Relative distance:

Practices of relatedness among transnational Kenyan families

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Abstract

Relative distance: Practices of relatedness among transnational Kenyan families

Leslie Fesenmyer, St. Antony's College, University of Oxford
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In this thesis I examine familial dynamics and relations between Kenyan migrants in London and their non-migrant kin remaining in Kenya. One strand of the transnational families literature contends that migration disrupts kin relations and contributes to the commodification of love and care. It suggests that co-presence is essential for genuine relations and, therefore, that the distance with which such families contend be understood as primarily geographic and physical. Another strand of this literature views migration as offering a long-standing, culturally acceptable means for families to ensure their material and emotional wellbeing. Acknowledging the historical antecedents of recent Kenyan migration, I adopt a generational, life-stage, and gendered approach, with the aim of contextualizing migration as a factor in the social reproduction of kin relations. The focus on transnational Kenyan families fills a gap in African diaspora research that has largely focused on migrants from West Africa and issues of identity, diaspora politics, and development, while also addressing themes in African anthropology, such as, intergenerational reciprocity, kinship reproduction, and change.

Two transnational family configurations predominate in this research: younger migrants and their non-migrant parents and siblings, and older transnational couples (migrant wives and non-migrant husbands). I examine their migration stories and everyday and ritualized practices of staying in touch that implicate kin in a transnational moral economy of relatedness. The following questions are addressed: how do transnational Kenyan families create, imagine, and sustain senses of relatedness across space? What happens to kin relations under conditions of transnational migration? More specifically, how do social and cultural norms and expectations related to kinship, gender, and generation interrelate with individual agency to extend and/ or reconfigure kin relations?

If migration is understood as a morally-laden social process, then how migrant and non-migrant kin engage with the distance(s) between them become the grounds on which what it means to be related is expressed and negotiated. This study illuminates how migration articulates with lines of difference and tension within Kenyan families. Distance emerges not only as geographic and physical, but also as socially generated by the actions and inactions of kin. I argue that the emplacement of kin in different contexts post-migration, particularly migrants within a nascent Pentecostal community in London, mediates transnational kin relations.

Rather than kin relations becoming commodified through migration, the case of transnational Kenyan families indicates an ongoing process of disentangling economics and affection discursively, if not in practice. Despite professing a concern for material wellbeing as central to their ideas of relatedness, Kenyan migrants try to redefine their kin obligations by narrowing the definition of who is kin (in the sense of who they are responsible for) to include only their spouses and children. While older women migrants turn to a discourse of development prevalent in postcolonial Kenya, younger migrants express this redefinition through Pentecostal discourse and practice. The analysis points to a dialectical and inevitably affective process of negotiating what it means to be related within such families and vis-à-vis wider Kenyan and British societies.

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Introduction

On a brisk, autumn afternoon in October 2009, I walked through the doors of the Royal Festival Hall on London's South Bank. Amidst the bustle of people rushing to a performance or sipping coffee and chatting, I spotted Margaret, who was wearing a navy knitted dress and many colorful bracelets on her wrist, sitting at a table typing on her laptop. She had suggested this meeting spot because she had made a habit of spending her Sunday afternoons there after attending (a Pentecostal) church in Walthamstow in North London. A mutual Kenyan friend had introduced us and, over the course of our conversation, we discovered that we had both attended the same wedding a few months earlier and that I had visited a church she occasionally attended because of its proximity to her home in Dagenham in East London.

We soon began talking about what had brought her to London back in 1996. Margaret wanted to 'better herself', she said. Having left school at 16 to help her widowed mother support her and her three younger siblings, she had envisaged the United Kingdom as her opportunity 'to finish her education, get a job, build a house, develop her career, straight, straight'. By the time we met, 13 years after her arrival, she had earned a Bachelor's degree and was studying for a Master's degree, while supporting herself as a cleaner.

Speaking about her family in Kenya, she told me how she had helped her cousin Teresa move to London. Margaret explained that she had helped Teresa further her education in a similar way to how Teresa's father, who was Margaret's mother's eldest brother, had helped Margaret herself by paying her school fees. Margaret believed that, in turn, Teresa would assist her own family the way Margaret had helped her own mother and siblings. She helped Teresa find a place in a college

and apply for a visa, and saved the money needed to cover the cost of the flight and additional expenses before Teresa found a job. 'Everything was fine in the beginning,' Margaret said. 'Teresa was nice and cooperative. But once she learned the system here, she decided she wanted to leave, to have her freedom,' which meant moving out of Margaret's home. Since then, Teresa had 'gotten messed about: living with several different boyfriends, raising her young son on her own, postponing her studies.'

Though the two cousins still see each other now and then, their relationship is strained, as is Margaret's relationship with Teresa's parents. Margaret reflected philosophically on what happened with her cousin. 'It's hard to know if someone has other intentions and wants something from you. Teresa used cunning to do what she wanted [that is, to come to the United Kingdom]. She felt entitled to be given.' Margaret went on, 'I just try to carry on and not get pulled off my path, not get drawn into disagreements and tension with others.'

This conversation I had with Margaret highlights several of the themes and issues explored in this thesis. First, Margaret's efforts to assist her cousin were an act of intergenerational familial reciprocity that reflects the intertwining of economics and affection within Kenyan families more generally. I will propose that such acts imply that all (Kenyan) migration can be understood as family migration, even though only one person typically moves, given that migration projects are inevitably embedded in wider social relations.

Teresa's 'cunning' and Margaret's disappointment and sense of vulnerability highlight another theme: kin relations can engender envy, guilt, and frustration, as well as generate tension and conflict. Following from this, I will suggest that

situations such as the one described above raise difficult questions for migrants about how to stay in touch and whom to assist and in what ways – questions imbued with morality. They underscore what is at stake for families with geographically dispersed kin. Examining how migrants stay in touch, or not, provides a way to consider kin connections *and* disconnections and to challenge conceptualizations of distance as primarily geographic and physical in transnational migration.

Finally, Kenyan migrants in London live, work, and spend their leisure time in many different parts of the city, as exemplified by Margaret traveling that day from her home in East London to church in North London, followed by Central London to meet me, before she headed home in the evening. I will propose that the places that are socially meaningful to Kenyan migrants in London be understood primarily as constituted in moments where social relations coalesce, rather than as specific physical spaces or geographic localities. Like many Kenyan migrants, particularly younger ones, Margaret converted to Pentecostalism post-migration, and Pentecostal migrants' place-making practices generate a new set of reciprocal moral relations. If people and places are mutually constitutive, then the respective emplacement of migrant and non-migrant kin, I will suggest, mediates their relations, as well as their ties to Kenya and the United Kingdom.

* * * * *

In this thesis I examine the dynamics and practices of transnational Kenyan families whose migrant members live in London and non-migrant members remain in Kenya. Adopting a processual approach to the study of kin relations, I consider how transnational families are constituted through the statements and practices of migrant and non-migrant kin. More specifically, I examine their stories of migration, and their everyday and more ritualized practices of staying in touch across space – that is,

the micro-spaces of transnationalism – which implicate kin in a transnational moral economy of relatedness. While I focus primarily on migrant kin in London, who are the ones expected to stay in touch, visit, and remit and who can be accused of 'forgetting where they come from', I also consider the perspectives and imaginings of their non-migrant kin in Kenya. In doing so, I address the following questions: how do transnational Kenyan families create, imagine, and sustain senses of relatedness across space? What happens to kin relations under conditions of transnational migration? More specifically, how do social and cultural norms and expectations related to kinship, gender, and generation, interrelate with individual agency and desire to extend, reconfigure, and/ or curtail kin relations across space?

The act of migration emplaces migrant and non-migrant kin in different contexts. Advances in information and communication technology, as well as transportation technology, offer the means of generating a sense of *simultaneity* and co-presence regardless of the physical distance. *Imagination* can also contribute to sustaining a sense of relatedness across space. However, in looking critically at these two concepts through the lived experiences of transnational Kenyan families, I will contend that they can also produce disconnections largely because imaginations and experiences of simultaneity are both mediated by people's emplacement. The religious emplacement of Pentecostal Kenyan migrants, in particular, provides a distinct politics of identity and mode of being in the world through which they relate to their non-migrant kin who remain in Kenya.

Migration articulates with existing differentiation within families and becomes another vector through which expectations and obligations, tensions and opportunities flow. Acknowledging the historical antecedents of recent Kenyan migration, I employ a generational, life-stage, and gendered lens to the study of

transnational Kenyan families, with the aim of contextualizing migration as a factor in the social reproduction of transnational families. Processes of social reproduction evoke notions of continuity and change. These charged terms are also debated and discussed within families, among migrants, and within the wider societies of Kenya and the United Kingdom.

If migration is understood as a morally-laden social process, then how migrant and non-migrant kin engage with the distance(s) between them becomes the grounds on which what it means to be related and how to demonstrate that relatedness is articulated and negotiated. I will argue that, while most Kenyan migrants try to stay implicated in a transnational moral economy of relatedness, they also try to re-define the terms of what being related entails, thus generating social distance between themselves and their non-migrant kin. This re-working hinges on a disentanglement of economics and affection in kin relations such that migrants can be seen as moral persons without also being responsible for the material wellbeing of their non-migrant kin. They do so by drawing on culturally intelligible, though contested, discourses: younger migrants I worked with turn to Pentecostalism in claiming continuity through change, whereas older women migrants invoke the discourse of development and generate change through continuity in practice.

The case for studying transnational Kenyan families

In London migrants from Kenya join a growing and diversifying African diaspora (Koser 2003), where Black Africans now outnumber Caribbean people and comprise 12 percent of migrants in the city (Piggott 2008: 31). Kenyans are the fifth largest Black African group in the capital following Nigerians, Ghanaians, Somalis, and Sierra Leoneans (Werbner 2010: 158-59).

Many migrants from Kenya currently living in London began moving to the United Kingdom in the late 1980s, with many arriving between the early 1990s and early 2000s. This period was marked by a diversification of diversity, or 'super-diversity' (Vertovec 2007), and the introduction of numerous policy changes aimed at restricting migration to the country. Increased and diversified migration to the United Kingdom has contributed to public perceptions of migrants 'flooding' the country and triggered policy concerns about national cohesion and integration. In these discourses migrants are often depicted either as part of a mass 'exodus' fleeing poverty and, thus, as victims with little agency, or as calculating, rational individuals trying to stay in the country by any means (de Haas 2008: 1305-1306). These images of migrants are at once over-socialized and under-socialized: they contradictorily depict migrants as both socially-determined and thus, lacking agency, *and* as radically individualistic actors unencumbered by social norms or constraints. Migrant families are of particular concern in that they are seen to be 'backward', oppressive toward women, and bound up with 'unchanging tradition' (Gedalof 2007: 90; cf. Grillo 2008: 17-18).[1] Thus, they are understood to constitute a particular threat to national cohesion (cf. Bryceson 2002: 9).

Much of the research on the African diaspora in the United Kingdom reflects trends in migration and transnational research and addresses issues of public and policy concern. This has meant an interest in questions of identity, ethnicity, diaspora politics, integration, and development. In contrast, transnational African households and the transnational practices of African families have received far less

[1] It is important to note that the concern over families is not only to do with those of migrants, but families in general in the United Kingdom, which are often used as a barometer of 'social decay'. For instance, the terms 'broken Britain' and 'broken society' have been used by *The Sun* newspaper and the Conservative Party to refer to issues ranging from child neglect, teenage pregnancy, and single mothers to violence, often among youth, and binge drinking. For examples, see Pascoe-Watson (2008), Cameron (2011) and BBC News (2011).

attention. The focus on transnational Kenyan families in this research responds to calls by anthropologists working on the African diaspora, such as Grillo and Mazzucato (2008: 187-188) and van Dijk (2004: 442), for more research on African kinship, family, and marriage practices. It also broadens our comparative understanding of transnational families by moving beyond well-researched areas (Pessar and Mahler 2003: 833), such as migration from Latin America and the Caribbean to North America (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Mahler 1995; Levitt 2001) and from South Asia to the United Kingdom (Werbner 1990; Gardner 1995; Charsley 2005; Raj 2003).

Moreover, studying migrants from Kenya living in London complements research conducted among Kenyans in Kenya since the late 1980s and in African anthropology more generally. Stories of younger Kenyan migrants in particular speak to similar themes raised in work focusing on youth across the continent whose life courses have been reshaped by neoliberal economic policies and structural adjustment programs (see, for example, Christiansen et al. 2006). Concerns with kinship reproduction, generations, and historical change (Geissler and Prince 2010; Cole 2010) resonate with questions of how African families are being reconfigured. In these ways, this research aims to bridge studies of African migration and diasporas with those in African anthropology.

In what follows, I further situate this research in the fields of transnational families, African diaspora studies, and African anthropology. In doing so, I detail the case for studying transnational Kenyan families and highlight where I aim to contribute these fields, before providing an outline of the thesis.

Distance and the relationship between economics and affection in studies of transnational families

Studies of transnational families by sociologists and anthropologists are often premised on Bryceson and Vuorela's definition: 'families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, … hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely "familyhood"' (2002: 2). They tend to follow several related lines of inquiry: the creation of 'global care chains', the reconfiguration of gender roles transnationally, and the lived experiences of transnational families.[2] First, some researchers examine how global structural inequalities interpenetrate families such that the wellbeing of wealthy families in the global north becomes inextricably linked to poor families in the global south (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003; Beck-Gernsheim 2011). Such research focuses, for instance, on women who migrate from poorer countries to work as domestic workers in the homes of families in wealthier countries (Anderson 2000). In doing so, they often leave their own children in the care of other women in their families, such as grandmothers and sisters. These relations give rise to what are referred to as 'global care chains', that is, a series of personal links between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring (Hochschild 2000: 131).

Second, other researchers focus their attention on dynamics within transnational families, exploring issues of transnational parenting, including transnational motherhood and fatherhood; transnational childhood; and transnational care giving for children or elderly kin. A key concern is what the migration of women means for gender roles, particularly culturally specific ideas of mothers and

[2] Another important area of work in this field focuses on marriage migration [see, for example, Charsley (2005) on Pakistanis; Gardner (2006) on Bangladeshis; and Constable (2003) on Filipinas]. However, this sub-field is less relevant to the case of migrants from Kenya living in London with whom I worked because the majority has not migrated through marriage.

motherhood. For instance, Latina nannies in the United States must reconcile a cultural preference for biological mothers raising their own children with the need to migrate in order to earn the necessary income to raise them (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997). Those who have brought their children with them condemn their peers whose children remain in Mexico not only as 'bad mothers', but also as untrustworthy to provide care for other people's children. In the case of Filipina mothers studied by Parreñas (2005), we see how migration expands women's roles such that they take on the traditionally masculine role of providing materially for their families, while continuing to give emotional care and support. However, they too struggle with the stigmatization of their families as 'broken' in light of their absence.

A third topic of interest in transnational family studies is the lived experiences of such families. Scholars such as Baldassar (2007, 2008), Parreñas (2001a), Svašek (2008, 2010), and Madianou and Miller (2011), focus on understanding how families maintain a sense of 'family-ness' and deal with the emotional strain of living apart. An interest in what Coe (2008) calls the 'everyday pain of globalization' links this strand of work on transnational families to the 'global care chains' mentioned earlier. Information and communications technology (ICT), such as inexpensive telephony and electronic money transfers, facilitate the provision of both emotional and material care across significant geographic distances. For instance, in her work among transnational Italian families with members in Italy and Australia, Baldassar conceptualizes how 'absence' is mediated by different types and degrees of co-presence, including virtual, by proxy, physical, and imagined (2008: 252).

Much of this literature is premised on several implicit assumptions. Migration is largely understood as disrupting family life and necessitating the reconfiguration of familial roles and households. For instance, Parreñas asserts that the rise of transnational families themselves signifies how successfully governments have implemented migration policies to prohibit families from migrating together (2001b: 104-107; see also Dreby 2006). Similarly, the negotiation of gender roles and relations within families is seen as a necessary consequence of migration where key family members, particularly mothers, are no longer physically present in the same locality as the rest of the family. Such analyses suggest that the act of migration marks a break from the past. In doing so, I would argue that they may obscure consideration of possible continuity in gender roles and relations and/ or familial life post-migration.

