Dwelling in Diversity

Religion and Belonging in Kibera, a Neighbourhood in Nairobi

by

Tammy Vanessa Wilks

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Supervised by: Professor Asonzeh Ukah

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Abstract

This dissertation is an ethnographic study of how religious communities make and take place in Kibera, a neighbourhood that is also a homeland in the city of Nairobi. Since its establishment in 1907, the debate about who belongs in Kibera and to whom Kibera belongs has shaped how religious communities in Kibera define themselves and relate to each other. This debate is presently intensified by land struggles between religious communities on the one hand, and a series of unannounced bulldozings on the other, as the Kenyan government advances its project to develop Nairobi into a world-class city. This study asks, how do religious communities in Kibera make religion work and maintain belonging to each other amidst such change and uncertainty, and where the meaning of Kibera – as a neighbourhood, home, and homeland – is contested? If the neighbourhood is routinely made and unmade, to what extent is religion the locus of belonging for the residents of Kibera? Through oral, social, and life histories, as well as archival materials, this ethnographic study examines how Kibera became an urban homeland in Nairobi, how the distinction between 'home' and 'homeland' creates a different sense of belonging for the religious communities who live there, and what it means for some religious communities to perform their religion in another's homeland. It argues that religious communities make religion in Kibera work by maintaining a sense of belonging to people and places elsewhere and in so doing, invent ways to respond to life in a changing and contested neighbourhood.

Glossary

Arabic words

abaya	a full-length garment worn by Muslim women
arak	a distilled alcoholic drink referred to in Kibera as gin
barakat	blessing
bilad-an-Nuba	'the Nubians'
dhikr	prayers or phrases perform in repetition to remember Allah
Eid al-Fitr	a religious day in Islam that marks the end of Ramadan
hajj	a pillar of Islam and an annual pilgrimage to Mecca
hajjah	a Muslim woman who completed hajj
henna	a plant based dye used to decorate the body
jihadiya	in precolonial Egypt, black enslaved armies
kofia	a brimless flat cap worn by Muslim men
madrassa	an Islamic school
mawlana	a learned Muslim man
nikkah	in Islam, a marriage contract between a man and woman
tasbih	prayer beads
thobe	an ankle-length garment worn by mostly Muslim men
ulama	literally, 'the learned ones' or custodians of religious knowledge in Islam

Kiswahili words

askari	a local soldier from Africa who served in the army for European countries
baraza	meeting
boda-boda	motorcycle
chapati	unleavened flatbread
duka	a shop or store
karibu	welcome
karibuni	plural of karibu
kitenge	fabric prevalent in East and Central Africa, worn by women as a sarong or wrapped around the waist
kinyozi	barber
mabati	corrugated iron sheets
matatu	a minibus taxi
mtaanis	neighbourhood
panga	machete
shamba	a cultivated plot of land
shuka	fabric worn by Maasai people
ugali	maize meal
uhuru	independence or freedom
wazee	plural for 'older persons' or 'elders' (singular, 'mzee')

Abbreviations

AIC	African Inland Church
ACK	Anglican Church of Kenya
BEA	British East Africa
CBD	Central Business District
CBO	Community-based organisations
IBEAC	Imperial British East African Company
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
KAR	King's African Rifles
KENSUP	Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme
KLC	Kenya Land Commission
KNA	Kenya National Archives
KNCE	Kenyan Nubian Council of Elders
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science and Technology
NGO	Non-governmental organisations
SAEA	Sudanese Association of East Africa
SMS	Short Message/Messaging Service

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Note on Language

The material discussed in this study is drawn from English, Swahili, Arabic, and Kinubi. Swahili, Arabic, and Kinubi words and phrases used in this study are written in italics. When I offer the Swahili, Arabic, and Kinubi words, I mark them respectively as "S", "A" or "K".

Part One: Situating Religion in Kibera and Kibera in the Study of Religion

Chapter One

Introduction: Locating Religion in Kibera, and Kibera in the Study of Religions

This is an ethnographic study of how religious communities, past and present, make and take place in Kibera, a neighbourhood that is also a homeland in the city of Nairobi. The problem that initiated this study was identifying a theory of religion and research methodology that enabled me to understand and navigate the multiple, changing, and competing definitions of, and claims to Kibera. Throughout history, Kibera has been defined by various actors including its residents, the Kenyan government, academics, and international organisations. Historian Timothy Parsons (1997: 87) describes Kibera as "a sprawling slum that differs little from the other lower-class enclaves surrounding Nairobi".[1] Indeed, this enclave, located approximately seven kilometres southwest of the central business district in Nairobi, is a spatially congested place. Kibera is approximately 630 acres in size, comprises fourteen villages, and is home to 185,777 people or 61,690 households (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2019, Vol. 1: 20).[2] In fact, the latest 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census define Kibera as a "sub-county" in the Nairobi City County (*ibid*.,). Erica Hagen (2014: 41), who employs ethnography as the primary research method, submits that although overcrowded and difficult to navigate, Kibera is "a vibrant community surviving and often thriving with hundreds of small shops, health clinics, schools, churches, mosques, community groups, movie theaters, corn mills, battery charging kiosks, kerosene stations, water vending points, and pay-showers and latrine" (Hagen 2010: 41).[3]

In addition to these definitions are names that function as historical claims to Kibera. The word 'Kibera' derives from the Kinubi word, 'Kibra', meaning 'forest' (de Smedt 2011: 4). Named by Nubian soldiers who first settled there in 1907, Kibra is considered by descendants of these Nubian soldiers as the "homeland" of the Kenyan-Nubian community (Nubian Rights Forum 2021). Although many Kenyan-Nubians are stateless – meaning that their Kenyan citizenship is determined by formal application and not birth – this community

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[1] Scholars who adhere to this definition will be discussed in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

[2] The fourteen villages of Kibera are, Gatwekera, Kambi Muru, Karanja, Kianda, Kisumu Kidogo, Laina Saba, Lindi, Makina, Mashimoni, Olympic, Raila, Silanga, Soweto East, and Soweto West.

[3] Brian Ekdale (2014), Jessica Gustafsson (2012), and Nanjala Nyabola (2017) variously uphold this definition of Kibera in their scholarship discussed in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

remains the only landowning group in Kibera.[4] In 2017, when President Uhuru Kenyatta bestowed a community title deed for the Kenyan-Nubian community for 288 acres in Kibera, he referred to Kibera as the "home" of the Kenyan-Nubian people.[5] What then is Kibera, I wondered? A "slum"? A "vibrant community"? A "home" or a "homeland"? And who decides? The residents of Kibera? The descendants of the Nubian soldiers? Or the Kenyan government? Why would the government of Kenya bestow land to a community of people whom it considers stateless? How does the community land deed influence the dynamics of religious coexistence between Kenyan-Nubians who identify as Muslim, and their neighbours who are affiliated with the other religious communities in Kibera?

These questions were further complicated by the unannounced bulldozing of Kibera that occurred in 2018 which left approximately 30,000 Kiberans unhomed, destitute, and religiously adrift (BBC News 2018; Golla 2018; Mwanza 2018). The bulldozing resumed the construction of a bypass road that began in 2016 and was initiated to alleviate Nairobi's notorious traffic congestion. Although community landowners, the bulldozing destroyed the homes, businesses, and places of worship of the Kenyan-Nubian community. Observing this event from Cape Town, I wondered why the community land deed did not prevent the destruction of property and places of worship of the Kenyan-Nubian community? I initially considered that similar to the multiple definitions of Kibera, perhaps there is no single means to determine to whom Kibera belongs. If the definitions of, and claims to Kibera are changing, how then do religious communities produce a sense of belonging to each and the neighbourhood?

Ethnographic fieldwork for this study between January to April 2019 provided a useful methodology for mapping and understanding how Kiberans define and negotiate their belonging to a place and each other amidst change and contestation. Many young people who participated in this study refer to Kibera as a 'slum' to reclaim the definition used previously by outsiders to negatively describe their neighbourhood (Fieldnote, 25 January 2019). Others proudly describe their neighbourhood as a microcosm of Kenya, noting that every religion and

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[4] The 2019 Kenya Population and Household Census report that 9.9% of all households in Kibera are owned whereas 90% of households rent. These statistics are not delineated by ethnicity or religious affiliation, however. Republic of Kenya. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. *2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, Vol IV: Distribution of Population by Socio-Economic Characteristics.* 251.

[5] President of the Republic of Kenya. June 2, 2017. *Justice For Nubians as President Kenyatta Gives Them Title For 288 Acres of Land In Kibra*. https://www.president.go.ke/2017/06/02/justice-for-nubians-as-president-kenyatta-gives-them-title-for-288-acres-of-land-in-kibra/ (Accessed 25 August 2021).

ethnic group can be found in Kibera (Fieldnote, 27 January 2019), while some underscore that "Kibra is a city in a city (Interview with Kenyan Nubian Council of Elders, 11 February 2019).[6] Walking in Kibera illuminated similar conceptual complexity. Although *boda-bodas* (S: motorcycles) easily navigate the numerous streets and footpaths that meander through the neighbourhood, and while *matatus* (S: minibus taxis) play a prominent role in Kibera and Nairobi more broadly, by walking I familiarised myself with this spatial rhythm and embodied knowledge that Kiberans employ to inhabit and move in this busy neighbourhood.
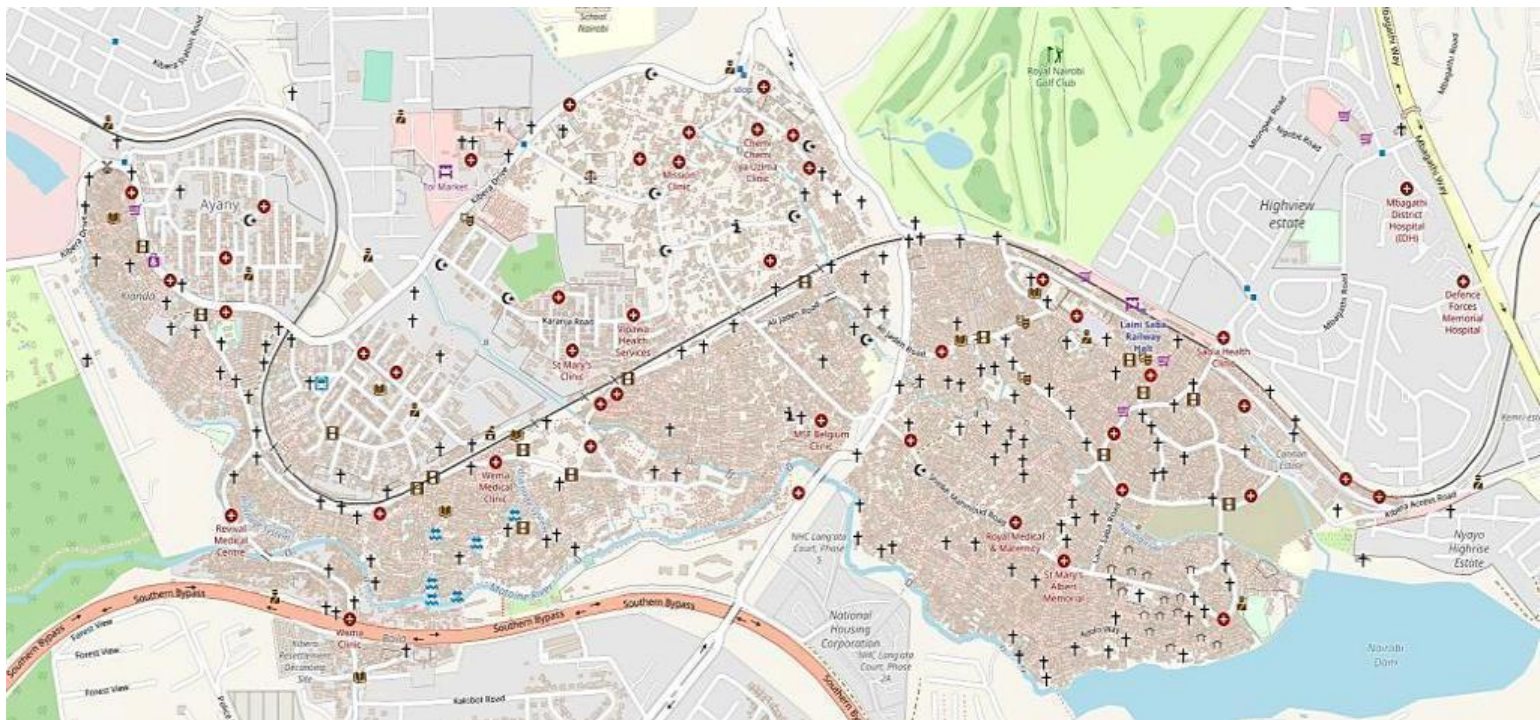
FIGURE 1.1: Places of worship in Kibera as they appear on the OpenStreet Map, 2022. Scale 1:8650

Because the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census records population demographics at the county and sub-county levels rather than neighbourhoods, scant data exists on the statistic representation of Kiberans based on their ethnicity, gender, or religious affiliation. The demographic data compiled by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) based in neighbourhood mostly promote the misnomer that Kibera is 'the largest slum in Africa' and

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[6] 'Kibra' is the Kinubi word for 'forest' (de Smedt 2011: 8). 'Kibra' is also used officially as the electoral constituency of the Nairobi County, Kenya. 'Kibera', however, is used by most academics and researchers. The neighbourhood was also referred to by Nubian elders and colonial officials during colonial rule as 'Kibira' (see Chapter Three). Throughout this dissertation, I use 'Kibra' to maintain the way that residents refer to their neighbourhood, and 'Kibera' when I refer to the neighbourhood or literature about the neighbourhood.

represent the lives of residents as fixed, inflated, and abstract statistics.[7] Thus, in order to understand, in particular, the religious diversity of Kibera, I relied on participant observation to describe religious diversity not as a statistical representation of religious affiliation, but as textured analyse of how and why Kiberans represent their religiosity materially, affectively, aesthetically, and temporally. By walking, I observed how religious adherents change the physical, spatial, and material make-up of Kibera every week, every day, and sometimes, every hour. Sunday is the ideal day to observe how different religious communities negotiate coexistence in a congested and contested space. Structures that usually operate as *kinyozis* (S: barber but also used to describe barbershops), day-care centres, or *dukas* (S: shops) from Monday to Saturday are transformed into a variety of religious spaces wherein different religious communities congregate to practice their faith, provide Sunday School, and conduct youth instruction. A few structures host female *madrassa* (A: Islamic instruction) classes. In one of these structures, I observed a group of young women in similar religious dress seated on the floor in a circle, murmuring recitations while fingering across yellowed-paged books.

Colourful banners hang in the doorways or outside the structures to mark the presence of a religious community congregating inside. The banners change regularly throughout the day, indicating that the structure is rented to different religious communities. Those religious communities who are unable to secure an enclosed place to congregate will settle on the dusty roadside or beneath makeshift marquees as the religious leader conducts services under the hot January sun. The location and timing of the roadside church appear strategic; one congregation of around twelve adherents wearing papal purple kerchiefs have assembled in an area that has not interfered with the weekly processional route performed by the Legio Maria religious community.[8] How, I wondered, does one define, map, and analyse 'religion' in a place subject to such change each week, and sometimes, every hour?

In this way, the initial problem developed through ethnography to form the central research question of this study: how do religious communities in Kibera, past and present, make religion work and maintain belonging to each other amidst change and contestation? Second, if Kibera is routinely made and unmade physically, socially, and conceptually, to what extent is religion the locus of belonging for residents? To address these three questions, I draw on the theory of religion as dynamic and relational, and the 'neighbourhood turn' which emerges from

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[7] I discuss the methodological implications for scholarship that adhere to the incorrect notion that Kibera is the largest slum in Africa in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

[8] The Legio Maria is an African-initiated Roman Catholic church (Schwartz 2005: 159).

scholarship on Nairobi, and constitutes a subfield in the study of religion as well. Together, these two theories provide useful frameworks to explain two research findings; that religion in Kibera is produced through mobility and dwelling, and religions produce Kibera by moving and dwelling. In the next section, I expound on these theories and define what I mean by 'neighbourhood', 'religion', and 'belonging' as it relates to Kibera and Kiberans.

Religion in Neighbourhoods, and Neighbourhoods in the Study of Religion

Throughout this study, I refer to Kibera as a neighbourhood. Rather than an "enclave" – to use the term by Parsons (1997: 87) – where different religions can be found, a neighbourhood provides the material possibilities for religions to make and take place. Religions in turn, "carry on the task of reproducing their neighborhood [...] under conditions of anxiety and entropy, social wear and flux", that "contribute rather unwittingly to the creation of contexts that might exceed the existing material and conceptual boundaries of the neighborhood" (Appadurai 1995: 52-58). In the past twenty years, an exceptionally large and varied body of scholarship has examined the place of neighbourhoods in the study of religion, and investigated how religions make and take place in neighbourhoods. This body of scholarship examines how religion proliferates in and sustains poor neighbourhoods (McRoberts 2003), examines the significance of neighbourhood mosque movements for organising daily moral conduct (Mahmood 2005), illustrates the complexities of dwelling in a neighbourhood with others and their divinities (Elison 2018), investigates the rapid rise of prayer camps that radically transforms the urban terrain into a religious landscape (Ukah 2014, 2016), explores the rise in municipal applications for the call to prayer as a homemaking practice for Muslim adherents (Tamimi Arab 2017), highlights neighbourhoods as exploratory sites for religious leaders to 'improvise' how they establish durable religious institutions and practices (Burchardt 2019), and finally illuminates how attempts by religious communities to enhance their visibility in the neighbourhoods alters the spatial order of the city (Chidester 2000, Verkaaik 2020). Each of these scholars in one way or another shows that by building religious communities with each other, constructing religious spaces, and performing their religiosity, residents make the conditions of their neighbourhood sensible, meaningful, and durable.

Residents further build religious spaces and communities by drawing on the discursive and material histories of the neighbourhood. Contemporary debates amongst residents about

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who belongs in the neighbourhood and their material struggles about to whom the neighbourhood belongs, are practices of both "historymaking" and "claim-making" as residents invoke and revise the past to ensure their present and future claim to land and property (Smith 2019: 4, 15). What I call the 'neighbourhood turn' in the study of Nairobi is an emerging subfield of both urban history and urban anthropology which examines this process, particularly how residents' "contemporary lives are inflected by a temporal recursivity, where material legacies of the past and visions of the future are simultaneously reworked in the present" (*ibid*., 5). Scholars in this subfield regard the material makeup of neighbourhoods as active forces that shape the sociality and subjectivity of residents on the one hand, and factors that influence how residents perceive their self-worth and place in the world on the other (Kimari 2017; Smith 2019; White 1990). These studies show that residents in Nairobi do not passively accept the urban or city planner's idea of the neighbourhood, but use the (lack of) material resources to imagine and produce their aspiration of an urban subject and space.

That said, while neighbourhoods in Nairobi such as Kibera remain "home to hundreds of thousands of Nairobians", Kibera is a neighbourhood in Nairobi that is also a homeland (Smith 2019: 4). Living in a homeland produces a different orientation to the land and people, dead or alive (Smith 2019: 114-116). Since the Nubian community first settled in 1907, Kibera – then a military barracks – was first a cemetery before a residential place (see Chapter Three). Not only has this longstanding practice of burying the dead imbued and inscribed the neighbourhood with sacred significance, but the cemetery also remains the only one in Kibera thereby solidifying Nubians' claim: that Kibera is a homeland as all other communities are buried in their homeland outside Kibera, and often outside Nairobi (Smith 2019: 113-138; see Chapter Four). Given these conditions, an examination of Kibera presents scholars of religion with an interesting case to examine how residents who regard Kibera as a 'home' perform their religion in another's 'homeland'. The 'neighbourhood turn' in the study of Nairobi and the study of religion provides a joint and sound theoretical framework to explore whether, and to what extent, the different associations to Kibera as a 'home' or 'homeland' might influence the boundaries of religious differences between religious communities in this neighbourhood.

Religion as Dwelling and Crossing

Which theory of religion allows this study to work with the multiple, changing, and competing definitions of Kibera that religious communities in this study report? How do scholars study and map 'religion' in a place subject to change and contestation? As I described in the opening paragraphs of this introduction, religion enables Kiberans to "dis-connect from and un-make places, at the same time as they seek to (re-)make a place for themselves" (Fesenmyer 2017: 190). But what explains the need to do this? The findings of this study show that Kiberans disconnect from, and unmake the very places they seek to forge belonging, as a way to respond to the material and physical changes that occurs in and around Kibera, *and* as a way to negotiate religious coexistence in a changing and contested neighbourhood. By 'religious coexistence' I mean different religious adherents and communities who reside in the same location and are generally impacted by the conditions of life there. I show that connection and disconnection are both material and immaterial processes of belonging. Through religious practices, narratives, and memory, and by building makeshift churches, religious communities access and briefly connect with their people and places from whom they are socially, spatially, and spiritually disconnected.

Kiberans are not the only Kenyans to respond in this way. Scholars who focus on Kenya have raised the question that if religion involves moving between and dwelling in multiple places, where and how do religious communities "feel at home" in the world (Fesenmyer 2017: 189-192; Pasitau and Mwaura 2010: 97). How do "lunch hour religious assemblies in Nairobi" produce a durable sense of belonging for religious adherents who meet for only a few minutes each day? (Ezekiel 1995: 1-4). In each study, the author shows that religion can be at once locative and translocative, both materially present and immaterially lingering. The logic that weaves through Fesenmyer, Pasitau and Mwaura, and Ezekiel's scholarship relates to, and in the case of Fesenmyer (2018: 233–240) draws directly on Thomas Tweed's (2006) theory of religion as dynamic and relational and a practice of dwelling and crossing. In his ethnographic study of the devotional practices that Cuban immigrants in Miami perform, Thomas Tweed (2006: 3-5) explains how he searched for a theory of religion that made sense of the rituals that transnational migrants used to dwell in, and move between their homeland abroad, and a new home in Miami. To say that religion is about dwelling and crossing is to say that religion "involve[s] finding one's place and moving through space" (*ibid*., 74). Religion provides adherents with a framework for how to inhabit the world from which they derive and the one

they intend to make, and how to maintain belonging with those from whom they are disconnected, and with whom they presently coexist (*ibid*., 82).

In this respect, the religious spaces or practices that religious communities produce and perform are not just attempts at making a lasting home outside their homeland. These spaces and practices are insights into how religious communities understand their place *in between worlds* (*ibid*., 74). And so, if home and homeland are both multiple and interconnected places where religion occurs, Tweed's theory moves religion 'beyond the officially sacred centre' which has been the dominant theoretical model of twentieth-century religion in urban contexts, toward a theory that traces "the changing place of religion" (Garbin and Strhan 2017: 5; Kong 2001: 226).

Tweed's theory of religion provides a useful framework to think through and with Kiberans' multiple and competing notions of what their neighbourhood is – a 'home' for those still moving and crossing, and a 'homeland' for those who moved from elsewhere. Throughout this study, I employ Tweed's theory to explain how dwelling and crossing enable religious adherents and communities for whom Kibera is not their homeland, to understand not just their place in the world, but their place and belonging *in someone else's homeland*. This theory of religion further allows for an examination of how the distinction between 'home' and 'homeland' creates different material possibilities between religious communities about who can and cannot produce religious spaces in Kibera. As Tweed explains, when religious communities make a home in the "new land", they not only invent spaces and practices to connect to their homeland; they also "chart taxonomies of the people within and beyond the borders" (*ibid*., 110). Making a home, Tweed continues, "draws boundaries around us and them; it constructs collective identity and, concomitantly, imagines degrees of social distance" (*ibid*.,). In this respect, the spaces and practices that religious communities create and perform, exert power as well as produce meaning and belonging (*ibid*., 112-113). By expounding on this point with the neighbourhood turn in Nairobi and religion alongside Tweed's theory of religion, I demonstrate how crossing, moving, and dwelling are both practices of and for belonging, as well as strategies that religious communities use to circumvent power by those who presently control access to land and property in Kibera.

Belonging as a Claim, and Belonging to a Community

The central research question of this study is, how do religious communities in Kibera make religion work and maintain belonging to each other amidst social, material, and physical change on the one hand, and where the meaning of Kibera is contested on the other hand? I use the term 'belonging' to refer to the narratives, communities, and practices that Kiberans, past and present, construct and contest about who belongs in Kibera, and to whom Kibera belongs. I rely on a corpus of scholarship conducted in various African contexts that shows belonging is not an identity or idea already assured (Feldman-Savelsberg 2016: 8). Belonging is spatially imagined and cartographically represented (MacArthur 2016), mythically invented in diaspora (Malkki 1992, 1995, 2012), routinely negotiated, and mobile (Geschiere 2009: 6, 2018: 27; Nyamnjoh 2005; Meiu 2017: 5; Smith 2019). To be sure, existing studies on Kibera assert that belonging is based on a collective demand for Kenyan citizenship (Balaton-Chrimes 2012), or premised on ethnogeneity (de Smedt 2011), but these studies focus on a single community; the Nubian people of Kibera. One of the central findings of this study that differs from Balaton-Chrimes (2012) and de Smedt (2011) is that in a neighbourhood inhabited by *multiple* religious communities, 'home' and 'homeland' is not just the multiple places of belonging that Kiberans hold. Rather these definitions constitute the discursive arenas that religious communities, past and present, variously occupy to defend their claim to land, property, and belonging in Kibera. Additionally, by tracing in the colonial archives, oral histories, and life histories of Kiberans how the debate – about who belongs in Kibera and to whom Kibera belongs – has transformed over time, this study found that religious communities emerge and change to respond to this shifting debate.

This finding resonates with existing scholarship which shows that belonging for Kenyans is not already assured based on nationality, ethnicity, or religious identity, but a future to be constructed (Lonsdale 1977: 123-135; MacArthur 2016: 1-8; Smith 2019: 11-32; Weitzberg 2017: 3-5). What this future is, and how it is realised, is how social groups are formed, transformed, and represent themselves. Consider, for example, how a disparate group of Nubian soldiers who first settled in Kibera around 1907, came together and represented themselves as a single religious community to stake a claim to Kibera. Although the term 'Nubian' may conjure an association with the Nuba Mountains in present-day Sudan, "the geographical and ethnic referents of 'Nubian', those of 'Sudanese', are multiple and contextually variable" (Sarre 2018: 141). However, because the British colonial state (1899-1963) failed to pay these soldiers for their military service, the soldiers organised themselves

into a religious community with a clear religious myth and set of practices, and variously represented themselves as 'Sudanese', 'Muslim', or 'Nubian' in order to claim and remain in Kibera. For the Nubian community living during colonial rule, belonging in Kibera meant representing their belonging to people and places elsewhere in Sudan.

Taking seriously how the Nubian community negotiated their belonging in and to Kibera this way complicates the ethnogenesis account that hitherto dominates the social history of migration to Kibera (de Smedt 2011). Not least because it would be several decades, particularly after the 1933 Kenya Land Commission, that those who arrived in Nairobi from the countryside would present and create social ties based on a fixed and uniform ethnic identity (MacArthur 2016). Rather, and as this study found, the way in which the Nubian community negotiated their belonging in and to Kibera in response to macro changes did not end after colonialism nor were they the only group to negotiate belonging to multiple people and places outside of Kibera. Consider how the post-independent Kenyan government (1963-present) produced an ambiguous sense of political belonging when it failed to deliver land reconciliation as part of its national development project (Mozkowitz 2019). Many Kenyans were, by result, forced to leave their rural homeland and relocate to Nairobi. Thus, even those whom the post-independent Kenyan government of the day considers 'citizens', a pluralised and fluid sense and meaning of belonging was developed as Kenyans moved between 'home' in the city, and 'homeland' in the countryside.

Moreover, doctoral studies that shift from the ethnogenesis paradigm and therefore away from the idea that social belonging – at least for Kiberans – functions as a consensus between members about their shared origin, identity, and practices, reveal interesting findings. These studies found that unemployed youth (Farrell 2015) and unmarried couples in Kibera (Swart 2017; Wilson 2019) produce stable and enduring forms of belonging that may not reflect the dominant political values of the day. In this respect, Farrell, Swart and Wilson's examination of the alternative forms and systems of belonging that Kiberans engage in, uncovers and foregrounds new actors and relationships and demonstrates that social consensus does not constitute belonging as studies of Kibera that employ the ethnogenesis paradigm show.

Additionally, the pluralised notion and practice of belonging that the Nubian community performed continued into the post-independence period was due to the Kenyan government's idea that former 'detribalised natives' like Nubians and Somalis were "only questionably indigenous to Kenya" (Weitzberg 2017: 3). Not only in terms of autochthony but

their religious identity as Muslims rendered Kenyan-Nubians and Kenyan-Somalis *de facto* stateless, meaning, these communities are still required to prove their citizenship in a process of 'vetting'.[9] As this study found, this change in the politics and discourse of national belonging compelled religious communities like Kenyan-Nubians and Kenyan-Somalis to fix themselves to the very spatial boundaries that they claimed in the past to mediate in order to strengthen their claim to the land and belonging in the present. Thus, rather than representing the religious communities in Kibera, or Kibera itself, as unique in how belonging is negotiated, what this section and study overall shows is how the micro- and macro-levels politics of belonging inform the way religious communities – past and present – position themselves and others to secure belonging in and to Kibera.

Kibera, a Brief History (1899-2019)

One of the interview questions I asked all Kiberans who participated in this study is, "what is the one thing that someone like me [an outsider] should know about Kibera?". Invariably, residents would state that every religion and ethnic group in Kenya can be found in Kibera (Fieldnote, 27 January 2019), or "Kibera has a market for every pocket" (Fieldnote, 06 February 2019), and "Kibra is a city in a city (Interview, 11 February 2019). These statements portray Kibera as an ethnically and religiously diverse, affordable, self-contained, and self-sustaining neighbourhood, a portrayal that is at once visibly evident when you walk through the neighbourhood, but conceptually incompatible with existing studies that categorise Kibera as a "mega-slum" (Davis 2006: 139) or "sprawling slum" (Parsons 1997: 87). Scholars have contributed to not only the categorisation of the neighbourhood as a 'slum', but sought as well to retrace the social heterogeneity of present-day Kibera to the supposed homogeneous origins of the neighbourhood (Clark 1978; de Smedt 2011; Johnson 1988; Parsons 1997). In this brief history, I highlight and trace the processes, patterns, and practices of human movement and dwelling that shaped how the neighbourhood was formed and transformed.

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[9] 'Vetting' is a formal process that Kenyan-Nubians undergo at eighteen years old to obtain their citizenship and official documentation, including an identity document and passport. The vetting process is often discriminatory and inconsistent. The process requires the applicant to verify to a government official present that they and their family members were born and have lived in Kenya, however, the terms of verification are often determined at the discretion of the government official present (Balaton-Chrimes 2012: 75-77). Because this process does not recognise Kenyan-Nubians are citizens at birth, they are *de facto* (in practice) stateless or lacking in nationality until an individual successfully completes the process of vetting.

Kibera is not the only neighbourhood in Nairobi established and influenced by human movement and settlement. The formation of Nairobi as the capital of the Imperial British East Africa Company (later British East Africa) in 1899 provided a strategic rail depot on the Ugandan Railway between Kisumu in the west and Mombasa in the east. Vast amounts of labour and land were needed to establish and maintain the railway network. To obtain land proved violent, as Kikuyu, Maasai, and Dorobo communities who long inhabited the area before it would be named 'Nairobi', were displaced. To obtain labour, the British Empire recruited people from neighbouring colonies, and sometimes from as far as present-day India, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. It comes as no surprise to historians that to erect one of the grandest locomotive projects in Africa on land forcibly claimed, and maintain the flow of goods forcibly extracted, colonial subjects were variously and routinely moved and removed in and between the British colonies (Mutongi 2017: 17-20). The first settlement of Nubian soldiers in 1907 was, moreover, not the only wave of migration to occur in Kibera during the colonial period (1899-1963). The archival record shows that throughout the colonial period, soldiers from British East Africa and Uganda Protectorates were recruited into the King's African Rifles to establish a firm police presence in Nairobi or reinforce the warfront during the First and Second World Wars.[10] These soldiers were trained, buried, and housed in Kibera and in that order, produced new ties to the neighbourhood. In this respect, Kibera was formed and continuously transformed through waves of migration and settlement of individuals whose home and homeland were elsewhere, whether in Kenya, East Africa, India, or Southern Africa.

As I show in Chapter Three, what is unique about the social history of Kibera is that the soldiers who first settled in Kibera in 1907, were perhaps the first generation of Nubians to define what it means to be 'Nubian' after centuries of military enslavement and forced migration. In this respect, understanding why and how Nubians came to settle in Kibera allows us to understand what makes Nubians *in Kibera*, Nubian. The processes of place-making and subject-making were, in this way, co-constituted as Nubian soldiers produced a religious identity and community in settlement and in so doing, produced a sense of home and belonging in and to Kibera. Archival records show that soldiers "proved themselves in no way inferior to those of other coloured races and on occasions even vastly superior to some of the other units

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[10] East Africa Protectorate. 1917. *Correspondence on the Subject of Grants of Land in the East African Protectorate to Men who have Taken Part in the War*. 1-28.

of the Force", and since "giving land was a much cheaper option, and remained for a long time, the KAR soldiers' only pension", British East Africa constructed not just a settlement plan for soldiers, but a land policy of "999 years lease at an initial rental of 10 cents per acre (de Smedt 2011: 53).[11] So strong was the sense of gratitude and indebtedness to soldiers that in 1915, the War Council of the United Kingdom implored "His Excellency urge upon the Home Government the desirability of granting to each British Volunteer or soldier taking part in the East African campaign a block of land not exceeding 320 acres agricultural or 1,000 acres pastoral within the area specified above".[12] The settlement of soldiers was therefore not only a colonial policy, but a moral duty of the Crown.

No sooner had this land policy been implemented than Kikuyu representatives protested, and colonial officials in both the BEA and the metropole found themselves furthermore at odds about whether the land policy risked "the future security of the European Colonists" (MacKenzie 1996: 64-65).[13] Despite the appeal to His Excellency to reward the soldiers and Nubian soldiers in particular, with land titles, the overwhelming contestation by both colonial subjects and amongst colonialists resulted in Kibera being gazetted as a "Military Area".[14] One way that colonial officials tried thereafter to void their agreement to offer Kibera to Nubians, was to delegitimise the religious authenticity of Nubians as Muslims. As discussed in Chapter Three, throughout the colonial period, officials of the day authorised investigations and engaged in debates about whether Nubians can be considered Muslim given their immoral behaviour and production of *arak* or gin, for example. As these colonial campaigns increased, so too did Nubian elders of the day insist that Kibera constitutes the outstanding debt to their ancestors – the first soldiers who settled there (Kenyan Land Commission *Memorandum and Evidence* 1933: 1158). Aggrieved by these measures, some Nubians tried to return to Sudan, whilst others embarked on a political campaign to embrace their Sudanese-ness (Chapter Three). Both strategies illustrate how crossing and moving were at once physical, political, imaginative, and aspirational.

In this respect, we see that the settlement of Nubian soldiers in Kibera was established on three overlapping processes and projects of human migration, displacement, and settlement.

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., 4.

[13] Ibid.

[14] The Official Gazette of the East African Protectorate, Vol. XX, No.601. July 10, 1918, *General Notice No. 688*. 577.

The first of these processes is the displacement of Nubian soldiers from their homeland and the concomitant displacement of Kikuyu and Dorobo communities from the area that became Kibera. The second process is the settlement of Nubians in Kibera and the burying of their dead. The third process is the intertwined debates about who owns Kibera and to whom land should be awarded. Bearing this history in mind provides insight into what is at stake for their religiosity when Kenyan-Nubians' claim to land in Kibera is contested and what the community will do to ensure their claim to the neighbourhood in the present day.

These multiple and intersecting processes remained unresolved throughout the colonial period and until the post-independent period, that is, after 1963. To the newly independent government of Kenya, the word Nubian and their history as colonial benefactors were out of step with the emerging national identity based on ethnic autochthony. The Kenyan Republic expressed that it was "not bound to uphold promises by the colonial regime, and extended housing concessions, rather than land tenure" to the Nubians of Kibera (Parsons, 1997: 89). In Chapter Four, I analyse how the Kenyan Nubian Council of Elders refashioned Nubian belonging in and to Kenya not by representing themselves as an ethnic identity as previously discussed by Balaton-Chrimes (2012), de Smedt (2011), and Osborn (2012). Instead, I focus on how the elders revised the entire national history – from colonialism to post-independence – as one that was made by, and is indebted to, the moral, military, and material investment of Nubians past and present.

At the same time, the government of President Jomo Kenyatta (1964-1978) implemented a new land reconciliation policy that sought to develop the system of rural agriculture as well as uplift rural farmers (Moskowitz 2019: 88-98). But Kenyatta's vision of independence as land reconciliation was lofty in its aims and required considerable bureaucratic apparatus to distribute land in a fair and timely manner (*ibid*., 23). For nearly two decades until the late 1980s, Kenyans lived doubly detached from the land as they simultaneously disconnected from most land regimes of the past, but remained temporarily 'displaced' as land distribution was being issued (*ibid*., 84). This dual liminality produced a new sense of landlessness that cultivated a different set of anxieties among Kenyans about who belongs and whether *uhuru* (S: independence) had come. Not only the failed promise of *uhuru*, but several severe environmental crises plagued the countryside during the 1980s, which caused for the first time, whole families to leave their rural homeland and migrate to cities like Nairobi.

Through the life history of a pastor and prophet, I explore in Chapter Five the ambitions and aspirations that people from rural Kenya brought with them to Kibera, and examine how rural migrants navigated what home means and how to perform their religion in someone else's homeland. As this national land policy and the environmental crisis unfolded in Kenya, political calamity erupted in East Africa which resulted in a new wave of migration to Kibera; namely, Ugandan-Nubians fleeing Uganda's civil war in the 1980s. Chapter Five also addresses the under-examined pattern of post-independence migration of Nubians to Kibera who arrive from Uganda not as soldiers, but as fleeing citizens. I further investigate how two religious communities who share a similar origin story of King's African Rifles soldiers from Sudan, yet experienced two distinct pathways to citizenship, understand and relate to each other in the diaspora – meaning, outside of Sudan.

By 1980 approximately 700 of the initial 4198 acres of land gazetted in 1918 remained, and tracks of land were 'illegally' or 'irregularly' appropriated by the state and re-issued to Christian communities in Kibera who aligned themselves to President Daniel arap Moi.[15] Both the state capture of land in Kibera and the dissociation of Nubians as citizens of Kenya produced violent conflict between religious communities in Kibera, especially in 1995 when a Luo man allegedly refused to pay rent to his Nubian landlord on account that Nubians are foreigners who have long exploited other ethnic groups (de Smedt 2009: 588; Los Angeles Times; 17 October 1995 Reuters, 16 October 1995). The Kenyan government's land reclamation regime shaped how neighbours in Kibera contested the economic, religious, and political differences between landlord and renter, Nubian and citizens, and Christian and Muslim. However, in 2017 President Uhuru Kenyatta attempted to correct the land-grabbing of his predecessors, particularly of his father, former President Jomo Kenyatta. One way that President Uhuru Kenyatta corrected previous land injustices was to issue the Kenyan Nubian Council of Elders a community title deed to 288 acres of land in Kibera (*The Kenya Gazette*, 7 May 2018: Chapter Four). While the government of the day attempts to reconcile the past appropriation of land, it continues to classify Nubians as 'stateless' (*Huduma Namba Registration Form* 2019: Section Two) – an ambiguous identity that every Nubian is born with and changes once a Nubian person successfully undergoes the formal 'vetting' process to

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[15] Republic of Kenya. 2003. *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Illegal/Irregular Allocation of Public Land*. http://www.kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/CommissionReports/A_Report_of_the_Land_Commission_of_Inquiry_into_the_Illegal_or_Irregular_Allocation_of_Land_2004.pdf (Accessed 29 June 2020).

obtain their national documentation and become an official Kenyan citizen (Registration of Persons Act 2018: Section XVI).

This reconciliation produced new paradoxes of belonging that uniquely affect Kiberans. How does a 'stateless' religious community with a communal title deed to land in Kibera understand co-existence with their Christian neighbours who are landless but recognised citizens? What does the meaning of 'home' and *uhuru* imply for Kiberans who do not identify as Kenyan-Nubian? In what ways and to what extent will the communal land deed change how Kenyan-Nubians and Christian residents practice their religion in Kibera? Just as external forces to Kibera shapes the dynamics of coexistence between religious communities in Kibera, so too should these questions be understood within the increasing and unannounced waves of bulldozing in Kibera that threaten the expansion projects of all religious communities. As I described in the ethnographic note of walking Kibera at the start of this chapter, as both a result of past bulldozings and in response to future razes, Kiberans have rebuilt their religious spaces to be materially malleable. At the same time, the proliferation of these makeshift places of worship risks encroachment on Kenyan-Nubian land. Chapter Six illustrates the organic way in which Kiberans have come to set aside Sunday as a day of religious vitality and mobility in order to ameliorate the possibility of religious tension or conflict. As I will show in Chapter Six, religious mobility *is* a form of dwelling that happens every day and every hour in Kibera.

This brief history of Kibera makes the case for understanding and exploring the social history of the neighbourhood as formed and transformed by multiple and overlapping processes, patterns, and practices of human movement and dwelling. As this historical overview has shown, dwelling and crossing are not only human practices but strategies for dealing with urban precarity, political transition, and religious coexistence. The next section outlines and discusses the methodology and methods used to conduct this study.

Conducting Research with Kiberans

From the outset of this study, I tried to discern the methods and methodology that best enabled me to conduct a sound and coherent study of religion in a place subject to social, spatial, and material change on the one hand, and competing claims to and definitions of the place, on the other. This research is foremost an ethnography. I define ethnography as both a practice and sensibility, meaning, ethnographers do not simply observe and report back what people do and

say. Ethnography is an interpretive practice whereby researchers become familiar with the place and people and make meaning from the actions, words, events, and reality they encounter (Schatz 2009: xi, 5). Ethnography as methodology and interpretive practice is also an ethical commitment to unlearn and revise previously tacit understandings of the topic through human interaction and participant observation (Mahmood 2005: 199). I found Greenhouse *et al.* (2002: 8-28) entitled *Ethnography in Unstable Places* useful as it suggests researchers ask themselves, what might participants' experiences and responses to crisis teach us that we should not unlearn in times of so-called normalcy? I used this question throughout the research process – from the 'field' to the 'desk', and the 'page' – to address my assumption that Kiberans living in flux seek normality or inevitably return to a state of normality after a crisis. Rather, I came to understand and will demonstrate that individuals and communities have long made religion (work) under conditions of uncertainty and instability. In this respect, ethnography, as a meaning-making practice, is a methodology, ethical commitment, *and* epistemology as it relies on a grounded and intersubjective praxis for co-producing knowledge with participants (Schatz 2009: 12-14).

With this framework, sensibility, and ethic of ethnography, I conducted field research in Kibera between January and April 2019 with twenty-eight participants across different religious, ethnic, and political identities. Given that the population size of Kibera fluctuates regularly due to seasonal labour patterns, children who attend boarding school outside Nairobi County, and calamities including local fires, floods, and forced evictions, to obtain a suitable 'sample size' of participants—that also reflects the ethnic, religious, political, and gendered identities of the neighbourhood—undermines how urban precarity affect the mobility and stability of life in Kibera (Hagen 2010: 41). In this respect, the number of participants in this study is neither representative of the population size nor the population profile of Kibera, meaning that the twenty-eight participants cannot be evenly split along religious, ethnic, and socio-economic lines. Rather, that twenty-eight Kiberans who agreed to participate in this study emerged from the gradual familiarity and formation of relationships we formed as reflected in the 'snowballing' method (Cohen and Arieli 2011: 423-435).

I drew on a range of methods to immerse myself and establish trust and rapport in the field which are central practices to the snowball sampling method (*ibid*., 425-426). I lived in Nairobi, learnt Kiswahili, participated in everyday activities, and met with people on their schedule and often in their homes, and allowing trust to steer the research process. Hakim, a local Kiberan and research assistant to this study, was instrumental in helping me establish trust

with Kiberans. Not only did Hakim forge the initial meetings and introductions in the field he also translated Luo and Kinubi into Kiswahili and English during the interview. While I preferred participants to speak in a language they prefer, the Kenyan research permit "is granted subject to provisions of the Constitution of Kenya" which mandates Kiswahili as the national language of Kenya and sets English and Kiswahili as the official languages of the Republic.[16]

One of the unexpected findings that the snowballing method revealed is how in a tightly-knit neighbourhood like Kibera, recommendations for potential participants at times omit people considered 'outsiders'. In the case of this study, 'outsiders' included a variety of persons depending on the person doing the recommending, like Kenyan-Nubian Muslims for Christian-identifying Kiberans or non-native born Kiberans such as Ugandan-Nubians for some Kenyan-Nubian Muslims. Rather than a potential limitation of the snowball method, the kinds of recommendations that participants in this study provided, offered an early illustration – in the 'data collection' process – of the social network and power relations between the residents of Kibera that are usually analysed in the 'data processing' stage of ethnographic research (*ibid*., 341). To trace these power dynamics and other observations, I kept thorough fieldnotes and worked closely with a research assistant, a local Kiberan who was instrumental in forging the initial meetings and introductions in the field and translating Kiswahili, Luo, and Kinubi into English during the interview. In the interest of confidentiality, all names in this study are pseudonyms. A key reason for the short period of ethnographic fieldwork was my non-immigration visa status as a South African in Kenya limited me to ninety days in one calendar year. I planned to return to Kibera in 2020 to conduct follow-up interviews since my research permit was granted for one year from 2019 to 2020. Instead, I scheduled online follow-up interviews with the same participants who agreed to the study in 2019 in April and May 2020 when it became clear that the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) prevented the conventional return to fieldwork.

In addition to interviews and participant observation, I conducted extensive archival research at the Kenyan National Archives in Nairobi and the University of Cape Town Special Collections and Manuscripts. Working with the late archivist Richard Ambani (d. 2021) of the Kenyan National Archive was a life history interview in itself, as his institutional memory helped me navigate the incongruencies that pervade Kenya's 'migrating archives', such as

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[16] National Commission for Science and Technology of Kenya (NACOSTI), 2017. Application for Research Licence. https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke/# (Accessed 09 April 2023).

missing catalogues, differently labelled boxed numbers, and unpublicised collections (Anderson 2015: 142). It seemed that even when using the seemingly most durable form of history – the national archives – telling a story of Kenya and Kenyans required an interpersonal engagement with and understanding of the past as lived in the present.

As much as I was interested in familiarising myself with Kibera and getting close to Kiberans, so too were residents curious about my interest in their neighbourhood. My status as a foreign researcher who is South African was ambiguously received throughout fieldwork. Whereas in the interview with the Kenyan Nubian Council of Elders I was welcomed as an esteemed guest and spent several hours with the elders who initially agreed to a one-hour interview, in other settings, my presence as a South African, troubled the trust-building process of ethnography. Especially with younger Kiberans, my identity as a South African generated conversations about the inequality and privileges of being mobile. At a time when the South African government was criticised nationally and internationally for its strict immigration policies that disfavoured African nationals, and the inadequate address of violent xenophobic attacks by South Africans on African non-locals, some Kenyans and Kiberans alike were openly critical of my ability to move in the continent.[17] I came to understand that for young Kenyan-Nubian Muslim men, in particular, these debates were not simply about passport privilege amongst different African nationalities. They also operated as a discursive arena wherein participants could openly criticise and confront the power relations between documented and undocumented persons, even within their community (Interview with Isa, 8 February 2019). Rather than shy away from, or explain my outsiderness as different to European foreign researchers, these conversations helped me understand that discussions about social exclusion and othering are for participants, sometimes easier to initiate and explain by speaking through and about another's otherness. I observed this data point during life history interviews which served as the primary method for this study.

