn, where do you want our children to belong, is a question that needs to come out clearly. What, what do you want them to do?

Sarah's query, "what do you learn, where do you want our children to belong?" relates the processes of learning with identity formation. The context of her comments implies that Kenyan children were/are learning colonial values. Values which counter a sense of belonging. For Sarah incorporating into the curriculum knowledge that "works for Kenyans" is a necessary responsibility of schooling because it affirms agency as opposed to oppression. She illustrates her point below.

Sarah: I think the only thing that has since evolved that I really like is literature. We used to a lot of the White books, and when I call the White, it is books which is by White authors. Or, authors that are coming from abroad. However, in... when I was just uh, joining, uh, high school, which was about in 1999, we started doing books which had been African authored. And during my time, we did a short stories books which were by, like, ten different African authors. We did "River and the Source," which is by Margaret Ogot. We did Kilio Cha Haki. Now when we did the set book Kilio Cha Haki, Kilio Cha Haki helped us understand the struggles that our Kenyan people went through in the hands of White people, in the hands of colonizers. So it cries out Kilio Cha Haki, if translated in English, would mean "fighting for rights." So, sometimes you'd find that um, it talked about the colonizers, the oppressing of the White people, but it also went ahead to show that when the White left, when the Black people who are people from our own country took over, they continued with some of the persecutions that the White people were, were, were passing on to the Africans. So, in truth you removed one person, thinking that you're solving a problem, but

no one set a new trend. No one took up and said, 'This is what we don't want, and this is how we're going to go with it.' We just adopted everything the White person said, and we went with it and we ran with it and only until very recently have we started doing things that work for Kenyans.

Lessons participants learned in schools shaped their thought processes regarding agency, autonomy, and nationhood. This is evidenced by the types of conversations participants held regarding the effects of colonization, Independence, and the formation of current political structures. Juma's reference to 'African lords,' Isaiah's pondering of 'first principle' knowledge, George's pontification on disrupted methods for communal resource distribution, and Sarah's synopses of systematic alienation, relate back to a national curriculum which codified lived experiences. Schooling, therefore, mediates the ways in which participants interact with their Indigenous ontologies. Consequently, it has worked to alienate the Indigene from her Indigenous knowledge, and therefore, herself.

Conclusion

Colonization created and established a gap between Indigenous ways of knowing and being, of knowledge-making, and of societal constructs. More than merely invaders coming in to extract spoils, the colonizers sought to permanently change life as it had been. The colonized, stripped of agency, were meant to whole-heartedly embrace the colonizer's cosmological constructions of knowledge and of being. The colonial machine, regardless of the wishes of the people of the land, moved onward. Attempting to annihilate everything that did not line up with its predetermined path. Whether or not the Indigene acquiesced to the machinery, the colonial juggernaut rolled on, exploiting, restructuring, and claiming dominance. Indeed, the machinated exploitation of human

and environmental resources sanctioned injustices at the individual, family, and societal levels. That the colonial perpetrator made no attempt to bring healing, leaves deep wounds now being nurtured by post-Independence remnants. In this chapter, I highlighted participant voices as they named wounds specifically pertaining to alienation from the self and from the land. In addition, participants drew connections between colonial land injustices and present socio-cultural and economic struggles.

This dissertation poses two main questions: (1) how do young, urban, professional Kenyans define their tribal identities? (2) How does the process of engaging in dialogue through *Kupiga Hadithi* allow participants to make connections between tribal identity, colonization, and the lived experience of nationhood? As I conclude this chapter, I will attempt to contextualize these questions within the framing of the chapter's theme.

Within the thematic framework of colonial wounds, young, urban, professional Kenyans define their identities in relationship to their Indigenous knowledges as passed down by their Grandparents and their Parents. They lament their loss of language, and therefore the meaning carried within the language, while assuming an inevitable absorption into a more globalized future. They are individuals who see themselves grounded in a waning past while inhabiting a present future. Subsequently, participants accept as part of their identities, the need to make an effort to go 'home.' That is, they recognize that they are, in some ways, visitors to their ancestral lands and their ancestral ways of knowing. Additionally, participants acknowledge that the pedagogy of the colonizer as instituted in systems of governance, in schooling curriculum, and in the national economic structures, has divorced them from fully knowing their ancestral communities and in turn, from further knowing themselves.

As they engaged in dialogue through *Kupiga Hadithi*, participants reflected upon the ongoing effects of colonization within the nation. More than merely tracing the roots of existent historical injustices to colonial land alienation, and the resultant economic difficulties, they opened up spaces for troubling political issues while using an expanded historical perspectives. The space created in utilizing *Kupiga Hadithi*, participants began to refer back to their Indigenous Knowledges as the location of healing colonial wounds.

Through their conversations, participants demonstrated a depth of understanding the key issues facing their nation. These perspectives are generally not represented in the academy's portrayal of African profession, either young or old. Participants indicated that they are cognizant of the curriculum within Western narratives that depict them as less than. A curriculum that has not made an equal and available space for their Indigenous ways of being and of knowing. Therefore, even as they incorporate this curriculum into their lived experiences, they actively fight to ground themselves within their Indigenous knowledges.

Chapter 7: Inequities

In Chapter 6, I discussed the theme of colonial wounds as expressed by participants. Within the chapter, participants identified these wounds as ongoing issues of historical justices rooted in the exploitation of Imperial governance. They identified their Indigenous Knowledges as a location for beginning to heal these wounds.

This chapter includes a discussion of Inequities within the current national system of governance. Situated within an anticolonial and decolonizing framework, *inequities* as examined here, are the participant identified areas that limit the holistic well-being of citizens. Specifically, participants discuss inequities as lived experiences shored up by political structures working disproportionately to support those who already have economic wealth. Inequities, therefore, affirm a hierarchical and non-distributive system of governance. For participants, inequities are not merely historically bounded; rather they are, in their current iterations, engrained colonial economic constructs codified by a national government that does not disrupt their damaging effects. Contextualized within the previous chapter's discourse regarding colonial wounds, participants communicate that inequities are made explicit by economic demarcations and disparities which exist within the country.

As we move further into this chapter, I will show how participant voices affirm the idea that the processes of colonization rupture three imperative systems of Indigenous knowledge and of Indigenous being within design of culture. These are the knowledge of self, and self within a wider society, and the knowledge of the ways in which society is structured. Again, presentation of the theme flows from participant commentary to my

engagement with that commentary. The fluid nature of this presentation style is meant to replicate, at least in part, the conversations that occurred in the field.

Within the chapter, I begin by highlighting discussions in which participants comment upon inequities established during Imperial reign. In their observations, participants trace back the roots of present inequities, through the construct of schooling, into exploitative colonial structures. Next, I move into participant discussion examining how land appropriation is tied to existent economic struggles. Finally, I feature participant commentary upon the troubling issues of infrastructure including corruption and its ensuing political tension. I close the chapter with a return to the dissertation's two driving questions: (1) how do young, urban, professional Kenyans define their tribal identities, and (2) how does the process of engaging in dialogue through *Kupiga Hadithi* allow participants to make connections between tribal identity, colonization, and the lived experience of nationhood?

So What's the Problem?

In the course of our conversations, Juma captured participant sentiment and conceptions of inequities with statements that encompassed their themes. In the comment below, he reflects upon the genesis of inequities within the overarching structures of governance. He continues his commentary by discussing the theme of inequities as it pertains to the distribution of economic wealth, and within organizations fostering civic and social well-being.

Juma: Oh, there's been a lot, there's been a lot of struggles, first of all, we've had struggles in our leadership as a nation. Yeah. There's been a huge struggle because many Kenyans feel that the political class took away from the rest

of the Kenyans. Because after Independence, what the White man left behind in terms of land, property, they felt it was taken and given... it was handed over to few Kenyans while the rest of the Kenyans remained behind struggling with poverty, education, and sickness.

Even though Juma does not use the term inequities here, he is deliberating upon an unequal distribution of power within the architecture of leadership. Juma, ties this inequity to issues of land, and as established in the previous chapter, to the inheritance of wealth. Therefore, even though he does not contextualize the current ‘struggles’ within the wound of a disrupted Indigenous system of governance, he does identify class disparities instituted by the Imperial government. He continues

Juma: So, that has been a huge struggle for Kenya because these same properties are still held, you know, by the few Kenyans as the rest are struggling. Yeah. And that’s why we use this term historic injustices in Kenya. Whereby, you know, once you... when you find yourself in, born in a family that is not in that class , your chances of succeeding as a child, they are slimmer because you don’t have that financial muscle to take you to good schools. There’s no financial muscle to take you to good hospitals if you’re sick. So with that, it has made the gap between the rich and the poor widen overtime. Because the rich became richer, the poor became poorer and it’s like a vicious cycle, so that’s the biggest struggle we faced, as Kenyans.

(2.6)

Juma’s utilization of the phrase ‘historic injustices’ ties the ongoing, divisive issue of land inequities to a limitation of access. In his estimation, those who did not

inherit choice land from 'the White man' are restricted from acquiring wealth. They can neither gain access to that wealth through the avenues of schooling, nor can they gain access to healthcare in order to maintain a healthy standard of life. Juma is pointing out inequities that have created a chasm within the nation. In addition, he begins to explain the establishment of elite class with historic, present, and continual access to economic well being, and a proletariate class without that ability. Inequity, according to Juma then, is cyclical. As such, it is cyclically determined by economic success for this present generation and their subsequent progeny.

For Josephine, the impact of economic access, or lack thereof, is felt quite pragmatically. She describes conditions where economic success is inhibited by factors unrelated to an individual's capability, but related to allegiances that supersede both academic credentials and professional experience. Her storied-knowing demonstrates how tribal allegiance can affect economic progress. Thereby, systematizing the inequity of limited access to resources.

Josephine: I was saying earlier, the way people think that um, I won't get this job because I don't know so and so. But, I believe in some places it is like that. Just recently, I was talking to a former colleague of mine and she was telling me, 'we did an interview with this guy and the person who was going to be my direct manager liked me, but because the other guy had an auntie who was working the same organization in a very high position, he got the job over me.' So, yes, it still does exist. This was like a big organization, it's a Kenyan organization, it's an international organization. So even in an international organization, even that happens. (2.8-9)

Despite the fact that Josephine acknowledges the persistent nature of inequities obstructing economic success for all members of the population and that she is closely tied to the sentiment of such inequities around her, Josephine's personal experiences allow her to neutralize the pervasive nature of the problem. She enduringly holds that 'equal opportunity' is attainable for most given the appropriate mentors. Her statement, "I really believe in giving people opportunities" punctuates this perspective. They also solidify her assumption that her experiences and agency in pursuing economic stability mirror the experience of most people as they navigate the nation's economic structures.

Josephine: But, I still believe there's equal opportunity because all the jobs I've ever gotten, I've never known someone there. Like, I just tried them like, "Uh, okay, advertising, I think I want to do that," and you go there and you prove yourself. One day I'll open my own agency. I've met people who, not necessarily that you don't have direction, but you just need someone to steer you in the right direction or something like that. So, I really believe in giving people opportunities, if they're unable to prove themselves, then at least you tried. (2.8-9)

In her comments above, Josephine imbues the individual with the burden of proof. According to her, opportunities for economic progress exist. However, it is up to the seekers of these opportunities to display the efficacy to grasp them. Isaiah, too, acknowledges the immediacy of impact arising from inequities. However, in his commentary, this immediacy is not merely the burden of the individual. It is exemplified by the low socio-economic conditions that a large number of the Kenyan citizenry

experiences. Isaiah interlaces a causal thread between dismal economic circumstances and the structural inequities that appear continuously within the political system.

Isaiah: Poverty is a big issue in this country; poverty, big time. And then these leaders, these leaders always take advantage of that. There is poverty and corruption. I mean those go hand-in-hand. Yeah. Poverty and corruption are just more like where there is corruption there is poverty. I mean you know, the people who are up there... I was talking to someone from Sierra Leone. He was telling me that in their country they have lots of minerals. But now the people who live in those particular areas don't benefit from those. The government comes, cuts a deal with some people who want to invest in the mine. They make some deal, percentages to 'remain here while you take a particular percentage.' But then, that doesn't go to the people who live there. Yeah? (1.35)

Isaiah's critique underlines his conviction that the actual, fundamental constructs of the political system allows for a continual cycle of exploitation. His explanation clarifies that the 'government' has mechanized a working system keeping those who are poor, struggling, and those with wealth, flourishing. Notably, Isaiah does not specify who the individual members of government practicing corruption are. He sees it as an institutional entity. For Isaiah, the inequity of poverty is structural. The parts simply reflect the whole. He continues his explanation about the interconnection between poverty and corruption.

Isaiah: So you just use their situation to negotiate for your benefit, all right? So the people, you can come and tell them, 'Oh, this and this. Oh, this is going to

do this.’ Then you just go and make a boardroom decision, but it remains up there. I mean, so the elite are the ones who will benefit from that. So they take advantage of the poor. So they benefit. So they might just give you something small that really it’s, it’s just to keep you dependent on them, yeah? They do not want you to be independent to the, to the point of having to make your own decisions in terms of saying, ‘I can also do this for my own self.’ So you have to depend on them and they have to keep you in that kind of cycle. So it’s basically keep you poor. (1.35-36)

The schism created by economic inequity, as described by Isaiah, moves beyond financial constraints and touches upon the question of individual autonomy. He describes a person bounded by the restrictions of poverty as being physically curtailed in her ability to exercise socio-cultural agency and to determine issues of governance. For Isaiah, it is not that the poor are incapable of making decisions of benefit to their circumstances; rather, he argues that the poor make decisions impacting their immediate ability to survive. They are embroiled a life and death crisis. This is his reference point for discussing the immediacy of impact inequities place within the political structure. According to Isaiah, this is how poverty and corruption intertwine to ravage and destroy those who are not ‘up there’ and who happen to be the majority of the population.

Isaiah: Once you are poor you have no choice. A man comes and gives you food for a week, what will stop you from voting them? Another one will talk about development, what’s that to you? I mean what a poor man caters for is just to work for his stomach... If I get a man who gives me something for my stomach or a lady, I’m going to go with that. I don’t care about really voting

for them, yeah. So poverty has a big, a big influence on this. And, and there is lots of it here, poverty. I don't know what they say now about the poverty levels in Kenya but, I'm sure they are quite, they are quite large. The people who live below the poverty line are really the majority in Kenya. Kenya is... there are few very rich. (1.35-36)

Isaiah's observations regarding the links between poverty and corruption, as well as agency and power, highlight fundamental flaws within the governmental infrastructure. According to him, these flaws allow those in power to capitalize on the labor of those without. Moreover, Isaiah offers a nuanced, non-linear view as to the interplay between economic success and flourishing. For Isaiah, the individual is dependent on the national system. He emphasizes this point by identifying the links between poverty and corruption. Thereby, he exemplifies the complexity inherent within this topic.

Schooling and Inequities

In the meetings with participants, they discussed pre-colonial Indigenous communities. They noted, that education⁹ occurred organically and within age-set grouping in order to prepare the next generations for their societal roles. Participants also observed that schooling¹⁰ was instituted by the colonial government to impart the government's values and ethos. Participants reflected that in the current post-Independent Kenyan state, schooling more closely resembles Western proclivities in structure and subject matter. Furthermore, schooling engenders a complex relationship between

⁹ Education refers to the systematic transmission of Indigenous knowledges through Indigenous methodologies.

¹⁰ Schooling refers to the systematic transition of the Colonizer's knowledges through foreign methodologies.

Indigenous ideals and Western ideology. Although this relationship can be viewed as dichotomous, participant voices within this study reflect an intricate range of experiences where schooling, even as it detracts from Indigenous ways of knowing, allows for both individual agency and national cohesion. In George's storied-knowing, he discusses the uneasy balance that the young, urban, profession individuals must hold. He or she is often pushed to choose between tribal allegiance and nationhood. I include his commentary here because he describes in detail the pull between tribe and nationhood. This pull is exacerbated because, for the individual, schooling instills one set of values and lived experience instills another. The inequity highlighted in this section surrounds issues of power. George explains,

George: So in Kenya, first of all, the political parties are on a tribal basis. They're formed in a tribal way. So right now, we can say that there's some tribes that feel marginalized. They belong to a certain, a certain political party. And then there, there's certain [other] party, another tribe, then they form their political party. Look at it like right now. We have the Jubilee government. The Jubilee government is made of up two tribes: the Kikuyas and the Kalenjins. They are [a combination of] two parties. The party of T-N-A, made up of entirely Kikuyu, and the party of U-R-P, made up of entirely Kalenjins. Come together, they form the Jubilee alliance. Let's go to court. We have the Luos. We have the Kambas. Partly Luhyas, because Luhyas also have their own parties, other parties, which are probably relevant... Then we have the coast people. You see? So already the formation of a party has a tribal connotation. So where do you go, when you want to identify

[with something]? Because the political party is a public body... But, that public body, people want to identify to it through tribes, not through ideology. I don't know how that modern thing can truly work in the tribalist (laughing), a tribalist society like this, because you find even the highly educated like myself, and others. Even though they're highly educated, but still... it is true that those injustices [against our tribes], those are the things which pull people to. They go to that connotation. I will even feel that it is right for my people, also, to have a piece of all this country has. You see?

(1.18)

For George 'injustices,' or as addressed within this theme inequities, are embedded in the very formation of the nation-state. Tribes that 'feel marginalized' unify in order to have a participatory voice within the government and within governmental, economic structures. Alternately, tribes who hold dominance also unify as a means of maintaining the status quo.

Encompassed in the grand machinations of both the tribal and national systems, the individual has to decide where she will align her loyalties. Will she act to benefit the tribe, or will she act to benefit the nation. More succinctly, allegiance to one's tribe necessitates allegiance to the specific political party attached to that tribe. As noted explicitly by George, politics are a 'public' affair. Therefore, an individual must eschew her tribal allegiance if she is to commit herself to building solidarity through political engagement and into nationhood. If, in her estimation, the best ideology serving the nation contradicts the political position of her tribe, then her choice must be *to publically align* herself against that very tribe which has birthed and nurtured her. Thus modernity's

push for nationhood, purported by schooling, is tantamount to abandoning tribal allegiance and identity.

George: Some may say that, probably the education itself, is not doing [helping]. But then, this education has made me realize that I can also fight for what is mine. And how do I fight it? I find vessels or vehicles now being made in a tribal way. Do I have an option? Right now, look at it, among people, Luo Kenyans are some of the most educated people in Kenya. But do you think somebody in Luo Kenya can stand up and say, say something against Baba [the President]? You can't. You can't. Educated, seriously educated people courted the world over as scholars. Do you think they're stupid, or they lack the wisdom? Apparently, there is a question of self-interest, vis-à-vis interest of the society or where they come from (1.18). Mm, I may say it is a certain kind of wisdom which is making them just let the pieces work the same way. Because even them, they feel they're being marginalized. In a way. They feel that they have the best education, but still they lack out in the big positions of government where they could have been useful in contributing to the nation's well-being. 'So when will I ever utilize this skill that I went so far, that I boarded a ship to go and get?' The only person who might allow me to utilize this has to be a person from my home, who has to be in status. So where do I benefit? Even the, intellectually rated highly, they have to depend on this tribal thing. Because there's benefit of being, coming from a certain tribe. (1.29-30)

George's commentary on education and schooling, reveals a critical ability to name and deconstruct the ways in which schooling exposes the inequities that surface as one performs her 'self' as a member of the tribe, and 'self' as a member of the nation. Within this tension, the individual enacts her ability to engage with and disengage from the political system. Schooling, therefore, both underscores one's power and it disenfranchises.

For George, 'education' helps the individual to understand how the national system is broken. As a result of going to school, the individual becomes knowledgeable about the inner workings of a national political system. A system that was imposed upon Indigenous sovereignty, and runs contrary to the established methods for Indigenous governance. According to George then, the individual can utilize her tribe as a resource or a 'vessel' to counterbalance the fractured political system primarily because she has gone to school. George's question, "do I have an option?" is revolutionary disruption of the status quo. Simply put, he is asserting that harnessing the power of the tribe is the only antidote for correcting a fundamentally flawed national system of governance. Sarah's commentary extends the concept of disenfranchisement caused by schooling.

Sarah: Like I said, nowadays we've stopped doing those communal things, where we used to have the age-set groups sitting together being taught things, having these communal classes just to guide you, and also nurture that talent. So since that is not happening at the community level and at the traditional level, [and] it was not picked up in school. So, you find school is just books, books, books. And we all know that not every kid is talented in that area. So, you find that we have a lot of young people falling through the

cracks of education. For that, if they feel like education is not working for them, they leave school completely. But they don't have a place to nurture their gifts, so they become risks in the community. (2.2)

According to Sarah, schooling is divorced from the importance of one's Indigenous and communal identity. This is because schooling does not encourage the formational communal practices inherent within Indigenous culture. She notes, "We've stopped doing those communal things." Sarah is implying that 'communal classes'¹¹ are more than a larger social practice working to glue people together. 'Communal classes' holistically nurtured individual well-being. Sarah connects the disenfranchisement caused by schooling to the despondence occurring when a person cannot find a place to contribute cogently to the greater society. She is contending that the national governmental system of schooling does not cultivate a nurturing space for the individual. Her commentary highlights the inequities dividing those who can navigate the schooling system into the wider political structure, and those who cannot.