Some transnational family literature suggests that co-presence is integral to sustaining intimate family relations, particularly between parents and children, and is thus framed within an understanding of 'family' as a domain of social and emotional belonging. Linked to this line of argument is that migration contributes to the commodification of love and care as parents try to replace emotional intimacy by sending material goods and remittances. For example, Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila highlight this understanding among transnational Mexican mothers, one of whom they quote as saying 'you can't give love through money'; rather, these mothers understand love to require 'an emotional presence and communication with a child' (1997: 563-64; see also Schmalzbauer 2004). Similarly, Parreñas quotes one of her Filipina informants as saying: 'All the things that my children needed I gave them and even more because I know that I have not fulfilled my motherly duties completely' (2001a: 372). These sentiments are evident in much research on 'global

care chains', whereby the non-migrant families of migrant care workers are understood to lose 'care resources' and thus intimacy through the extraction of care; care is commodified through the practice of paid domestic and care work for wealthy families in the global north, and workers subsequently use their wages to demonstrate their love to non-migrant kin, leading to the commodification of care within such families (see, for example, see Parreñas 2001b, 2005; Yeates 2004).

An important corollary to this assumption regarding the importance of co-presence is that the distance separating migrant and non-migrant kin is conceptualized as exclusively geographic and physical (see, for example, Parreñas 2001a). This is evidenced in considerations of how parents provide care from a distance, rationalize their sense of guilt, and manage the compromises entailed by migration. For example, based on her informants' comments, Parreñas concludes that transnational Filipino families are denied the 'joys of physical contact, the emotional security of physical presence, and the familiarity allowed by physical proximity' by migration (2005: 333). The focus tends to be on the tensions migrants must grapple with as they try to sustain, in practice, a particular cultural ideology of kin and gender roles across space (Parreñas 2001b). In examining how migrants demonstrate care across space, there is an implicit assumption that authentic relations are understood to necessitate co-presence and, thus, that the physical distance is negative and detrimental to social relations that needs to be mitigated. According to this thinking, the causes of changes in kin relations are external and structural. These assumptions make it difficult to account for the agency of family members in shaping their relations, particularly when and why they might seek to limit or even curtail such ties. In other words, migration may actually present an opportunity to reconfigure kin relations and limit familial obligations.

The case of Kenyan migration to the United Kingdom since the late 1980s onward and the subsequent formation of transnational Kenyan families suggest that presuppositions about the meaning and impact of migration on family life be treated with caution from the outset. Similar to migrants from other parts of Africa, physical and social mobility have long been linked and are considered a part of life for many Kenyans such that their recent migration has numerous historical antecedents (Foeken and Owuor 2001; Oucho 1996; White 1990; Parkin 1975b). Though women have not historically migrated at the same rates as men within the country, Kenyan women's mobility internally and internationally is understood as socially acceptable since it is seen as promoting the wellbeing of their families (Nelson 1992). They tend not to face the kinds of gender-based stigmas related to their migration, as do women migrants from other parts of the world mentioned above. Kenyan migrants to the United Kingdom thus include both younger migrants intent on pursuing a means to their social becoming and whose non-migrant parents and siblings remain in Kenya, as well as older Kenyan women who migrate on their own to 'provide for their families'.

Moreover, the argument that migration contributes to the commodification of love and care relies on a cognitive division of economics and affection that is unhelpful for understanding transnational Kenyan families from Kenya and elsewhere.[3] Concern for the material wellbeing of kin is fundamental to ideas of family and kinship among Kenyans. Sending money and material goods can materialize relations in migrants' absence such that migrating to earn money is

[3] For additional examples, see van Dijk's work among Ghanaians in the Netherlands (2002a); Coe's work with the non-migrant kin of Ghanaian migrants in a suburb of Accra (2011a); and Åkesson (2004, 2011) and Drotbohm (2009) on Cape Verdeans. For examples outside the context of Africa, see Olwig (2007) on Caribbean families and Hirsch (2003) on Mexican families.

understood as showing care. Migrants can sustain their relations with their non-migrant children, parents, and siblings respectively without necessarily needing to be co-present (cf. Coe 2011a; Kastner 2010; Shipton 1995, 2007). It is more productive then to consider how intimate relations and economic transactions intertwine and are possibly reconfigured through migration (cf. Zelizer 2005; Cole and Thomas 2009). Consequently, I will suggest that physical distance cannot be construed in and of itself as an a priori problem for transnational family relations.

Migration also cannot be readily understood as the (primary) cause of changes in kin or gender relations in transnational Kenyan families. Such an explanation carries an implicit suggestion that these relations were stable in Kenya prior to recent international migration. The infamous 1987 trial over the burial of the prominent Kenyan lawyer S.M. Otieno between his Kikuyu widow and his Luo clan, the Umira Kager, is illustrative here (see Chapter 3 for further discussion). The court case encompassed a series of polarizing dichotomies that implicate families and familial practices and that remain salient in public discourse in Kenya: nuclear/ extended family, traditional religion/ Christianity, tradition/ modernity, and ethnic/ national identity. It highlighted growing tensions between the nuclear conjugal family, which is arguably on the rise among Christian Kenyans, and the historically predominant, patrilineal extended family as a source of economic security and a site of belonging. Drawing on this example, Gordon (1995) makes the significant point that dynamics between gender, family, and ethnicity among Kenyans are irrevocably inflected with increasing class differentiation and religious beliefs (see Chapter Three).[4] In light of such an example, it is important to consider other factors, in

[4] The case has been the subject of much academic interest [Fesenmyer (1998: Chapter Three), Cohen and Odhiambo (1992), and Stamp (1991)]. Popular interest in the legal case and those involved has persisted in the intervening years. The remarriage of Wambui

addition to migration, which shape the social reproduction of transnational Kenyan families.

In this thesis I aim to contribute to more recent work on migrants and their families, much of it drawing on African ethnography (Åkesson 2004, 2011; Coe 2011a and 2011b; van Dijk 2002a; Drotbohm 2009; see also Olwig 2007 for a Caribbean example), that calls for a historically informed and contextual approach to these families and their migration and problematizes the understanding of economics and affection as separate domains. Not only is it necessary to historicize and contextualize their migration, but it is also important to consider the post-migration context, to which I now turn.

Relatedness and emplacement: Pentecostalism and the African diaspora in the United Kingdom and Europe

Much research on the African diaspora in the United Kingdom and Europe has focused on questions of identity, belonging and citizenship; the roles of ethnicity and place in African diaspora politics; and migrants' transnational ties to their countries of origin both as a resource for development and as a potential threat to long-term social cohesion in the host country.[5] Research has often been conducted in home associations[6] (for example, Mercer and Page 2010) and churches that African migrants established and that minister to predominantly African congregations (Adogame 2009). The latter strand of work extends scholarly interest in the

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Otieno, the widow, to a man 42 years younger in 2003 brought renewed interest in and notoriety to her (Musila 2005). Her death on 30 August 2011 again made Otieno front-page news in Kenya's daily newspapers.

[5] See, for example, the special issue of *African Diaspora* edited by Fumanti and Werbner (2010); the special issue of *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* edited by Grillo and Mazzucato (2008); Page et al. (2009); and Mercer et al. (2008).

[6] These organizations are also referred to as hometown and diaspora associations. For a discussion of the different terms, see Mercer and Page (2010).

historical links forged through missionization between African countries and the United Kingdom, including the religious training of Africans in various parts of Britain (Killingray 1994: 18-21). While religion is a privileged moral discourse among African migrants for discussing important social issues, churches, along with home associations, are also understood to mediate notions of identity and constitute alternative or additional places of belonging.

Though not as well researched as other topics, existing research on (transnational) kin relations among Christian migrants from Africa has been approached through a focus on religion and/ or has examined the role of churches in their lives. For example, in a recent doctoral thesis, Wangaruro (2011) explores links between transnational identity and subjective senses of well-being among Christian Kenyan migrants in the United Kingdom by looking at the experiences of migrants who support chronically-ill family members in Kenya. She concludes that such transnational ties are integral to migrants' senses of self and are largely unproblematic, though not without tension (Wangaruro 2011: Chapter 6). Her work aligns with the transnational family literature referred to earlier, which views the 'family' as a 'natural' site of social and emotional belonging.

Similarly, Pasura's work (2008) among Zimbabwean migrants in the United Kingdom explores how changing gender relations and roles are re-shaping families (see also McGregor 2007). He pays particular attention to churches as sites for the performance of ideals of masculinity and femininity. More specifically, Pasura examines how churches (both Pentecostal and Catholic) serve as sites for men to re-assert their historical dominance (cf. George 2005: Chapter Four). Many women congregants also support 'a return to traditional gender roles and relations' in the face of marital strain and breakdown (Pasura 2008: 102). Similar to some of the

transnational family studies mentioned above, Pasura concludes that migration is largely the cause of changes in gender relations and the breakdown of families (Pasura 2008: 107).

Van Dijk (1997, 2002a, 2004) considers Pentecostalism's role in the negotiation, and ultimately limiting, of migrants' familial obligations and ties. In his work among Ghanaian Pentecostal migrants in the Netherlands, he argues that Pentecostalism assists migrants in managing their families' expectations regarding remittances by subjecting them to moral supervision by the church (van Dijk 2002a: 181, 188; 2004: 462). Deliverance rituals in particular help migrants handle the ambiguities that arise from pulling away from their families in Ghana and investing in their new conjugal families formed in the Netherlands. Van Dijk concludes that Pentecostal discourse and belief contribute to the 'fabrication of individuality' among migrants (2002a: 192).

These African diaspora scholars are in agreement about the importance Christian migrants from Africa attach to 'family' and that religion provides a key moral discourse through which ideas of 'family' and familial practices are negotiated. At the same time, though ideas of 'family' are at the center of Pentecostal discourse and church life, van Dijk's research suggests that the 'family' itself is being redefined to reflect a patriarchal Christian nuclear family ideal, rather than an extended, multi-generational patriarchal one. That is, he raises questions about whom Pentecostal migrants consider to be kin in the sense of whom one engages in reciprocal relations with (van Dijk 2002: 184). Considered key to fostering a Christian moral self (Meyer 2004: 459-460), marriage emerges as not only important to settlement and community formation among migrants (van Dijk 2004: 451-452), but also as a potential space for reconfiguring kin relations and obligations. In light

of transnational family researchers' interest in changes to kin relations post-migration, van Dijk's findings signal the need to interrogate such changes not only in terms of the commodification of love and care or the idea of 'broken families'.

If we are not to assume what being related means in specific cultural contexts, Carsten's concept of relatedness (1995, 1997, 2000) offers an important conceptual tool for studying transnational Kenyan families. Anthropologists have long made the point that kin relations cannot be understood as 'natural' and 'given' based on biological connection (Schneider 1984; Collier and Yanagisako 1990). Carsten (2000) suggests that, while blood may be important, so may affection, shared substance, and nurturance. The concept of relatedness draws attention to the 'statements and practices' through which people constitute senses of relatedness (Carsten 2000: 24). Moreover, it suggests a dynamic understanding of kin relations as always 'under construction' and that entails the agency of kin.

Despite the processual dimension of relatedness and the notion of kin relations being 'negotiable', we cannot overlook that these relations are still shaped by cultural and social norms and prescriptions that inform how people relate to each other (Miller 2007: 539, 544). Migrant kin carry these expectations with them when they migrate, while those who remain behind retain their expectations. Issues of power, status, and hierarchy shape kin relations, just as they do other types of social relations. This point undermines any view of families and households as monolithic social units. Tensions and conflicts over reciprocal familial obligations contribute to making families sites of potential contestation and struggle. Acknowledging the nuances of kin relations enables us to grasp a point Turner made long ago: 'the closer the tie, the greater the ambivalence' (1957: 249). We must then consider that implicit in the concept of relatedness is its conceptual antithesis, that is, un-

relatedness. Following this line of thinking, just as senses of relatedness must be sustained through action, they can also be eroded, whether intentionally or not. 'Kin connections (and disconnections) thus belong to the myriad and quotidian ways in which people divide their social universe' (Edwards and Strathern 2000: 161).

Against this backdrop, the conclusions of these African diaspora scholars regarding how migrants from Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Ghana living in Europe experience and manage their transnational familial relations and kin obligations underscore the importance of being attuned to discourses of 'family', gaps between what migrant and non-migrant kin say and do, and how such gaps are reconciled. A transnational lens is then necessary for studying these families in order to grasp the perspectives of both migrants and their non-migrant kin and understand how they constitute their relatedness in practice (see Chapters Four and Five in particular).

In addition to religion serving as a moral discourse for many African migrants, the notion of churches as places of migrant belonging – another strand of African diaspora research – is relevant to this thesis. Massey's interpretation of place (1993) has been integral to such efforts, where places are understood not as bounded entities, but rather as constructions forged out of concrete social relations and practices. For example, Adogame argues that Ghanaian Pentecostal migrants in Germany engage in a process of emplacement through their efforts to create a religious space. In his view 'place-making is a strategy toward public self-representation and positioning' vis-à-vis the host country (Adogame 2010: 166). This approach to place complements that which initially predominated in studies of migration, transnationalism, and diasporas, namely migrants' ongoing attachments and orientations to their places of origin, whether defined in national, regional, and/ or local terms (Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Sutton 1987; Portes et al. 1999).

While sharing the interest of other African diaspora scholars in how migrants are creating new morally and emotionally significant communities of belonging in Europe (Krause 2008, 2011; Adogame 2009; Fumanti 2010; Garbin 2010), I focus my attention primarily on the implications of Kenyan migrants' place-making for their relations with their non-migrant kin, rather than for their sense of belonging or identity vis-à-vis wider British society. In living their daily lives in London, migrants from Kenya have emplaced themselves within new moral relations in a specific historical moment and social context; it is from this place that they engage with their non-migrant kin transnationally (cf. Gielis 2009; Smith 2001).

Since Kenyans began migrating in late 1980s, the migratory regime of the United Kingdom has become increasingly restrictive. For many, their imaginings of the United Kingdom as a place of opportunity have been confronted by the realities of London as an expensive 'global city' where 'they earn in pounds, but also have to pay bills in pounds' (Sassen 2001). They are an ethnic immigrant minority in the United Kingdom about which public and policy discourses profess various concerns and anxieties. Many of them are constrained in their ability to achieve their own aspirations and to fulfill their reciprocal obligations to non-migrant kin, and thus attain recognition. This is culturally and personally humiliating, not to mention an unexpected consequence of migrating.

Despite practices of familial reciprocity having been transformed historically through processes of colonization, missionization, and urbanization in Kenya, helping one's kin nonetheless remains a normative moral expectation among Kenyans. The implications of such changes for kin relations are also a concern in African anthropology, to which I now turn.

Intergenerational reciprocity and morality: Generations, kinship, and historical change in African anthropology

A focus on Kenyans who migrated to the United Kingdom fills an ethnographic gap not only in research on the African diaspora in the United Kingdom and Europe, but it also extends our understanding of how the economic, political, and social uncertainty that characterized Kenya during the regime of President Daniel T. arap Moi, who led the country from 1978 to 2002, shaped Kenyans' lives both within the country and beyond.

In examining transnational Kenyan families, this research aims to contribute to our understanding of the relationships between kinship reproduction and transformation, generations, and historical change prevalent in African anthropology. Two generations of migrants emerged in the research whose counterparts remain in Kenya. Younger Kenyan migrants are the contemporaries of youth who predominate in much current African anthropology (see, for example, Vigh 2006a; Christiansen et al. 2006; Cole 2004, 2010; Archambault 2012). They came of age at a time when the failures of modernity and development could be felt in Kenya and across much of Africa (Geissler and Prince 2010; Ferguson 1999). In migrating to the United Kingdom, they 'left behind' their parents, siblings, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. Many migrated to a place where they imagined their future aspirations would be realized, only to find themselves stuck in time and space, their situation not unlike that of their peers who remained in Kenya (Frederiksen 2000, 2002). Meanwhile, older women migrants inverted the more common pattern of male internal migration in Kenya, when they migrated from Nairobi to the United Kingdom to 'meet their families' needs'. Many of these largely middle-class

families were transformed into transnational ones, with the wives living in London and the children and husbands remaining in Nairobi.[7]

The two different transnational family configurations that predominate in this research – younger migrants and their non-migrant parents and siblings, and older transnational couples (migrant wives and non-migrant husbands) – represent different generations within families, as well as different historical generations. As Whyte et al. point out, 'generation is one of the most powerful analytical tools for studying society because it implies relations in time' (2008: 1). They further assert that '[r]eciprocity is the most important quality of intergenerational relationships and refers to the sharing and transmission of resources (material and immaterial) and also mutual expressions of care and regard' (Whyte et al. 2008: 6). Such practices and sentiments are imbued with assumptions about morality and signal the intertwining of obligation, expectation, and affection.

What is expected of, and by, whom shifts over the course of one's life. The dynamic nature of normative expectations means that what constitutes being a good kinsman or kinswoman, is subject to debate and contestation, often most intensely between generations and genders, and particularly within families. Changing historical circumstances and uneven access to material and other resources, which are not new challenges for Kenyans, underscore the contingent nature of people's capacity and desire to fulfill such expectations. A focus on intergenerational relations within families then provides a productive lens for grasping at once the

[7] For discussions of the middle class in Kenya, especially Nairobi, and of issues of class more generally, see Gordon (1995); Stamp (1991); Cohen and Odhiambo (1989); Stichter (1987, 1988); and Robertson and Berger (1986b). For a recent example of young middle class Kenyans, whose lives and concerns resonate with those of some of my informants' non-migrant kin, see Spronk (2012).