Life history interviews served as a compelling and invaluable method for a research topic that explores how religious communities in Kibera past and present, forge and maintain belonging to each other and the neighbourhood amidst change and contestation. Life history interviews allow the researcher to understand how the speaker perceives themselves in relation to others, their context, and in response to the events experienced (Thomson 2013a: 28-30).

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[17] see Human Rights Watch, 17 September 2017. "They Have Robbed Me of My Life": Xenophobic Violence Against Non-Nationals in South Africa, https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/09/17/they-have-robbed-me-my-life/xenophobic-violence-against-non-nationals-south (Accessed 31 May 2022).

The narratives that speakers offer do more than provide an account of their life and life trajectory but offer insight into the way personhood is socially and historically constituted, situated, and represented (Weitzberg 2017: 13-14). Through life history interviews, participants in this study narrated the challenges of leaving, belonging to, and longing for people and places elsewhere, and shared their experiences of living in a place subjected to change and contestation. Many participants also described their experiences of social disconnection and rejection from their community of belonging which revealed crucial insight into the intra-dimensions of belonging within a religious community. I came to understand that the life history interview itself provided participants with a space to critique individuals and discuss their anxieties about what the future of religion in Kibera will be. Life history interviews also illustrate the value that different religious communities place on the past. I learned that for some Kenyan-Nubian Muslims, remembering is a moral obligation and practice of belonging. Without the life history interview method, I would not have understood how the past influences the present conditions of religious life in Kibera.

I used the life history narratives to organise Kiberans into religious communities based not on a shared belief or singular religious identity only, but on similar experiences and understandings of displacement, mobility, and dwelling in someone else's homeland. The first religious community is those who identify as Kenyan-Nubian Muslims. Kenyan-Nubian Muslims claim Kibera as their ancestral home and trace their lineage to the soldiers who first settled in Kibera in 1907. What sets Kenyan Nubians apart from other religious communities in Kibera is the founding myth or cosmogony of Kibera as a debt to their ancestors (discussed in Chapter Three) and that they collectively own 288 acres of land in Kibera. Second is Kiberans born outside the neighbourhood, which includes Kenyans from the countryside and individuals who identify as Ugandan-Nubian. The participants who identified as Ugandan-Nubian arrived after fleeing the Ugandan Civil War of 1981-1986 and describe the challenges of adjusting to Kibera as trying to mediate the subtle but crucial differences between Ugandan and Kenyan 'Nubianisms' including the determination to be buried 'back home' in Uganda. Third, are mostly Christian and native-born Kiberans who belong to the many congregations in Kibera, including the Anglican Church of Kibera (ACK), the African Inland Church (AIC), and smaller Pentecostal churches. These individuals, although Kenyan citizens, are most critical of and innovative in their circumvention of the mythical and legal precedent that Kibera is the homeland of Kenyan-Nubian Muslims, a precedent that prevents them from expanding their religious communities in Kibera. For this study, I focused on these three religious

communities as well as other identity factors that may influence their inner worlds, such as material affluence (Chapter Four) and gender (Chapter Five).

Plan of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organised into three parts. Part One: Situating Religion in Kibera, and Kibera in the Study of Religions, includes this introductory chapter, as well as Chapter Two which is the literature review chapter. Chapter Two provides a critical appraisal of the large and varied body of literature that comprises the study of Kibera and Kiberans. I examine how academics and non-academics alike have conceptualised Kibera as a place and Kiberans as people, analyse the methodologies and methods used to study the neighbourhood at different periods and with different research participants and situate this study in what I consider to be a burgeoning 'neighbourhood turn' in the study of Nairobi. Part Two: Making a Neighbourhood and a Moral Community, includes chapters three and four. In Chapter Three, I revisit the history of Kibera by returning to a series of unsettled debates, about who belongs in Kibera, and to whom Kibera belongs, a debate that permeates the colonial archive. These debates centred on whether Kibera constitutes the material reward that the British Empire bestowed to the Nubian soldiers for their military service and loyalty. Whether accepted or challenged, Nubians and colonial officials of the day negotiated this debate through a lexicon of categories that variously premised land tenure on the Muslimness of Nubian people. Throughout the chapter, I show how this debate came to constitute the religious myth of Nubians past and present and propel them to produce a kind of urban religion. In Chapter Four, I examine how this myth is deployed and remembered in post-independent Kenya (after 1963). Here, I found that discourse, specifically oral histories, and memories, and the material practice of homemaking jointly enable present-day Kenyan-Nubian Muslims to produce a durable sense of belonging to Kibera. I will explain that because Kenyan-Nubian Muslims are considered *de facto* stateless people by each iteration of the post-independence Kenyan government, the Kenyan Nubian Council of Elders has refashioned the historical debt for two aims; to represent Kenyan-Nubian Muslims into a moral community on the one hand, and to secure their claim to Kibera as their homeland on the other.

Part Three: Building Religion to Belong, includes chapters five and six where I examine how other religious communities who are not Kenyan-Nubian Muslim, encounter and negotiate

this myth. In Chapter Five, I explore what happens to the dynamics of religious diversity when other religious actors and communities introduce new material practices of belonging. I will also show how these material practices of religion enable residents who were born outside of Kibera to move and negotiate between multiple notions and practices of belonging. In Chapter Six, I explore how Kiberans debate and negotiate everyday life in a religious diverse neighbourhood. This chapter examines how Kiberans implicitly and explicitly came to designate Sundays as a day of religious conviviality, a day for religious adherents from inside and outside the Kibera to explore and engage in alternative religious practices. I argue that by permitting Sundays as a temporal and spatial sphere for religious frivolity, Kiberans ensure that their everyday life is not reconstituted and, in this way, circumvent the possibility of religious conflict generated by intolerance toward others. The existing literature on religion in urban Nairobi allowed me to mediate between multiple frames of analysis, from the everyday, to the 'every week', to the 'every hour'. The concluding chapter (seven) summarises the study, reflects on the key findings of this study and maps the trajectory of the field of religion in a place beset by change, contestation, and uncertainty.

Chapter Two

A Review of Literature on Kibera and Kiberans

What does it mean to study a neighbourhood that is shaped and transformed by human migration, urban de/re-generation, and political and religious influence? In this literature review chapter, I trace and characterise how academics and non-academics alike have conceptualised Kibera as a place and Kiberans as people, evaluate the kinds of methodologies and methods used to study the neighbourhood at different time periods and with different research participants, and map the intellectual progression and/or scholarly debates that the research findings of these studies produced. In the final section, I examine what I refer to as 'neighbourhood turn' in the study of Nairobi. Scholars in this subfield employ a history of the present as a methodology and use the life history interview method to examine how urban residents encounter the remains of the past in the present and ensure a place for themselves in a neighbourhood under both decomposition and transformation. To locate this study of Kibera within the context of the 'neighbourhood turn', I outline the methodological and epistemological purchase that 'the neighbourhood turn' provides for a study focused on religion and belonging in a changing and contested neighbourhood.

Kibera as a Neighbourhood of Cooperation

Academics have a longstanding presence and interest in Kenya during colonialism (1880-1963). Though scholars who focused on Kenya, like Bronislaw Malinowski (1927) and Louis S. B. Leakey (1930), conducted research in rural locations in the Kenya Colony, their data influenced nonetheless the nature of British colonial policies for urban cities across the Kenya Colony and British territories in Africa. That said, academic research in Kibera specifically, commenced only after independence in Kenya in 1963. The initial body of scholarship comprises a handful of journal articles and two doctoral theses. The studies focused mainly on the patron-client relations between landlords and their tenants. Invariably, their scholarship found that the economic motivations of both parties propelled cooperation in ways that overrode ethnic loyalties and religious affiliations. Together, this collection of studies makes a strong case for the use of mixed methods including survey data and interviews to examine and

explore the impact of rural migration and urbanisation on social relations between Kiberans in the post-independence period of Kenya.

John E. Anderson's (1966) investigation of the employment aspirations and opportunities of Kikuyu adolescent male primary school leavers marks the first study to examine how social relations amongst people living in Kibera are negotiated and nurtured. By employing survey data and short interviews, Anderson observed that amongst the small number of boys who found their way to Kibera immediately after independence (1964-1965), adolescent males provided each other advice about, and negotiated in groups for, housing and employment opportunities in the neighbourhood (*ibid.*, 16). From the interviews conducted, Anderson illustrates that his participants considered their negotiations with their landlord, and employer and the ability to maintain them, as invaluable experiences and in some cases, important rites of passage to become a man and practice a kind of cosmopolitanism (*ibid.*, 3-5). Anderson's small but insightful study shows how moving from the rural to an urban setting and the transition from boyhood to adulthood enabled study participants to understand and use Kibera as a space to cultivate the kinds of masculinities required for life at home in their respective rural environments (*ibid.*, 5).

If Anderson's study demonstrates the personal reward that comes from forging and fostering healthy patron-client relations, Amis (1983, 1984, 1988), Clark (1973, 1978) and Temple (1974) examine the communal benefits that both the client and patron receive when they maintain a healthy relationship. Along with Anderson, these scholars maintain that patron-client relations sensibly explain the success of cooperation in Kibera and demonstrate why Kiberans are less likely to organise along ethnic loyalties and religious affiliations. How then do scholars identify and represent the *mutual* benefit of cooperation? David Clark (1973: 3-4; 1978: 41) turned his attention to the organisations that self-employed Kiberans collectively organised to obtain public goods for their neighbourhood. Through participant observation at local *barazas* (S: meetings), Clark found that Kikuyu charcoal dealers, Luo shopkeepers, Meru stall owners and Nubian landowners collectively discuss and organise ways to improve the road conditions in Kibera in order to facilitate ease of trade. For Nelle W. Temple (1972: 21), the customers, or clients, of the self-employed patrons in his study report that community organisations were beneficial as they could be used to pressurise the municipality of Nairobi to provide additional political goods and services, including sanitation and health facilities.

Philip Amis's (1984) survey data, however, contradicts the findings above. Amis (*ibid.*, 91-94) notes that as land becomes politically controlled and distributed during President Moi's first administration (1978-1992), landlords in Kibera found it best to place tenants of different religious and ethnic backgrounds in the same rental space to avoid collective action in the form of land grabs or boycotts against the 'uncontrolled' rise in rents. By foregrounding the political corruption of land taking place at the echelons of the government alongside the local 'uncontrollable' rental spike in Kibera, Amis departs slightly from the findings that Temple and Clark hitherto provide; namely that the economic motivation of tenants to cooperate concealed in part, a burgeoning crisis of land insecurity in Kenya (Amis 1988: 242). Because Amis (1984: 88; 1987: 255) regards landlord-tenant relations to derive from an inherently predatory housing and land system which serves the elites in Kenya, he critically analyses the observations of inter-religious and inter-ethnic cooperation that he encounters during fieldwork alongside the assumption of scholars hitherto; namely, that cooperation is based on the neutral power dynamics between patrons and clients. In this respect, Amis provides a convincing case for examining patron-client or landlord-tenant relations as a network of unequal economic and political relations where diversity may not evidence the social health of the neighbourhood, but function as a means to negotiate the unequal economic and political relations.

It is useful at this point to review how the studies by Anderson, Amis, Clark and Temple situate the dynamics between patrons and clients within national trends. First, the quantitative data compiled under these studies provide a twenty-year overview of the various trends which shaped the patron-client relationships between landlords and tenants in Kibera. Between 1960 and 1980 the population of Nairobi grew on average by five per cent, per annum (Amis 1984: 89). By 1966, Nubian residents were outnumbered by their non-Nubian neighbours, by a factor of two-point-three to one (Clark 1978: 36). In 1972, less than a decade after independence in Kenya, the population of Kibera was at most 17,000 residents and consisted of communities from diverse religious, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds and across gender, age and occupation criteria (Temple 1974: 6). In this sense, the statistical representation of Kibera as a rapidly diversifying and expanding neighbourhood emphasises the methodological benefits of examining the one-on-one relationships between landlords and tenants as both a representation of and interdependent on, the changing conditions occurring in Nairobi and Kenya, more broadly.

Second, the studies arrive at different conclusions about how Kibera might be defined, even though each scholar relies on the same methods and contributes in one way or another, to the theory of patron-client relations. According to Clark (1978: 41) and Amis (1984: 87-88), Kibera is best understood as an "unregulated" or "illegal" housing marketplace, given that the land itself is regarded as the property of the government and residents require and often do not have, a council permit to build housing. Anderson (1966) reminds us that at least for his sample group, a marketplace should be considered as both a place of employment opportunities and a space to cultivate virtues and social networks. In contrast, Amis (1984: 94) maintains that the illegality of the housing sector in Kibera complicates the ways in which tenants regard the neighbourhood as their "home". By tracing the widespread "residential mobility" within Kibera, Amis found that as tenants explore more affordable rental options within the villages of Kibera, approximately every two-and-a-half-years, 'home' becomes expressed as a series of economic choices (*ibid*., 94-95).

Clark (1978: 43) similarly notes that for most tenants, Kibera "was fortuitous and held no significance". Rather, their place of residence in Kibera, "was a convenient, but temporary, home". Clark found that the Nubian community in particular, "displayed the strongest sense of community, and emotional attachment" to Kibera, based on the history and number of organisations that catered specifically to this community (*ibid*., 37-38). Importantly, Clark contends that this "sense of community" was neither sentimentality nor an expression of Nubian identity. Rather "the formidable array of associations formed by Nubian residents and the 'sense of community' this had engendered" amongst Nubians, was directly and positively related to the economic success "between Nubian and non-Nubian self-employed in the marketplace" (*ibid*., 44).

A question which arises from my reading of the research conducted by Anderson, Amis, Clark, and Temple is, how might the relationships *outside* the patron-client network influence the way in which landlords and tenants interact with each other in the housing market? Insofar as their studies illustrate that patron-client relationships in Kibera are influenced by factors outside Kibera, including urbanisation and state corruption over land, how might our understanding of these relationships change if we explore how colonial land systems influence the terms of relations between Kiberans landlords and tenants in the post-independence period? This question directs attention to the research which employs life and oral history methods to examine how participants living in the neighbourhoods of Nairobi encounter the remains of the

past in the present (Smith 2019: 3), why and in what ways participants strive to preserve the past (de Smedt 2011: 89), and how participants respond to "what they see as the continuation of empire" (Kimari 2017: 13). The methodology which frames these later studies is a history of the present which seeks to understand how individuals draw on their experience and interpretation of the past to navigate their relationships in the present and ensure a place for themselves in the future.

The methodology of the history of the present, and the research methods employed, are both significant to the study of Kibera. As social historians submit, although the housing market in Nairobi was regulated entirely by the colonial state, Kibera remained the only neighbourhood where property owners, all of whom were Nubian, were authorised to rent their premises to urban labourers (Parsons 1997: 99; Sarre 2018: 135-136). However, when the post-independent government under President Jomo Kenyatta (1964-1978) re-established citizenship based on ethnicity and ethnic unity, Nubians as former 'patrons' of the colonial state were classified as stateless and their claims to both land and belonging in Kenya were rendered undetermined (Balaton-Chrimes 2015: 66-78, 2017: 55-60). The shift in Kenya's political system and change in the definition of citizen reconfigured not only the relationship between landlords and tenants, as Anderson, Amis, Clark and Temple duly illustrated. Rather, these political changes provided ordinary Kenyans and Kiberans alike with a new political discourse to argue who *ought* to occupy the categories of 'landlord' and 'tenant' in the new political dispensation – 'citizens' as defined by the post-independent government, or descendants of the first Nubian settlers (Balaton-Chrimes 2015; McIntosh 2016; Moskowitz 2019).

By tracing the political transition from colonialism to independence, historians and political scientists show that 'landlord' is more than a socio-economic occupation or class position. Through the life history interview method, their studies illustrate that 'landlord', for Kenyans, is an identity and a claim to belonging which under the post-independent period, is invested with political and material aspirations. Furthermore, Kenyans invest in the identity of landlord to determine what political belonging should look like and what it should offer, such as land and property. These studies may shift how we examine and understand the dynamics of religious coexistence and conflict in Kibera past and present. Rather than strictly a resource struggle between Kiberans over land and property, the longstanding title that Nubians hold as the landlords of Kibera illustrates that the ongoing competition over land and property are

unresolved debates amongst residents about who should occupy the political identity of 'landlord' – Nubians as a stateless people, or 'Kenyans'?

Kibera as 'the Largest Slum in Africa'

The period between 2000 and 2013 is significant not only for characterising the research on and about Kibera, but for the motivations which underline the studies, and the process by which scholarly knowledge about Kibera and Kiberans is produced and disseminated. Under President Kibaki (2002-2013), three major governmental initiatives were passed – UN-Habitat Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (2004), the Kenya Vision 2030 (2008), and the Nairobi Metro 2030 Strategy (2008) – which collectively aimed "to grow and develop [Nairobi] into a world class African region, that is able to create sustainable wealth and offer a high quality of life for its residents, the people of Kenya" (Nairobi Metro 2030 Strategy 2008: v). However, in upgrading the lives of Kiberans, the government outsourced its healthcare and education services to international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) who constituted in a short period of time, the new residents of Kibera. In addition to conducting their own research, INGOs and a few Kenyan non-governmental organisations (NGOs) received an 'affiliated organisation' status with National Commission for Science and Technology of Kenya (NACOSTI) – the government body which regulates academic research in Kenya. This status allowed both INGOs and NGOs to host foreign academics who wished to conduct research with the recipients of the services provided by the respective organisation. As a result, humanitarian organisations became not only the gatekeepers to, and monopolists of research data and production in Kibera, but institutions that blurred the boundary between academic research and ethics and humanitarian intervention (Ekdale 2014; Nyabola 2018).

The entanglement between academic research and humanitarian intervention is evident in the research topics on Kibera which often focuses on "Kibera's deplorable conditions while ignoring the features that residents value" (Ekdale 2014: 93). These studies can be characterised by their research questions as expressed in the following ways. What explains the need for communal sanitation practices (Lusambili 2011; Omambia 2010; Schouten and Mathenga 2010)? What are the challenges of urban agriculture initiatives (Gallaher, *et al*. 2013; Pascal and Mwende 2009)? Which factors inhibit the unsatisfactory acceptance of antiretroviral treatment (Unge, *et al*. 2009) or the efficacy of antibiotics (Marston, *et al.* 2007; Silas, *et al.*

2006)? What explains the prevalence of viral infections (Chemuliti, *et. al.* 2002; Halliday, *et al.* 2013) and the reason for poor academic performance (Mudani, *et at.* 2013)? On the one hand, these studies provide an extensive outline of the various structural issues that Kiberans face and highlight the areas where the Kenyan government and other humanitarian institutions can provide targeted solutions to improve the conditions of the neighbourhood and the lives of the residents. On the other hand, by highlighting in their research findings either how government and humanitarian intervention has, or can succeed in improving the lives of Kiberans, these studies help to advance a need for developmentalism in ways that conveniently overlook how the predatory practices between government and non-government agencies produced the conditions for extractive research practice in Kibera.

Additionally, and when read as a nexus of political and epistemic power, the interventionist mandates suggested by the above studies illuminate how and why certain definitions of Kibera succeed, particularly the misnomer that Kibera is 'the biggest slum in Africa' (Aswani Omenda 2008; Klopp 2008; Klopp and Paller 2019; Manji 2014; Omenya and Huchzermeyer 2006). This academic definition of Kibera was made possible by urban theorist and historian Mike Davis (2006: 92) and it became one of the leading typologies in Davis's theory of slums. According to Davis (2006: 139), Kibera is a "mega-slum", that is, "shantytowns and squatter communities [that] merge in continuous belts of informal housing and poverty, usually on the urban periphery". The empirical data that Davis used to substantiate and demonstrate this definition relies exclusively on the experiences of Andrew Harding, a British journalist who describes how he consumed illegal substances with and in the presence of underaged Kiberans (8 October 2002), shadowed the lives of dangerous juveniles (10 October 2002) and met with "immaculately dressed" women whose clean clothing were "like a gesture of defiance" against "the mud and squalor surrounding their little courtyard (15 October 2002). Such a lack of cogent methodologies and methods by Davis fosters the idea that and practice that "slums" need not require the same research rigour or ethical oversight as research on other places and communities. These findings further promote the idea that Kibera is a problem to be solved rather than a place of life and livelihood.

This kind of research practice and definition of Kibera is further evident in the varied estimation of its population size that the UN-Habitat claims to be between "600,000 to 1,000,000 inhabitants" (Nairobi Metro 2030 Strategy 2008: 76; UN-Habitat Kenya Slum

Upgrading Programme 2004: 24). Journalists offer similar irregular accounts of the population size of Kibera, ranging between 800,000 people (Harding, 4 October 2002) to 500,000 residents (Seager, 10 November 2006). This broad estimation is not a statistical error and while it can be argued that the population size of Kibera is represented in this way to account for human migration and forced removals, often the people who are excluded in these statistics as long-term residents account for the largest population, such as 'undocumented' persons including stateless Nubians and refugees from neighbouring African states (see below Balakian 2020, Scharrer 2018, Thomson 2013b and Varming 2020).

In response to these representations of Kibera and Kiberans are three ethnographic studies that employ a bottom-up methodology to highlight the lived experiences of Kiberans and how they represent Kibera. Brian Ekdale's (2014: 103-104) ethnographic research illuminates that a focus on the ways in which Kiberans define, experience, and relate to their neighbourhood differs not too far from the essentialist discourse advanced by outsiders. By asking Kiberan participants what their opinions are of 'Kibera as the largest slum in Africa', Ekdale was surprised to find that a fair portion of his participants profited from the slum discourse by selling narratives of despair and suffering to international non-governmental organisations eager to obtain data in exchange money. In other words, Kiberans made a place for themselves within the political economy of slum discourse from which they were initially neither the inventors nor regulators. This finding prompted Ekdale to argue that Kibera is best understood as a translocalised site where narrative and capital power intersect and interact with multiple stakeholders, including scholars, journalists, governments, INGOs, and Kiberans (*ibid.*, 93-94).

In a similar vein but employing a different methodology, geographer Erica Hagen (2010, 2011, 2017) argues that cartography 'from below' provides a useful process for understanding Kibera according to the people who inhabit the neighbourhood. Working with Kiberans, Hagen (2011: 79) and her team produced various cartographies of Kibera by relying on the "participatory mapping" of ordinary residents.[18] This way of mapmaking, Hagen found, minimised the power relations between the mapmakers and those being mapped on the one hand, and represented Kiberans' myriad of spatial regimes, epistemologies, experiences, and

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[18] "Participatory mapping" builds on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) by encouraging residents to create and analyse geographic information about their place and space (Hagen 2011: 79).

relationships on the other (Hagen, *et. al*., 2018: 228-233). By 'mapping from below' Hagen *et. al*. (2018: 229) found that "becoming visible on the map was a matter of pride for the people we worked with". This conclusion illuminated for Hagen (2011: 69; 2018: 229) that Kibera reflects a paradox in that the neighbourhood is at once highly visible to the international community, and yet the spatial knowledge of the residents who live there is fairly unrepresented.

A final illuminating study that illustrates the various ways in which Kibera can be examined and defined when scholars foreground the experiences of those who live, is presented by Elizabeth Swart (2009, 2017). Swart used the qualitative diary entry method to understand how women in Kibera perceive and experience their daily lives and the ways in which they manage the stresses of unemployment and poverty. Following the argument that journaling provides women with a space for self-reflection and self-representation, Swart (2009: 28-29; 2017: 124-126) found that women were motivated to both endure and circumvent their gender roles when their networks of female support were strong. In other words, and as Swart recommends, not only are the strategies of women and their agency bound intimately to their social relations, but women's efforts to cultivate friendships also challenge the dependency model advanced by INGOs and local NGOs that institutions can save Kiberans and Kibera. Swart stresses that this finding underscores that marginalised individuals are rarely without agency, but cultivate innovative and transformative ways to navigate the circumstances of their own lives to obtain greater socio-economic, political, and personal control.

In this respect, the definition of Kibera as the largest slum in Africa is not a mere misnomer. Rather, this definition is produced and maintained by an interconnected set of actors, including international donors and international non-government organisations, national institutions in Kenya, academics and Kiberans themselves. This generalisation of Kibera has, over time, paved the way for a standard convention for conducting research in Kibera which created a large gap in the literature between how foreign institutions and academics define Kibera and how these definitions are interpreted by those being represented, which Ekdale, Hagen, and Swart focused their research on.

The period of 2000 to 2013 is also significant on account of the 2007/2008 election violence that swept across Kenya and hardened ethnic differences amongst ordinary citizens. Although President Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner in the 2007 national election, he was

not, however, the popular choice for many Kiberans who supported the other candidate on the ballot and their long-serving Member of Parliament, Raila Odinga (de Smedt 2009: 581-582). The violence that erupted nationally, following the outcome of election results in December 2007 until the power-sharing agreement between Kibaki and Odinga was signed at the end of February 2008, was reported to have caused over 1,100 deaths and led to 350,000 internally displaced people across Kenya (de Smedt 2009: 581-582). Academic research on this period examined whether, to what extent, and to what ends, politicians engendered or exploited ethnic division, and how ordinary Kenyans responded to this tactic (Cheeseman 2008; Horowitz and Klaus 2020; Klaus 2015, 2020).

The two studies below emerge from the scholars' doctoral dissertations on Kibera. First, de Smedt (2009, 2011) explored this question in Kibera through a historiographical method which showed that since independence in 1963, the underlying factor of 'political tribalism' in Kibera – the deliberate oversimplification and deployment of ethnicity by political elites to gain political and electoral support – remains socio-economic inequality and not ethnicity. In other words, "post-election violence cannot be centred at the national level only", but emerges from socio-economic inequalities between neighbours to which politicians provide language through ethnically divisive rhetoric (2009: 598). By focusing on the local and socio-economic conditions in Kibera, de Smedt's findings illustrate the limits of politicians to engender violence on a whim and illuminate instead how politicians benefit from structural inequality in Kibera.

It is not only the local conditions in Kibera which restrict politicians' efforts to engender ethnic division and ethnic violence there. Michelle Osborn's (2008, 2012) research on the political information that Kiberans produced and circulated through Short Message/messaging Service (SMS) text messages, underscores how Kiberans themselves limited the nefarious tactics of politicians to sow discord between neighbours. By employing a discourse analysis of the content of these text messages that participants shared with her, Osborn (2008: 322-325) critically examines the role of rumour as information Kiberans use to make sense of the violence taking place in and around Kibera. Because these rumours were often sent to loved ones to warn them of their ethnically different neighbour, Osborn argues that worries, concerns, and advice constitute powerful technologies of social and political conflict which "may not have directly caused violence, [but] nonetheless served as a crucial catalyst in the escalation of

Kenya's crisis" (*ibid*., 325). Thus, both de Smedt (2009, 2011) and Osborn's (2008, 2012) studies illustrate that Kibera and Kiberans are neither instruments in a political struggle for electoral votes, nor violent places or communities. Rather, the longstanding socio-economic inequalities and underlying suspicions between neighbours provide politicians with the conditions to generate discord and violence.

To conclude, this section of the chapter has discussed the studies which focus on the lived experiences of Kiberans – Ekdale, Hagen, and Swart – and the local dynamics of Kibera – de Smedt and Osborn. Both methodological approaches arrive at the same conclusion; that neither the neighbourhood nor the people are 'on the margins' of the state or society. Rather, these studies emphasise how Kibera and Kiberans shape the international relations between Kenya and its donors and allies, and the efforts of politicians to influence the election outcome. Still, there remains a gap in the literature about whether and how religious communities in Kibera define and relate to the neighbourhood.

Kibera as a Religious Space and Homeland

Kibera as a Religious Space

The 2007/2008 post-election violence interested academics who focus on religion. The ways in which Christian and Muslim clergy produced and circulated discourses of evil, satanism, and divine deliverance to explain the post-election violence, prompted academics to examine whether, and in what ways, were religious leaders and institutions co-opted in the political parties' promotion of (post)election violence (Blunt 2019; Kagema 2019; Knighton *ed*. 2009). Similar to Michelle Osborn's (2008) discourse analysis of SMS text messages, these scholars examine the religious sermons broadcasted on a variety of media that were later appropriated by politicians, to illustrate the importance of discourse as a way for Kenyans to explain cosmological and political change (Blunt 2019: 20-22; Kagema 2019: 70-73; Knighton *ed*. 2009: 12-13). From their varied research foci on places and people in Kenya, these scholars collectively show that since discourses flowed between the pulpit, parliament, and the public, the boundaries which delineate between religious, public, and private spaces were often obscured to the extent that different religious and non-religious communities were co-

inhabitants of the same 'discursive sphere'. Although their research does not focus on Kibera, the findings in these studies are useful for thinking about the dynamics of religious differences at the micro-level.

The following studies comprise a collection of journal articles which describe Kibera as a religiously diverse neighbourhood wherein different religious communities and notions of belonging play a multifaceted and sometimes contradictory role in helping Kiberans manage and make sense of their socio-political and socio-economic lives. Gregory Deacon (2012, 2013, 2015, 2020) employed participant observation and discourse analysis to examine the discourses presented by neo-Pentecostalists in Kibera, and how these discourses reflected or provided religious adherents with the tools to understand their political and socio-economic realities. Deacon (2012: 666-667) found that although the genre of these neo-Pentecostalist discourses emphasised repentance and deliverance rather than the expected focus on prosperity, the former style of discourse provided adherents with a comprehensible narrative to make sense of "events that felt beyond their control as mere men and women". Because neo-Pentecostal discourses maintained that the 2007/2008 (post)election violence occurred because Christian adherents, including Pentecostalists, 'let the devil in', Deacon found that adherents were less likely to hold their politicians accountable or transform their socio-economic position (also see Deacon and Lynch 2013: 108). Instead, adherents explored ways to obtain repentance and forgiveness from the transcendent. Deacon's studies convincingly illustrate the need for scholars to focus their research on *both* religious leaders who transmit the divisive discourse and adherents who interpret and instantiate these discourses in unexpected ways.

Interestingly, the emphasis on repentance and forgiveness was not limited to Pentecostal adherents. Employing the same methods of participant observation and discourse analysis, Christine Bodewes (2004, 2005, 2010, 2014) observed how a Catholic church in Kibera offered religious gifts – the holy spirit – to their adherents to help mitigate feelings of "apathy, frustration and cynicism caused by decades of government corruption and mismanagement". This strategy, Catholic clergy confessed, was not something offered to Kiberans alone. Instead, the Catholic clergy, most of whom originated from and trained in Mexico, report in interviews with Bodewes, how their missionary experiences in rural Amazon, Brazil and the outskirts of Mexico, required priests to sometimes go beyond the role imagined, and present religious symbols and teachings as working tools for poor parishioners to manage their everyday stresses and strains (Bodewes 2005: 127-143; 2014: 56-60). In this sense, it is

not only religious adherents who have to negotiate their socio-economic circumstances but Catholic clergy whose limited financial budget forces them to extend the meaning of religious symbols in order to help their parishioners.

The themes of repentance and forgiveness are not limited to Christians either. Johanna Sarre (2018) notes that her older Nubian Muslim participants in Kibera expressed a similar discourse when reflecting on their political and socio-economic position. Although the Nubian community remains the only people to possess a title deed to land in Kibera, Sarre employs critical historiography to trace over time, the downward trend that Nubian Muslims individually experience in their social mobility (*ibid.*, 137-140). The invisibility of this trend, Sarre notes, is at once masked by the political exclusion that Nubians face by the Kenyan state, and masks the reported social and religious discrimination that her participants experience by their neighbours who perceive Nubian Muslims in Kibera as economically privileged. It is furthermore this nexus of invisibility and marginalisation, Sarre concludes, that explains why Nubian participants in her study emphasise the need to forgive thy neighbour to ameliorate the prospect of conflict. This single journal article by Sarre provides an opening in the literature on Kibera to use forgiveness to understand the nature and dynamic of inter-religious relationships in Kibera in ways that counter the expected research findings of conflict and violence.

The studies presented by Bowedes, Deacon and Sarre present a compelling case for defining and examining Kibera as a religiously diverse neighbourhood wherein a variety of actors, including religious adherents and clergy, employ religious discourses and teachings at their disposal to manage the socio-political and socio-economic circumstances of themselves or their congregants. That said, the claim by Kenyan-Nubians that Kibera is their homeland constitutes a significant and longstanding argument for an examination of religious coexistence and conflict in Kibera. The studies in the section below invite us to examine how this claim affects the dynamics of religious coexistence and conflict through this claim.

Kibera as a Homeland

This literature review chapter has thus far shown that political changes which occur in post-independent Kenya – rural-to-urban migration, international humanitarianism, national

elections, and socio-economic inequality – directly affect Kibera and Kiberans. It also examined how the findings of these studies provide empirical insight and methodological validity for the use of micro-studies to understand larger national issues at play, such as urbanisation, urban development, and political transitions.

Another landmark political event took place in 2010 when President Mwai Kibaki officially promulgated a new Kenyan constitution. Alongside amendments to and checks on, the executive and judicial branches of government, the reformed constitution amended its Bill of Rights to recognise and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms "of all human beings" (*The Constitution of Kenya 2010*, Article 19(2)). According to political scientist Samantha Balaton-Chrimes (2013: 343; 2015: 77; 2017: 52), the Kenyan-Nubian Council of Elders (hereafter KNCE) mobilised the amendment in the Bill of Rights to achieve their longstanding mission for political recognition and citizenship in Kenya. Balaton-Chrimes examines the 2011 legal case that the KNCE presented before the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child to which the Kenya government is a signatory, to demonstrate that claims to citizenship are a transnational and transhistorical endeavour which draws on international law to make an age-old case for political belonging.[19] Her legal analysis of this case and other political efforts by the KNCE for citizenship, allows Balaton-Chrimes to expand the socio-political efforts and concerns of Kenyan-Nubians beyond the spatial and temporal boundaries of Kibera, and thus show that Kibera is not only where Kenyan-Nubians locate their belonging but constitutes the means through which their belonging is achieved.

This way of achieving national belonging is what makes the IHRDA case noteworthy. In the case, the KNCE argued for political recognition and citizenship by claiming Kibera as the "homeland" of Kenyan Nubians.[20] Historians who focus on Kibera have already shown that this claim is not recent, but constitutes an important historical narrative for the Kenyan-Nubian people past and present (de Smedt 2011; Johnson 1988, 1989, 2009; Parsons 1997, 2017). However, the 'homeland' claim has previously not yielded the Kenyan-Nubian people the desired outcome for political belonging and citizenship until 2011 when the IHRDA court ruled

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[19] Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA) and Open Society Justice Initiative on Behalf of Children of Nubian Descent in Kenya v. The Government of Kenya, No. Com/002/2009. https://www.refworld.org/cases,ACERWC,4f5f04492.html (Accessed 17 October 2020).
[20] Ibid., 2.

in favour of the KNCE, and in 2017 when the KNCE successfully obtained from President Uhuru Kenyatta, a community title deed to 288 acres of land in Kibera (*The Kenya Gazette,* 7 May 2018: Chapter Four). Thus, absent in the literature is an examination of how the homeland claim may affect the relationship between Kenyan-Nubians and their non-Kenyan-Nubian neighbours now that political recognition and land tenure legally legitimises and secures this claim. Put differently, what does it mean for non-Kenyan-Nubians to now live in another's homeland, especially for those who were born and raised in Kibera and hold citizenship, unlike their 'stateless' Kenyan-Nubian neighbours?

By highlighting this gap in the literature, it is moreover important to note that Kenyan-Nubian is an identity not adopted by all Nubian-identifying people in Kibera. The Nubian-identifying people in Kibera include Ugandan Nubians who fled Uganda during the Civil War (1981-1986) and who may not consider Kibera to be their 'homeland' (Amone 2018; Johnson 2009; Mahajubu *et al*., 2019). Their notions of political belonging to the Kenyan-Nubian community of Kibera and Kenya more broadly, remain underexplored given that scholars have relied extensively on the history of Kibera from the perspective of Kenyan-Nubian identifying people who first settled in Kibera in 1907. By foregrounding the histories of non-Kenyan-Nubians and Ugandan-Nubians in Kibera, we can begin to pluralise the dominant history of the neighbourhood to better understand the historicity of religious coexistence in the neighbourhood.

Thus, I note three gaps in the literature on Kibera and Kiberans. First, does the claim that Kibera is the homeland of Kenyan-Nubians explain why the history of Kibera is examined and narrated as predominantly a history of Kenyan-Nubians? Second, since Kenyan-Nubian is an identity not adopted by all Nubian-identifying people in Kibera, how might Ugandan-Nubian identifying people conceptualise their belonging in Kibera and how do these conceptualisations affect their relationships with other Kiberans? Third, what does it mean for non-Kenyan-Nubians to now live in someone else's homeland, especially for those who were born and raised in Kibera? Each of these questions will be respectively explored in the upcoming chapters. By addressing these gaps, I will draw on and contribute to the 'neighbourhood turn' in urban anthropology of Nairobi, which employs a methodology of history as the present and examines how personhood and placemaking co-jointly shape the ways in which different communities coexist and interact.

The 'Neighbourhood Turn' in Nairobi

This study is located in and contributes to what I term the recent 'neighbourhood turn' in urban history and urban anthropology studies on Nairobi and its residents. I have identified three seminal studies which constitute the 'neighbourhood turn': Luise White's (1990) urban history of Pumwani, Wangui Kimari's (2017) urban anthropology of Mathare, and Constance Smith's (2019) urban anthropology of Kaloleni. The neighbourhood turn is an emerging subfield of both urban history and urban anthropology which employs history *as* ethnography or, a history of the present, as a methodology. One of the constitutive logics of the neighbourhood turn is the idea that a study on neighbourhoods *is* a history of the present. This means that since neighbourhoods are colonial constructions of space, sociality and subjectivities, the space continues to shape how residents relate presently to their neighbourhood and one another. In terms of methods, studies in the 'neighbourhood turn' rely on the life history interview method to examine how residents make a life and livelihood in a changing neighbourhood, how they forge belonging to their neighbours, and imagine the future as the neighbourhood develops or decays.

To be sure, these studies are not the only scholarship which focuses on the neighbourhoods of Nairobi. A small but growing collection of journal articles by Balakian (2020), Scharrer (2018), Thomson (2013b) and Varming (2020) adds to and diversifies the literature on neighbourhoods in Nairobi by focusing on Somali refugee women in Eastleigh, and the intimate social bonds they cultivate in order to negotiate forms of discrimination and harassment in Nairobi. The use of life-history interviews in each study describes Eastleigh as a dense set of unsynchronised power relations that Somali women negotiate in their everyday lives. This description of Eastleigh makes a case for examining neighbourhoods as transnational sites where power, identity and belonging intersect in ways that constantly remake the neighbourhood and its inhabitants. That said, these studies provide no history of the neighbourhood and therefore fail to explain whether and how Somali refugee women have over time shaped the neighbourhood of Eastleigh through the intimate bonds they produce and perform.

However, White, Kimari and Smith show that neighbourhoods emerge from a bricolage of imperial, material, and gendered practices of belonging. Pumwani is a neighbourhood in Nairobi established in 1921 and the focus of Luise White's (1990) study on how urban women's property rights shaped the land tenure system under colonial rule and the material

possibilities of the women's descendants later on. White maintains that although the capacity to dwell in Nairobi for African residents was subject to racial and gendered rules that privileged men, women exploited the need for domestic labour by selling sex and offering other domestic comforts. Drawing on both archival and life histories, White's landmark study illustrates how women's labour and capital constituted an important framework in the formation of Pumwani and Nairobi in a way that obscures the boundary between the 'official' and 'hidden' versions of urban history on the one hand, and prompt us to rethink who the makers of colonial cities are on the other.

Anthropologist Wangui Kimari (2017) extends White's research on women's labour and property rights as a place-making project in present-day Mathare, a neighbourhood which has similarly been represented as a dangerous slum, as has Kibera. Kimari expounds on the tropes of prostitution, alcohol brewing and single motherhood as sites where women's labour and capital have been and remain, fostered and sustained through property, knowledge and skills. By charting the life trajectories and histories of her female study participants from the colonial period into the present, Kimari illuminates how their labour and capital practices remain central to how we interpret the spatial and material history of Mathare and the urban futures of the residents. Similar to White, Kimari's study contributes to the present study by showing how neighbourhoods are inherently contradictory spaces in that they are both colonial artefacts and unfinished postcolonial spaces, a contradiction that requires the critical engagement of temporality, spatiality, and subjectivity as entangled processes.

Constance Smith's (2019) urban anthropology focuses on Kaloleni, a neighbourhood constructed in 1940 for, and to expand, the African middle-class. Smith examines the homemaking projects of her participants, including extensions on their homes and gardening, as everyday practices that equally sustain the colonial image of the neighbourhood, and deconstruct it. According to Smith, these homemaking practices allow the residents of Kaloleni to instantiate their belonging to Nairobi as the city undergoes a rapid urban transformation which risks the futures of ordinary people like her study participants. Smith, therefore, presents neighbourhoods as ambivalent spaces of belonging, where belonging is based on an idealised past, a precarious present, and a tentative future. The life history interviews which Smith conducts with her research participants further underscore the meanings that individuals derive from their homemaking practices, thus thickening how she understands the relationship between place-making, history-making, and subject-making.

The neighbourhood turn is thus a reorientation to belonging as more than an identity question but a material and historical practice that the residents of Nairobi actively engage in. As White, Kimari, and Smith respectively show, what people do to secure their belonging is incremental and often takes place beneath the official transcript. In this respect, their studies show that belonging for the residents in Punwani, Mathare, and Kaloleni is not an identity already assured, but an idea to collectively pursue. To investigate this point requires a research focus on the everyday practices inside the neighbourhood. That said, White, Kimari and Smith's research focuses on neighbourhoods previously defined under colonialism as 'African' or, discriminately, 'native' neighbourhoods. This means that the materiality of the neighbourhood was designed for a particular racialised idea of what the residents will be and how they will belong to Nairobi. Kibera, however, was designated as a 'non-native' or 'detribalised' neighbourhood and thus, was produced for and produced over time, a different notion and practice of belonging. This present study contributes in this way to the neighbourhood turn by presenting a history of Kibera as a novel way of thinking about belonging.

Conclusion

Each of the three sections in this literature review chapter has contributed to the study of Kibera and Kiberans. In the first section – Kibera as a Neighbourhood of Cooperation – the studies reviewed employ quantitative survey data and qualitative interviews to examine coexistence and conflict as a clientele relationship between landlords and tenants. Given the history of Kibera and that these studies were conducted during the advent of independence in Kenya, what I found missing in this section is whether, and to what extent, are patron-client relationships historically shaped. I showed that this question similarly prompted scholars who focus on other neighbourhoods in Nairobi to examine occupations like 'landlord' as privileged occupations designated under a colonial system which some individuals strive either to maintain or challenge. By using life history methods, these studies illuminated how the conflict between landlords and tenants are not only present-day contestations but historical holdovers of an imperial past.

In the second section – Kibera as 'the Largest Slum in Africa – we learn that it is not only the past that shapes how Kiberans co-exist, but international actors and institutions who are also inhabitants of Kibera. These institutions as residents participate in naming and classifying the place, the people, and their circumstances. Additionally, because these institutions regulate the research process of scholars who intend to conduct studies in Kibera, we began to understand how and why the misnomer that Kibera is 'the largest slum in Africa' succeeded in academia for so long. This point emphasised the need for methodologies that highlight the lived experiences of Kiberans and their representations of Kibera, through a range of innovative methods including cartography and diary entries. Problematising the pejorative of Kibera as the largest African slum also helped scholars to critically unpack how other misconceptions of Kibera operate, namely, that conflict between neighbours is ethnically motivated. By employing discourse analysis from the pulpit to parliament and into the public sphere, studies in this subsection trace how Kiberans are misrecognised and misconstrued by each other and by politicians to respectively exclude certain groups of people from Kibera and political representation in government.

Finally, the third and final section – Kibera as a Religious Space and Homeland – examines how religious leaders and aldermen who assist in the socio-economic and socio-political circumstances of their members, also shape what concerns are represented about the neighbourhood. These studies approach Kibera as a religiously plural neighbourhood where different religious identities and notions of religious belonging, assist in sometimes contradictory ways, to the socio-political and socio-economic realities of the residents. This section highlighted three gaps in the literature which characterise the three upcoming chapters in this study and, will draw on and contribute to the 'neighbourhood turn' in urban anthropology of Nairobi.

In the next chapter, I revisit the history of Kibera for two reasons. First, to examine the historical conditions under which emerged the claim by Nubians that Kibera is their homeland. Second, to explore how this claim has shaped the way in which colonial officials recorded, and Nubians of the day narrated the history of Kibera. Revisiting the history through these two foci provides an opportunity to demonstrate how and why the claim by Nubians that Kibera is their homeland came to constitute the central religious myth of their religiosity as well.

Part Two: Making a Neighbourhood and Moral Community

Chapter Three

Kibera, a History Revisited

(1885 – 1963)

I concluded the previous chapter with a question; why is the history of Kibera overwhelmingly a history of the Nubians? Keeping with the argument in the 'neighbourhood turn' that people and place are co-constituted, I argue that taking seriously the above question allows us to analyse how the history of a religious community in Kibera also became the religious history of Kibera, and why this question matters in the academic study of religions. In my consultation of the colonial archives of British East Africa and the Kenya Colony, I encountered what was at the time an ongoing debate between British colonial administrators and Nubian elders. Succinctly stated, the debate, that continued throughout the colonial period, centred on whether Kibera constitutes the material reward that the British Empire bestowed to the Nubian soldiers for their military service and loyalty to the Crown. Whether accepted or challenged, Nubians past and present premised their religious and political projects on this debate to the extent that the debate became the central religious myth in the construction of a Nubian religiosity.

I will demonstrate how both Nubians and colonial officials of the day negotiated this debate through a lexicon of categories that variously premised land tenure on the 'proper' and 'authentic' Muslimness of the Nubian people. However, rather than trace the genealogy of these categories as the evidence each party presented for or against the debate, this chapter makes two interventions. First, it demonstrates how disputes over Kibera as unsettled debt enabled Nubians to claim both the neighbourhood as their ancestral homeland *and* hold multiple belongings to people and places in Egypt and Sudan. As long as this material debate remained unsettled, the discursive arena remained open for Nubians to circumvent and sometimes circumscribe the categorical tenets of their religious identity as Muslims. Second, debates in the archive about whether Nubians are 'truly' Muslim and if Kibera is 'really' owed to them, conceal in part a larger material history of religion, one in which shifting ownership over land and property in Kibera signals who at the time – Nubians or the colonial state – was the creditor and could therefore declare what counts as religion. In this respect, the categorical tenets of Nubian identity, whether religious, national, or ethnic, were rarely stable or static, and

belonging was regulated based on adherence to the myth of Kibera as a material reward and the collective pursuit to attain it.