Sarah: Yeah. We had a course— nowadays, I think they call it social studies— but back in the day, it was GHC, geography, history, and civics. So, there was the... Back in the days we had provinces. Unlike what now they are calling districts and sub-districts. We had [learned] the locations. So what tells about all that? What's that about the Cushites, the Bantus, the Nilotes? We were taught how they migrated into Kenya. We were taught a lot about colonialism. It was very clear on how they brought about their agrarian revolution, and industrialization in the country as colonization was going on.

¹¹ Communal classes refer to the age-set education as carried out by various ethnic groups.

A lot of the teachings [about colonialism] we'd look at it like it was something very positive. Yes. Until when we get to high school. That is when we start now learning about the Mau Mau and the breakout when Kenya was trying to get independence. But when you're young, you're always taught what about the positives that colonization brought about in there, so you look at the coming of the Whites as something very positive. But when you grow and you go into high school, then that's when you learn about you know, like the negatives [of colonization]. What the Mau Mau, all the freedom fighters were fighting for, the hardships they went through. It's not the radicalization of the Africans. [In primary school] It's brought about like something negative, rather than very positive. Because you see them being talked about: how they burned things, they destroyed things, making you see like, they are hurting freedom. [They] put us one step back, whereby the Whites have brought new transformations, new systems, nice buildings, we are burning them and breaking them. So we look like radicals and we look like outlaws, rather than people who are fighting for a mission and a purpose. (2.2-3)

In her commentary, Sarah identifies schooling as a location of loss. Schooling teaches its young population to devalue their Indigenous histories and revere the colonizer's knowledge. She writes, "we were taught a lot about colonization... we'd look at it like it was something very positive." Sarah's words demonstrate the ways in which schooling divorces the individual from herself. According to Sara, even once the individual has reached 'high school' where she becomes exposed to 'the negatives' of

colonization, she still looks outward. She emphasizes that schooling instills a sense of unworthiness. Of the curriculum and its representation of Indigenous histories she writes, “we look like radicals and we look like outlaws, rather than people who are fighting for a mission and a purpose.”

As participants established in their discussion of colonial wounds, for Indigenous people, connection to land is an extension of being and it is mandatory to the construction of knowledge. Sarah’s question regarding social studies curriculum, “so what tells about that?” stresses the notion that schooling alienates the individual from herself and from her people.

According to Sarah then, individuals are separated from key elements of their Indigenous knowledges because schooling no longer focuses on geographical landscapes and the way that such landscapes inform migration patterns of Kenya’s ethnic groups. She also explicitly notes that, schooling as a remnant of the colonial system, functions to celebrate colonization. Specifically, because the schooling curriculum, during the formative primary years, is written from the colonizer’s perspective. Therefore, in Sarah’s perspective, schooling does not work to encourage communal practices as espoused by traditional Indigenous epistemologies. As such, it tears down individual knowledge of self and knowledge of self within the community. Alternately, Sarah explains schooling shores up the idea of a disjointed self. Curriculum references discourse regard freedom fighters, “you see them being talked about: how they burned things, they destroyed things, making you see like, they are hurting freedom,” connote the powerlessness of a self caught up within the cogs of an exploitative national structure.

Consequently, Sarah's hadithi-storied knowing, informs us about the way in which schooling affirms the inequities between those who have power and those who don't.

Land and the Economy

In discussing the political structure, participants rooted inequities within the nascent formation of the country. According to our conversations, Inequities were established by the way in which the Imperial government constructed the boundaries of the nation. Now, these unequal systems are entrenched within national power structures and governance. George explains how these demarcations generated ongoing struggles.

George: I'm a historian. In the piece of history that I've interacted with, the demarcation of Kenya was drawn by a foreigner. Apparently, in the demarcation of the boundary's creation, was the time of the scramble and partition of Africa, that's when the map of Africa was generated. There are places where tribes have been cut. Like the border from Namanga: we have Maasais on this side of Kenya, and we have Maasais on this side of Tanzania. Okay, we go to the Busia border: we have the people from Busia on this side [of Kenya], and then in Uganda. The Luhyas... but then there's some other clan they belong to. Luhya really is not a tribe, eh? And then, you go ahead to the Pokot, the Pokot Karamoja. You know? You go to the north, you go to Somali! Apparently, even some people claim that the people this map [of Kenya], when they were drawing, the colonialists had influence on the person who drew it so that they annexed part of Somalia. So, probably people feel that Kenya annexed Somalia, the same way Ugandans feel that Kenya annexed Uganda. You remember, some president

saying that Uganda goes up to the point of Naivasha? [Laughs] We have a case we solved in Sudan, over the border there. So, that is how Kenya was developed as a country. Before, [each tribe] had its own, it was managed actually internally and so everything was happening internally. (2b.3-4)

George's point in identifying the geographic boundaries of Kenya as being, "drawn by a foreigner" and subsequent detailed narration of the how tribes were dispossessed of their lands, illustrates systematized inequities from the nation's inception. According to George, these inequities are not only an internal issue, but they are also external, political issues. He surmises that these issues directly influences the nation's stability both as tribes relate to each other, and as the nation interacts with its neighbors. George describes how this seeping colonial wound of land appropriation, continues to trigger volatile, destructive results. As such, it further expands the gap between those who can access economic success and those who cannot.

George: And then, there was the creation of the governors who came to Kenya, to govern Kenya. They distributed, too, different zones. The Western, the Eastern, the Coast... and the North, what do you call that? North Province Frontier, that's what it used to be called. Which Moi, when he came to power, called it Northeastern. And then, we went to where now Kenya was developed. I think that's the constitution which divided Kenya into provinces, which are 8 provinces. Rift Valley, Northeastern, Western, there is the Coast, there is the Nairobi, there's the Central, and there's the Nyanza. So, so when that is now shaping of what we call now, the new Kenyan. And that this other new constitution... remember, in that shaping we are still

cutting the tribes. You understand? (2b.4) You see that kind of, of cutting, creating boundaries and cutting tribes. This tribe belongs to the other province and the same tribes still they belong here. Again, they are... let me say, adding salt on the wound. And this new demarcation, which is now called the 47 counties. Which is even more complex. It has cut tribes. It has even cut clans. It's unique. It's very unique. Whereby you find minorities in a county...you are totally minorities. You just are in that edge of that county and probably you are on a land which is almost like 100 acres, which a whole county might be having like 10,000. Because then for you, you are just there. (2b.4-5)

For George, even though Independence imbued power to Kenyan–Africans, it did not correct the inequities of colonial land injustices. The post-Independence government did not right the colonially-created boundaries which transgressed historical Indigenous geographic agreements. According to George, from colonial appropriation until this present moment, the national system remains inherently broken. Despite the creation of a new, seemingly multilateral constitution, the wounds of land injustice continue. George observes, the government is “still cutting the tribes.” By further cutting tribal boundaries, George posits, the government continues the marginalization of minoritized people groups.

George: So it becomes complex, even in the political sense. Like last year, they said we are going to give a Luo, senator. We give a Kuria something else. And then, these other positions we can share among the Kisiis and others. So, there's already the sense of minority or exclusion and such. So, the Kenya

we have right now is cut into 47 pieces, which ideally mean nothing. Sure, it is a good thing because the resources are trickling down to the people. It will be easy for them to get them, because the resources are going there. But, if not well managed, this can be very bad. Because, now, up here [in governmental structures] there's also that disparity in distribution of resources. What about if it goes down there where some people still feel we have [disparity]? "These people are taking everything, and for us, they are forgetting about us." You understand? (2b.5)

For George and other participants, there is a felt realization that colonial boundaries are transgressive and that Indigenous histories are culturally holistic. George's contemplation of "the Kenya we have right now" disrupts transgressive histories by continuously drawing attention to hegemonic practices of marginalization. George indicates that, even now, there are specific resources tied to the way in which land is utilized. Furthermore, these resources either work to allow certain segments of the population particular economic privileges, or they work to alienate those without influence. With Devolution¹², the gap between rich and poor could be closed, George contemplates. Alternately, without appropriate oversight, a greater amount of people would feel even more alienated. Isaiah exemplifies this point.

Isaiah: You know, Kenya is an agricultural land. I mean that we basically depend on agriculture and it's an agricultural economy. In the sense of, you know, we depend on land for our survival. Yeah. So largely people have been

¹² Devolution is a current national policy decentralizing resources from the capital city to newly formed county seats of power. It was instated in 2010 and required resources, infrastructure, and governmental systems to be created and distributed at the local level.

farming, but now with a kind of the subdivision. People are changing to other things like you know, real estate and all that. So, land is always a major factor in the economy. But I think it all goes, or boils down, to the economy. You have bigger lands or maybe you may grow more, more plants or more vegetables and all that. So land is directly attached to the economic uh, barrier (1.12-13).

Isaiah's commentary marks a direct link between land and the economy. For him, land whether used for agriculture or as housing, works to ensure economic survival. Isaiah underlines George's perspective that people without land are marginalized. His comment of, 'we depend on land for our survival' begs the troubling question, what happens when an individual or a people group do not have access to land as a resource? Can they survive in the existent Kenyan infrastructure?

Sarah expands upon Isaiah's commentary. She contends that tribes who exist in the margins of power and economic access, have been left out of the globalized economy. In pre-colonial histories, she explains, these tribes had established economic systems for thriving. Rules of trade were articulated and resources were exchanged. Without communal economic systems and an infrastructure incorporating the marginalized, she posits that they become further alienated.

Sarah: So, Kenya has a unique situation and I think it is nice for us to model what is going on in different countries, in other places, but there are some of those things that we have to model specifically for the Kenyan community. Because, okay, before colonization, you know like before industrialization and all that, you'd find that there used to be a lot of barter trade... And that

interaction used to allow them to know about the different cultures, used to allow them to know what's happening on this side of the world. Due to modernization, we find that that no longer happens, because we now trade in cash. So if this, some rural person comes from somewhere and has no cash, they wouldn't think of going to the market, because if you do not have cash, even if you have 50 cows, yeah? (2.7) The normal trade in the market is cash basis. So you have cows, but you want mangoes or you want banana, you want greens, yeah? And completely, completely– You don't have money, you find that, with time, these people have been marginalized with time, they stop interacting so much with people. So they end up remaining land-locked, remaining uneducated, remaining not exposed. And the few exposed people always move to the capital city. (2.8)

For Sarah, alienation and marginalization encompasses much more than a lack of economic resources. It includes people groups who are removed from the processes of nationhood. Sarah's commentary about 'remaining land-locked' reflects a concern for the inequities experienced by those without voice and without agency within the greater Kenyan national culture.

Economic and Political Inequities

Rachel anchors economic inequities into the very basic struggle for food security. She comments upon the cyclical nature of the injustice surrounding food. She wonders at the structural issues perpetuating such disparities in a nation that, in theory, holds the capability for feeding all of its people.

Rachel: I can talk about food security. Every year we face that; because, every year you must hear of people starving in Turkana, Baringo. As in, every year. It has always been there. And I don't know how it's going to end because it seems the government really doesn't have a solution for that. There is no infrastructure. Those people don't even believe sometimes that they are in Kenya. Sometimes they think they are in another country because they are so isolated. These leaders were appointed; they always stay, stayed in Nairobi. When their term expires, they go home. Okay, not home... they still stay in Nairobi. They don't really go back to their, to their what? To their provinces.

Rachel argues that those in power positions do not experience the struggles of their constituents. This, itself, is a deep inequity. Building upon Sarah's concerns, she notes that marginalized communities face isolation both in terms of distance from the physical center of political power and in carving out resources for their communities' survival. Continuing to reflect upon the economic de-constructions of particular communities David adds,

David: Are they given an equal chance? I don't know, I don't know. Uh, for example, in government offices— we have, I think six main tribes that have dominated in appointments and in employment. The first president he is from a Kikuyu tribe. At that time there were many Kikuyus in offices, government offices. The second president was from the Kalenjin tribe. And during his reign, there were many Kalenjins who held offices during his reign. Even the policemen, many of them were Kalenjins. Because he stayed

in office for 20-something years, so, he put so many of his tribesmen in, especially in police force and the army so that he can control the State. So different, small tribes are not really represented because—there's Kikuyu. There's Luo. There's, uh, Luhya. The Akamba. The Kalenjin. Then the Kisiis. Yeah. Then the rest follow, you know, from there. There are 42 tribes. There are some who are very small, very small. Like the Suba. Suba, they're very small. So you'll find they're like a very little number of people from their tribe in government offices. So the national cake as it's not equally maybe, representative, given... Because national cake it's essentially resources-sharing resources equally. So for Kisiis, it will be the land. It will be the land. And for many Kenyans, I think, it will be the land. We are traditionally, we were a communal, communally-based tribe. And no one will have, no individual person will have a bigger chunk than the other, so it [the resource] will be the land. (2.2-3)

David's question, "are they given an equal chance?" Is a query into the issue of equity and imbalance within governmental infrastructure. His hadithi communicates a deep realization of inequities made apparent through actual suffering. David's comments explain the underlying resentment for those that cannot access national resources, and cannot break out of their economic shackles. His commentary troubles the very formation of a government constructed in such way as to reward imposed colonial hierarchical structures, and discredit Indigenous communal formation of governmental systems. His comments echo Sarah's "there are some of those things that we have to model specifically for the Kenyan community" (2.7).

Conclusion

Dialogue through Kupiga Hadithi

Discourse within this section called attention to conceptions of current inequities within Kenyan nationhood. Participant voices centered around dialogue which: first, emphasized participant acknowledgement that existent inequities are rooted in structures of government put in place by colonial rule. Second, participants indicated that land appropriation established a pattern of economic inequity that continues to be replicated by the current national government. These inequities lead to a marginalized segment of the Kenyan citizenry that cannot gain access to national social resources. Third, participants illustrated experiences which anchor conversation regarding inequities into the lives and struggles of the citizenry.

Definition of Tribal Identities

As they engaged in discourse cultivated through the rituals of *Kupiga Hadithi*, participants named their tribal identities as indicative of inherited privilege or marginalization. Some tribes are born into a dominant identity, and could therefore, more easily find means for economic well-being. Other tribes inherited identities that are minoritized and alienated from the centrality of power and of economic success. In addition, participants acknowledged the role of schooling as a tool for economic achievement, even as the very processes of schooling worked to dismantle their Indigenous ways of communal knowing.

Chapter 8: Tensions

The liminal servant sees beyond the false harmony that exists between the subject and the social order and recognizes that knowledge is always constructed in a social historical context in which there is always a struggle over the production of meaning, a struggle which reflects a still larger conflict over relations of power

McLaren(1999, p. 170) ¹³

A village is an all-encompassing space. Lives happen within it. Children are born, people die. Marriages connect clans into families. Businesses provide material provisions, and a system of education unifies the culture created. Within the village, people engage in relationships that develop their own knowing and capacities. They also develop relationships that inform their roles and participation in the greater community. A village has a spiritual connective link, both physical and metaphysical in that it is a space for the cultivation of human potentiality. This chapter draws upon the participant-provided metaphor of an open village (Naomi, 2.5) to frame discussions about some of the tensions encountered between the traditional village and modernity, by young, urban, professional Kenyans.

In Chapters 6 and 7, participant voices generated themes discussing the chasm between Indigenous social constructs and the current experiment of Kenyan nationhood. The term ‘experiment’ is defined as an undertaking, or an enterprise crafted to bring together various people groups. In their discussion, participants underscored and reflected upon colonial wounds. They described these as injustices spawned and institutionalized by the Imperial government. Additionally, participants hypothesized the ways in which these wounds constituted structural inequities within the nation-state. In this chapter I,

¹³ McLaren, P. (1999). The liminal servant and the ritual roots of critical pedagogy. *Language Arts*, 65(2), 164-180.

once again, spotlight participant voices as I engage in a back and forth dialogue with their commentary. The goal of this chapter is to emphasize some of the *tensions* between tribal identity and nationhood. Within the chapter, participants unravel the threads of tension that they both inhabit and engender. Like McLaren's (1999, p. 170) liminal servant, participants both at once occupy an Indigenous identity as well as a national identity. They are both citizens of Indigeneity, and members of the Kenyan, nation-state citizenry. The nuanced dual nature of their occupation is sometimes, seemingly, seamless. An African fabric woven together in vibrant, textile patterns and structures, colors and proverbs; sometimes, this liminal occupation is like the itchy abrasion of a sisal rope pulled taut between two carved Mpingo¹⁴ posts. Nevertheless, these tensions are a continuum influencing participant perspectives.

Within this chapter, I will call attention to the ways in which participant voices: (1) discuss the tensions between their Indigenous and Westernized selves; (2) link these discussions of the fragmented self to their perspectives on Kenyan nation-building; and (3) deliberate upon the tensions that constrain the relationship between tribes and the processes solidifying nationhood. I will conclude the chapter by situating participant discourse about existent tensions within the research questions posed by this study.

Between the Entry Posts: Tensions Grounded

In the commentary below, David supposed the genesis of tensions curtailing the processed of nationhood. He considers these tensions to be deeply embedded and deeply

¹⁴ Mpingo is a heavy, African blackwood used for carving, and for making musical instruments. It is a nearly endangered species in Kenya because of economic harvesting (Hamilton, 1996). Citation: Hamilton, A. (1996). Kenya's wood-carvers face uncertain future. Retrieved March 1, 2016, from http://www.blackwoodconservation.org/Kenya_carvers.html

destructive to systems of governance, and therefore, to the citizenry. His commentary creates the context for our ensuing discussion.

David: Yes, okay. You, what you have is, eh, chaos or, uh, a deep, eh, deep anger, even if it doesn't come to the surface, people are feeling disenfranchised, uh, maybe disillusioned by, uh, the nation Kenya. Um, uh, angry because they don't have an equal share with the rest. Eh, and, uh, that bubbles up to something like the post-election violence that happened. In 2007 and '08. A small trigger will just bring all that anger into the surface, yeah. Huh. Yeah. Okay. (2.3) Uh huh. Uh, unemployment. Eh, uh, especially for the youths. Eh, and of course if you're from a, a smaller tribe, it's more, it's more rampant in that tribe. Eh, feelings of anger, I think. Uh, people hating other tribes for no apparent reason. You just hate Kikuyus because they're Kikuyus, you just hate Kisiis or Luos because they're Luos. The, you have no particular reason, uh, because I think in your mind you think, ah, those people, *ni kwa sababu ya wale*, the, because of them that I'm not working, I don't have a job, I don't have equal opportunities. So those are some the signs that you might-encounter. Yes. Yes, yeah. Who are, eh, yes, unemployed. Uh huh. Uh, who are vulnerable to very many influences, eh, for example, politicians are easy, easy, eh, they easily use, uh, these youths to do their bidding. Eh, even terrorism maybe— (2.3-4)

By mentioning the anarchistic 'anger' felt by people, David is tapping into a cord of tension vibrating underneath the seeming peaceful environment in which Kenyan's live. According to David, discord among people is an easily accessed possibility. Such

tense discord is the deep and fertile undercurrent restricting solidarity in nationhood. David exemplifies this perspective in his citation of the 2007-08 post-election violence that shocked and traumatized the fledgling Kenyan democracy. The ‘small trigger’ of contested election results erupted a bitter volcanic and violent chasm pitting neighbor against neighbor, and tribe against tribe. The nature of the violence was unlike anything the nation had experienced since 1963 when Kenya claimed its independence from the Imperial government. David’s statement ‘ni kwa sababu ya wale– it is because of them’ encapsulates tensions emerging from inequitable resource distributions. Furthermore, David posits that those plagued with chronic ‘unemployment,’ who do not wield tribal connection to secure ‘equal opportunities,’ are at risk of allowing violent expression to these tensions. Clearly, David’s discussing the tension which constrains tribes from trusting each other in the task of nation-building.

In addition, his mention of ‘feelings,’ of ‘hate,’ of ‘vulnerability’ begins to excavate tensions experienced within individuals as they attempt to navigate the space between their potential within the nation, and their abilities to realize that potential. Specifically, he considers individuals who are disenfranchised from economic opportunities. He is hearkening back to Sarah’s (2.2) stance in Chapter 7. She posits that schooling does not ‘guide’ nor does it ‘nurture’ the ‘talents’ individuals hold. David, here, affirms her position. By recognizing that people are disillusioned, he is describing tensions experienced by individuals within society. Thereby, laying groundwork for our discussion.

Knots of Tension: A Self Between

George: Okay. Probably what I might say is, uh, I have been exposed to what is a little bit foreign, as compared to the person who is in the homeland. So, and being exposed to this foreign, some of it might have influenced my behavior. You understand? But then you see somebody who is at the local home there, they still maintain the way of life there. You understand? (1.18)

So for me, probably, if I go back there, there's some of the things, probably, you do in Nairobi, or in this modern area you are not going to do then there. So for me, to shed that which I've already been exposed to and then to go back to the Kisii-ness. So that I can relate to the people at home, because, you know, you cannot go just with your lot of exposure and stuff and you want to dump it to the people back at home, you have to trim that. So that in itself, the fact that me, I've been exposed to different cultures and different ways of doing things vis-à-vis the, the person who is back at society who has known only one way of doing things, I think that's the difference. For them, they will have other ways... A depth, which apparently I might be, I might have lost that touch. (1.18-19)

George's quote articulated the balance with which participants navigate their worlds. They are individuals who have explored beyond the boundaries of the tribe and of the nation. Through schooling, experiences of living in multi-ethnic and multi-cultural urban setting, and geographic relocation and/or tribal, these are people who's lived experiences moved beyond the village housed in physical tribal boundaries. In his commentary, George recognizes that he has been 'exposed,' and he is 'influenced' by the

interactions from this exposure. As such, he acknowledges that he has lost some of his Indigenous knowledges, his traditional ‘way of life.’