'micro-scale of the body, family, and household relations and the larger scale of political and economic transformations' (Cole and Durham 2007: 13).

Given Kenyans' history of (internal) migration as a means of advancing their own well-being and that of their families, it is important to contextualize migration as a factor in the social reproduction and transformation of kinship. Following Whyte et al., I am interested in issues of 'intersubjectivity, relatedness, cultural creativity and agency', while still being attuned to historical continuities (2008: 3). In studying connections and disconnections between Kenyan migrants and those who remain in Kenya, I intend to highlight the interconnected dimensions of their lives within a transnational social field (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004) forged out of multi-stranded social, economic, religious, and affective ties.

Outline of the thesis

In Chapter One I describe the methodology employed in conducting multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork in London, Nairobi, and Kiambu District, Kenya. Taking as a point of departure the ethnographic heterogeneity of people living in London whose country of origin is Kenya, I outline my initial efforts to locate Kenyan migrants and provide an overview of migration from Kenya to the United Kingdom. Moving from the more general to the specific, I discuss how the field was constructed, what methods were employed, and the people among whom I conducted the research.

Chapters Two and Three detail the conceptual framework for the thesis and provide a historical and sociological background, respectively. Chapter Two outlines the theoretical context for studying transnational Kenyan families, which entails discussions of family migration, notions of relatedness, and processes of social

reproduction. In doing so, I develop a conceptual approach to studying the distance(s) with which transnational kin contend as they engage in practices of relatedness across space. In Chapter Three I consider the links between physical and social mobility among Kenyans, highlighting the historical antecedents to Kenyans' migration to the United Kingdom, particularly colonial labor migration and rural-urban migration prior to the 1980s. I examine the role played by education, which itself is closely entangled with Christian missions in Kenya, in shaping people's imagination about what their futures might hold. Finally, I shift focus to the wider political, economic, and social contexts of Kenya starting in the 1980s when many Kenyans of various social backgrounds began moving to Britain.

Chapters Four, Five, and Six, which comprise the empirical core of the thesis, focus on statements and practices of relatedness among transnational Kenyan families. Chapter Four focuses on Kenyans' stories of migration contextualized within wider familial and social circumstances. I consider the seemingly straightforward reasons Kenyans typically cite for migrating along the lines of life stage, generation, and gender that emerged from my research. The chapter draws out converging and diverging aspirations and ambitions of migrant and non-migrant kin within a prevailing discourse of familial reciprocity. To show the (conflicting) familial dynamics evident in migration decision-making, the stories include perspectives of migrant and non-migrant kin and reveal the importance of gender and generation for our understanding of migration and the kin relations that are sustained, or not, post-migration.

In Chapters Five and Six I discuss two different types of transnational practices of relatedness. Chapter Five considers everyday transnational practices, such as, calling, remitting, and visiting. Much transnational family research

presumes that migrants want to stay in touch with their non-migrant kin and, thus, focuses on how they overcome the physical distance that separates them. While acknowledging the importance of advances in communication technology and transportation, I carefully examine points of disconnection and connection to understand transnational family dynamics. Drawing on series of ethnographic vignettes of migrants and their non-migrant kin who occupy different familial positions, I explore the gaps in expectations and imagination that emerge between them and how they are negotiated.

I continue to consider transnational practices of relatedness in Chapter Six, but shift attention to ritualized occasions. In particular I examine weddings among Kenyan migrants as moments in individual and familial life cycles in which families are both re-constituted and extended. They are a ritualized practice of relatedness that holds the potential to bridge the distance(s) between migrant and non-migrant kin, but may also increase the sense of distance in various ways. I also consider how weddings generate a new moral 'community' among those who participate in the proceedings.

In Chapter Seven I synthesize the empirical material from the previous chapters to answer the question of what happens to kin relations post-migration. Implicit in the question is an interest in issues of social change and historical continuity, including how notions of 'change' and 'continuity' are represented and contested discursively. Key to these relations is how migrant and non-migrant kin engage with the distance(s) between them, which I suggest is shaped by their respective emplacement and imaginations. The Conclusion summarizes the argument of the thesis and its contributions to studies of transnational families, the African diaspora, and African anthropology, and points to areas of future research.

Chapter 1 – Constructing the field: Transnational Kenyan families in London and Nairobi

On a cold Sunday morning in December 2009, I travelled by tube and bus to Greenwich, southeast London, to attend the 11 am service of a Pentecostal church. Following the Pastor's directions, I alighted at Millennium Village, a shopping mall with a Nando's, a Pizza Hut, and an Odeon cinema near the Millennium Dome. As I walked into the cinema, the bright glare of the winter sun shining into the lobby momentarily blinded me. Some teenagers queued to buy tickets for the first show of the day, others to buy popcorn and soda. I circled the ticket booth in the center of the lobby, looking for Screen 13 – the location of the service. I wondered how could I go upstairs without purchasing a ticket. Stopping to ask a ticket taker, he waved me up the escalator to the second floor. A dozen or so congregants, who I would learn had also travelled from various parts of London that morning, were in the screening room when I arrived. At the start of the service, we walked up and down the aisles and along the rows to greet each other, shaking hands, smiling, and crunching popcorn kernels underfoot as we walked.

* * * * *

Conducting research in a densely populated city like London posed numerous challenges to a new fieldworker. The vignette above describes the kinds of places where migrants from Kenya meet in London. The places are at once ephemeral and enduring in that migrants disperse leaving no trace of having been gathered together in a particular location, yet their social relations are ongoing, coalescing at the next occasion. The vignette also hints at the interplay of migrants' place-making practices – that is, how they construct 'places' out of social relations and social processes (see

Chapter Two) – and the specificity of the locality (London) that contributes to their decision to meet at a cinema, a secular place that would otherwise be considered an unexpected site for religious worship.

I begin this chapter with an overview of the official numbers and diversity of those who are referred to as 'Kenyan', before moving on to discuss my initial efforts to locate migrants from Kenya living in London. In doing so, I outline London and the United Kingdom as structural contexts that shape Kenyans' migration and their lives in the city. In the second part of the chapter I discuss my multi-sited transnational fieldwork, including where and how I spent my time. I describe how I met Kenyans in London and in turn met their family members in Nairobi and nearby Kiambu District in Central Province (see Figures 1, 2 and 3).[8] In particular I highlight the people among whom I worked, with a focus on eight core families whose family members I met in both countries.

[8] In August 2010 Kenya passed a new constitution, which replaced the administration of the country based on a system of eight provinces to a county-based system with 47 counties. Because my fieldwork took place prior to these changes, I use the pre-2010 terms and demarcations throughout the thesis.

Figure 1: Map of the United Kingdom (Google Maps)



Figure 2: Map of Kenya (Google Maps)



Figure 3: Map of Kenya's eight provinces (d-maps.com)



Research among ethnographically heterogeneous Kenyans in London

According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS), Kenyans in the United Kingdom numbered 129,000 in 2009–2010, and Kenya was the eleventh most common country of birth among those born outside the United Kingdom (Office of

National Statistics 2010).[9] Unofficially, one community leader told me the number of Kenyans in Britain is roughly 300,000, while a staff member at the Kenya High Commission in London gave me a lower estimate of 230,000. Given that many Kenyans have had difficulties regularizing their legal status (see below), the numbers are likely to be closer to the tally of the High Commission than the ONS figure above. Of those counted officially in the UK census 2001, just over half (66,311 people) of Kenyans live in Greater London and can be found in every borough of London (Greater London Authority 2005: 77).

The official statistics reveal that Kenyans living in London are very diverse racially, religiously, and ethnically. Those who identify as Black African, on whom this research focuses, account for 11 percent (or 7,294) of people born in Kenya living in London.[10] The majority includes those who identify as Asian (81.7 percent), most of whom are likely to have migrated to the United Kingdom in the late 1960s and 1970s during a period of political and economic upheaval in East Africa;[11] there is also a small population that identifies as white (4 percent) (GLA 2005: 97). In terms of religion, those who cite Kenya as their country of birth include Hindus (46.5 percent), Christians (17.3 percent), Sikhs (10.7 percent), and Muslims (10.5 percent) (GLA 2005: 99).[12]

[9] The statistics and ranking are based on the Annual Population Survey/ Labour Force Survey.
[10] The specific figure of 7,294 people is based on Census DMag update, 2006/9 and Table S102, Sex and Country of Birth by Ethnic Group, and specially commissioned Table C0568, Country of Birth by Ethnic group (Werbner 2010).
[11] The report is based on UK census 2001 data. The Asian population can be further broken down into those who identify as Indian, Pakistani, or other 'Asian'. For additional research on Asian Kenyans, see Baumann (1996) and Bhachu (1985).
[12] The remaining 15 percent include those who identify as any other religion, no religion, or did not state a religion.

While the official numbers are likely to underestimate the number of Black African Kenyans[13], a subject I will return to below, this subset of Kenyans still comprises a small proportion of those living in London who were born in Kenya. However, it is important to note that this population is the overwhelming majority in Kenya. As mentioned earlier, they also constitute a large population compared to migrants from most other African countries living in London (cf. Werbner 2010: 158-159). Kenyan migrants are part of the 'new' African diaspora living outside the African continent (Koser 2003: 4).

Since official maps rely solely on country of origin data, they do not indicate where this particular subset of Kenyans lives. Early in fieldwork I asked each person I met if Kenyans tended to live any particular part of the city. One informant explained to me that many Kenyans who, like himself, had migrated in the 1990s initially lived in East Ham in the borough of Newham in East London. This was where Kenyans were 'known' to be living, he told me, but this was no longer the case. While I did meet Kenyans who lived in East Ham or elsewhere in Newham, many also lived in other areas of eastern London, such as Ilford (Redbridge), Romford (Havering), Barking, and Woolwich (Greenwich) (see Figure 4). Still others lived in various parts of the city, ranging from Shepherd's Bush (Hammersmith and Fulham) and Harrow-on-the-Hill (Harrow) in the west and northwest to Finchley (Barnet) in the north and Croydon in the south.

[13] From this point forward, I use Kenyan to refer to Black African Christian Kenyans, unless otherwise specified. The UK census does not collect information about the ethnicity of Black African Kenyans.

Figure 4: Map of the 32 boroughs of London (www.londoncouncils.gov.uk)



Many migrants' residential histories reflect their movement around the city. For instance, Jane[14], a woman in her mid 50s, first lived in Southall in the west with other Kenyans nurses who also moved in 2002; she later moved with one of them to Barking and then to Croydon. By the time we met in 2009, she was preparing to move to her own flat in Greenwich in the southeast. Decisions to move are not surprisingly often based on a calculus of cost, convenience (usually to work), and social contacts, leading to dispersion throughout the city. This is not unusual in a city like London where people of one nationality do not tend to be concentrated in

[14] The names of informants have been changed to ensure the anonymity of those I spoke with. I use other names common to women and men from Kenya.

any particular part of the city.[15]

Yet it does seem that in the case of Kenyans this point is at least in part attributable to the timing of my fieldwork. As some Kenyans have established themselves in London, they have moved as part of their social mobility, leaving Inner London for other areas where they have found better jobs or where housing is less expensive, such as Outer London[16] boroughs and the counties beyond the M25, which encircles Greater London, including Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Middlesex, and Surrey. In this sense London is a 'gateway' city attracting Kenyans for a combination of historical and opportunity factors (Clark 2004; see Chapter Four).

Migrants from Kenya are also not readily identifiable through community-based organizations. Those organizations founded by Kenyans and working with Kenyans were established in the (early) 1990s. They initially focused on welfare-related needs and provided HIV services, but quickly widened their programmatic focus and client base because focusing solely on Kenyans meant a diminishing client base and funding sources.[17] This was in part due to the changing needs of migrants from Kenya, who increasingly wanted job skills training, rather than welfare services. Another factor accelerated further changes in 2001: disturbances in Bradford,

[15] An exception to this point is the high number of people from Bangladesh and Somalia who live in Tower Hamlets (GLA 2005: 76, 80).

[16] The London Government Act of 1963 define Inner London as encompassing the boroughs of Camden, Greenwich, hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth, and Westminster (http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1963/33 Accessed 1 June 2012). Outer London includes the boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond upon Thames, Sutton, and Waltham Forest. The Office of National Statistics and the Census include the boroughs of Haringey and Newham in Inner London, but consider Greenwich as part of Outer London. Many of my informants live in these latter three boroughs. Finally, Greater London encompasses both Inner and Outer London.

[17] Such organizations include Widows and Orphans International (Dagenham), Kenya Community Support Network (Newham), and the Kenya Women's Association (Brent).

Burnley, and Oldham prompted local governments to develop strategies to increase 'community cohesion'. As part of these new policies, funding for voluntary organizations shifted away from single nationality-focused organizations toward multi-ethnic organizations serving people living in a particular area, rather than people of a specific ethnic or national background (Cantle, et al. 2001; Local Government Association 2002). The name-changes of one organization started by a Kenyan woman are illustrative of this shift toward inclusiveness. Initially named 'Active Kenyan Support', the organization morphed into 'African Community Partnership' serving all Africans and, finally, into 'Building Healthier Communities' working with those in New Cross, Lewisham, in southeast London.

The notion of 'community' has been particularly important in migration research. Early studies of migration, particularly in the United States among the Chicago School of sociology, took 'ethnic communities' as a departure point. Seen as equivalent to the kind of 'village' traditionally studied by anthropologists, these 'communities' were often approached as if they existed in isolation from outside influences and connections. They were also taken to be culturally homogenous. According to Wimmer and Glick Schiller, this approach is the logical outgrowth of what they refer to as 'methodological nationalism' that is, 'the nation/state/ society as the natural and political form of the modern world' (2002: 302). In light of the lack of residential concentration of Kenyans, and the limited number of organizations representing and working with migrants from Kenya, any notion of a 'community' based on shared ethnicity or national origin was immediately problematic (cf. Hage 2005: 467-68).

Moreover, current transnational migration research argues for the importance of taking the specific locality into account (Glick Schiller and Caglar 2011, 2009;

Levitt and Jaworsky 2007: 143-144). According to Brettell, cities influence the kinds of jobs migrants take, where they live, how they construct their communities, what languages they use, with whom and how they form social relations, and how they are socially and culturally incorporated (2003: 190). It is important then that London be understood as more than a location for this research (Hannerz 1980: 14-15), in order to accommodate the dynamic, dialectical interaction between identifications, social relations and structural forces. If London shapes the local lives Kenyan migrants live in the city, it is worth considering how the United Kingdom as a nation-state structures their lives.

Migration from Kenya to the United Kingdom

While the ties between Kenya and the United Kingdom are diverse, long-standing, and extensive, most movement between the two countries has historically been circular. Though travel outside of Kenya, much less international migration, was limited prior to independence (Nelson 1992: 112), Kenyans who came to the United Kingdom from the colonial era through the 1970s often did so to pursue their studies, with many promising young Kenyans receiving scholarships to attend British universities.[18] Many of those students returned to Kenya[19] and became part of the struggle for independence and later the elite as they assumed leadership positions in the Kenyan government and the private sector (Okoth 2003). Numerous current government ministers, as well as two of Kenya's three presidents, have spent time in the United Kingdom as part of their studies and training. British missionaries also

[18] For a discussion of this era, see Shachtman (2009).

[19] I met a handful of Kenyans who migrated to London in the late 1970s or early 1980s and have remained in the country. Given the growing economic recession in Kenya in the 1980s (see Chapter Three), it is perhaps not surprising that they chose to stay in London, rather than return to Kenya.

invited Kenyans they met while working in Kenya to travel to the United Kingdom for religious training (Killingray 1994: 18).

Conversely, most migrants from Kenya I met in London migrated between the late 1980s and early 2000s, with the majority having moved during the mid 1990s; many said they did so with no immediate plans to return to Kenya. Though not specific to Kenyan migration to the United Kingdom, statistics from the United Nations Population Division reflect that more Kenyans began leaving their country of origin at the start of the 1990s: the number of international migrants from Kenya jumped from an estimated 162,981 in 1990 to 527,821 in 1995, and later to 755,351 in 2000.[20] They migrated through various channels, such as student visas, asylum, working holidaymaker visas, work-related visas, and tourist visas, which some eventually overstayed.[21]

While I will detail the context in which most migrants left Kenya in Chapter Three, it is important to mention here that the largest proportion of Kenyans in London I met are those who say they migrated to 'better themselves' or 'meet their family's needs'. In academic literature and public and policy discourse, such migrants are typically referred to as 'economic migrants' (Massey et al. 1998; Okoth 2003). However, in historicizing and contextualizing these seemingly straightforward reasons (see Chapters Three and Four), I will problematize the categorizations of such migrants as economic migrants. Those who came from the late 1980s onward are a diverse group that also includes diplomats, medical professionals, academics, and business people, along with those typically referred to as 'economic migrants'.