Nubians prior to the establishment of Kibera

Who are the Nubians who settled in Kibera? How and under what circumstances did Nubians arrive in Kibera? And, why Kibera, as opposed to any other place in the East African Protectorate? I answer these questions by drawing on secondary sources of historians. To be sure, not all Nubians who arrived in Kibera were Muslims. As historians mentioned in this section suggest, 'Nubian' is a category that describes how the institution of military enslavement transitioned from a colonial army and an independent civilian community, and illustrates the kinds of political possibilities this transformation presented to those to whom this term was assigned (de Smedt 2011; Hansen 1991; Johnson 1989, 2009; Kokole 1985; Parsons 1999).

First, the longstanding history of Nubians dates to the institution of military enslavement practised as early as 2700 BCE when the *jihadiya* – black enslaved armies – were formed by the Nubian Kingdoms as a commodity to trade with Egypt (Balaton-Chrimes 2016: 150; de Smedt 2011: 28; Johnson 1989: 76). Despite the reference to their racial features, in ancient Egypt and for most of the precolonial period, the term *bilad an-Nuba* (A: the Nubians) referred to the place that provides enslaved persons to Egypt rather than a description of the characteristics of the soldiers (Johnson 2009: 113). In this sense, 'Nuba' and 'Nubi' expressed a series of spatial and power relations between polities in the 'free north' and the 'slave south' of Egypt (Johnson 1989: 82; 2009: 151).

Second, 'Nubi(an)' emerged from the zone of domesticity that enslaved soldiers cultivated within their garrison. Between 1805 and 1824, enslaved soldiers were bought in significant numbers by Muhammad Ali, the Khedive of Egypt, for the Turco-Egyptian conquest of Sudan (de Smedt 2011: 28-30). To ensure that his soldiers performed their military duties effectively, the Khedive prohibited soldiers from interacting with local peoples (Johnson 1989: 76-77). In response to this social exclusion, soldiers used the large training camp erected in Aswan as a space of domesticity and discipline where certain skills, practices, and attitudes were developed and exchanged (Moyd 2011; Parsons 2017). The training camp in Aswan over

time became unique in that soldiers were trained in armed defence and instructed in Islam (de Smedt 2011: 30). In this regard, the zone of domesticity constituted a crucial site where enslaved soldiers transformed the representation of 'Nubians' from outcasts to desirable, albeit enslaved, soldiers.

Third, when the institution of military enslavement transformed into a British colonial army in 1891, soldiers subsequently transformed the lineage of 'Nubian' from slavery to nobility. The transition of the institution of military enslavement to a British colonial army occurred in Uganda when Captain Federick Lugard (later Lord Lugard), a representative for the Imperial British East African Company (IBEAC) "was met with great rejoicings" of "8000 souls, of whom 1000 were armed soldiers of the old Egyptian regiment" who fled Turco-Egyptian Sudan after the Mahdists captured Khartoum in 1885.[21] These soldiers "enlisted themselves under the Company's flag" and assisted the Company in the establishment of a frontier border from Unyoro, eastward to the Kingdom of Tooro.[22] The soldiers also fought for the British in the Uganda Mutiny of 1897. As Lugard expressed, "such loyalty deserved a better reward than it had met in Cairo", and for which he campaigned to Britain during his post at the Royal Niger Company, to incorporate the 'Sudanese' soldiers in the King's African Rifles (hereafter KAR).[23]

The transition of this battalion from military enslavement to a colonial army was transformational for two reasons. On the one hand, military historian Douglas H. Johnson (1989: 79) argues that it marked for the soldiers, "the origin of the perception of themselves as a distinct community having a special relationship with the government". Although the historical record provides no evidence of how the soldiers expressed or interpreted the incorporation of their unit into the British army, their descendants will later testify how this act by Lord Lugard entitles them to land tenure in Kibera in recognition of their services to the Crown.[24] On the other hand, the recruitment and incorporation of these soldiers into the KAR shaped the discursive and categorical dimensions of Lugard's colonial mission in Africa, as evidenced in his self-published monograph. Not only did he define 'the Sudanese' soldiers as

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[21] Bentley, E.L., and Lugard, F.L., 1892. *British East Africa and Uganda: A Historical Record Compiled from Captain Lugard's and Other Reports*. Chapman and Hall. 19.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., 27; Perham, M. ed., 1959. *The Diaries of Lord Lugard, Vol. III*. Northwestern University Press. 423.

[24] Memorandum of Ex-soldiers of the King's African Rifles, 7 January 1933, Kenya Land Commission – *Evidence*. 1933. 1160

a "disciplined force", "intelligent" and "more dependable", Lugard expounded on these descriptors as metrics to classify and order other "native African troops" and "African races" whom he encountered (Lugard 1922: 574-575). In other words, 'Sudanese' is not only an identity imposed or claimed, but a category that describes the imperial reasonings and racist assumptions about why those classified as 'native' are different to those categorised as 'Sudanese'.

These three historical moments illustrate how the definition of Nubian described the changing terms of relations between soldiers and the state, as well as the soldiers' ongoing efforts to regulate social mobility within their garrison. One of the important themes that emerge from this expansive political history is that 'Nubian' in one way or another defined a group of people set apart on account of their enslavement, military pedigree, and social exclusion from civilian communities. However, whether Nubian soldiers were Muslim remained unclear, at least in terms of the archival record that historians in this section referenced.

Kibera prior to the settlement of Nubians

In this section, I will briefly outline how the land that became Kibera was previously used, by whom, and for what purposes. The 4,198 acres of land gazetted in 1918[25] that became known as 'Kibra' was part of the region of wetlands that different groups of people used during the nineteenth century for cattle grazing (White 1990: 30). The evidence available of land use prior to the nineteenth century relies on a combination of linguistic mapping, archaeological discoveries, and oral tradition. Regarding linguistic mapping, contemporary reconstruction of the precolonial period between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries offers a rich account of the linguistic complexity and diversity facilitated by the movement and interaction between societies from central, eastern, and southern Africa (Diagne 1981; Ehret 1982; Sutton 1981). Archaeological research provides texture to the linguistic dimensions of social interactions by describing in material ways the vibrant trading networks between these societies, the forms of trust, reciprocity, and commodity value systems these societies cultivated and maintained, and

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[25] The Official Gazette of the East African Protectorate. 1918. *Notice No. 686*, July 10, 1918. 577.

how they moved goods in this region we now know as Kenya (Hannaford 2018; Turyahikayo-Rugyema 1976; Wynne-Jones 2016).

The period between the twelve and sixteenth centuries was also significant as societies transitioned from an agricultural tradition to cattle-herding. Whereas Ogot (1984: 498-499) assures that, "for a long time there was peaceful coexistence between the agriculturalists and pastoralists prior to the state formation processes", Ehret (1984: 494) maintains that the surplus grains and livestock generated intense competition between and within societies. White (1990: 30) however, asserts that societies regularly combined "agricultural production with livestock accumulation. Only the Maasai were said to have been entirely pastoralist". Nonetheless, all three scholars resist the idea that agriculturalists and pastoralists were early forms of ethnic groups and instead approach these categories as occupations that individuals and groups could enter into and exit out of.

Finally, the oral tradition which describes by whom and in what ways land was used and owned prior to colonialism emerged from testimonies provided by chiefs at colonial commissions and courts (MacArthur 2016; MacKenzie 1996; Ogot 1963). These testimonies were often issued in the aftermath of land disputes between colonial administrators and local elites about the institutions and principles on which land ownership should be constituted, and their statements reflect the linguistic and archaeological evidence that land use and ownership were openly negotiated between people (MacKenzie 1996: 62).

In these two opening sections, I first outlined the genealogy of military enslavement and illustrated the circumstances under which a single battalion of Nubian soldiers was incorporated into the British colony army before they became a settled community in British East Africa. While the commanding officers of the battalion that arrived in present-day Machakos near Nairobi received a salary and raise, the foot soldiers were unpaid and remained so until at least 1907.[26] de Smedt (2009: 53) reminds us that in the absence of a military salary, "giving land was a much cheaper option, and remained for a long time, the KAR soldiers' only pension". However, as the second section of this chapter has shown, the land practices which preceded colonialism and the settlement of Nubians in the region suited migrating and semi-pastoral societies. Therefore, in order to salvage the bankrupt Imperial British East Africa

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[26] Governor of Nairobi to H. M. Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, 13 December 1907. CO 534/5, The National Archives (hereafter TNA).

Company, which was unable to compensate its soldiers, and to provide Nubian soldiers with a place to recuperate, British officials transformed land in Kenya for the needs of a settled community. It is in this period of land transformation (1890-1907) that Kibera was established, and it is for this reason that the Nubian soldiers who settled in Kibera "had good reason to think that the land had been granted to them outright as a community, in reward for military service, in place of repatriating them" (Johnson 2009: 119).

The next section will illustrate how the settlement of Nubian soldiers in Kibera fundamentally changed the meaning of Nubian. This matters because it illustrates what makes Nubians *in Kibera*, Nubian. As I will show, the processes of placemaking and subject-making were co-constituted as Nubian soldiers produced a religious identity and community in settlement and in so doing, produced a sense of home and belonging in and to Kibera. In this respect, the soldiers who settled in Kibera were perhaps the first generation of Nubians to define what it means to be 'Nubian' after centuries of military enslavement and migration. At the same time, their settlement in Kibera was established on a series of unstable grounds, literally and conceptually. In a literal sense, the land on which Nubian soldiers settled was expropriated from indigenous communities and offered no title deed. I will show why taking these circumstances seriously might help us understand what is at stake for the Nubian people of the day when faced with the possibility of eviction from Kibera.

Conceptually, I argue that although Nubian soldiers were initially allowed to settle on a parcel of land which became Kibera due to their 'detribalised' status, this status was imbued with assumptions and expectations on the part of the British about whether Nubians were, and should behave as, Muslims. These assumptions and expectations I show were routinely revised during the colonial period as a way to delegitimise Nubians of the day from owning either or both land and property in Kibera. At the same time, how Nubian elders resisted or exhibited these expectations will be examined in this chapter as the precarious ways in which their belonging in and to Kibera was tied to the material conditions provided by the colonial state. In this respect, I propose that tracing the adaptations and adoptions of 'Nubian', 'Nubi', and 'Sudanese' by both parties offers a historiography of Kibera in its own right whereby these concepts both emerge from and mediate the changing material relations between the colonial state and Nubian elders of the day.

Settling Nubians in British East Africa (1899-1918)

Incidentally, the land in Kenya was not an immediately valuable resource when Captain Lugard, his fellow British representatives for the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC), and the Nubian soldiers arrived in Machakos near present-day Nairobi around 1890. Between 1890 and 1899, rinderpest and smallpox epidemics swept across the region, from Ukamba Province in the east to Nyanza Province in the west, causing widespread casualties to both human and livestock populations (White 1990: 32). The ongoing drought in the eastern region caused significant deterioration to soil fertility, and the lack of animal manure contributed to continuous crop failure and famine (Ainsworth 1900: 189-192). These ecological crises suspended the regular migration of people and cattle and upended the complex social contracts which made these movements possible (Ogot 1976). Given that land in the region was too barren for agriculture and cattle-herding and if, as de Smedt (2011: 53) provides, "giving land was a much cheaper option, and remained for a long time, the KAR soldiers' only pension", why did Captain Lugard convoy his troops to Nairobi?

Lugard (1922: 2-5, 20-21) claims that the expedition to Nairobi served the moral and financial imperatives of the IBEAC. In terms of the moral mandates, the expedition was ordered by Sir William Mackinnon who established the IBEAC, as part of "the opening up of Africa" to civilisation, and in so doing, prevent further "extermination and slavery [that] were practised by African tribes upon each other" (*ibid*., 2-3, 5). To be sure, the eradication of the slave trade aided the IBEAC significantly in securing the route for its own benefit given that, as Lugard explains, "no revenue was coming in" to the Company otherwise "and private funds could not indefinitely sustain the heavy costs incurred" in the Ugandan Mutiny (*ibid*., 20-21). In other words, as formerly enslaved mercenaries, the KAR soldiers were recruited because their knowledge of the slave trade benefited the Company who, in turn, either could not or would not pay their recruits for military services rendered.

Another reason why Nairobi was chosen is that it provided, at the time, various forms of waged labour. In 1895 the British government assumed control of the Imperial British East Africa Company, declared British East Africa (later Kenya) and Uganda protectorates, and commenced construction of the Uganda Railway to replace the migratory caravan route (Thomason 1975: 148). After a railway head was established in Nairobi in 1899, the city became the new administrative headquarters of British East Africa (Ainsworth 1900: 191). Given the employment possibilities of railway construction and the seeming vast availability

of land in Nairobi, British colonial officials in Nairobi presumed that Nubian soldiers would welcome this form of employment (Johnson 2009: 117; Parsons 1997: 88). This, however, was not the case. Former Nubian soldiers recruited by Lord Lugard considered these opportunities unsuitable substitutes for the outstanding military compensation due for service in the 1897 Uganda Mutiny; compensation which they insisted should be land tenure.

The soldiers' reservations were communicated in letters that district commissioners across British East Africa exchanged between 1901 and 1907, concerning the management of Nubian soldiers and their families on Crown Lands.[27] In these letters, the twenty-seven-year-old Chief Native Officer of Ukamba Outward, Captain John Ainsworth explains in detail to colonial officials in London, and those in the East African Protectorate as it was then known, why the expatriation of the soldiers and their families was fraught with logistical, financial, and political issues, given that the Protectorate was bankrupt, the injuries of the soldiers made travel a challenge, and that the soldiers risked persecution upon their return home for supporting the British Empire.[28] In the absence of title deeds to land and, in fact, any form of remuneration, Ainsworth recommended that district commissioners issue Nubian soldiers an "I.O.U" or "post date cheques" until the Protectorate became solvent.[29] In the meantime, the Protectorate found a way for the Nubian community to earn income by granting them "Hawkers License" to trade in Nairobi.[30] In addition to these forms of patronage, Ainsworth approved the designation of Nubians as 'detribalised' due to the "Mohammedan" faith of the soldiers and their "Soudanese" origins. This designation placed Nubians in a privileged position relative to other African communities in Nairobi who were classified as 'native', since 'detribalised' people were exempt from paying Hut Tax.[31]

Despite this special status and the forms of colonial patronage issued, the Protectorate remained unable to settle its debt to the Nubian soldiers. In 1903 the *King's African Rifles Ordinance* was passed which granted the outstanding military pensions to the widows and

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[27] Kenya National Archives (KNA), PC/Coast/1/1/83.

[28] Ainsworth to Railway Warden, 20 May 1901, Ainsworth to Sir Charles Eliot, 25 November 1901, PC/Coast/1/1/83, KNA; Mentioned in Lord Lugard's diaries are here are letters between colonial officials instructing 'the Sudanese' stationed at Unyoro (western Uganda) "to watch the Mohammedans, and if they should clear out, attack them in the rear", 28-29 February 1892 in Perham (1959: 78-79).

[29] Ainsworth to Administrator of Nairobi, 1 January 1901, PC/Coast/1/1/83, KNA.

[30] Ibid.; 'Hut Tax' is a form of taxation imposed on 'native' households living in a British colony in Africa (Rhamdani 1986: 12).

[31] The Official Gazette of the East Africa and Uganda Protectorate, 1901. *Hut Tax No. 18 of 1901*, 23 October 1901.

orphans of soldiers who served in the KAR for longer than twelve years.[32] This piece of legislation remains perhaps the only formal acknowledgement of the Protectorate's commitment to settle its debt with the soldiers in the future, specifically through financial remuneration. Nonetheless, when a parcel of land was established initially in 1904 as a military training site and later partitioned in 1907 to constitute a residence for the Nubian soldiers and their families, it can be said that the Nubian community "had good reason to think that the land had been granted to them outright as a community, in reward for military service, in place of repatriating them" (Johnson 2009: 119). Their descendants will later testify that their forebearers marked this moment as an acknowledgement that Kibera will be theirs "in perpetuity" and "as a pension and in recognition" of services.[33] By 1906, this military training site constituted the largest settlement of KAR soldiers in British East Africa, numbering 2,000 soldiers excluding their family members.[34]

Within less than a decade – between the arrival of the battalion of Nubian soldiers of the King's African Rifles to British East Africa in 1899, and their settlement in Kibera in 1907 – the term 'Nubian' underwent a significant change in meaning. For Ainsworth, and henceforth when used by colonial administrators, a homogenous notion of 'Nubian' was produced. It referred to veterans of the KAR, and later their descendants, who are Muslim and originate from Sudan. Importantly, to colonial administrators, Nubians were 'detribalised' and therefore were not designated to a 'native reserve' nor were they under the jurisdiction of 'native councils' (Parsons 1997: 90). Thus, in addition to being Muslim, to colonial officials, 'detribalised' also meant those non-white persons in Nairobi who were fiscally and politically autonomous.

In this way, the establishment of Kibera as exclusively a Nubian settlement tells us how the formation of Nairobi as headquarters for British East Africa was, from its inception, spatially organised along racialised ideas about which non-white communities could self-govern or not. Colonial officials were not always clear if detribalised natives in Kibera – although law-abiding and esteemed veterans of the Crown – should be left entirely to their own

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[32] The Official Gazette of the East Africa and Uganda Protectorates, 1903. *King's African Rifles Ordinance No. 6 of 1903*, 27 May 1903.

[33] Kenya Land Commission, 1934. *Memorandum and Evidence of the Kenya Land Commission*. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office. 1160.

[34] Williams, G.B., 1907. *Report on the Sanitation of Nairobi and Report on the Townships of Naivasha, Nakuru, and Kisumu*. London: Waterloo. 6.

ways. For instance, in the first decade after Nairobi was made the BEA headquarters, the racialised boundaries which demarcated people and space were reinforced with moral ideologies of contagion and disease. By 1907, 'Indian', 'European', 'KAR' and 'Native' settlements were deliberately separated. The *Report on the Sanitation of Nairobi,* wherein this map can be found, submits that the separation of races will alleviate the spread of both airborne and venereal diseases.[35] In this respect, public health concerns masked colonial anxieties that the (sexual) relations between non-European people would cause communities to become 'native'.[36]

These anxieties appeared to be enhanced during the First World War (1914-1918) as evidenced by the range of public health policies which various colonial actors enforced to eradicate 'unhygienic' and 'unsanitary' practices in Nairobi. Headmistresses of government and mission schools in Nairobi implemented "Hygiene" as a subsection into the curriculum for 'native' and 'Indian' pupils.[37] The Public Works Director, W. McGregor Ross (1904-1923) used the *Report on the Sanitation of Nairobi* to destroy African neighbourhoods in Nairobi between 1915 and 1918 that were deemed zones of malaria, prostitution, and crime. The main point to note is that insofar as colonial officials misunderstood who Nubians are based on their Muslim identity and issued to them the 'detribalised' status as a result, so too were 'natives' misconstrued to legitimise colonial notions of impurity and immorality. The designation of Nubians as 'detribalised', therefore, illustrates how interdependent the category was to notions of who 'natives', 'Indians' and 'Europeans' are; 'detribalised' was precariously situated between 'natives' behaviours and practices which required invasive regulation, and 'Europeans' whose civilities the colonial state model had to protect.

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[35] Ibid., 14.

[36] Ainsworth to Chief Secretary, East Africa Protectorate, 21 February 1916. PC/Coast/1/1/83. KNA.

[37] Evidence of Miss Elizabeth Alice Marshall and Miss Marion Stevenson, 1919. *Evidence of the Education Commission of the East Africa Protectorate*. East Africa Protectorate, Nairobi. 57-59, 84-86.
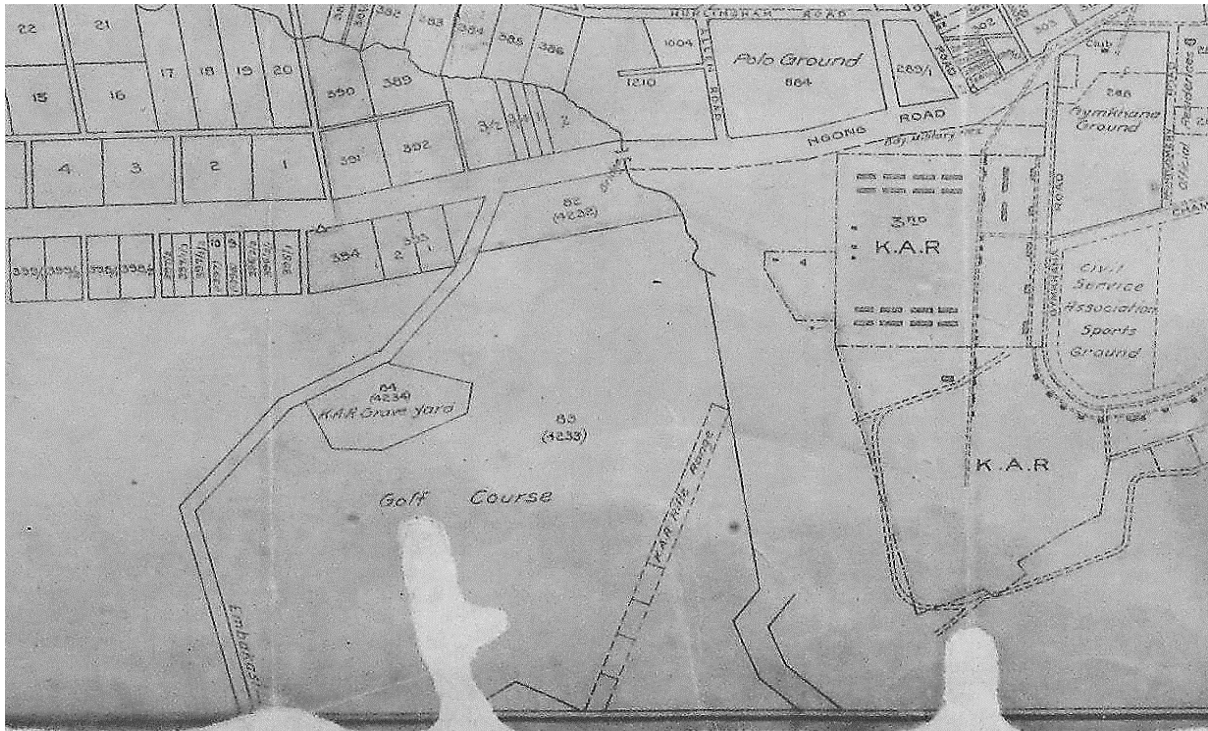
FIGURE 3.1: An enhanced section of the *Key Plan of Nairobi Township 1916-1923* and of the parcel of land that became gazetted and known as 'Kibra'. This enhanced image shows two residential premises of K.A.R to the east (right), and to the west (left), a golf course, K.A.R shooting range and K.A.R cemetery (The National Archives of the United Kingdom, MPGG 1/101/2. *The Key Plan of Nairobi Township 1916-1923*).

Whereas 'at home' in the Protectorate the war provided a space for colonial administrators to interweave moral ideologies tightly with racial categories to manage land and space, these categories were obscured on the frontlines as 'European', 'detribalised' and 'native' soldiers worked alongside against a single enemy. The War had placed the British Crown once more in need of Nubian soldiers, which academics state is the reason that Kibera remained one of the few 'non-European' neighbourhoods to avoid demolition in the interwar period (Parsons 1997: 91-92; White 1990: 46). In fact, in 1918 the year that the demolitions of African settlements in Nairobi commenced, Kibera was officially gazetted as a "Military Area".[38] The 'Military Area' became known as 'Kibra' to Nubians, a word said to derive from the Kinubi word for 'forest' (de Smedt 2011: 4). Importantly, the gazetting meant that Nubian soldiers who returned to Kibera from the war were coming 'home' and had a place to bury their dead, a ritual which radically transformed Kibera into an ancestral home (Parson 1997: 122).

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[38] The Official Gazette of the East African Protectorate, Vol. XX, No.601. July 10, 1918, *General Notice No. 688.* 577.

Thus, given the wartime demand for soldiers and the outstanding debt owed to Nubian soldiers, the British colonial state appeared to loosen its definition of Kibera thereby allowing the definition of Kibera to shift from a military barracks *for* Nubian soldiers to the home and ancestral homeland *of* the Nubian soldiers. Whereas before WWI the colonial state assumed all 'detribalised' Nubian soldiers are Muslim, the fact that Nubian soldiers returned from the war to a home and a place to bury their dead provided paradoxically the material conditions for the latter to define and express what it means to be Nubian *in Kibera*. In the next section, I will illustrate how colonial administrators approached the increased valuation of land on which Kibera was occupied by attempting to consolidate a criterion on which to evaluate the Muslimness of Nubians.

To be sure, colonial officials were not concerned with determining whether Nubians shared a belief system or collectively performed a set of practices. Rather, Muslimness indexed idiosyncratic expectations by colonial officials that Nubians should behave in order to verify their ability to own land and property in the Kenya Colony. That these expectations were enacted at the discretion of the colonial official exposed the lack of standardised regulation in the colony and later revealed a lack of trust among colonial officials, about whether their colleagues could enforce such expectations of the Nubian people.

Re-tribalising the Nubians of Kibera (1920-1933)

In April 1920, two months before the King of Britain decreed the British East Africa Protectorate a colony of the British Empire, a man by the name of "Nur Awali" was apprehended in Moyale District in the north-eastern region of Kenya, on route to British Somaliland.[39] It was reported that Awali was in possession of a "Non-Native Poll Tax Receipt" issued in Nairobi in 1919, which he carried to evidence his detribalised status as a way to move freely between the administrative boundaries of the Protectorate.[40] Although it is unclear why Awali was apprehended in Moyale, his case triggered a series of embittered appeals by the Senior Commissioner of the Northern Frontier Province to the Acting Chief Native

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[39] The Special Official Gazette of the East Africa Protectorate, Vol. XXII, No. 723. July 23, 1920. *Government Notice No. 242*. 697-698.

[40] Acting Officer of the Northern Frontier District to the Chief Native Commissioner, 8 April 1920. PC/NFD/4/1/6. KNA.

Commissioner, to jettison what the Senior Commissioner regarded as an increasingly futile 'detribalised' status. Between 1920 and 1929, these two parties debated about who and what should count as 'detribalised'.

Of prime concern to the Senior Commissioner, and his reason for informing the Acting Chief Native Commissioner whose office did not oversee detribalised issues, were the following two reasons. Firstly, many detribalised Nubian soldiers were not Muslim according to the Senior Commissioner and there was no way to verify their religious identity. Second, the Senior Commissioner bemoaned the lack of discipline amongst district commissioners in Nairobi past and present to uphold detribalised people to the expected principles and virtues of this status.[41] His critique of his colleagues and the effects it produced would extend beyond Nur Awali and include other 'Muhammadans' in the detribalised category; namely, 'Swahilis', 'Somalis', and 'Nubians'.

How did a lone and itinerant figure create such confusion and discord among colonial officials? Why was the Senior Commissioner insecure about the categories by which non-Europeans in the Kenya Colony were classified and controlled? What might the case of Nur Awali tell us about the ways in which detribalised persons were managed in the early period of the Kenya Colony? On the one hand, the case of Nur Awali illustrates the assumptions and expectations of 'detribalised' Nubian soldiers about what benefits the category affords them. For other detribalised 'Muhammadans' living in the Kenya Colony during this time, like Somalis, a Non-Native Poll Tax Receipt "often served as a "passport" to prove legitimate residence" so as to freely move in and outside the colony (MacArthur 2019: 122). In this respect, we see how detribalised 'Muhammadans' at the time understood and performed seemingly contradictory practices of mobility and belonging. On the other hand, the commissioners' concern about the mobility of detribalised persons illustrates their lack of confidence in the system and their low expectations as to whether their colleagues will uphold and enforce rule and order. Such disagreement and distrust amongst colonial officials demonstrate why colonial categories could not be universally applied across the Colony. It also provides insight into how exceptionally untenable it was for persons like Nur Awali to perform the expected behaviours of a detribalised person in order to move in the Kenya Colony.

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[41] Senior Commissioner of the Northern Frontier Province to the Acting Officer of the Northern Frontier District to the Chief Native Commissioner, 20 August 1922, 5 December 1923, PC/NFD/4/1/6.

Frustrated that his demands and appeals were overturned, the Senior Commissioner desperately charged that Nubians who arrived in the Northern Frontier District originated from "townships in Nairobi where their presence is embarrassing to the Government and where life is demoralising".[42] Since Nubians are no longer, or worse, may have never been of 'standing' as colonial officials hitherto alleged, their presence, the Senior Commissioner recommended, should be contained and internally regulated in Nairobi before they were allowed to move between the districts and counties of the Kenya Colony.[43] Although the Acting Chief Native Officer assured the Senior Commissioner that "Nubians seem to stand on a different footing and I think that land might be found for them in the area", the district commissioners of the Northern Frontier Province were slow to implement this recommendation and most ignored it altogether.[44]

Although the limitations of these categories were revealed in the frontier district of Moyale, it became the task of the capital to enclose these categorical boundaries. The debates above persuaded the Acting Chief Native Officer of the Kenya Colony to task the District Commissioner of Nairobi, E. B. Hosking, to ascertain why Nubians were misbehaving outside Kibera. The first way in which Hosking pursued this task was by transferring Kibera from military supervision to the direct administration of the District Commissioner of Nairobi (de Smedt 2011: 71). This means that Kibera also officially lost its status as a military barracks, and under the auspices of the District Commissioner of Nairobi, became a civilian community. In this respect, Nubian soldiers lost the privilege to self-manage in Kibera.

Following this transfer, Hosking alleged that the possible reason for misconduct was due to the production and trade of the infamous 'Nubian Gin' or 'Arak'.[45] Hosking was not the only British colonial officer to note that alcohol distillation may be the root of the Nubians' disorder. In 1890, Frederick Lugard (1922: 604) similarly observed that 'the Sudanese' had such an 'art' for distilling alcohol that 'natives' were left very inebriated by the drink. Despite noting that "[m]any old women rely entirely on their illicit distilling to earn a livelihood", Hosking insisted that their engagement with alcohol disqualified Nubians of their detribalised

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[42] Acting Officer of the Northern Frontier District to the Chief Native Commissioner to the Senior Commissioner of the Northern Frontier Province, 14 May 1929, PC/NFD/4/1/6, KNA.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Acting Officer of the Northern Frontier District to the Chief Native Commissioner to the Senior Commissioner of the Northern Frontier Province, 4 June 1929. PC/NFD/4/1/6, KNA.

[45] Evidence by E. B. Hosking, 3 March 1933, Kenya Land Commission *Evidence*, 1933. 1155.

status and legitimised their relocation from Kibera since distillation meant that Nubians were not working the land.[46] As he confessed; "I admire the Nubi, but would like to see him happily settled say 10 miles from Nairobi".[47]

Tackling the 'Nubian Gin' problem and the relocation of Nubians from Kibera was postponed for three reasons, all of which highlight the political differences and disagreements amongst colonial officials about how Nubian soldiers should be honoured for their role in the KAR. First, Nubian veterans had influential allies in London and elsewhere in the Commonwealth, including Federick Lugard, who advocated on their behalf.[48] Correspondence between military officers under whom Nubian veterans served and the Colonial Secretary shows that the eviction of Nubians from Kibera was stalled on account of the emphasis placed on the debt that the British Crown owes to these soldiers.[49] Second, the Game Warden protested the land earmarked for Nubians' relocation in the interest of animal conservation.[50]

Third, the visitation of H. R. H Prince of Wales to the Kenya Colony in 1928 suspended both the inspection of the gin trade and the relocation of Nubians from Kibera, and once again reconfigured the power relations between Nubian veterans and colonial officials. Given the exemplary portrayal of Nubian soldiers by their military officers who served in WWI, the Chief Secretary arranged for the Prince of Wales to pin on the military jackets of Nubian veterans a special medal with distinct colours for their service in the King's African Rifles.[51] Most Nubian veterans initially announced to Hosking that they would attend the ceremony only "if their expenses can be met there and back", and later requested payment for their attendance, to which the Chief Secretary agreed.[52] This highly publicised event renewed the prestige of Nubian soldiers to colonial officials in the colony and metropole, and significantly undermined Hosking's attempt to demote Nubians from the detribalised status and relocate them from Kibera.

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[46] Evidence by E. B. Hosking, 3 March 1933, Kenya Land Commission *Evidence*, 1933. 1155.

[47] District Commissioner of Nairobi to the Provincial Commissioner of Nyeri, 27 April 1931, MAA 2/1/3/i, KNA.

[48] Notes of a Meeting with the Joint East African Board, 17 June 1924, CO 533/12340/015, TNA.

[49] Provincial Commissioner to Colonial Secretary, 7 June 1940, MAA 2/1/3/ii, KNA.

[50] E. B. Hosking, 3 March 1933, Kenya Land Commission *Evidence*, 1154.

[51] Chief Secretary of Nairobi to the District Commissioner of Nairobi, 19 September 1928, PC/NZA/3/50/7/7, KNA.

[52] District Commission of Nairobi to the Chief Secretary of Nairobi, 7 September 1928, PC/NZA/3/50/7/7, KNA; Chief Secretary of Nairobi to the District Commissioner of Nairobi, 18-20 September 1928, PC/NZA/3/50/7/7, KNA.

In the early 1930s, Hosking jettisoned the charge of religious inauthenticity against Nubians and proceeded instead with the debt discourse of the day, acknowledging in correspondence with his soon-to-be successor that "[t]he old Nubi is a man to whom the Colony owes much".[53] This political shift by Hosking was part of the rebranding of his political character, an attempt to fall in step with the sensibilities of his colleagues and superiors. At the *baraza* (S: meeting) held in April 1931 with the senior Nubian veterans and the Native Affairs officer, Hosking hears for the first time the testimonies of Nubian veterans against their eviction from Kibera.[54] Recounting the manner in which Nubian veterans presented their case, Hosking noted to his colleague that

> His [Nubian] attitude at present though truculent and difficult is understandable. He thinks that Government persuaded him to remain here and make his home here as a loyal reservist and now when he is no longer needed as a soldier he is turned adrift into the world, hundreds of miles from his home.

Employing the trappings of sympathy, Hosking made no attempt to conclusively settle the acknowledged debt to the Nubians. Instead, and in his vague comprehension of the dual meanings of "home" amongst the Nubian community in Kibera – as a place in the colony and "hundreds of miles" outside it – Hosking demonstrates an insight that the Senior Commissioner of the Northern Frontier Province did not in the case of Nur Awali; that to encourage people to order themselves within their assigned categorical domains, even in the case where the Crown owes a debt to its subjects, the latter requires a home on Crown Lands wherein they can domesticate and naturalise this category rather than subvert it. By agreeing that Nubian veterans would live out their lives in Kibera and that their descendants will be allowed to reside in Kibera on the condition that no further houses be built, Hosking showed that retaining the detribalised status was better than having people like Nur Awali be "turned adrift in the world" and show up in districts within the colony. This political tactic, albeit brief, proved successful for Hosking as the older generation of Nubian men agreed to supervise their itinerant youth and manage the gin brewing trade done by women, thus preventing friction between himself, his fellow colonial administrators, and his superiors.

In this respect, we see that in the decade in which Kenya became a British colony, both the detribalised status and the authorising principle of religious authenticity by which this status

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[53] Major A. W. Sutcliffe to the District Commissioner of Nairobi, 13 May 1931, BN 46/4/49, KNA.
[54] District Commissioner of Nairobi to Provincial Commissioner of Kikuyu, 27 April 1931, PC/CP 9/15/3, KNA.

was maintained, proved insufficient to verify whether someone is Muslim. Detribalised persons had their own ideas about what this status affords them and acted on these assumptions by moving in and out of the Kenya Colony. Moreover, whereas some colonial officials demanded an agreed-upon apparatus by which all provincial and district commissioners would govern their detribalised constituents, others like Hosking manipulated this grievance to advance his brand of colonial rule and for self-promotion. Such idiosyncratic observations of colonial rule showed up in dramatic ways during the 1933 Kenya Land Commission which the British Parliament constituted to consider, amongst other issues, the feasibility of a centralised land policy for detribalised persons in the colony.[55] In the next section, I show how the Nubian elders of Kibera used the claim that Kibera constitutes the material reward that the British Empire bestowed to their ancestors as the central religious myth of the construction of Nubian religiosity.

Defining Nubians in The Land Commission of 1933

Through a collection of correspondences, minutes, official reports, maps, and gazettes, this chapter has thus far illustrated the quotidian ways in which colonial officials determined and differed on the Muslimness of Nubians in order to manage land on the one hand, and the material relations between the Empire and Nubians on the other. By navigating this constellation of archival material, my task was neither to recover nor stabilise the history of Kibera as a coherent narrative. I also did not intend to illustrate how the colonial 'cover up' of Empire's indebtedness to Nubians was achieved through the unreasonable expectation for Nubians to be Muslim. Despite circumventing and sometimes denying their indebtedness to Nubians past and present, indebtedness was nonetheless an open secret. This open secret was expressed amongst colonial officials in terms of frustration and confusion about how to categorise Nubians, how to regulate Kibera, manage 'detribalised' persons, enforce the expectations of officials in London regarding Nubian veterans, and what all of this meant for their ability to administrate. I showed that as long as this material debate remained unsettled, Nubians of the day had legitimation to circumvent and sometimes circumscribe the categorical tenets of their religious identity as Muslims, and move in and out of Kibera and Kenya. All of

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[55] Kenya Land Commission *Report*. 1934: 1.

this changed, however, once the Kenya Land Commission (hereafter KLC) was established in 1932.

Kenya Land Commission was established to determine whether the colonial state has, or had, a "moral obligation" to Nubians and if Kibera constitutes that obligation as opposed to any other parcel of land.[56] What makes the KLC unique in terms of archival analysis is the discursive procedures by which the question of "moral obligation" was approached. Insofar as colonial commissions are standard procedures for dealing with crises, their affinity is also derived from the ability of commissions to reaffirm the political myths of the state in times of duress. Commissions invoke the past in order to provide prescriptions for the present and predictions of the future. In this way, commissions present the state with an occasion to renew its political myth (Stoler 2002: 103-107; 2010:141-142).

One of the ways in which this myth-affirming practice took place in the KLC is how British colonial officials perceived the land crisis in Kenya to emerge from the heterogeneous and divisible system of land tenure amongst African people. This 'native' land tenure system was assumed to create a network of conflicting social contracts rather than an outcome of the continuous alienation of white settlers (MacArthur 2016; MacKenzie 1996). These presumed notions of the causes of land conflict in Kenya illustrated how certain truths were often "preordained" before the commission heard evidence (Stoler 2010: 141).

Another way in which the KLC can be understood as an occasion to affirm the political myth of British colonialism was in the choice of chairmanship which was granted to Sir William Morris Carter. Carter was both the former Chief Justice of the Uganda Protectorate and former commissioner of the Land Commission of Southern Rhodesia in 1925 (later Zimbabwe) which found that indigenous people possessed no inalienable rights to land in the colony and recommended the continuation of segregation of people as well as the denial of land tenure to indigenous people.[57] In his role as the Commissioner of the KLC, Carter was appointed to determine three issues of similar concern; whether the land tenure of African people should be based on tribal or individual ownership, whether land should be set aside for detribalised people, and how to negotiate the claims by Africans over land alienated to

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[56] Ibid., 170-171.

[57] Southern Rhodesia Land Commission, 1925. *Report of Southern Rhodesia Land Commission*. Salisbury: Government Printing Press.

detribalised people.[58] Two co-commissioners were subsequently appointed; namely, Captain F. O'B. Wilson and Mr R. W. Hemsted.

The notion that commissioners are impartial further reaffirms and reinforces the legitimacy of colonialism in the British Parliament at the time. From its inception, the KLC encountered criticisms, notably from the House of Lords on this point of impartiality.[59] One month before the Commission was to receive testimonies in June 1932, the Lords debated the composition of the Commission, specifically whether each commissioners' relationship with Africa and African people would complicate not only the success of the commission, but the ways in which evidence would be offered and the findings implemented. The most ardent critic was Lord Sanderson who submitted before the House of Lords that

> Had the Commission consisted entirely of men in the position of ex-officials who could not be supposed to be taking the point of view of either the white settlers or the African population, I doubt whether I should have raised this question in your Lordships' House. But Captain F. O'B. Wilson is in quite a different category. He is a white settler and a landowner. It may be, for all I know, that he is actually occupying land which the African population, rightly or wrongly, regard as stolen from them and alienated by the Crown. He has been, I believe, rather closely identified with a section of the settlers who have advocated the alienation of more or of all land by the Crown. Of course, he may be able to keep perfectly impartial on the Commission; I dare say he will. But the African population will not regard him as an impartial member of the Commission, and I think it is not too much to say that some of the white settlers will not expect him to be altogether impartial. He will be looked upon, at any rate, as in the position of a judge who is also one of the litigants.[60]

Although Lord Sanderson was not supported by the rest of the House, his dissatisfaction with the composition of the KLC reveals a rather naive assumption that the land commission could succeed if impartial people like Wilson were excluded or, as he went on to suggest, if "one or two Africans" were included. Put differently, by narrowing his criticism to *who* was unsuitable for the commission, Sanderson remained convinced that the instruments of colonial rule could resolve the Kenyan land crisis. Such confidence that the commission could help indigenous

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[58] Kenya Land Commission *Report*. 1934: 1.
[59] House of Lords Debate, 04 May 1932, Vol 84 Col 306-313.
[60] Ibid., Col 307.

Kenyans if more African representatives were included was upheld by even anti-colonial activists such as Jomo Kenyatta.[61]

In June 1932, the Commission convened in London where it heard testimonies of retired civil servants living in England.[62] Those who gave testimony were amongst the first officials of the Imperial British East Africa Company to arrive in Nairobi between 1894 and 1899, and confirmed the colonial myth that land in and around Nairobi was unoccupied and uncultivated.[63] The only mention of Nubians is offered by Mr. C. R. W Lane, the former Provincial Commissioner of Nairobi, who notes that the KAR soldiers who arrived with Captain Lugard assisted his journey by foot from Nairobi to Fort Hall.[64] When the Commission relocated to Nairobi on 2 August 1932, it proceeded questioning along two veins. First, it asked whether any land tenure system can be said to exist prior to colonisation given that land was neither occupied nor cultivated, and second, whether non-Europeans should continue to inhabit 'Crown Lands' if they do not cultivate the land.[65]

The second question concerned specifically those classified as 'detribalised'. Those who provided evidence were asked specifically about whether detribalised people worked the land or not. A crucial turning point in the Commission was how colonial officials in Nairobi alleged that urban Muslims were not using land for grazing or cultivation, but as a space to detribalise people through religious conversion According to the Municipal Native Affairs Officer of Nairobi at the time, the calibre of detribalised 'Mohammadans' whom Lugard praised had deteriorated and a new wave of detribalisation afflicted the city whereby 'Mohammadan' men deceptively convert 'native' girls to Islam without parental consent.[66] For the Officer and his colleague the Superintendent of the Native Locations of Nairobi, the detribalised status no longer protects the Nubians of Kibera from eviction.[67] The Officer argued instead that

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[61] Ibid.

[62] Kenya Land Commission *Report*. 1934: 2.

[63] Evidence by Mr. C. B. Hausberg, 9 June 1932, Kenya Land Commission *Evidence*. 1933. 390-391; Evidence by Hon. Charles C. F. Dundas, 16 June 1932, Kenya Land Commission *Evidence*. 1933. 420.

[64] Evidence by Mr. C. R. W Lane, former Provincial Commissioner of Nairobi, 10 June 1932, Kenya Land Commission *Evidence*. 1933. 400.

[65] Kenya Land Commission *Report*. 1934. 2.

[66] Evidence by Mr. H. A. Carr, Municipal Native Affairs Officer of Nairobi, 15 February 1933, Kenya Land Commission *Evidence*. 1933. 1119-1123.

[67] Evidence by Mr. D. W. Young, the Superintendent of the Native Locations of Nairobi, 15 February 1933, Kenya Land Commission *Evidence*. 1933. 1135-1136.

If they go back to the reserves the chances are that their children will grow up decent people. If they continue living in the town there is very little hope of that. The fact that so many of them [detribalised] have become Islamized may in some cases show that they have lost touch with their tribe, but some of them become Islamized very easily and many of them are not real Mohammadans at all.

Quite a number of young girls have left their parents in the reserve and come to live in the town. Mohammadans get hold of these girls, give them a Mohammadan name and marry them to friends according to Mohammadan custom and when the parents come along for them they cannot get them.

The Officer's description that 'native' women became 'Mohammadan' through marriage was not a new phenomenon in either the genealogy of Nubians or the social history of Kibera. In fact, the assumption that people could "very easily" convert to Islam and that many "are not real Mohammadans at all" was not limited to the Officer, as a member of the Union of the Sudanese explained, but a trope that the member believed most colonial officials held.[68] That said, the tension in the above testimony lies not so much in its (lack of) veracity or hubris but in the anxiety by which the Officer describes the inability to control to whom and by whom the detribalised status is issued, an anxiety expressed by colonial officials previously mentioned in this chapter. Put differently, at stake in the Officer's testimony is if the colonial state cannot regulate the designation of 'detribalised' or enforce certain expectations of 'detribalised' persons, then how can it be sure that Kibera is not misused?

This issue of seeming rampant conversion to Islam was presented as not only a challenge to colonial rule and order but a social health concern as well. As Nairobi's Deputy Director of Sanitary Services explained, the growing number of people who "become Mohammadans" had caused both overpopulation and unemployment in Kibera since there were too many "people without enough land to keep them busy".[69] Such evidence was, however, rejected by the District Commissioner of Nairobi at the time who challenged the claim that detribalisation was taking place under his watch or that "many other detribalized natives live in Kibira as well as the Nubians". Although he maintains that Kibera was not granted to former Nubian soldiers for pension and in perpetuity, the District Commissioner stated that "the

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[68] see Hassan Abia, Hon. Secretary, the Union of Sudanese, Kibra, Nairobi to Lugard, 14 January 1941, RH MSS Lugard L85/3 2022 in Johnson 2009: 124.

[69] Memorandum by Dr. A. R. Patterson, Deputy Director of Sanitary Services, Kenya Land Commission *Evidence*. 1933. 1143.

statements that many other detribalized natives live at Kibira as well as the Nubians is exaggerated. A careful recent inspection shows that there are only five householders who are neither ex-soldiers nor relatives of ex-soldiers".[70] In this respect and as in the case of his predecessor, E. B. Hosking, the current District Commissioner of Nairobi negated these representations of detribalised Nubians in order to counter and perhaps avoid questioning by the Commission of his authority over the district of Nairobi, or lack thereof.

Testimonies by colonial officials who were sympathetic to Nubians revived the debate about whether the British Empire had a "moral obligation" to the Nubians. The final testimony regarding the Nubian community of Kibera was a glowing report offered by Captain B. F Montgomery who supervised the 5th Battalion of the King's African Rifles. In his testimony, Montgomery stated that Nubian soldiers were not idle residents of Kibera but cultivated land, and that, "every man has a plot of land. It is well worth it. It is extraordinary the way they retain their military customs and routine. The plots are all very clean and well laid out".[71] According to Montgomery, the Nubian soldiers in his battalion were not from Sudan but were recruited in Uganda by Capt. Lugard. Further, "except for one Abyssinian and one Arab" all residents in Kibera were Nubians to his knowledge, although "[t]he present generation are mixed owing to intermarriage" (*ibid*.). For this reason, Montgomery concluded his testimony that "all existing serving soldiers of the second generation be allowed to continue to live there during their lifetime".[72]

Montgomery's testimony, albeit in admiration of the Nubian community, illustrates that the moral character of Nubians could be redeemed only through their relationship with colonial officials. His testimony was less a contribution to the circumstances facing the Nubian community than a moral tale of the longstanding ability of the British Empire and its representatives to recognise and seemingly respect the qualities of those whose station is regarded beneath whites. In this respect, the testimony by Capt. Montgomery illustrates how the underlying objective of the KLC to recover the political narrative of the British Empire influenced the nature of the testimonies received, as both Lord Sanderson and Jomo Kenyatta forewarned.