However, he does not accept this loss with complacency. He talks of “shed[ding] that which I’ve already been exposed to and then go[ing] back to the Kisii-ness.” He realizes that he has the ability to dwell in both places. This ability to analyze steps he must take in order to be part of his ‘homeland’ and to continue his day-to-day existence in Nairobi spotlights the tension of a divided self, or more holistically, a shared self. For him, this tension is born from the complexities of multi-faceted experiences that balance both traditional obligations of his ancestral homeland, and the westernized expectation of his nation.

Offering a perspective of this balance, Josephine recounts a story in which the full embracing of western values alienates an individual from being in-sync with both his traditional and Kenyan culture.

Josephine: Recently at my workplace, there’s a guy who most of his life he’s not lived in—he’s Kenyan—but most of his life he’s not lived in Kenya. And he went to the Tunis of this world and then he went to..., he’s [his] parents were traveling all over. Then later he went to a university in UK, and then came home. He’s a Kenyan, yes, but there’s nothing Kenyan about him. I don’t mean embrace everything because we have flaws. But he kind of thinks we don’t have much work ethic and stuff like that. But as a marketer, you need to really relate with the Kenyan-ness, the you know, people who are bottom of the pyramid. I won’t say they live in their own world, but there’s something so inspiring from them that you can learn. So, for him, there are

certain things he doesn't understand. You know, he will behave like, 'Oh, guys, let's go for lunch at...' he wants to go for lunch at Galitos, everyday. Hmm. And I look at him like, 'Eh' because for him, at home, his parents do everything. They pay all the bills. Yeah, he's got money. But I sit down and [na mwambia,—I tell him], you know what, some of us we earn yes, we're young yes, but I pay so many bills at home you'll be shocked. He's like, 'Really, why? Can't your parents,' like, 'Um, your parents for pay for them?'... You are kind of expected to chip in once you start working. You know? So there are certain things he doesn't understand. There are just certain things he doesn't understand. For us, I'd say, we do most of things like we go to university, we might not even want to, but I think that's also something I forgot to mention. Like, it's painted in our heads that without a university degree, there's nothing you can do. (2.21-22)

For Josephine, the tension between her familial-tribal obligations are a part of the unwritten and unspoken knowledges that she carries. She is 'expected to contribute.' Her responsibilities are to the communal well-being to those within her immediate social structure. Her comment, "for us we do most things we don't even want to" underscore the balance that she must maintain. It is fine for the individual with foreign ideals to focus on sustaining himself economically, and to work on his individual progress solely. For Josephine, there are communal obligations that inform her existence. Her story brings into relief a tension between tradition and modernity¹⁵. George's experience of this

¹⁵ Tradition and Modern are terms utilized by participants within the course of our conversations.

intricate balance between tradition and modernity, between self in a more globalized context and self in the homeland clarifies adds to the nuance discourse.

George: So, you may find people who come from the same clan or the same, even, location or locality are probably some three blocks apart but we never meet. The only time we can meet is when you go back home for a burial or something or wedding or something. You understand? So, don't you think this kind of... Don't you think this modern life is denying us that ability to freely interact and exchange and be the intertwined, you know, interwoven community we used to be?... It is an unspoken rule. But you see, these things which are non-codified, they're even more strong than the ones which are codified. It's not written anywhere. But you find it that people, you don't go to anybody's place. You ask me why is it that way? This, in Nairobi, but when we are back at home, I just pass by. (1.12)

George's discussion of a lack of connection with fellow tribal members articulates his felt loss of community, of fraternity, and the cultural glue accompanying it. More than a sense of nostalgia for a time 'that has been,' he is currently living out the unraveling of familial-tribal connections. He clearly emphasizes this sentiment, "don't you think this modern life is denying us that ability to freely interact and exchange and be the intertwined, you know, interwoven community we used to be?" His experienced tension, between the demand of a hurried urban, production experience, and a traditional more relational experience culminates in a sense of loss.

As well, George demonstrates that he recognizes the underlying rules of engagement within each of the spaces he inhabits. He speaks of the 'unspoken rule,' the

strength of 'non-codified' standards that progressively chip away at this tenuous link with his Indigenous culture. Sarah deconstructs these 'uncoded' codes that accompany expectations of urban living. She is clear about the 'cost' of participating in modernity.

Sarah: Okay, being modern comes at a cost really because you're trying to compete with the trends, and most of the western trends. And you want to be the one with the latest car, the latest styles, the biggest you know TV or the flashiest of shoes that can be bought... and even hair. So it's, um, being modern comes really at a cost and I think what people are really missing out, or rather that we are getting lost in is that thinking that being modern is flashing as much money, that you can show how much more money that you can be able to spend. But basically for me I think it's just being comfortable as long as I look very decent. I'm respected, that's something that I really hold high. (1.19)

For Sarah, modernity brings with it a thirst for surplus material goods, and the underlying factor of being modern is a competition. "You want to be the one with the latest..." However, along with these material technologies comes loss. Individuals are working for one-upmanship as opposed to unity. Sarah does also recognize a value to modernity. She mentions, 'being comfortable,' 'being respected.' Josephine sees the benefit of modernity beyond comfort. For her, it is an ability for self-expression.

Josephine: Yeah, so we were talking about what I feel is Western and was kind of like imposed on us? Now, of course, it depends on who colonized you. We were colonized by the British. I find the British to be—very conservative of course, as you know. And there are some, I think most of the things I'd pick would

be from like my Mum, my Mum believes in just um, what would I call it? You know, you grow up, you get a nice job. My mum worked at a bank, you know, at a bank, it's a very respectable job you know. I'm sure till today, she feels like, 'I made it.' You know. Yes, she did make it, but yeah, so she's just like you get a job at a bank. You get married, you have children, buy your own house. Then buy a car and so if I try—

I remember once I told my Mum um, 'Uh me, this Nairobi traffic, I think I'm going to get a motorbike.' You know, she can't understand. Motorbike, first of all, okay, leave alone the danger, how will people look at you? You'll look so unserious. Of course, safety was the biggest worry for her. But also, how people will look at me. 'Eh, do you feel like they will treat you seriously having um, riding a motorbike?' I'm more like, 'Well, for me, if it's cutting my cost, I'm getting there in time, enjoying myself as I do it, then it works for me.' Mum was like, 'No, no, no, no, you know you people.' I was like, 'Mum, what are the key things? Fine, I'll, I'll try as much to be safe. Other than that, I want to get there on time in the most cost effective way and just be happy'... There's just a certain way a professional person is painted to look.

Like, with my hair, my mum, she used to be like, 'Eh, you've gotten a perm?' In fact, today she was asking me, 'You said you're on job on Monday? You don't want to do something?' She didn't quite say it, but she wanted to [say], 'you don't want to do something with your hair?' Eh, my hair, it looks fine(2.13). So, apparently, for her you know, my hair should

just be permed. I have very long hair so permed and just like in a nice bob cut or with a nice weave. But I want to embrace my natural hair. It's African hair. So, she doesn't understand some of these things. But there's, let me in short, let me just say there is some certain form of liberalization that we the millennials have that our parents look at and they're like, 'I think you're pushing it.' (2.12-14)

For Josephine, the influences of modernity are direct results of the influences of colonization. Her observation, "it depends on who colonized you" and subsequent storied-knowing beginning with the conservative nature the British and revolving around her 'Mum's' conservative bend reveal her perspective. Josephine's examples about the choices that she wishes to make for the sake of convenience—the motorcycle—, and for the purpose of self-expression—her hairstyle, demonstrate a tension between the individual and her obligation. She reflects this tension with a statement channeling her parents' viewpoint, "I think you're pushing it." Additionally, Josephine's story also clarifies that these tensions are in existence because of foreign influences.

George draws the self as a connecting point between tradition and modernity. His conversation highlights an integration of perspectives. Modernity, for George, holds benefits for the individual as well as the safety material well-being.

George: For me, what I believe is modern is I'm appreciative of new ways, or civil ways of other people. And, and I can borrow new ways of living, new ways of doing things, new ways of interacting. Apparently, being appreciative of other people's cultures, or being in, well integrated. You have to appreciate others' way of doing things. Other civil ways of doing things. And that in

itself doesn't really have to deny you from, from the holding on to some of your cultural beliefs or customs (1.7). Let me go broader, the making of a nation itself, the people who are there, they have to have some kind of similarities. So, it wouldn't be so much to give or to lose when you are taking some... I want to say that modernity in itself is the improvement in technology, improvement, probably, infrastructure. Let's say, like right now I have an option of living in a hut or living in an apartment. You understand? And then probably, uh, let me go to something like circumcision. Yeah, circumcision is part of our people, but then I have an option of doing it the traditional way of going to the bush or going to the hospital. You see? So, so, what will I choose right now? Right now, I will be careful enough to choose taking my, probably, my son to the hospital rather than taking him to the guy back home who, who just uses knives in a rudimentary way. You know? Not that when they used to do it, people used to die. But as that crucial message has come to me that we can still do it this way and we get almost, I cannot say equal, but almost equal benefit. (1.7-8)

For George the tension within one's self, as exemplified in the pull between tradition and modernity allows for access to wider baskets of knowledge. He comments, "what I believe is modern is I'm appreciative of new ways or civil ways of other people." For George, modernity opens the village gate in that it allows for ideas to be exchanged and new knowledges to be ascertained. While he recognizes that this opening poses a compromise to his Indigenous knowing, he does not decry such compromise as a limiting factor for self-growth and for national development. He comments, "the making of a

nation itself, the people who are there, they have to have some kind of similarities. So, it wouldn't be so much to give or to lose when you are taking some." Therefore, the tension that the individual encounters in navigating tradition and modernity is a balance of compromise.

In this section, participant voices wrestled with tensions within themselves as they fully embraced the liminal space of tradition and modernity. In doing so, participants recognized the loss of communal nurturing and support that is part of their Indigenous social construction. At the same time, they acknowledged that modernity carries with it material, economic, and individual freedoms.

The Village Opened

In discussing tension between the individual and the nation, Naomi expresses the need for solidarity if the nation is to succeed. She indicates that tensions exist because some, in positions of influence, actively work to exploit others for the purpose of maintaining that power.

Naomi: People still have that tribal thing. But, it's only because they don't reason. You just talk of it because you've had your Mum say... and like things have been put, you've been brainwashed somehow. But when you come to look at it really, it does not help. Most people, most don't think the way I'm thinking. Yeah, I know, you just talk, you just give them a reality check like I said... Which are not even his ideas, his way of thinking is divide and conquer thing. It is not helping, he, he told us, it is not helping us. It's just bringing the backwardness like it's making us not develop because we're

not working as one as we should be to help each other and make this country grow.

While Naomi is expressly discusses tensions between the tribe and the nation, her commentary exemplifies choices that individuals must make or reject in advocating for a move toward nationhood. She posits, “you’ve been brainwashed somehow, but when you come to look at it really, it does not help.” For Naomi, nationhood is the goal, and it requires a conscious divorce from negative tribal associations. She does not merely recite this, nationhood is the goal she holds firmly and envisions for her children. Her wish is,

Naomi: That they would know, they wouldn’t uh, so much dwell on the tribal thing, but they should work towards building Kenya as like you know, Kenya as one village, one community. Being Kenyan, they should be proud of their origin of course but uh, not the tribal thing you know, and do much about where they should own land.... If you have money, you could buy property whenever you want because it’s your money you’re spending, you worked hard for it, so why would anyone prevent you from buying whatever piece of land whenever you want to stay. It’s your country so..... There should be no limitations. (2.16-17)

Sarah contextualizes Naomi’s goals by troubling her own understanding of Kenyan nationhood. Even though the country bears one name and is under one system of governance, she contends that there is no firm direction.

Sarah: Like I said, as Kenya, I don’t have the vision of Kenya. I don’t know, other than characteristics of Kenya, I think that Kenya’s beautiful, it has this. I can only talk of what Kenya has, which makes part of the tribes. But I don’t

know what is the vision of Kenya. Hence, I didn't teach you of Kenya. Hence, talking about my identity as a Kenyan, it's something I really question. Who is Kenya? What is Kenya? But the only reason why I identify as Kenyan is I was born in Kenya, I live in Kenya. I was raised in Kenya. But is that what Kenya is? You see in the tribal setting, you'd always be told, 'A young Luo man behaves like this.' A young Luo man dresses like this. A young person does this, yeah? So growing up, you knew what was expected of you. You knew who you were expected to turn out to be. You knew, and you had role models. You had, now, Kenya, who's our role model, is it the Luos? Is it Africa? And which country in Africa? Are we the best in Africa? Are we always the last? Are we always the negative ones? What can we say about us that makes us special? Exactly. And that's what I'll not want my children to have. I want my children to have structures. I want my children to feel like they really truly belong and they know why they belong. They don't just belong because they found themselves born there. What if I ended up in Uganda? Uganda is known as the pearl of Africa. What makes it the pearl of Africa? Wouldn't you want to be associated with a pearl? It's not the pearl of East Africa. It's the pearl of Africa. What is, what is Kenya? In terms of the African Pan-African, what is it? In terms of international, is instability the only thing that can be talked about? Is it a place where people say, 'Oh, we should send food aid?' Because in truth not everyone is suffering. Some people live better than even some people in the States, yeah? Some people do so well, I expose so

well, but who is Kenya? If, if you met anyone out there, especially African, would they talk about Kenya? Fine, the Westerners could say it's the place which I know poverty exists, but is that the only thing they know? Are we known only for Mombasa? What can Kenya really offer? Are we really giving our best foot forward? What's our dream? Do we even have a dream as a Kenyan? Or do, do we want to just alienate everyone? Do we want to be a one where everyone is a pauper? Do you want to be industrialized? Don't you think there are certain things that everyone wants? What do we want for ourselves? What, what is this sole identity that we can give our children and say, 'We are here, but this is our vision.' Now, you need to play your role, as the little Kenyan, to get us to that vision. (2.30-31)

For Sarah, the nation lacks a foundational organizing curriculum. There is no unity of 'belonging,' no direction for growth. Her questions of: 'who is?...are we?...do we?' exposes a the need for ongoing national discourse regarding a solidified identity. More specifically, she poses questions for discussion regarding the construction of a national identity. One that is inclusive, has solid infrastructure, and is guided by internationally recognized optimism. Sarah's comments highlight a tension between the individual and the nation. Her assumption of a unified space in which individuals can belong indicates that she knows what it means to belong. Consequently, she has the desire to cultivate that space in a broader, national construct. Naomi adds,

Naomi: We're raising our kids through this system so, we have to somehow adapt and perfect it to suit our own needs. We don't exactly adapt it as it is, we adapt the little we can, then adjust it to fit our own traditions. Yeah, because

it's been, like we've been brainwashed. We have that thing about the way we should be living. But, I tend to think people would still have survived, whether a Mzungu [foreigner] came to Africa or not, we would have been there. Maybe not all of us but, there were people, they found people. So, it was not all bad. It's corrupted, it's not exactly how it was. But like the government, I don't know. We're kind, we're so much of a tribal country... So, I think it's still, still the same in politics. Yeah, in our political nature, there's still that thing for you to fight for, you fight to develop your own tribe. But, it should be discouraged because we're not in this old times, we're not times, we're not living in villages and you know. Yeah. That's why I'm saying it should be discouraged. Yeah, we should all be Kenyans since we opened the village, it's no longer a village, we're all integrated.

(2.5-6)

For Naomi, tensions involving the individual and nationhood revolve around one's ability to 'somehow adapt.' She is certain that such adaptation can occur. It is within the purview of the citizenry. Naomi recognizes, too, that Indigenous histories demonstrated this ability to 'survive.' For her, the goal is not assimilation, thereby losing the entirety of one's legacy. The goal is integration. Sarah reaches a similar conclusion. For her, too, the goal is integration into nationhood. However, she advocates for a deep consideration of the tribe's role in the processes of nation-building.

Sarah: No, you must take the tribes into account. You must, because otherwise, then give each tribe their land and they continue being... The reason we were able to even call something Kenya or grow something and say, 'That

Kenya start from me, out of here,' it's because you love that tribe. Your father's people originally staying there. Yeah? So you must respect that.

You must accord them the recognition they need. (2.29-30)

For Sarah, the basic building block of the nation is the tribe. Her statement, “that Kenya starts from me, out of here” is a call back to the tribal origins of the nation. Indigenous knowledges and Indigenous knowing, for Sarah, is deeply rooted within each individual. Her “out of here” comment refers back to herself, the entirety of her being. Her declaration, “you must respect that. You must accord them the recognition they need” is not a statement of acknowledging formality, a vague sort of nod to the past. She is mandating that Indigenous knowledges must inform nationhood.

The tension between the individual and the nation can present participants with a seemingly apparent binary. On the one hand, participants, as discussed by Naomi, can be pulled toward protecting the needs of the tribe against the needs of the nation. On the other hand, participants can abdicate their tribal obligations for an identity mired in the nation-state. Sarah counters this binary by offering a possibility where individuals utilize their Indigenous knowledges to build a unified nation.

Opening the Village

Speaking of her age-set peer group—young, urban, professional Kenyans—Sarah acknowledges the intersectionality inherent in their lives.

Sarah: We've grown in a generation where we've grown in town. We've interacted with people of different tribes. We have friends from different tribes and different religions. Now, when we are busy doing this, it means that you

cannot talk about tribalism without trying to feel... it's hard to even have positive tribalism. (1.22)

Sarah recognizes that multi-ethnicity and multi-culturalism influences her view of 'otherness,' as it pertains to neighboring tribes. She cannot separate tribes, as whole entities from the individuals with whom she interacts in her daily setting. She clarifies,

Sarah: Because tribalism is trying to make or come out that one tribe is superior than the other, which in truth that it, it's not. It's not superior and maybe just because of some, sometimes you find that superiority would be brought about by where these people settled, or where they're found in Kenya or something like that. Maybe that place is, is, is very wet and very rich and healthy with... Farming is awesome. Another, uh, different things such as those and this is just our topography. It's Kenya. If we learn how to share, if we learn how to balance things, then we can all gain from each other. You know? But when you want to hoard things and start saying, 'Yeah, no wonder we are in this side,' it just brings enmity and you know? And so these drove a wedge even for friends... They don't deserve anything. It's like you've stripped them of any human rights. Now you only want for them is bad, you just want all the worst things that you could ever imagine for an enemy... to happen to them. So I think for my identity, I felt that I lost that pride when politics in Kenya turned to be strictly tribal. (1.22-23)

For Sarah, tribalism is an epithet, a negative construct that works against 'human rights.' Tribalism, according to her, is not based in any fundamental 'superiority.' Any advantage that tribes experience are a matter of geography. She comments, "sometimes

you'd find that superiority would be brought about by where these people settled, or where they're found in Kenya or something like that." Josephine agrees,

Josephine: It's no longer, yeah, it's no longer a secret. It's just people showcasing, being proud of their tribe and showcasing it. But in as much as they're proud of their tribe, it's within I'd say the Kenyan culture, the greater Kenyan culture. (2.21)

She is extending Sarah's idea that tribes should be contextualized within the nation. From her vantage point, the nation is the encompassing construct. It is the overarching structure, the umbrella point of reference.

Josephine: Rethink tribes in the context of nationhood? I wouldn't rethink tribes, it's just about inclusion in the bigger picture which is nationhood. Um, nationhood in the context of tribes? It's the same again. It's just inclusion in that... no, we're all devolved. We have all devolved governments. And there are tribes who have never been able to push their agenda. There are some tribes who are just so pronounced, so distinct that you can't miss them. Yeah, but then there are those which are, like they've just been almost non-existent for the longest time ever. So, with devolution, everyone has a voice. Everyone has a platform or a space to push their agenda. Yeah and there are certain tribes and certain cultures that will, that have I think a lot to offer in nationhood, you know. In making Kenya as a nation, like enriching that culture as a nation. So that we're so distinct that um, you know, the way you can distinctly tell a southern African or a western African? (2.19-20)

The tension, for Josephine, arises when tribes, underneath the umbrella of nationhood, lack a voice, a “platform or space to push their own agenda. This tension can be remedied by the opening and maintenance of such a space. Naomi counters her perspective, offering a practical origination point to the tension of tribe and nation. She returns to the issue of land as a divisive factor.

Naomi: And the tribe thing... and mostly, tribes are against Kikuyus, which I don't understand, because when they were fighting, 2007, 2008, it was majorly about land. And I'm thinking, if am in a Kalenjin community, I didn't come steal land from you guys, you sold it to me. So, why would you beat me up and burn my things and come up with some silly story that I was given the land by government if you sold it to me? Because most Kikuyus work hard, I told you they spot opportunities. And they take, you, you take a risk. You go to a, a community you know no one, they learn their language and they learn their way of life. So long as I know, if I take this to Luo land, it will sell like hot cakes. So, I venture, I base myself there and I put myself into it. I learn the language and their way of life and we live like that. So, I didn't get, I didn't get but majorly it was about land. We majorly have a problem with land and tribes. I think they played the political tribe card when it comes to politics during elections... 'We're Kenyans, since we're out here, we understand we're one, why wouldn't you go back home and do the same thing?' I don't know, I never used to get it because um, if I know you by your first name, I would not bother with the rest because it won't, knowing

your second name or where you're from or what village you come from
wouldn't really do much to me, so, it's none of my business. (2.7-8)

Naomi's commentary pinpoints land tensions that pit tribes against each other; and therefore, against nationhood as focused on one tribe. For Naomi, historical injustices centered on land are not systemic. They are responsibilities pertaining to a different time. "I didn't come steal land from you guys, you sold it to me." For Naomi, the intersections of business transactions carried out in the construct of nationhood supersedes current tensions. Sarah offers a divergent perspective by situating the responsibility of the current struggles with nationhood on the colonizer.