[20] http://esa.un.org/migration/p2k0data.asp. Accessed 30 September 2011.

[21] Most Kenyans I met migrated directly from Kenya. Among my contact pool, only five people, including one couple, moved to the United Kingdom via another country and, thus, were 'transit migrants' (Collyer et al. 2010). In these cases, the transit countries were South Africa, Greece, and the United States.

While the period coincides with ethnic-related clashes during the first two multi-party elections in Kenya in 1992 and 1997, I only met two men, both of whom self-identify as political activists, who describe their migration as vital to ensuring their physical safety. The individualized nature of the reasons most migrants give for migrating, I suggest, further undermines any assumption of an a priori 'community'.

It is worth noting that the arrival of most Kenyan migrants in London who I met during fieldwork coincided with the introduction of several British parliamentary measures aimed at restricting entry to the United Kingdom and tightening requirements for claiming asylum and obtaining indefinite leave to remain.[22] For those claiming asylum in the early to mid 1990s,[23] the asylum review process could take several years. During this time, they could further their education and develop skills that might improve their chances of being granted asylum; however, by the spring of 1995, these procedures were restricted and the timeframe shortened (Shah 2000: Chapter Eight). The election of Mwai Kibaki as president of Kenya in 2002, which marked the end of the 25-year reign of President Moi, was taken as a signal that the years of politically related violence and displacement in Kenya had also ended, thus removing the basis of many Kenyan migrants' asylum claims. Although the two political activists mentioned above told me that they had been granted indefinite leave to remain on the basis of their asylum claims, official statistics indicate that the vast majority of claims were unsuccessful.[24]

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[22] These include the Asylum and Immigration Acts of 1993, 1996, and 1999 and the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 (Shah 2000).

[23] Many informants mentioned they knew of Kenyans who had tried to remain in the country by making what they considered to be bogus asylum claims. However, given the morally condemnatory way in which such people were mentioned, it will not come as a surprise that no one I met would admit that they were one of these people. Hence, it is not possible to disentangle the gossip from the real experiences of people who needed asylum and, thus, develop an understanding of Kenyan asylees in London.

[24] Between 1989 and 1997, Kenyan nationals filed 5,170 applications for asylum, with the highest number (1,395 applications) in 1995 and the lowest (15 applications) in 1989

These policy changes coincided with the introduction of managed migration policies shaped by the interests of businesses and aimed at managing the number and kind of migrants entering the United Kingdom. Migrants with skills that were in short supply in the country were deemed desirable. Though the entry of those with limited or no skills was restricted, there was still a need for low skilled people in the domestic economy, which provided a migration route for 'short-term casual labour' (Home Office 2002: para. 3.25). Managed migration policies, which were closely linked to the new Labour government that came to power in 1997, were later followed by policies that capped migration in order to further limit the overall numbers of migrants. Flynn suggests that the policies for managing so-called economic or labor migration complemented those that addressed the involuntary migration of refugees and asylum seekers; together, the policies helped to ensure the maximization of migration's benefits (2005: 464). In light of these policy restrictions, the fact that most Kenyans in London I met came to the United Kingdom from the early 1990s through the early 2000s is not surprising. Those I met who came after 2002 tended to be medical professionals and business people, as well as students.

Meanwhile, Kenyans in London have faced numerous changes in settlement policies and, as I suggest in Chapter Five, securing the right to remain in the United

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(Watson and Danzelman 1998: 20). With only 30 applicants being granted indefinite leave to remain during the period, the overwhelming majority of applications were denied (Watson and Danzelman 1998: 27).

Nonetheless, there is good reason to believe many more claims were legitimate than were actually approved. Asylum Aid (2001) argues that Kenyan women in particular were subject to sexual abuse and torture in Kenya during the 1990s. Asylum Aid asserts, rather than taking these charges seriously, the Home Office viewed such claims as contradicting what it understood the human rights situation to be in Kenya at the time and, thus, questioned their validity (2001: 19-21). Moreover, claims were denied due to the lack of substantiating evidence, discrepancies in statements, and suspicions about asylees' underlying motives, that is, some were accused of being 'economic migrants' (Asylum Aid 2001: 75-90).

Kingdom has taken on unanticipated importance for many (younger) migrants in particular. It is significant to note that, by the time of fieldwork during 2009 and 2010, many of my informants had been in the United Kingdom for 10 or more years, having migrated during the mid to late 1990s. Many of those who successfully obtained permanent residency did so through one of two continuous residency schemes: after 10 years of continuous lawful residence or after 14 years of 'continuous residence of any legality'.[25] Nonetheless, an important consequence of the tightening of immigration controls, I was told, is that there are many migrants from Kenya who are undocumented; those whose asylum claims were denied, as mentioned above, are apt to be among the undocumented. For these reasons, official statistics likely underrepresent the number of migrants from Kenya living in the country.

Contextualizing Kenyan migrants' self-identification

I refer to migrants from Kenya among whom I conducted fieldwork using their own terms of self-identification as Christian, as well as Kenyan. Two particular concerns informed my thinking, one rooted in the public and political discourse about migrants in the United Kingdom, and the other in academic concerns of methodological nationalism. First, Barth (1969) discusses the fluidity and contingency of ethnic identity, which is constructed in specific social and historical contexts. This relational understanding of identity is important in understanding how migrants from Kenya see themselves in the wider context of London and the United Kingdom, as well as in relation to Kenya.

[25] For further information about how these schemes work, see http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/policyandlaw/IDIs/idischapter18/. (accessed 6 April 2011). As of 9 July 2012, the 14-year route has been abolished and replaced with a 20-year residency path to obtaining indefinite leave to remain (Home Office 2012: 64).

Most Kenyans, both migrant and non-migrant, are Christians and regular churchgoers. For instance, according to a 2010 poll by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 88 percent of Kenyans in Kenya identify as Christian. Roughly four out of five Christian Kenyans in Kenya say religion is very important to their lives (86 percent) and attend church at least once per week (81 percent).[26] In London Kenyans attend a range of Christian churches, such as Anglican, Baptist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, and Quaker churches, among others. As I have already described, some migrants attend several churches of different denominations in London, always referring to themselves as 'Christian'.

Many (younger) migrants converted to Pentecostalism post-migration and founded numerous Pentecostal churches in London and elsewhere in the United Kingdom; unlike the churches of many Ghanaian and Nigerian migrants in Europe (van Dijk 2004; Maier and Coleman 2011), for example, these churches tend not to be branches of religious institutions in Kenya. Their conversion has contributed to Pentecostalism becoming the fastest growing sector of Protestant Christianity worldwide (Robbins 2004: 118). The conversion of younger migrants in particular is important to note because it can be understood as an expression of choice and autonomy. Many were born into their parents' religion, typically one of the mainstream Christian denominations (for example, Presbyterianism, Anglicanism, or Catholic) that established their presence in Kenya through missionization efforts as early as the mid 1800s. Conversion to Pentecostalism among Kenyan migrants in

[26] Pew Forum on Religious Life, *Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa,* April 15, 2010 poll. http://features.pewforum.org/africa/country.php?c=113 (accessed 27 September 2011).

London coincides with the rise of Pentecostalism in Kenya as well, including among some of my informants' non-migrant kin.[27]

Kenyan migrants' self-identification as Christians likely has a politicized dimension to it that relates to both Kenya and the United Kingdom. On the one hand, Kenya is a multi-faith country with long-standing Muslim populations, including Swahili people who traditionally lived along the coast and Somali Kenyans, as well as Hindus and Sikhs from the Indian subcontinent. Also, since the early 1990s, Kenya has hosted increasing numbers of Somalis, who are predominantly Muslim and who have been displaced by ongoing violent conflict in Somalia. The presence of Somalis in Kenya in general and in Nairobi in particular has become part of a heated public debate in Kenya, with Somalis regularly being blamed for driving up property prices in the city with their 'pirate money'. Eastleigh, an area just east of Nairobi's central business district, is now primarily home to Somalis and referred to as 'Little Mogadishu'. Adding more fuel to the tension were discussions about the protection of Kadhi courts[28] based on Islamic law in the Kenyan constitution, which was passed in August 2010. Identifying as Christian, an identification that stems

[27] Pentacostalism is popular in Kenya: the Pew Forum on Religious and Public Life survey indicates that more than half of Kenyans identified as Pentecostals or charismatics in 2006 (http://www.pewforum.org/Christian/Evangelical-Protestant-Churches/Historical-Overview-of-Pentecostalism-in-Kenya.aspx Accessed 18 June 2012). Gifford reports that by 2007 Kenya had 8,520 registered churches, 6,740 applications pending, and 60 new applications every month; the new churches are not branches of existing mainline ones, but new 'juridical entities' (2009: 109).

[28] The history of the Kadhi courts dates back to before colonization. In 1895 the Sultan of Zanzibar agreed to let the British government oversee a 10-mile strip of Kenya's coast as long as it respected the Kadhi courts. Thus, a British protectorate was founded over which the Sultan retained sovereignty, at the same time as the rest of Kenya became a British colony. As the prospect of independence grew imminent in the early 1960s, representatives of the British government and the Sultan of Zanzibar again debated the fate of this coastal strip. Eventually, it was decided that the protectorate should join the rest of Kenya in becoming independent with the guarantee that the existence of the Kadhi courts would be respected. Accessed 9 October 2011
(http://www.commonlii.org/ke/other/KECKRC/2002/11.html).

from personal religious convictions, as well as the political context of Kenya, is then something that Kenyan migrants bring with them when they migrate.

Moreover, Kenyans' identification as Kenyan and Christian must be seen against the backdrop of what has been taking place in the United Kingdom since the early 1990s when many arrived. During this time, Britain has shifted from a period of net outflows to one of new inflows of migrants: roughly 150,000 persons per year, compared to about 40,000 persons in 1971 (Berkeley, et al 2006: 7).[29] In addition to the significant rise in net immigration to Britain, there has also been a diversification of migrants' countries of origin. A city of 7.7 million people (as of 2009), London attracts the highest proportion of foreign-born persons in Britain (GLA 2008). People from 179 different countries live in the city, and London schoolchildren speak more than 300 different languages (GLA 2005; Baker and Eversley 2000).[30]

Vertovec makes the significant point that the increase and diversification in the migrant population has coincided with numerous parliamentary measures referred to earlier (2007: 1028). It has contributed to public perceptions of migrants 'invading' the country and triggered policy concerns about issues of national cohesion and integration (see, for example, Home Office 2002). Migrants from Kenya who I worked with are aware of this highly politicized environment regarding the topic of migration. Their self-identification as Christians in the United Kingdom,

[29] In *What's new about new immigrants in twenty-first century Britain,* Berkeley, et al (2006) are comparing demographic and migration data between 1971 and 2002. It is important to keep in mind that, although the number of people entering Britain in 2002 is more than 2.5 times higher (from 200,000 to 513,000) than in 1971, the number of people leaving Britain is still high (from 240,000 to 360,000). Nonetheless, the net balance is still positive (Berkeley, et al 2006: 8).

[30] It is important to call attention to the fact that, contrary to the often implicit assumption that migrants move from rural, homogenous places, Kenya is a multi-racial, -ethnic,-faith, and -lingual country, which means that encountering the super-diversity of Britain is not an entirely new experience for them (cf. Vertovec 2009: 17).

a historically Christian country, also has a political dimension to it, similar to the previous discussion of Christians and Muslims in Kenya.

Similarly, in light of their perception that British people see Kenya as having a positive reputation, particularly as a popular tourist destination, they seek to associate themselves with this image by self-identifying as 'Kenyan'. I was told that this helps to distinguish them from non-Kenyans, such as, African migrants from Nigeria who many Kenyans I met perceive to have a negative reputation in Britain. Taken together, these points highlight the relational nature of their self-identification as Christian and Kenyan, underscoring the importance of contextualizing such identifications.

Finally, I have adopted my informants' self-identification and use the category of 'Kenyan' more descriptively than analytically. It is likely that their identification as 'Kenyan' is also linked to my research interests and, thus, it should be understood as a situational identification as well. Acknowledging the important concerns raised by the notion of methodological nationalism, I do not presume what 'Kenyan' means to them nor that the 'national' is a primary frame of reference in their lives and actions (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002). On a related note, I refer to various practices and relations that migrant and non-migrant kin engage in which span national borders as 'transnational'. I do so with the recognition both that the term tends to draw attention to that which it seeks to downplay, the 'nation' (Hannerz 1996: 6), and that the structural framework of nation-states has real material consequences for people's lives. This is then not a community study with an a priori assumption of a (transnational) 'Kenyan community'.

Constructing the field: Sites, methods, and contacts

I conducted fieldwork from June 2009 through July 2010. While I spent the majority of the time in London, the latter half of the period included 10 weeks of fieldwork in Kenya from the end of February until early May. As mentioned earlier, migrants from Kenya are not concentrated in a particular area of London nor are they identifiable through intermediary community organizations. Similar to other urban fieldworkers like Raj (2003) who worked among middle class Hindu Punjabis in London, I had to find Kenyans and then follow them to the places where they lived and spent time.

In the remainder of the chapter, I will discuss my multi-sited fieldwork, methods, and contacts. First though, I begin with excerpts taken from my field notes early in my fieldwork, which help to illustrate several aspects of my initial contact with Kenyans and how I constructed the field.

7 June 2009 – *My first 'official' day of fieldwork: a Madaraka Day[31] celebration hosted by the Kenya Nurses Association on the first Saturday in June. I saw the invitation on misterseed.com, a website run by a Kenyan migrant. I travelled on the Piccadilly Line to the celebration, which was being held at the Wood Green Social Club, a non-descript, two-story brick building in Wood Green [in the borough of Haringey in North London]. Hopeful about meeting lots of potential contacts, I entered the room only to find it mostly empty. A large and open space, several rows of 8-person tables were set up at one end of the room, while a long banquet table ran along another wall with chairs on one side facing into the room. Opposite the banquet table was another long table with warming dishes, paper plates, and plastic utensils at the ready when the food arrived. A few band members were setting up a sound system, microphones, and a keyboard in one corner. I introduced myself to a woman at the door, explaining that I was a 'friend of Kenya' (a phrase used on the invitation) and asking would it be okay if I join the celebration.*

After paying £10, I joined a table of five women nurses. Over the course of the next few hours, as more and more guests trickled in, I learned that two knew each other from Kenya where they had worked together, while they had met the others after moving. Most had travelled from various parts of London and beyond: Croydon

[31] Although Kenya became fully independent from the United Kingdom on 12 December 1963, Madaraka Day commemorates the beginning of internal self-rule in Kenya and is celebrated on 1st of June every year. Since it is not a national holiday in the United Kingdom, many Kenyans plan their celebrations for the Saturday immediately following 1 June.

in the south, Beckton and Forest Gate in east London, and Northampton. One woman lived nearby and was hosting two of them at her flat that evening so they would not have to travel all the way home. I also shared more information about myself, my interest in Kenya and Kenyans, and my research. By the end of the event, I had five mobile numbers and five invitations to have lunch or to spend the weekend. My fieldwork seemed to be off to a promising start.

14 September 2009 – *I attended the second wedding of my fieldwork on Saturday in Dagenham on the outer edges of London. Inside the Anglican Church hall, I sat in the front row of plastic chairs facing the bridal banquet table. My host, Joyce, was part of the wedding committee and was busy with the preparations, so I began chatting with the woman sitting to my left. Marie knew Joyce through her older sister, who had been at secondary school with Joyce in Nyeri District in Central Province. When I learned she was a nurse, I mentioned that I had attended the Madaraka Day. She looked at me, her eyes opening widely, and said she had been there too. What serendipity, I thought! During the meal, I lost track of Marie before I could get her mobile phone number. Our conversation had been one of the most promising of the day….*

11 October 2009 – *This past Sunday I headed to another church. It was my fourth, and this one was located in an Anglican church on a residential street in Ilford [in the borough of Redbridge], which the pastor rented on Sunday afternoons. I was curious what it would be like since the senior pastor was Ghanaian, but one of the other pastors was Kenyan. [The other churches I had attended were predominantly Kenyan.] I had met Pastor Arthur's wife at a wedding in August, and she had invited me to visit their church one Sunday afternoon. I was hoping it would give me the chance to meet more Kenyans.*

At the start of the service, everyone stood and turned to greet each other, a practice I had quickly become accustomed to from attending other Pentecostal churches. When the woman in front of me turned around and said 'it's nice to see you', I was shocked – and delighted – to realize it was Marie from the wedding. We laughed when we saw each other. Later that evening, she offered to drive me to the nearby tube station. I had already learned that car, tube, and bus rides were ideal opportunities to chat with people. Before heading home, we went to her flat in Mile End so she could make me 'Kenyan' tea, a spicy black tea boiled together with milk.