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[70] Memorandum by Mr. C. H. Adams, District Commission, Nairobi, Detribalized Natives, Kenya Land Commission *Evidence*. 1933. 1149.

[71] Evidence by Capt. B. F. Montgomery, 7 February 1932, Kenya Land Commission *Evidence*. 1933. 1158-1159.

[72] Ibid.

Finally, in a joint memorandum by the "Elders of Kibira", the voice of Nubians appears for the first time in the archival record.[73] The six elders, all former soldiers of the KAR, maintain that

> ...the lands were given to us and our descendants as a pension and in recognition of our
> services. Some of us came down from Uganda with Lord Lugard and others were recruited
> in the Sudan; and we were told that Kibira should be ours in perpetuity and that Government
> wishes us to settle on it, and not return to our native country.

In this joint memorandum, the Elders characterise who Nubians are, namely, a community of soldiers of heterogeneous origins who are loyal to their patron and perceive their patron as a symbolic figure of the state. By outlining these characteristics, the Elders present two conjoint arguments. The first is that the conditions under which Nubian soldiers were recruited by Captain Lugard, and the colonial state's initial and ongoing inability to expatriate soldiers to their 'native country' and compensate these soldiers as evidenced by Ainsworth's deployment of colonial patronage, explains why they perceive the land to be theirs in perpetuity. The second argument is more supplicatory in nature in that the Elders explained that their place in the Kenya Colony, and perhaps the longevity of the Nubian community, remains dependent on the material conditions either owed or provided to them by the colonial state. In this sense, the memorandum conveys what the Elders consider is at stake for the Nubian community should the colonial state reclaim Kibera. Both readings of the memorandum show how instrumental land and place are for shaping and sustaining the Nubian community of Kibera.

The Elders later invited the British Empire to conscript their sons and grandsons, arguing that the Nubian people "are very glad for their children and grandchildren to serve in the King's African Rifles or the Police and would like the Government to conscript them.[74] In this way and in order to remain in Kibera 'in perpetuity', the Nubian ex-soldiers entered once more into a contract with the colonial state which was ratified in the KLC *Report* (1934: 170-171)

> There is nothing in the gazettement to show for what reason so large an area was required,
> but it is common knowledge that one of the objects was to provide a home for Sudanese
> ex-askaris. It cannot be said that these facilities were provided for the Sudanese in lieu of

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[73] Memorandum of Ex-soldiers of the King's African Rifles, 7 January 1933, Kenya Land Commission *Evidence*. 1933. 1160.

[74] Evidence by Mohamed bin Abubaker, Aminalla Mohamed, Absura Salim. 10 May 1933, Kenya Land Commission *Evidence*. 1933.

pension, since they received a gratuity on retirement. But no doubt it was felt that there was a moral obligation either to repatriate them or to find them homes in the country, and it was also hoped that the institution of a military cantonment of this kind would form a useful recruiting ground when the sons of these ex-askaris should grow up. Presumably it was thought that the settlement would increase, since their sons in turn would retire and beget families, and therefore so large a reservation was made.

While we are fully satisfied of the necessity for moving the unauthorized residents of Kibira, we are not convinced of the necessity for moving the Sudanese. Their past services to Government entitle them to sympathetic consideration, and it is certain that they would prefer to stay where they are.

In the first section of the above extract, the Commissioners present the historical and material conditions of the colonial state's "moral obligation" to "the Sudanese", and redefine them by way of its benevolent "sympathetic consideration". By referring to Nubians as "the Sudanese" – despite the description presented by the Elders of Kibira of their heterogeneous origins – the Commissioners effectively recast the otherness of this community in national terms and in terms of national difference. Here, "the Sudanese" is not so much an invention of a new category of people, but an emergent grammar of political difference and non-belonging, a grammar that performs a kind of exclusionary ideology and practice of the Nubian community without formal policy. Historians have shown in their analysis of other communities that appeared before the Kenya Land Commission, that the Commission was successful at consolidating land as a national concern for the British Empire (MacArthur 2016; MacKenzie 1996; Moskowitz 2019). It did so by construing the plurality and heterogeneity within communities as not only incongruent to land tenure, but "potentially subversive and destructive to national stability" (MacArthur 2016: 3). In so doing, a new obligation emerged, one in which communities were required to present themselves as homogenous – and in the case of Nubians, as indigenous – to qualify for political belonging and land tenure in the Kenya Colony.

In this respect, the Kenya Land Commission reminds us that religion and colonialism were inextricably linked projects for aggregating people and land in the Kenya Colony. To say that religion was a colonial project is to understand that what counted as 'religion' was itself a contested space that emerged from contestations over land as either a form of material reward or colonial possession. To say that colonialism is a religious project is to acknowledge that categories like 'detribalised' were used by the colonial state to neutralise, and by the Nubian

community to emphasise, its respective claim to and meaning of land. The following section examines the extent to which the outcomes of the KLC were implemented during the Second World War, which required the services of Nubian soldiers on the frontlines.

Domesticating Nubian Households during World War II (1939-1945)

According to Lieutenant Colonel H. Moyse-Bartlett, (1956 [2012]: 475), the official historian for the King's African Rifles, "East Africa was not taken by surprise on the occasion of the Second World War". Before the war broke out in September 1939, the KAR in Kenya expanded its recruits by 2,900 soldiers, which grew to about 98,240 soldiers during the war (Killingray and Plaut 2012: 25, 44). Although the exact number of Nubian soldiers who participated in the Second World War remains unclear, Parsons (1997:104) suggests that in 1940, the soldiers constituted only one percent of the 3rd battalion of KAR. That said, the 3rd battalion earned high praise from their military officers and remained the only "machine-gun battalion" in the infantry brigade of the KAR (Moyse-Bartlett 1956 [2012]: 480). It seems that to service its war efforts, colonial officials conveniently overlooked the otherness of Nubian soldiers; that is, their 'Soudanese' identity.

At home, political unrest amongst urban African workers reverberated throughout the Kenya Colony. The dock strike in Mombasa in 1939, a response by African workers against labour insecurities and poor living conditions in the city, brought into sharp relief the role of the colonial state to provide better housing and wages to the expanding urban population.[75] The colonial government in Nairobi confessed that it was unsurprised that 'native unrest' arose from urban challenges. It remarked that it, "had recently [placed] under consideration certain aspects of the native problem arising out of urbanisation and has reached the conclusion that the ultimate solution was the provision of adequate and suitable housing at rents properly related to native incomes" (Parker 1949: 88). Thus, starting in the 1940s, municipal authorities and town planning officials in Nairobi worked to systematically create housing suburbs for African workers, where a home and a stable family were considered a way to depoliticise urban disorder. As the Ogilvie Report (1946: 58) recommended, "the African communities will

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[75] Willan, H. C., 1939. *Report of the Commission of Inquiry Appointed to Examine the Labour Conditions in Mombasa*. Nairobi: Government Printer.

become more settled and a series of happy family homes established where the needs of all age groups will be catered for".[76]

However, domesticity should not be confused as a 'civilising mission' intended to placate what was in hindsight a burgeoning African nationalist movement that pre-staged the Mau Mau Movement.[77] Domesticity included malevolent efforts on the part of colonial officials to propel Kibera 'to die a natural death' (Parsons 1997: 99). This was achieved in two ways. First, given that the urban housing projects in Nairobi provided new forms of housing security for African 'salary men', Muslim homeowners were left subsequently without a stable source of rental income (Lonsdale 2010: 17; see also Sarre 2018). Second, without rental income and given that their husbands, fathers, and sons were on active duty during the Second World War, Nubian women in Kibera increased the production of 'Nubian Gin'. Although several Provincial Commissioners tried to eradicate this industry, African salaries generated an insatiable demand for Nubian Gin and the industry itself was difficult to locate, since distillation took place at night and inside the home, and gin could not be easily distinguished from water (also see de Smedt 2009: 209).[78] What became known as "the Kibera Problem" evidenced the inventiveness of Nubian women to generate new forms of dependency on Nubian labour during times of duress and in ways which posed a direct threat to the colonial project of African domesticity.[79]

In 1938, the District Commissioner of Nairobi and his Provincial Commissioner agreed to deny the residents of Kibera access to piped water in order to starve gin brewing altogether.[80] The District Commissioner further advocated that this strategy can be explained in part by the fact that Kibera lies outside the municipal boundary and therefore, outside the city's water and sanitation plan:

> The process of manufacture of Nubian gin requires large quantities of water both for the making of it and for cooling the distillation plant. No doubt the Municipal supply would be ideal for this and probably would produce a purer quality and better flavoured beverage

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[76] Ogilvie, Gordon C. W. 1946. *The Housing of Africans in the Urban Areas of Kenya*. Nairobi: Kenya Information Office.

[77] For domesticity as a form of British colonial rule in Africa, see Hunt, N.R., 1999. *A Colonial Lexicon: Of Birth Ritual, Medicalization, and Mobility in the Congo*. Duke University Press.; McClintock, A., 1995. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. Routledge.

[78] S. H. La Fontaine, PC/AR 1937, KNA; C. Tomkinson, PC/AR 1940; G. J. W. Pedraza, PC/AR 1959.

[79] J.D. McKean, PC/AR 649.

[80] District Commissioner of Nairobi to Provincial Commissioner, 16 May 1938, MAA 2/1/3/i, KNA.

than is produced at present, while of course it would guarantee a steady output regardless of weather conditions.

This pattern of intentional water restriction continued with the next District Commissioner, E.G. St. Tisdall, who informed the Director of Medical Services for the municipality that the "established water policy endorsed by the Chief Secretary is that no permanent water supply should be established at Kibra because it is undesirable that the Nubian Settlement there should be permanent".[81] While this biopolitics of water worked to reduce the gin brewing industry, it was not successful on its own. The sustained lack of adequate rainfall between 1938 and 1942, contributed to the disincentivisation of gin brewing, since women normally relied on water from the Nairobi River (de Smedt 2009: 209).[82] Additionally, Nubian women were forced to abandon the industry due to an increase in violent liquor raids in Kibera which were accompanied by severe police misconduct, according to first-hand accounts presented to the Police Commissioner of Nairobi.[83] Whereas 146 convictions were issued between 1931 and 1936 to people who were in possession of illegal liquor in and around Kibera, in 1943 there were 123 convictions alone (de Smedt 2009: 213). During the early 1940s when warrants of arrest were issued, Nubian women fled Kibera for a few weeks, some were apprehended as far as western Kenya.[84]

Although Kibera and Kiberans were excluded from the colonial state's narrow idea that wives would serve a particular role in its housing development scheme in Nairobi, the labour practices of Nubian women in Kibera nevertheless exposed the limits of this narrow idea. What the colonial state failed to recognise was that gin brewing emerged from a tradition of female labour and Nubian sociality, rather than an industry or mode of criminality (de Smedt 2009: 206). This means that through gin brewing, Nubian women could head and sustain their households and preserve important traditions and customs for social continuity.[85] Thus, when the Provincial Commissioner of Central Kenya S. H. La Fontaine, sympathetic to the circumstances of recent Nubian widows who lost their husbands in the Second World War,

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[81] District Commissioner of Nairobi to the Director of Medical Services, 10 April 1941, BY 13/302, KNA; Legislative Council Debates, Official Reports. 22-25 March 1960. 52, 55-56.

[82] For discussion on rainfall in Central Province between the late 1930s and early 1940s, see Anderson 1984: 331; Moskowitz 2019: 148.

[83] Letter to Commissioner of Police, 14 October 1933, MAA 2/1/3/i, KNA; Legislative Council Debates, Official Reports. 22-25 March 1960. 52, 55-56.

[84] Officer of the District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo, 31 January 1944, DC/KSM/1/21/5, KNA.

[85] The 1944 'Kibera Survey Report' by Deverell and Colchester demonstrates that the number of female-headed households amongst Nubian families increased by 32 percent between 1930 and 1944 (KNA, MAA 2/l/3/ii, 2).

presented them with a "compassionate allowance" to dissuade women from returning to gin brewing as a source of income, the industry continued to thrive in intimate social gatherings.[86]

In addition to the biopolitics of water restriction, the use of coded permits to authorise who may erect a home, furthered the colonial cause to permanently evict the Nubian community from Kibera. In May 1947, Captain W. H. Kitching was hired by La Fontaine as a permanent superintendent for Kibera to immediately investigate "the situation regarding unauthorised residents in the area".[87] Barely a fortnight into Kitching's post, the Sudanese Association of East Africa penned a letter to the Civil Secretary about what "a special enquiry into the whole question of the future of the settlement of Kibera" meant for "the ex-soldiers and their descendants".[88] Although the archives appear not to hold a reply from the Office of the Civil Secretary to the Sudanese Association of East Africa, within two years of his appointment, Kitching presented a *Memorandum by the Superintendent of Kibera* which states that his first duty after appointment "was to carry out a physical survey and to clear out all unauthorised persons".[89] The survey enabled Kitching to implement a new permit system for 'Soudanese' homeowners, employees of Soudanese homeowners, visitors of Soudanese homeowners, and finally, 'unauthorised' persons living in Kibera.[90] Kitching's ultimate aim, as he blatantly remarked, was the hope that should 'the Soudanese' be found in noncompliance with these new procedures, "some of the more influential Soudanese [would] be arrested for not being in possession of permits, and prosecuted".[91]

La Fontain expressed to the Chief Secretary of Nairobi that he found this aspect of Kitching's plan particularly disconcerting; "I am afraid that it is going to be almost impossible to decide who are the 'bona fide' lodgers as presumably anyone who is residing in a house with the permission of the owner could claim to be one".[92] With this, La Fontain advises Kitching against his plan to "round-up of some 40 to 50" soldiers who refused to accept the permits,

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[86] Provincial Commissioner La Fontaine, Report of Investigation, 13 November 1947, MAA 2/5/172/iii, KNA.

[87] Vacancies in Kenya Government: Superintendent of Kibera Sudanese Location – Administration, 5-13 May 1947, RZ/8/764, KNA.

[88] The President of the Sudanese Association of East Africa to the Office of the Civil Secretary of Nairobi, 22 May 1947, VQ1/10/137, KNA.

[89] Kitching, Memorandum by Superintendent of Kibera on the Situation Regarding Unauthorised Residents in the Location, VQ1/10/137, KNA.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

[92] District Commissioner of Nairobi to Chief Secretary of Nairobi, 21 October 1949, VQ1/10/137, KNA.

even if as Kitching notes, "it entailed going to prison".[93] La Fontain's hesitation about Kitching's approach to both Kibera and Nubians illustrates how differences in colonial interactions between colonial officials and Nubians – on the frontlines, in Kibera, and the home where Nubian female labour operated – played out in ways that splintered both the definition and treatment of 'the Soudanese'.

If Kitching, who lived in Kibera as a Superintendent, regarded the 'Soudanese' as nothing more than criminal gin brewers and defiant ex-soldiers, La Fontaine who served alongside Nubian soldiers in both World Wars, proclaimed the 'Soudanese' as esteemed soldiers and honourable war widows. Far from providing the colonial state with a different repertoire of colonial rule, domesticity – when imposed on the Nubian community of Kibera – reveals discord between colonial officials about the kinds of autonomy, privacy, and trust that 'the Soudanese' are allowed or not, based on each official's personal relationship to the community and to Kibera. These reservations about what the Nubian community should be allowed to do in their homes and settlements present a different and historically contingent case of how debt relations between Nubians and colonial officials were played out, negotiated, or denied in the inter- and post-war periods.

Housing Nubians under the State of Emergency (1950-1963)

The political efforts of colonialists to regulate Nubians and Kibera through a single conceptual apparatus – whether 'detribalised' or 'Soudanese' – succeeded in part when Nubians began appropriating these terms in the 1950s. Five years after its formation in 1945, the Sudanese Association of East Africa (hereafter SAEA) embarked on a project that essentialised the Nubian people as 'Sudanese', and thus differed radically from former Nubian elders who previously stressed the heterogeneous origins and identities of the Nubian people. This project comprised two interconnected tasks. The first was at the level of Kibera where in 1953, the SAEA petitioned the District Commissioner of Nairobi that only 'Sudanese' children be admitted to the new secular school in Kibera that was built "to convey the Government's recognition of the example of unwavering loyalty shown by the Sudanese during more than 50

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[93] District Commissioner of Nairobi to Superintendent of Sudanese Settlement, 27 October 1949, VQ1/10/137, KNA.

years of service under the Crown".[94] With the social segregation of Sudanese Kiberans in public life secured, the Association went on to organise the private, domestic, and gendered lives of Nubians. In 1953, the Association released a memorandum of "Rules and Regulations of the Sudanese Association" which declared Kinubi as the official language, forbade Sudanese to marry outside their community, and enforced a strict dress code for women (Parsons 1997: 115). The Association also advanced the Sudanese-ness of Nubians by emphasising their transnational history from Sudan.[95] Cultivated initially through letter writing to Khartoum, these deep connections to Sudan were reinforced after Sudan's independence in 1955 as the young nation was able to finance both the visitation and permanent immigration of older Nubian men to Sudan.[96]

The Sudanisation of Nubians in this period has been differently interpreted by scholars. Parsons (1997: 109) insists that the SAEA's efforts to advance the Sudanese-ness of Nubians should not be interpreted as their disassociation from Kenya and being Kenyan. Instead, Parsons recommends we understand the SAEA as riding the wave of anti-British rule that swept across East Africa at the time and enabled the Association to secure a new benefactor in the case of the state of Sudan and to align with the anti-colonial movements of the Mau Mau Movement and the Kikuyu Central Association. In a similar vein, de Smedt (2011: 89) posits that although the Sudanese Nubians desired and enforced a different political future than their predecessors, the Sudanisation project represents a situated expression of Nubian exceptionalism within the genealogy of their social construction in Kibera. In this respect, Parson's and de Smedt's arguments illuminate equally how crucial the political projects and efforts of Nubian elites were to the naturalisation of colonial categories. Put differently, the Sudanisation project of Nubians in Kibera shows that colonialism was not simply a system of categorical rule and order, but also as a discursive space wherein subjects appropriated these categories for their own political ends.

Such conceptual reworkings, however, yielded 'Sudanese' advocates neither land tenure for the Nubian people, nor the inclusion of their land claims in negotiations between the colonial state and indigenous Kenyan communities that occurred during the final years of

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[94] District Commissioner to The Director of Education, 21 November 1952, LND 34/2/147, KNA; District Commissioner to Chief Native Commissioner, 30 March 1953, OPE 1/1382/5, KNA.

[95] Correspondence between the District Commissioner of Nairobi and the Sudanese Association of East Africa, 25 September 1950, 1 October 1951, 3 February 1952, VQ1/10/137, KNA.

[96] British Embassy of Khartoum to the Kenyan Secretariat, 26 July 1956, CO 822/820, PRO.

colonial rule. This was on account that their political transformation remained fixed on the distinctiveness of the Nubian people at a time when the future of the land in Kenya was jointly and optimistically negotiated between the colonial state and the African people of Kenya. Toward the end of the 1950s and starting in 1960, the Kenya Colony was mandated by the British Parliament to work with African communities to develop a draft land policy for peacebuilding following the Mau Mau Emergency. Unlike the Kenya Land Commission, the steering committee comprised "a new multi-racial Advisory Board...to help to carry forward the new policy toward its declared objective of the progressive disappearance of racial land boundaries throughout Kenya" (*ibid*.).

Moreover, neither the Sudanese Association of East Africa nor Nubian elders were invited to serve on the Advisory Board whose recommendations were incorporated in the landmark *Sessional Paper on Land Tenure and Control Outside the Native Lands* which aimed to "ensure that the basis of tenure and management of agricultural land will be similar throughout Kenya regardless of race or tribe, as far as local economic and agricultural factors will permit".[97] Crucial for the Nubians was that the draft stipulated that all future "[l]and transactions will be judged on grounds of sound agricultural policy and the economic use of land, and not on grounds of race", which presented a direct threat for "urban dwellers" like the Nubian community of Kibera.[98] Keeping with the promise to erect "a new multi-racial Advisory Board", in 1962 an African government minister by the name of Musa Amalemba, was elected as Minister for Health and Housing. Under Amalemba's administration, the municipality of Nairobi embarked on the demolition of Nubian homes to create a unified housing scheme in Kibera.[99] Five housing models were established near the new school to present to the Nubian community what their future homes would look like, the logic being that "the Sudanese who intended to become tenant purchases of the new homes" will have their previous homes "demolished and the compensation payable will be used to towards defraying the purchase price of the new homes".[100]

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[97] Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, 1959. *Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1958/59 on the Land Tenure and Control outside the Native Lands*; 1960, *Sessional Paper No. 06 of 1959/1960 on the Land Tenure and Control Outside the Native Lands*.

[98] British Information Services. 1960. *Kenya: Progress and Problems*. 7.

[99] Kenya National Assembly Official Record [Hansard], 8 May - 27 July 1962.

[100] Hansard, 13 July 1962. 916, 924.

When the decision was brought to the Sudanese Association of East Africa to purchase these homes, they were unsure whether to accept or continue their petition against the housing scheme.[101] As Parsons (1997: 120) explains, "[a]lthough this building campaign made a small contribution to the quality of life in Kibera, it was no where near enough to undo the legacy of colonial neglect. Moreover, it marked an end to the Sudanese way of life". This point was vocalised amongst the Nubian women of Kibera who petitioned against the design of these homes on account that they neither represented the traditional architectural or aesthetic features of Nubian homes, nor the practical needs of Nubian family life.[102] Annoyed at "the endless memoranda, endless deputations to the Government" by the Nubian community of Kibera, the Parliamentary Secretary for the Constitutional Affairs and Administration settled "the Kibera question" by pronouncing that the community either have to move with the times, or settle elsewhere.[103] Thus, on the eve of independence in Kenya, the Nubian community of Kibera were equally, if not more unsure of their future in Kibera and Kenya, since their arrival in 1899.

In this respect, 'housing' Nubians at the end of colonialism became a polyvalent concern. As this final section has shown, both parties involved in the new land policy – the colonial state and the African people of Kenya – can be said to frame this concern as practical and political, meaning that the issue was not only what kinds of housing would Nubians be accommodated in, but the kinds of political belonging that Nubians will be included in or allowed to inhabit under the new land policy. This concern was, for the most part, not only unresolved at the end of colonialism but transferred to the post-independent government who had to decide whether, and to what extent, should the political identities and claims to land be recognised in the new dispensation.

Conclusion

At the start of this chapter, I presented a question, namely, why are the histories of Kibera overwhelmingly the histories of the Nubian community? And, how did the history of a single religious community in Kibera also become the religious history of Kibera? Throughout this

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[101] Petition from Kibera Sudanese Community, c1960. OPE 1/365/154/4, KNA.

[102] Hansard, the Minister for Health and Housing, 13 July 1962. 916.

[103] Hansard, the Parliamentary Secretary for the Constitutional Affairs and Administration, 17 July 1962. 954, 982.

chapter, I have addressed these questions as both an epistemological and historical concern. In other words, the archive is constituted by and simultaneously narrates the preoccupations of colonial officials about how to define and evaluate the Muslimness of Nubian people. This means that while scholars cannot escape the limitations of the British colonial archive, it is possible nonetheless to interrogate why the preoccupation of Nubians' Muslimness endured for as long as it did, to the extent that the archive is filled with letters between colonial officials, inquiries, and commission reports on the topic. I showed that the colonial preoccupation of Nubians' Muslimness was less about delineating what is 'really' Muslim about Nubians. Rather, they were attempts by colonial officials of the day to resolve and sometimes reject the claim by Nubians that Kibera constitutes the material reward that the British Empire bestowed to the Nubian soldiers for their military service and loyalty.

Through shifting categories of 'detribalised', 'Nubian', and 'Soudanese', Nubians and colonial officials of the day respectively claimed or imposed these categories to configure their material relations to each other and redefine how indebtedness will be discussed. By analysing how this unsettled debt, real or imagined, emerged and was managed, I showed a second layer of analysis that scholarship on the 'neighbourhood turn' argues; namely, that the making of Kibera and the making of the Nubians of Kibera were inextricably linked processes. And yet, their efforts to claim legal ownership of Kibera did not mean that Nubians claimed autochthony to Kenya. The ongoing disputes over and for Kibera in fact enabled Nubians to claim both the neighbourhood as their ancestral homeland *and* hold multiple belongings to people and places in Sudan. In this respect, belonging and identity for the Nubian people living in and under British colonial rule were shifting, dynamic, and plural.

Moving from the colonial to the post-independent era, Chapter Four traces how the history of unsettled debt is fashioned into a moral project in which Kenyan-Nubians narrate how they have and continue to behave as virtuous subjects in a country that disavows their contribution to nation-building and discounts them as citizens. This approach, developed recently in 1999 by the Kenyan Nubian Council of Elders, distracts from what the elders view as a false narrative that Nubians enjoyed patronage from the colonial state and reframes debt as owed to a community who remains virtuous despite their history of displacement, non-recognition, and discrimination. By demanding not only land tenure of Kibera but the right to express oneself as a Kenyan-Nubian, the KNCE offers debt as something that can be incrementally, actively, and personally achieved. This reconceptualisation of debt transforms

the act of claim-making from a physical object – land – to a metaphysical one – space, and allows Kenyan-Nubians to see themselves in the material and physical environment of Kibera, their home and ancestral homeland.

Chapter Four

Kenyan-Nubians and the Making of a Moral Community

In a sun-drenched office in February 2019, the Chairman of the Kenyan Nubian Council of Elders (hereafter, KNCE) narrates in the company of his colleagues, the oral history of the Kenyan-Nubian community.

> The Kenyan-Nubian came to Kenya on or around 1850. When I talk of 1850, people, well educated people, they end up writing down 1950. So, when I say this, I really have to look at them again, and hammer it again for them to understand. So even for you I just have to hammer it at you. 1850! One-eight-five-zero. From the Sudan.

Pausing to survey the seven heads of the elders nodding in drowsy agreement, the Chairman proceeds;

> Going that far back for a purpose. We were soldiers throughout our lives. Our career, we have been soldiers [...] Second, the Nubians have a stake in Kenya that cannot be moved. You cannot shift this. Nubians; it has got to be Kenyan-Nubian.! [...] We owe it to our forefathers, we owe it to those soldiers, to get the facts right, number one. This is why I hammer it for you. And second, to continue to tell this story of our part in Kenya.

As though aware that my historical knowledge of Kibera and the Nubian people had until then been shaped primarily by the archives, the Chairman deftly reappoints the arrival of Kenyan-Nubian in Kenya to about thirty-five years before the date recorded in the archive and recast Sudan as the single place of historical descent and migration of the Kenyan-Nubian people. Notably, the Chairman introduces why and to whom present-day Kenyan-Nubians are obliged to remember and marks the act of remembrance as an inherent part of being a Kenyan-Nubian.

This chapter examines how the untold and unacknowledged history of Kenyan-Nubians, from the perspective of those in this chapter, has produced for them an obligation to remember the past, a past that influences and intersects with the way Kenyan-Nubians understand themselves as Muslims. By adopting this approach, I consider Kenyan-Nubians to be a moral community whose virtues, sensibilities, and practices emerge from a shared past and shared obligation to the past. Recent scholarship examines the moral reforms that Muslims in African contexts pursue in their everyday lives to illustrate the multiple and situated

expressions of morality as opposed to it being a fixed precept (Hirschkind 2006; Hillewaert 2019; McIntosh 2009; Mahmood 2005). The latest contribution to this debate by Sarah Hillewaert (2019) examines the everyday practices that young Muslims in Lamu, Kenya perform to renegotiate the local expectations and global understandings of what it means to be a morally responsible Muslim. Morality, according to Hillewaert, is both discursively constituted through renegotiation, and a discursive formation of personhood. In other words, by debating what it means to be and become a 'good Muslim', young people in Lamu regard morality as less a prescription than the capacity to develop and improve themselves and their community (*ibid*., 14).

When the meaning of and aspirations for morality are both unsettled and variously pursued, the academic task to define the term 'moral community' will be "notoriously resistant to determination due to the many-sidedness of human pluralism and to different systems of value with long, historical roots in many cultures around the world" (Babst 2011: 20). Scholars who study moral communities in Kenya show similar to Hillewaert that a moral community is best defined and examined by their "unfinished debates" (Lonsdale 1992: 317) and "unresolved questions" (Moskowitz 2019: 10) about *which* attributes of morality – respectability or modesty – their community will collectively pursue, rather than an examination of *how* these ideals are uniformly expressed. As Parsons explains (2012: 62), focusing on the 'what' illuminates the various and competing ways of being and coming into being that members of a moral community might pursue. These differences and contestations can moreover uncover the key actors or structures that direct the moral project and pathway of the community. In the case of the Kenyan-Nubian community, the group interview that I conducted with the elders shows that their nearly twenty-year project to consolidate Kenyan-Nubians into a moral community is largely achieved through the dual processes of historical revisionism and land acquisition. By revising the history of Kenyan-Nubian Muslims as selfless people who sacrificed their lives for Kenya and Kenyans, the KNCE has reframed the contestations about and around land as a moral tale, and religious one too.

But why now? What explains the impetus by the KNCE to make and represent the Kenyan-Nubian people this way? What is 'religious' about this moral community, and how does the religious identity of Kenyan-Nubians as Muslims figure in making a moral community? In this chapter, I will demonstrate how the KNCE refashions the historical debt claim examined in Chapter Three as not only an outstanding land deed to Kibera, but the right

to express oneself as a Kenyan-Nubian Muslim in Kibera. In this way, the KNCE presents debt to present-day Kenyan-Nubian Muslims as something that can be daily and incrementally reclaimed in a way that both recovers and animates what it means to be a moral Kenyan-Nubian Muslim. This does not mean that the KNCE has abandoned the demand for a land deed to Kibera. On the contrary, the KNCE achieved a community land deed in 2017 for 288 acres of land in Kibera from President Uhuru Kenyatta.[104] Since then, the KNCE has advanced a sort of political economy of land by arguing that land and property in Kibera should serve the moral project of the Kenyan-Nubian community. In this respect, their arguments present land as more than a material resource to possess, but a space of moral integrity to be protected from outsiders, meaning non-Kenyan-Nubians and the Kenyan government of the day. Throughout the chapter, I trace what implications this debt discourse and sensibility have for ordinary Kenyan-Nubian Muslims who are not members of the KNCE.

The first section of this chapter examines the oral history of the KNCE and illustrates how the nearly twenty-year project to consolidate Kenyan-Nubians into a moral community is achieved through historical revisionism and land acquisition. Second, I analyse how the mandate to "get the facts straight" and "continue to tell the story of [their] part in Kenya", the KNCE has rendered the obligation to remember as a shared moral project for all Kenyan-Nubian people. Finally, I examine how the mythico-historical figure of "the holy soldier" is used to exemplify Kenyan-Nubian Muslims *par excellence*.[105] In the second section, I discuss how the representation of Kenyan-Nubian Muslims as a moral community is used successfully by the KNCE to acquire and control the community deed to land in Kibera. I ask, what does the acquisition of land mean for ordinary Kenyan-Nubian Muslims in Kibera? To address this question, I will demonstrate how land and property enable ordinary Kenyan-Nubian Muslims to dwell in and with the past which has been challenged by the bulldozing of July 2018, and by the new power disparities which exist between the elders who control the communal land deed and ordinary Kenyan-Nubians Muslims. I conclude by reflecting on what it might mean to be a Kenyan-Nubian Muslim without the material and moral conditions that shape this community.

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[104] President of the Republic of Kenya. June 2, 2017. Justice For Nubians as President Kenyatta Gives Them Title For 288 Acres of Land In Kibra. https://www.president.go.ke/2017/06/02/justice-for-nubians-as-president-kenyatta-gives-them-title-for-288-acres-of-land-in-kibra/ (Accessed 25 August 2021).

[105] I borrow the term "mythico-historical" from Liisa Malkki (1995: 53-56) to show how past events or figures are mythologised to provide prescription for daily moral conduct in the present.

Elderhood in Post-independent Kenya (1963-present)

Every Tuesday morning, the Kenyan Nubian Council of Elders convenes in the upper story of the oldest mosque in Kibera to receive and counsel their constituents on matters pertaining to land and property issues, dispute resolution between neighbours, and the vetting process.[106] The elders – all men between sixty-three and eighty-one years of age at the time of the interview – rely on Nubian tradition, oral history, and precedent to assist Kenyan-Nubians with practical and quasi-legal advice on the political and everyday aspects of their lives. They will, on occasion, enlist the expertise of the sheikh who coordinates Kibera's historic mosque, about Islamic jurisprudence based on his training at Egypt's oldest degree-granting university. As a result, deliberations will often take place in Kinubi, Kiswahili, and Arabic, which renders the collective knowledge of the elders and the available expertise of the religious clergy in Kibera both expansive and impressive.

The privilege of who gets to tell the story of their community is ordinarily assigned to the elders or *wazee* (K: old or elder men). As respected members of their community, elders act as the custodians of local history, collective memory, and tradition and use these precepts to maintain social continuity and order (Osborn 2020: 297-298). In Kenya, however, the history of elders is a history of the political conditions that give rise to, and under which, elders tell stories. As the previous chapter demonstrated in the section of the Kenya Land Commission, when elders were summoned to narrate the history of their community, the story they presented had to prove that the community was regulated by set customs and adhered to a coherent system of land tenure, so as to obtain or maintain land ownership. Over time, what elders said not only constituted 'fact', it further advanced the notion that some Kenyans are experts of their history and others are told what their history is (Shadle 2006: 182; White 2000: 12-13; 2001: 296-299). Even when advocates of the life history method argued, and later demonstrated that everyone has a history and one worth telling, elders continued to shape the narrative by acting as gatekeepers to community members (White 2001: 298). This did not dissuade scholars from interviewing elders but encouraged them to examine the performance of speech and ask what

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[106] 'Vetting' is a formal process that Kenyan-Nubians undergo at eighteen years old to obtain their citizenship and official documentation, including a Kenyan identity document and passport. The vetting process is often discriminatory and inconsistent. The process requires the applicant to verify to a government official present that they and their family members were born and have lived in Kenya, however, the terms of verification are often determined at the discretion of the government official present (Balaton-Chrimes 2015).

audiences the elders might be addressing when narrating their story (see Barber 1995; Ewald 1987; Hofmeyr 1994)

The influence of elders over the production of historical knowledge encouraged scholars to redefine the category of 'elders' altogether. Recent landmark anthropological studies by Robert W. Blunt (2019) and George Paul Meiu (2017) offer elders as an emic category to describe a calculus of power at play, one in which political officials exchange patronage in order to use the authority of elders to endorse their version of statehood, thus rendering elders as proto-sovereign bodies. Both studies show that because the incentive to legitimise statehood requires elders to represent themselves as respected members of moral communities, elders are not only beholden to multiple networks of accountability but should the patronage they accrue fail to trickle down to the community, a crisis of belonging and authority can ensue. In this respect, rather than diagnose patronage or those who participate in it as evidence of malfeasance and inequality, Blunt and Meiu foreground elders as necessary to the flow of patronage which ensures stable relations between state and society.

Despite evidence of the longstanding and dubious relationship between elders and the state, the legislative branch of the Kenyan government presently defines elders as separate from the state, as opposed to chiefs who are salaried government officials.[107] The closest official definition of elders appears in the Land Disputes Tribunal Act of 2010 (1990) wherein elders are defined as

> persons in the community or communities to which the parties by whom the issue is raised belong and who are recognized by custom in the community or communities as being, by virtue of age, experience or otherwise, competent to resolve issues between the parties.[108]

Whereas chiefs can represent any constituency, elders are limited to representing their community of belonging only, and are selected according to culturally specific meanings of age, experience, and competency. Moreover, that the definition, role, and function of elders are outlined in the legislature for land disputes is noteworthy given that land reconciliation in Kenya bestowed title deeds in form of communal tenure and in this way, issued elders the task of determining how communal land will be utilised (Moskowitz 2019: 3-12; Nyamweru and

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[107] Republic of Kenya. 2012. Chiefs' Act, Chapter 128 (1998, Revised 2012). C14-5. http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/ken102000.pdf (Accessed 30 August 2021).
[108] Republic of Kenya. 2010. The Land Disputes Tribunal Act, Chapter 303A (1990, Revised 2010). 3. http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/ken63789.pdf (Accessed 30 August 2021).

Chidongo 2018: 246-247). In this respect, the state's definition of elders is underscored by a fixed understanding and relationship between land and identity in that elders represent set communities and manage land through static social norms and customs.

Though the KNCE is derived from the "Elders of Kibra" who, as the previous chapter illustrated, petitioned the commissioners of the 1933 Kenya Land Commission to remain in Kibera as landowners based on the colonial state's debt to their forebearers, the Kenyan Nubian Council of Elders emerged in 1999 as an offshoot of a land and settlement rights group called the Kibera Village Committee. Established by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Lands and Settlement to liaise between the Nubian community of Kibera and the government, the Kibera Village Committee comprised Nubian elders and members of the Kibra Land Committee, both of which preceded the KNCE. Some of the Nubian elders are today the executive members of the KNCE (Balaton-Chrimes 2012: 59, 81, 127). However, given that the state's definition of elders is "persons in the community", the KNCE had to illustrate to the Kenyan state who Nubians are, a task that became ostensibly challenged by the statelessness of many Nubian-identifying people in the post-independent period.

In 2005, the KNCE augmented their land struggle with the pursuit of full citizenship for all Nubians in a maiden speech given by the current chairman called "Right to Existence" which gained the support of notable human rights and equal citizenship organisations including, the Center for Minority Rights Development, the Open Society Initiative for East Africa, and the Justice Initiative Africa Discrimination and Citizenship Audit.[109] Similar to the ways in which Nubian elders of the past enlisted the support of patrons to apply pressure on the government of the day, collaborations with international organisations evidence the KNCE's acute understanding of the psychology of the government; notably, that international attention and public shame can hasten the governments' repayment on its outstanding promises to the Nubian community. As the chairman of the KNCE remarks in our interview (11 February 2019)

> We worked with these NGOs for five years to get what was promised to us donkeys' years
> ago: to be Kenyan. And we went at the government blow by blow. To the [Kenyan] High
> Court we lost. Ok, fine. That was round one. Round two, we got it right at The African

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[109] Open Society Foundations. June 16, 2005. Nubians in Kenya Appeal for Their "Right to Existence". https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/newsroom/nubians-kenya-appeal-their-right-existence (Accessed 31 August 2021)

Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, upheld by the A.U [African Union] Court. Right. Now we have them [government]. We have them totally and utterly embarrassed, especially to their fancy investors.[110]

By recounting this landmark victory for Kenyan-Nubians as an episode of national embarrassment for the Kenyan government and an occasion which highlights the ability of the KNCE to collaborate with esteemed organisations, we begin to get a sense of what, according to the KNCE, makes a compelling story and how this story can best display the prowess of the KNCE. The fact that the story exposes that the KNCE will pursue political belonging for Kenyan-Nubians despite the ambiguous and unguaranteed nature of political belonging, has not dissuaded the chairman from narrating this story to me. Nor has his acknowledgement during the interview that neither the court's verdict nor its public humiliation had thus far compelled the Kenyan government to remove the vetting process that produces *de facto* statelessness for Kenyan-Nubian people. Rather, it shows the other aims that the retelling of the litigation process serves. In particular, the story is used to highlight the bravado of the KNCE and potentially of Kenyan-Nubians and sets the terms for how Kenyan-Nubians will be understood in and to the nation-state. In this way, we begin to understand the myriad and intersecting modes of speech, recollection, and political motivation that shape the way the elders speak about the past in the interview.

For the purpose of this chapter, I have chosen to present and analyse the oral history into three excerpts that broadly illustrate how the elders make and represent Kenyan-Nubians as a moral community through the retelling of the oral history. In these excerpts, historical revision and land acquisition function as both themes in the oral history and strategies by which the oral history can be put to task. In other words, the reader will encounter how the KNCE participates, and encourage Kenyan-Nubians to participate in their history both as narrators and actors.

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[110] See African Committee of Experts on The Rights and Welfare of The Child. 22 March 2011. *Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA) and Open Society Justice Initiative on Behalf of Children of Nubian Descent in Kenya v. The Government of Kenya, No. Com/002/2009*. https://www.justiceinitiative.org/uploads/e2fd5fc8-a229-41f8-a881-c10bfc7233ab/ACERWC-nubian-minors-decision-20110322.pdf (Accessed 1 September 2021).

Challenging History

> One enters a room and history follows; one enters a room and history precedes. History is already seated in the chair in the empty room when one arrives. –Dionne Brand (2001: 6).

This first section of the oral history examines how historical revision operates as a theme within and strategy of the oral history told by the Chairman of the KNCE. In this section, I focus not only on what the revised oral history contains, but pay attention to how it is told as well. Specifically, I address the purposeful spatial arrangement of the office of the KNCE wherein the interview took place as well as the space provided during the interview – or lack thereof – to discuss the contentious elements of the oral history such as the date of Kenyan-Nubians' arrival in Kenya. The way the oral history is told buttresses the authority of both the narrative and narrators and illuminates how oral histories in general operate as a social performance of power (White 2000: 14; 2018: 122).

Consider the way in which the interview setting was organised and managed. Before the interview can begin, a series of ritual practices are performed. The interview starts with a customary Nubian greeting which signals respect by younger people to their elders. If permitted, given the discreet gendered norms that an elder may observe, he will present the back of his right hand to me which I will lift to touch my forehead and chin. Only three elders permitted me to greet them this way – the Chairman, Secretary-General, and the oldest member of the KNCE – while the rest nodded politely. Greetings and introductions are issued according to the rank and file of each elder within the council. On the Tuesday morning of our interview, the eight elders present were seated according to their position in the KNCE. Identifiable by his snow-white beard and seated behind a heavy and ornate desk is the Chairman of the KNCE. The Chairman introduces himself by name and position in the KNCE, and then begins introductions of his colleagues. To the left of the Chairman sits the Secretary and Deputy-Secretary generals followed by the Treasurer of the KNCE. For the purpose of the interview, the Treasurer vacated his seat for me to occupy, which the Secretary-General positioned between himself and the Deputy-Secretary General. My questions to the Council – which became questions to the Chairman – were first presented to the Secretary-General who then communicated my questions in the ear of the Chairman. Finally, seated crossed-legged, and facing the Chairman are two members without executive portfolios, one of whom is the longest-serving member on the KNCE. Behind the two non-executive elders is a bench assigned for

visitors which on the day of the interview was occupied by Hakim, the research assistant to this study.
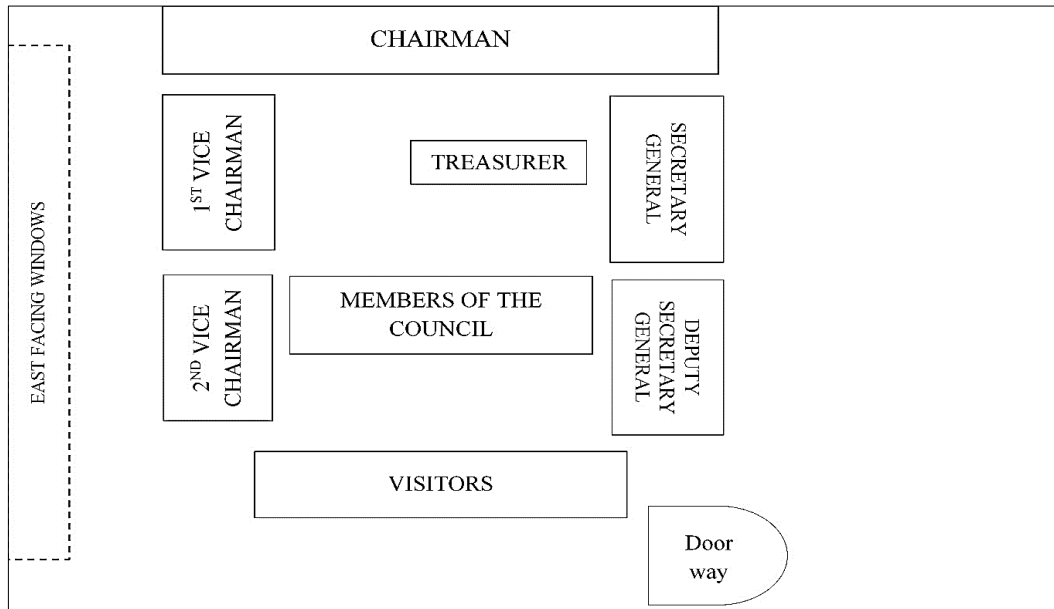
FIGURE 4.1: The Seating Arrangement at the Interview with the KNCE. 11 February 2019, Kibera.

The chairman then outlined how the interview would proceed: "I am going to give you some background on who we are and about the Kenyan-Nubian people. This background I am going to spend one or two sentences only and then you can ask me all the questions you want". These few sentences were the opening lines to an extensive and elaborate oral history that he narrated almost exclusively for four hours with surprising unawareness of the stifling heat in the room.

> The Kenyan-Nubian came to Kenya on or around 1850. When I talk of 1850, people, well educated people, they end up writing down 1950. So, when I say this, I really have to look at them again, and hammer it again for them to understand. So even for you I just have to hammer it at you. 1850! One-eight-five-zero. From the Sudan […] At the time it was known as Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. But before that it was Turco-Egyptian Sudan during the time of the Ottoman Attacks. Then it became Turco- ah, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. During the time of the Ottoman Attacks, Emin Pasha and all those people, they would *always* come to Nuba Mountains, to Kassala that is Eastern Sudan, to Katoria, to Kordofan – North Kordofan, South Kordofan – to Darfur, to recruit soldiers. Good Soldiers!

I opened this chapter with a few lines from the origin story wherein the Chairman marks the date of Kenyan-Nubians' arrival in Kenya as 1850 – some thirty-five before the date recorded in the archive. What interests me is the assertion that those who arrived either identified as, or should be identified as, Kenyan-Nubian. As the previous chapter demonstrated, the category of Nubian was amongst a list of both contested and claimed categories – including detribalised, Mohammaden, and Sudanese – used to determine, in part, the status of their land tenure in Kibera. By presenting Kenyan-Nubian as an identity that was claimed *before* British imperialism in present-day Kenya, the KNCE is able to describe Kenyan-Nubians outside of the archival version of history, and instead emphasises the ontological status of the soldier who arrived in Kenya. This means that 1850 marks not only when Kenyan-Nubians arrived in Kenya, but their condition of being on arrival as a people with a self-claimed identity, despite being displaced. This point is important as it lays the moral groundwork to discuss the selfless contributions that Kenyan-Nubians of the past made to nation-building despite their difficult experiences and despite the debt or ingratitude that remains owed to this community. The Chairman continues

> The British when they came and it became Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, we Nubians were press-ganged to become their soldiers. And not stopping there, we were afterwards and forever relocated as a whole group from the Sudan to Kenya via Uganda. Around about the time, the Nubians also came into contact with the Rwandan Kingdom. The Rwandan Kingdom is west of Kenya and the Nubians deeply admired the pride, you know of the people. They are magnificent in their order and this, uh, sense of respect. They have a royal lineage. A dynasty. A court. All those things. *Long* before the colonialist came with their ways. A noble people. And after that, we got to Kenya. Through all these places and nations, we remained Nubian. Single, pure, no mixing.