Sarah: So no, Kenya did not exist. Tribes existed, land existed, resources existed, way of life existed. Because we had our own way of life. We had our way of life, Kisii had way of life, Luos had a way of life, Kalenjin... We all had our different set of rules. Maybe sometimes we'd peep over the fence and say, 'Oh, look at their houses. Maybe I should add that to my house.' Yeah? And, and that's when we were able to pick from each other, seeing and relating, you know? So if I was to think about Kenya, I would say that Kenya inherited the tribes, and it's something beautiful, it's something good. But can we come up, now that we know they're tribes, and we all, uh, know that we have this thing that got created that called Kenya, and we need to move forward, because we found ourselves, when the division was done, we were told, 'Oh, you guys belong to Kenya,' and we said, 'Oh, okay.' So that made us Kenyan. Cause my first identity was Luo, or [or whatever,] you know? There was never a Kenya, there was never a thing. 'This is the

Lakeside,' those things were all created by the White man, yeah? But now that we find ourselves in Kenya, what is our vision... not as tribes, as Kenya? What's our vision? We don't have provinces nowadays, but so and so districts, and Kenya has 42 tribes... Let, let that be our characteristic of Kenya, and not the key. Because if you look at it from tribes, you will destroy Kenya. There'll be no Kenya. Tribes are a characteristic, like I've said, but you see tribes under tribes you find, there are 42 tribes, and of the 42 tribes, you find different way of life. Under the 42 tribes, you differ, and you get different settings. So you can imagine, and I think that's one of the things we could use, we could say, fine, there are 42 different tribes, what is common in the 42 different tribes, and take it and run with it. But truly speaking, if you were to define Kenya as tribes, you'd you'd... They are very vast, and they are very different and they're very complicated. And uh, the question is, 'Whose way do we follow, and whose do we reject?' (2.29-30)

Sarah's commentary recounts Indigenous sovereignty. She notes, "tribes existed, land existed, resources existed, way of life existed..." Within the construct of the tribe, like in a village, culture existed and individuals within those cultures had meaningful, viable, structured systems of being and of knowing. Tensions now arise because 'the village has been opened' to borrow Naomi's (2.5) words . Sarah proposes a restructuring of the open village. She observes, "but now that we find ourselves in Kenya, what is our vision, not as tribes, as Kenya?"

Conclusion

This chapter attempted to do three things: (1) discuss participant tension revolving around their Indigenous and Westernized selves, (2) link these discussions to the construction of the nation, (3) query tensions between tribes and the nation as conceptualized by participants. As we moved through the chapter, participant discussion about the tension between tribes and the state assumed the construct of the nation-state as it stands currently. That is, they spoke of the way forward as requiring all 42 tribes working together toward solidarity in nationhood. Participants also recognize intersectional urban spaces as neutral grounds where inter-tribal interactions superseded insular and superior tribal preferences. As such, participants advocated for national spaces where each tribe could play a viable role of influence within the context of the nation.

Participants did have contributions to make to the first research question posed by this study: how do young, urban, professional Kenyans define their tribal identities? Within this chapter, they discussed identity as a liminal space between tradition and modernity. While their Indigenous selves understood the necessary value of communal belonging and interaction in supportive, holistic relationships as a way of being, their Westernized selves encouraged compromise in advocacy for nationhood. Their identities were fluid, demonstrating an understanding of both the written and unwritten codes of engaging within these multiple spaces.

The second research question asks: how does the process of engaging in dialogue through *Kupiga Hadithi* allow participants to make connections between tribal identity, colonization, and the experience of nationhood? For participants, tensions are an inherent

part of the intersections in which they exist. They inhabit geographies between tradition and nationhood, between rural and urban, and between national and international. In addition, participants convey an understanding that they've inherited a nation without a solidified infrastructure. Participants hypothesize the way toward solidarity and in nationhood is in creating spaces of equity. Spaces where every tribe can bring their distinct 'characteristics' to the task of nation-building. Participants recognize also that compromise must occur in order for such unity to form.

Chapter 9: Hope

PREAMBLE

We, the people of Kenya—

ACKNOWLEDGING the supremacy of the Almighty God of all creation:

HONOURING those who heroically struggled to bring freedom and justice to our land:

PROUD of our ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, and determined to live in peace and unity as one indivisible sovereign nation:

RESPECTFUL of the environment, which is our heritage, and determined to sustain it for the benefit of future generations:

COMMITTED to nurturing and protecting the well-being of the individual, the family, communities and the nation:

RECOGNISING the aspirations of all Kenyans for a government based on the essential values of human rights, equality, freedom, democracy, social justice and the rule of law:

EXERCISING our sovereign and inalienable right to determine the form of governance of our country and having participated fully in the making of this Constitution:

ADOPT, ENACT and give this Constitution to ourselves and to our future generations.

GOD BLESS KENYA¹⁶

In Chapter 8, participants discussed tensions involving the self and revolving around the construction of a Kenyan nation-state. Their discourse showed how tensions developed as a result of obligations to their tribes and expectations from the pursuit of a modern lifestyle. In addition, participant conversations emphasized the intersectionality of the spaces that they inhabit.

This chapter endeavors to give prominence to the pervasive sense of hope that participants expressed during our dialogues through the methodology of *Kupiga Hadithi*, storied-knowing. Conversational topics emerging from this chapter came from discussions with participants about their perceived responsibilities, or lack thereof, toward the nations. Additionally, we talked about the successes of the nation as well as the legacy that they would want to leave for their children. I engage their responses, here,

¹⁶ This is the opening statement is the Preamble to The Constitution of Kenya.

in a give and take manner. The goal is to interact with the transcripts in a manner representative of participant perspectives.

In the Preamble to The Constitution of Kenya¹⁷, there two specific points of relevance to discourse within this chapter. The Preamble states the nation is “proud of our ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, and determined to live in peace and unity as one indivisible sovereign nation, and committed to nurturing and protection the well-being of the individual, the family, communities and the nation.” These declarations reflect the subject matter of participant discussion within this theme. Moreover, participants continually referred to the constitution as they explored and queried the topic.

Within the chapter, I bring forward participant ideas regarding: (1) the intersections of hope and governance in the nation, as well as, the responsibilities participants may assume within the interplay of such intersections, (2) the role of schooling as a utility for individual and national growth, and (3) how their interaction with each in common national spaces influences progress towards nationhood. I conclude the chapter with an effort to demonstrate how the theme of hope informs the research questions of this study.

As an entry point to the chapter, David’s commentary both introduces and captures the subjects emphasized by participants. He defines ‘hope’ as it is understood in this sense. He contextualizes the way in which this hope has been affirmed and nurtured.

David: There’s a certain direction we’re going to, there’s a feeling of hope, especially since the constitution was passed. There’s that feeling of, things will be better. For example, when we got independence, there were things

¹⁷ Kenya’s constitution was promulgated on 27, August 2010.

that the first president wanted to do, Kenyatta, President Kenyatta. To give everybody a good education, to eradicate poverty, there were other, two things. I don't remember. But those two things: you see, the education at least we're doing well, even if we're not doing, at the level that we can, at least many people have gone to school. Many people after colonization, after Independence have gone to school. That is of my generation, and maybe your generation. (2.16)

David defines hope as "things will be better." This is an active sentiment, a goal to be achieved. It is not merely words uttered as a panacea without predicated action. He refers back to President Jomo Kenyatta's goals as an anchoring post denoting achieved progress. His statement, "we are doing well, even if we're not doing at the level that we can" draws a historical line marking growth from Independence until now.

Simultaneously, David implies that the work of progress is not complete. The hope, therefore, lies in the potential to achieve 'education' for all beyond current national accomplishments.

David: What else I think will change? You know, that feeling of hope by the way, that is the best, I think because people will wake up every day and work because they feel that we're doing something for our children and you know. So that feeling of hope changes a lot. I think democratically we will change. The next regime will do a better job than the current regime is doing in implementing the constitution, in following the constitution. And, corruption wise I think we'll also change because people are complaining so much about corruption. There are some policemen who don't take bribe,

absolutely completely. And you see with this Twitter and Facebook, the technology, Social media, you know, somebody just posts on, you know, takes the photo of this policeman, I've seen him do this and this, and every, people comment, you know, they congratulate the policeman, they do a lot of things. Some people even send him money. So there, there's that— Yeah, so there's that feeling of that's what we want, somebody not to be corrupt. So I think it's slowly but surely we'll get there. (2.17)

For David, hope is action connected to agency, and it moves beyond temporary measures. He mentions “work” and “doing something for our children.” He is noting that the actions taken now will reap benefits in the next generation. According to David, then hope, performed by individuals engaged in the long term work of national improvement, takes time. Such hope is egalitarian, a democratic process buttressed by the new constitution and encouraged through voluble actions of citizens, as sometimes expressed on social media platforms. Hope, though elemental to progress, is not rooted in the present. David establishes this perspective as he ponders the birthright he will leave for his child.

David: So I will wish for him [my son] to learn my culture, the positive aspects of my culture, 'cause they are many. The hard work, loving your family, providing for them, and all those things. Being true to your family, those things that makes us African, those good things, I will love for him to learn them, and of course pass it on to their child. I will never want my son to be embarrassed about being Kisii or even afraid to say it in public. I would like,

I would want them to, to have it as they are very proud to be Kisii, a Kisii who is a Kenyan. I will want that for my child. (1a.22)

Inherent in David's statement is an awareness that his Indigenous knowledges do inform the social construction of nationhood. The desire for his son to "learn positive aspects of my culture" and "be proud" is an indication of his intent to continue passing on the Indigenous knowledges that he holds to the next generation. His statements reflect a commitment to working toward the democratic stability of Kenyan nationhood, of accessing Indigenous knowledges as foundational self grounding, and of enacting agency to champion national progress. David's commentary mirrors the two key points, mentioned earlier, within the Preamble to the Kenyan Constitution, and provides a framework for understanding the ways in which participants shared the perspectives within this theme.

Hope and Governance

This section features Sarah and Isaiah's voices as they reflect upon some of the effects of Indigenous sovereign histories. In addition, they discuss some of the legacies that these histories have brought to bear upon current efforts in one central and national government.

Sarah: So I think if, if we could adopt the old system, whereby we would find something that brings us together, that's not necessarily money or um, just industrial revolution, then it would be nice because it would mean this people could be able to mix with people, learn new things, come with, even be able... it would challenge them enough to come up with solutions that work for just them. But because they are so locked up together, it doesn't,

they never want to think out of that box because that's the only life they know. (2.8)

Sarah's reference to "adopting the old system" is a barometric check urging a return to Indigenous knowledges as a viable mean for finding solutions to issues plaguing the current social construction of nationhood. She is calling for a cultural glue composed of more than economic wealth or its pursuit. She thinks unity will require more than 'money' or 'just industrial revolution.' She seeks "something that brings us together." The goal, for Sarah, is for individuals and tribes to arrive at solutions that 'work' for them. Sarah demonstrates, by her statements, a realization that the national government limited by its structural composition, is not created to objectively solve inequities within the system. Such solutions emerge from constituents steeped in their own cultural knowledges of relevant, appropriate and tribally contextualized solutions applied within the greater context of nationhood. She continues,

Sarah: But you see, mixing with people, you're selling something to someone who comes from whatever region, and they tell you about, there's this thing called a light. You go home and start saying, 'What, what is this exactly? What is this involving?' So it exposes you, it challenges you, it brings an inner passion in you. So that, that lacks, somehow, especially in areas that are very arid, is very remote in our country. I think it plays in a lot because it helps you understand and comprehend what is Kenya, who is Kenya, in the sense that it helps you know what we have in the country. So it helps you understand what Kenya is strong at, and at the same time it helps you know that we have a lot of challenges and there's a lot still to be desired. (2.8)

Sarah is not advocating for Indigenous sovereignty at the expense of or counter to nationhood. She is calling for an intersection of knowledges where an integration of the knowing from singular traditions conjoin to define and maintain nationhood. “It helps you understand and comprehend what is Kenya, who is Kenya,” she asserts. Isaiah extends Sarah’s observation. He ponders existent divisions and agitations within the nation. He concludes that the logic of nationhood does not make sense outside of the logic of Indigenous histories.

Isaiah: The hardest thing for this country is because of our demography. Just because of the way we are, you know, the members [of tribes], and that is the hardest. Mathematically it’s not. Mathematically it’s just basically numbers. And numbers always don’t work... I mean numbers work tribally. I mean so that is how I understand mathematically. I mean it’s hard really. If you bring in mathematics it’s just the issue of numbers, and numbers always have a tribal thing that... I’m thinking, the only time that might change is if Kenyans have to start listening to issues. (1.35)

Isaiah’s observation, “I mean numbers work tribally” is in reference to voting patterns and their consequent political prowess. Simply, issues of governance are decided according to those in the majority. The sheer number of their voices outweigh the minoritized. Therefore, demographically, those in power continue to maintain stronger prowess and enact more of their agency within the nation. Isaiah implies that the marginalization arising from such inequities will be tempered only when individuals adhere to overarching ideologies that legislate for the good of the nation as opposed to decision-making based on individual tribal allegiances.

Isaiah: I used to follow the debate... the Kenyan debates. We had them this time around, and I think we are moving progressively. And I used to listen to how these people address the issues. Good thing is who cares where who is from? I mean speaking to the issues. If I think you are sensible, you have a head. I will give you my vote because I think you have some help, you have something in you; you can offer something to this country. So I will vote. You know we have people speak of more issues and the same, but then the fact that we have a large population that is illiterate, issues don't really mean much to them because they just need food for that day. You get a man who is going to give you food for that day, whether he speaks for anything, you vote for him because he's given you food (1.35).

Isaiah's acknowledgement that the nation is "moving progressively" is point of hope for the nation. He does, however, recognize power inequities and material struggles which curtail the ability for individuals to make holistic decisions regarding nationhood.

Hope and Agency

This section focuses on participant discussions surrounding the responsibilities that they assume in the construction of a national identity. They stress the importance of hope as an underlying factor both motivating and engendering these responsibilities. Additionally, they discuss the importance of schooling as formation for national identity and for developing individual agency in the processes of citizenship. Josephine reveals her ambitions

Josephine: Me wanting to become a women's rep...? My dad was into politics. And he ran for counselor two times. Lost both times. Okay one time, he kinda like

stepped down so someone else could win. Because he wasn't so sure he was going to win and stuff like that. So he had to step down for, I don't know what happened. Some politics. So, he stepped down for someone to win. And he was very passionate about politics and helping people... So, he left a legacy. Which I'd like to, in my own kind of way, not necessarily the same way he did it. But in my own kind of way, just make a change or just do something for my community. For people, I don't want to do it [for example] for the whole of Meru. No. Just for people in my locality. Do something for them. (1.19-20)

For Josephine, desiring to become a participant in government is the continuation of a legacy passed down by her Father. It is her inheritance. In pursuing this goal, she would be giving life to her Father's hope as an individual who supports the community. Moreover, her consideration of her leadership potential shows that she is comfortable in asserting her agency as a leader at both the tribal and provincial level. Juma elaborates.

Juma: There are young Kenyans who are very open. They are ready to take challenges. They believe they have to work. They don't believe in freebies from politicians. For me, I must say it's just getting pissed off at politicians and politics in general in Kenya and the way it's done. I just get so worked up with the rhetoric, the stories they give us, you know. I'm very cynical about Kenyan politicians. I don't take their words. I interrogate their words and look into the past and see, you know, is there a pattern here? When I see there's a pattern, I say no, I say ;Okay, this happened so many years. How can they guarantee me that this is going to be different this time around?;

Yeah. So, I just learned to live my life and believe that, you know, opportunities are out there and I shouldn't just wait, no, until the politicians are out there trying to campaign for me to make something out of them, you know. (2.18)

Juma's hope is in the ability of the youth to undertake difficulties, and work around issues facing the nation. His recognition of "young Kenyans who are very open" and "ready to take challenges" affirms a commitment to individual agency. Juma also expresses an understanding of existent tensions within the structures of governance. Furthermore, he is willing to circumvent the establishment in order to ascertain progress within the nation. He states, "I must say it's just getting pissed off at politicians and politics in general in Kenya and the way it's done." He is claiming a sense of anger, recognizing the "rhetoric" and a need for action against it. Juma's hope is in his ability to exercise a voice within the legislative actions of the government.

Juma: They influence I must say. But what they won't influence my voting pattern... just because of what they say. Because they might know it or not know it, but there are many, many Kenyans out there who are like me who really follow their politicians in terms of what are they doing, what scandals are they involved in... what, who is funding them, what do they as people, believe in, you know? What background do they come from and many other things that I must consider before casting a vote for them or not, you know. Yeah. (2.15-16)

Juma's quote gleans Isaiah's (1.35) notion of engaging in political action based on ideology that unifies the nation as opposed to ideology uplifting the tribal sovereignty or

dominance. He contends that “there are many Kenyans out there who are like me who really follow their politicians in terms of what they are doing.” Sarah disrupts Juma’s conception. She asserts,

Sarah: We’re all kind of brainwashed, told that national government is the only way to go. And so a lot of these elders who used to be recognized, a lot of these chiefs, that power and authority was taken away from them. So we used to have that, even like, it’s the national, the president, national officer, then the police. So they need to come up with either systems to educate free education right now, we have kids going to school. And we even have recently some old, old people going back to school, even if not to get a formal education, but just learn to read and write. So we have to accept that we still are a lot of illiteracy. Yeah, sure. As I was saying, we have a lot of illiterate people in Kenya. So if this was emphasized, at least to ensure that every single person is able to read and write. (2.1)

Sarah’s commentary of being ‘brainwashed,’ of ‘power and authority’ being taken away from the Elders challenges the idea of the centrality of the national government’s role in terms of meaning-making, and in the predominant role of socially constructing a unified society. She suggests a reclamation of knowledge systems that have sustained people groups previous to the establishment of a Kenyan nation-state, at least in allowing for flexibility in structures that serve the population at large. For Sarah, hope lies in the Indigenous knowledges that can inform as well as influence the structures shoring up inequities and marginalizing those who have been minoritized. She adjures,

Sarah: If we work on uh, some of the few things that I've talked about, corruption, thinking out of the box, doing things that work for us. I want to give an example of one of the African nations that I,... admired till this very day. I admire Ethiopia. Ethiopia did not let, allow itself to get colonized. Hell no. And if you look at it, they are very rich in terms of their heritage. They're very rich in it, in the sense that they even teaching Amharic in their schools. And they're very proud of it, you know? You find that Ethiopians even when you meet with them or wherever they're in the streets, you know they're Ethiopians, without question. They are very proud of it, and they are very independent. And it has made their resilience and their... I think being able to stand on their own made them look for solutions that work for themselves. And even right now as a country, they may not be developed, quote unquote, as per the White man's definition of developed. But they have the basics that works for them so well. And they still have a long way to develop, and because they will develop and pick the positives. So what they can do is just pick the positives.... that work for them. They don't have to just take everything just because they were told, 'This is good, this is good, this is good.' No. They can sit down as a people, as a nation, say, 'Okay, so we are hearing that this country's doing this, this one is doing this. Do you think this can work for us? Do you think this is positive for us?' Do you even want Ethiopian people to, you know— Getting to this. 'Yes, we do. Okay, we take it up.' So you see they are able to invite only positives. Of

what they consider as positive. And they can easily reject out the negative.

(2.26)

Sarah's conception of agency which includes self-determination based on historical knowledges is active. Her comment, "they are able to invite only positives, or what they consider as positive" takes into account the hope that she imbues upon individual action. Naomi agrees

Naomi: Yeah. You work and get knowledge and don't get stuck to one place. You have to go on developing. Yeah. You have to grow. (1.18)

For Naomi, growth is neither passive nor is it static. It is a labor intensive practice which in turn engenders development and progress. George considers this process from the vantage point of a national platform.

George: Our constitution is very clear in the chapter for human rights, it's very concrete. Even amending it, is a referendum. The sanctity of a human being. Life is undeniable. It cannot be taken away from anyone. That is so clear. So right now, first in Kenya we have to look at you as a human, before any other thing. So the fact that you are human, you need to be treated in another esteem. Even if you are a rebel, you are a human, you have to be treated as such... It will come to pass, but it has started, to come to pass that, the first thing you see is a human. You have to respect that. (2b.7)

George indicates that agency is cultivated and demonstrated in the recognition of each person's humanity. He states, "in Kenya we have to look at you as a human, before any other thing." George's concern is with systems and power structures that humanize as opposed to tearing away at human dignity and holistic capabilities. For him hope, within

the context of nationhood, begets agency. It is affirmed and established in how the government protects each person's ability to claim his or her human rights. This is the hope that is instituted in the current Kenyan constitution and revealed by participant discourse. Reflecting on the nation's history, George emphasizes his certainty that such agency will continue as an embedded part of the national fabric.