These vignettes are typical of my early fieldwork experiences in London in many ways. The venues of the Madaraka Day celebration, wedding, and church service were each rented and located in various parts of the city. When they were not rented for such purposes, they reverted to other uses. Thus, they were not sites where I could 'loiter with intent' or engage in participant observation outside of particular occasions. These experiences reveal the disjointed and episodic nature of much urban fieldwork, especially in the early stages. But the vignettes also demonstrate the

serendipity of encounters I had with migrants from Kenya. While they lived in many different parts of the city, many came together at particular occasions in specific venues. Each event I attended and person I met helped to establish me within what was to become a translocal network of relations (Hannerz 2003: 209).

One Kenyan pastor who I met through a Kenyan friend[32] introduced me to several other pastors whose services I then began attending. Churches became central places for me to meet people, and I rotated my attendance between three Pentecostal churches with predominantly Kenyan congregations. I soon learned that I was not the only one attending services at multiple churches. Many migrants from Kenya move between congregations depending on their own schedules, those of the churches, and more idiosyncratic reasons like tensions with other congregants, which might lead them to change congregations permanently (cf. Adogame 2009). For instance, similar to Margaret in the vignette in the Introduction, one informant who lives in southeast London attends the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Stratford, but sometimes attends a Pentecostal church led by a Nigerian pastor near her home in Woolwich when she is short of time on a given Sunday, and occasionally attends services conducted by one of the pastors at a church I attended in Manor Park (Newham).

Church activities dominate much of my informants' time. Among the churches where I spent time, each held regular 2-3 hour services every Sunday. Congregants hosted numerous weekly prayer meetings in their homes in different parts of London. During the week, women's, men's, and youth fellowships held their own meetings and organized activities. There were also periodic, multi-day revival meetings church members attended held all over London and in other British cities.

[32] At the start of my fieldwork, two friends from Kenya who I met through the University of Oxford generously introduced me to several of their Kenyan friends in London.

In addition to those who I met at church services, I developed contacts through attending diaspora association meetings, celebratory occasions such as weddings, and national events like the Madaraka and Jamhuri[33] celebrations. The different gateways to meeting people enabled me to meet migrants with different individual characteristics, including gender, age, and ethnicity. Combined with the use of various gateways, I employed a 'snowball' sampling approach to generate additional contacts (Bernard 2011: 147-149).

Sites came to be defined by my relationships with my informants and the places that are of significance to them; new sites were incorporated as I was introduced to them (Hastrup and Olwig 1997). For instance, the area where I lived near King's Cross was eventually incorporated into my field. A diaspora association held their meetings in the basement of a nearby Anglican church where one of its members was a congregant, and a Kenyan Quaker congregation held monthly services at the Quaker Meeting House near Euston Station. After these occasions, many would gather in a local pub around the corner from my flat. I spent time at various venues, churches, and homes, primarily in eastern areas of London, such as Manor Park and Forest Gate (Newham), Ilford (Redbridge), Becontree (Barking and Dagenham), and Woolwich (Greenwich), as well as in the King's Cross area (Camden), Pimlico (Westminster), and South Bank (Southwark) in Central London (see Figures 5 and 6).

[33] Jamhuri (Swahili for 'republic') Day is celebrated on 12 December to mark when Kenya became a republic in 1964. It also marks Kenya's official independence from Britain on the same day the year before in 1963.

Figure 5: Map of East London (Google Maps)

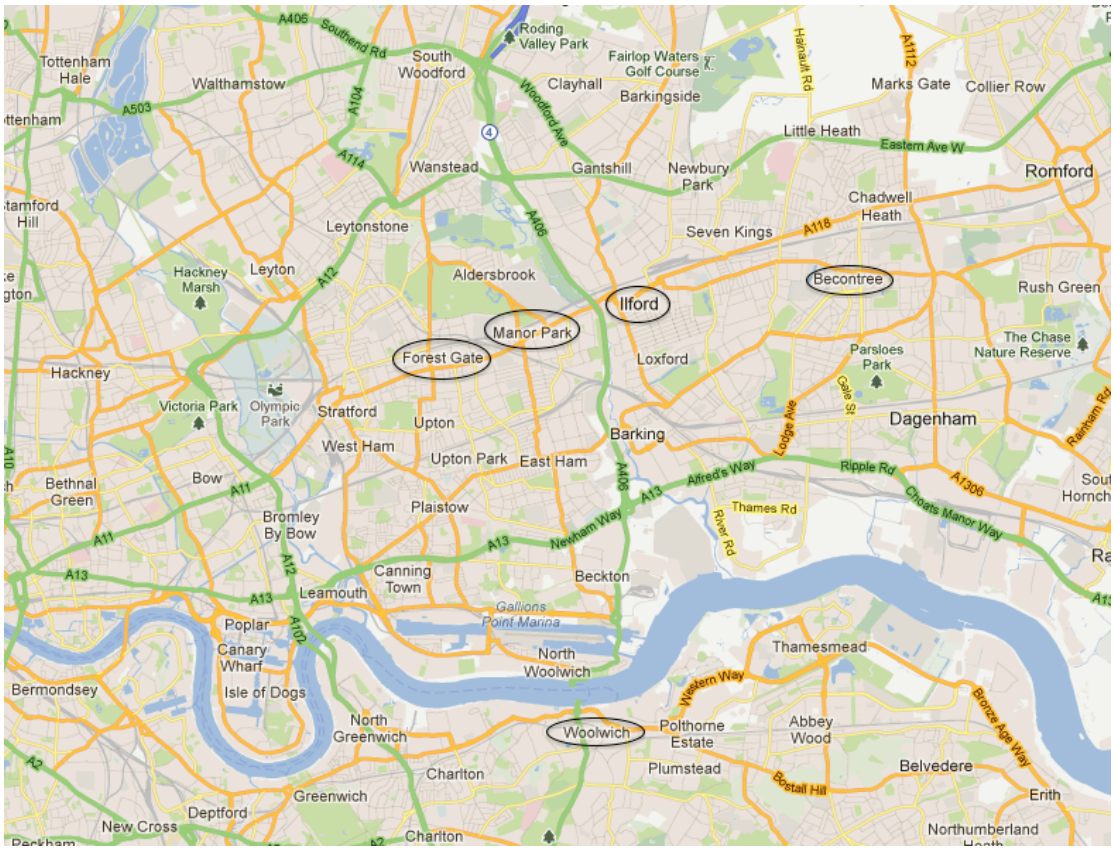
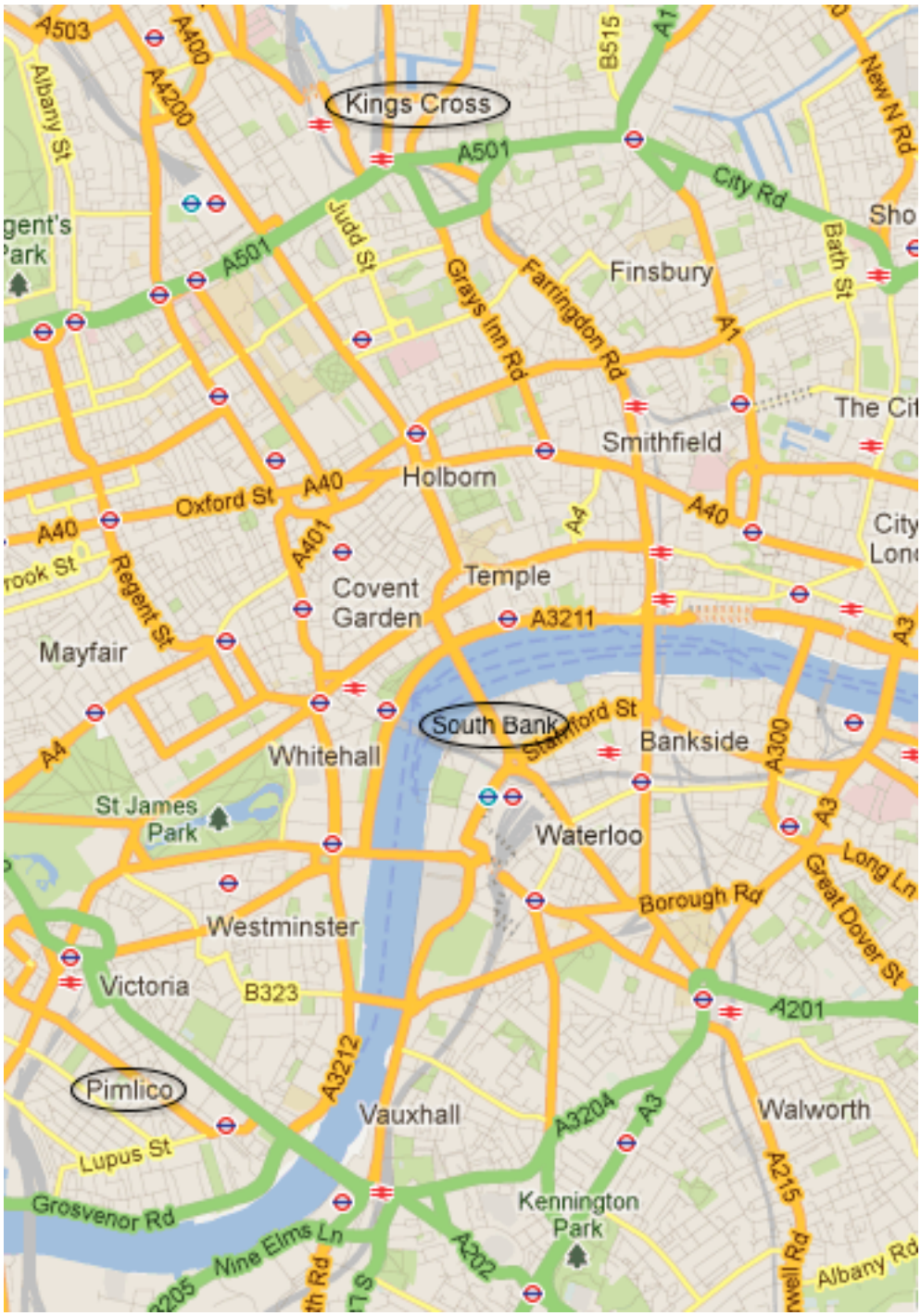


Figure 6: Map of Central London (Google Maps)



Meeting people in diverse venues quickly revealed the intersecting networks of Kenyans in the city. Though migrants shared similar migration backgrounds in terms of the reasons they gave and the timing, Kenyans of different ages, educational backgrounds, ethnicities, and class and work backgrounds came together in various

constellations, illuminating the ethnographic heterogeneity of Kenyan migrants in London. With that said, I do not intend to imply that they did not acknowledge social differences among themselves or that they were necessarily unimportant to their actual social relations; attending the same wedding, church fund raising dinner, or diaspora association workshop did not mean that everyone mingled with each other. Rather, it is to highlight the diversity of Kenyan migrants at many social gatherings. It is also important to note that at social gatherings organized by Kenyans, there were often at least a few non-Kenyans, including other Africans and British people, in attendance as well; the weddings discussed in Chapter Six are illustrative of this kind of mixing. However, because my focus was primarily on familial relations and only three informants were married to non-Kenyans (a Tanzanian woman, a Ugandan woman, and a British man respectively), I did not follow those in their social networks who were not Kenyan as I developed my contact pool.

As my efforts to meet people in London gained momentum, I had to determine how best to present myself. Given the importance many Kenyans place on education, my status as a student was immediately understood and respected. I also connected with many Kenyans as a fellow foreigner when they learned I was from the United States and, thus, was not British. Being a migrant provided a basis for asking questions and sharing experiences, for example, of being foreigners in London, not understanding different British accents, living away from one's family, and having to deal with the UK Border Agency. As one woman said to me upon learning that I was an American student studying in the United Kingdom, 'you are not alone anymore'. When I looked at her quizzically, she explained that she herself had migrated to London as a 19 year-old to complete her education and knew how hard

and lonely it could be living in a foreign country; thus, she said I was welcome to stay with her anytime.

Being a 'friend of Kenya', a claim I asserted at the Madaraka Day celebration described earlier in the field note excerpt, was substantiated for many by the fact that I had previously spent extended periods of time in Kenya as a student in the mid and late 1990s. During those visits, I studied Swahili, along with Kenyan history, politics, and society, and traveled to many parts of the country. I also lived with a Luo-speaking family in a Nairobi estate and a Kamba-speaking one in a rural Machakos village in Eastern Province. Notably, my previous visits to Kenya coincided with the period when many of my informants left Kenya, just as the timing of my fieldwork there overlapped with some of my informants' first trips back to Kenya since they migrated. Sharing memories of my time there in the 1990s became a point of connection, particularly with informants with whom I was close in age, and lent credibility to my current interest in their lives.

My fieldwork in Kenya flowed from the relationships I developed with my London-based informants, which also determined where I spent time there. More specifically, I followed the familial and social networks of my London informants to meet their non-migrant kin. By pairing migrants and non-migrants within one family, I was able to grasp multiple perspectives on stories of migration and ensuing transnational ties (see the next two sections for further discussion of the families). In a couple of instances, I had hoped to include my London informants' relatives in Nairobi in my research, but either my London informants chose not to introduce me at all or their relatives preferred only to meet me informally while I was there and not participate in my research. However, with several families, I moved from being a researcher to an 'auntie'. This was most apparent when I travelled to Kenya and was

welcomed by two families of my London informants. I lived with two families while there, occupying the role of 'sister' in the first and 'daughter' in the second.

I travelled to Kenya in February 2010 for 10 weeks, spending most of my time in Nairobi, as well as in several villages and towns in Kiambu District, a peri-urban area that borders Nairobi to the north. Most of my informants lived in Nairobi prior to their migration, and their families and extended families still live there. Many of my informants who did not live in Nairobi prior to migration moved from villages and towns in Kiambu District, and I was able to visit several of their families. Though other informants were raised in and/ or retain ties to western Kenya, it was not possible for me to visit their family members there during my fieldwork in Kenya.

My arrival and transition into this new locality was remarkably smooth. It began and ended with the 30-something daughter of a nurse I know well, her two younger sisters, and their cousin welcoming me and later wishing me a safe journey back to see their mother in London. I lived with the eldest daughter at her flat in Uthiru on the outskirts of Nairobi (see Figure 7 on page 64). Although only a 7-kilometer drive into the city center, the surrounding area was largely agricultural and sparsely populated. Nonetheless, a two-minute ride down the tarmac road brings one into Kawangware, a sprawling informal settlement with many tens of thousands of residents. The second family I stayed with lives on the edge of Lavington, a leafy suburban area on the opposite side of Kawangware. The three-bedroom stone house, which my London informant and her sister had purchased, housed their mother and one of their sons. Having moved from Kawangware, the mother still attended a Pentecostal church there and did her daily shopping in the market. During my time living at her house, I accompanied her to church, helped her with the shopping, and joined her on visits to meet friends in the area.

Marcus makes the point that 'multi-sited ethnographies inevitably are the product of knowledge bases of varying intensities and qualities' (1995: 100). Recognizing this underscores the need to turn 'what feels like illicit incompleteness into an actual methodological decision' for which one takes responsibility (Candea 2007: 174). The bulk of my fieldwork was carried out in London among migrants from Kenya. But my understanding of dynamics within transnational families necessitated meeting non-migrant kin as well. Furthermore, informants' evocations of 'home', cross-border relations, and familial histories of migration underscored the importance of also conducting fieldwork in Kenya. I wanted to spend time with their non-migrant kin, that is, those who my migrant informants called and sent money to, visited and cared for, missed and cried over, avoided and were frustrated by. In turn, my ongoing relationship with several non-migrant kin after my return resulted in my having close informants in both localities. Finally, living with and visiting family members provided me with the opportunity to see the rural villages and/ or Nairobi estates where many migrants came from and where they return on visits; they also offered insight into the material conditions which informed kin's imaginings of one another and the places where each lived.