In both paragraphs, displacement, migration, and encounter are described not as historical events, but as conditions that shaped and reflected the moral character of Kenyan-Nubians. Nor is dwelling in and crossing between Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, and Kenya meant to be interpreted by the listener as mere experiences. Rather, these events and experiences are construed by the Chairman as moral tests that Kenyan-Nubians successfully overcame and, in the process, remained "pure". The practice of historical revision continues in this manner with Kenyan-Nubians represented as native to Sudan and actors who helped produce regime change and state building in present-day Sudan, East Africa, and the Middle East. We do not get an interpretation of why this vast region in Sudan was known for 'good soldiers', although

historians mentioned in the previous chapter have demonstrated that the preference for Sudanese soldiers emerged from a particular and longstanding institution of enslavement. In other words, polities or individuals at the time may have been equally motivated by economic reasons of cost and availability to "recruit" soldiers, as well as the calibre of soldiers that this region was known for.

But glossing over archival aporias[111] like when Kenyan-Nubians arrived in Kenya, whether they descended from soldiers who were enslaved or not, and if they remained pure, describes not only how the KNCE performs historical revision, but why. First, having already rendered my historical knowledge of when Kenyan-Nubians arrived in Kenya inaccurate and by regulating the interview space, the Chairman has the authority to provide the 'official' history and address questions according to *his* version of history. Second, side-stepping archival aporias also serve to distance Kenyan-Nubians past and present from the patronage they are claimed, by the post-independent Kenya government, to have received from the British colonial state who "press-ganged" soldiers into service, displaced them from Sudan, and relocated them to Kenya (Balaton-Chrimes 2012: 63-66). As the Chairman exclaimed, the claim of colonial patronage is not only false but is advanced by "denialists" as a way to deny certain "stakeholders" from enjoying the resources of the country which they – Nubians – helped to build. In this way, the oral history makes a moral case for why Kenyan-Nubians belong in Kenya and why Kenya belongs to Kenyan-Nubians. The moral case is achieved in a way that skilfully obscures the otherness of the "press-ganged" soldiers and their present-day descendants, so that Kenyan-Nubians are not altogether 'foreign' so as not to obtain resources, but not altogether 'Kenyan' either, so as to maintain prestige and autonomy from the government.

In this respect, historical revision functions not simply as a position of denial or counter-historical claim by the KNCE. Rather, historical revision is a strategy used to make Kenyan-Nubians into a moral community by claiming a single origin and clear genealogy of their moral character starting with the soldiers, so as to set them apart from those who abide by a different political history of Kenya. As the next section shows, to highlight the moral character of

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[111] A term borrowed from Anjali Arondekar (2009: ix) that describes an epistemological struggle to work with the absences, doubts, and tensions in the archive without searching for or restoring the archive to a state of completion.

Kenyan-Nubian Muslims without othering the community requires revision of not only the social history of Kenyan-Nubians, but the political history of Kenya as well.

Claiming Land, Regulating Space

The excerpts in this section describe what, according to the KNCE, Kenyan-Nubians' relationship with Kenya and Kenyans ought to be. Their normative statements are presented in moral and material terms about the various and invaluable contributions that Kenyan-Nubian made to the formation of Kenya and its institutions and the outstanding debt that remains owed to them. By presenting these contributions as unacknowledged in the founding myth of Kenya and as outstanding debt in a material form, the KNCE employs historical revision for three aims. First, the obligation to remember what is owed constitutes the foundation of what it means to be a moral Kenyan-Nubian Muslim. Second, by recording what remains owed to Kenyan-Nubians, the KNCE makes a claim to a greater portion of land in Kibera than the 288 acres they presently own. Third, this debt narrative is represented as the moral conditions by which Kenyan-Nubian Muslims should relate to Kenya, Kenyans, and Kibera. In the excerpt below, the chairman submits that Kenyan-Nubians' relationship to Kenya specifically will not be that of outsiders, but as founders and makers of Kenya as a state, albeit a colonial one.

> So, we got to Kenya and what is important to know is that Kenya was supposed to be a corridor. Kenya as an entity was not a country. It was just a corridor for the railway line from Uganda to the sea in Mombasa. And we Kenyan-Nubians think of Kenya like a thoroughfare from our home in Sudan, through this corridor from Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya. And everybody in Kenya, and when I say everybody, I mean every tribe in Kenya, came from outside Kenya. For example, the Kikuyus came originally from the Cameroon. The Luhyas, came from up north, the Sudan again. The Kalenjin people, a very powerful group, came from the Sudan. There are traces of the Kalenjin even today in Sudan speaking the same language. Akamba, they came from the south and some other people came from places up elsewhere. So, the people who are Kenyan today, have a place and, I shall go further, in fact they have a history far outside the territory of our little country as we know of it today. There is no so-called Kenyan. No. It is, Kenyan-Nubian. Kenyan-Kalenjin. You see my point?

It is difficult to ignore the *terra nullius*[112] argument pervading this excerpt. Terms such as "entity" and "territory" seem purposeful when referring to Kenya and work well to support the Chairman's claim that "Kenya as an entity was not a country". Additionally, the *terra nullius* argument, in this case, seeks not only to return Kenya to a time before it was "an entity...not a country", but to challenge who belongs in Kenya and to whom Kenya belongs. If there was no Kenya and if 'there is no so-called Kenyan", then political belonging as it presently functions is neither automatic nor limited to those groups who count as Kenyan. On the one hand, the argument about who belongs in Kenya and to whom Kenya belongs is a material one. It calls for the equal distribution of national resources, particularly land, to those who have contributed to nation building. In this respect, the claim that 'there is no so-called Kenyan, only Kenyan-Nubian and Kenyan-Kalenjin' illustrates how the KNCE's attempts to revise the terms of belonging in and to Kenya and Kibera based on the historical contribution to nation-building that a community has made, which favours the contributions of Kenyan-Nubians whether real or imagined. The KNCE has in the past highlighted the various and invaluable contributions that Kenyan-Nubian Muslims made to the formation of Kenya to advance their right to land tenure in Kibera, which was recognised in 2017 when President Uhuru Kenyatta issued the Nubian community with 288 acres of land in Kibera.[113]

Before I proceed to the second outcome that the *terra nullius* and "there is no so-called Kenyan" claims seek to achieve, it should be noted that participants in this study – both Kenyan-Nubian and others – report that they have not seen the community land deed. Indeed, the process to acquire a community land deed in Kenya is thorough and rigorous and includes multiple stages from the formal registration of both the community and the community land, to the inspection and survey of the land, all of which are meticulously recorded for public record as per the Community Land Act (No. 27 of 2016). According to the Community Land Act, community land tenure occurs through the joint and formal registration of the community and the registration of community land.[114] The registration of a community provides said community with legal personhood to own the land. Following the registration of both community and land, an official survey is done by the Community Land Management

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[112] Latin word for 'territory without a master' or nobody's land.

[113] President of the Republic of Kenya. June 2, 2017. Justice For Nubians as President Kenyatta Gives Them Title For 288 Acres of Land In Kibra.

[114] The Republic of Kenya. The Community Land Act No. 27 of 2016. https://lands.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/MOL-NLC-COMMUNTIY-LAND-LAW-BOOKLET_13.03.20.pdf (Accessed 02 October 2022).

Committee in consultation with the community assembly and the adjudication team of Surveyors, Land Adjudication Officers and Planners. If no disputes arise from the survey or once disputes are resolved, the surveyor in the adjudication team will finalise the maps and submit the final cadastral map to the office of the Director of Land Adjudication and Settlement. Finally, the Director will issue a Certificate of Finality that is forwarded to the Registrar of Community Land together with the adjudication register. The Registrar of Community Land will register the land and issue a Certificate of Title or a Certificate of Lease to the respective community.

In the case of the Kenyan-Nubian community land deed, the conditions under which the 288 acres of land was issued as well as the political ambiguity of Kenyan-Nubians' citizenship, did not follow the abovementioned process. First, President Uhuru Kenyatta both issued and presented the community land deed to the Chairman of the KNCE at a ceremony hosted at State House. Second, the Secretary of the KNCE acknowledge during the interview for this study that the 288 acres of land was yet to be surveyed. Third, because Kenyan-Nubians are denied citizenship until a member of the community successfully undergoes the vetting process, it is unclear whether and how a majorly stateless community may register themselves under the Community Land Act. Fourth, neither the cadastral map of the 288 acres of land, nor the Certificate of Finality, Certificate of Title or Certificate of Lease can be found in public records online or at the county records office according to my research.

In the absence of these procedures and the community title deed, exists a single photograph published by the Office of the President of Kenya that depicts the exchange of a framed "title for 288 acres of land in Kibra" from President Uhuru Kenyatta to the current Chairman of the KNCE.[115] A copy of this photograph – and not the land deed – hangs above the Chairman's desk where the interview for this study took place. That said, the absence of a visible and accessible copy of the community land deed has not appeared to undermine – and perhaps may have emboldened – the symbolic claims to Kibera that Kenyan-Nubian Muslims enact through historical and moral investment. Consider how Samantha Balaton-Chrimes (2012: 174-175) describes that ordinary Nubians openly expressed the need to "lock out other tribes" through exclusive land ownership of Kibera and by dominating the socio-cultural

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[115] The photography is available on the link for President of the Republic of Kenya. June 2, 2017. Justice For Nubians as President Kenyatta Gives Them Title For 288 Acres of Land In Kibra. https://www.president.go.ke/2017/06/02/justice-for-nubians-as-president-kenyatta-gives-them-title-for-288-acres-of-land-in-kibra/ (Accessed 25 August 2021).

identity of the neighbourhood in order to defend their claim to Kibera and preserve their heritage represented in the neighbourhood. The author found that these spatial controls represent for many Nubians their only exercise of power given that the community has since independence been unable to constitute any electoral influence due to their population size and statelessness (*ibid*.,174-175).[116] However, with a claim to land tenure in Kibera – whether verified or not – but no less contested by their neighbours and other non-Kiberan Kenyans, it is interestingly to observe how the invisibility, inaccessibility, and incredulity of the community land deed in fact embolden Kenyan-Nubian Muslims' claim to land and belonging.

Proceeding to the second point, the claim that 'there is no so-called Kenyan, only Kenyan-Nubian and Kenyan-Kalenjin' is factual in part and reflects, if not directly responds, to the ambiguous way in which Kenyans are enumerated in the national census. Nubians have only recently – since the *2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census* – been enumerated as an "ethnic" group or as "Nubi" (code 220) specifically, to which 15,463 selected in 2009 and 21,319 people selected in 2019.[117] Prior to 2009, the options for enumeration were either "Sudanese" in 1962, "Non-Kenyan African-Sudanese" or "Non-Kenyan African-Other" in 1969, "Other Kenyans" in 1979 and finally, "Other Africans" or "Tribe Unknown" in 1989 (Balaton-Chrimes 2012: 98-99). The effects of the 2007-2008 post-election violence furthermore compelled the Director General of the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics to reconsider what it means for the state to enumerate Kenyans in the way it does, and how statistical representations might be used by political actors to incite fear and division. The *2009 Census,* therefore, offered for the first time since independence the category of "Kenyan" (code 720) as an option for "nationality" which enumerators were instructed to "[f]irst establish the nationality of the person, then for Kenyans code the tribe".[118]

This decision produced a new set of identities such as Kenyan-Nubi and Kenyan-Kalenjin. It also introduced a new set of identity politics that rendered people unsure of whether

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[116] In his one term position as Member of Parliament (1969-1974) Yunus Ali, Nubian-identifying and born and raised in Kibera, repeatedly raised the lack of political recognition and representation for Nubians but failed to advance either issue into policy. Republic of Kenya. *Kenya National Assembly Official Record (Hansard)*, 16 June 1970. 1345-1347; 30 September 1970.409-412; 27 November 1970. 2245-2467.

[117] Republic of Kenya. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, Vol. IV. Distribution of Population by Ethnicity. Available on Open Access https://open.africa/dataset/2019-kenya-population-and-housing-census/resource/b1199ddd-a1a9-4e2d-8ba6-eb9c075b3b37 (Accessed 25 August 2021).

[118] 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census. Enumerator's Instruction Manual. 86-87 https://international.ipums.org/international/resources/enum_materials_pdf/enum_instruct_ke2009a.pdf (Accessed 25 August 2021).

and which aspect of their identity – Kenyan or Nubi – counts more in the post-independence dispensation. Finally, this hybrid identity introduced competing and conflicting origins about when the Kenyan-Nubian community acquired belonging: in 1850 when they arrived? In 2009 when they were enumerated? In 2017 when the community land deed was issued? Or when full citizenship is granted in the future? To decide on a date as a Kenyan-Nubian is to prescribe to a version of belonging that is attained and which remains outstanding, which may work against the KNCE's efforts to represent Kenyan-Nubians as *a* moral community. Unable to mediate these competing origins, the KNCE focused on what is owed as the crux of what it means to be a moral Kenyan-Nubian. In the excerpt below, this position is issued not only to the government of the day, but to all Kenyans past and present.

> I wonder if you know, my dear, about a little place called Makutano? Makutano. No? In the local language it is called Mukatani, but in Swahili it means 'a meeting place'. It is just to the north of the little lake on your way to Embu. Nubians helped to make that place by acting as living buffer zones between many tribes. Here I'm talking about 1900s or so. Almost eight tribes at a time would come together to barter, to settle agreements, to make deals and in all of this, the Nubis would be in the middle at Makutano to maintain the peace. You do the bartering, you do the negotiating and then you go home. No fighting. The place is still there today, and the name is still Makutano. Our influence is in the very name of the place. Imagine that, hey? And everywhere in this land we call Kenya, Nubians have a little imprint in making this country.

I had not known this linguistic meaning or version of the history of Makutano before the interview with the KNCE. I found this excerpt, not unlike the others thus far analysed, a story that highlights the virtuous nature of the Kenyan-Nubian community and their influential contribution to nation-building in Kenya. In this excerpt, Kenyan-Nubians are said to have inscribed their morality in the physical and political landscape of Kenya when they brokered peace between "tribes". While I do not think that the KNCE suggests that Kenyan-Nubian Muslims were the first to introduce peacebuilding in these places, I do maintain that this narrative is meant to emphasise the innate qualities that enabled them to act "as living buffer zones between many tribes", and render non-Kenyan-Nubians who either descend from these communities, or presently inhabit Makutano, unknowingly indebted to Kenyan-Nubians. This argument extends to Kiberans as well

> Now in Kibra you also have names that tell you about our nature. Here where we are now is called Makina village, Makina. Makina means 'market'. Before, long ago, our

grandparents made a weekly market *for all* in Nairobi to sell and barter. You must remember, back then, there was a Native market, Indian market, market for the whites, for the Jews. But Nubians didn't fit in these categories. We were detribalised, you see. So, we just made an open market [laughs]. Nevermind who you are, just bring your business.

Here, too, Kenyan-Nubians are shown to have worked against the racial segregationist policies and practices of the British colonial state, and established an open market for all who live in Nairobi. Statements like these both exaggerate the moral nature of Kenyan-Nubians and provide an alternative claim of who belongs in Kibera and to whom Kibera belongs. Especially since Makina village has and continues to function as both the economic hub of Kibera and the religious centre for the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim community, this story of Makina and Makutano positions the altruism of Kenyan-Nubian Muslims past and present as the terms of conversation when describing their relationship to Kenya and Kenyans. Makina village is where the oldest and largest mosque in Kibera is located and where the only cemetery in Kibera resides, the Kibra Nubian Muslim Cemetery, making it hallowed ground for many Kenyan-Nubian Muslims whose ancestors are buried there. Makina village is also home to the offices of major stakeholders of the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim community, including the KNCE, the Nubian Rights Forum and Kibra Nubian Community Land Trust. In this respect, the oral histories of the KNCE about Makutano and Makina present new metrics – the moral character of Nubian soldiers as peacemakers and fair traders – of nation-building that work against ethnic autochthony, the central and current feature of the founding myth of Kenya.

The KNCE is not the only body in Kibera that regards Makina as an important landmark for the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim community. Kenyan-Nubian Muslim landowners have recently, vehemently, and often violently opposed the erection or extension of church structures in Makina village with some insisting that Makina should be "protected" from other religions. For instance, the Chairman of the KNCE expressed during the interview that "everyday Nubi, man or woman, must see the victory of the title deed as a mandate to be themselves utterly and entirely, *in* Kibra, *in* their homeland" (emphasis made by the speaker). The KNCE is not alone in advancing this mandate. Shortly after the title deed was issued, the Nubian Rights Forum argued in court that non-Kenyan-Nubian Muslims should not be permitted to erect permanent

churches on Nubian land.[119] In their May-June 2021 newsletter, the Kibra Nubian Community Land Trust argued that there is no benefit to having "structures in Kibra owned by communities who are the landlords whose only interest is to collect rent from Kibra and give nothing back".[120]

Rather than construe land as the antecedents of religious conflict and violence in Kibera, I posit that because the government declared their debt to Kenyan-Nubians settled upon issuing the communal land deed, the KNCE has reframed what is owed as a socio-spatial argument about how Kenyan-Nubian Muslims should relate to, and express themselves in their neighbourhood and homeland.[121] Moreover, that other stakeholders in Kibera have adopted this position should not be interpreted as allegiance to the KNCE or an attempt to enforce power in Kibera, but illustrates what privileges they assume the communal land deed affords them on account of the KNCE's reticence on what area of land in Kibera it includes. My point is not to excuse how some Kenyan-Nubian Muslims have interpreted the privileges, power, and impunity they imagine the land deed affords. It is rather to illustrate how the KNCE's reticence on these questions and concerns has direct consequences for the religious futures of Kenyan-Nubians living in Kibera and the rites of passage they hope to experience communally.

For example, another important question that remains unclear is whether citizenship will determine who benefits from the community title deed. This question preoccupies Yousif Abdallah (b. 1958) who searched the Kenya Land Registries online for information about the community title deed but came up short (Interview, 26, 27 February 2019). Yousif Abdallah intends to build a house for his son whose wedding was scheduled for October 2019. As he explains, property ownership marks a significant moment in the life trajectory of a Nubian man. Property is both an endorsement of the community and a commitment by the individual that "he is ready and willing to live the Nubian way"; to raise a family according to Nubian customs, and one day performs this ritual and either build or pass down property to his son. Given that the house was to be built near the site that was razed in July 2018, Yousif Abdallah was concerned that another unannounced bulldozing would place his son and future daughter-in-

[119] Republic of Kenya. Environment and Land Court of Nairobi. *ELC Suit No. 268 of 2019*. 31 October 2019. Nubian Rights Forum v. Full Gospel Church. http://kenyalaw.org/caselaw/cases/view/183449 (Accessed 17 November 2021).

[120] Kibra Nubian Community Land Trust. *Lim-Badu Newsletter*, May-June 2021. 4

[121] President of the Republic of Kenya. June 2, 2017. Justice For Nubians as President Kenyatta Gives Them Title For 288 Acres of Land in Kibra.

law at risk of harm. Although he approached several elders in passing to explain the details of the community title deed, they implored him to "be patient until the government surveys the land and say exactly what is for the Nubis and what is for them". Yousif Abdallah laments the impact that waiting will have on the commitments that the families have made to each other.

> [My son] has commitments to that girl's family. It isn't a matter of 'let's push the wedding back to November, December'. You know, this is an agreement between families and we are responsible for making it come true. All this business of waiting is causing us to now go back on our word.

Yousif Abdallah's unfortunate predicament resonates with the KNCE in that both share a distinct generational idea and experience about what it means to be a Kenyan-Nubian man, an experience that remains unencumbered by statelessness. That said, Yousif Abdallah's predicament highlights what the KNCE is yet to address; how will Kenyan-Nubian Muslims in Kibera continue as a moral community as the neighbourhood undergoes changes in land tenure and spatial planning after the bulldozing? His lament underscores how the intersecting and sometimes conflicting determinations of land by the KNCE and the Kenyan government, impede ordinary Kenyan-Nubian Muslims from performing their obligations to the past and to each other as family and community members. Why not make a home outside of Kibera, I asked Yousif Abdallah in reference to his son? Yousif Abdallah confessed that he believes the elders will soon "sort out the community title deed in the best interests of the Kenyan-Nubian people" and admitted that it is unfathomable to imagine his son starting a family outside Kibera. Yousif Abdallah continued that the same virtues of respect and honour that he hopes his son to realise through marriage and fatherhood also require him to respect the wisdom of the elders. Far from being a victory for all Kenyan-Nubians, the community title deed exposed the power differences between elders and ordinary people on the one hand, and generational disparities between parents who are citizens and their stateless children, on the other. These differences undermine the longstanding practices that people like Yousif Abdallah rely on to ensure the belonging of future generations of Kenyan-Nubians Muslims in Kibera.

This section has shown that in the case of the KNCE, in addition to observing a shared obligation to remember the contributions that their forebearers made to Kenya and Kibera, a moral community is formed by remembering what to them is owed which in this section, is achieved by expressing oneself in their homeland. However, many Kenyan-Nubian Muslims and the organisations who represent them, are split over what this mode of expression is or

resembles, how it should be observed, and with whom – one's immediate family or without non-Kenyan-Nubian Muslims. One aspect on which Kenyan-Nubian Muslims appear resolute is that their moral character and religiosity as Muslims derive from their forebearers – the "holy soldiers". In this final section, I examine how the mythico-historical figure of "the holy soldier" is used to exemplify the moral character of Kenyan-Nubians Muslims *par excellence* and form Kenyan-Nubian Muslims into a moral community as well.

The Holy Soldier

> We were the holy soldiers, don't let anybody deceive you about this. What do I mean by this? We are Muslims, first and foremost. We say, you know, the *shahada* [profession of faith]. We pray five times a day. Fast. Make *hajj* [pilgrimage] if possible, if the pocket so allows. Give to the needy. All that. We are Muslims. But; Muslims with a history! It is no- in fact, there is no difference between these two. Because without this history, how else do we recount the wonders of Allah?

Just as the KNCE argues that certain moral attributes and contributions make Kenyan-Nubian Muslims *Kenyan*, so too are their virtues, sensibilities, and practices argued to represent what it means to be a Kenyan-Nubian *Muslim*. As the opening excerpt of this section shows, Kenyan-Nubians observe the five pillars of Islam and their history as Muslims allow them to "recount the wonders of Allah". This is not to suggest that Kenyan-Nubian Muslims in and outside of Kibera derive their religious identity from the KNCE. For the KNCE, the past constitutes how the self-understanding of Kenyan-Nubians as Muslims is appreciated and realised. After giving the meaning of 'holy soldiers', the Chairman continues with passionate exhortation about how the soldiers' faith protected them on the warfront.

> So, after this, why I say holy soldiers is because we are so highly respected in Kenya. If you walk down Kenyatta Avenue in the CBD [of Nairobi] and look around you'll find some statues there of those soldiers who defended Kenya. They are in military uniform with this [taps his *kofia*]. And believe you me, because of the main experience of the war, if you forgot your faith, there is simply no way you would make it. No way! The war, which was declared in 1914, by 1916 already the Germans were crushed out completely by the Nubians. In fact, they [British Empire] did not have to bring in reinforcement into Tanzania to help with the war effort; the Nubians simply took care of matters. Of course, a sizable number of us died. So very many... gone back to the earth. But, *alhamdulillah* [praise be to

Allah] we are here today because of the mercies and favour that Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* [Glory be to Him] showed those soldiers – the ones who survived.

A brief silence fell over the room, interrupted shortly by the first Vice-Chairman who uttered "*Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un*" (A: To Allah we belong and to Him we shall return) as his fellow elders murmured in repeat. The description of the 'holy soldier' and the way in which the narrative affectively charged the room led me to interpret the 'holy soldier' not as a deceased figure preserved in bronze in Kenyatta Avenue or in living memory. Rather, the figure of the 'holy soldier' provides a symbol and parable of how Kenyan-Nubian Muslims have and continue to hold multiple identities, and that to be Muslim enables Nubians past and present to negotiate the challenges of being both a soldier and stateless individual. As the excerpt notes, this negotiation operates not only at an ontological level, but materially, as the Chairman marks the *kofia* (A: headdress) as part of the military uniform. Both descriptions of this negotiation present the holy soldier as the Kenyan-Nubian *par excellence*. In other words, and when situated alongside the purity narrative of Kenyan-Nubians' migration through East Africa, the holy soldier serves as a moral figure that Kenyan-Nubian Muslims can emulate or reflect on in difficult moments.

These difficult moments may include the longstanding struggle for citizenship, the Islamophobia that followed the terror attack in January 2019, or daily personal struggles. Especially as Kenyan-Nubians increasingly report how their statelessness prohibits them from performing *hajj* (A: pilgrimage) (Balaton-Chrimes 2012: 83) and almost prevented the current sheikh of the mosque in Makina, Kibera from obtaining his degree at Al-Azhar University in Cairo (Interview, 11 March 2019), the parable illustrates how the two identities – Kenyan-Nubian and Muslim – are harmonised through trust in Allah. This harmonisation not only exemplifies Kenyan-Nubians as Muslims, but in the aftermath of the 2019 terror attack in Nairobi that occurred a few days before I began fieldwork, it functioned as a way for both the elders and Kenyan-Nubian Muslims who participated in this study to set themselves apart from "other" Muslims in Kenya. At the time that fieldwork was undertaken for this study, the KNCE referred to Kenyan-Somalis as "other" Muslims as well, given how negatively Kenyan-Somalis were perceived and treated after al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the January 2019 terror attack in Nairobi. Additionally, the KNCE previously referred to "other" Muslims as those who do not descend from the Nubian soldiers. These groups include Nubians who identify as Muslim but were born and raised in Uganda, and Kenyan converts living in Kibera who are often exempt

from the vetting process (Balaton-Chrimes 2012: 21, 220-221). In this respect, and this is often the case, the pursuit to openly emulate the qualities and confidence of 'the holy soldier' at times constitutes the very reason for the religious setbacks or discrimination that Kenyan-Nubian Muslims experience.

Additionally, the obligation to remember and preserve this way of being of Muslim is also extended to an imagined community 'in the Sudan' to whom Kenyan-Nubian Muslims belong by way of the soldiers who were displaced over a century ago. In the excerpt below, the Secretary-General explains how Kenyan-Nubians are not only connected but accountable to their "distant relatives" in Sudan to preserve the legacy of the Kenyan-Nubian soldiers through the upbringing of their children and in their daily mannerisms and behaviours.

> Chairman, if I can interrupt here. You know, this history that the Chairman is telling you, it's something we tell our kids. I used to tell this to my boys, they're well grown now with children of their own, but I used to say to them, 'you come from great people. Great people! Never forget. When others bring you down, just walk with your head high because your ancestors are well known the world around'. We may not be soldiers today, but it's still in our DNA. If I go to Sudan where my grandfather is from, they see my name, my *kanzu* [thobe], how I wear it, how I walk, and they say 'ah! But this man is one of us' [utterances of agreement by elders] Truly! It's so distinctive because we still have it in our blood. So, I always say, we can't just think of ourselves here in Kibra. We share ancestors with those in the Sudan. They are distant relatives. So we must work with them, together, to keep this linkage going, to keep the heritage going, and so on.

The excerpt refers to the obligation that Kenyan-Nubian Muslims have to communities of belonging across space *but in time*. Here, ordinary activities like walking and dressing are marked as crucial moral actions that two spatially distanced communities either perform, or ought to perform, in the present as a collective goal to "keep the heritage going". What interests me is how the Secretary-General foregrounds belonging and accountability through a range of shared and identifiable characteristics including names, dress, and bodily comportment that distant relatives will immediately recognise should Kenyan-Nubians arrive in Sudan. This way of maintaining belonging through accountability hinges on the notion that those in Sudan have similarly upheld their Nubian traditions and practices in anticipation of Kenyan-Nubians' return, a notion that places both communities in a state of unchange. I do not mean to suggest that the Secretary-General, KNCE, or Kenyan-Nubians who commit to this notion of accountability are misguided by who their extended family is. Such a determination delimits

our understanding of the aspirations that emerge from and inform Kenyan-Nubians' commitment to communities of belonging elsewhere, foremost of which is the desire to be recognised and respected for the kind of values, sensibilities, and practices that make Kenyan-Nubian Muslims.

During fieldwork, for instance, several Kenyan-Nubian male youth participants reported how the idea of distant relatives in Sudan and Aswan, Egypt who admire the virtues of, and await to meet their Kenyan-Nubian family, encouraged them to commit to learning Kinubi, to obtain a passport, and not be demoralised when the vetting process failed. One participant stated that he was financially sponsored by his great-uncle in Sudan, whom he met only telephonically, to apply for a Kenyan passport and study engineering at the University of Khartoum (Interview, 14 February 2019). Finally, many young Kenyan-Nubian Muslim men also strove to emulate 'Nubian' dress and style by staining their nails and palms with *henna*, a plant-based dye, donning a different *kofia* fashioned from a square scarf and held in place by a black cord, and peppering their conversations with Kinubi words. Whether intended by the KNCE or not, knowing that one is accountable and related to distant relatives in Sudan provided young Kenyan-Nubian Muslim men with a sense of confidence in the present to express their identity or pursue life goals.

There were, however, a few young men who considered the KNCE's version of morality as a materially futile pursuit. Not all male youth have parents like Yousif Abdallah or well-off uncles abroad who can finance their futures. One participant, Mustafa (b. 1993), remarked that intergenerational wealth in the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim community begets nepotism in Kibera's labour market where only the landed or propertied class employed each other (Interview, 28 March 2019). Given that Mustafa is both the youngest son and a child of his father's third marriage, when his father died in 2010 Mustafa inherited neither property nor money from the estate. At the time of the interview, Mustafa worked as an assistant manager for a small printing company about three kilometres from Kibera and bemoaned that his Ethiopian employer – and not the KNCE – supported him in the vetting process to obtain his national identification card. Mustafa's employer wrote numerous letters, allowed him to print supporting documents without charge, and gave him days off to attend vetting interviews in 2014. Although he did not oppose the idea that Kenyan-Nubian Muslims should express what it means to be a Muslim and moral person, Mustafa exclaimed that doing so made sense if one lived and worked exclusively in Kibera.

Mustafa's frank remarks compelled me to consider what would it mean to be a moral Kenyan-Nubian *Muslim* if more people felt impressed to not only work and reside outside Kibera, but attend a different place of worship and possibly be buried elsewhere? This section has shown that what is distinctly Muslim about Kenyan-Nubians relies on, and is articulated through, the material and physical features of Kibera – the mosques, cemetery, private property, dress, and style – and the moral stories in which these features are grounded. Despite their different socio-economic standings, the challenges that someone like Yousif Abdallah's son and Mustafa face equally describe what is at stake for Kenyan-Nubian Muslims if the present generation cannot reproduce the moral and material aspects of their community *in* Kibera. And, if they *do* observe these virtues in Kibera but have reinterpreted them through a different dress sense, how does this generation's notion and practice of morality figure alongside "the holy soldier" advanced by the KNCE?

Here lies the great task that the KNCE has set itself; to represent Kenyan-Nubian Muslims as *a* moral community and through *a* figure – the holy soldier – in a way that traverses the socio-economic and intergenerational cleavages in the community and within the same age group in order expand land ownership and spatial control of Kibera. And to a large extent, the moral project of the KNCE is highly gendered and describes what it means to be and become a Kenyan-Nubian Muslim man. Who are the female Kenyan-Nubian property-owners in Kibera, and what virtues do they express as property-owners? One female Kenyan-Nubian property-owner whom I refer to as Bibi Jaina provides a moral idea of dwelling in Kibera; namely, to develop, inhabit, and relate to the neighbourhood with reverence and respect.

Dwelling in Kibera

Throughout history and across geography, female property-ownership in Kenya presented a moral problem for government officials and village elders. In the previous chapter, I explored how Nubian women in Kibera were classified by colonial officials as non-Muslim due to the production and sale of *arak* (A: gin). Although the archive provides scant information about how many Nubian women owned property in Kibera, I illustrated how their investment in this industry nonetheless contributed to the financial success of their families and community during wartime. Of the other neighbourhoods in Nairobi, scholars have shown that female property ownership was the initial and longstanding mode of proprietorship in Nairobi and

maintain that women's tenure propelled the socio-economic mobility of their descendants for many generations (Hake 1977; Kimari 2017; White 1990). Moreover, the idea that women could neither attain nor maintain proprietorship in a "respectable" manner – that is, without selling sex or alcohol – remains a motivating factor of the government of the day to conduct violent raids on the homes, businesses, and bodies of women to dispossess them of their property, capital, and agency. Even in the countryside, husbands and fathers who migrated to town for employment were concerned about their wife's mobility and daughter's unchecked sexuality, and granted temporary custodianship of their land to chiefs and elders to circumvent the polluting qualities of female property ownership they imagined would occur (MacArthur 2016; MacKenzie 1996).

While women were not outrightly discouraged from owning property, they were expected to perform property for the moral health of the community. Put differently, female property ownership was meant to sustain the virtues of their community, rather than constitute a space to develop and express a sense of independence. Far from limiting women's agency or financial prospects, however, one participant whom I refer to as Bibi Jaina[122] (b. 1952) explains that female proprietorship cultivates an invaluable virtue; to develop and relate to a place with reverence and respect as one's forebearers have done and as future generations hopefully will do. For Bibi Jaina, this moral investment in and reverence to Kibera is, at the end of the day, what matters in debates about to whom Kibera belongs. To an immediate observer, Bibi Jaina's reservations could be said to be financially and economically motivated. Of the sixteen Kenyan-Nubian Muslims who participated in this study, Bibi Jaina was perhaps the wealthiest participant in terms of the family property holdings she inherited. After becoming widowed in 2000, Bibi Jaina assumed the role of primary caregiver to her mother (b. c1924) and was granted custodianship of her father's property by her siblings with the agreement that the property be bequeathed to the grandchildren in the family. Her father's property constitutes a compound of four homes, and she also manages ten one-bedroom houses that her father and uncles built in the late 1990s and rented as a form of retirement annuity.

But to charge Bibi Jaina's moral reservations about whom Kibera belongs to and should be inhabited by as merely financially motivated, would overlook two fundamental points, the least of which is the fact that her family lost most of their property in the bulldozing of July

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[122] Bibi is a Swahili word for 'grandmother' and is commonly used to refer to senior women.

2018. Rather, the first point to note is that the moral expectations which bear on Bibi Jaina to be a good daughter – to manage the bulk of her family's estate and provide care to her mother – emerge from the same logic of what it means to contribute to Kibera as a good Kenyan-Nubian Muslim. In other words, her obligations as a daughter, mother, grandmother, property owner, and Kenyan-Nubian Muslim illustrate the manifest forms that moral expectations take for a single person, which cannot be understood if one delineates Bibi Jaina's motivations for her status as a property owner alone.

Secondly, to charge Bibi Jaina's moral reservations as financially and economically motivated assumes Kenyan-Nubian Muslims to be a uniform socio-economic class, when this chapter has shown the downward socio-economic mobility that befalls generations of the same family (Sarre 2018: 135-137). Similar to Yousif Abdallah, Bibi Jaina's reservations convey an irresolvable concern about what will happen to notions of obligation and belonging if the present generation of Kenyan-Nubian Muslims cannot reproduce the moral and material aspects of their community. By situating Bibi Jaina's reservations within her various obligations as well as the "unfinished debates" (Lonsdale 1992: 317) about the moral trajectory of the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim community, I wish to illustrate the complex arena of material interests, moral obligations, and social mapping wherein her motivations emerge and are to be understood.

For the most part, Bibi Jaina expressed her moral reservations through intimate stories and nostalgic remembrances of when Kenyan-Nubian Muslims thrived in Kibera. She would, during our conversations, exhume from between the pages of books patinated photographs of her paternal grandfather and father. One photograph depicts her grandfather bearing a stern expression, dressed handsomely in his military attire, and standing erect in his *shamba* (S: cultivated plot of land). In another photograph, her father is dressed similarly in his military uniform but positioned in an empty courtyard enclosed by four squat mud and wattle dwellings. There is also a small, creased black and white photograph of her parents on *hajj*, donning white religious attire and holding a *tasbih* (A: prayer beads) in their folded hands. Bibi Jaina also presented her nursing certificate from 1986 and midwife certificate from 1997 which she neatly preserved in a plastic zipper bag (Interview, 19, 20, February 2019). These material objects, on the one hand, reminded me of Nur Awali who, in the previous chapter, used his 1919 "Non-Native Poll Tax Receipt" to evidence his detribalised status and assume the privileges that this status was meant to afford, such as the ability to move freely between the administrative

boundaries of the Protectorate at the time. It seemed to me that in the absence of an individual title deed to land in Kibera, material objects like photographs and receipts mattered to ordinary Kenyan-Nubian Muslims as it validated their rightful belonging to Kibera.

On the other hand, the material objects that Bibi Jaina presented in our interview illustrate how property and property-ownership enabled families to access and obtain various opportunities; to save money and invest in their children's education, to perform the obligation of *hajj*, and the comfort of knowing that multiple generations will live alongside each other in Kibera. These objects also show that property represented a durable form of respectability for the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim men in her family. When Bibi Jaina's father was not on active duty as an *askari* (soldier) for the King's African Rifles, or in an administrative role, he worked as a travelling cordwainer between Nairobi and Mombasa, making mostly men's leather sandals. From the sale of the sandals, Bibi Jaina's father gradually developed the *shamba* into a compound of four two-bedroomed houses and worked thereafter as a bus driver to finance the construction of the ten one-bedroomed homes in Kibera. As Bibi Jaina explains, property is a form of *barakat* (A: blessing) as it provides a daily practice and reminder to attend every day to a "worldly thing" – property and land – without becoming "greedy, boastful, or haughty". Each act of home maintenance or gardening inculcates, renews, and reinforces the virtues of humility, patience, and respectability that a man aims to perfect throughout his lifetime, teach his children, and inscribe in the neighbourhood for "the betterment of the Nubis in Kibra".

By entangling and regulating the timing of property acquisition with the inculcation of virtues and the passage to manhood, I came to understand how Kenyan-Nubian Muslims subverted "shortcut" avenues to wealth which is considered both susceptible to loss and a challenge to how social belonging is achieved (Elliot 2021: 3; Meiu 2017: 141-142; Smith 2019: 137). Such temporal rhythms of moral and material development moreover provide granular insight into how Kenyan-Nubian Muslim families ensure and safeguard their presence in and influence over Kibera through spatial and biological reproduction. Both cases illustrate the shared obligations to the past and future that Kenyan-Nubian Muslim families commit to within the household and between each other to continue 'the Nubian way'. They also resonate with a central theme in this chapter, that property operates within a consortium of material objects including religious and military dress, that men of former generations used to display respectability and success.

Like Yousif Abdallah, Bibi Jaina is concerned that her grandchildren will be the first generation of Kenyan-Nubian Muslims to be both stateless and propertyless in Kibera. Several of the one-bedroomed homes that the family rented were destroyed in the raze of July 2018. The bulldozing resumed construction of a bypass road designed to run through the heart of Kibera and, for the first time, connect the two roads that historically bordered this neighbourhood; Ngong Road to the north and Lang'ata Road in the south (BBC News 2018; Golla 2018; Mwanza 2018). Although demolitions have occurred in Kibera since the early 2000s, the raze of July 2018 was unprecedented as it left approximately 30,000 Kiberans homeless, destitute, and religiously adrift.[123] Not only was the raze unannounced, but Bibi Jaina also learnt through it the family property did not reside on the land included in the communal title deed but on state land. As a result, she can neither claim compensation from the government nor rebuild in the same location (Interview, 25 March 2019). Given that the family relied on the property as a source of income, and since many of her grandchildren are stateless and thus cannot secure formal employment opportunities, she worries that the family may never generate the money through savings to rebuild the property. Should this happen, the present and future generations of Kenyan-Nubian Muslims risk becoming "visitors in [their] homeland".

The loss that befell Bibi Jaina and her family highlights a larger concern about the shift in the dynamics of religious coexistence in Kibera. The bulldozing erased the material conditions that for generations constituted how religious difference was experienced and expressed between Kenyan-Nubian Muslims and their neighbours. Observe in the extract below how the loss of property has unsettled for Bibi Jaina the stable relations that once existed between 'home' and 'homeland', living and dead, past and present, and 'we' and 'they':

> Even if we remain in Kibera it will not be the same Kibera […] We have lost greatly. For Nubians it [Kibera] is our home. That is what it was meant to be. The rest of their tribes they have their homeland, where they come from [...] They have their home. They have a place to bury. They have a place where their tribe makes sense. *Kibra* [using the Kinubi word] is our ancestral place. Here is where we make sense of who we are. Out there we

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[123] As discussed in Chapter Two, President Mwai Kibaki implemented a series of urban development projects during this period – UN-Habitat Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (2004), the Kenya Vision 2030 (2008), and the Nairobi Metro 2030 Strategy (2008) – which collectively and extensively aimed "to grow and develop [Nairobi] into a world class African region", but often without due notice or compensation to the affected residents.

have nothing to ground us, firm. My fear is if we leave, they will remove our loved ones
buried in the cemetery. But what is stopping them?

In this extract one gets a vivid sense of how the bulldozing destabilised Bibi Jaina's ability to
"make sense of who we are" as a Kenyan-Nubian Muslim in Kibera. The material and physical
effacement radically altered how she inhabits and mediates between the past and present, living
and dead, and home and homeland. It is perhaps this fundamental material and ontological
change that causes Bibi Jaina to relapse into categorical speak that "*they* have their
homeland...*they* have their home", and forces her to question whether the next raze will destroy
the cemetery, which will leave the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim community both homeless and
homeland-less (emphasis added). Entering Bibi Jaina's life history in the aftermath of the raze,
and as she struggled to understand and articulate the significance that this loss bears on future
generations, illuminated to me that Kenyan-Nubian Muslims may be on the cusp of cultivating
divergent answers about what it means to be a moral community without the material
conditions that Bibi Jaina and Yousif Abdallah's generation knows, and without full access to
the communal land deed. How will this moral community explain who belongs in Kibera and
to whom it belongs if property can no longer exhibit the moral contributions Kenyan-Nubian
Muslims are said to have made in Kibera as well as validate the socio-spatial privileges that
Kenyan-Nubian Muslims ought to have and enforce?

To a large extent, Bibi Jaina's longstanding socio-economic status precludes her from
observing, as Mustafa's life story briefly showed, that some individuals have begun to rethink
and rearticulate what it means to be and belong in Kibera as a Kenyan-Nubian Muslim. As I
presented at the start of this chapter, these 'unresolved questions' are the precepts that shape a
moral community and influence its moral trajectory. I posit that the questions that will shape
the future iteration of Kenyan-Nubian Muslims as a moral community may revolve around how
the growing intergenerational and socio-economic disparities, and power dynamics between
elders who control the communal land deed and ordinary people, will influence who 'belongs'
to Kibera and Kenya respectively.

Conclusion

The central question of this study is how do religious communities in Kibera forge and maintain
belonging to each other and the neighbourhood amidst social, material, and physical change on

the one hand, and where the meaning of Kibera is contested on the other? This chapter answered this question at an angle. Namely, I examined how the project to make and represent Kenyan-Nubian Muslims as a moral community ensures their claim to Kibera as their homeland and belonging in Kenya as majorly stateless people. In this chapter, I showed that the debate about who belongs in Kibera and to whom Kibera belongs is a moral question for Kenyan-Nubian Muslims about how they have and continue contributing, in moral ways, to the construction of religious life, space, and place relative to other religious communities in Kibera. This moral claim to Kibera and belonging to it persuaded me to define Kenyan-Nubian Muslims as a moral community who belong to a shared past and who share an obligation to the past.

I illustrated how in making and maintaining themselves into and as a moral community, the Kenyan-Nubian Muslims introduced in this chapter participate both as actors and narrators of their shared past. Through oral and life histories, property, material objects, dress, and bodily comportment, we see how this moral community is constituted as well as the various and shifting meanings these constitutive elements have for different Kenyan-Nubian Muslims. By analysing the implications of these shifting meanings, as well as shifting analytically between oral and life histories, I showed the power imbalances of authority within the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim community, which cannot be captured or sufficiently understood in the confines of the KNCE office alone. Bibi Jaina and Yousif Abdallah's life history and story respectively illuminated this point. That said, these individuals share a generational resolve that resonates with the KNCE; the obligation to remember constitutes the primary means for reproducing the moral and material aspects of their community. It is this resolution that shapes socio-economic cleavages within the moral community, since not all can honour the past through specific material practices such property-ownership, or religious practices such as performing hajj.

Finally, by situating the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim community within the changing physical and material landscape of Kibera, I hoped to have shown that 'the Nubian way' is but one sensibility and sociality at risk of change, which renders other forms of belonging and dynamics of religious coexistence in Kibera precarious. You feel these changes in an embodied and sensorial way as your body vibrates and ears ring during an interview because the construction vehicles are paving the bypass road nearby. For this reason, I propose we shift focus and in the next chapter examine how individuals – for whom Kibera is not a homeland but a home nonetheless – maintain the virtues and sensibilities that connect them to places and

communities of belonging outside Kibera, and how these virtues inform the way in which they presently relate to Kibera and others in Kibera.

Part Three: Building Religion to Belong

Chapter Five

Making Refuge in Kibera

Chapter Five explores the waves of political and environmental migration to Kibera in the post-independent period (1963-present) through the life histories of two individuals who do not identify as Kenyan-Nubian Muslim: a Kenyan national and pastor named Pastor Juma (b. 1980) and Ugandan-Nubian Muslim named Habiba (b. 1971). I focus on these individuals and their life histories to illustrate what it means for Kiberans, who do not identify as Kenyan-Nubian Muslim, to build a home and perform their religion in a neighbourhood that is also someone's homeland. I show that both Habiba and Pastor Juma rely on material practices of religion to forge belonging to Kibera and Kiberans on the one hand, and move between Kibera as their home and their homeland, on the other.

However, if as Kenyan-Nubian Muslims argued in the chapter before, Kibera belongs to those who made it morally and materially, what happens to the dynamics of religious coexistence in Kibera when migrant religious actors introduce new material practices of belonging in the neighbourhood? And, to what extent do the material practices of religion by Pastor Juma and Habiba count as forms of investment to the religious and moral making of the neighbourhood? I respond to these questions through Thomas Tweed's (2006) theory of religion as dynamic and relational and suggest that the transformations and innovations of religious practices, space, and notions of belonging in Kibera, were propelled by the material practices of (im)migrants to the neighbourhood in the post-independent period. I submit that religion in Kibera in the post-independent period was produced through mobility, crossing, and dwelling, and that religious actors produced Kibera by crossing and dwelling.

<div align="center">***</div>

What do you remember when you first came to Kibera?

This is a question that I presented to participants who were not born in Kibera, participants who regard Kibera as their home but belong to, were displaced from, and long to return to their

homeland elsewhere. I define homeland as both a place and sensibility meaning, people claim to be because of whom and where they derive. Overwhelmingly, the question is answered with a deep sigh that initiates the life history of the participant. After settling his son on the church pew for a nap, Pastor Juma repeated the question to me (Interview, 26 March 2019).