George: It is sustainable. And that is not out of just feeling, because I'm a Kenyan. No, no. This is not about being really positive, or negative, but I believe it's sustainable. Apparently, if Kenya has sustained itself with all these... let me say challenges it's facing, up to now. It has not gone down. I think Kenya has a lot to offer. There's that resilience in the people, themselves. Wherever they come from. Wherever their background is, whatever their location, their tribe or what. There's that resilience in Kenyans. The fact is, a lot of things in Kenya are not going right. But we are still a nation. And we are still a very powerful nation. Talk of it economically, military, education, otherwise. People in Kenya have gone to school. People in Kenya are aware of what is happening. I think there is some, some openness and freedom of access to information. There are a lot of freedoms we enjoy. But there are a few things which are ignored for potential. That's why I'm saying Kenya has not yet gone to its full potential. If Kenya goes to its full potential, people would be scared. Not even the African, now. [Laughs]. The European would be scared, because I believe there is a lot in Kenya can offer the world. (2b.7)

George's commentary emphasizes history as a proving ground for hope and for progress. According to George, hope is centered upon the perseverance discovered as one looks back into history and recognizes the 'sustainability' and 'resilience' of their ancestors. For George, hope is also cultivated in an awareness of systemic issues within national governance. He states, "there are few things which are ignored for potential." In addition to nurturing a historic perspective, hope can be found in the potentiality of citizens in solving difficult issues. Naomi carries the idea of hope as a potential. For her, it is an action generated through lessons passed down to future generations. She advocates that people.

Naomi: Educate (our children)... so they, as better people, do not get divided politically. Because of things that are not even, they don't even affect us those tribal things. I don't know why people hold so much onto them, because really, when you look at it, it does not help... I like people who've traveled because they are coming from outside your village walls, and seeing different people and cultures and makes you wiser, more interesting and you're given a different perspective about life that will help improve your village. Make it a better place for future generations. Maybe solve problems people never knew even existed. Make the future a better, a better place for everyone, for the kids especially. (2.18)

Naomi's stance assumes a unified nation in which individuals are cohesive in working toward national solidarity. For her, education leverages diversity in thought and utilizes such diversity to maintain the purpose of "making the future a better place for everyone, the kids especially." Contributing to the topic of progress, George adds,

George: We have come to value development to the point now that we're holding people in power accountable. Although, we are really facing, that's now the negative part of it, we're facing corruption too, it's high. Although it's becoming a giant here, but still people are fighting, people never give up in Kenya. There's resilience, because we're facing many external forces, which are not really for our benefit. We have the Al Shabaab terrorism—is really having a toll on us and you can see it even in economic sense. But Kenyan people, they never die. It's not an excuse, the hope is not dead. However much the, the people have come destroyed our property, we always come back. You, you look at the question of Westgate which was bombed in like one year ago. Now, it is open and it's running and the first day, the first day of it's opening, it was full. What does people tell you?

(2a.6)

George's articulation "hope is not dead" is a statement summarizing an authoritative and active stance. His inclusion of terms and phrases such as 'value development,' 'holding people in power accountable,' 'resilience,' and a lack of 'benefit' stresses the importance of individual action in shifting the power dynamic within the nation from the few to the many.

George: Another thing, there's freedom of worship, freedom of association, it's still alive. But, there are many liberties in Kenyans. Probably, we are so short sighted to see them and then to enjoy them. When you go outside, I've not gone outside farther than our neighboring countries, and the question of just expressing yourself. It's hard. But, here in Kenya, you can even insult the

person of the presidency, not really the presidency, because you can't insult an institution. But then, you can insult the person of the presidency. If you insult in a smart way, you get away with it. But again, if you insult it in a stupid way... But then, there are, there are places you cannot even talk about the presidency itself, leave alone the person of the presidency but the presidency itself. (2a.6)

Agency, as deliberated by George, moves beyond 'resiliency' into the freedoms and responsibilities accompanying citizenship. That the citizenry can interrogate the seat of power within the nation, that public interactions are not monitored and curtailed, that self-expression is allowed, all of these are reasons for hope. Not only are there ideological foundations to the current theme of hope bubbling up, but there are some material and practical realities that contribute to the feeling of hope. George continues,

George: Those youth, the majority of them, have at least basic education. So this is a nation which has human resources which is really to deploy... anyway, we don't have to lack. So the question of bringing people from [outside of] us with certain expertise, that one I don't think it's needed. Definitely we need some certain of expertise but we have proved that we can provide such an expertise to the world. We have contribution to the world. And then you look at the resources in Kenya. They are enough, totally enough for us and even for the world. But now, the problem is, right now in Kenya, some people are just holding on to those things. They don't want things to work well. The dream of sharing, it's not within them. So, I just think what is making Kenya as a nation not go far is the political environment. And a lot

in Kenya is tied to the political environment. The moment our political environment is sober, everything will be sober. I don't even know why the new constitution has not been able to tame it. Because, if we have a leader who respects institutions and the rule of law, in Kenya, even for one year, he will see wonders. (2b.8)

George also explains that hope is based in the 'human resources' who are an able, creative, and versatile workforce. Given this workforce, the nation does not require external shoring up. His comment, "then you look at the resources in Kenya, they are enough," upholds his confidence in the ability of Kenyans to find solutions for Kenyan issues. He hypothesizes that the nation experiences current material shortages because "some people are just holding on to those things... the dream of sharing is not with them." Despite these inequities in economic resource distribution and a "political environment" that is not correcting the national struggles of the proletariat, George finds hope within the intellectual and workforce capabilities of citizens.

This section considered participant perspectives on nationhood and the legacies they would like to contribute to the experiment. Participants stressed the importance of agency as a key factor for activating and maintaining hope. For participants, agency came from an awareness of oppressive systemic issues followed by opposition to the system. These acts of opposition are represented by the utility of an individual's political voice, resilience based on Indigenous histories, perseverance in the workforce, and active knowledge of the workings of political structures.

Hope and Schooling

In this section, participants discuss school curriculum as a possible source of national hope. Through discourse, participants reflect on the influences of schooling in shoring up national identity and in propagating individual expertise within the workforce. In this opening statement, Juma delineates between the role of the parent as educator and the role of the system in schooling an individual.

Juma: I think I'll just expound on what I've said already, and I'll give contexts. For example when I'm at home with my children. I'll try to pass down to them my tribal identity. Yeah. Then, when my children are at a school, they're singing national anthem and stuff like that, you know, their national identity will be like implanted into them. Yeah. They'll know they're Kenyans, they'll go study geography, history, and civics. They're learn about the history of the land, you know. So, for me as a parent, I'll do my part of showing my kids that they are Luhyas. (2.18) And the school will play its part of showing my children that they are Kenyans. I hope the teacher will do a good job. (2.18-19)

Juma indicates that education is a complex endeavor. There is duality inherent within its processes. This duality includes active parental participation in sharing Indigenous knowledges with their children. In this way, traditional histories can continue. Education, according to Juma, also includes schooling, the methods by which children learn about their 'national identities and history.' Juma's hope lies in both the parent and the system involving students in learning.

Sarah counters Juma's supposition of the system 'doing a good job' in the work of schooling, specifically as it pertains to national identity.

Sarah: Like teachers not necessarily only teaching in schools uh, like from a point that is well set up. But even teachers going out of their way, like teachers assigned to like go to the villages, you know? Like, the Barraza's under a tree, and you know they'd have to be a bit flexible in the sense that we know that most of these people were illiterate. Their mothers, some their fathers, they have to go out, um, to do, to work for a living, yeah? So like let's say from the community I come from. I come from the Ruiru. And most men would go out to fish, and this would happen very early in the morning like at 3 or 4 they are out going out to fish in their boats. So that would mean that automatically, if you told them to come to class at 8, they would not be able to make it. But if you are able to find something, a balance, that works for these people, like for example like if you can set a class at 11, and maybe end by 3, 3:30. Just to be able for them to just learn how to read and write. In that even when a document is published, they're able to read it on their own, why? Because they have the power and knowledge to read, yeah?... And comprehend such things. We, we have to think out of the box and use the formal new stages that we've been able to create and the professionals that we've been able to be, become to suit the old... We would just be adopting some of the old models that we used to do traditionally but from a very structured, structured way... so it's just finding a balance. (2.10-11)

Sarah's contestation of the system 'doing a good job' is based on a lack of holistic and nurturing curriculum celebrating the entirety of Kenya's national identity. A curriculum crafted in this manner stand in opposition to the deficit theorizing emergent from colonial perspectives. "We are not taught why we love Kenya," she asserts. Sarah's assumption of 'love' as a base for curriculum demonstrates her hope for a unified nationhood. Her implication is, a nation affirmed by a curriculum teaching it to 'love' itself will be grounded in a solid, confident national identity.

Her stance, "we would just be adopting some of the old models that we used to do traditionally but from a very structured way," appeals for a national reclamation of Indigenous knowledges. Further, her appeal is attuned to depth only accessible to people who have an inherent understanding of their homeland. "As a Kenyan, who knows Kenya" (2.9) is her call for her fellow citizens to inhabit the entirety of their histories. For Sarah, this can only occur when schooling curriculum changes to incorporate traditional knowledges, and therefore, the nation's Indigeneities.

Rachel's hope focuses on the progress made by the nation as it cultivates an environment for educational expertise and equity. She is interested in the progress made from Independence onward.

Rachel: We have really gone far, because clearly, a long time ago I think it was, most of us, most of the people that I know used to go out of the country for them to go, as in go for further studies outside. But now you see, like us we don't have to go to Europe or America to get a university education. We just study in here. And then, a long time it was only about the boys going to school and the girls were, were just at home. That has changed since then.

And also if you look at our government, it was only about the males being there. They were the only ones. They, I think we all believe that they, the men could be leaders, but now we have people like kina [the likes of] Martha Karua now who are leading in opposition. (2.5)

That individuals can continue their schooling within the nation's boundaries and gain global expertise, is hopeful for Rachel. Moreover, that schooling has created opportunities for gender equity is commendable headway in the task national growth. Naomi affirms this sense of development. Her observations focus on the nation's infrastructure,

Naomi: A lot has changed. Especially development and education. You've seen roads, at least our buildings have been built which are a bit more modern. Since, we're developing too fast. The world is becoming one thing, like all global. So, when you go to school, you learn a lot. It's not about books only. You learn how, your, your social aspect, aspect improve and you'll also meet people from different cultures and people with different characters, you learn to deal with everyone. So, you, you can survive anywhere, when you're put in like situations, life is unpredictable. Something might happen and you have to move from your home area or your comfort zone, the education system makes sure uh, you're able to survive anywhere you're thrown or you survive anything that life throws at you. Yeah, we kind of, all the other countries do. (2.3-4)

Naomi, like other participants, recognizes schooling as a necessity for economic well-being. She states, "the world is becoming one thing, like all global. So when you go to

school, you learn a lot.” She indicates that through the processes of schooling, individuals not only gain expertise in specific skills, but they also become adept at diverse interactions in multi-ethnic and multi-cultural arenas. These combined skills of expertise and fluid interactions are the tools for survival and thriving in the current national and global environment. Hope, for Naomi, is found in the ways which schooling equips the population for the intra and international workplace. George adds,

George: Right now, let me just talk about the window of opportunity. Now the window of opportunity in Kenya is that we have the human resource trained. If people doubt their skills, that’s up to them, but those are people who have gone through a system of education which is set by their nation. And they have gone through university which is universal education. So however much we can say that the quality here and there, but then that comes to an individual base that how good can you work with what you already have. We have right now in our population, the youth are the biggest number.

(2b.7)

George’s commentary provides a summation of participant voices regarding the relationship connecting hope and schooling. His conception of “the window of opportunity” reflects a common thread pulling through this theme. Hope, for George and the other participants, is found within actions taken by the citizenry. That action, in turn, informs and performs a pervasive sense of hope. For George, the “window of opportunity” is based on ‘human resource’ potential as fostered by a national ‘system of education.’

This section focused on the relationship between schooling curriculum and hope. Participants recognized school as both informing a national identity and providing workforce skills determining economic well-being. Therefore, hope as found in the schooling system, is generated in the system's ability to impart expertise as well as a sense of national identity.

Hope, the Intersection of Nation-Building

In this section, participants discuss hope as an intersection for nation-building. Within discourse, they consider the demands for integrating their knowledges into a unified nation-state. Additionally, they ponder the balance necessary in participating in the 'global village.'

Josephine: We are slowly becoming a nation. We're slowly moving from being tribal to being Kenyan. So then, when we move from (2.16) being tribal to being Kenyan, then we just share, we're like one big, happy family. We just share common, like just that Kenyan spirit, that's what we share. So, bureaucracy will always be there. It would decrease but to some extent in some avenues, it will always be there. But, I actually no, I don't think. I think actually becoming a nation, is helping us pull from some of those things. We're coming to realize um, instead of being incited by politicians who are you know, the way a politician will incite you to fight but they'll be at home asleep. So, that education is like sensitizing us and we're like, 'No, I'm not going to do that.' I'm going to become an entrepreneur. I'm going to do my farming. The more we become a nation, the less likely for those things to happen again. Very sustainable. Like as, as people, as I said before, people

are not asking for answers as to why I shouldn't associate with the person of a different tribe. Now, we're asking for answers and if those answers don't make sense then, we're not going to, we're not going to follow up with that. So it's sustainable because people are more educated. People huh, um, they might not know what they want particularly, but like, we're breaking boundaries. It's becoming a global village. Boundaries are being broken and we're, let alone even just tribes within here, we're marrying westerners, we're marrying people from Tanzania, Uganda and all that, so it's very sustainable. (2.16-18)

Josephine acknowledges nation-building as a slow, measured process. Moreover her comment, "we're slowly moving from being tribal to being Kenyan" demonstrates an awareness that a historical shift is occurring within the population. For Josephine, an awareness of being the midst of change, allows the nation to stand in a position of hope. 'Actually becoming a nation,' 'we're coming to realize instead,' 'education is sensitizing us,' are phrases that she uses in establishing this hope.

Beyond awareness, Josephine observes that individuals are committing acts of integration in order to maintain the sustainability of 'becom[ing] a nation.' She cites the ability for individuals to interrogate the system, obtain schooling, and intermarry, as engendering a fertile ground for nationhood. Hope, Josephine, lies in 'becoming a global village.' Sarah adds to Josephine's comments by including a historical perspective.

Sarah: So I think even with us, as much as we've inherited problems from the colonials, we'll not lie that we did not gain any positive. We have gained. But I think as Kenyans, we should learn from all that and now start working

on policies, start working on rules that work for us. Let's stop looking at mostly what everyone is doing. Because what works for one man, will never work for you, no matter how hard you try. But if we can create something Kenyan, by Kenyan, I can definitely work for us. (2.26)

From Sarah's perspective, a bridge must be built from the chasm created by colonization to the current experiment in Kenyan nationhood. Her comment, "as much as we've inherited problems from the colonials, we'll not lie that we did not gain any positive." Sarah, like other participants, is immersed in the tasks of attempting to find practical and actionable solutions to the inequities and struggles faced by Kenyans. As she mentions colonial history as the genesis for both current struggles and structures of nationhood, there are 'negatives' and 'positives' within that history. Therefore, she contends that looking into a past further than that disrupted by colonization, a history steeped in Indigenous knowing, will benefit the nation. She states, "if we can create something for Kenyan, by Kenyan, it can definitely work for us." For Sarah, hope is established by looking into precolonial history to find support structures for the existent nation-state. Juma notes,

Juma: I must say education has really helped to bridge the gap. Because some of these are poor people, many of them took their children to school, and encouraged their children to work hard at school and get good jobs and these children went back to their parents you know, when they've grown and bought them land. So it helps, you know, to uplift the livelihoods of these poor people. Yeah. So, education has played a big role. Um, again, the government also has helped. (2.12)

Juma's observation that both schooling and the government have "helped to bridge the gap" between tribal identity and nationhood adds a contemporary and less historical lens to Sarah's ideas. By recognizing a historical shift toward democracy occurring in the national 'political arena,' Rachel incorporates both Juma and Sarah's theorizing.

Rachel: Since independence, the much I know is there's gaining democracy, we became democratic. Over the years, of course our, our political arena has really like, would I say matured? It's become very different. (2.5)

While she does not explicitly define democracy, she does recognize that a 'matured' political climate. David does offer a definition for democracy. In his definition, he includes as key concepts individual agency, voice, and an equitable distribution of power.

David: Democracy. We have the best constitution where we just elected, two years ago, our third president. In the next two years we'll be electing our, the next president or maybe the, the incumbent will come back. So the democratic space has been opened up. We have, freedom. The constitution has ensured that we have freedoms, for example, freedom of expression. I think we have a very robust media industry. We have a very good opposition or there is space for them to talk and air out their views without ever feeling intimidated or facing imprisonment. (2.9)

A 'democratic space,' for David, is a hopeful space in that it promotes 'diversity,' and 'presence' 'to make whole.' David redefines nationhood as the capacity for

individuals and their tribes to be represented in government, active in society, to engage in participatory contribution to the nation-state.

David: First, this is my country. To be nationalistic is to have out of every tribe, presence. It's different parts combining to make a whole. Right, yeah? So that whole is the nation that is Kenya. Some of those different tribes are part of one and they all have their roles to play. They bring their diversity to like one basket that makes Kenya. So every, every, every tribe, including my own, Kisii, we have to appreciate one another because without one part then we're not Kenyan, it's not Kenya. Every person contributes to make Kenya, every tribe, I mean, to make Kenya what it is. So nationhood, I'll define it in that, those kind of terms. From tribes to, to, to, to a country. (2.2)

Such processes of inclusion, for David, are the basis for nationhood. He states, "so nationhood, I'll define it in those kinds of terms. From tribes, to a country." For David, a sustainable contract for a unified national identity require equal participation from all of the stakeholders. Nationhood requires nation-building. Hope, therefore, lies in each member of the society having the capacity to engage in the processes of nation-building. Sarah exemplifies this idea.

Sarah: So the thing I want for my children, I want them to be very proud of their roots. I want them to know their roots. I want them to know, 'You're Luo. Your mother was Luo, is Luo.' If maybe their father will be Luo, 'My father is Luo.' If not Luo, the better. Then they can know... two different tribes and you'll find there's maybe Kikuyu or Luhya. This is how they grew up doing things. This is how we grew up doing things and we merged it and it

became something new. (1.23) Yeah? Something new because we are not, we are not putting aside the Luo. We are not putting aside the Kikuyu, but we are saying we can't take everything, so let's just find something that works for us... both of us. Let's appreciate the positive things from the Kikuyu tradition. Let's appreciate the beautiful things from the Luo tradition. Let's teach our children to love one another. And when they love the Kikuyu side and the Luo side, I mean even when the Kikuyus and Luo are fighting, will they really fight? That's what they are. What are you fighting exactly? You're fighting yourself. You know? So I want them to know our cultures and I want them to learn from them. And I want them to love them, but I also want them to be very logical. Just like we, just like me who grew up and I said, 'There are some of the things about my culture that were very demeaning, that were very inhumane, so would I wish for them to have a logical thinking when looking at tribes.' They are beautiful. You can learn how to speak them. You can enjoy them, but with just a bit of measure. Everything needs control. (1.23-24)

Sarah's explanations reflect David's in that she identifies roles that tribes can inhabit within the overarching national structure. She states, "so I want them to know our cultures and I want them to learn from them. And I want them to love them, but I also want them to be very logical." The ultimate goal for participants, including Sarah, is nationhood. Hope, therefore, is found in finding ways for tribes to contribute their knowledges to the construction of a national state.

As a concluding summation, George's commentary below, presents salient points that captured participant perspectives regarding tribal identity and nationhood. First, he begins his discourse by reflecting on his responsibilities as a member of the nation. He ponders, "what's my contribution to the nation?" Second, he moves to discussing the actions that he must take as a contributing member of his society. He states, "I have a right to work myself for leadership." Third, he humanizes the meaning of nationhood by recognizing his responsibility as his 'brother's keeper.'

George: What's my contribution to my nation? We are called upon! Anyway, I have a role. I don't need to wait to be given my role. I have a role, as a Kenyan, and I believe it's within me to fulfill certain things for the nation. One thing is I have to be a law-abiding citizen. That is one. We have a system in place and I should believe that that system is working so we have to respect the rules which have been put in place. Because those are our rules, they are to govern us. So my first responsibility, and something I believe I owe Kenya is to follow the rules. Because when I follow the rules, and another person follows the rules and another person follow the rules... then we'll be, we will be a force which is working for one thing. Rather than conflicting. The other thing is to be, like an eye. The question of participatory accountability. Where I see things are not going on well, I should be in a position to say that these things are not going on well. Through the freedom of expression. And another thing, I am a citizen. Mandated by the constitution, I can recommend myself for public office, I can vote. You understand? So, by the fact that I can vote, in itself, that is one of the biggest powers that citizen. I

have the power to vote. The power to exercise my right of who should become my leader. Apparently, less people, or people don't know how powerful that is. It's because that's one of the most powerful tools in the current Kenya we have. You have the power to decide who becomes the leader. It's a democratic right, it's very powerful anyway. (2b.8)

I also have the right to work myself for leadership. To work in certain positions which are being created by the system. Who said I have no rights to go to the farm and dig and plant? Those are my responsibilities. Yeah. Not only to be employed, but to work in any capacity I'm able to. (2b.8)

And another contribution is just to be another brother's keeper, is key. Brother's keeper doesn't necessarily mean your brother, but then you don't see injustice being done to your brother and then you keep quiet. People just want to take from your hands, probably they want to steal some mboga, or they want to take somebody's house. People want to steal and then you keep quiet. You're called upon to act. Because it's against our new system, it was against our old system. It was against it. Precolonial it was against our system. This constitution recognizes our old ways of living. As long as they don't contravene the freedom of others. It is in the constitution. And I think it's in the first pages. So, that's what I believe. To be what I call being a Nationalist. Just following those few or fulfilling those few responsibilities. And then I become a Nationalist. By the frameworks we have the different laws. Because we have to appreciate that we are living now. And when we are living now, as of now, the governing institutions and frameworks are

those. Because those are the governing institution framework, they have a spirit of having a nation which is called Kenya. The country, rather a nation and that's key in itself. So I have a contribution to all those three in one. The country, the nation and the state. (2b.8-9)

This section focused on participant notions of hope as an intersecting factor underscoring the development of Kenya as a nation-state. Within the section, participants recognized that progress toward a unified nation is slow. They reflected through both historical and contemporary lenses about the actions required to maintain solidarity in nationhood. Participants also comment upon the responsibilities that they needed to assume in order to maintain a cohesive nation.