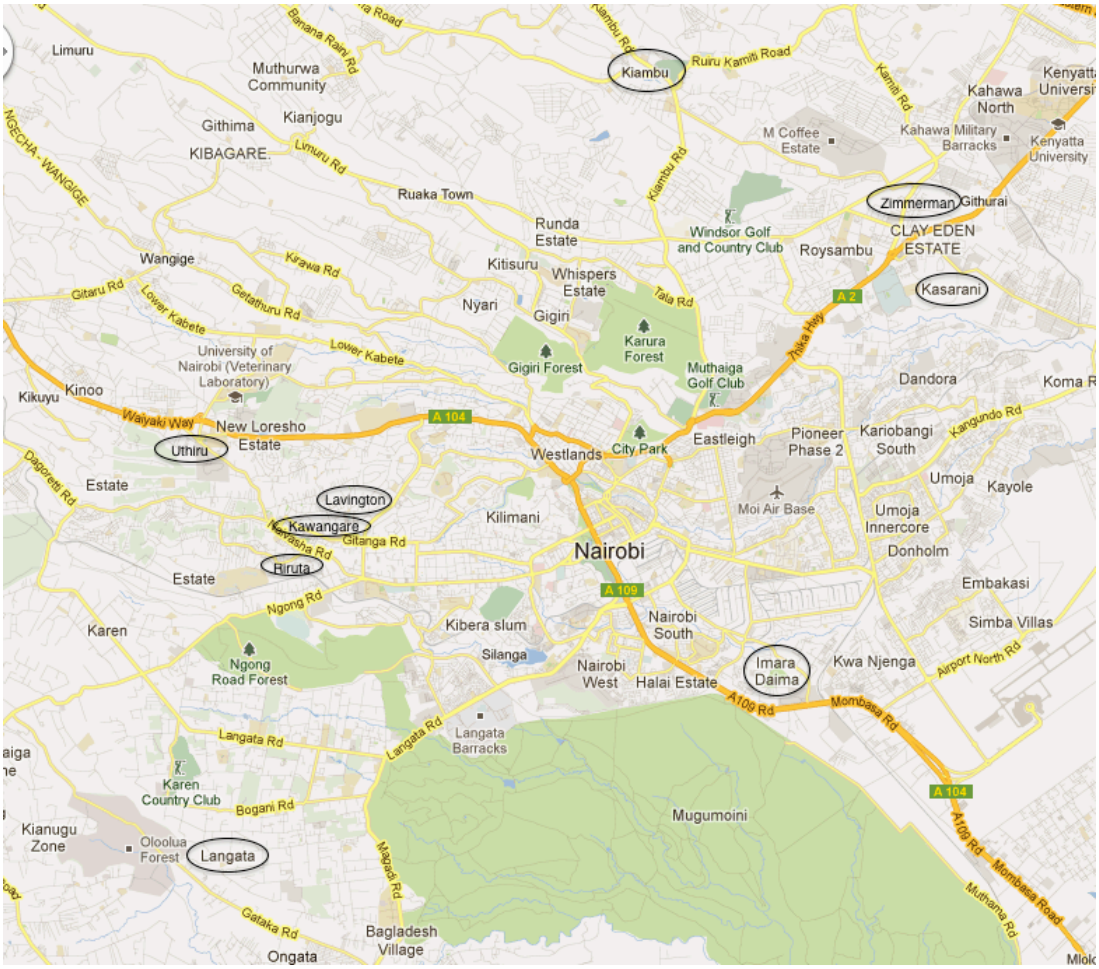
Given that my focus was on practices of relatedness transnationally, I did not systemically gather information, for instance, about the work lives of migrant and non-migrant kin. While my attention on kin relations does not mean these are the only connections Kenyan migrants maintain with their country of origin, it does mean that I did not investigate their political or business links nor do I address issues of political belonging or citizenship.

Methods and ethical considerations

More opportunities arose for participant observation over time in London. Many informants worked during the day, leaving evenings and weekends for us to meet. Some women I met were home during the day because they worked night shifts as nurses and care workers. We met for lunch, picked up their children at school, and spent the afternoon together until they headed to work. I travelled to and from people's homes, gatherings, and events, often travelling with my informants. I spent the night or weekends in the homes of the families and other key informants, and participated in their everyday, leisure, and church-related activities. My stays often coincided with a social gathering, which allowed me to meet and spend time with other Kenyans. Observing everyday transnational practices, such as international telephone calls, text messaging, and gift-buying, afforded me the opportunity to observe the link between norms of relating and everyday activities of staying in touch. Despite the challenges of urban fieldwork, particularly the dispersed nature of the field, I was able to spend extensive amounts of time with people in diverse settings.

While in Kenya, my time was spent much as it was in London. I travelled to housing estates all over Nairobi to visit family members: Zimmerman and Kasarani in the northeast, Langata in the southwest and Imara Daima in the southeast, and Riruta in the west (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Map of Nairobi and Kiambu District, Central Province (Google Maps)



I met informants for coffees and meals in town, stayed overnight at their homes, made visits to their family homes in nearby Kiambu District, which runs along Nairobi's northern border, and attended many Pentecostal services and prayer groups.

Stories of individual migrants, particularly of their migration to the United Kingdom, feature in the thesis. Some were gathered through open-ended, semi-structured interviews, while others were learned over the course of numerous informal conversations; I relied on note taking in both cases. Following Brettell, I use their stories to 'assess how individuals interpret and understand their own lived experience… in the context of broader history and culture' (2002: 439). This requires treating their stories as narratives that 'represent a primary embodiment of our understanding of the world, of experience, and ultimately of ourselves' (Rapport

2000: 75). They also 'offer insight into cultural priorities and values' that serve as guidelines for interpreting experience (Chamberlain and Leydesdorff 2004: 232). As such, narratives are socially symbolic acts that take on meaning only in a social context, but that also play a role in constructing that social context as a site of meaning within which social actors are implicated (Mumby 1993: 5). Important for studies of transnational families in particular, Olwig notes that 'the act of *relating* life stories creates a sense of *relatedness* that demarcates cultural values and social norms associated with… family *relations* (2007: 18).

I do not treat their stories as 'ideal types', nor am I arguing that the people are necessarily 'representative' (cf. Davies 1999: 167-173). In choosing whose story and which aspects to highlight and in contextualizing the stories, I make the stories my narrative as much as theirs. As Gardner points out, this act makes my account 'one kind of truth amongst others' (2002: 29). With individual stories serving as departure points in some chapters, the ensuing discussions draw on a wider range of informants' experiences and perspectives.

In the course of identifying contacts and developing relationships with informants, I shared details of my research project. This was to ensure they were aware of the context in which I was asking questions and to create an ethical basis for engaging with informants. People were generally open and welcoming toward me, though establishing rapport took time because of the challenges of living in a densely populated, sprawling city and trying to get to know people with busy lives. Although I did not experience any outright hostility, some people were inevitably hesitant to speak to me and would move on quickly after we were introduced.

Finally, I discussed some of the vignettes and stories of particular individuals with them so that they were aware of what material I have used and how I have

presented it. I have used pseudonyms to safeguard the identities of all my informants. For those who shared sensitive information, I reminded them at the time of our conversation the purposes of my research and the intended audience (that is, the academic community), and clarified that my interest in knowing such details was to understand factors that might affect their transnational kin relations. In several cases, I also changed some basic identifying details of informants' migration stories and background so as to further protect their identities.

Dwelling among families and in social circles

In London and Nairobi I had varying levels of interaction with close to 130 people. I worked most extensively with eight families, roughly 25 people in total, whose members I met in London, Nairobi and/ or nearby Kiambu District in Central Province. With roughly 30 additional contacts in both London and Kenya, I developed close(r) relationships, and we stayed in regular touch. Another dozen or so were contacted primarily for interviewing, including representatives of Kenya-related organizations in London, as well as non-governmental organizations in Nairobi. The outer circle of my contacts is comprised of approximately 60 acquaintances I met at church services, diaspora meetings, and social gatherings in London and Nairobi.

Olwig's use of the notion of dwelling (2007) is an apt one for my own fieldwork. She draws on Gupta and Ferguson who question how anthropologists define their fields by asserting that, rather than being the study of a particular place where it is located and accounting for multiple points of view within a local site, anthropological fieldwork is approached as 'a form of dwelling that legitimizes knowledge production by the familiarity that the fieldworker gains with the ways of

life of a group of people' (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 31). Gupta and Ferguson (1997) go on to argue for a 'focus on shifting locations' and away from the notion of a 'bounded field'. In conducting fieldwork with members of three geographically dispersed families with links to the Caribbean, Olwig argues that the notion of dwelling remains important, but that it does not necessitate that the people being studied be confined to a particular location. She describes her own experience as 'dwelling within an extensive field of social relations', thus continuing 'the time-honored method of carrying out prolonged fieldwork in social communities of relevance to the people studied' (Olwig 2007: 23-24).

Eight families, who were the most generous with their time, are at the core of my research; it is within their transnational kin relations that I 'dwelled', and that transformed my multi-sited fieldwork into a single analytical field comprised of geographically non-contiguous spaces (Hage 2005: 466). In roughly half (3) of the families, my initial and primary informant were 'older migrants' in London. In Kenya I met their spouses, children, and siblings. In the other half (5) of the families, 'younger migrants' were my primary informants. It is important to note that not all of these migrants can be considered young (many were in their 30s at the time of fieldwork); I also selectively refer to them as 'adult migrant children' in order to underscore the parent-child relationship they have with their non-migrant parents. They introduced me to their parents and siblings in Kenya. In several instances, I also met cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandmothers as well. I did not pursue links with kin in countries other than the United Kingdom and Kenya, though several of my informants have relatives, usually siblings, who live in the United States, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

A distinction arises within such families through the act of migration. For the

purposes of this research, international migration differentiates family members into two categories: I refer to those who migrate as 'migrants' and those who remain in Kenya as 'non-migrants'; though, in some cases, the latter group includes family members who have migrated within Kenya. These terms emerged as salient to understanding family dynamics between those who left and those who stayed in Kenyan migration to the United Kingdom. I use the term 'non-migrant', however, with the recognition that it has shortcomings, particularly in that it defines those who stayed in Kenya negatively – that is, by what they are not – and implicitly suggests that being a 'migrant' is the normative state of being, which is not the case among Kenyans. In Chapter Three, I will discuss further how these categories are also socially constructed and, thus, not limited to dynamics between kin (cf. Carling 2008: 1456). It must finally be acknowledged that kin relations are relations between individuals and, thus, have fundamental interpersonal dimensions not reducible to social analysis.

All the families identified as Christian and included a mix of ethnic backgrounds, five Kikuyu families, two Luhya families, and one Luo family. According to the 2009 Kenyan census, these are among Kenya's largest ethnic groups: Kikuyu (6.6 million), Luhya (5.3 million), and Luo (4 million) (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2010a: 34).[34] Thus, the families are racially and ethnically reflective of people in Kenya, in contrast to the majority of those in London who cite Kenya as their country of birth who are in fact Asian, as discussed earlier. Most of my migrant informants moved to London from Nairobi, where their families were living at the time of migration and still are; two younger migrants were the exception in that they migrated from nearby Kiambu District where their parents

[34] These groups are the first, second and fourth largest in the country respectively. The third largest group (4.96 million) is Kalenjin and the fifth is Kamba (3.9 million).

and some siblings still live. At the time of fieldwork, the older migrants (two Kikuyu and one Luhya) had houses in the rural areas where they were raised, in addition to their houses in Nairobi; younger migrants in contrast did not have houses of their own in Kenya. Many family members belonged to different Christian denominations, and some attended several churches of different denominations. My primary informants in six of the families were born-again Christians.[35] Of the remaining two (older) families, one informant was Presbyterian and the other was Anglican; however, both periodically attended Pentecostal churches led by Kenyan pastors.

Most of my other contacts in London were younger migrants, though I also spent time with a number of older migrant women whose husbands remained in Kenya. All of their backgrounds were similar to those of the London-based migrants in the core families in terms of their ethnicity (many were Kikuyu), residence prior to migration (primarily Nairobi), and religion (predominantly Pentecostal, particularly younger migrants). Regardless of age, the majority of my informants worked in London as teachers, nurses, care workers, bank tellers, administrative assistants, store clerks, council workers, cleaners, security guards, and small business owners.

Chapter Six, which focuses on weddings, is based on the weddings of the younger migrants in my core families, as well as the experiences of other young couples whose weddings I attended in London, whose wedding videos I watched, and/or whom I talked with about their weddings. Most of the couples I worked with

[35] They include both born-again Pentecostals and those who are born-again but are members of non-Pentecostal denominations. The latter, often referred to as charismatic Christians, are members of mainline Protestant churches, such as Baptists, that have opened up to the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Robbins 2004: 121). I use the terms Pentecostalism, Pentecostal churches, and charismatic interchangeably, unless noted. They designate forms of Christianity that may differ culturally and historically, but still assign a central role to the Holy Spirit and to individuals' relationship to God (Meyer 2010; Robbins 2004: 119-123; see also further discussion in the last part of Chapter 3).

met and married each other in London. They were predominantly couples in which both partners were Kikuyu, but also include several couples where only one spouse was Kikuyu. In those cases, the spouses included non-Kikuyu Kenyans (Luo men), a Ugandan woman, a Tanzanian woman, and a British man.

All of my informants in London used English in their daily lives, and my fieldwork was conducted in English. Most of the many young families I worked with only spoke English with their children, as did some of the older migrants when speaking with their children who remained in Kenya. Church services, association meetings, and the wedding ceremonies and receptions[36] were conducted in English. In Kenya I also conducted fieldwork in English, though in one case I relied on the non-migrant cousin of a London informant to help me communicate with their non-migrant aunt/ mother, who primarily spoke Kikuyu.

The primary use of English in my fieldwork is in part a reflection of conducting research in the self-conscious, politicized English-speaking setting of London, as well as of the social significance attached to English among Kenyans, both migrant and non-migrant, more generally. Although my informants appreciated my basic knowledge of Swahili (and Kikuyu greetings), speaking English with me reflected their education and status. Many migrant and non-migrant Kenyans spoke of their desire to 'better themselves', an aspiration to which speaking English was seen as central (see Chapters Three and Four). Using English for fieldwork made Moore's point even more imperative: 'we need to use shared concepts while also working against their tendency to integrate experiences and thus be able to reveal alternative experiences and pre-theoretical assumptions' (1999: 16).

[36] As will be discussed in Chapter Six, wedding activities were primarily conducted in English, but many included hymns sung in Kikuyu, as well as brief religious sermons and parts of reception speeches in Kikuyu. The language choice reflects the ethnic background of the wedding couples.

The primacy given to English is best understood within the context of language policy and usage in Kenya, which has undergone numerous changes since the de-colonization of the country. English and Swahili are both official languages in Kenya, but they are valued differently. English is the language of instruction,[37] whereas Swahili is confined to being a compulsory subject taught in school. Lower primary school classes may be taught in vernacular languages, especially in rural areas; but depending on the area, the local language may be Swahili (Nabea 2009: 126). According to the 2008-09 Demographic and Health Survey, the median years of education completed was 7.6 years and 8.8 years for urban female and male residents respectively, compared with 4.5 years and 5.2 years for rural female and male residents (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2010b: 16-17). In short the languages Kenyans speak are closely linked to their access to education, which is contingent on having sufficient financial resources; where they live; and their gender. School enrollment numbers have been rising slowly, but still indicate that education beyond the primary level is largely out of reach of many Kenyan. Thus, fluency in English is still restricted to a limited portion of the population, primarily people living in urban areas.

To some extent, language can then be used as a crude proxy for understanding the class, educational, and residential (that is, if they migrated from rural, peri-urban, or urban areas) backgrounds of Kenyan migrants prior to their migration. All of my migrant and non-migrant informants are bilingual, if not tri- or multi-lingual, though which languages they speak and degrees of language proficiency vary by generation. Older migrants typically speak Swahili; a vernacular language, such as, Kikuyu or Dholuo; and (now) English. Conversely, as many

[37] English was adopted as the language of instruction in 1961.

younger migrants, especially those who were raised in Nairobi, told me, their parents encouraged them as children to only speak English and Swahili in order to facilitate their social advancement (cf. Spronk 2012: 67-70, 202); they may or may not know their parents' vernacular language(s). However, an important caveat to using language, particularly informants' fluency in English, as a proxy in this way is that most of my informants had already been living in the United Kingdom for at least five years by the time I met them, with many having lived there for over ten years. Nonetheless, several informants mentioned to me that, though they had studied English during secondary school in Kenya, they had difficulty understanding British accents when they first arrived. Thus, it is difficult to gauge what their command of English was at the time of migration, much less to infer from that their class background in Kenya.

It is important to comment here on how I approach ethnicity in this research. In his work in complex urban settings in Central Africa, Mitchell makes the point that 'tribe' should never be the analytical starting point for a study in an ethnically mixed town (1966: 248). Taking heed of his comment, this research is not, for instance, a study of 'Kikuyus in diaspora'. Instead of a focus on culture or identity that leads to only seeing connections that give rise to political projects and identities, I concentrate on social relations and processes among families (cf. Glick Schiller 2008: 5-6) and the ways in which 'these intersect with the structural framework of nation-states' (cf. Olwig 2003: 796-798).