> What do I remember? I came barefoot [laughs]. Yes, barefoot, in a [pair of] shorts. I came with my mum and small brothers and we came in '89 from Vihiga [county]. My dad he came some time before – '86, '87 maybe. Ya, so we came here in a broken family, piece by piece. Those times it was a drought, ya, droughts all over Western [Kenya], and we lost everything. You had to grow up fast then. But after some time we were told we're going to town to meet my father – we are going to Nairobi, Kenya's biggest city. But when I came it was the opposite of what I was expecting. We find some sewers, litter, smells, overcrowding. So, it was opposite of what I expected.

Of the twenty-eight Kiberans who participated in this study, five individuals were born outside the neighbourhood – Habiba, Pastor Juma, Patrick (b. 1975), Brian (b. 1984), and 'Boda-Bakir' or Abu-Bakir (b. 1992).[124] Like Pastor Juma, these individuals report similar experiences of arriving in Kibera as a "broken family", meaning family members staggered their relocation over several years before they reunited in Kibera. Similarly, the environmental crisis in Vihiga County that compelled Pastor Juma's family to migrate to Nairobi resonates with participants born outside Kibera and who remember the extended uncertainty and insecurity that affected their home life long before they relocated to Kibera, including the sole migration of one parent or the need for children to mature in advance. Most recounted their excitement to learn that they would live in Nairobi and distinctly recall their disappointment upon witnessing the reality of not only the place, but the conditions that their family members were living in. Similar to Pastor Juma, Habiba maintained as a child a grandiose idea of Nairobi as a place that provided a 'good life' for her father and other Nubians (Interview, 5 March 2019).

> Oh, what do I remember? Okay, I came here from Tooro [northern Uganda] firstly, all the way to here [Kibera]. This was '79. Right, so what I remember after that is I came with my

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[124] Patrick was born in Siaya and arrived in Kibera at age seventeen. Brian was born in Kitui, Machakos County. He arrived in Kibera at age 19 with his eldest brother. 'Boda-Bakir' is an amalgamation of 'boda boda', a Kiswahili term for 'motorcycle', and 'Bakir' from his given name, Abu-Bakir. He was born in Malindi and arrived in Kibera in 2015, at age 22. Abu-Bakir is considered by his neighbours as one of the most skilled and well-connected motorcycle mechanics in Kibera, with a penchant for obtaining spare parts that most mechanics can neither access nor offer. Abu-Bakir explained that he does not know when the nickname was invented and by whom, but the name became his brand over time, and he now prefers to be known as 'Boda-Bakir' in order to market his business (Interview, 31 January 2019).

mum, my sister, my cousins, neighbours, and some women; all of us we did ten days walking and bus. Why we came to Kibra is because my father lived here – in between here and our place in Tooro. He worked the trucks doing long-distance deliveries and stayed between Kibra and in Tooro when it was down time. But I used to think wow, my father he lives like a big man in Nairobi, he has a home for us to go [after fleeing Uganda] Woh! When I came, I thought is *this* now he live? Is *this* how Nubis live?

Both Habiba and Pastor Huma arrived in Kibera with a variety of feelings, presuppositions, and aspirations such as disappointment about leaving their homeland, excitement about starting a new life in Nairobi, and bafflement at the conditions of the neighbourhood and city. Their life histories and those of Patrick, Brian, and Boda-Bakir collectively show that these feelings, presuppositions, and aspirations did not dissipate over time, but informed their evaluation of whether, and how one achieves belonging and a good life in the city. Especially in the immediate years following independence when Kenyans pursued a salient idea of political belonging – one in which attachment to land in the countryside represented what it means to be Kenyan – families like those of Pastor Juma who were forced to leave their rural homestead due to drought, and those affected by political instability in the East African region like Habiba's, were at odds with this rooted idea of one's place in the world. Despite the religious, national, ethnic, and gendered differences between Habiba – a Ugandan-Nubian Muslim woman and permanent resident of Kenya – and Pastor Juma – a Luhya Christian man and Kenyan citizen – their life histories reveal the often-paradoxical ways that postcolonial Africans navigate belonging and/as mobility (Geschiere 2020: 28). It shows that belonging is not something already assured based on nationality, ethnicity, or religious identity; but a community be cultivated.

In terms of the 'neighbourhood turn' discussed in Chapter Two, Constance Smith (2019: 11-32) similarly follows Geschiere's definition of belonging and/as mobility to demonstrate how urban migrants in the neighbourhood of Kaloleni perform material practices of homemaking to produce belonging in their neighbourhood, and maintain a sense of belonging to those in their homeland. Homemaking projects such as home extensions and gardening show that the move from rural to urban or homeland to the city is often less definitive and teleological than scholars previously stated.[125] Instead, the kinds of belongings that urban

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[125] For example, the argues that frame Anderson (1966), Amis (1983, 1984, 1988), Clark (1973, 1978) and Temple (1974) in Chapter Two.

migrants attempt to forge is influenced by the sense of self they seek to portray to their neighbours and family members in their homeland. The material practices that urban migrants perform therefore transcend the boundaries of space and time and collapse rural and urban and home and homeland into the same spatial and temporal domain (*ibid.*, 15-19). This finding by Smith is important to the analysis of this chapter as it demonstrates that a micro-study of a single neighbourhood like Kibera or Kaloleni is not a "bounded community", but an examination of how a place is continuously affected by events that happened, and by people and places located elsewhere (*ibid.*, 19).

Finally, the material practices of belonging that urban migrants in postcolonial Africa perform and/as mobility reflects Thomas Tweed's (2006) finding of the material practices of religion that Catholic-identifying Cuban migrants perform in the US. His extensive analysis of making and performing devotion at a shrine illuminated to Tweed that material practices were neither performed nor an attempt to produce a similar or salient religious community between home or homeland (*ibid.*, 21-22). Rather, Cubans' construction of and devotion before the shrine of the Virgin Mary in Miami provided them with an "orientation" – "how to come to terms with the ultimate significance of one's place in the world" (*ibid.*, 74). Constructing and visiting shrines enable Cuban Catholic migrants in Miami to both orient themselves in a new home and move spatially and temporally to their homeland (*ibid.*,).

This chapter is therefore situated between these two theories – the theory of religion as dynamic and relational on the one hand, and the 'neighbourhood turn' emerging from scholarship on the city of Nairobi, on the other. I add to Tweed's definition of orientation by showing that migrants use a material practice of religion to come to terms with their place *in someone else's world* – namely, the homeland of Kenyan-Nubian Muslims. This chapter also uses the term 'migrant' to include rural to urban migration as Smith does, and transnational migration as Tweed does. When migrants come to Kibera they are often assumed to associate with, and be absorbed within, an existing religious institution (see Deacon 2015: 200; Deacon and Lynch 2013: 110). This process is useful to understand how religious communities in Kibera continue to survive and thrive amidst conditions of intense religious competition and urbanisation due to continuous migration.

However, as the history of Kibera (see Chapter Three) shows, the material contributions that Nubians made to the formation of the neighbourhood and religion are important to understanding the present-day dynamics of religion and religious diversity in Kibera, as well

as the reasoning for present-day claims to land, property, and belonging. This chapter examines whether, and to what extent, the material practices of migrants who arrive in Kibera in the post-independent period, may also affect the dynamics of religious coexistence in Kibera. The two life histories of Habiba and Pastor Juma allow us to observe and examine this effect over time.

The Dressmaker of Olympic

It was Yousif Abdallah's soon-to-be daughter-in-law – Aziza (b. 1994) – who introduced me to Habiba, the legendary bridal dressmaker in Kibera. Aziza planned to have two dresses for her wedding; a simple robe or *abaya* for the *nikkah*[126] and a more elaborate dress for the main ceremony (Interview with Aziza, 5 March 2019; Fieldnote, 6 March 2019). On our walk to Habiba's shop in Olympic, a village in Kibera adjacent to Makina, Aziza explained that Habiba is the only dressmaker in Kibera who can source bridal fabrics from Dubai, India, and Iran, and who designs according to client's requests, rather than "what Nubi brides must look like in the proper way". Trained and employed as a nurse assistant for an international non-governmental healthcare organisation in Kibera, Aziza can afford to purchase imported fabrics which may not conform to "what Nubi brides must look like" on their wedding day. When she unpackaged in Habiba's shop the sapphire blue fabric for the main ceremony, I understood how far from "the proper way" Aziza had veered. Whereas the dress for the *nikkah* is usually simple in design, the dress for the wedding ceremony is traditionally white and gold, and layers of pastel-coloured fabric are draped over the head and shoulders of the bride. Her enthusiasm for the fabric, however, vanished upon Habiba's inquest if Aziza had informed her mother of the choice of fabric. When Aziza remained silent, Habiba interjected

> [Aziza], it is *your* mother who thinks I'm unreliable, hê [right]? I don't make it Nubi, I don't respect your tradition, I choose for you. So *you* must tell her, 'Mama, I choose this fabrics, I paid for them, I have my own mind, please come to *hajjah* Habiba to see my ideas, my designs.

The silence in the shop was palpable and Aziza appeared to avoid meeting Habiba's stern gaze. Eventually, Aziza nodded, accepted meekly a hug from Habiba, fixed her headscarf, and waved us goodbye. Repacking the fabric, Habiba explained that Aziza's mother considered her design

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[126] In Islam, marriage is a legal contract (nikkah) between two parties (Black, E.A., Esmaeili, H. and Hosen, N., 2013. *Modern Perspectives on Islamic Law*. Edward Elgar Publishing. 111-112).

style too provocative for young Muslim women. Since the design and construction of her daughter's engagement dress in August 2018, Aziza's mother has expressed to both Habiba and others that Habiba can neither be entrusted to, nor recommended as someone who, respects and upholds the traditions of the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim community. Of concern to Habiba is how these reservations conditions her belonging as a Ugandan-Nubian Muslim in Kibera. Despite living in Kibera for almost thirty years, marrying a Kenyan-Nubian Muslim man, and sharing identities with Kenyan-Nubian Muslims, her belonging remains precarious and her religious authenticity as a Muslim continues to be questioned.

> You know I'm Muslim, I'm Nubi, I'm a *haji*, I have daughters of my own. In fact, me and [Aziza's] mum are very similar in this things I'm telling you. Ok, she's a bit older than me and she's now a grandmum also. But me, I've been living here for many years and they [Kenyan-Nubian Muslims] still say, 'oh we can't trust *hajjah* [Habiba] because she is from Uganda, she learnt dressmaking in Iran, what kind of Muslim is she now? Shafi'i? Shi'a?

Bridal dresses lie at the intersection of the religious geographies and genealogies of Habiba's life history as a Ugandan-Nubian Muslim, and embody in material terms what it means for her to be a Muslim, Nubi, haji, mother, and neighbour. Weaving together these geographies of Muslim belonging and genealogies of female Muslim dressmaking, bridal dresses provide a useful ethnographic site to examine how someone who inhabits a myriad of identities and claims belonging to multiple people and places, relates to Kibera and to Kiberans. It also illustrates what happens and what is at stake for those who are native to Kibera, when people born outside the neighbourhood introduce and instantiate material practices of religion, practices that may not fit neatly into what counts as religion in Kibera. While she indeed learnt dressmaking in Isfahan, Iran, where her family lived between 2000-2011, Habiba chose to make bridal dresses to preserve the craft and memory of learning embroidery from her paternal grandmother and aunts in Tooro Kingdom, Uganda, a place she fled in 1986.[127] As her life history will show, it is less simply about whether dressmaking is a valid material practice in and of Islam that the Nubian Muslim community (Ugandan- and Kenyan-Nubian Muslims) in Kibera debates, but how Kenyan-Nubian and Ugandan-Nubians used the bridal dress to

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[127] The Kingdom of Tooro was established in 1830 after seceding from the Kingdom of Bunyoro, where Nubian soldiers who did not accompany Captain Lugard to present-day Kenya in 1890 relocated. The Tooro Kingdom was subsequently reintegrated into Bunyoro in the 1870s and in the 1890s, was again reinstituted as a separate kingdom by Captain Lugard to weaken the Kabalega of Bunyoro. Apollo Milton Obote, the first independent president of Uganda, dissolved all kingdoms but President Yoweri Museveni overturned this decision in 1993, providing all kingdoms with cultural and not political autonomy (Behrend 2011: 21-25).

position themselves in this debate and, what this means for the way we understand religious diversity and difference *within* a religious tradition.

Many Kenyan-Nubian Muslims in present-day Kibera can trace their origins to the battalion of Nubian soldiers in Uganda whom Captain Lugard (later Lord Lugard) incorporated into the British army (see Chapter Three). Whereas the regiment who accompanied Lord Lugard in 1890 to what later became Kenya and their descendants considered themselves in one way or another as 'Sudanese' and remain *de facto* stateless in Kenya, the company that remained in Uganda integrated into local communities and was recognised as citizens in the 1995 Constitution of Uganda (Hansen 1991: 579).[128] Still, although Ugandan-Nubians and Kenyan-Nubians in Kibera differ in citizenship in their respective countries, Nasseem and Marjan's (1992: 211-212) analysis of Ugandan-Nubians in Uganda shows what Chapter Three demonstrates of Kenyan-Nubian Muslims in Kibera; both communities appear to be engaged in understanding what the origins, norms, and practices of Nubians are, and how these aspects inform and illustrate what it means to be Muslim. In this respect, what Habiba's life history illuminates is how two religious communities who share a similar origin story but experienced two distinct religious genealogies, understand and relate to each other in the diaspora. How might their tentative attachments to homeland – Kibera as a contested homeland for Kenyan-Nubians and Uganda as a distant homeland for individuals like Habiba – shape the terms of belonging between these communities? Does their shared origin story mean that Kenyan-Nubians will understand or tolerate the material practices of religion that Habiba employs to coalesce the multiple places and people of belonging outside Kibera?

What is therefore missing from the literature is not an analysis of how Ugandan-Nubians and Kenyan-Nubians differ in the past and present, but how Ugandan-Nubians like Habiba who arrived in Kibera in the post-independent period and therefore not as soldiers, forge belonging with Kenyan-Nubian Muslims who are also not citizens of Kenya. Understanding this question requires a framing of the context in Kibera and Kenya in which Ugandan-Nubians arrived. At the micro-level, the arrival of Ugandan-Nubians to Kibera in particular coincided with the boom in post-independence migration from the Kenyan countryside. This migration facilitated a sharp decline in the nominal representation of Nubians in Kibera as well as a reduction in their autonomy over the neighbourhood as studies by

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[128] Republic of Uganda, *Constitution of the Republic of Uganda*, 1995. Chapter 3, Article 10.

Anderson (1966), Amis (1984), Clark (1978) and Temple (1974) demonstrated (see Chapter Two). In other words, Kibera was diversifying religiously, linguistically, and ethnically and the status quo of land tenure relative to Nubians declined.

At the macro level, political tension between Uganda and Kenya was heightened during Idi Amin's presidency. In 1973, three Kenyan men were "massacred" by Ugandan soldiers at a pub in Kampala, Uganda, for allegedly harassing a Ugandan woman. Although no further murders were committed, the event prompted members of parliament to debate whether Kenya should demand compensation from the Ugandan government for the family of the deceased, or reinforce the border and potentially unsettle Kenyan citizens living nearby.[129] In 1978, members of parliament heard testimonies and submitted reports to the national assembly that "soldiers of ousted Ugandan Regime", meaning the regime of Idi Amin of which Nubian soldiers constituted the majority, were crossing the border into Kenya not only to traffic weapons, but to harm Kenyan citizens.[130] The Office of the President of Kenya argued at length that "these people who crossed the Kenya boundary from Uganda could have been ex-soldiers of Amin", and maintained that the government of Kenya cannot risk the wellbeing of Kenyan citizens. Instead, it was recommended that border-crossers should "be sent back to Uganda and will be dealt with by the new Government of Uganda".[131]

While these recommendations were neither passed in parliament nor enacted, the word "massacre" and the rhetoric that underscored these recommendations reveals the politics of othering that the then Kenyan government invented about Ugandan-Nubians, a politics that continues from the colonial period as outlined in Chapter Three. These recommendations may also explain the gap in the literature on Ugandan-Nubians who live in Kibera or Kenya. There presently exists no official census record to my knowledge, whether conducted by a branch of government, non-governmental organisations in Kenya, or the numerous NGOs in Kibera, that represents how many Ugandan-Nubians arrived in Kenya in this period and how many were former soldiers. The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics has differently enumerated non-Kenyans, based sometimes on "country of origin" (2009 census) and other times simply as "non-Kenyan" (2019 census). According to the 1969 census, Ugandans accounted for 21 percent of neighbouring African nationals living in Kenya, the second largest group after

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[129] Republic of Kenya, *Kenya National Assembly Official Record (Hansard)*, June 12-July 27, 1973. 1443-1445.
[130] Ibid., May 2 - Jun 29, 1979. 40-60.
[131] Ibid.

Tanzanians.[132] Then again in 2009, Ugandans were enumerated according to their nationality, but not ethnicity, and accounted for about 32 000 individuals.[133] By 2019, the categories for non-Kenyans included only two options; "non-Kenyans" and "not stated".[134] If we include the category of 'Nubian', then between the time that Habiba arrived and lived in Kibera in 1979, and before she emigrated to Iran in 2000, Nubians in Kenya were once more differently enumerated. First as "Other Kenyans" in the 1979 census and secondly as "Other Africans" or "Tribe Unknown" in 1989 (Balaton-Chrimes 2012: 98-99).

A third aspect of the gap in the literature on Ugandan-Nubians in Kibera is due to the history of fearmongering and propaganda by the Kenya government against them following the Ugandan-Kenyan conflict discussed by Parliament representatives above. Given this history, I acknowledge the possibility that some Ugandan-Nubians may have chosen to withhold information about their country of origin, whether to census officials, non-government workers, or researchers like myself. I am also aware that some participants who arrived in the period and under circumstances similar to Habiba may identify with me as Kenyan-Nubian to avoid unwanted questioning. I take all these possibilities into account, including the fact that some participants like Habiba may wish to self-identify as Ugandan-Nubian. Doing so allows me to illustrate that each generation of Nubian living in Kibera – soldiers, colonial and post-independent subjects, and foreign nationals – comprise many geographies and trajectories that must be accommodated for in this study that focuses on the coexistence of different religious communities in Kibera.

Continuing with Habiba's life history, it is interesting to note that the portrayal of Ugandan-Nubians as harmful began at home for her, in Uganda, and which changed her idea and sense of home in both her immediate family and village before her family departed Uganda for Kenya. After Tanzanian President Julias Nyerere captured Kampala in the Uganda-Tanzania War (1978-1979), many Nubians fled Uganda to neighbouring countries in Africa amid rumours that Ugandan-Nubians would be sent back to Sudan (Nasseem and Marjan 1992:

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[132] Committee for International Coordination of National Research in Demography (C.I.C.R.E.D), 1974. *The Population of Kenya-Uganda-Tanzania*. 48

[133] 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census. Enumerator's Instruction Manual. 27, 29. https://international.ipums.org/international/resources/enum_materials_pdf/enum_instruct_ke2009a.pdf (Accessed 08 May 2022).

[134] Republic of Kenya. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, Vol. IV. Distribution of Population by Nationality. Available on Open Access https://open.africa/dataset/2019-kenya-population-and-housing-census/resource/b1199ddd-a1a9-4e2d-8ba6-eb9c075b3b37 (Accessed 08 May 2022).

205-206). In the months preceding their departure in 1979, Habiba remembers that Nubian families followed closely the news communicated by friends and family members and from village council meetings that Nubians risked persecution under the new regime for their loyalty to and patronage from Amin. She began to note the visible absence of adolescent and adult Nubian men in her village, particularly her schoolteachers, uncles, and eldest brother. Her brother (b. 1963) was "smuggled" in a minibus to Jinja, a town on the shore of Lake Victoria, to Kenya, under the pretence of mission work.

It was not only regime change that altered home and family life for Habiba, but the lack of employment opportunities for Nubian men after Ugandan independence in 1962. Habiba's father (b. 1948) was employed as a cargo truck driver for a Kenyan company, a job he had before Habiba was born which meant she only saw her father for three weeks a year. Her father spent the remainder of his "downtime" in Nairobi and Habiba learned to interpret when her father was in the city by the money and gifts he sent, including dresses for his three daughters, scarfs and fabric for his wife and sisters, and beaded bracelets or earrings. In the courtyard of the family compound, her paternal grandmother, aunts, and female cousins would add to the "Kenyan" fabric and scarfs, their style of embroidery and beadwork in design motifs that represented the flora native to Tooro. Her family would wear their new clothing on *Eid al-Fitr* and receive admiration from her neighbours for not only their attire but for the sacrifices that her father made to support his family. Despite the compliments, Habiba laments how she longed for her father to return from the mosque and greet the family on *Eid* like the other "normal" families in her village.

Although no member of her family explained sufficiently why they were leaving home, for how long, and what route to Nairobi they would take, the anticipation that she would reunite and live with her father in Nairobi sustained Habiba on the ten-day trek from Tooro to Nairobi. Their first commute was to Kampala, the capital of Uganda, where the family stayed to await money from her father and "pay for papers", meaning a visa or special permit to enter Kenya. Thereafter, they travelled to Mbale in eastern Uganda and spent two nights before crossing the border into Kenya and to Kitale, a town in the Rift Valley. From Kitale, the family walked for an entire day to Nakuru and then embarked by minibus to Nairobi. Anticipating that her father would meet them in Nairobi with several cars to take them to his "big house", the family was apprehensive when a man who introduced himself as a friend of her father, greeted her grandmother by name and explained that he would escort them to Kibera, "where other Nubis

live". When they arrived in Kibera, the home assigned to her mother and sisters was occupied by another family. Unbeknownst to his Ugandan family, Habiba's father had married a Kenyan-Nubian woman with whom he fathered two young children. In the ensuing years, Habiba would learn that her father developed a "bad reputation" in Kibera as "a foreigner who live in sin with a young woman, who made a child with her without paying dowry", a reputation that Habiba declares was unfairly transferred to his Ugandan children.

> No person in Kibra liked him so no one liked us, you see? And the people were so nasty to us; 'there go [father's name]'s children, look at them, they from Uganda what are they doing here?'. Ah, it was tough. We had nothing in Kibra; no monies coming in, no farm to get something from, no goats, and my father gave to his [Kenyan] family first before he gave any of us! We had to all stay in two rooms, one for my mother and us [daughters] and in the other room was the other woman and her children. And in front of my mother, he slept with that lady and didn't come eat with us or anything. I would visit my grandmother and just do my stitching; it kept my mind off everything.

While in hindsight Habiba understands her father may have married a Kenyan-Nubian woman "to be accepted" and "to feel normal", his mother – Habiba's paternal grandmother – denounced assimilation for her granddaughters and instructed that they preserve their Ugandan-Nubian identity in anticipation of an imminent return to Uganda. Domestic tasks such as embroidery and making *chapatis* (S: unleavened flatbread), home-based religious practices such as *dhikrs* (A: vocalised devotions to Allah), and speaking Kinubi not only constituted the foundation of her grandmother's preservation project. In their ensuing years in Kibera, these practices became vexed sites between Ugandan and Kenyan Nubians about what differentiates them and who has the authority to determine this difference. The granddaughters' proficiency in and proclivity for Kinubi in the classroom generated disapproval from her Kenyan-Nubian *mawlanas* (A: religious teachers) who remarked to Habiba's grandmother that "Kinubi isn't a plaything; it must be used with care". Below, Habiba expresses the difficulty in determining two concerns. The first is whether the "reprimands" of her *mawlanas* derived from the fact that Kenyan-Nubians, according to her, generally and incorrectly considered Kinubi to be ancient and therefore subject to strict and imagined linguistic regulations. The second was whether Kenyan-Nubian *mawlanas* reprimand her use of Kinubi as a way to mark differences between Ugandan and Kenyan Nubians.

> I don't know why they were so upset that we were speaking Kinubi, I really don't know. It was so unnecessary, you know? Especially for children; they don't know the politics and all that. You must remember; Nubians from Kibra live in a make-believe idea of what Nubian culture actually is and what it was back then: 'it is so old, we must protect it by all means, we must make sure you say it this way and that way not any howly'. But we [her family] just thought of it as 'oh, it's Kinubi, it must be talked', sometimes you use this word from Arabic but you'll never say, 'Kinubi is just for the special people', like it is so, so, precious it will be poisoned if you use it wrong.

The above excerpt reflects the challenges experienced by other participants born outside Kibera upon their arrival to the neighbourhood, the challenge to understand and navigate the many-sidedness of grievance and conflict in Kibera and assess what this means for how they might express their religiosity and form relationships with those who share their religious identity. Listening to participants narrate their experiences of the challenges of religious coexistence and belonging in Kibera revealed a shared concern about whether religious vitality, belonging, and community are even possible for them amidst tensions with some, and also disconnections from others. For Habiba, the overlapping aspects between Ugandan- and Kenyan-Nubians were possible and manageable only in her intimate relationships with friends and later, her Kenyan-Nubian husband. Their marriage in 1996 was the result of almost two years of negotiation between the families about what form the dowry would take – goats, money, a house – what each family would contribute to the wedding, who would represent Habiba at the *nikkah*, and whether the children would be reared 'Ugandan' or 'Kenyan'.

Habiba worked tirelessly on her bridal dress during the negotiation period which she says became a symbol of the "coming together of two cultures, two histories, two families, two fabrics, two styles". Habiba reflects that it was after she and her husband relocated to Iran in 2000 that he gained both an understanding of, and appreciation for, the way she negotiates the complexities of belonging as a Muslim but not a citizen. Iran represented a host of anomalies for the young married couple. In addition to negotiating feelings of disappointment and betrayal that their Iranian Muslim neighbours and colleagues adhered to racial, class, and sectarian views of who should belong in Iran, the pressures of parenthood exacerbated the couples' difficulty to make friends, leading to extended periods of homesickness and despair for both.

> Here you are, a new couple, in love, so hopeful and excited, you think, 'alhamdulillah for a new opportunity, a new start, a new country'; and *again* there's others – other Muslims – they shun you, they don't like you, your skin, your hair, it's not very nice, you don't have

a car; my husband is very humble he used the bus and we live in the beginning with other people because we had little when we arrived.

But it was hard. I was a young mum all on my own, and I cried and cried when my daughter cried. I couldn't go to the hospital without my husband because he has the money, he speaks better Farsi, so it was like that; very, very lonely in the beginning. I just thought, 'I am again a foreigner living with Muslims and feeling like I'm unwanted'. And my husband he really believed in me, he said, '[Habiba] you were in this position before, but you were a small child. Now you have me, you have [daughter], you must teach us how *you* did it. So I told myself, '[Habiba], [husband] is right; remember how you got through it then, now you must use that knowledge and don't waste this opportunity'.

In the extract above, Habiba describes the personal, practical, and political challenges of belonging she experienced as a Muslim, mother, wife, and foreigner living in Iran. She notes the challenges of forging belonging in Iran as a Muslim and foreigner by signalling the racial and class issues she experienced *and* referencing her new life roles as a mother and wife. In other words, it seems that Habiba struggled with questions about what it means to be a mother, a wife, and a Muslim, given her physical appearance, that she could not speak the local language, or that her husband used the bus transit system. How does one make a home for their family and make meaningful bonds with people, given the practical and political aspects of daily life? The entanglement of these new roles and the personal, practical, and political dynamics to forging belonging is also conveyed in the way that Habiba shifts between the third person – *"I told myself, '[Habiba]'…"*, the past perfect second person – *"I cried…"* – and finally, as an onlooker speaking to herself, as evident in the first paragraph of the above excerpt, *"Here you are…"*.   It could be said that similar to the expectations, excitement, and disappointment she remembers when leaving Uganda for Nairobi, Habiba reflects on her initial years in Iran through the present- and present perfect tense.

Sure enough, Habiba found solace both in her new role as a mother and in a new country by returning to needlework. She began to knit clothes for her daughter but after her husband graduated in 2005 and started a new job, the family's disposable income increased and Habiba decided to purchase a sewing machine to restart dressmaking. Her initial clients either underpaid or deferred payment, a predicament most non-Iranian self-employed residents experienced, according to Habiba. Their treatment of her emboldened Habiba to resist an external valuation of her self-worth and talent. And so, at great financial risk to the family,

Habiba made an elegant dress for hire which reflected in material terms, the conditions of her belonging and illustrated the religious geographies and genealogies of her identity as a Muslim. Inspired by the dresses her mother wore on Eid, the dress Habiba made was emerald green and included embroidery from the rib to hip section with elbow-length sleeves. She laughs when describing how she "marketed" her dress by positioning her mannequin at the window of her apartment with a sign of her name and cell-phone number. After weeks of no interest, her sister suggested she rewrite the information in Arabic script and add the title of '*hajjah*' to her name. Within a few days, a woman telephoned Habiba stating that she was interested in the dress for her daughter, which led to a sleuth of recommendations and in a few months, a request for the first bespoke bridal dress. While Habiba continues to mark this request as the start of her career in bespoke bridal dressmaking, she remains unsure if her credentials as *hajjah*, her talent for dressmaking or both, attacked the attention of passersby.

Habiba soon gleaned that bespoke bridal dressmaking "is like doing social work for the families [...] you learn about the relationship between mum and the daughter, and then them two don't like the mum of the boy, and you must make a dress for the happyment of all". This dual mediation of performing bridal dressmaking as a form of "social work for the families" marks a new stage in her life trajectory, where, in addition to enlisting her histories into dressmaking, Habiba also inscribed the aspirations and concerns of her clients. Similar to the parting advice she bestowed to Aziza, Habiba encouraged future brides to advocate for themselves and receive the opinion of their mother and future-mother-in-law as *barakat* (A: blessing) on the marriage. By encouraging women to do so, Habiba was able to maintain a degree of moral and symbolic influence over the dressmaking process, especially through the maternal and spiritual figure of *hajjah*. She was also able to negotiate the shift in roles from designer-dressmaker to dressmaker only, the former of which constituted the terms of who she is and how she wanted to be perceived by Iranians. This advisory role she adopted suggests that Habiba performs bespoke bridal dressmaking as a material practice of religion as it enables her to mobilise matter – the dress – to position herself strategically, religiously, and morally in the dressmaking process and to the people involved.

I was therefore interested to know how her clients and their family members, like Aziza's mother, received and responded to her advice and whether this response differed between Iranian and Kenyan clients. Habiba encouraged me to visit her social media accounts and consult the numerous reviews by former clients who commended her integrity and

commitment to preserve Islamic modesty in her craft, whilst others celebrated the exquisite detail of her embroidery. She also expressed that in both Iran and Kibera, women who returned after the wedding for everyday bespoke garments shared with her their marital concerns and due to the significant influence of the *ulama* (A: learned individuals) in both societies, the women would lament that their husbands received marriage advice from learned men only. Whereas Habiba interprets her clients' visitation after their wedding and continued engagement on social media platforms as a reinforcement of their client-patron bond, it illuminates three other points for consideration.

First, bridal dressmaking enables Habiba to create a livelihood for her family, perform her Muslim identity, and carve out a niche market in a contested religious space where she is also an immigrant. By inscribing the title of "hajja" to her name, Habiba authenticates herself and her garments as Muslim, especially in Iran where she needs 'buy in' to the religious community and to the fashion market as an outsider. By representing herself and her garments this way, Habiba can also be said to use religion to sell her material garments and to generate religious inclusion and new clients in the Muslim-bridal dressmaking industry of Iran.

Second, the kind of belonging that Habiba builds with her clients intersects and traverses a variety of scales; between herself and the client, the family of the bride, new and existing communities, the physical place of Iran, the imagined place of Uganda, and virtual space of social media platforms. In this sense, belonging for Habiba can be affectively transmitted over long distances and across borders, yet rendered tangible and memorable in the dresses she constructs. Finally, religious counselling adds an important 'value added' component to her garment and dressmaking skills in general. This act of offering moral and marital advice may set her apart from the competition, as advice imbibes her garments with symbolic, moral, and religious significance, thereby transforming her bridal dressmaking into a material practice of religion. Together, Habiba can be said to have approached the question of what it means to belong as an outsider simultaneously in economic, political, and religious terms.

I suspect that Habiba spent a significant portion of our conversation – forty-three (43) minutes out of an hour-and-twenty-seven-minute (1h27) conversation – to represent a past that to her, is materially and economically different from her present circumstances in Kibera. Throughout the conversation, Habiba referred to photographs on her cell-phone or memories to explain why her present life in Kibera differs so radically from the bounty she had in Tooro

and Isfahan. This past was also important for Habiba as it emphasised her 'Ugandaness' which she mobilised as both an identity, a religious aesthetic in her bridal dressmaking, and a source of livelihood for her family. However, when her family returned to Kibera in 2011, following her husband's diagnosis of a chronic illness in early 2009, Habiba had to re-establish both a home for her family, and a market for herself, especially after she became the sole provider for her family. What served her formerly in Iran as a Ugandan-Nubian Muslim who blended fabrics, aesthetics, and dress styles in her dressmaking, no longer suited either the bridal dressmaking market or the landscape of Nubian identity politics in Kibera. In the initial months following their arrival, Habiba noted a collapse in the distinction between 'Uganda' and "Kenya' in terms of dress sense and style, a distinction that characterised how she experienced and understood the politics of Nubian identity in Kibera before relocating to Iran in 2000. For one, given the rapid change in the cost of living in Nairobi as well as the socio-economic difference between clients in Isfahan and Kibera, most Nubian grooms and brides preferred respectively a basic white *thobe* and sleek *abaya* for the *nikkah*. Second, the second-hand and imitation goods market in Nairobi provided "a market for every pocket", according to Habiba, and her unique Ugandan-Nubian Muslim aesthetic was no longer affordable to brides who could purchase a wedding dress at a fraction of the cost in Toi Market, the largest second-hand clothing market in Kibera.

In an unusual but ingenious move, Habiba agreed to donate her bridal dresses to a contestant in the 2012 Mr. and Miss. Kibera Leadership Contest, who won the "best dressed" award that year. In the ensuing years, Habiba participated four times in the "Mr. and Miss. Kibera Leadership Contest". Her bridal dresses became a canvas on and through which she communicated messages of peace after the terror attacks in Nairobi (2013), respect for the environment in honour of Nobel Peace Laureate, Wangari Maathai by constructing a bridal dress from plastic (2014), a celebration of love for her thirtieth wedding anniversary (2016), and unity after the 2017 election violence. Committing to the Nubian style but relying on recycled waste, *kitenge* prints, Maasai *shuka*, and Persian fabrics, Habiba's bridal dresses cultivated a new clientele, but no longer represented so exclusively her Ugandan-Nubian identity. But Habiba bemoans the fading interest in Ugandan-Nubian style as also a waning opportunity to continue the tradition of embroidery that her aunts and grandmother taught her. She predicts that like Aziza, her daughters will one day request a less traditional bridal dress,

especially since they have neither visited Uganda nor attended a Ugandan-Nubian wedding ceremony to observe how a bride in Tooro dresses on her wedding day.

Whereas Habiba's innovative style intrigued young women like Aziza, it unsettled women of her (Aziza's) mother's generation. Habiba claims she was initially unaffected by their disapproval as she understood that there were certain Kenyan-Nubian Muslim clients who were more traditional than those who ventured outside tradition. Some clients, for example, would challenge what a traditional Nubian bride should be by changing the colour, others the style of the dress, and some would preserve tradition in their *nikkah* dress but alter their reception dress. In time, however, Habiba perceived their disapproval of her dressmaking as jealousy, sectarianism, or both after an unfortunate incident in 2018 when a group of mothers hurled insults at her youngest daughter for being "a Shi'a witch". To Habiba, the violent turn on her children evinced that the conflict she encountered was not the censorship of her artistic expression but a violation of her family's freedom of belief. She sought conflict resolution from the Kenyan Nubian Council of Elders, but was advised to assimilate her children into the Shafi'i tradition which Kenyan- and Ugandan-Nubian Muslims in Kibera follow.

> Yes, my children had to be raised in a Shi'a country; this is *my* responsibility, it is *my* sin to take as their mother before Allah one day. It is *not* right to shout at a child for following Islam and for what their parents do; I know this – it happened to me when my father was marrying that woman and didn't say about his other family and lied to everyone. So, yes, they [children] learnt to pray and recite this way and yes, it is different, I get that. But the elders told me I must take them *back* to the Shafi'i method; fine! What about the mums who shouts at them [daughters]? Nothing was done, nothing was said to them.

Though firm and ardent her voice, tone, and body language were when describing this incident, Habiba also teared up when she continued to describe the impact that the incident had on her daughter. Habiba's salvo and resolve in this extract are mirrored in the firm way she lectured Aziza at the start of the conversation, followed by a warm hug which together illustrates the complicated way in which she both inhabits and performs belonging to Kenyan-Nubian Muslim women who reject her as a member of the community, but on whom she relies for employment opportunities as they represent her main clientele. But Habiba was most embittered by the KNCE. She loathed the elders' use of "my dear" when referring to women for instance, and insisted that they look down on women. And yet, while Habiba disagreed with the exclusionary ideas that the KNCE abides by about who Nubians are, she was impressed

that I sought "approval" from the elders to conduct fieldwork with Nubians. Her appraisal of the way I navigated fieldwork in Kibera illuminates that adhering to social norms and conduct does not mean those born outside the neighbourhood are not critical of, or resistant to them. Rather, examples like these eschew the binary between compliance and resistance and enrich our understanding of the complex ways that Kiberans navigate social norms in order to belong and coexist. That said, Habiba would portend that I will apprehend certain truths about who people in Kibera "really" are and what their words and actions "truly mean". I understood that by anticipating what my research would uncover, Habiba offered the same maternal and moral wisdom to me as she offers her younger female clients, and I could not ignore that the generational boundary Habiba maintained between her and I was similar to how KNCE relates to Kenyan-Nubian youth which I analysed in the previous chapter.

Aziza's engagement and bridal dresses were the first, and at the time of the interview, the only dresses that Habiba was able to commission after the assault on her daughter in 2018. Though she supplemented her income through ready-to-wear garments, selling imported fabric and apparel, and reduced overhead by subletting her shop or leasing her sewing machine, what troubled Habiba was whether she should continue to cultivate a home for her family in a country that remains unresolved about what relationship Islam and Muslims have to Kenya. Habiba is neither alone in asking this question, nor is her question out of step with her context at the time. Like many people living in Nairobi at the time of fieldwork, Habiba's sense of safety was unsettled after the terror attack in January 2019 which al-Shabaab claimed. The attack was the first to be executed by Kenyan citizens of non-Somali descent and caused both the Kenyan government and ordinary citizens to question what risk Islam presents to domestic security relative to foreign immigration (Bryden and Baha 2019). As both a Muslim and Ugandan national, Habiba states that in the days following the terror attack, she feared her shop and home would be vandalised and paid a nightwatchman to keep guard outside her home.

She also confessed that the attack brought into sharp relief what might happen to the family should she or her husband die; her husband will be buried in the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim cemetery and her body will have to be transported to Uganda. But Habiba has presently little savings to return to Tooro, alive or deceased. Moreover, given that burial in one's homeland signals to the family of the deceased that the departed's life as a migrant in Nairobi was "well-lived", will her family also dismiss her years in Nairobi as a 'good life' should she fail – as her father did – to leave behind money to transport her corpse to Uganda for burial? (Smith 2019:

31).[135] And what of her children? What kind of future awaits them as Muslims in Kenya? Will they visit her grave if they have neither been to Uganda nor identify as Ugandan? Importantly, has she imparted in her clients a greater measure of who she is as a Ugandan-Nubian Muslim, than her children? These questions haunt Habiba she says, and for the first time in her memory, dressmaking no longer provides respite from "the troubles of the world" as before.

The Church Builder of Makina

Despite the saturated yellow paint on the exterior walls and roof, to find AIC (African Inland Church) Makina, you need to get to higher ground. AIC Makina is wedged between several homes and shops, blanketed by a canopy of electrical cords, concealed by smog from the burning refuse site nearby, and surrounded by a maze of footpaths which stymied local Kiberan and research assistant, Hakim. He suggested we "take to higher ground" – to the rooftop of a housing complex in Ayany, a village in Kibera adjacent to Makina – to map a path to AIC Makina. The church is immediately recognisable from this vantage point, so are the two other churches and mosques painted in "optimistic yellow". "Optimistic yellow" is the name of the paint colour glossed on the exterior walls of AIC Makina and the other four places of worship that participated in the 'Colour in Faith' project between 2015 and 2017.[136] Developed by NGO directors in 2015, Colour in Faith embarked to paint places of worship in Kibera yellow to create multiple non-denominational safe spaces in Kibera from the prospect of the 2017 national election violence in Kenya.

Coincidentally, when I met Pastor Juma in April 2017, he was painting the inside walls of the church in "Bermuda Blue", a light and muted shade of blue. At that point, it had been seven months since he and his congregants painted AIC Makina "optimistic yellow" which, in the scorching summer heat, gave the church a halo. Whereas the cool blue of the interior walls visually contrasts the vibrant yellow outside, AIC Makina appeared to me to incorporate the spectrum of colours associated with the Roman Catholic Church; the yellow of the Vatican

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[135] Habiba and her eldest brother requested and were successfully granted by the KNCE, that their father be buried in the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim cemetery in Kibera in August 2014, about a week after his death. The family could neither afford nor locate the passport of their father and could therefore not expatriate the corpse to Uganda.

[136] Alibhai, N., August 2017. 'Why People of Different Faiths are Painting their Houses of Worship Yellow', *TedGlobal2017*.https://www.ted.com/talks/nabila_alibhai_why_people_of_different_faiths_are_painting_their_houses_of_worship_yellow?language=en (Accessed 5 February 2022).

City flag, blue tones of The Blessed Mother Mary, and the green, red, and purple banners hanging at the altar which reflects the liturgical calendar. However, AIC Makina is not an African initiated and Roman Catholic inspired church like the Legio Maria church in Kibera (see Schwartz 2005). The various use of colour in this church achieves in part God's will for an interfaith church in Kibera, a divine calling that Pastor Juma received at the age of twenty-five. But why *yellow*? What shared reasoning exists between religious clergy in Kibera like Pastor Juma, and NGO directors to select yellow as the colour of religious tolerance, inclusion, and belonging in Kibera?

When I reconnected with Pastor Juma in 2019 to conduct field research for this study, he explained that from the age of twenty-five and for over a decade, God visited his dreams and instructed him to "build a church for all his people in Kibera". He continues; "I didn't know how to bring it about […] until it was Colour in Faith who come, and we painted together, Muslim and Christians, and then we have Muslim children in our crèche today, we have Muslims marrying in the church, we even have your friend here [pointing to Hakim] who feel at peace in our place. So ya, this is all His plan".

Prophecies like Pastor Juma's about "building [g]od's church in the city", to borrow from Asonzeh Ukah (2016: 524), are forms of urban city planning in their own right. As Ukah (2014, 2018: 352, 362) explains, the city is not simply a site where religion takes place, but is increasingly a key stake in a wide range of conflicts between religious, state, and secular groups over land and the right to belong. While Pastor Juma as a single religious actor may not display the neoliberal prowess of the megachurch in Ukah's analysis, his collaboration with non-Kiberans and non-religious actors like Colour in Faith and the Ugandan paint company that supplied the paint for the project resonates with the argument by Ukah (2016: 525); that the placemaking practices of religious institutions, or actors in the case of Pastor Juma, illustrate how religion informs urban transformation in Africa.

This section examines how his participation in the Colour in Faith project enabled Pastor Juma to materialise his calling to build an interfaith church, not only in a highly contested and competitive neighbourhood, but in a way that introduced a new politics of sacred space and positioned him as a key player in the land and spatial politics of the neighbourhood. Once emplaced, colour connected places of worship in Kibera to those painted yellow in Nairobi and Mombasa, transcending physical boundaries to produce not only a safe neighbourhood, but also a safe country. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, Pastor Juma's

church-building mission and participation in Colour in Faith respectively challenged and altered how sacred space in Kibera is organised and represented, and by whom. For instance, when I mapped the places of worship painted yellow from the rooftop of the housing complex in Aynay, I noticed what I refer to in this chapter as a 'chromo-cartography' of yellow structures that weaves through the neighbourhood. These yellow places of worship appear to visually and poetically set apart *other* places of worship in Kibera. By this, I mean that despite the objective of Colour in Faith to demonstrate through paint that "there is more that unites us than divides us as a people, African and otherwise", the project motivated me to question if the non-yellow places of worship in Kibera are, by default, less safe from political and/or religious intolerance?[137] Did religious communities of non-yellow places of worship perhaps refuse to participate, or were excluded from the Colour in Faith project? Interestingly, the main director of Colour in Faith will later broadcast in a TEDTalk that "Colour in Faith is literally highlighting those who mean well in yellow".[138] For this reason, the second part of this section examines *what matter does* to the representation and dynamics of religious coexistence and conflict in Kibera, and how it affects Pastor Juma's relationship with his neighbours.

To understand why Pastor Juma contends that painting AIC Makina achieves in part God's will for an interfaith church in Kibera, one needs an account of his life history. Pastor Juma is the first-born son of his father whom I will call Kevenge (b.1957) and his mother, Lilian (b.1959). His birth order is equally important to him and to understand his life history and trajectory. Pastor Juma descends from Luyha and Christian subsistence farmers born and raised in Vihiga county, in western Kenya located close to Lake Victoria. His paternal grandfather, uncle, and father were also "born with the gift of prophecy" and received prophetic callings and dreams from God to encourage others to "return to the land and to God" (Interview, 26 March 2019). The men enacted this divine mandate by promoting subsistence and small-scale farming as a service to God and advised their neighbours on claimed biblical farming techniques and practices. Pastor Juma recalled his father, grandfather, and uncle offering their neighbours the following statements: "I am seeing God is pleased with how you bring up your children to serve Him, your wife she is involved in the church, so I am seeing your harvest will

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[137] Colour in Faith. 'Concept'. https://www.colourinfaith.com/ (Accessed 5 February 2022).

[138] Alibhai, N., 2017. Why People of Different Faiths are Painting their Houses of Worship Yellow. *TedGlobal2017*. https://www.ted.com/talks/nabila_alibhai_why_people_of_different_faiths_are_painting_their_houses_of_worship_yellow?language=en (Accessed 06 October 2022).

be very, very, blessed this year. I am seeing God is asking you to leave your job that is not serving you and serve Him through farming. God is telling me you will be very, very successful". According to Pastor Juma, individuals would travel long distances to visit his grandfather for advice and offer gifts of their harvest as a gesture of thanks. On two occasions, men from neighbouring Kakamega county handed custody of their farms to Pastor Juma's uncle to administer. His uncle produced a successful harvest for several seasons and persuaded Pastor Juma's father to work the two plots of land with him. The successful harvest of both the prophets and their neighbours served as tangible testimony of God's direct involvement in the village and his reward to those who served him.

Prophecies that call for individuals to return to the land as a return to God have been hitherto defined as anti-colonial and anti-*uhuru* (S: 'uhuru' means independence) techniques of land resistance and reclamation. Western Kenya where Vihiga county is located, is regarded by scholars as fertile grounds for producing prophets who enact this religio-political mission (MacArthur 2016, 2020; Shadle 2002; Wipper 1977). Scholars of and interested in religion submit that the longstanding interaction between and integration of indigenous and Christian practices in the region gave rise to forms of "ritual syncretism" (Caxton 2015: 8) and symbolic hybridity that enabled "the renovation of the present through appeals to past orders rather than its restoration through confrontation" (MacArthur 2020: 810). In other words, prophets emerge from, and their prophecies are articulated through, the very modes of religious innovation – ritual and symbol – they seek to delineate. This historical overview of religious syncretism in Vihiga county, therefore, primes us to understand the varieties of religious diversity that those born outside Kibera, like Pastor Juma's experience, engage in and enact *before* their arrival to the neighbourhood. Paying attention to this enables us to better comprehend the myriad and changing religious diversities in Kibera which participants like Pastor Juma contribute to and refashion during their lifetime in the neighbourhood.