Conclusion

In this study, participant conversations regarding tribal identity and nationhood was built upon the foundation of two general research questions: (1) how do young, urban, professional Kenyans define their tribal identities? And (2) how do the processes of engaging in dialogue through *Kupiga Hadithi* allow participants to make connections between tribal identity, colonization, and the lived experiences of nationhood? Within this theme, participant perspectives revolved around agency, legacy, and responsibilities toward the nation-state. Hope in the sustainability of the nation-state emerged as a continual theme for discourse.

Tribal Identities Defined

Within the theme, participants defined their tribal identities in conjunction with their national identities. That is, they engendered and performed multiple identities. In as much as tribal identity was their core, it worked to inform a unified identity. In short,

participants are hyphenated individuals: Meru-Kenyan, Kisii-Kenyan, Kikuyu-Kenyan, and Luo-Kenyan. Hope in the unity of the nation, was a generative factor for bridging these conjoined identities. In addition, participants affirmed their agency by acknowledging their ability to become leaders within government, in business, and throughout the stratified areas of their lives. They referred to their sense of agency in terms of the ability to speak out and disrupt societal ills, and to contribute creatively and expertly in the workforce. Participants discussed bringing their inherent Indigenous knowledges into their identities ‘as Kenyans’ seeking to ‘find solutions that work for Kenyans.’

Connections to Tribal Identity, Colonization and Lived Experiences

Framed by the notion of hope as an action, participants discussed utilizing their tribal identities as ‘characteristics’ (Sarah) for inclusion within the larger context of nationhood. Additionally, these ancestral knowledges provided the basis for righting structural issues within the national system. Participants, while acknowledge the damage caused by colonization, viewed schooling as a connecting tool for both affirming national identities and equipping participants with the expertise to thrive in a globalized economy.

Chapter 10: Beside the Bamboo Reeds

In the spring of 2013, I found myself caught up in a rather terse video-conferencing call. I was speaking with my counterparts in Nairobi, and we were pondering the upcoming Kenyan presidential elections. The specific topic of our conversation was quite sobering, and it carried me along on a journey imagining violent tribal and political unrest in the upcoming weeks, after election results were collected and votes were tallied. The fear and trepidation accompanying our discourse was well-grounded. It was based in the traumatic experiences of the vehement post-election violence of the 2007 presidential election cycle. In the course of the discussion, my collaborators spoke of their disillusionment with their tribes. One commented, “I don’t want to have anything to do with these tribes. I don’t want my children to identify as anything like a Kamba, a Meru, a Luo. I don’t want them to speak the language, nothing.” I found that statement to be quite jarring. I could not envision a Kenya divorced from its tribal heritage. However, I recognized that I was, and still am, a member of the Kenyan diaspora. I reasoned that perhaps, my intermittent visits followed by long, continuous absences removed me from the shifting realities and practicalities of day-to-day living in the country.

This sentiment, of divorcing one’s self from tribal allegiance, affiliation, and identity, was repeated in various conversations by my different acquaintances and relations in Kenya. The conversations meandered, too, from disappointment with political manipulations through various modalities of comparisons. Often, it was the paralleling of Kenya to other nations. The prowess of Kenya and the logic of Kenyans was juxtaposed against that of Western nations. Often, the critique ended with a negative lens turned

inward, to the Kenyan nation-state. Interestingly enough, I began to recognize some commonalities among this community of speakers. They expressed a sense of urgency and latent trepidation of the unknown. The speakers were attempting to find solutions to navigate the tense atmosphere. I noted, as well, that the speakers were urban-based professionals attempting to continue their daily lives in the midst of a precipitous economic shut-down that urban centers were enacting in preparation for the elections.

As I listened to various people and attempted to comprehend their circumstances, questions slowly formed. Did these individuals truly mean to divorce themselves from their tribes, or were they expressing something about some other underlying issues? Was their concern about the economic stability of the nation, or were they challenging a need for the protection of tribes? Could they really, immersed in the context of Indigenous legacies, abstain from teaching their children about their Indigenous traditions and culture? I considered these questions loudly, both with the community of speakers in Kenya and in the diaspora. I brought the questions to my academic local in critical studies. Eventually, these questions coalesced into the two research questions posed by this study: (1) how do young, urban, professional Kenyans define their tribal identities? (2) how does the process of engaging in dialogue through *Kupiga Hadithi* allow participants to make connections between tribal identity, colonization, and the lived experience of nationhood?

As mentioned, I did not consider the questions in solitude. A community of voices shaped and reshaped their focus. Along the way, Deborah, my research guide, began to craft with me possibilities of going to Nairobi to think through these questions with

interested and available members from the community of speakers whose voices had been represented in earlier exchanges.

Deborah and I agreed that I would spend six weeks in Nairobi. During this time, I would meet with people and have discussions about the research questions. These conversational interviews and information exchanges would occur both in a group setting and with individuals. Deborah shared the topic with people in her community and invited those interested to join in the discourse. Sometimes, they invited others. Once in Nairobi, I was allowed the privilege of interacting with participants to discuss the research questions. I asked questions and listened as they offered meaningful insights. I was part of the conversation. I responded when they asked me questions about my positionality. I acknowledged my Luo roots and my membership in the diaspora. Generally, my stance was that of a learner and a host for the process of dialogue.

The collective, as I came to call participants in our discourse group, came to the research candidly and firmly knowledgeable about their various stances. They were very gracious and quite accepting of me. They allowed me to glean and share knowledge with them. Their theorizing about the subject matter of tribal identity, colonization, and the lived experience of nationhood informed the basis of this work. Additionally, their perspectives informed how I analyzed and applied my theoretical knowing to the topic.

I used two theories as foundational frameworks for this work, Anticolonial theory and Sage Philosophy. As I wind my way through this conclusion, I will specify that ways in which Anticolonial Theory influenced conclusions about the findings. Here, I will discuss the role that Sage Philosophy occupied in the design and approach to the subject matter.

This study borrows from Odera Oruka's (1990) Sage Philosophy as a means of reflective engagement with the participants in this subject matter. Masud (2011) lists the following tenets of the philosophy:

- Sage Philosophy deals with the ideas and thoughts generated by wise men and women of the African community who are invested with creating critical insights into everyday life experiences
- The philosophical attribute of the thought process in Sage Philosophy stems from communal ideologies and are focused on reflecting truth on the basis of what is applicable and rational for those who seek knowledge
- Outcome of communal realities that then ties the ideological perspectives to cultural attributes. (p. 875)

I utilized the first tenet of Sage Philosophy, "dealing with ideas and thoughts generated by wise men and women of the African community," by recording, transcribing, and presenting excerpts of conversations from the field. My goal was to privilege participant voices as they created 'critical insight into everyday experiences.' Therefore, I featured their commentaries in response to questions surrounding tribal identity, colonization, and nationhood.

I wove the second tenet of Sage Philosophy throughout the conversations and within the findings as I interpreted and explained participant perspectives. I treated their words as generative texts, first oral in nature and then written, as I laid down thoughts on paper. The goal here was to articulate 'thought processes' as they 'stemmed from communal ideologies' and 'reflected truth on the basis of what is applicable and rational.'

I contextualized the third tenet of the philosophy by focusing the findings solely on participant storied knowing, absent the questions that I posed. In doing so, I was able to begin understanding some of the ‘ideological perspectives’ that participants expressed. Thus, my interpretations of findings remained ensconced in ‘outcomes of their communal realities.’

It can be, in the tradition of the Western academy, a temptation to reach a universalist and monolithic position regarding participant ideologies. That is not my goal here. My interest is to privilege the voices of young, urban, professional Kenyans. My interest is to allow their voices to carry the weight of critical discourse about the ways in which they have constructed meaning within and through conversations surrounding tribal identity, colonization, and nationhood. I have stated that this study *borrow*s from the tenets of Sage Philosophy. It does so through the privileging of the knowledge and discernment expressed by these young professionals. While Sage Philosophy ideally centers around Elders in the homeland, I have focused on young, urban professionals as their voices represent a group that has not been significantly heard in the literature. As the individuals experiencing the liminal spaces and intersectionality between indigeneity and nationhood, they carry the critical awareness necessary to inform this work.

Kupiga Hadithi

As a culturally responsive methodology, *Kupiga Hadithi* nurtures a hospitable space for critical interaction. It is an approach bringing together the host and her guest, intentionally, into a location of sharing, what Memmi (1966 as cited in Israel-Pelletier, 2013) refers to as assimilation. “Assimilation, for Memmi, is not erasure... but an ongoing project to take attention off the personal, to be liberated from the narrow,

provincial, injurious, and ultimately flawed sense of who anyone really is” (Israel-Pelletier, 2013, p. 211). The individual, in Memmi’s expression of assimilation is free to move beyond a “desire for hegemony” (p. 212) and into a more vulnerable space of critical discourse. For Memmi, writes Israel-Pelletier (2013), “assimilation... is a condition continually negotiated” (p. 211). The condition is not negotiated in isolation, or only with self as a reference point. Rather, it is a negotiation “in his relations with others” (p. 212). As such, assimilation as articulated by Memmi (1966), lends itself as a location of sharing, a hospitable space.

Kupiga Hadithi with its utility of cultural rituals for hosting a guest exemplifies such a location, it is hospitality enacted. Israel-Pelletier (2013) continues,

to speak of hospitality in the context of colonialism and postcolonialism is in effect to draw attention to one of the core issues of modern times, namely the relationship between ethics and politics, the standards that inform the way people, organizations, and nations relate to each other. (pp. 216-17)

Through the predetermined rhythms of *Kupiga Hadithi*: welcome, introductions of lineage and self, orientation to the current moment, storied-knowing, and meandering closing, the host and her guest establish a space enshrined for authentic dialogue regarding deeply contested issues. Israel-Pelletier (2013) continues, “hospitality has both an ethical and a political dimension” (p. 217). These are the dimensions housed in *Kupiga Hadithi* that allowed participants to speak openly about the inequities present within the nation, and the ensuing tensions they experience in response.

“For Memmi, hospitality is not merely the consciousness of an ethical imperative, the application of pure hospitality, but that hospitality like assimilation, becomes an

approach and a strategy for reducing the hold dualistic thinking has on subjects” (Israel-Pelletier, 2013, p. 218). Through the culturally familiar hospitality of *Kupiga Hadithi*, participants felt safe enough to disrupt their self-protective shields of navigating the status quo and engage with me in conversations surrounding tribal identity, colonization, and nationhood. As such, they engaged in discourse as a revolutionary act, a beginning point to fuel further critical action on their own terms.

As I engaged in these deep conversations with participants through the processes of *Kupiga Hadithi*, storied-knowing, four themes emerged as significant areas of focus. Within the work, I interacted with these themes under the following topics: colonial wounds, inequities, tensions, and hope. Keeping in mind that this is not an exhaustive work about the relationships of tribal identity, colonization, and nationhood, I will spend this final chapter reviewing the themes. I will also discuss their implications in terms of the ways in which my findings can be applied to educational policy, practice, and the individual. I will close the chapter with a reflective poetic reflection.

Colonial Wounds: The Aching Sand

Colonization disrupted the ways in which Indigenous peoples know themselves, their roles within their tribes, and the ways in which they construct their societies (Césaire, 1972; Dei, 2011; Grande, 2004; Oruka, 1990; Smith, 2012). Emanating from participant discussions, colonial wounds are the violences perpetrated on the holistic well-being of individuals, their tribes, and, subsequently, the current nation-state. These wounds are continuous in that they are the basis for current national economic and infrastructural struggles.

Cabral (1973 as cited in Williams & Chrisman, 1994) names the harm to economic processes as a key trauma arising from colonization. This is the trauma that the colonial wound identifies. He notes, “the principal characteristic, common to every kind of Imperialist domination, is the negation of the *historical process* of the dominated people by means of violently usurping the free operation of the processes of development of the *productive forces*” (Williams & Chrisman, 1994, p. 55). According to Cabral then, because colonial wounds exist, they work to remove Indigenous agency by wrongfully curtailing and seizing the Indigene’s ability to develop viable economic infrastructures.

Colonial wounds are historical. In Kenya, these wounded histories have been silenced by the national government’s efforts to forge a cohesive national identity (Elkins, 2005, Anderson, D., 2005). Not until recently have these colonial wounds been subject to sanctioned public reconsideration (Wainana et al., 2011). In recent years, the national government has taken steps into redressing colonial wounds and privileging the place of culture in the healing process. Hughes (2011) observes, “The Preamble declares that the constitution [of Kenya] recognizes the ‘people of Kenya [as] Honouring (sc) those who heroically struggled to bring freedom and justice to our land” (Hughes, 2011, p. 182). Ultimately, these colonial wounds have worked to reconstruct historical ethnic identities and Indigenous sovereignty into the current experiment of nationhood (Hughes, 2011; Cohen & Odhiambo, 1987; Ogot, 2003).

This dissertation draws upon an anticolonial theoretical stance to inform my understanding of the subject matter. Patel (2014) asserts, “I privilege the use of anticolonial... as a way to draw into relief the ways in which decolonial should always speak directly to material changes, specifically to land” (p. 359). For Patel, her utility of

anticolonial theory allows her to address clearly the injuries of colonial exploitation.

Much like Patel, I privilege the use of anticolonial theory in that it underscores the roots of colonial wounds. Anticolonial theory allows for the explicit connection of historical injustices to the Imperial government's state defined practices. Fanon (1963) asserts,

colonial domination because it is total and tends to over-simplify, very soon manages to disrupt in spectacular fashion the cultural life of conquered people.

This cultural obliteration is made possible by the negation of national reality, by new legal relations introduced by the occupying power, by the banishment of the natives and their customs to outlying districts by colonial society, by expropriation and by the systematic enslaving of men and women. (p. 178-83)

Anticolonial theory allows me to identify that colonial wounds, established by colonial domination, became institutionalized. As such, they allowed for egregious and ongoing economic exploitation, the results of which can be seen in the discrepancies between those with economic resources and those without.

Gutto (2016) attempts to address the overarching historical causes of these inequities. He writes of three phases of history. In Phase I, he identifies East and South Africa as generative sites for humanity. Phase II includes civilizations in the African continent cultivating "the development of social, scientific, and technological developments" (p. 6). In Phase III, he notes the declination of these civilizations. He adds, however, that these downturns "starting in 15th to the 20th century" (p. 27) and propagated by colonization "developed Europe and the European world system" (p. 7). According to Gutto (2016) then, European economic development was achieved because "Africa's resources and enslaved free labour fueled by industrialisation and capitalist

socio-economic production and re-production systems in Europe and the European dominated world” (p. 7).

Defining Tribal Identity

Through our conversations, participants discussed their tribal identities as fluid and multi-faceted. It is important to note that tribal identities, here, are not discussed as a monolith. That is, there is a rich diversity of ethnic identities and histories encapsulated by the terms ‘tribe or tribes.’ Each of the ethnic groups and subsequent tribes in Kenya carry with them generational histories, legacies, and cultures that precede Imperial invasion. While conversations with participants did not highlight the cultural and socio-political diversity of the tribes, participants did talk about the ways in which their particular cultural heritage informed their discourse about tribal identity, colonization, the construction of a Kenyan nationhood.

In their discussions regarding tribal identity, participants noted that: first, their identities are established in ethnic histories predating the colonizers. Second, their identities are influenced by the historical injustices institutionalized by colonization. Third, their identities are shaped by the intersections of their urban versus rural experience and traditional versus modern existence. Thus, they acknowledged that their tribal identities pre-dated colonial rule even as these very identities were and are currently influenced by Imperial and neocolonial constructions.

Participant discourse also demonstrated their awareness of the institutional traumas resulting from colonization. They, in their commentaries, understood colonial wounds to be inherited structures put in place by the Imperial government and shored up by the post-Independence government. Specifically, they acknowledged that these

wounds are centered around issues of land and resource distribution. As such, participants recognized the deep roots of Kenya's broad economic disparities as imbedded in colonial governance and exploitation.

In their considerations, participants held the government responsible for the healing of these wounds through the processes of nation-building. They identified the system of schooling as a location of hope because it is key to the processes of nation-building. Schooling, according to participants, could work to establish a national identity. Additionally, schooling strengthened the nation because it allowed citizens the rights of knowledge acquisition. These are necessary tools to survive in the current economy.

As much as schooling contained hope for a unified nation, participants also interrogated the ways in which schooling suppressed ethnic identity formation. In so doing, they troubled the ways in which schooling influenced their identity formation. For participants, while schooling labored to establish a national identity, it simultaneously worked to erase Indigenous knowledge contributions to the processes of nation-building. Schooling, for participants, did not provide avenues for celebrating, utilizing, or acknowledging the wisdom found in Indigenous cultures. Schooling, therefore, alienates the individual from herself and from forming an identity nurtured by her Indigeneity.

In the discussion with participants about colonial wounds, education materialized as a separate entity from schooling. Education could be defined as the knowledges ancestrally inherited by the Indigene. These are the histories, ontologies, and epistemological understandings, the body incorporate of learning, passed down as legacy from one generation to the next. These are the very knowledges about governance, about

the individual and her role in society, that colonization has worked to disrupt and curtail (Fanon, 1963; Bhabha, 1994).

Schooling, like education, is knowledge transmitted. However, schooling is knowledge transmitted for the enculturation of the Indigene in order to accomplish colonial purposes (Smith, 2012). This is because schooling carries with it knowledge systems imposed by the colonizer. Wa Thiong'o (1986), in his writings, troubles the system of schooling while offering an alternative mode of education embedded in ancestral knowledge methodologies. His work "presents education [defined here as schooling] as European indoctrination, storytelling offers an alternative site of pedagogy" (p. 140).

For Wa Thiong'o (1986), schooling that divorces individuals from their Indigenous Knowledges is both dehumanizing and oppressive. Therefore, a true education is based on Indigenous Knowledges, and it must include avenues where an individual is "learning the truth of his people's history" (p. 140). A true education must do this in a way that is in alignment with Indigenous methodologies. Thus, it is important to learn of one's Indigenous knowledges utilizing Indigenous methodologies. Dalleo (2012) notes that for Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, "storytelling provides an avenue towards nationalist consciousness meant to counter the worldview imparted by formal education" (p. 140).

In addressing colonial wounds, participants discussed the processes of their education as having come from their interactions with their Grandparents, and in the homeland. As people whose main residence was situated in urban areas, the journey back

to their homelands was intermittent. Therefore, they had limited access to their Indigenous knowledge base.

Schooling, on the other hand, was a familiar and prevalent system. Participants were in schools most days of their formative years. Most participants spent a majority of their secondary and higher education years living on school campuses and in its regimented environment. Schooling, then, imparted an indelible influence on their ways of knowing and their identities.

As mentioned earlier, participants did recognize a lack in their schooling. They noted that it was devoid of connection to their Indigenous histories. As well, schooling, even though it attempted to establish a national identity, was generally devoid of cultivating true national identity formation. Coombes (2011) observing the lack of national recognition for Independence heroes notes,

those involved directly in the struggle are often the first to be cast into oblivion once independence is achieved. In both South Africa and Kenya there are many without whom neither country would have succeeded in throwing off the yoke of colonialism. (p. 202)

This oblivion means that there is no place in the primary school curriculum where “liberation histories” (Coombes, 2011) systematically work toward “commemorating and celebrating the liberation struggle” (p. 202). This is evident in this research as participants could not name ideologies that were specific cultural markers for the nation.

Perhaps because of their recognition of these deficiencies, participants indicated that while schooling was necessary for the economic survival of the nation, it created a chasm between their Indigeneity and the attainment of an authentic, cohesive nationhood.

Brim and Harrison (2015) provide a location for troubling a benign understanding of schooling as an egalitarian instrument. The authors assert,

colonization is a fundamental element in the world historical economic system known as capitalism and it reflects the inner drive of this system, which is to accumulate ever more capital and expand in ever more diverse ways... The logic of capitalism requires that every human being on the planet must become a commodity of some kind within a broad and multi-faceted, but essentially homogenous, global marketplace. (p. 5)

Schooling, through that lens, becomes utility for capitalistic processes in that it replicates and exacerbates the divide between those with accesses to resources and those without. For participants, however, there is a broader perspective. More than replicating capitalism in its race for accumulation of endless surplus, schooling becomes a connective ligament beyond labor production. Participants were hopeful in identifying schooling as engendering spaces of interaction and common union.

Schools were spaces where members from diverse ethnicities could interact and intermingle with members from different tribes. Thereby, all individuals would be imbued with the ability to move fluidly and confidently in multiple contexts. Schooling, according to participants, encourages cohesion in the building of a nation. Despite the fact that it divorces the individual from her indigenous knowledges, it allows for the cultivation of an intersectional identity. As individuals are forced to interact and intermingle with ideas and in the same physical setting, they begin to cultivate relationships that in turn redefine how they construct themselves.

My use of anticolonial theory as a base for theorizing this subject matter leads to rejecting the colonizer's mode of dominant superiority, and calls for revolutionary action against the oppression. Colonial wounds, through these lenses, reflect the institutionalized ways in which the colonial government established power. These wounds continue to be that basis for a vulnerable national infrastructure, and reconstruction of the governmental system must occur if these wounds are to be healed (Muranga, 2002).