With that said, it is worth noting that ethnicity is a particularly politicized issue in Kenya, perhaps more so than in many other African countries. The violence following the presidential elections at the end of 2007 is only the most recent example (Mueller 2008; see also Chapter Three). Ethnicity is a historically important

factor in shaping people's mobility and incorporation into the Kenyan state and their access to resources and political power (Berman and Lonsdale 1992c and 1992d). An idiom of ethnicity is still common in political and social discourse among Kenyans. It also inflects cultural beliefs and social practices related to the reckoning of kinship ties, marriage customs, gender roles, and generational dynamics (see Chapter Three).

Yet, having lived in and/ or been raised in Nairobi prior to migration, most migrants, particularly younger ones, were not only familiar with the languages and traditions of various ethnic groups and socialized across ethnic lines, but were also apt to identify as 'Kenyan', rather than by their ethnicity. The conversion of many Kenyan migrants to Pentecostalism further complicates discussions of ethnic identity and practices because Pentecostalism constitutes a new (though not mutually exclusive) basis of identity, recognition, and sociality (see Chapter Two). Nonetheless, as Frederiksen points out, although 'traditional [cultural] ordering of relations between genders and generation based on hierarchy and authority is now largely history, more clearly so in towns than in the countryside…[,] a moral ordering… survives as social memory' (2000: 221). Thus, in light of this complex and contradictory picture, I chose to explore if and how ethnicity emerged within transnational families in practice and discursively, rather than presume a priori that ethnicity was central to their familial lives.

In the course of my fieldwork, I encountered several Kenyans who migrated through their professions and who would be considered 'elite', for example, those working as professionals in international firms, academics, or diplomats. However, the only 'highly skilled' migrants who are part of my contact pool are nurses. The snowballing technique led me to meet few Asian, white, or Somali Kenyans living in

London, indicating that Black African Kenyans tend not to socialize or worship with others from their country of origin who have different religious and/ or racial backgrounds; this was reflected in my experience working in Kenya as well. In fact, several informants commented that they had met Asian Kenyans for the first time while living in London.[38] Additionally, employing a snowball approach implicitly trades on the characteristics of one's own identity. While some aspects of my identity worked to my advantage in terms of developing a rapport with informants, there were also limitations related to my gender and age. In particular I developed few close relationships with older Kenyan men, migrant or non-migrant, but it is also likely that there are fewer older migrant men in London (see Chapter Four).[39]

Conclusion

In addition to describing the population among whom I conducted research and how the field was constructed, this chapter introduced several analytical strands that will be pursued over the course of the thesis. In arguing that migrants from Kenya cannot be considered a pre-existing community, I have alluded to my interest in understanding how they create their social lives in practice and thus emplace themselves, given the opportunities and constraints posed by London and the United Kingdom. My interest also extends to include what their emplacement means for their relations with non-migrant kin. In light of the ethnographic heterogeneity of migrants from Kenya, it will be important to trace when their social positioning becomes salient to understanding their migration stories and transnational practices

[38] For instance, two older women migrants who were raised in Luo-speaking western Kenya shared stories of meeting Asian Kenyans in Harrow in northwest London who spoke 'perfect Dholuo', much to their amazement.

[39] Though not specific to Kenyan migrants to the United Kingdom, the United National Population Division reports that more Kenyan women began leaving the country than men, starting in 2000 when 379,281 women and 376,070 men left.
(http://esa.un.org/migration/p2k0data.asp Accessed 30 September 2011).

of relatedness. In doing so, I will also pay attention to where the transnational lives and practices of migrants who are socially positioned in different ways converge and diverge.

Chapter 2 – A processual approach to migration, relatedness, and distance: Theoretical framework and concepts

In this chapter I further engage with the fields within which this thesis is situated to develop the theoretical framework and conceptual tools for analyzing transnational Kenyan families. I start with a discussion of how to approach Kenyans' migration to the United Kingdom, problematizing the concept of economic migration as too reductionist. In doing so, I argue for the need to examine economic and non-economic (that is, social and affective) dimensions of migration and, thus, the importance of contextualizing migration decisions within wider family relations.

Building on the discussion of migration, I shift attention to the concept of relatedness and its usefulness in studying transnational kin relations. While reciprocity is key to relatedness, engaging in reciprocal relations is contingent on the capacity and desire of kin to do so. I suggest that kin relations are like other social relations in many ways and, thus, infused with power, difference, and hierarchy. Accordingly, the 'family' must be understood as differentiated not only along lines of gender, age, and generation, but also mobility status (that is, migrant and non-migrant). Thus, kin relations cannot be taken as 'natural', harmonious, and inevitably enduring social relations, but rather should be approached as a social problematic.

I next turn to social reproduction of transnational families. This part begins with a brief review of early studies of transnationalism that viewed migrants as unfettered by constraints, social or otherwise, which suggest that change is the product of individual agency. I contrast this view with that of studies of transnational families, many of which tend to focus on structural explanations of

change. With this background, it is then possible to outline a historically and phenomenologically grounded approach to processes of social reproduction that situate social actors in time and space.

Finally, I consider the nature of the 'distance' separating family members, suggesting that we approach it as socially constructed, as well as physically given in space. As part of the discussion, I highlight three concepts – simultaneity, imagination, and emplacement – that are salient to analyzing what happens to kin relations under conditions of transnational migration.

All (Kenyan) migration is family migration: The making of a transnational familial field

The reasons many Kenyans give for their migration – to 'meet the needs of their families' or to 'better themselves' – seemingly lend themselves to being understood in terms of 'economic migration' and the closely related term, 'labor migration'. Given that most Kenyans have migrated on their own, the reasons could also be interpreted as the outcome of individual decision-making. In developing my approach to Kenyan migration and transnational Kenyan families, I want to begin by problematizing these two assumptions common in migration research.

First, in analyzing people who migrate to engage in economic activities, including those working in paid employment, investors, and business travelers[40], the 'economic' is often understood as a discrete domain, isolated from the rest of

[40] The distinction between labor migration and economic migration is not clear-cut. According to the International Organization on Migration, 'labour migration is generally defined as a cross-border movement for purposes of employment in a foreign country', though it acknowledges that there is no universally accepted definition of the term (http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/about-migration/developing-migration-policy/migration-labour/labour/cache/offonce, accessed 9 March 2011). Economic migration can also encompass persons who migrate to engage in other types of economic activities, such as investors and business travelers.

people's lives. Attention is given to macroeconomic factors that *push* people out of their country of origin and those that *pull* them to another country. The focus on national and global economies and labor markets slips easily into an emphasis on movement between places. Subsequently, many factors shaping migrants' decisions and experiences, including wider social relations and cultural expectations that can facilitate and constrain their migration, receive less attention.

Yet, as Massey et al. argue, economic disparities are 'necessary but not sufficient conditions for labor migration' (1998: 8). By not presuming the primacy of economic considerations for explaining migration, any conflation of pragmatism with economic determinism is pre-empted. As Vigh points out, it is analytically unhelpful to reduce complex social motivations to simple economic logic: though economic gain and social possibilities are often related, they are not the same (2009: 92-93). In taking a wider view of` migration, it becomes possible to explore how economic concerns interrelate with other factors and aspirations, as well as to consider non-economic dimensions of migration, including affective ones (cf. Halfacree 2004). However, it is important not to adopt a dualistic mode of thinking that sees economic and non-economic dimensions as discrete from each other or privileges one over the other.

A consideration of non-economic factors helps to balance, on the one hand, under-socialized views of migrants as rational, calculating agents and, on the other, over-socialized views in which agents are passive victims of structural forces and the migration process (Boyd 1989: 641; cf. Boehm and Swank 2011). I take inspiration from Charsley, who remarks 'incorporating emotion into ethnography… entail[s] presenting a fuller view of what is at stake for people in everyday life', a task for which ethnography is well suited because of its enhanced 'aesthetic and

communicative power' (2003: 23-24). Thus, I explore the affective dimensions of transnational migration in order to consider more fully how migrants and non-migrants make sense of migration and how various emotions shape transnational kin relations. This is particularly important for a study of transnational family relations and dynamics, since sustaining relations across space raises difficult and often pressing questions about how to show care, the answers to which can generate guilt, anxiety, shame, humiliation, and frustration (cf. Grillo 2008: 16-20; Øien 2010). With this said, I do not engage with questions about whether emotions are innate and universal, or culturally created and, thus, variable across cultures (Beatty 2005; Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990; Lutz and White 1986).

De-centering migration in the analysis through a focus on kin relations shifts attention away from the individual migrant who physically moves to the decision-making processes and the social relations informing the decisions. It then becomes untenable to see migration projects as the endeavors of individuals. Rather, I propose treating them as domains of interaction between migrant and non-migrant kin. Consequently, the experiences both of those who move (migrant kin) and those who remain behind are brought into view (non-migrant kin) (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). 'Studying networks, especially those linked to family and households, allows us to conceptualize migration as a social product – not as the sole result of individual decisions made by individual actions, not as the sole result of economic or political parameters, but rather as an outcome of all these factors in interaction' (Boyd 1989: 642).

The point that 'transnational family processes and relations between people defined as kin constitute the initial foundation for all other types of transnational social relations' follows logically from such an approach to migration, helping to

link acts of migration to transnational life post-migration (Basch et al. 1994: 238). Glick Schiller et al. define transnationalism:

> … as the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement. Immigrants who build such social fields are designated 'transmigrants'. Transmigrants develop and maintain multiple relations – familial, economic, social, organizational, religious and political that span borders. Transmigrants take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns and develop identities within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously (1992: 1-2).

Drawing on Bourdieu, Levitt and Glick Schiller define a social field as 'a set of multiple, interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed' (2004: 1009). A central point in conceptualizing kin and other social relations in this way is that it becomes possible to see how national boundaries and social fields are not necessarily coterminous.

The concept of a transnational social field builds on earlier anthropological work of the Manchester School in particular that challenged the idea that people forgo social ties when they migrate. As Glick Schiller points out, anthropologists of the Manchester School, such as Gluckman, Mitchell, and Epstein, focus on questions of 'why people maintain or construct home ties when they migrate? What motivates people to live rural/ urban lives as "townsmen" and "tribesman"'? (2003: 115). Moreover, Mitchell and Gluckman saw rural and urban contexts in Africa as constituting a dynamic social field, rather than as two opposed fields – a dynamic, modern, urban one and a static, traditional, rural one (Kapferer 1995: 56-58).

Such a conceptualization is particularly relevant for my purposes because of Kenya's long history of migration and mobility that links 'town' and 'country', migrant and non-migrant (Parkin 1975b, 1978; see Chapter Three). In this research, these links are conceptualized as stretching to include Kenyans living in London. Following this thinking, I understand the relations of Kenyan migrant and non-

migrant kin to constitute a transnational social field.

Approaching migration within the context of migrants' families is aligned with more recent approaches in family migration that see it not only as a migration event in which all family members migrate together or when families are unified or formed through marriage, but also when only one person in a family migrates (Cooke 2008). This broader conceptualization of family migration highlights the importance of the social relations within which people are embedded to their lives and entails consideration of the perspectives of both migrant and non-migrant kin. More specifically, such a definition encompasses cases, for instance, in which families whose children are nearing university-age decide it is a beneficial time for a family member to help fulfill their familial aspirations by migrating, while the rest of the family stays behind. According to this thinking, instances where an event that occurs within a migrant's family, such as the death of a spouse or a divorce, can also be seen as contributing to his or her migration. Additionally, the lives and trajectories of family members, perhaps even distant ones, can affect one another and lead to a person's migration.

My approach to Kenyan migration also coincides in part with the New Economics of Labor Migration. NELM focuses on the nature of decision-making based on the significant insight that decisions are not made by isolated individuals but by larger groups of related people, families or households in an effort to maximize income and minimize risk (Massey et al. 1998: 15-17). It necessitates paying attention to the contexts in which such decisions are made and to the specific social and economic dimensions that define context. This approach links micro- and macro-levels of analysis through a consideration of the interplay of socio-economic structures, household strategies, and individual decision-making.

However, NELM often presumes that resources are pooled or shared such that a family (or household) can be understood as a moral economy based on solidarity and reciprocity. Yet this view disregards so-called domestic political economies in which the interests of men and women, of those of different generations, do not necessarily or inevitably coincide (Pessar 2003: 79-84). For instance, bridewealth practices, which remain socially and economically important for marriages among migrants from Kenya, entail negotiations and payments within and between the bride's and groom's families. Historically, the bridewealth paid by the groom's family is raised collectively among his agnatic kin. It is in turn incorporated into the bride's family such that her own brothers may use the livestock and/ or money as bridewealth when they marry (Radcliffe-Brown 1950: 50-52; see Chapter Six for further discussion). These occasions are potential sites of intra- and inter-family conflict.

Accordingly, kin relations must instead be approached as potentially fraught such that decisions among kin regarding migration emerge through processes of negotiation (Boyd and Grieco 2003: 2; Beyers et al. 2009). Such an understanding means recognizing that families cannot be assumed to be monolithic social units, but rather differentiated ones that demand consideration of the tensions and competing demands that kin place on each other across time and space. The different subject positions that kin occupy within families also have different bases of power.

Families are differentiated along lines of gender, generation, and age. Gender is understood here as socially constructed and must be conceptualized fluidly and dynamically and, thus, as being relational and situational. Hondagneu-Sotelo explains it in this way:

> Gender is not simply a variable to be measured, but a set of social relations that organize immigration patterns. The task, then, is not simply to document

> or highlight the presence of [migrant women]…, or to ask the same questions of immigrant women that are asked of immigrant men, but to begin with an examination of how gender relations facilitate and constrain both women's *and* men's immigration and settlement (1994: 3).

Gender is a form of difference that intersects with an individual's race, ethnicity, age, class, religion, and place of origin, though it must be noted that individuals do not live their multiple identifications sequentially or separately, but rather simultaneously (Moore 2007: 35). It is also embedded in systems of difference and power that structure people's lived experience and from within which they act. Notably, traditional patterns of authority, inheritance, and residence among Kenyans are patriarchal and virilocal (see Chapter Three). Among Kenyan migrants and non-migrants, explanations of and reflections on who migrates and why evoke notions of gender. Roles and responsibilities, along with relations, within families are gendered in socially and culturally specific ways, which may be reproduced and/ or reconfigured across space (Mahler and Pessar 2001: 445-448; Pessar 2003: 93).

Generation in the genealogical sense refers to the descriptive and classificatory relationships between parents, children, and children's children. In addition to it being a relational term, it is also socially constructed and elaborated in terms of the values, norms, and obligations associated with different generations. Age is another differentiating factor in familial relations that is closely related to generation. Those of the parent generation are generally chronologically older than those in the children or children's children's generation. It is important to take note of the social and cultural importance attached to elderhood or youth among Kenyans, for whom there has been a strong traditional and historical emphasis on gerontocracy as a principle of social organization, along with the primacy given to men (see Chapter Three). Accordingly, in large families, particularly polygynous ones, co-wives could be younger than another wife's children, or a younger sibling might be

the same age or older than the spouse of an older sibling. Thus, the importance of age can be mediated by the social position individuals occupy in particular family configurations.

As Grillo (2008) points out the term 'family' implies both gender and generation, but the reverse is not true. Thus, it is necessary to be conscious of how '"family" dissolves into these categories when studied and also to place familial relations in wider social and historical contexts, without losing the 'sense of location, of an iconic cultural, social and ideological "site" in which such [gender and generational] relations are enacted' (Grillo 2008: 19).

At this point, it is important to consider two terms that I have thus far been using interchangeably: 'household' and 'family'. 'Household' is defined as a 'basic unit of society involved in the production, reproduction, consumption, and socialization' (Moore 1988: 54). It is understood as referring to co-resident domestic groups or domestic groups of geographical propinquity (Yanagisako 1979: 162-163). As Rapp et al. point out, 'it is through these relations of production and reproduction that conditions originating in larger arenas of society are internalized and experienced (and sometimes inverted and resisted) within households' (1979: 176). In contrast to a notion of households as material relations, 'family' is defined as a kinship unit, as well as a normative construct that recruits people into households and organizes their relations and actions (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991: 139). Such normative constructs are informed by gender, class, and kinship ideologies. In activities of production, reproduction, and consumption, the concept of 'family' 'reflects and masks the realities of household formation and sustenance' (Rapp et al. 1979: 177).