Still, not everyone was ready to receive the divine calling, according to Pastor Juma. He remarked that prophets are often mocked, and their revelations are refuted by "the very ones who is in need of it". The hesitance of those in the community to receive agricultural advice might not have been a complete rejection of prophets or religious intervention. Subsistence and small-scale farmers in Kenya became increasingly distrustful of the Kenyan government's move toward agricultural mechanisation, particularly during the 1970s when poor management and corruption began to permeate the entire post-independence project for rural agricultural

development (Moskowitz 2019: 196-205). As the conditions of subsistence agriculture in the countryside diminished to devastating levels, prophecies which called for individuals to return to the land as a return to God intensified as a way to control the mounting political and environmental uncertainty that individual farmers felt (Kniverton *et. al* 2015: S44-47). In the case of Pastor Juma's family, the prophecies eventually "failed" and the first instance happened in Vihiga county in 1984, the year "the rains didn't come" (Interview with Pastor Juma, 26 March 2019).

Unlike the semi-arid regions in eastern Kenya, western Kenya is neither severely nor routinely affected by droughts. However, extreme episodes of drought in 1983-1984 affected most of the Horn of Africa and the floods that followed in 1985, impacted the planting patterns and agricultural activities of communities for several seasons (Bernard 2015: 2; Shisanya 1990: 132). The environmental crisis led to hunger and disease outbreaks across eastern Africa and Kenya. Many Kenyans reported visceral memories of having to eat yellow *ugali* (S: maize), considered "a very undesirable food eaten only during times of hardship" (Neumann *et al.* 1989: 6-8). While some families like Pastor Juma's were compelled to migrate from western Kenya to seek employment, there were 'pull' factors which drew people to Nairobi at the time, particularly rumours that "big men" in Nairobi – politicians and wealthy individuals – were hoarding food or exporting it to generate a profit.[139]

In addition to the agricultural failure his family experienced, Pastor Juma's uncle and later his father, were forced to leave after men in Kakamega county accused his uncle of "sowing bad seeds" – literally and figuratively – which spread to *shambas* (S: cultivated land) in the surrounding area. From this statement and the ensuing conflict that Pastor Juma narrates, these accusations concerned the harmful methods *and* intentions of the uncle's farming practice. "[I]t was some time when the people understands this thing isn't about evil, it is a drought, it isn't man-made", Pastor Juma clarifies, "...if you are the one bringing the healing, you are also the one making it wrong; that's how they thought. My father took my uncle to the elders [in their village] to show, 'this man is normal, he never hurt no one, do your tests, make sure he is sound of mind'. They said, 'there's no one to blame here, but the people are angry, maybe you should take your brother and go somewhere…'".

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[139] Cowell, A., July 16, 1984. Drought Spreads to Kenya, Stirring Fear of a Food Crisis. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/1984/07/16/world/drought-spreads-to-kenya-stirring-fear-of-a-food-crisis.html (Accessed 09 February 2022).

These events were narrated to Pastor Juma by his father not because he was too young to remember, but because Pastor Juma attended boarding school in Kakamega county (1991-1994) and would overhear stories of his uncle when he visited his father's village during school holidays. He explains that his father wanted him to know that "people who push for prophecy after prophecy" will encounter "its full potential", something that Pastor Juma's uncle failed to understand, according to his brother. His uncle left in 1985 for Siaya, a town located about sixty kilometres east of Vihiga county, and sometime between 1986 and 1987, Pastor Juma's father found employment as a cook and groundskeeper for a Pentecostal church in Kibera. When the family reunited in 1989, a mass exodus of people fleeing Nairobi from political persecution under President Daniel arap Moi was underway. Including the crackdown on journalists, academics, and lawyers, the banning of newspapers critical of the government, and the assassination of Tom Mboya, 1989 was reportedly the worst year for human rights violations, extra-judicial murders, disappearances, and torture of Kenyans by the post-independent government. The Kenyan government also introduced that year a "screening" procedure, which presaged the vetting process, and required all Kenyans of Somali origin to report to the nearest police station or local office with their identity documents.[140] The ambiguous role of the state security personnel in removing those defined as non-Kenyan on the one hand, but killing citizens on the other, rendered the state of security in neighbourhoods like Kibera tumultuous as vigilante groups emerged to combat state violence but turned violent on their own community (Kimari 2017: 187-188; Smith 2019: 146).

These early experiences of life in Kibera were profound for Pastor Juma as he distinctly remembers his father uttering divine forsakenness by God and claiming Kibera to be unredeemable. His father took to the "matatu stage" – a minibus stop – on Saturday mornings to preach and compel passersby to repent and return to God. Pastor Juma describes this period below;

> …it was war, war, war. '89, '90, thereabouts, people were dying. Some mornings you go
> to school, in the railway you see some bodies there, dumped just in the open, in the rivers
> there is chopped bodies in plastics – it was not a good place to be. The police, they suspect
> you, you die, no questions. So, it [extra-judicial murders] was unhelpful because sometimes
> it is the wrong person who is killed, and the real killer lives and the community finds out

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[140] Human Rights Watch, 1989. *Kenya*, https://www.hrw.org/reports/1989/WR89/Kenya.htm (Accessed 10 February 2022).

and burn that house. It's chaos all around, you see? [...] My parents sent us back to western for schooling because it was too violent here in Kibra...

These events had a profound impact on the life trajectory of Pastor Juma. As he explains, the "war" and "chaos" compelled his parents to send young Juma to Kakamega county to complete high school. His father also insisted that his children spend their school vacation in Vihiga county, where in his young adolescent years, Pastor Juma learnt about the genealogy of prophecy in his paternal line, and pledged to God to return to Kibera and help his father "spread God's word" there. Had these events not occurred, Pastor Juma maintains that he may not have spent extensive time with his family, learning about the generations of prophets before him, and would therefore neither recognise nor understand the meaning of dreams and visions as messages from God. Underlying his recollection of events, however, I also came to realise that "war" and "chaos" were not only descriptions of the events he experienced during this period, but ideological standpoints that Pastor Juma inhabited to demonstrate why Kiberans should return to land and God.

I initially considered the "sewers, litter, smells, overcrowding" that Pastor Juma remembers upon arrival to Kibera, as the visual and visceral reactions of Pastor Juma as a child. However, listening to the arc of his life story, I observed how similar depictions and experiences appeared to reinforce Pastor Juma's mandate that the physical and environmental landscape of Kibera should be "healed", "cleansed" and "redeemed". He described, for instance, how sanitary the campus of the theological school he attended in Indiana, USA (2009-2013) was, and that it inscribed in him an ethos that "godliness is next to cleanliness". One Saturday afternoon, before this extended interview took place, I accompanied Pastor Juma and a female prophetess of AIC Makina to a makeshift footbridge on the river in Kibera to pray for the several aborted foetuses discovered by residents a few hours before (Fieldnote, 23 February 2019). Less than a month later, I attended a "prayer stage", a kind of prayer vigil that lasted for two days, organised by Pastor Juma and other clergy to pray for those affected by the fire that blazed Toi Market (Fieldnote, 12-13 March 2019).[141] From the river of aborted foetuses to the alleged drug infestation that exploded and caused the market fire, Pastor Juma regarded the physical and environmental landscape of Kibera as a morally polluted site to be religiously

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[141] See also Marita, B., March 12, 2019. Raila: Land Grabbers Responsible for Toi Market Fire Tragedy, *The Standard* https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/nairobi/article/2001316306/raila-land-grabbers-responsible-for-toi-market-fire-tragedy (Accessed 21 February 2022).

cleansed and revived, which contrasts the sacredness that Kenyan-Nubian Muslims claimed their ancestors imbued the earth with.

Pastor Juma's intention after graduation in May 2013 was to either "preach or teach" the word of God in Kibera. This plan changed, however, after the terror attack at Westgate Mall in Nairobi on 21 September 2013 which lasted four days and resulted in the death of at least sixty-seven people. Pastor Juma held a prayer vigil on the Saturday of the attack (21 September 2013) and Sunday at AIC Makina and invited Kiberans of all faiths to "make fellowship under one roof". The enthused attendance of Kiberans encouraged Pastor Juma to offer an interfaith service every second Sunday where new members are "called" to renew or "turn" to God, meaning convert to Christianity. Realising that his calling is to create "a interfaith church in Kibra", Pastor Juma enlisted his networks in the US and elsewhere in Kenya to fund his project. He tried for several years to get funding but to his surprise, Pastor Juma was later introduced through a mutual acquaintance to the directors of Colour in Faith. When the directors of Colour in Faith approached Pastor Juma in September 2016 to participate in the project, Jeddah Mosque Kambi and ACK (Anglican Church of Kenya) Holy Trinity Kibera had transitioned to "optimistic yellow". In March 2017, Pastor Juma invited parishioners and all Kiberans to paint AIC Makina and later suggested to the pastor of Jesus is the Key of Life Church, to participate in the project. Before Kenyans cast their ballots in August 2017, two mosques and three churches in Kibera had shifted to "optimistic yellow", transforming Kibera into an interfaith neighbourhood and proving to Pastor Juma that "God's plan for me was greater than I imagined".

Colour in Faith is an "art orchestration that creates a space for the expression of faith in humanity and universal values".[142] Developed by NGO directors in 2015, the project invites religious communities initially in Kibera, later in Nairobi (2017) and Mombasa (2019), to paint places of worship "optimistic yellow", a colour which represents "a physical manifestation of LOVE as the most important value in any religion".[143] The initial goal of the project in Kibera was twofold. Firstly, Colour in Faith set out to use a single colour – optimistic yellow – and single material – paint – to unite religions on the one hand, and refine religious diversity on the other. The directors wanted to show that "there is more that unites us than divides us as a

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[142] Colour in Faith. Concept. https://www.colourinfaith.com/ (Accessed 17 February 2022).
[143] Ibid.

people, African and otherwise".[144] They maintained that painting the exterior walls of sacred spaces yellow "would bring faith outside of the walls of institutions into an experience of encounter, expression of common acceptance and tolerance".[145] In other words, if paint released faith into the public, colour mediated this matter into a unified meaning. The second goal was to organise space in Kibera into zones of safety from the prospect of national election violence and thereafter, "infect" the surrounding spaces with yellow. As the curator of the project explains, "[b]y creating pathways between houses of worship within one neighborhood, we would create islands of stability and networks of people that could withstand threats".[146] This phase of the project was actualised after a Ugandan paint company donated several thousand litres of paint, allowing residents to paint their homes 'optimistic yellow' in order to enhance the location of these churches and mosques.

Despite trying to produce a salient meaning of yellow, religious leaders in Kibera variously domesticated what yellow means accordingly. Pastor Juma for example, told me that "in Kibera, yellow is life, yellow gives life", and noted the jerry cans wherein water is stored. One imam who participated in the project stated that "yellow is the color of the sun. The sun shines on us all equally. It does not discriminate".[147] Interestingly, shortly after the mosque was painted, the same imam received complaints from his congregants that green and white are in fact the colours of Islam. The imam later conceded to their grievances by painting the bottom half of the exterior walls of the mosque green, leaving the top-half yellow (Fieldnote, 1 February 2019). This material negotiation was still in place when I returned to Kibera to conduct fieldwork in January 2019.[148]

The material negotiation of colour motivated me to read 'optimistic yellow' as a chromo-genealogy of how religious communities in Kibera negotiate belonging materially in their place of worship and neighbourhood. By chromo-genealogy I mean that changes to the social life and meaning of 'optimistic yellow' describe in both material and poetic terms how sacred spaces and places of worship are made and unmade. Not only has the yellow paint

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[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Alibhai, N., August 2017. Why People of Different Faiths are Painting their Houses of Worship Yellow. *TedGlobal2017*. https://www.ted.com/talks/nabila_alibhai_why_people_of_different_faiths_are_painting_their_houses_of_worship_yellow?language=en (Accessed 17 February 2022).

[147] Ibid.

[148] Ibid.

chipped, faded, or painted over since Colour in Faith was introduced in 2015, but one 'optimistic yellow' mosque was razed in the bulldozing of July 2018. The yellow *mabati* (S: corrugated iron sheeting) that comprised the mosque was repurposed into a shop and crèche. The neat chromo-cartography that existed before the bulldozing was at the time of my fieldwork in Kibera in 2019, characterised by an assemblage of hodgepodge yellow *mabati* littered across the neighbourhood. The bulldozers further shaped my interpretation of yellow in Kibera as a material initiator of religious destruction, renewal, and mobility. In this respect, adopting a chromo-genealogical approach to the material construction and reconstruction of religious space and belonging in Kibera illuminates, through paint, changes to the chromo-cartography of sacred space before and after the bulldozing.

As demonstrated in Chapter Four, the raze radically reconfigured the material differences between Kenyan-Nubian Muslims and other religious communities in Kibera. Just as Colour in Faith provided the material conditions for Pastor Juma to materialise his prophecy, so too did the bulldozing clear the grounds, literally and figuratively, for Pastor Juma to extend AIC Makina. Although the church was not directly affected by the raze, it received funding from its national and international patrons to extend the physical layout of the church, thus extending 'optimistic yellow' further into the heart of Makina. The extra space would accommodate not only the community of AIC Makina, but the religiously adrift whose places of worship were destroyed in the razing. The problem with this plan was that the church occupies "Nubian land", to use Pastor Juma's phrase. AIC Makina had for almost two decades, rented the land from "the Nubian mama" who resides next to the church. According to Pastor Juma, the landlady agreed to the extension permitting an increase in monthly rent, but a group of Nubian youth considered the extension of AIC Makina a disrespect on the part of Pastor Juma toward his Nubian landlady and the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim community in general. By October 2018, disapproval against the church extension turned violent after the youth threatened to harm Pastor Juma.

> We are almost fighting. There are a group of Nubian youths – GoGo Boys. They said they can't allow us to build a permanent thing. This land is theirs since they have the title deed. So, we went to administration [police office] and then we were given the way forward [to build] […] Then we started construction in September [2018]. So, they come with their *pangas* [machetes]. They were ready for that, you know? They were ready to harm us. But we [pastors of AIC Makina] decide to speak to their elders; how can the elders allow this

things to take place? The youth, they don't own the title deed. No, it sits with them, their elders. But the elders don't have any control of the youth. The youth, their main aim is they wanted money. They don't have land. Now you see, they want to make Kibera their money chest. They squeeze and squeeze you for money. I stood strong and said we will not give them.

TW: Did they listen? Did they come back?

PJ: Yes, almost thrice. Each time they come with *pangas* and some more of friends. The one time they came with fires [torches]. Finally, they came to say, 'what we want is that you give us something so that we can let you continue the project'. The last time I told them 'I don't have money'. Then they went.

Kiberans who participated in this study variously referred to the GoGo Boys as a "youth gang", a "boda club" – 'boda' meaning motorcycle – "criminals", and finally, "our boys". It is also the name of a local soccer club in Kibera. I became familiar with the GoGo Boys as boda drivers during fieldwork as they were close friends with Hakim, my research assistant, and would drive us to our interviews in Kibera. I cannot confirm if these men accosted Pastor Juma, nor did I pose questions to clarify this point. What can be said is that similar to the court case discussed in the previous chapter where The Nubian Rights Forum rejected the erection of permanent churches on Nubian land after the raze, the extension of AIC Makina occurred within a burgeoning social mandate enforced by some Kenyan-Nubian Muslim residents, that the reconstruction of churches in Kibera should comply with the same spatial norms that existed before the bulldozing. It appears that individuals were already on the lookout after the bulldozing to monitor whether other religious communities complied with this mandate or not, as Pastor Juma explains below;

TW: How did the GoGo Boys know you were building?

PJ: They know because at the time we were bringing in the materials: the bricks, the mabatis, poles. So, they follow us to know what is going to happen there. That is how they know. Because the bricks we were carrying all the way from the road in the front [Kibera Drive] and they have to follow you to know where you are taking them. That is how. Everything in Kibra is monitored. You can't build without someone knowing what you're doing.

TW: So, did the elders do anything in the end?

PJ: Uhm, yes but also no. They said 'ok, we will speak to our boys, if we negotiate it is always without weapons so, yes, your safety is priority'. But they also say what we are doing is taking advantage of the Nubians' generosities; we must have our religion but not impact theirs. It is their land at the end of the day.

About two weeks after the meeting the KNCE, Pastor Juma arrived one morning in October 2018 to find the in-progress building demolished and two of the four exterior "optimistic yellow" walls of AIC Makina were spray painted "Kibra = Nubis". The culprits remain unknown due in part to the neighbours' reticence and Pastor Juma's decision not to report the incident to the police for fear of further retaliation. Pastor Juma declares the sacrilegious demolition of the in-progress building and vandalism to the church as the second unrealised prophecy in the family's genealogy. Despite his success in establishing an inclusive church service and neighbourhood for Kiberans in times of crisis, and although the church would have expanded by four rooms only, Pastor Juma maintains that the built extension would have provided a permanent place where internal migrants of Kenya arriving to Kibera could produce a durable sense of belonging to the neighbourhood and each other. It is also possible that a physical building would serve to materially obliterate the former prophetic mishaps of Pastor Juma's family. It appeared that church-building for Pastor Juma was as much, if not more, about reproducing belonging and respectability within his family and village in Vihiga county, as it was a material practice to make a home for himself in Kibera. Similar to Habiba, the material practices to build an interfaith church in Kibera or a successful dressmaking business, enable both Pastor Juma and Habiba to present themselves and their parents as morally respectable persons, especially to their communities of belonging in and outside Kibera.

That said, even though the church extension interrupted the project taking place in the courts at the time which was to claim all land in Kibera as the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim homeland, it is necessary to ask who else was likely responsible for the destruction of the church extension. Given the competitive market for religious members, converts, and space between churches in Kibera, Pastor Juma's ongoing plans to enact an interfaith church – the interfaith church service, Colour in Faith, and the extension of AIC Makina – may have been interpreted by other Christian clergies as a form of "sheep-stealing" (Gez and Droz: 2017: 163-189). Thus, similar to the challenges Habiba experienced, the material practices of religion that internal and regional migrants to Kibera enact in order to make a home for themselves and

others, illuminate the myriad and complex negotiations they must navigate *within* their religious community to make this possible.

Conclusion

Producing ways to connect to one's homeland whilst living in someone else's homeland is a delicate task; it requires replicating certain emotions, places, and practices from *there*, without replacing the established ones *here*. This task is further complicated by the challenges of living in Nairobi, such as the onslaught of terror attacks or routine demolitions that a neighbourhood like Kibera is subject to. Without the life experience that native-born Kiberans have on how to maintain religious belonging in a city beset by extra-state violence, urban development, and social discord, migrants invent and repurpose material practices of their religion to forge belonging to those in their new home and maintain belonging to those in their homeland. By taking a material religion approach, this chapter offered tangible examples of how Habiba and Pastor Juma attempt to make the worlds of their belonging 'real' to themselves and others in Kibera through the material practices of dressmaking and church-building, and through material objects of bridal dresses and paint. Their material practices of religion depict Habiba and Pastor Juma as agents who actively sustain religious diversity and vitality in Kibera in a way that pluralises how we define Kibera as neighbourhood (Chapter Three), homeland (Chapter Four), now a home and a place to build God's church.

Through their life-histories, this chapter showed that leaving one's homeland, locating oneself in a new home, and longing to return to one's homeland is not linear for the participants under discussion. Instead, it is managed and mediated through material practices of religion, practices that enable Habiba and Pastor Juma to inhabit and connect to their homeland elsewhere and navigate the vexed politics of land and belonging in Kibera. These practices further allow Habiba and Pastor Juma to remake their social pasts and themselves as morally respectable persons to their communities of belonging both in and outside Kibera, as well as provide a livelihood for their families. In this next chapter, I examine the everyday negotiations that Kiberans perform and navigate to accommodate the multiple and multiplying religious practices, spaces, and communities in their neighbourhood.

Chapter Six

Negotiating for a Place to Belong

Previous chapters of this study analysed the social, oral, and life histories of Kiberans past and present to understand how religious communities enact a pluralised notion of belonging and the effects this has on the dynamics of religious coexistence in Kibera. This chapter explores how Kiberans negotiate everyday life in a religiously diverse neighbourhood. Everyday life in Kibera is at once exceptionally unpredictable and fairly mundane. The mediation of these two realities has to do with differences in "the affective dimensions of African urbanism" (Dilger *et al*. 2020: 3), for while residents of Kibera maintain that they expect nothing will improve the conditions of their everyday lives, they also live in a neighbourhood and city where urban development, residential fires, and annual floods risk destroying the structural and social fabric of their neighbourhood. The same analysis can be made of the religious dimensions of everyday life being at once unpredictable and monotonous. Residents proudly report that their neighbourhood is home to every ethnic and religious community in Kenya, whilst cautioning that the location of religion changes depending on the day of the week, as churches rent space from barbershops on a Sunday and many churches in Kibera exist only when enough money was raised the previous week (Fieldnote, 25 January 2019).

Given the concomitant conditions of unchangeability and unpredictability, how, then, do religious communities in Kibera grow, practice their religion, and produce a durable sense of belonging to each other and the neighbourhood? Which condition of their reality do religious communities in Kibera prioritise; improving the state of the neighbourhood that the Kenyan government has failed to do, or finding a way to belong amid urban precarity? Do they negotiate the imbricated realities of unchangeability and unpredictability within their religious community or as a neighbourhood of different religious communities? This chapter demonstrates how religious communities in Kibera change the place of religion weekly, daily, and sometimes every hour for two reasons: to negotiate where, when, and how long to practice their religion in response to bulldozing, fires, or floors on the one hand, and to ameliorate conflict over land on the other. I observed this change by accompanying religious adherents who visit and worship with other religious communities on Sundays. I focus on Sunday and on

their religious mobility, not only because Sunday is the most religiously diverse day in Kibera. Sunday has become a day for religious adherents in Kibera to experiment with, and engage in, alternative forms of religious belonging. After the "critical event"[149] of the bulldozing in July 2018, Kiberans with whom I consulted report that they come to expect Sundays to be a time to safely disconnect them from their religious community and visit other churches, whilst others acknowledge and implicitly agree to these practices to avoid tension and conflict.

I employ the concept of 'flux' to describe how religious adherents and communities in Kibera address the proliferation of religious space, people, and practices following an unpredictable event, and why they are willing to encourage more religious conviviality as a way to create a lasting sense of belonging. First, I will show that religious communities accommodate the proliferation of religious space, people, and practices both internally and relationally through two strategic negotiations. These negotiations involve how far to disconnect from one's religious community (internally), and how much space to give other religious communities without causing tension (relationally). Second, these accommodations and negotiations produce briefly – on a Sunday – a surplus of religious spaces, practices, and elasticity in the meaning of belonging. This brief surplus is important. It illustrates the point advanced by scholars of religion who examine religious coexistence and cooperation in African contexts, that negotiation amongst religious communities need not produce salience or synthesis out of difference or contestation (Grillo *et al*. 2019; Spies 2013, 2019; Spies and Seeseman 2016). Sometimes, in the case of Kiberans, to accommodate and negotiate life in a religiously diverse neighbourhood means setting a time and space aside for "sacred surplus" and "too-muchness" to occur, as it generates a sense of belonging for residents and prevents the prospect of conflict (Ukah 2020: 323). To be sure, by 'religious coexistence' I mean different religious adherents and communities who reside in a distinct location and are generally impacted by the conditions of life there. By 'religious cooperation' I mean the individual and collective strategies that religious adherents and communities deploy to cohabit together and address the conditions of their shared place.

Existing scholarship on the concept of 'flux' suggests that Kenyans have previously debated and resolved the question of how members of their community can briefly disassociate

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[149] A concept borrowed from Veena Das (1995) to describe the rupture of pre-existing forms of understanding and ways of being that dissolves after a radical event has transpired, and that these events have the potential to produce new modes of identity and practice.

or disconnect from the group, and how much territory to give other groups. The term "flux" as it relates to Kenya, was deployed by Colin M. Turnbull (1968: 132-137) to examine how and why two hunting societies – who occupied and moved within the mountainous region located in present-day Uganda, Kenya, and Sudan – coexisted in relative peace despite encroaching on each other's territory and competing for the same resources. Turnball found that in the longue durée of their social history, these two societies practised open membership and learnt each other's hunting methods. The constant change in personnel, frequent shift rotations, and pluralised hunting methods, enabled both societies to become highly resilient to environmental change and inter-group conflict (*ibid.*, 132). Notably, Turnbull suggests that the "function of flux might be said to be religious, for, by deemphasizing stability in interpersonal relations, the process throws the people into closer recognition of the one constant in their lives" (*ibid.*, 137). Turnball neither returns to, nor develops this point in later studies, but appears to recognise that belonging is elastic as long as individuals feel that they can deviate from a "constant" point, a point he presumes to be religion.

It is unclear how a term used to describe coexistence between communities in the rural highlands of Kenya was reworked to understand urban life in the city. Nonetheless, flux re-emerges as a descriptor for the "state" or "condition" of urbanisation in Nairobi after Kenyan independence in 1963, and to describe the challenges and innovations that residents face and create to develop lasting and meaningful relationships (see also Suda 1997: 199).[150] What is clear is that throughout the genealogy of the term, scholars have used flux to show that social membership is fluid amongst communities in Kenya past and present, produced through social negotiation, subject to changing spatial conditions, and that membership deviates from a fixed point which is religion for Turnball, and 'the rural' for scholars like Anderson (1966), Amis (1983, 1984, 1988), Clark (1973, 1978) and Temple (1974) (discussed in Chapter Two).[151]

Like Thomas Tweed (2006), Devaka Premawardhana (2015: 46) argues that religions are inherently itinerant and produce the capacity for people to live in flux – between here and there and religion and tradition. Premawardhana (2015: 46) uses the term flux as a heuristic to

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[150] I discuss this literature at length in Chapter Two, specifically in the section entitled 'Kibera as a Neighbourhood of Cooperation'.

[151] For ethnographic studies which examine how residents in other African cities like Dakar and Luanda negotiate the meaning of belonging to the city in response to the shifting urban landscape around them, see the work of Melly, C., 2017. *Bottleneck: Moving, Building, and Belonging in an African City*. University of Chicago Press, and Tomás, A., 2022. *In the Skin of the City: Spatial Transformation in Luanda*. Duke University Press.

understand why wellbeing for Pentecostal Mozambiquans, whether spiritual or socio-economic, requires not a grounding in stability, but "the capacity for mobility and mutability, for shifting places and altering identities". What is important about Premawardhana's contribution to the term, is that similar to Turnbull, flux is considered neither the antecedent of nor explanation for religious or social conflict. By following their everyday lives from the church to the shrine and from subsistence farming to mechanisation, Premawardhana (2015: 38; 2018: 16) observes that for Pentecostal Mozambiquans who engage in both Christianity and Traditionalism, and in village and state roles, "being committed is not opposed to being fluid"; people report a sense of human flourishing and autonomy from living out the plurality of selfhood, even when they are reprimanded by pastors and elders for veering too far from the prescribed notions of 'Christianity' or 'Traditionalism'. In this respect, flux is necessary "for coexistence, community, and connection – with persons and beings both human and other-than-human" (Premawardhana 2022: 112). Premawardhana (2018: 3-8) concludes that flux "holds open pluralism and fluidity without discarding the sense of distinct, compartmentalized essences [...] because change, even rupturing change, is endogenous, intrinsic to tradition".

Finally, the concept of flux offers an alternative framework for examining religious coexistence and cooperation that does not presume a history or climate of religious violence amongst neighbours.[152] If, as the body of scholarship above posits that groups that coexist will strive for negotiation even if that means redefining the terms of belonging, then the ways in which religious communities in Kibera negotiate religious coexisting by setting time aside for religious conviviality, is neither a-theoretical nor a-contextual. Rather, an examination of flux in Kibera offers insight into whether these negotiations are a sustainable means to secure belonging and manage coexistence in a neighbourhood under the constant threat of physical and material change. In the following sections of this chapter, I will explore how Kiberans make sense of living and participating in flux on Sunday, how they implicitly and explicitly came to designate Sundays as a day of religious conviviality, and how this negotiation enables Kiberans to strategically disconnect from their religious community, without causing tension internally or between religious communities.

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[152] The representation of Kibera/ns as violent and/or dangerous is discussed in the literature review chapter (Chapter Two).

Karibu Sundays

Sunday is the most religiously diverse day in Kibera. In the introduction of this study, I remarked how materially and sensorially unique Sundays are by describing the cacophony of religious sounds, the wave of street processions, the vibrant colours, and clusters of makeshift places of worship that collectively transform the neighbourhood into a scene of religious conviviality. In the first few Sundays of my fieldwork, I thought that the aura of religious conviviality was all-encompassing and undecipherable, which is why I presupposed that Kiberans simply gave way to this religious exuberance as it was too difficult to regulate the sacred surplus of sounds, spaces, and people that engulfed their neighbourhood on a Sunday. I further assumed that Kiberans might practise "techniques of inattention" (Larkin 2014: 1002-1006) to manage their disconcertment of sound and that the ramshackle construction of makeshift places of worship was the result of the raze of July 2018 and therefore, an outlier to the way space and place in Kibera is organised and managed. As I continued fieldwork, I gradually observed from the female street vendors who arose from their seats and joined in dance and song whenever the walking procession passed them, that there was a pace to the way some Kiberans experienced religious diversity and conviviality on a Sunday (Fieldnotes, 17 March 2019). In other instances, certain religious practices – although highly visible and audible – were clumsily positioned within this flux, like the pastor who preached from a loudspeaker in a slow-moving car but each week struggled to manoeuvrer between and would lose his travelling congregants to, the walking processions of larger religious communities. In both respects, there was a rhythm to the expression of religious diversities in Kibera on Sundays which offered texture to my initially dense view of religious coexistence.

I also found Kibera, on Sundays, both unrecognisable and incomprehensible. 'Unrecognisable', because religious communities assembled new places of worship on Sunday morning to be deconstructed in the evening, and 'incomprehensible', because the material and physical changes radically reconfigured the spatial and embodied knowledge that I use to navigate the neighbourhood during the week. This experience caused me to return to a key of this study: what kind of space is Kibera? What would it mean to provide a different answer to this question each day of the week? Why do Kiberans – who claim Kibera as their home and homeland – enact and adhere to altering definitions and practices of space throughout the week, and how do they negotiate these daily informed definitions? It took several weeks to understand that flux was a negotiated form and practice of religious coexistence and conviviality occurring

in a set time – Sunday. This negotiation allowed for elasticity or deviation in the kinds of belonging Kiberans adhered to during the week. The religious adherents who contribute to this flux do more than transform Kibera on Sunday; they also reveal the various forms and practices of belonging that residents have to offer, and provide a window into the kind of religious space and future that Kibera may be when religious communities allow for the prospect of fluid religious belonging.

By consulting with residents, I found that they both earmarked Sunday as, and eventually expected it to be, a time and space of unparalleled religious accommodation and negotiation. By permitting Sundays as a temporal and spatial sphere for religious conviviality, the proliferation of religious space, and the flood of people on the streets, Kiberans ensure that their everyday life is not reconstituted and circumvent the possibility of religious conflict generated by intolerance toward others. By accommodating each other this way, Kiberans make sense of and contribute to the flux in their neighbourhood. Finally, by dedicating time and space to other religious practices, people, and spaces, Kiberans know why religious conviviality is happening, and by producing the conditions for it, they also feel as though they can manage their neighbourhood. What sets Sundays apart from any other day is the negotiations that local religious communities agree to perform to accommodate the presence and practices of other religious adherents.

Both the movement and density of people visible on Sundays were due in part to the raze of July 2018 which caused many in Kibera to become religiously adrift, meaning, that affected Kiberans were either without a stable religious community or without a permanent place of worship, whether materially or spatially permanent. In the weeks following the 2018 bulldozing, five members of religious clergies whose places of worship were not affected, including Pastor Felix – who presides over a small Pentecostal church in Olympic, Kibera and participated in the *Colour in Faith* project – created '*karibu* Sundays' (S: 'welcome' Sundays) for religiously adrift Kiberans to temporarily "make fellowship" with their neighbours while their clergy raised funds to rebuild their church (Interview with Pastor Felix, 1 February 2019). According to Pastor Felix (b. 1972), during the initial weeks that *karibu* Sundays ran, religious clergy of the host churches, including himself, agreed that visitors would not be compelled to perform the rites and practices of membership, such as baptism, or pay the obligatory monthly tithe. Their agreement to do so abided by the community ethos of *karibuni* from which *karibu* Sundays derives; *karibuni* is a moral gesture of compassion and a demonstration of solidarity

that village, community, and religious leaders extend to people affected by fires (Fieldnotes, 12, 13 March 2019) or during bereavement (Fieldnote, 7 February 2019), for example.

Karibu Sundays demonstrate how religious adherents in Kibera reworked a local ethos and crisis management response into a religious framework that accommodates their religiously adrift neighbours. In this sense, *karibu* Sundays provided both a temporary home and an alternate sense of belonging to residents who already pursued varied notions of home and belonging. Not only did this observation pluralise how I defined belonging as social, spatial, and now temporal, *karibu* Sundays further illustrated that the religious mobility and conviviality I observed on Sunday was the outcome of three imbricated phenomena; the nature of coexistence amongst the numerous religious communities of Kibera, the nature of urban precarity in neighbourhoods like Kibera, and the resilience demonstrated in community response to precarity.

Additionally, more than a case study or phenomenon that I encounter during fieldwork in Kibera, *karibu* Sundays constituted and required its own methodology and method for how to conduct fieldwork in Kibera. Methodologically speaking, during *karibu* Sundays, "church hopping" – visiting one church after the other – constituted both an ethnographic and religious practice (Gez and Droz 2019: 38). What I initially considered to be multi-sited ethnography, I later realised, was at once made possible from, and mimicked the religious mobility of Sundays in general, and of *karibu* Sundays in particular. This realisation illuminated how obscure the boundary between 'observing' *karibu* Sundays and 'participating' in it is, and further collapsed the distinction between 'researcher' and 'researched' in that on some occasions both I and the residents of Kiberans occupied the category of 'church visitor' (Babbie 2021: 291-293, 320) It also highlighted the vitality of religious activity on a Sunday, so much so that other practices become profoundly regulated in turn, even forms of non-activity by residents like Yousif Abdallah and Bibi Jaina who both state that they choose to reside at home on Sunday to avoid the crowds (Interview, 21 and 27 February 2019).

To map and measure how *karibu* Sundays reorganise time, space, and movement, required on my part a degree of flexibility, negotiation, and accommodation to change. Whereas I usually scheduled with participants a suitable time to conduct an interview or requested archival material days before consulting them, if I by chance met someone I knew on route to church on a Sunday, I would certainly be invited to attend church with them and be expected to accept the invitation. Interestingly, should I break my previous agreements, the

member or pastor of the church with whom I initially agreed to visit that Sunday, would unquestionably understand my change of plans; that was how life on Sunday works. Understanding and adopting this flexibility as a research practice helped me to understand that inhabiting and navigating Kibera is neither mechanistic nor monotonous, but dynamic and fluid.

The Limits and Possibilities of Karibu Sundays

One of the key and initial ambiguities that I encountered with regards to church visits in general, is that outside of *karibu* Sundays, church visits were already a highly prevalent practice in Kibera, but tolerated within the neighbourhood only if young people pursued it (see Fesenmyer 2017: 194-195). For instance, the members of the Kenyan Nubian Council of Elders, Bibi Jaina and Yousif Abdallah equally recalled inviting the children of their Christian neighbours to the family *Eid al-Fitr* meal when the former were parents of young children. Consider as well that the daycare which operates inside AIC Makina (Pastor Juma in Chapter Five) was founded as an inter-religious and inter-denominational space, and remains open to Christian and Muslim-identifying families. Particularly amongst Christian and Muslim-identifying parents, Kiberans are proud of and cite numerous examples of the way in which their families, daycares, and churches foster inclusion and acceptance of other religions. Other residents maintain that this practice and ethos of religious inclusion and cooperation is acceptable until the socially expected age of marriage, after which a person stands at risk of being deemed untrustworthy, duplicitous, and even promiscuous. One single mother from Kibera whom I will call Pamela (b. 1973) explained that when her children were school-aged, church hopping was "very normal" as her children moved between the church located on the school grounds, the church that the family attended on Sundays, and "their granny's church" when they visited during the school holidays. She continued that church visits are an important form of moral conduct for young people, and included religious activities such as participating in morning prayer at school as a morally positive practice of self-making even though the denomination of the church attended was different to the denomination of their 'family' church (Interview, 27 January 2019). Eventually, her sons "settled", meaning they matured out of the restless pursuit of a religious community around the age of 24 to 26 years, found suitable partners and married in the church.

I found this point illuminating, not only because it illustrates that in some cases, families in Kibera will condone their youth's engagement in religious diversity because they have mechanisms to prevent religious mobility from interfering with the temporal rhythms of social and biological reproduction. Pamela's story also drew my attention to the many Kiberans who continued to participate in *karibu* Sundays in their late twenties and six months after the bulldozing occurred. Her knowledge and experience of the church hopping that young people perform is therefore situated *before* the "critical event" of the bulldozing that extended not only the period of church hopping, but reconfigured the socially acceptable age that parents like Pamela may expect this practice to end. It seems that insofar as church hopping or church visits by Kiberans occurred before the bulldozing, the liminal period of church reconstruction and religious reconnection altered what is permissible. For example, Pastor Felix explained that neither he nor the religious clergy who formed *karibu* Sundays expected the practice to continue for so long. Given that the practice of "church hopping" amongst Kiberans was already prevalent and subject to tension between religious clergy in Kibera, the organisers of *karibu* Sundays notified visitors that they are not required to reaffiliate, regularly attend, or offer tithe to the host church to avoid assumptions that *karibu* Sundays was about "preying on the people of Kibra" (Interview, 1 February 2019; see also Doz and Gez 2021: 285-299; Gez *et al.* 2021: 57-84).

Despite such efforts to ameliorate religious conflict, *karibu* Sundays continued in part to the unexpected participation of adherents from 'big' and 'permanent' churches in Kibera who used *karibu* Sundays as a time and space to visit other churches, observe their practices, and understand the lifeworlds of their neighbours. For someone like Anne (b. 1990), whose late grandfather was a priest of the largest Anglican church in Kibera, it was as though the relaunch of *karibu* Sundays in August 2018 provided ordinary Kiberans with the permission to invite friends to their church as well as an opportunity to accept the invitation and participate in practices otherwise disproved of by one's religious community. Anne claimed that she met and befriended many people through *karibu* Sundays, people who to her surprise were born and raised in Kibera like she, but whom she would never have had the opportunity to know (Fieldnote, 3 February 2019).

Although I knew that Anne continued to engage in *karibu* Sundays six months after the raze, I suspected when I recognised her one Sunday at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, a Catholic Church on the border of Kibera, that her continuation was due to a willingness to

convert to Catholicism. The fact that Anne participated in the liturgical aspects of the mass usually reserved for official members of the church, further assured me that she considered conversion. Ordinarily, the Catholic ritual of presenting the gifts to the altar is performed by "the faithful", meaning Catholics who were "called by baptism" (Ostdiek 2015: 59). However, when I found Anne in the church courtyard after mass and noted to her that I did not know she was interested in becoming Catholic, she firmly stated otherwise as evident in the excerpt below.

> No, Tammy! I'm not a Catholic! [laughs]. It's not about becoming a Catholic, no. It's just everyone is so nice. They say 'come, welcome, be in fellowship with us'; they make you feel like a big person, so important.
>
> I'm here [Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish] twice now; from last year in November [2018] to now, I only come twice. But I'm seeing what's out there, and maybe what it is people do. If someone says, 'come meet me Sunday at so-and-so time and church', I say 'very well, I am honoured to go', and when you say it with such thankfulness, then you get a very big welcome.
>
> Ok, I won't go to the Legios [...] the Legios say they're like Catholic but ah, I don't know. You see them wear this toy guns; did you see? They're dangerous. I don't want to be with them.

And so, Anne has no intention to join another religious community; she simply enjoys the sense of welcome and the opportunity to make fellowship with her neighbours. She visits other churches only when a friend of that community is present, and continues to accept invitations for church visits to see "what's out there". Anne's example illustrates how the extended practice of *karibu* Sundays provided religious adherents in Kibera inadvertently an opportunity for religious networking and to cultivate a strong sense of belonging within their religious community as neighbours feel confident to offer or accept the invitation for a church visit. Negotiation enters the frame of analysis when the question of why, if restless church visits are expected to cease at a certain age, does Anne continue to participate in *karibu* Sundays? The response to this question resides for Anne in particular, in the way she navigates what it means to be a 'good' Christian. It seems to Anne, that to be a good Christian may mean declining invitations to the 'wrong' religious communities, like the Legio Maria whom Anne considers "dangerous" because "they wear this toy gun" in public (see Figure 6.1). I too observed members of the Legio Maria religious community in Kibera carry on their person, wooden

carved assault rifles such as handguns or semi-automatics, presumed to ward off evil when walking in public (Fieldnote 3 February 2019, 17, 24 March 2019; see also Mukoya 2007).

Moreover, and to the point of Pamela that young Christian people are expected to mature out of the restless pursuit of a religious community, recent studies of young people in Kibera illustrate that unmarried couples who cohabit and young people who actively delay starting a family continue to attend church despite criticism from their family and religious community of their life choices (Farrell 2015; Wilson 2019). Anne's case study and Pamela's remarks are therefore not opposing realities. Rather, they illustrate how religious adherents attain a sense of belonging in two ways; by circumventing the norms of their community on the one hand, and affirming and performing community the expectations for young people to move within religious spaces for some time as a process of religious and neighbourhood socialisation, on the other hand. This dual negotiation illustrates that far from being premised on or preoccupied with strict adherence to a coherent belief system and regular attendance, religious communities in Kibera and their adherents practice a form of belonging that is mobile and mutable. Moreover, both realities illuminate the many-sidedness of the concept of flux as both a collective and individual negotiation about how far members disconnect from the tenets of belonging without destabilising the social system. In this respect, Anne's remark about the Legio Marias illuminates that *karibu* Sundays is not without the daily local politics about who to interact with, and who to avoid. The intense religious mobility and activity that I observed on Sundays is predicated on such incremental and daily observations and interactions that Anne experiences during the week in Kibera, which further enables her to assess which religious community she intends to associate with.

FIGURE 6.1: Legio Maria adherent (front left) carry a self-made wooden toy gun during a procession at Uhuru Park, Nairobi. 21 October 2007. Reuters/Thomas Mukoya.

Anne further negotiates what it means to be a good Christian *within* her religious community as she navigates the timing and frequency of her church visits so as not to appear disloyal to Anglicanism. To avoid admonishment from her family, parish priest, or members of her religious community, Anne suspends church visits during important liturgical events like Advent or Easter, and circumvents questions of her commitment to Anglicanism by participating actively upon return and acting warmly to visitors.

> When I go out there to other churches, the priests of my church they become very happy for me. Even my mother is happy I am becoming a loving Christian to others. [Before participating in *karibu* Sundays] I didn't use to be involved in anything; not service, not helping in church, nothing. Then I see how others from their churches, how they do their level best to make everyone feel so, so very welcome. Now when I'm at my church, I do the same. I see you are new, you are a visitor, I give you a seat at the front. I tell the priest, 'she is the one who is new. Give her a blessing'[...] I just become a more [*sic*] better Christian by being out there with others.

Anne's statement that she has "become a more better Christian by being out there with others" and that her communities of belonging – familial and religious – acknowledge and support this flourishing, offers an expected positive appraisal of church visits. According to Anne, church visits have improved her spiritual well-being and enabled her to contribute to the well-being of the church. Delving closer into her excerpt, however, reveals insight into how those who return to their religious communities after church visits navigate the micro-politics of belonging to their church members. Anne's story shows that church visits are highly scrutinised rehabilitation practices that returnees are subjected to by their regularly attended adherents and clergy. I say rehabilitation because Anne's church duties communicate her willingness to return to the fold while also demonstrating to her religious community that engagement in church visits helps her build rapport with visitors who attend *their* Anglican church on *karibu* Sundays.

This kind of regulation that Anne performs after church visits – willingly, unwilling, or unknowingly – is noteworthy for a second reason, as it draws the frame of analysis outside Sunday, and into the everydayness of the week. This analysis raises a series of questions about how her family life or daily interactions with Kiberans during the week may shape Anne's decision about when and how often to visit other churches. Such day-to-day negotiations provide variance, scale, and texture to religious diversity and coexistence and offer granular insight into the incremental decisions made in the week that gets played out on Sundays and therefore shape the flux observed. It shows that although *karibu* Sundays function for only a few hours on one day, each individual, church, and religious community differently negotiates how far to extend the accommodation of others or the disconnection of their own. This negotiation in turn, produces a range of alternative ideas and practices of belonging that overlap the existing claims to multiple people and places of belonging thus far analysed. This means that, in the case of Kibera, flux is not a symptom of religious diversity and coexistence, but the manifest form that strategic negotiation *between* and *within* religious communities takes.

It may be useful to return to the concept of flux and illustrate how this section qualifies certain features of this term. First, similar to the findings of Turnball's (1968: 132-137) study, *karibu* Sundays demonstrate that religious adherents who participated in this study feel comfortable visiting other religious communities and participating in alternative forms of religious belonging when they have a firm base to return. Whether that base is a church, the affiliation of religious identity, or both, belonging for the Christian religious communities thus far discussed does not mean regular church attendance or allegiance to a single church or

community. Rather, belonging – to a church, a religious community, and to the neighbourhood of Kibera – is a negotiation practised internally and relationally. Furthermore, this chapter shows that when residents agree to accept and assign a time and space for religious conviviality in their neighbourhood, then negotiation is pursued not toward establishing or reifying the spatial or categorical boundary between 'us' and 'them' but to accommodate the existing and continuing presence of other religious communities, spaces, and practices. This practice of setting time aside for religious conviviality and creating a 'sacred surplus' helps religious communities as well to anticipate and mitigate urban precarity that routinely affects how they practice religion and coexist with others in Kibera.

Second, the flexible practices and fluid notions of belonging that Kiberans perform during *karibu* Sundays is not simply a response to the making of Kenyan-Nubian Muslims into a moral community. Rather, *karibu* Sundays can be analysed as facilitating another kind of moral community in Kibera, one in which majorly Christian residents create new religious spaces, practices, and experiences to contend with the "unfinished debates" (Lonsdale 1992: 317) and "unresolved questions" (Moskowitz 2019: 10) about what it means to belong in a changing and diversifying neighbourhood.[153] Not to single out the moral project of Kenyan-Nubian Muslims as shaping *karibu* Sundays alone, it is no less interesting to note how the moral becomings of former enables and is inextricably linked to the religious becomings of those who participate in the latter. By considering these moral communities as both becoming and connected, I hope to also illustrate how Islam in Kibera undergirds the religious possibilities of place, space, and belonging of the Christians who participate in *karibu* Sundays.