In analyzing participant responses through the binary of an anticolonial lens, I might be propelled, entirely, to reject the processes of schooling as a location of hope for healing colonial wounds. This is because schooling alienates the individual from her cultural knowing. In its mediation of the chasm between Indigenous knowledge and nationhood, schooling works to oppress the Indigene by dehumanizing her history and therefore, herself. Postulating such a binary, however, does not embrace the holistic reality as presented by participants. These are individuals who inhabit liminal spaces. They traverse the sometimes murky and always realistic geographies between education and schooling. Therefore the goal, as explored by Wa Thiong'o, is to move beyond the theoretical binary and into experiential praxis by "seek[ing] to imagine ways... towards consciousness while avoiding a vanguardist condescension that view people as empty vessels to be filled with superior knowledge" (Dalleo, 2012, p. 141). This begins by honoring participant voices and the ways in which they construct meaning.

Colonial Wounds–Implications

Participants discussed schooling as a locus of hope in healing colonial wounds. They reasoned that schooling helped to forge a cohesive national identity. As well, they surmised that schooling provides individuals with the skills and credentials necessary to participate in the national economy. Kenyan national educational policy, in response to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes Free Primary Education (FPE). The government has instated this policy “since education is formally recognized as a necessary component for fulfillment of any other political, economic, social and civil rights” (Ngũgĩ, Mamiukha, Fedha, & Ndiga, 2015, p. 87). Formally, therefore, the current purpose of schooling in Kenya is to develop one’s economic viability. Informally, the system of schooling provides an intersection where members of society can interact and learn from each other. Ngũgĩ et al. note “since education is seen as a tool for transmission of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for meaningful survival, then it is from this premise that it is attributed to positive and economic social development of the society” (p. 89).

Like Ngũgĩ et al. (2015), I agree that in its role as a mediator of communal cultural spaces, schooling should also work to affirm each individual’s humanity by including her Indigenous histories. The problem, however, is that this does not occur. The school curriculum is not representative and discursive of the traumas caused by colonial wounds.

Even though Ministry of Education revised the curriculum in 2002 for the “indigenization of textbook publication and the production of texts that are more culturally relevant” (Foulds, 2013, p. 165), the focus has not been to decolonize the

content represented. Moreover, the curriculum does not seek solutions within Indigenous knowledge bases to address historically meaningful and humanizing ways of healing colonial wounds. Foulds (2013) observes, “on the one side of the divide sits colonial knowledge, while the other includes nationalist paradigms and local knowledge systems” (p. 166). The curriculum therefore is divided in its purpose and tends to the West for solutions to national issues. Foulds (2013) continues, “when the Ministry of Education revised their curriculum and evaluation processes in the early 2000s, global implementation of the MDGs¹⁸ were also taking place. This parallel has had clear consequences for the effectiveness of Kenya’s curriculum” (p. 173).

The implication, therefore, is that curriculum beginning in primary school should be decolonized in order to reflect the traumatic birth, and subsequent resilience of the nation. This means that national curriculum needs to be discussed, disassembled, and recreated to reflect Indigenous histories that existed long before nation-building. The explicit goal is to find as the African Union (Ruhindi, 2013, p. 5) clearly stated “African Solutions to African Problems” (Hountondji, 1970, Appiah, 1992, Mama, 2007). This process, of solution finding, cannot be scripted or pre-scripted. It requires a complement of the voices and knowledges of people within the nation coming together in discourse, analysis, and action, or lack thereof.

In terms of school reform and the curriculum, the individual plays a key role. She can begin conversations about the nature, purpose, and effects of schooling. She has the agency to interrogate the system of learning and begin to progress toward systemic change. The individual, too, holds the responsibility for transmitting her Indigenous

¹⁸ MDG represents the twenty one targets identified by the United Nations Millennium Declaration as necessary in eradicating extreme poverty by 2015. Free Primary Education is one of these goals.

knowledges to the next generation. Through the active processes of maintaining her language and dynamic connections to her homeland, she can work to establish a sense of rooted equilibrium in both her personal and her Indigenous histories. The tribe then becomes a location for being and for knowing: a cosmology where histories, ontologies, and epistemologies become a valued and celebrated source, rather than its status at the genesis of this study—a space of continual struggled, oppression.

Kupiga Hadithi

Through dialogue utilizing the culturally responsive methodology of *Kupiga Hadithi*-storied knowing, participants drew upon their cultural memories (Mazrui, 2000; Dei, 2011) to disrupt their understandings of the purpose of schooling and the school curriculum. They began to question the lack of Indigenous knowledge representation and they pondered the ways in which they could contribute to the processes of schooling. As a collective, participants troubled the weight of certainty with which they regarded schooling, as an ameliorative factor. While they identified the need for changing the curriculum, they did not, as a collective, assume the responsibility for that change.

As a methodology, *Kupiga Hadithi* cultivated a space where participants could think freely and express openly the root causes of colonial wounds. They could unrestrictedly consider the ways in which these wounds worked to derail solidarity in nationhood. However, the methodology only allowed the process of critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) to begin. More decolonizing work needs to occur as citizen groups come together in culturally appropriate ways to have discourse regarding the issues, identify historical injustices, discover their agency in addressing these injustices, and then to enact solutions.

Inequities and Tensions: The Muddied Banks

Inequities: The Miry Clay

Inequities are the systematic patterns of marginalization, and consequent minoritization of tribal groups and individual members within those groups. Inequities arise from uneven power and resource distribution (Anderson, D., 2005; Cabral, 1973 as cited in Williams & Chrisman, 1994; Mbembe, 2001; Mudimbe, 1988). Inequities, therefore, are shored up by economic disparities.

The context of this study considered inequities to be rooted colonial wounds exactly because they have an economic base. That is, the national infrastructure as constructed by colonial powers ascertained the marginalization and economic despondence now experienced by a majority of the Kenyan population. Slaughter (2004) notes,

the spatial logic of colonial Kenya was developed in relationship to the British metropole, that Nairobi existed as the circulatory center of Kenya, but that Kenya itself was dependent upon the external pumping of England. Thus, the structural and infrastructural geography of Kenya and its capital were developed to support an export economy. (p. 42)

Slaughter is referring to the colonial history of the nation-state. Kenya, as a nation, was conceived to maintain the Imperial government's economic interests. Césaire (1972) asserts

colonization = "thingification."..I am talking about natural *economies* that have been disrupted—harmonious, and viable *economies* adapted to the indigenous population—about food crops destroyed, malnutrition permanently introduced,

agricultural development oriented solely toward the benefit of the metropolitan countries; about the looting of products, the looting of raw materials. (p. 42-43)

From land appropriation first enacted by Imperial legislation, and then institutionalized by the post-Independence government, inequities have created a hierarchical and hegemonic power divide. Elkins (2005) writes, “in the end [at Independence], the fruits of freedom were going to be divided between Kenyatta’s emerging oligarchy, the loyalists, and those settlers who remained in Kenya (p. 361). In this divide, the rich who have the means to maintain their wealth continue to get richer, and those entrenched in poverty further digress into economic desolation. Certainly, Elkins (2005) identifies the lineage of colonial economic beneficiaries, but there is also, in that undercurrent, a more systemic issue.

Slaughter (2004) discusses the notion of urban individualism. He argues that urban individualism is a core desire underlying the creation of a Kenyan nation. Urban individualism underscores a “first world desire for a ‘third world’” (p. 30). Enacted as a concept, urban individualism exploits those who exist at its margins. Slaughter writes,

Urban individualism is not so much set in antithesis to a rural communalism (a colonial anthropological distinction between a European subjectivity and a traditional African one), but it is, rather, charted as a *telos*, as an evolutionary development scheme where rural communal subjectivity responds to the infrastructural and spatial demands of the patrimonial legacy of the colonial administrative capital—the metonymic supplement of the post-colonial nation, state, to produce the civil subject, over and against a now naturalized and primitivized rural subjectivity. (p. 48)

Slaughter (2004) asserts that urban individualism tears away at the communal values of society by economically exploiting and anti-intellectualizing those values. More than dismantling communal values, an anticolonial reading of Slaughter explicitly acknowledges that the British government had clear purpose in its plan for constructing the nation, and that this purpose involved the task of convincing individuals to disavow their Indigenous knowledges. By doing so, individuals could earn the appertaining privileges of becoming a *civil*-ized servant of the state.

In alignment with literature, participants discussed inequities as struggles inherited from colonization. They also indicated that government systems, fueled by corruption and the tendency for officials to reward their individual tribes, perpetuated the oppressive inequities experienced by the majority of the citizens. These inequities, give rise to the tensions that currently fuel the nation. Murunga (2002) writes,

Since Independence, Kenya has had both governance and resource allocation problems... governance has been characterized by political dictatorship, rampant abuse of human rights, and the marginalization of several groups and communities. In addition, the economic system has been fraught with corruption, patronage and high levels of public malfeasance. (p. 106)

As well, these deep tensions are emblematic of the volatile and dynamics intersections that exist for young, urban, professional Kenyans.

Tensions: Winds Whistling Through the Reeds

Tensions are the underlying currents informing social interactions. They exist between individuals and their tribes, inter-generationally, in the dynamic of the tribe versus the nation-state, and along economic divides. Mudimbe (1988) posits,

because of the colonizing structure, a dichotomous system has emerged, and with it a great number of current paradigmatic oppositions have developed: traditional versus modern; oral versus written and printed; agrarian and customary communities versus urban and industrialized civilization; subsistence economies versus highly productive economies. (p. 4)

An anticolonial lens (Dei, 2011) embeds the roots of tensions within the colonial wounds engendered by Imperial ideology and enactment of colonization (Morris & Spivak, 2010; Rivage-Seul, 2008; Said, 1983). A statement by the African Union (AU) to the International Criminal Court (ICC)¹⁹ at The Hague on November 21, 2013, emphasized the nature of tensions within the nation-state, and the reverberation of those tensions to the Pan-African context.

The situation in Kenya is very complex. There are at play important dynamics and tensions of politics, peace, justice, and the rule of law, and a very acute sense of ethnicity that cannot be wished away or swept under the carpet... the concerns of Africa, if Kenya were to be destabilized, were genuine and it was important for the International Community to trust Africa to prevent any further crisis in a region that is so volatile and where the difference between peace and no peace is not easy to define. Therefore, the AU's position cannot be perceived as having no justification and the Kenyan situation warrants UN Security Council to exercise its mandate... to allow Kenya to move forward and deal with the challenges confronting it. (Ruhindi, 2013, pp. 3-4)

¹⁹ ICC opened inquiries regarding the Kenyan post-election violence of 2007-8. The ICC presided over a failed war crime court case against Kenya's sitting president, Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto. As of February 2016, the Kenyan government has proposed to withdraw from the ICC for unfair targeting (The Guardian).

Current tensions in Kenya certainly involve the systemic avoidance by the national government to correct the wrongs engendered by Imperial rule and perpetuated by the post-Independence government. These tensions also filter down to an individual level, where people work to negotiate intersectional spaces between: the political and the personal, traditional and modern, tribal and individual.

Participants' discourse presented tensions as both external experiences and internal struggles. For them, the navigation of these tensions is a balancing act, a kind of dance where they were situated in liminal spaces performing whichever steps were, momentarily, relevant, and appropriate. Wainaina et al. (2011, p. 181) comment on tensions that individuals experience as they interact politically.

Here the tensions created between individual/community and rights/responsibilities in the context of nation-building 'require that the individual's [civic] activities must simultaneously promote the corporate existence of the community. This puts humanity at the centre of nation-building or *active citizenship*' (Avoseh, 2001, p. 480).

According to Wainaina et al.(2011), then tensions, for participants, are part of active citizenship. Thus, to be a young, urban, professional Kenyan who participates in and engages with streams of discourse regarding the state of the nation is to be political, is to be an active citizen.

For participants, schooling represented one geographic and safe intersection where they could learn to position themselves within daily landscapes rife with tension. Schooling allowed participants to interact multi-ethnically and multi-culturally thereby expanding their experiential knowledge of the 'other.' At the same time, schooling acted

as an arena of sublimation. This is because the curriculum worked to re-story the atrocities of colonial history in order to maintain a unified national Kenyan identity (Mazrui, 2000; Elkins, 2005). The system of schooling, therefore, works to extend the words of Kenya's first president on his inaugural speech

Let this be the day on which all of us commit ourselves to erase from our minds all the hatreds and the difficulties of those years which now belong to history. Let us agree that we shall never refer to the past. Let us instead unite, in all our utterances and activities, in concern for the reconstruction of our country and the vitality of Kenya's future. (Elkins, 2005, p. 360)

Inequities and Tensions: Implications

For participants, the goal of maintaining a cohesive, national identity was of primary concern. The idea of cohesion, for them, did not negate plurality or the ability for contestation. Participants conceived of a national identity as a space for mutual belonging. As a result, they identified schooling as a necessary and elemental component of achieving this goal. While school represented progress, growth, and stability, in a new and dynamic economy, Indigenous education was recognized as a distant ambition. Such education was viewed as necessary for personal growth and theoretically plausible as a basis for national reconstruction; however, it was more of a curious unknown. Indigenous education presented possibility for participants in that it could systematically and structurally inform current processes and protocols for schooling. Participants had yet to finalize ways of enacting these protocols. Adefarakan (2015) writes,

formal schooling needs to be a place where... we do not continue to replicated and work from Cartesian models of pedagogy that ideologically and philosophically

depoliticize, marginalize, or closet students' physical bodies and the dominant social and political meanings ascribed to them. (p. 155)

The implications, therefore, are for both the national system of schooling and individuals to generate ways in which Indigenous methodologies can inform how learning occurs. While curriculum reform instituted beginning in 2002 continues to Indigenize textbooks (Wainaina et al., 2011, Foulds, 2013) and increase Indigenous Knowledges research at higher education institutions (Murunga, 2002, Njiraine et al., 2010), it does not work to decolonize the hegemony (Said, 1983); "that is so naturalized that we often do not recognize that it is there" (Karege-Munene & Schmidt, 2010, p. 326). Karege-Munene and Schmidt (2010) also affirm, "postcolonial studies reveal that there has not been a revolutionary disruption and overthrow of colonial ways of thinking that come with political liberation" (p. 326). They posit counteraction "the themes of silencing, disenchantment, and multivocality" (p. 326) is a crucial beginning point for decolonization.

In that vein, individuals can also work to restore inclusive practices for the national school system. They can, through involvement with community groups, work to hold counties responsible for equitable resource distribution for under-resourced schools. Their voices, through Barazas²⁰ and other meeting venues, social media, and networking communities, can work to alleviate the disparity of access to schooling.

Defining Tribal Identities

As a battling ground for overcoming systemic inequities, schooling, for participants, both helped to ameliorate individuals from economic destitution, and

²⁰ Barazas are community meetings, usually hosted by Elders.

imbued them with the knowledge to fight against corruptible and unequal institutionalized practices. As a result, those enculturated into the system of schooling are further disassociated from their tribal centers. While those for whom schooling is not a primary way of life remain closely tethered. The unequal distribution of human and material resources within schools, further emphasized disparities (Foulds, 2013; Wainaina et al., 2011).

However, with continual implementation of Devolution as a policy, the distribution of resources continues to be decentralized. “With the implementation of the 2010 constitution, approximately one third of the national government’s functions have trickled down and been shared with forty-seven county governments led by governors. The devolved system allows for more equitable distribution of funds, and thus once marginalized regions are prospering” (Foreign Affairs, 2015, p. 126). As a result of sharing resources with regions out of the Nairobi urban center, counties more easily have access to resource allocations for their constituents. This means that resources can be allocated to maintain and restore structures for schooling.

In general, ease of the economic burden allows the citizenry to reconstruct a more stable nation (Mazrui, 2000). Karega-Munene and Schmidt (2010) observe that, “liberation from a colonized mind takes forms that often *provoke* and challenge conventional ways of practice and thinking (Munene, 2010, wa Thiong’1986)” (p. 324). As participants noted, this sort of liberatory practice is difficult when people are starving for food, shelter, water, and/or basic needs. Alleviating destructive tension inherent in pursuing economic viability allows for economic justice and national growth.

In terms of systemic inequities and their resultant tensions, participants defined their tribal identities according to the status of their tribes. Because inequities are the systematic ways in which economic justice is denied to the marginalized according to ethnicity, one's tribe becomes one's locus action. Defining tribal identity, then, becomes an act of resistance against the status quo, or an affirmation of the individual's tribally ensured capability to engineer her own success.

Tribal identity is also defined in accordance with the ability to negotiate the school system as means of reaching the necessary threshold for economic success. Therefore, some tribes have the reputation for having more education than others. Some tribes are known for their business acumen, etc. Identity formation, then, becomes about developing agency within the national, globalized economy.

Hope

In a review of Memmi's (2006) *Decolonization and the Decolonized*, Jones (2010) encapsulates Memmi's summation of post-Independence. She writes that Memmi, lists problems generally faced by developing nations focusing on abject poverty, poor hygiene, administrative and political corruption, lack of foreign investment, and a lack of economic development. These conditions go hand in hand with political instability, a poor educational system, structural long-term unemployment, mass emigration of the elite and a widening gulf between rich and poor. Further problems include nepotism, censorship, sexual inequality, uncontrolled population growth, the inflated role of the military, and most importantly, the dangerous rise of religious fundamentalism in many formerly colonized nations. (p. 138)

Given such an overwhelmingly extensive list of struggles, it would seem as if hope is an impossible, if somewhat, naïve and utopian ideal. Oxford dictionaries (2016) define hope as: “a feeling of expectation,... grounds for believing something good may happen,... a feeling of trust, and... cause for optimism.” This definition offers some subjective ambivalence about the word itself. This makes it appear as if *hope* is ephemeral and subject to the whim and fancies of passing. Such is not the holistic hope expressed by participants.

Hope, as found in these discussions, is an iterative and pervasive action. It exists in the solutions that individuals and their Indigenous communities have found to counteract struggles faced by the nation (Oruka, 1990, Masolo, 1997, Ochieng’ - Odhiambo, 2006). For participants, hope is imagination constructed and enacted. Appadurai (n.d. as cited in Williams & Chrisman, 1994) connects hope to the performative agency that participants espoused. He notes, “the imagination is now central to all forms of agency, is itself a social fact, and is the key component of the new global order” (para. 12). Hope, therefore, includes agency, consciousness, and the determination to enact that consciousness.

Participants discussed generative hope as having been established in their pre-colonial and historic past, where systems of being, of knowing, and of governance informed lived experiences. As inheritors of these legacies, participants also identified themselves, as a part of a capable Kenyan citizenry, to be the cultivators of hope.

Hope and Implications

Participants noted three points of action in their discussions of generative hope. First, hope was an idea enacted by individuals utilizing their agency to contribute to their

society. Second, hope was a reference point back to the entirety of their Indigenous histories. As such, it allowed participants to acknowledge the resilience that has, thus far, manifested their historic presence. Third, hope as affirmed by the Constitution of Kenya, upholds unifying and equitable tenets for all citizens.

Participants identified schooling as the most readily available intersectional space in which to cultivate, and then actualize that generative hope. Schooling allowed, at the very least, a physical location for individuals from diverse ethnic groups to intermingle, associate, and experiment the processes leading to nation-building. Within schools, specifically in higher education, participants could act out resistance against national policies, engage in counter-narratives against the colonizers, and work to reclaim their Indigenous Knowledges. Therefore, schooling becomes a fertile place to generate possibilities for both a unified nationhood and for decolonizing the mind.

Miguel (2004) discusses the necessity of such intersectional spaces. He asserts the need for “ameliorative ethnic divisions” in the task of nation-building. These divisions are places where different tribal groups can come together in their differences without having to fabricate a superficial unity for the sake of nationhood. That is, their differences are the contributions that they carry into the task of building a nation—as is stated by the constitution.

Miguel (2004) further argues that nation-building in Kenya cannot occur unless its multiple tribes come to some agreements about their divergences and about “collective action.” He advances theories that emphasize “the important role of community *social sanctions* in sustaining collective action and how diverse settings can render sanctions ineffective” (p. 330). Schooling, therefore, provides a unified setting..

While higher education in Kenya fosters an atmosphere enabling democratic action for nation-building, lower levels are only partially engaged in this work. A lack of human and material resources, as well as a curriculum that does not wholly celebrate Indigenous histories, inhibits the ability to promote authentic democratic practices. Therefore, the Kenyan citizenry needs to advocate for a retooling of pedagogy in order to inculcate democratic practices. Miguel (2004) notes, “the basic idea is that it becomes difficult to sustain cooperation across ethnic groups in areas where members of different groups tend not to have frequent social interactions or personal affinity” (p. 330). Schooling, as a national policy, mandates an arena for ‘frequent social interactions.’ As such, it is the most viable space for generating hope.

Schooling, attached to the goal of creating a cohesive national identity, has afforded avenues for a majority of the youth population to acquire technical skills for nation-building. However, vulnerable national infrastructure curtails individual and communal progress by providing limited access to economic well-being for the skilled population. In the mix of policy and praxis, institutional reform that addresses economic infrastructure to create jobs needs to be developed for the burgeoning populations. Additionally, a mechanism to “promote power sharing across groups within governments or other organizations” (Miguel, 2004, p. 330) is necessary to keep these jobs viable and to encourage employers in maintaining equitable employment practices,

Limitations

As a research study, this work utilized two research questions as a basis for interaction with young, urban, professional Kenyans. These were: (1) how do young, urban, professional Kenyans define their tribal identities? (2) how does the process of

engaging in dialogue through *Kupiga Hadithi* allow participants to make connections between tribal identity, colonization, and the lived experience of nationhood? In an exploration of these questions, I utilized Anti-colonial theory, informed by Sage Philosophy (Oruka, 1990), as a lens for framing the work. These philosophical approaches consider the influence of colonialism as a historical base for social discourse and privilege the voices of Indigeneity as providing wisdom to socially construct meaning. While in the field, I used the tenets of Culturally Responsive Methodologies (Berryman et al., 2013) as the ethical approach for carrying out fieldwork. As result, *Kupiga Hadithi*, storied knowing, became the methodology through which I held conversational interviews with participants. In the field, Deborah, my research guide was instrumental in my ability to collect research data. The findings of that data, are the base for this study.

The first limiting factor of this study revolves around the amount of time that I spent in the field. While the data collected was rich and yielded meaningful information, it was collected over a period of six weeks. Given more time, I would have been able to have ongoing conversations with participants about each of the themes that arose. I could, for example, extend discussion on the subject of land appropriation, or the ways in which they navigate the tensions between tradition and modernity. I did not address the issue of economic injustices within schools and how such injustices impact nationhood. I did not discuss the impact of globalization and transnational capitalism on both schooling and the tribe, neither did I specifically address the interactions of tribes with each other. These are all critical and meaningful areas for exploration.

The second limiting factor of the study surrounds the amount of participants with whom I interacted. For this work, I held conversations with eight individuals. As much as possible, they were members of different tribes and represented both males and females. If the study included more individuals, I would have been able to widen the perspective of the findings. Additionally because of the limited number of participants, the experiences expressed by participants can be viewed, erroneously, as a monolith. That is, the participants can be seen as speaking for a people group, or a generational group. This is not the intention of the study. These are individuals who have shared their intellectual and time resources to contribute to the topic.

The third limiting factor for this study is the limited prior research informing the work. While my literature review included terms such as ‘anti-colonial’ and ‘post-colonial research,’ there is a limited amount of work published in addressing this subject matter within this particular community of young, urban, and professional Kenyans. Given that the findings are grounded in participant discourse, this work does contribute in a very specific way to the body of research.

Future Research

Within the research, participants discussed themes comprehensively. Therefore, future work on each theme would contribute to the body of knowledge about the subject matter. Additional academic work can also be done on gender roles and the ways in which they inform the topic. Finally, there is plenty of work to be done in revisiting the national curriculum. Academic research work surrounding both the context and the content of the curriculum is necessary if the schooling system is to change.

A Final Thought

My Grandfather, when I was a child, used to tell me stories that would elicit my curiosity and my sense of justice. On several occasions, he told me a story of shadows and light. This story revolved around one of our Luo heroes. A great soldier who was courageous, insightful, just, and loving. This man would go to war. When the time for fighting came, he bore the sole burden of representing our people and returned when the season ended. This hero, could not be killed. The opposing side attempted to find his vulnerabilities, his weaknesses. They threw weaponry at him. They attempted hand-to-hand combat, they threw stones. Nothing would work. Finally, they strategized and came to a conclusion. The idea was, they would find a beautiful and cunning woman and send her to him. He would take her as a wife, and eventually she would betray him. They enacted their plan, and it worked. He met the woman at a well. He found her beautiful and charming, and intelligent. He did marry her. However, as much as he loved her, he did not trust her with his weakness. She, in turn, cared for him and came to love him. Seasons came and went.

Her family, from the opposing side, eventually came to ask her for information. They wanted to know his weakness. She could not tell them. She did not know. They warned her, stating that they would hold her parents ransom. She needed to prove her allegiance. Soon enough, and after being shown evidence of the harm that would come to her parents, she acquiesced. She planned to discover his weakness. She promised that she would do so by the time the season changed.

As it happened, the hero became sick, and then, even sicker. His wife begged him to allow her to help him. At first he refused, but then upon her implorations based on her

loyal companionship, he told her how he could be healed. He said, “if you cut my shadow, I will bleed.” So, she cut his shadow, and allowed him to bleed, little by little, until his sickness ran out and he was healed. The time for war returned.

One early morning, when she was at the well, messengers from the opposing side came to her. They asked her if she was ready to make her decision. Who would she sacrifice? Remembering her parents she made her decision, with regret. She told the messengers that her husband, the hero bled when his shadow was cut. Soon enough, the fighting began. The warriors, confident with their secret, waited until the sun was high in the sky. They waited until they could see the shadow of the hero pronounced in clear relief on the valley floor. At that precise moment, they aimed, and threw all of their weaponry at him. As he was bleeding, he remembered the pride with which he had represented his people. He remembered how he had loved them. Mostly, he remembered how he had loved his wife. He could carry his anger with him to death, because he knew that she would live to regret. And, she did.

I would like to use this story, told to me by Grandfather, as a reflection on education and schooling. Specifically, as participants throughout our conversations regarded schooling as a hopeful and intersectional point.

The role of an authentic education is holistic in that it challenges, it invigorates, and it propels those involved into new ways of being. Schools, are a key avenue for realizing an education. In schools, we are able to learn the narrative of our histories, and therefore, of ourselves. We learn how we have come to be, and how we make meaning. Schooling, personified becomes then, like my ancestral hero: a place to build courage, to

cultivate insight, and to learn the art of love. Just like that particular hero, schools as centers of learning, of sharing, and of constructing meaning, have been wounded.

First, the colonizer has wounded the ways in which ‘schools’ happen for Indigenous peoples. By the act of re-shifting the geography of schools from an organic, place-based method of engaging with, and understanding the world, to a structure, boundaried, mechanized routine, the colonizer has decontextualized the institution itself. No longer is school a communal center for learning, a helpful location for sharing and transmitting holistic knowledges. Now schools are places, outside of the center, where people go to get information. The result of this geographic chasm is a divorcing of the individual from the core of her foundation, her structures for meaning-making, her epistemology.

Second, like the woman at the well attempting to arrive at a decision about which sacrifice to make, young Kenyans have critical decisions to enact about the context and the content of what will be taught in schools. Will they drink at the well of Indigenous knowledges and find themselves planted in their historical landscapes of knowing, of critical reflection? Will they sacrifice for an external perspective? Perhaps the suggestion is that there lies a way to both drink at the well, and to make peace with that which is foreign.

Third, my ancestor in the story lay bleeding. As he was dying, he remembered those whom he had represented. He remembered the love, for them, that he had cultivated, and he remembered his key relationship, his wife. Tribal groups in Kenya, always metaphorically and sometimes physically, are bleeding in an attempt to craft themselves into an equitable and just nation. Given that colonization has traumatically

harmed their histories, shored up a vulnerable infrastructure as their governmental foundation, and continues to raid their susceptible economies, these groups are attempting to negotiate a cohesive union.

Schools, as a fertile intersection for building the nation, can be viewed as a panacea where children can be inculcated with a unified national identity. However, the current system of schooling which still functions much in the same way as when it was established by the colonizer, continues to cause bleeding. It does so by instilling an underlying sense of deficit and inferiority within the nation. Young professionals, as demonstrated in this research, are aware of this. Furthermore, they have the agency with which to decide the implicit and explicit knowledges that shape the school curriculum. They can break away from the colonizer's yoke.

They can utilize their expressed agency in forming citizen groups, brain trusts, and foundations tasked with re-tooling the curriculum to be based on content that reflect Indigenous ways of knowing, and of gaining that knowledge. This is not a new idea. It is the way that Elders make decisions and affected change. It is, like in Grandfather's story, the way that the opposing side came together to find out the vulnerability of our hero.

Colonization, mediated by schooling, created a chasm between Indigenous sovereignty and nationhood. A possible way to bridge this chasm is to reach back into Indigenous histories in order to find Kenyan solutions for Kenyan issues.

I began this study with an introduction of myself as a scholar formed by her Indigeneity and schooled within the Western academy. I troubled the streams of this schooling by using an anti-colonial lens to look back through the history of my birthplace. The 'telescope' with which to begin the work of decolonizing my

understandings of how these questions have come to be. Along this journey, I was invited by fellow sojourners from home. They shared with me their time, their wisdom and their knowledge. They gave me the blessing to carry these thoughts out, from within their cultivation into my hands. I am grateful. The questions still remain, to call us into places of conversation and then action. Still. I am the scholar who troubles waters and a sojourner in the depths of learning.

Soul Deep

*a soul deep question flutters out
from my instructor's wisdom-kissed lips
"who are you now, dear one?
I know you are not exactly the person who left,
so who are you now?"*

*I am the daughter of tears,
born from the dust-shorn banks
of the Athi River.
She, who has lost her way
between borderlands and barren escarpments.
Whose face recognizes not the acacia,
nor the baobab.*

*Whose voice cannot whisper
the ancient songs carried along savanna plains.
I cannot see into the far distance.*

My heart is silent.

*I am the triumph in sorrow,
she who recognizes that time,
like the spirits of our ancestors,
pours out blessings
which carve us into patterned beings.
segment by segment,
we are creations
tattooed into a bleeding land,
the blood of hope,
the blood of re-birth.*

*I am the enemy arrow
driven into the shadow of my forefather.
Watching even as my people turn away
in defeat, their champion vanquished,
only to live on in the cautionary tale
of heroism, and of humility,
the rock of Kit-mikayi.*

*Who am I now?
the time for rain has come and gone
I dwell in the season of drought
Fierce birds of prey have scavenged,
and the graceful animals have moved on,
to more fertile ground.
I am still here,
the child reared to thrive
the daughter swallowing
her unspoken dream.*

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Young, Urban, Professional and Kenyan? Interview Questions

Part 1- Tribal Identity

1. What makes you a member of your tribe?
2. Can you identify some tribal norms?
3. Tell me what happens in your tribal when someone dies?
4. Given that your tribal identity is reaffirmed during the norms and rituals such as marriage and burial, how is that identity affirmed at other times?
5. Is a (*insert tribe*) now different than (*insert tribe*) have traditionally been? Why do you suppose that is?
6. What are the characteristics of modern (*insert tribe*)?
7. What sort of education did you receive about (*insert tribe*) traditions?
8. What role does schooling play in your definition of your tribal identity?
9. How do you see your tribal identity intersecting with the current politics of the country?
10. In terms of a tribal identity, what do you wish for your children?

Part II- National Identity

1. How would you define nationhood?
2. What makes up a Kenyan national identity?
3. Can you talk about some key successes that the nation faces?
4. Can you discuss some key struggles that the nation faces?
5. How was the Kenyan nation created?
6. Do you suppose that the creation of the Kenyan nation contributes to its current struggles, why or why not?
7. Do you think that Kenyan nationhood, as it stands today, is sustainable? Why or why not?
8. Does your tribal identity contribute to the nationhood of Kenya? If so, how?
9. How does your tribal identity intersect with your Kenya identity?
10. Are you more interested in maintaining a tribal identity or a national identity? Why or why not?
11. How would you re-think your tribal identity in the context of nationhood?
12. What sort of education did you receive about your understanding of Kenya as a nation?
13. What role does schooling play in your definition of a national identity?
14. Currently, what role does schooling play in the identity of the nation of Kenya?

15. Do you think that schooling will play a role in the future national identity of Kenya. If so, what do you think this role would, or should be?
16. In terms of a national identity, what do you wish for your children?

Appendix B: Demographics

Table B1

Participant Demographics Chart

Name	Age	Tribe	Primary in Kenya Yes/No	Secondary in Kenya	Boarding School Age Range	University and Where	Under-graduate Degree	Profession/ Work	Graduate Studies	Mar-ried	Chil-dren
George	31	Kisii	Yes	Yes	10-20	Makerere	BA Social Science	Social scientist	MA Armed Conflicts and Case Studies	No	No
Juma	33	Luhya	Yes	Yes	10-17	Jomo Kenyatta	BSC computer technology	Creative Director of a Marketing Company		No	Yes
David	31	Kisii	Yes	Yes	10-20	Makerere	BA Business Statistics	Business Owner		Yes	Yes
Rachel	30	Kalenjin	Yes	Yes		Makerere	BA	Real Estate Brokerage	MBA		
Isaiah	30	Kisii	Yes	No	11-20	Makerere	BSC in Telecommunications engineering	ICT professional	Mic Information Technology	Yes	No
Naomi	31	Kikuyu	Yes	Yes	10-18	Makerere	BA Procurement	Business woman		Yes	Yes
Josephine	25	Meru	Yes	Yes	15-18	Eomstate technical Univ, Russia	Commerce in Marketing	Marketing		No	No
Sarah	30	Luo	Yes	Yes		Daystar	BA	Administrator			No
Deborah	30	Luo	Yes	Yes	14-18	Makerere	BA Library and Information Science	Aeronautical Logistics			No

Appendix C: Kenya Application for Research

APPLICATION FOR AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN KENYA BY NON-KENYANS (1990) PART II (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT)

SURNAME OF PROJECT LEADER		OTHER NAMES	
PASSPORT NO		ISSUED AT	DATE
PERMANENT RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS			
POSTAL ADDRESS			
ADDRESS WHILE STAYING IN KENYA (IF APPLICABLE)			
CONTACT TELEPHONE IN KENYA			
AGE	SEX	NATIONALITY	
QUALIFICATIONS			
<i>(PLEASE ATTACH ABOVE DETAILS FOR OTHER RESEARCH STAFF AND THEIR CURRICULUM VITAE)</i>			
PERSONAL REFEREES (GIVE NAMES AND FULL ADDRESSES OF TWO SENIOR ACADEMIC/PROFESSIONAL REFEREES. THESE SHOULD BE PROFESSIONALLY QUALIFIED IN THE SAME FIELD OF RESEARCH THAT THE APPLICANT WISHES TO UNDERAKE.)			
	REFEREE 1	REFEREE 2	
NAME			
ADDRESS			
OCCUPATION			
SIGNATURE			
DATE			
HAVE YOU APPLIED FOR AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN KENYA BEFORE?			YES/NO
TITLE OF THE RESEARCH (IF ANY) PREVIOUSLY APPLIED FOR			

THE APPLICATION WAS APPROVED/REJECTED <i>VIDE</i> THE MINISTRY'S LETTER		REF NO	DATED
HAVE YOU SOUGHT AFFILIATION WITH A KENYAN INSTITUTION APPROVED FOR AFFILIATION PURPOSES		YES/NO	
IF YES, PLEASE GIVE NAME OF INSTITUTION			
<p>IF NO, YOU SHOULD SEEK RESEARCH AFFILIATION WITH A RELEVANT APPROVED KENYAN INSTITUTION AND PROVIDE NAME OF INSTITUTION (A LIST OF INSTITUTIONS APPROVED FOR AFFILIATION IS APPENDED). AFFILIATION IS MANDATORY BEFORE A PERMIT CAN BE ISSUED. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE RESEARCHER TO LOOK FOR SUCH AFFILIATION.</p> <p><i>NOTE: AFFILIATION IS NOT REQUIRED FOR KENYANS SPONSORED BY KENYAN SOURCES OR UNDER APPROVED BILATERAL OR MULTILATERAL AID SCHEMES.</i></p>			
UNIVERSITY/FOUNDATION/ORGANISATION ETC. UNDER WHICH THE RESEARCH PROJECT IS BEING UNDERTAKEN			
SOURCES OF FINANCE		AMOUNT	
TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT			
PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH (e.g. MSc, PhD, thesis etc.)			
FIELD AND SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH			
THEME/HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH			
METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH			
LIST MAJOR EQUIPMENT TO BE BROUGHT TO KENYA BY NON-RESIDENT RESEARCHERS			

LOCATION OF THE FIELD WORK:			
LOCATION/DIVISION:			
DISTRICT			
PROVINCE			
<i>PLEASE NOTE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF KENYA MAY REQUIRE ALTERNATIVE LOCATION</i>			
ESTIMATED PERIOD OF THE PROJECT	FROM:		
	TO:		
I WILL NEED ACCESS TO THE FOLLOWING PUBLIC RECORDS:			
I WILL NEED TO INTERVIEW THE FOLLOWING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS			
I NEED TO INTERVIEW MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHOM I WILL SELECT AS FOLLOWS:			
(PLEASE INCORPORATE DETAILS OF SAMPLING PROCEDURES, IF RELEVANT, IN THE DESCRIPTION OF YOUR PROJECT.)			
I INTEND TO USE THE ATTACHED COPIES OF QUESTIONNAIRE(S)			
I CERTIFY THAT I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE CONDITIONS GIVEN IN PARTS I AND II. I DO AGREE TO ABIDE BY THEM AS REQUIRED AND THAT THE INFORMATION GIVEN BY ME IN PART II IS CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.			
I (NAME) DO AGREE TO DEPOSIT AT LEAST 4 COPIES OF A FINAL COMPREHENSIVE REPORT ON MY RESEARCH PROJECT WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF KENYA WITHIN A YEAR FROM THE DATE INDICATED AS THE COMPLETION DATE OF THE PROJECT IN ITEM 14 IN PART II ABOVE.			
DATE		SIGNATURE	

PART III - FOR OFFICIAL USE BY AFFILIATING INSTITUTION

NAME OF AFFILIATING INSTITUTION	
RECOMMENDATION BY THE HEAD OF THE INSTITUTION OF AFFILIATION	

NAME OF OFFICIAL TITLE

SIGNATURE DATE.....

PART IV (FOR USE BY N.C.S.T.)

COMMENTS BY THE RELEVANT GOVERNMENT MINISTRY/DEPARTMENT
SUB-COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

DATE..... SIGNED (CHAIRMAN OF SUB- COMMITTEE)

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

DATE..... SIGNED (CHAIRMAN OF N.C.S.T. RESEARCH COMMITTEE)

PART V (FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

COMMENTS BY THE RELEVANT GOVERNMENT MINISTRY/DEPARTMENT
SUB-COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

DATE..... SIGNED (CHAIRMAN OF SUB- COMMITTEE)

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

DATE..... SIGNED (CHAIRMAN OF N.C.S.T. RESEARCH COMMITTEE)

Appendix D: Letter of Affiliation



Athi River Campus
P. O. Box 17 - 90145
Daystar University, Kenya
Tel: 045 6622601 (2) (3)
Fax: 045 6622420
E-mail: admissions@daystar.ac.ke

Nairobi Campus
P. O. Box 44400 - 00100,
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: 020 2723 002 (3) (4)
Fax: 020 2728338
E-mail: admissions@daystar.ac.ke

Mombasa Campus
Apollo House, Moi Avenue
P.O. Box 99483 - 80107,
Kilindini Mombasa
Tel: 020 2416916
E-mail: mombasa@daystar.ac.ke

www.daystar.ac.ke

THE DIRECTOR

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
P.O. BOX 30623-00100
NAIROBI

15 June, 2015

RE: LETTER OF UNIVERSITY AFFILIATION FOR RESEARCH IN KENYA

Dear Sir/Madam

With the help of Dr. Macmillan Kiiru, we are pleased to inform you that Sarah Charlotte Evensen and Patricia Mbugua have established an academic affiliation with Daystar University in order to facilitate successful completion of their social science studies namely exploring tribal identity and nationhood among professional young adults and Special Education for the disadvantaged students in Kenya respectfully.

As per our agreement, the two students will be responsible for the research, data collection, writing, and dissemination of findings from the study. With the support of Dr. Kiiru, Daystar University will facilitate their academic work in Kenya.

We truly hope that the relationship we have formed will be long lasting and prosperous for both parties.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. T. Wachira
The Vice Chancellor
Daystar University Nairobi Campus
P.O. Box 44400 -00100
Nairobi

Appendix E: Letter of Professional Reference

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
P.O. BOX 30623-00100
NAIROBI

2 June, 2015

RE: LETTER OF PROFESSIONAL REFERENCE

Dear Members of NACOSTI:

We are pleased to write a letter of recommendation Sarah Charlotte Evensen. We highly recommend Sarah Charlotte Evensen as a doctoral research student in the field of social science.

We have known Ms. Evensen for the past three years as she has taken doctoral student classes in Chapman's College of Educational Studies (CES). As her Dissertation Chair and Dissertation Committee Member, We have had an opportunity to observe her participation and interaction in class and within the scholarly community. Therefore, we are able to evaluate Ms. Evensen's knowledge of the subject matter. She is a dedicated student in all respects. Ms. Evensen has proven that through diligence, perseverance, and collaboration, she can accomplish rigorous academic tasks.

As a CES doctoral student, Ms. Evensen has excelled in her classes, participated in academic conference presentations, and contributed authorship to publications. Additionally, she is an active member of the scholarly community as evidenced by her work as a writing fellow, a mentor, and a graduate assistant. Within these roles, she has worked with individuals as well as organizations to effect positive growth and change.

Ms. Evensen is well equipped to grow from challenges that she is presented with. Her intellectual capability, cultural responsiveness, and patience prepare her beautifully for her research study. I strongly endorse Sarah Charlotte Evensen as doctoral researcher in the field.

Kindest Regards,

Dr. Suzanne SooHoo
Dissertation Chair
Chapman University
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soohoo@chapman.edu

Dr. Lilia Monzo
Dissertation Committee Member
Chapman University
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Orange, CA 92866
U.S.A.
monzo @chapman.edu

Appendix F: List of Poetry

Table F1

Table of Poetry

<i>Homesick</i>	iv
<i>At the End of My Telescope By Senghor</i>	62
<i>Hadithi</i>	88
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<i>At first principle</i>	94
<i>The Bearer of Fruit</i>	96
<i>African Woman</i>	97
<i>She sings</i>	98
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<i>Soul Deep</i>	267

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