Third, by analysing *karibu* Sundays as made by and for an emerging moral community may explain why *karibu* Sundays continued for as long as it did. Although Christian religious clergy revitalised *karibu* Sundays in response to the bulldozing of July 2018, *karibu* Sundays offered ordinary individuals like Anne the opportunity to befriend their neighbours and understand their neighbourhood more broadly. More so, Anne's prolonged participation in *karibu* Sundays afforded her multiple moments to briefly inhabit unfamiliar spaces and places, perform unfamiliar religious practices, and occupy the position of an outsider all while doing religion. To the extent that flux describes how Kiberans at once produce, accommodate, and negotiate the multiple and multiplying forms of religious belonging, *karibu* Sundays both

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[153] I thank the anonymous examiner for bringing this point to my attention.

produced and provided religious adherents in Kibera with different ways of getting to know their neighbours and neighbourhood, by either receiving or being a visitor.

Minimising Competition during Karibu Sundays

Not only religious adherents, but religious clergy also appeared to negotiate how to accommodate church visitors without accusation of 'sheep stealing' when hosting church visitors as I previously mentioned. It can be said that religious clergy have in part transformed *karibu* Sundays from a moral practice for how to behave when your neighbour is in need, to a religious activity that favourably and symbolically displays their acceptance of visitors *as though* the latter is in need. Differently stated, by shifting the locus of need from the material – since *karibu* Sundays were produced to respond to the destruction of churches and homes – to spiritual need, religious clergy appear to 'help thy neighbour' without overtly competing for members. Consider, for example, how Pastor Felix achieves this in his sermons where he asserts that "we might not have much in Kibra, but we have a hunger for the Word of God, Alleluia!", and later, "we will arrive at the gates of heaven with a list of the good deeds we did for one another" (Fieldnote, 3 February 2019). When situated alongside other affordances such as attending *karibu* Sundays without the condition of tithe, this rhetoric of shared spiritual poverty amongst Kiberans obfuscates the ability to discern if and how religious clergy are simply accommodating those in need, or subtly persuading visitors to join the host church.

In some instances, however, it is evident that *karibu* Sundays is a sphere of competition for members and money. At the three Pentecostal and two Evangelical churches that I attended during fieldwork, they appeared to retain members by making them feel 'like a big person' to use Anne's phrase. All newcomers were invited to stand at the start of service and received hearty applause or collective exclamation of '*karibuni*' (S: 'welcome' in plural), from the congregation. At *Jesus is the Key to Life* church, newcomers were presented with a blue sash that read 'God is Good' (see Figure 6.2 below) and sometimes invited to sit in the front pew with the senior clergy. Pastor Felix also transacted other forms of labour from visitors by inviting them to the pulpit to offer a prayer, give testimony, or sign a hymn that was communicated through the loudspeakers outside and above the church. The movement in and out *Jesus is the Key to Life* church, the blaring prayers, speaking of tongues, and heartfelt testimonies of visitors emitting from the church, all gave the impression that the church was

"on fire"; meaning, that the holy spirit was present and "working in the place", to use Pastor Felix's words (Fieldnote, 3 February 2019).

To retain membership and encourage benefaction, Pastor Felix stationed a congregant at the church entrance who registered the names and contact numbers of the considerable foot traffic of visitors, added these names to his growing repository of contacts, and on Monday morning, sent a text message to visitors – myself included – to subscribe to a daily message service by Pastor Felix for one-hundred-and-fifty-shillings a month (approximately US$ 1). I also received an SMS saying, '*Pastor [Felix] has received a message from God he wants to share with you. Call now*.' (Fieldnote 27 March 2019). Other small churches sold CDs and hosted day-seminars for a few hundred shillings where participants learn "how to succeed in America" as the pastor of the Evangelical Church of Silanga village in Kibera has (Fieldnote 29 January 2019). Smaller churches, in this way, provide visitors with a range of options for participation during and after the church visit and highlights what Premawardhana (2015: 38; 2018: 16) submits, that to be fluid or even undecided about one's religious belonging, does not oppose being committed to one's religious community.

FIGURE 6.2: First-time visitor wearing sash at *Jesus is the Key to Life Church*. 3 February 2019. Photograph by Brian Otieno.

The facade of anti-competition seemed to ameliorate the possibility of religious tension or conflict. For instance, religious clergy rarely disparaged each other or other churches from the pulpit, nor did they explicitly recommend their church or themselves to visitors. Another example is when visitors offered testimony, they also disclosed which church in Kibera or county in Kenya they belonged to, and the pastor of the host church would present extensive compliments about the church, community, and county mentioned. Similarly, toward the end of mass, the priest at *Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish* praised Anne's late grandfather for his work in "bringing peace to Kibra [after] the skirmishes of the [2007/8] election" and commented on her attendance at church that day as a continuation of what her grandfather started (Fieldnote, 3 February 2019). Only on one occasion did I observe a senior pastor of an

AIC church instruct the two visiting families to notify their "shepherd" of the church visit; "please, friends, when you go, give my wishes to Shepard [Samuel] and the good men and women in that church, tell them to keep up the great work. Praise God! Such good work" (Fieldnotes, 24 February 2019). Since church visitors were acknowledged when present, but the practice of church visits itself was rarely outwardly encouraged by clergy, was Shepard Samuel, upon receiving this greeting, meant to be concerned that his 'flock' was wandering?

The point here is that flux is made possible not only by negotiating a set time for adherents to be mobile and determine religious belonging for themselves. Rather, *karibu* Sundays functions and continues to be fostered week-by-week if religious clergy neither openly encouraged nor discouraged church visits. To this end, insofar as *karibu* Sundays operated for as long as it did due to religious adherents' careful negotiation about when and how often to visit other churches, so too was it sustained by the clergy's careful reading of the landscape of religious competition in Kibera. Being aware of, and attuned to the dynamics of conflict and coexistence in Kibera also prevents religious conflict between Christians and Kenyan-Nubian Muslims in Kibera. There are protocols and techniques that Kenyan-Nubian Muslims adhere to on Sundays to avoid conflict between themselves and Christians. Older Kenyan-Nubian Muslims who have lived in Kibera since independence in 1963 and witnessed the increase in population and religious diversity, explained how they have had to comport themselves to the sounds, spaces, and people on Sundays (Interview with Yousif Abdallah, 27 February 2019). In an effort to appear accepting, Yousif Abdallah confessed that he has been advised, after issuing several complaints to the Kenyan Nubian Council of Elders, to concede Sunday to "them" to avoid potential claims to land and property that belongs to "us", the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim community (*ibid.*).

Yousif Abdallah's admission that he concedes space and time to other religious communities highlights a different sensibility and affect permeating Kibera on a Sunday; that of imminent danger. It gives the sense that religious verve on the streets of Kibera might carry the prospect of religious conflict since "any one of those interactions" – like between Yousif Abdallah and Legio Maria adherents who pass his house several times to perform their procession – "carries the possibility of scaling up to confrontation", as Brian Larkin (2014: 1001) notes of the urban landscape in Jos, Nigeria. In this respect then, Sundays in general, and *karibu* Sundays in particular, temporarily suspends even the most ardent claims of belonging that Kiberans like Yousif Abdallah adhere to otherwise. The examples discussed illustrate that

mobility has the potential to make both religious coexistence and religious conflict possible in Kibera. Given the history of land conflict in Kibera (Chapter Three), the ongoing struggle of the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim community to maintain control of land, space, and property (Chapter Four), and wave of migrants arriving in Kibera and the prospect of bulldozing (Chapter Five), the kinds of everyday negotiations that religious adherents and Christian clergy make to accommodate religious conviviality on Sundays are therefore not trivial. Rather, the ways in which these negotiations and accommodations are performed show that religious adherents are aware of and attuned to the history and context of their neighbourhood. By taking a quotidian view into the dynamics of religious coexistence in Kibera in this chapter, it is hopefully evident that flux is a local practice for residents to accommodate and negotiate the proliferation of religious communities, spaces, and practices, and a framework to understand and manage the conditions of the neighbourhood.

Karibu Sundays is shaped by another form of religious mobility; non-residents from neighbourhoods in Nairobi who are less versed in the politics of anti-competition between religious clergy. The presence of non-resident religious folk spikes when a church in Kibera hosts a divine healing rally, usually evident by the buses stationed on Ngong Road that transport members of their 'sister' churches to Kibera (Fieldnote, 27 January 2019, 24 February 2019, 24 March 2019). Non-residents who attend *karibu* Sundays in Kibera are easy to recognise, not least because they identify as visitors and stand for a welcome blessing by the church. Unlike church visitors from Kibera, non-residents usually attend *karibu* Sundays without a formal invitation from Kiberans, their children do not attend Sunday school in the neighbourhood, and the family often sits alone during lunchtime. This is how I identified one couple, Samson (b. 1989) and Tracy (b.1991), as possible outsiders (24 February 2019). I noticed that the couple had drifted aimlessly out of the church with their two children on Sunday, and accepted my directions to the nearest public restroom when I offered assistance. We soon initiated a conversation about our shared urgency to locate a lunch spot outside the scorching heat that beat down the city that day.

Crowded and busy though Kibera on Sundays is, I spent two Sundays with Samson and Tracy who reside in Kawangware, a low-income neighbourhood similar to Kibera located about eight kilometres north-west. In the course of our conversations, the couple explained that they heard about *karibu* Sundays by chance; Tracy initially visited Kibera one Sunday in September 2018 to obtain resources after observing on social media that NGOs and CBOs were

donating food, clothing, and materials to Kiberans affected by the raze (Interview, 24 February 2019). She neither visited nor was familiar with the neighbourhood, but decided to attend with her friend. The women queued outside the distribution point – a local daycare in Olympic, a village in Kibera – and each received a hamper of four diapers, a five-litre bottle of water, and one kilogram of *ugali* (S: maize meal). Tracy and Samson continued to attend church in Kibera to instantiate a more durable connection to the neighbourhood through employment and eventually a home. At the time of our meeting, the couple was in the process of enrolling their second daughter at a daycare in Kibera funded by a well-known NGO.

It was interesting to hear Samson and Tracy's ambivalence toward the dynamics of religious coexistence and cooperation in Kibera. On the one hand, the couple maintained that their experience in and perception of religion in Kibera – the fact that almost everyone in the neighbourhood participates in religion on a Sunday despite threats of displacement – has prompted Samson and Tracy to consider what kind of religious lives, futures, and persons they want (to be). Both admired how Kiberans "came together for one another" after the bulldozing according to Tracy, the hospitality they received as outsiders, and desired to live and raise a family in a place where religion triumphs over ethnic division. In this respect, Kibera offered them a model of what religious coexistence and cooperation in Kawangware, Mathare, and other low-income neighbourhoods in Nairobi could be.

On the other hand, Samson was particularly critical of the resources and media coverage that Kiberans received after the bulldozing as it illustrates to him that some poor in Nairobi are considered more deserving of help than others. He contends that the virtues derived from, and which represent religious coexistence in Kibera – 'welcome' or accommodation and religious tolerance – were often a farce. Rarely did the hospitality offered on a Sunday extend into tangible belonging for outsiders. According to Samson, he and his family are "one-hundred-percent Kiberan [because] my child schools here, we do church here, our baby will even be named in the church, we give some monies to the church to build up the place, we are invested here".

Their ambivalence offered another dimension to my analysis in that the religious mobility observed during *karibu* Sundays and generated by outsiders, is shaped as well by the spatial and economic marginalities between neighbourhoods in Nairobi, as through the piecemeal negotiations between the residents there. Recalling the definition of flux as describing how religious adherents in Kibera negotiate how far to disconnect from one's

religious community (internally), and how much space to give other religious communities without causing tension (relationally), Samson's lament extends the relational dynamics thus far discussed to between Kiberans *and other city-dwellers*. His remark of being deserving of a place in Kibera given his investment in the neighbourhood highlights the expectations and aspirations that outsiders like Samson hope to obtain from their weekly participation in religious activities. Especially when situated alongside the life-long pursuit for belonging that those born outside Kibera like Habiba and Pastor Juma, struggle to obtain, Samson's expectations that belonging in and to Kibera should be premised on the investments people make, reveals his innocence about how belonging in Kibera is determined, distributed, and by whom. In fact, it was after Samson stated below that he elicits, and occasionally invents, a shared belonging between himself and some of the pastors in order to "get the best for my family", that illuminated to me that his challenge was not only his outsiderness (Interview, 24 March 2019). In his attempt to instantiate belonging in Kibera, Samson drew crude attention to the system of patronage and prestige that permeates *karibu* Sundays, but which Kiberans implicitly acknowledge and perform to avoid open conflict and tension. Samson explains

> If I am seeing this pastor is from Siaya like me […] maybe by the name, by how they speak – I can tell who is Luhya – so then I tell them 'we come from the same place, we are Luhya also, we just need a little push'.

Tracy interjects

> But *you* do the pushing. You know he told this pastor where we were seeing you now, he told that pastor he has some old, distant, *nini* [what] this uncle from Siaya and his dad and my [Samson's] dad used to go to school [laughs]. He even said to them that we are married, we don't do this 'come-we-stay' business.[154] Here, you can't be a hustler [gesticulates like someone peddling] – it puts people off. But he doesn't listen.

Samson hastily clarifies

> Ok, I *did* mention that – the one about this uncle – I said it because I want them to know where we come from, we are good people. If you say to someone you know this elder or that council member, then you will see you can build up the neighbourhood. All we want is a chance; simple.

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[154] 'Come-we-stay' is a form of cohabitation without marriage (Fesenmyer 2017: 196; Wilson 2019: 12).

Tracy's interjection reveals that the couple is at odds about how to navigate the politics of belonging in Kibera. Although her remarks and jovial gesticulation are playful, they reveal her savvy understanding of how to tentatively navigate the social and religious dynamics of the neighbourhood. After all, Tracy has experience obtaining resources earmarked for Kiberans and engages daily with senior clergy who also supervise the daycare that her daughter attends. For Tracy, to make a home in Kibera is not limited to whether the couple can prove financial capability or ethnic loyalty. Rather, to make a home and cultivate a permanent sense of belonging to the neighbourhood requires a flexible performance of a host of identities and sensibilities including the sanctity of their marriage, ethnic identities, and spatialities should be appropriately invoked. This flexible performance illustrates to religious leaders in Kibera that people like Tracy and Samson know how to navigate a place where even the suspicion of competing for land and members can lead to conflict. Thus, the couple's banter illustrates that Samson has yet to understand that the authority to determine who belongs is not limited to his experience of, and participation in *karibu* Sundays alone. Indeed, the pastors with whom Samson co-opts belonging on Sundays, also negotiate a longstanding and shifting debate about who belongs in Kibera and who has the authority to dispense belonging, both of which limit their ability to assign belonging to visitors who participate in *karibu* Sundays – even their own neighbours.

In this respect, Samson and Tracy's outsider status is important to this examination of *karibu* Sundays and flux, as it illustrates two important points. First, given how unevenly integrated neighbourhoods in Nairobi are, it is likely that the scene and aura of *karibu* Sundays communicate a host of meanings and aspirations to outsiders about how participation in religious activities and practices can develop someone like Samson into the kind of man and father he imagines himself to be. Put differently, the religious conviviality in Kibera on Sundays may be fertile grounds for residents and non-residents to cultivate themselves as urban subjects and Kiberans will therefore have to negotiate how to accommodate the presence of outsiders like Samson.

The second reason that Samson and Tracy's outsider status is important to this examination of *karibu* Sundays and flux, is that for religious diversity in Kibera to be successful, the scope of religious accommodation, acceptance, and tolerance need not extend or apply to everyone. For Kiberans in this study and chapter, the purpose of religious diversity is to accommodate the multiple and multiplying religious communities in Kibera, without inflaming the tenuous

debates about who in Kibera belongs, and to whom Kibera belongs. To make this difficult task possible means assigning a time and space for residents to inhabit the neighbourhood without jeopardising belonging to their existing religious community, or their claim to land and property in Kibera. This task may become increasingly difficult to perform as blueprints for the neighbourhood become materialised over time, such as Vision 2030 by the Kenyan government, and the land deed bestowed to the Kenyan Nubian Muslim community.

Finally, the concept of flux returns to the theoretical framework of this study, about dwelling and crossing. Flux, as a negotiation about how to disconnect from one's religious community and when to connect to other religious communities, illustrates that even for those who claim Kibera as their 'home', the concept of home has an ambivalent meaning. Not only due to the material and physical changes taking place in the neighbourhood, but for some religious adherents, feeling at home in their place of worship or religious community means getting to know more about their neighbours and neighbourhood. This chapter on *karibu* Sundays, demonstrated that some Kiberans are sometimes actively, and other times cautiously participating in redefining their notions of religious belonging by visiting or inviting other religious communities in their neighbourhood.

Conclusion

I did not expect to understand the dynamics of religious diversity, religious mobility, and religious belonging in Kibera, through *karibu* Sundays. Despite focusing a few hours on a single day of the week, *karibu* Sundays demonstrated that the way in which religious coexistence and cooperation in Kibera operate is similar to what Turnball (1968), Tweed (2009), Premawardhana (2015, 2018) argued about flux; that religious adherents oscillate between their religious affiliation and auxiliary religious activities practices performed with other religious communities. *Karibu* Sundays taught me that how and why Kiberans are willing to pursue and perform more religious conviviality in order to create a lasting sense of belonging and peaceful coexistence. This data point seemed paradoxical to me in the beginning of fieldwork but proved to be a grounded way for Kiberans to make sense of change and uncertainty even if outsiders like Samson does not understand it as so.

What this chapter also illustrates are the different scales and spheres for thinking through and about religious coexistence as a negotiated practice, between Anne as the

individual, *Jesus is the Key to Life* as the church, different religious communities like Anglicans, and Kibera as a neighbourhood. Each interaction between the individual, church, and religious community produces and reproduces a new form of belonging, albeit for a brief time, but that no less offers religious adherents a sense of acceptance. Between the story of Pamela's sons, Anne, and Pastor Felix, we see that *karibu* Sundays provide life- and status-enhancing opportunities for how to be and appear as a 'good' Christian in Kibera, and for someone like Yousif Abdallah, how to be a 'good' neighbour and accommodate the presence of others. These negotiations that Kiberans make are not only exemplified in *karibu* Sundays, but performed in relation to one's family, religious community, or neighbours, and shows that even for people born and bred in Kibera, each sphere of belonging is a highly intersubjective and interrelated process. In order for the nature and dynamics of religious coexistence and cooperation in Kibera to be understood, these interlocking spheres of belonging and the everyday negotiations within and between them require critical attention.

Karibu Sundays also showed in a narrow temporal and analytical frame what this dissertation has demonstrated through social, oral, and life histories; that belonging does not reside or operate in a single unit of analysis, and that a study of religious diversity in Kibera is produced from the disconnections from, and tensions with others that religious communities in Kibera experience and enact. This point matters for two reasons. First, as it relates to Kibera, the study of religious coexistence includes multiplicities of belonging in social, spatial, and temporal perspectives. This means that everyday Kibera is as much an object of examination in the way we examine how a place comes into being through everyday relations, as do the subjectivities and communities of the people who reside there. Recalling the 'neighbourhood turn' discussed at the end of Chapter Two and in which this research is located, spatial-subject formations are phenomenologically and ontologically co-constituted and entangled. By focusing on the everyday from the perspective of *karibu* Sundays in general, and church visits in particular, the materials and experiences discussed in this chapter contributes to this theory by illustrating how and why this co-constitution works incrementally and quotidianly, and what kinds of belongings many Kiberans make possible under these conditions.

Secondly, a study of religious coexistence that focuses on the social, spatial, and everyday dynamics of belonging resists the assumed return to, and reification of 'religion', 'religious identity', or 'religious space' to a point of stasis and stability. This does not mean that either myself or the people with whom I consulted, deny belonging to a distinct religion,

religious identity, religious community, or place. Rather, it means that belonging is negotiated in and through these processes in order for Kiberans to negotiate a variety of phenomena that comes with living in a religiously diverse and rapidly changing neighbourhood. As Eva Spies (2019: 66) notes, even "in the comparative frame of diversity, the entities seem to lose their fluidity, constructedness, and, most of all, their relational coming into being", not because they become static and stable over time. Instead, scholars either expect, or reach a moment of analytical inertia whereby African religious communities, religious spaces, and religious practices appear to have "become reified stand-alone entities that are mechanically connected and, as in a kind of set theory" (*ibid.*). By using flux as a heuristic, this chapter circumvents this analytical issue to trace how Kiberans unmake and remake their ideas and forms of religious community, belonging, and space as they negotiate how to live with others and how to live in a neighbourhood subject to change.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion: Building Religion to Belong to the Future

On Sunday 15 March 2020, two days after the first case of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was reported in Kenya, President Uhuru Kenyatta delivered an address to the nation on the then-emerging spread of the virus within the country.[155] In his televised address, President Kenyatta directed citizens to "[a]void congregating including in places of worship" for thirty consecutive days and imposed a mandatory daily curfew between 7pm and 5am across Kenya to curb the spread of the virus.[156] Mandated until April 2020, the curfew continued for over a year until October 2021 and affected mostly residents from informal neighbourhoods like Kibera whose capacity to be mobile ensures whether their families eat that day or not (Pinchoff *et. al* 2021: 212).[157] The curfew did not, however, challenge the ability of religious communities to commune. Scholars of religion in Kenya observed that church services continued with a "business as usual" attitude and posit that the pandemic provided clergy with the opportunity to innovate and improvise how their adherents experience religious belonging and community (Gathogo 2022: 134-138; Parsitau 2020). Like Reverend Paul Machira. When in May 2020 it appeared that no date would be set for places of worship to reopen, Reverend Machira, of the All Saints Anglican Cathedral, Nairobi, decided to take religion to "higher ground" and began a mobile "Balcony to Balcony" church service in Nairobi.[158]

"Balcony to Balcony" was developed initially as a Sunday school service by Lilian Mbere, a Sunday school teacher at All Saints Anglican Cathedral, Nairobi, who encouraged children in her apartment complex to sing hymns from their balcony during the first phase of

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[155] The President of the Republic of Kenya, March 15, 2022. *Address to the Nation on Covid-19, Commonly Known as Coronavirus At Harambee House, Nairobi*. https://www.president.go.ke/2020/03/15/address-to-the-nation-by-h-e-uhuru-kenyatta-c-g-h-president-of-the-republic-of-kenya-and-commander-in-chief-of-the-defence-forces-on-covid-19-commonly-known-as-coronavirus/ (Accessed 08 June 20221).

[156] Ibid.

[157] The President of the Republic of Kenya, April 06, 2020. *Address to the Nation on Covid-19, Commonly Known as Coronavirus at Harambee House, Nairobi*. https://www.president.go.ke/2020/04/06/17505/ (Accessed 08 June 2022).

[158] Odula, T., May 23, 2020. Balcony Church Gains Popularity in Kenya amid Pandemic, *AP News*. https://apnews.com/article/virus-outbreak-kenya-africa-pandemics-international-news-f05b1c2e31be2e389c6de1be3c03f76d (Accessed 08 June 2022).

the COVID pandemic.[159] As interest by her neighbours in the balcony Sunday school service grew, Lilian invited Rev. Machira to deliver a praise and worship service in the parking lot of her resident complex. Although All Saints Anglican Cathedral, Nairobi delivered Sunday service online, both Lilian and Rev. Machira preferred balcony church services as many families lacked access to the Internet. Within a few weeks, Rev. Machira organised a group of choir singers and church band members to take "Balcony to Balcony" from higher ground to the road, travelling to several residential complexes in Nairobi.[160] The acceptance of "Balcony to Balcony" by Nairobians transformed the travelling, high-rise church service into its own "*mtaani*" or 'neighbourhood' in Kiswahili in that residents extended the invitation and gained consent from their neighbours to "host" Rev. Machira.[161] Moreover, residents in neighbouring apartments gathered on their balcony to attend the church service, thereby turning "Balcony to Balcony" into a "360° service".[162] In both ways, the residents in these high-rise buildings worked intentionally and collectively to transform their home – albeit briefly – into a religious space to establish a sense of social and religious belonging with their neighbours, most of whom were not members of their existing religious community.

"Balcony to Balcony" *mtaanis* highlights three key findings of this study. First, across neighbourhoods in Nairobi, residents make religion work and find ways to maintain belonging to each other as neighbours and religious adherents amidst profound change and uncertainty. Second, neighbourhoods are produced and sustained by residents' strategies to maintain belonging to religious communities elsewhere – whether in neighbouring residential apartments or across the border – and by forging belonging to each other as neighbours. Third, by building religious spaces and communities in response to change and uncertainty, residents in Nairobi complicate how scholars of religion and cognate disciplines define and demarcate the conceptual boundaries between 'home', 'place of worship', and 'neighbourhood'. In this concluding chapter, I will explore the contributions of these research findings for the theory of religion as dynamic and relational, and the 'neighbourhood turn' which emerges from scholarship on Nairobi, but constitutes a burgeoning subfield in the study of religion. I will end the chapter by mapping the trajectory of the field of religion in Kibera.

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[159] Wadekar, N., 29 June 2020. Balcony Churches: Kenyans Find New Ways to Worship in Lockdown, *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jun/29/balcony-churches-kenyans-find-new-ways-to-worship-in-lockdown (Accessed 08 June 2020).

[160] Ibid.

[161] Ibid.

[162] Ibid.

Making Religion Work

The central question of this study is how do religious communities in Kibera perform their religiosity, grow their congregations, and maintain belonging to each other and the neighbourhood amidst political, urban, and social change on the one hand, and where the definition of Kibera remains contested on the other? This question emerged from my initial attempt to define Kibera as a home, a homeland, a slum, or a neighbourhood by walking in the place (Chapter One). Through a systemic analysis of archives, oral histories, life histories, and participant observation data, two findings emerged.

First, these interlocking definitions constitute the discursive foundation on which Kibera was established as colonial officials, Nubian soldiers, and Nubian elders of the day debated whether Kibera belongs to the Nubian community for their military service (Chapter Three). During the colonial period (1899-1963), both Nubians and colonial officials used religion to claim ownership of Kibera. Whereas Nubians claimed that in addition to the colonial promise to grant their forefathers land, the burial of their ancestors transformed Kibera into their homeland, colonial officials argued that Nubians falsely represented themselves as Muslims (Chapter Three). Moreover, as the battle for ownership over Kibera unfolded, so too did the definition of Kibera shift between "Military Area", "homeland", and "a problem". Thus, for both Nubians and colonial officials of the day, to define Kibera was as much a material battle for land tenure as it was a religious project to respectively legitimise or delegitimise the neighbourhood as a homeland and the inhabitants as Muslims.

Second, the multiple definitions of Kibera provided residents of the past (Chapter Three) and present (Chapters Four and Five) the discursive arena wherein to organise and differentiate themselves as distinct religious communities. As land conflicts increased in the post-independent period (1963-present) and unannounced bulldozings intensified in Kibera, the definitions of 'home' and 'homeland' hardened the distinction between Kenyan-Nubian Muslims, Ugandan-Nubian Muslims, and Christians. By mapping how these definitions of Kibera influenced the dynamics of religious coexistence in Kibera, this study found that religious communities in Kibera organise themselves by their shared histories of displacement, mobility, and dwelling in another's homeland, rather than adherence to a single belief.

Both findings illustrate that despite a study of a single neighbourhood, the methods that religious communities past and present invent and deploy to make religion work has methodological and theoretical purchase for how scholars examine the meaning and making of religion in contexts of uncertainty and instability. For example, Chapter Six showed that for some religious adherents and communities in Kibera, to make religion work is to set aside time for others to perform their religion on the streets or construct makeshift places of worship. Interesting though this finding was, methodologically speaking, these negotiations complicated how I located, mapped and defined religion in a neighbourhood that changes every week and sometimes every hour. By situating these negotiations within the social history of Kibera and events outside Kibera such as the Nairobi Vision 2030 urban development project, this study was able to make a case for approaching such everyday negotiations as a longstanding mode of social action, not simply a reaction. In this way, this study expands the historical, temporal, and spatial dimensions of how religions make and take place in a single neighbourhood.

Theoretically, Thomas Tweed's (2006: 74) theory of religion offered a useful framework to explain why crossing and moving allow religious communities in Kibera to understand their place in a changing and uncertain world. In one respect, crossing as a mode of dwelling and moving, and as a form of belonging (Geschiere 2020) is not unique to the religious communities of Kibera. As Birgit Meyer (2020: 267) explains, religion is a "boundary-transgressing force" in that the tenets of religion enable religious adherents to cross, move, connect, and disconnect from places and people in order to stay, belong and dwell. That said, the religious communities of Kibera past and present show that these forces – crossing and dwelling – operate at different temporalities: generations for Kenyan-Nubian Muslims (Chapters Three and Four), a lifetime for migrants like Habiba and Pastor Juma (Chapter Five), and everyday week for some Christian-identifying Kiberans (Chapter Six). By highlighting how these temporalities emerge and interact in Kibera, this study expounded on Tweed's theory to show that a single neighbourhood can be a nodal point for a variety of religious crossings, dwellings, and timings.

Making a Neighbourhood

Since the establishment of Kibera in 1907, the residents of Kibera past and present have deployed a variety of practices to make, unmake, and remake the neighbourhood. To explain

why and how Kibera is made, unmade, and remade required a theory of movement and crossing, a theory that charts "the changing place of religion" (Garbin and Strhan 2017: 5). Thomas Tweed's (2006) theory of religion alongside the neighbourhood turn in urban history and urban anthropology (Kimari 2017; Smith 2019; White 1990) provided the frameworks to elucidate how making, unmaking, and remaking Kibera changes the place of religion in the neighbourhood.

First, religious communities make the neighbourhood materially by building places of worship (Chapter Three, Five, and Six) and property for their children (Chapter Four), and discursively through oral histories, memories, and disputes about whom Kibera belongs (Chapter Three). In line with the 'neighbourhood turn', this study showed that the discursive-material processes of claim-making and place-making are co-constituted ways of making a place. What makes Kibera a unique place to study is that the neighbourhood was built by immigrants whose homeland was elsewhere; Sudan and Egypt for Nubian soldiers who first settled, other parts of Kenya for rural immigrants, and Uganda for Ugandan-Nubian immigrants. In time, however, the claim that Kibera is also a homeland delineated who in Kibera can build (Kenyan-Nubian Muslims), who cannot (non-native Kiberans), and who may destroy them (the Kenyan government). Thus, in addition to constituting the dynamics of making a neighbourhood, the discursive-material process illuminated how religious communities construct and contest who the 'makers' and 'owners' of Kibera are.

In mapping the making of Kibera, this study also highlighted the methods and materials religious communities use to make their neighbourhood. Simple methods like setting Sunday aside for religious conviviality (Chapter Six) and ordinary materials such as paint (Chapter Five) were shown to radically transform a predominantly Kenyan-Nubian Muslim neighbourhood into a religious diverse one, whether briefly or permanently. Here, I found the neighbourhood turn as a sub-theory of urban history and urban anthropology most useful as it enabled me to identify and trace the processes, practices, and people that make Kibera into a neighbourhood.

Second, in the unmaking of Kibera, the invisible material divisions between religious communities were revealed and effaced. The life history of Bibi Jaina (Chapter Four) offered an intimate account of how the bulldozing of July 2018 destroyed not only her family property but the material conditions that defined and describes Kenyan-Nubian Muslims as the makers and property-owners of Kibera and their neighbours as people who rent. The loss of property also obliterated how Kenyan-Nubian Muslims transfer the moral values of their religion to the

next generation. Both examples of loss illustrated how the material unmaking of Kibera "blocked" the mediation of religious norms and practices between the past, present, and future for Kenyan-Nubian Muslims (Smith 2019: 115). Taking seriously this immeasurable loss for Kenyan-Nubian Muslims allowed this study to critically examine other forms of unmaking – socio-economic mobilities for example – that the raze had on the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim community.

Finally, this study addressed another form of unmaking – the iconoclasm of churches on Nubian-claimed land. Either through physical destruction that, to be sure, was presumed by Pastor Juma to be enacted by Kenyan-Nubian youth (Chapter Five), or through a legal interdict (Chapter Four), the destruction of churches on Nubian-claim land was analysed as a way to remake or reinforce the religious differences between Kenyan-Nubian Muslims and Christians in Kibera. In so doing, this religious unmaking in and of Kibera illustrated the kinds of religious costs and opportunities that material loss and destruction have for each religious community.

Third, in remaking the neighbourhood, religious communities in Kibera illustrate how new religious boundaries are drawn to accommodate the multiple and multiplying forms of religious space, practice, and people in the neighbourhood. In Chapter Six, I demonstrated two points. The first was that in remaking their place of worship every Sunday and every hour, Kiberans ensure that their everyday life is not permanently reconstituted and, thus, circumvent the possibility of religious conflict among themselves as neighbours. Second, in remaking Kibera after the bulldozing, new religious boundaries are drawn between state and religion. For residents like Bibi Jaina (Chapter Four), the cemetery marks a political boundary about how far into Kibera the Kenyan government ought not to encroach on the Kenyan-Nubian homeland as they attempt to make Nairobi "into a world class African region" (Nairobi Metro 2030 Strategy 2008: v). For Bibi Jaina, the invading presence of bulldozers in Kibera and its potential to destroy the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim cemetery signals to her how the trajectory and future of Kibera and Kenyan-Nubian Muslims in Kibera will potentially unfold. Thus, in remaking the neighbourhood, the cemetery has become the new physical, political, and religious frontier for Kenyan-Nubian Muslims to imagine and defend their place in the future of Kibera. This point provides an opportunity for future research on Kibera.

Building Belonging

This study departs from doctoral studies conducted by Johan de Smedt (2011) and Samantha Balaton-Chrimes (2012) who focus their examination on a single community, the Nubian people of Kibera to trace the genealogy of their belonging in and to Kenya as a project of ethnogeneity, and for Kenyan citizenship respectively. Not least because this study examines how *different* religious communities in Kibera past and present relate to each other and the neighbourhood, but it would be only after the 1933 Kenya Land Commission that indigenous Kenyans were mandated by the colonial state to represent themselves as a fixed identity in order to obtain or maintain land tenure (Chapter Three). Even then, members debated fiercely and continuously about the principles that would define them collectively (MacArthur 2019; Weitzberg 2017). Rather, a core argument of this study is that belonging is not an identity already assured and that one can easily occupy, but accrued through the practice of 'making'. Whether making Kibera into a homeland, making a home for your family, building God's church, or making Kibera a place for all religions to feel a sense of *karibuni* (welcome), it is in working toward a goal that religious communities generate a sense of belonging to each other and the neighbourhood.

This finding resonates with recent doctoral studies on Kibera which show that residents will forge new relationships by reworking the moral precepts of their ethnic or religious community (Farrell 2015; Wilson 2019). It also reflects what scholars of religion who focus on Kenya submit, that religious adherents report a sense of human flourishing and autonomy by living out the plurality of both their selfhood and religiosity (Fesenmyer 2017: 189-192; Pasitau and Mwaura 2010: 97). Rather than consider people who do so as renegades, these studies suggest that alternative or deviant practices constitute the salient and resilient features of communal belonging. One way in which this study demonstrated this point was to examine why the residents of Kibera will emphasise their elsewhereness to secure their belonging to, and dwell in Kibera. It showed that to negotiate the categorical and spatial regulations imposed by the status quo, whether the colonial state of the day or the Kenyan-Nubian Muslim community and to sustain their livelihoods through irregular practices such as brewing *arak* (gin) or making Ugandan-Nubian bridal dresses for a Kenyan-Nubian Muslim market, Kiberans in this study will revive and inscribe their connection to people and places elsewhere. In this way, this study made a case for the alternative forms of belonging that Kiberans practice as it revitalises the neighbourhood and draws scholarly attention to the knowledge that Kiberans draw from elsewhere to make a home and livelihood for themselves in Kibera.

Areas for Further Research

This study presents hopefully a foundation for future scholars to explore or develop the role and place of religion in Kibera. The future of Kibera is inextricably tied to the political trajectory of Kenya and Nairobi. Religion is at the forefront of the political trajectory for the Nairobi City County, as outlined in the Nairobi City County Prevention of Violent Extremism Bill, 2021 (ratified in March 2022).[163] The Bill, funded by the Royal Danish Embassy, the British High Commission and the Tony Blair Institute, provides commercial, non-governmental, and governmental agents with "measures for the prevention of radicalization; recruitment into violent extremism and enhance the participation of communities in the prevention of radicalisation and recruitment into violent extremism in Nairobi City County".[164] In particular, the Bill focuses on "[a]t-risk individuals", meaning, "individuals or group of individuals susceptible or vulnerable to radicalisation and recruitment into violent extremism and includes persons living within informal settlements and the youth".[165] The Bill appears to locate "violent extremism" in, and perhaps prejudice "violent extremism" as, a characteristic of "informal settlements" like Kibera. It also marks certain religions and persons as "at risk" given the events listed to motivate the need for the Bill, such as terror attacks in Nairobi claimed by al-Shabaab.[166] In the wake of these debates and legislature, Aisha Said Ibrahim, a Kenyan-Nubian candidate from Kibera, ran unsuccessfully for Member of County Assembly in Makina ward of the Kibra during the national elections on 9 August 2022.[167] Despite many Kenyan-Nubians unable to vote due to their statelessness, meaning they do not have national identification documents, 24-year-old Said Ibrahim provided not only an example of how Kenyan-Nubians are active in local politics. She also demonstrates the political system in which prospective politicians who identify as Kenyan-Nubian and Muslim from Kibera are compelled to navigate, a system that characterises her neighbourhood and potentially her religious community as "vulnerable to radicalisation and recruitment into violent extremism".

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[163] The Kenya Gazette. Special Issue. Nairobi City County Prevention of Violent Extremism Bill, 2021. https://nairobiassembly.go.ke/ncca/wp-content/uploads/bill/2021/The-Nairobi-City-County-Prevention-of-Violent-Extremism-Bill-2021.pdf (Accessed 17 October 2022).

[164] Ibid., 1.

[165] Ibid, 6.

[166] Nairobi County Assembly. Official Report – 22 February 2022. Second County Assembly – Sixth Session. https://nairobiassembly.go.ke/ncca/wp-content/uploads/hansard/2022/22nd-February-2022-Morning.pdf (Accessed 17 October 2022). 11.

[167] Jomo, A., 21 March 2022. Fresh Graduates Eyeing Political Seats in August Polls, *Kenyans.co.ke* https://www.kenyans.co.ke/news/74115-fresh-graduates-eyeing-political-seats-august-polls (Accessed 20 July 2022).

The future of Kibera depends as well on how the Kenyan Nubian Council of Elders will operationalise the communal title deed. Especially as the Kenyan government advances toward meeting its Vision2030 goals, these two land-owning groups of Kibera – the government and the KNCE – will constitute a remarkable and possibly either a collaborative or opposing force in deciding not only what the role and place of Kibera will be, but who in Kibera belongs. Moreover, how Kibera transforms physically and materially will impact the future of religion in the neighbourhood. For instance, the "verticality" that permits Balcony-to-Balcony *mtaanis* to take place in high-rise residential complexes provides a useful example to consider how multi-storied residential complexes in Kibera may transform not only how religious space, community, and belonging operates, but potentially dispel the fear of imminent bulldozings for instance (Smith and Woodcraft 2020: 1-10). Further ethnographic studies will likely be impacted by travel restrictions and local social-distancing practices following the coronavirus pandemic. African scholars who conduct research in neighbouring African countries are especially affected in this regard. Even as travel restrictions ease globally, some scholars submit that "immersive ethnographic field research will likely be among the last areas of academic research to resume something resembling its prepandemic rhythms" (Wood *et al.* 2020).

Sources and Bibliography

Primary Sources

List of Research Participants

All names are pseudonyms for confidentiality. The details of each research participant reflect the information offered during fieldwork in 2019.

Kenyan Nubian Council of Elders (Group Interview 11 February 2019, Makina, Kibera).

Members present at the interview (eight in total):

Chairperson

First Vice Chairperson

Second Vice Chairperson

Secretary General

Deputy Secretary General

Treasury

Member of the Council

Member of the Council

Anne (Interview 3 February 2019, Kianda, Kibera).

Anne (b. 1990) identifies as Anglican. She lives with her parents and three siblings in Ayany, Kibera. Anne works part-time as a childminder at a daycare in Kibera.

Aziza (Interview 5 March 2019, Olympic, Kibera).

Aziza (b. 1994) was born and raised in Makina village, Kibera. She identifies as Kenyan-Nubian and Muslim. Aziza is a trained nurse assistant and is employed by an international non-governmental organisation based in Kibera.

Bibi Jaina (Interview, 19, 20, February 2019 and 25 March 2019, Makina, Kibera).

Bibi Jaina (b. 1952) identifies as Kenyan-Nubian and Muslim and "was raised, brought up, schooled, and raised my kids and grandkids here", in Kibera. She is a trained nurse and midwife but since her retirement in 2003/4 has cared for her mother (b. 1923).

'Boda-Bakir' (Interview 8 March 2019, DC, Kibera).

Boda-Bakir or Abu-Bakir was born and raised Muslim but "doesn't worry with religion anymore". He was born in Malindi and arrived in Kibera in 2015, at age twenty-two. Boda-Bakir is self-employed and did not finish high school education.

Brian (Interview 19 February 2019, Prestige Plaza, Nairobi).

Brian (b. 1984) was born in Kitui, Machakos County. He arrived in Kibera at the age of nineteenth with his eldest brother. Brian attends a Pentecostal church in Kibera and identifies as Christian. Brian is self-employed and owns a furniture store in Kibera.

Habiba (Interview 5 March 2019, Olympic, Kibera).

Habiba (b. 1980) identifies as Ugandan-Nubian and Muslim. She owns a female dressmaking and clothing shop in Olympic, Kibera. Habiba lives with her husband, two daughters, and two sons in Kibera.

Jamia (Interview 14 February, Makina, Kibera).

Jamia (b. 1996) identifies as Nubian and Muslim. Her mother is Ugandan-Nubian and her father is Kenyan-Nubian which – for Jamia – troubles how she prefixes her identity. Jamia completed her high school education but was unemployed at the time of the interview. She hopes to become a lawyer.

Mustafa (Interview 28 March 2019, Makina, Kibera).

Mustafa (b. 1993) identifies as Kenyan-Nubian and Muslim. He completed high school education and works as an assistant manager for a small printing company in Nairobi.

Noor (Interview 14 February 2019, Makina, Kibera).

Noor (b. 1996) identifies as Kenyan-Nubian and Muslim and an aspiring engineer. Although he completed high school education with good marks, Noor cannot continue to higher education due to his statelessness. He applied and failed twice to obtain a Kenyan passport to study engineering at the University of Khartoum.

Pamela (Interview 27 January 2019, Soweto East, Kibera).

Pamela (b. 1977) identifies as Christian who attends an Evangelic church in Kibera. Pamela could not complete high school education due to her pregnancy at age fifteen. Pamela owns a hair salon in Soweto East.

Pastor Felix (Interview 1 February 2019, Olympic, Kibera).
Pastor Felix (b. 1972) presides over a small Pentecostal church in Olympic, Kibera. He did not complete high school education and was "called" to become a pastor, rather than formally training at a seminary or theological school.

Pastor Juma (Interview 26 March 2019, Makina, Kibera).
Pastor Juma (b. 1980) identifies as Christian. He presides over an African Inland Church in Makina, Kibera. Pastor Juma finished high school education and trained in Kenya and in the United States of America to become a pastor.

Patrick (Interview 5 February, Silanga, Kibera).
Patrick (b. 1975) identifies as Luo and Christian. Patrick was born in Siaya County and arrived in Kibera at age the age of seventeen. He did a variety of causal jobs, including selling charcoal but now earns a living as a car and *matatu* mechanic in Kibera.

Samson (Interview 24 February 2019, Kibera).
Samson (b. 1989) identifies as Kikuyu and Christian. He works an assortment of jobs, mostly driving matatus (S: minibus taxi) between Kawangware to Yaya Centre. He lives with his partner Tracy and their two daughters in Kawangware, a neighbourhood in Nairobi.

Sheikh Aslam (Interview 11 March 2019, Makina, Kibera).
Sheikh Aslam (b. 1981) identifies as Kenyan-Nubian and Muslim. He presides over the oldest mosque in Kibera, located on the border of Makina and Olympic village. He is married with two children. Sheikh Aslam trained at Al-Azhar University in Cairo where he received a degree in Islamic Theology (2000-2004/5).

Sherifa (Interview 7 February 2019, Prestige Plaza, Nairobi).

Sherifa (b. 1992) identifies as Kenyan-Nubian and Muslim. She is a Masters graduate from the University of Nairobi, Kenya and runs a food drive in Kibera.

Tracy (Interview 24 February 2019, Kibera).
Tracy (b. 1991) identifies as Kikuyu and Christian. She lives with her partner (Samson) and two daughters in Kawangware, a neighbourhood in Nairobi, but travels day to Kibera where her youngest attends daycare and where her family attends church on Sunday. Tracy works as a causal domestic worker for families based in Westlands, Nairobi.

Yousif Abdallah (Interview 26, 27 February, Makina, Kibera).
Yousif Abdallah (b. 1958) identifies as Kenyan-Nubian and Muslim. He is a retired bus driver for Nairobi County.

Victor (Interview 31 January, DC, Kibera).
Victor (b. 1987) identifies as Christian and attends a Pentecostal church in Kibera. Victor did not complete high school education. He relies on seasonal agricultural employment opportunities in Naivasha, Nakuru County.

Zeinab Saban (Interview 7 March, Olympic, Kibera).
Zeinab (b. 1962) identifies as Kenyan-Nubian and Muslim. She is a retired bank clerk and lives with her husband and two children in Olympic, Kibera.

Kenya National Archives, Nairobi

The file names below reflect the physical classification system used in 2019.

PC/Coast/1/1/83	Ukamba Outward, 1901-1907.
PC/CP 9/15/3	Central Province Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1930-1931.
PC/NFD/4/1/6	Isiolo Leasehold and Quarantine and Permanent Reserve for Wadorobo, 1919-1928.
PC/NZA/3/50/7/7	H.R.H The Prince of Wales visit Nubians, 1928
DC/KSM/1/21/5	Registration of Marriage, 1942.

RZ/8/764	Establishment of Europeans in Kibera Settlement.
MAA/2/1/3 i & ii [ADM 29/5/5/1/4/i]	Ministry of African Affairs, 1930-1932, 1933-1939, 1945-1947.
BN 46/4/49	Lands Office (Ministry of Lands and Settlement), 1949.
BY 13/30	Ministry of Health, 1941.
VQ1/10/85 [PC/CP 9/15/3]	Land for Detribalised Natives, 1930-1932
VQ1/10/137 [NAT/K/2/ii]	Native Land Kibera.
LND 34/2 & 3	Land for Detribalised Natives of Kibira, 1948-1952.
OPE 1/1382/5	

Kenya National Archives, Syracuse University Libraries, USA

The file names below reflect the physical classification system used between 2020 and 2021.

PC/AR 1937	Provincial Commissioner of Central Province Annual Reports, 1937.
PC/AR 1940	Provincial Commissioner of Central Province Annual Reports, 1940.
PC/AR 649	Nairobi District Annual Reports, 1946.
PC/AR 1959	Provincial Commissioner of Central Province Annual Reports, 1959.

Public Record Office (now, The National Archives, UK)

The file names below reflect the online classification system used between 2020 and 2021.

CO 534/25	Colonial Office: King's African Rifles, 1918. Vol. I.
CO 822/820	Colonial Office: East Africa: Original Correspondence.

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Colony and Protectorate of Kenya. 1959. *Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1958/59 on the Land Tenure and Control outside the Native Lands.* Nairobi: Government Printer.

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End of Dissertation