The term ‘household’ as it has been defined raises several concerns. Its common usage rests on a presumption of conjugality that must be applied with care to Kenyans. Households often consist of other members in addition to parents and their children (Guyer 1981; Stichter 1988). They may include temporary guests who are in fact visiting relatives, fostered children such as nieces, nephews, or grandchildren, and house help. Moreover, Kenyans ‘can exercise rights and be subject to obligations which are normally thought of as economic beyond the household in which they live’ (Guyer 1981: 98). As the earlier discussion of bridewealth demonstrates, the (intimate) lives of kin wherever they may live are often integrally connected. In a transnational context where people, practices, and values are spread out in different places, ‘households’ become diffuse and, thus, difficult to define (cf. Gardner and Grillo 2002: 182-183). In practice the distinction between ‘family’ and ‘household’ is more nuanced than these definitions acknowledge.

Though I primarily use the terms ‘kin’ and ‘family’, rather than household, I follow my informants in identifying who to consider as family members: parents, siblings, and children. I also include other family members they identify, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, as those who may have expectations of migrants and with whom they stay in touch transnationally; I refer to them as extended kin. Accordingly, I understand decisions to migrate as being shaped by immediate and extended kin and affines, whether co-resident or not, which is also consistent with the broader conceptualization of ‘family migration’. This understanding of family, however, is not premised on the notion of ‘kin’ as biologically related.

A transnational moral economy of relatedness

Anthropologists have long made the point that kin relations cannot be understood as 'natural' and 'given' based on biological connection. In proposing the concept of relatedness, Carsten suggests that, while blood may be important, so may affection, shared substance, and nurturance (2000: 21). Approaching kin relations in terms of ideas of relatedness focuses on practices that create and sustain ties of kinship, as well as the substance of those ties. For instance, Carsten (1995, 1997) examines daily practices of living, eating, and engaging in daily household activities together. The concept suggests a creative and dynamic understanding of kin relations as always 'under construction' (Carsten 2000: 18), rather than in terms of the historical emphasis on structures of descent (biological reproduction) and alliance (marriage) as sources of social cohesion (Radcliffe-Brown 1950). It necessitates a shift in attention to the lived experiences of concrete social actors engaged in practices of relatedness in specific social and historical contexts (cf. Ortner 1984, 2005).

Carsten's notion of relatedness is helpful to our conceptualization of transnational families. As Bryceson and Vuorela (2002) argue, transnational families are subject to negotiation and choice such that kin relations cannot be taken for granted nor seen as static. Since geographically dispersed kin cannot rely on daily interaction, they must be more deliberate about creating the family as a (meaningful) social unit. Bryceson and Vuorela point out that the sense of being related can be sustained through the 'active pursuit' or 'passive negligence' of blood kin ties and may extend to include non-blood kin (2002: 14). This entails what they refer to as the 'selective formation of familial, emotional and material attachments on the basis of temporal, spatial and need-related considerations' (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002: 14). The concept draws attention to the agency of actors and their practices that

generate and sustain a sense of relatedness.[41]

Reciprocity is crucial to ideas of relatedness among Kenyans. In addition to notions of relatedness being linked to common ancestors, 'kin' are largely understood as persons with whom one engages in reciprocal relations (see Chapter Three). Shipton's (2007) notion of 'entrustment' among Luo-speaking Kenyans captures this thinking: the distribution of material resources is part of long-standing reciprocal relations that exist among families and across generations in order to ensure the wellbeing of kin at different stages of their lives. According to Shipton, 'a debt to a senior kinsperson, repayable instead to (or for) a junior one, is a characteristically East African pattern' (1995: 179). For instance, expectations that older siblings will contribute to paying for the educations of their younger siblings are common, which in turn relieves parents of the responsibility of paying school fees for all of their children. In this way, kin inhabit all three roles – giver, receiver, and reciprocator – with the role(s) they occupy shifting relative to their financial and physical strength and social clout over the course of their lives. A normative expectation of reciprocity has remained a morally potent one, particularly in relation to obligations to older kin (Price 1996: 423), despite changes in practices of familial reciprocity precipitated by transformations of the household as a unit of production, consumption, distribution, and reproduction in Kenya historically (see Chapter Three).

By engaging in reciprocal relations, Kenyans come to be recognized as full social beings. Conversely, being unable to fulfill such expectations, or relying on others to do so on one's behalf, can render one a 'child' (cf. Cole 2010: 52). The

[41] Additional ways of conceiving of kinship have been developed, for example, by Borneman (2001) in terms of 'caring' and 'being cared for' as processes of non-coercive affiliation.

expectation and ability of kin to engage in reciprocal relations must then be understood as linked to notions of personhood (Riesman 1986; Jackson and Karp 1990) among Kenyans, that is, ideas of what it means to be a good person who can participate meaningfully in social life. In referring to recognition, I am less interested, for instance, in questions of the social status of individuals and group members in relation to societal participation and political power with which Fraser and Honneth (2003) engage.[42] Instead, I am concerned with the recognition that comes when people attain the social and symbolic capital that allow them to be acknowledged as having social worth by their kin and the wider society of which they are a part (cf. Christiansen et al. 2006: 14; Vigh 2006a and 2006b). Recognition in this sense is specific to one's social location understood in terms of gender, marital status, life stage, age, and class. Accordingly, to act in culturally congruent ways allows one to be recognized or to make oneself recognizable. Thus, engaging in reciprocal relations with family members can be seen as an act of mutual recognition in which they acknowledge one another as kin.

It must be noted that what constitutes the basis of recognition is not only culturally specific, but that it varies over time and is open to debate (see Chapter Three for a historical discussion). Gaining recognition, that is, the social and symbolic capital referred to above, is contingent on (changing) social and historical conditions, which different generations are born into at different moments. 'The movement from childhood to adulthood is a movement not just between developmental positions but between positions of power, authority and social worth' (Christiansen et al. 2006: 12). As will be discussed in Chapters Three and Four,

[42] Fraser and Honneth discuss how individuals and groups demand rights and respect to protect and promote their community, culture and identity in the name of 'recognition' (of difference). Feminist, gay rights, and nationalist movements are examples of collective identities and categories that are mobilized in political struggles.

paths of social mobility that were open to an older generation of Kenyans who came of age during independence became increasingly unrealizable during the 1980s and 1990s. These changes had ramifications for both that generation and subsequent ones and, I will argue, contributed to Kenyan migration to the United Kingdom. The dynamic nature of normative expectations means that what constitutes being a good person or, for our purposes, a good kinsman or -woman, is subject to debate and contestation, often most intensely between generations and genders, and particularly within families.

Drawing on Hegel who argued that the drive to recognize others and be recognized in return is the most fundamental source of motivation for human action, Robbins links reciprocity and recognition in a productive way for my purposes: 'something (gift/ recognition) must be given to the other, must be received by the other, and must be matched by the other' (2009: 46). In anthropological studies, reciprocity has historically been linked to social stability. Mauss's *The Gift* ([1924] 1990) posits that reciprocity is key to social relations, which presupposes commitment, trust, and stability in social relationships. Early anthropological studies of kinship are indicative of this thinking in that kinship systems were approached as 'a network of social relations, which constitutes part of that total network of social relations which is the social structure' (Radcliffe-Brown 1950: 13). Accordingly, structural-functional studies of kinship focused on understanding the flow and distribution of resources (material and immaterial) among kin, between persons of other communities and, thus, between communities.

However, the focus on formal interrelations and the reproduction of corporate groups meant that the sociality of everyday life and the agency of kin were overlooked. This oversight extended to more negative emotions, such as, selfishness,

dishonesty, weakness and hypocrisy, as also being part of kin relations, despite anthropologists acknowledging the ambivalence that characterized kin relations (see, for example, Evans-Pritchard [1940] 1969: 183-184; Radcliffe-Brown 1950: 54-60). Similar to the processual approach to kinship discussed previously, a focus on the phenomenology of reciprocity as a form of mutuality creates the space to consider the motivations and reasons for engaging in reciprocal relations from the perspectives of embodied social actors, including a wider spectrum of emotions.

Englund's definition of moral economy is useful for this discussion of kin relations and the moral obligations they entail, that is, a moral economy of relatedness: 'a continuous argument about the specific meaning and imputation of morality itself … [in which] … the focus is not on the material process of livelihood, but rather on certain qualities of relationships, which may, of course, secure access to livelihood as concomitant' (1995: 25).[43] The notion of moral economy allows us to examine how economic and other social considerations affect what may be primarily conceptualized as moral practices, which incur economic impacts.

In the name of kinship, family members make moral demands on each other, on each other's autonomy and resources, marking the entanglement of affection and obligation (Peletz 2001: 418-419; Fortes 1969: 232-242). Since '[k]inship is as much about institutionalized power relations as class' (Peletz 2001: 431), one's ability to negotiate such demands varies. While kin relationships may be marked by reciprocity, this does not preclude them from also being characterized by humiliation and marginalization. Normative cultural obligations encompassed in Shipton's

[43] See also the discussion of moral economy in Thompson's analysis (1971) of rioting mobs in in 18th century Britain. A notion of economic justice is central to his understanding of the legitimacy of taking collective action, such as protests: the underlying moral assumptions about value that inform relations among poor people, and between poor people and the merchant class.

notion of entrustment, for instance, can promote the collective wellbeing of families, but they can also create relational tensions, constrain one's actions, and pit individual aspirations against familial expectations. An inability or unwillingness to fulfill social expectations can trigger shame, guilt and a sense of vulnerability. Thus, an important axis for understanding kin relations is recognition and humiliation (cf. Eriksen 2007: 5-7) whereby recognition provides acknowledgment of one another as kin in culturally congruent ways, while humiliation conversely acts as a (de-) motivating and distancing experience in familial relations.

In approaching migration processes from the vantage points of individuals and families, I aim to examine how migrants from Kenya create and sustain different forms of relatedness through their statements and practices (Carsten 2000: 24; Olwig 2009: 521). Importantly, I do not mean to suggest that, prior to migration, all migrants had close relations with their kin devoid of conflict and tension nor that they were living with or near one another. Rather, based on Kenyans' migration stories and ongoing ties, familial aspirations and relations figure centrally in their migration projects. Hence, their practices of relatedness across space become a subject of inquiry. Moreover, I heed the distinction between migrants' 'ways of being', rather than their 'ways of belonging'. More specifically, I am primarily interested in examining the 'actual social relations and practices that individuals engage in rather than to identities associated with their actions,' that is, their 'ways of being', as opposed 'to practices that signal or enact an identity which demonstrates a conscious connection to a particular group', that is, their 'ways of belonging' (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004: 1010).[44] This point is particularly important with regard to

[44] Levitt and Glick Schiller make a further distinction between 'ways of being' and social ties; they see the latter as being linked to 'a notion of common interest or norms', which they want to decouple from social relationships (2004: 1010 footnote 2). However, I am using

ethnically-specific wedding practices, such as the giving of particular kinds of bridal gifts (see Chapter Six), which I would suggest be understood as Kikuyu customary practices, rather than as conscious assertions of a Kikuyu identity (cf. Geissler and Prince 2010: 77-80).

In his work on the human dynamics of migrant transnationalism, Carling asserts that migration means leaving a social group[45] in which one felt a sense of communality that was reinforced by geographical propinquity (2008: 1457). Carling argues that transnational social fields forged by kin relations are infused with values, norms, and obligations that constitute shared (and perhaps contested) frames of reference (2008: 1457). Drawing on Hage's (2002) notion of the 'gift of communality', that is, communal life is a gift that those who receive it are expected to reciprocate, he suggests that leaving may generate a sense of guilt and indebtedness that migrants feel obliged to re-pay.[46] Transnational practices, such as visits, calls, and remittances, become crucial to one's ability to repay the debt and continue participating in the moral economy of relatedness with those who remain in Kenya. Repaying the gift of communality is thus central to moral frameworks of transnationalism.

Through migration, family members become further differentiated: in addition to differences of gender, generation, and age, mobility distinguishes kin such that they can be categorized as 'migrant' or 'non-migrant'. Within the transnational social field, migrant and non-migrant kin are differently positioned.

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only the primary level of distinction between 'ways of being' and 'ways of belonging' such that my understanding of ways of being encompasses relations that are shaped by shared cultural norms and expectations.

[45] The social group may be a family, community or some other group deemed significant by migrants (Carling 2008: 1457).

[46] In this thinking, communal life may refer to being a member of a family, a community, and/ or a nation. Hage clarifies that people may be members of more than one communal entity to which they feel indebted (2002: 202).

Their positions are shaped by key experiences, which Carling suggests have moral dimensions, such as leaving, being left, and (thinking about) returning (2008: 1457). Accompanying their respective positions within the 'moralities of transnationalism' are different obligations and expectations, as well as differential access to power. These mobility-based categories need to be considered in conjunction with culturally and socially constructed and gendered familial roles, such as spouses (husbands and wives), parents (mother and fathers), children (daughters and sons) and siblings (older and younger, brothers and sisters).

While they may no longer be physically co-present, migrants carry familial norms and expectations with them to London, norms that the categories of 'migrants' and 'non-migrants' interpenetrate. This point is particularly important in the sense that, while Bryceson and Vuorela are right to highlight aspects of choice and negotiation in transnational families, it cannot be assumed that kin themselves feel their relations are a matter of choice. According to Miller (2007), flexibility and negotiation are not necessarily alternatives to formality and fixity, as the work of Parreñas (2001b, 2005) might suggest. Rather, they can be understood as part of the 'struggle people have in trying to retain clear principles and formal expectations in kinship in the face of the complexity of modern [transnational] family lives' (Miller 2007: 540).

With this more nuanced approach to kin relations that encompasses notions of power and difference, and conflict and ambivalence, as well as affection and care, transnational family relations emerge as a social problematic, rather than as taken for granted, inevitable, and naturally enduring social relations.

Processes of social reproduction: Discourses and practices

Considering kin reconfigurations raises broader questions of social reproduction, especially how to account for such social processes within transnational families. Early studies of transnationalism tended to see it as something to celebrate (see, for example, Kearney 1995; Glick Schiller et. al. 1992). Transnationalism's so-called liberating promise was seen as offering ordinary people ways to subvert and escape control and domination from 'above'. Migrants were often depicted as de-territorialized persons 'neither here nor there' engaged in transnational practices that take place in a 'third space' located 'in-between' territories and whose cultural hybridity was championed (Bhabha 1990). This conceptualization suggests migrants are freewheeling agents unfettered by social and cultural constraints and unaffected by structural conditions.

Such celebratory thinking makes it difficult to account for processes of social reproduction and change except with reference to individual choice. However, this results in decontextualized and historicized explanations. As Grillo points out, it further suggests that there is a 'magical state, accessible through transmigration, which allows people readily to escape national, ethnic and cultural rootedness' (2007: 213). It disregards that blockades and barriers of various kinds shape the movement of people, ideas, resources, and goods across national borders, often restricting and halting such 'flows'.

Acknowledging the latter point in particular, much of the transnational family literature identifies sources of change in these families as primarily structural. The explanations are shaped by the role migration policy regimes play in defining who qualifies as 'family' and, thus, for entry into a particular country. In the case of the United Kingdom, family members are narrowly defined to include spouses and

dependent children under 18 years of age (Kofman 2004: 245). In imposing their definitions on migrant families, migration policies constrain the movement of particular family members and ultimately the family's reunification in the place of migration. For instance, according to Parreñas, the existence of transnational families is taken as evidence of structural constraints and the prevailing power of states (Parreñas 2001b: 104-107). Similarly, the negotiation of gender roles and relations within families is seen as a necessary consequence of migration where key family members, particularly mothers, are no longer physically present in the same locality as the rest of the family.

Such analyses suggest that the act of migration marks a break from the past. In doing so, I would argue they obscure consideration of possible continuities in gender and familial roles and relations post-migration (cf. Pessar 2003: 89). Moreover, there is little analytical space to consider how migrants' aspirations articulate with these kinds of policies, resulting in family configurations that may align with, rather than contradict, migrants' values. For instance, the Christian ideal of the nuclear family embraced by many Pentecostal Kenyans aligns with the legal definition of 'family' in British migration policy.

Most importantly though, structural conditions cannot be treated as 'objective' facts': this would suggest that economic and political contexts are 'external to symbolic action, as if beliefs and practices were secondary constructions out of objective conditions' (Englund 2004: 297). As Englund describes, 'the analytical challenge is a phenomenological one – to understand intentional and embodied subjects as historically situated *within* specific conditions of action' (2004: 297; cf. Csordas 1994). While recognizing that structural factors present real and significant barriers to maintaining relations, I am thus interested in accounting for the agency of

migrants and non-migrants in shaping their relations. In particular, my interest is in the changes such relations undergo across space and time, how migrants make sense of the challenges and changes, and what discourses they draw on in doing so. In other words, how kin relations are made and unmade, defined and redefined, through the everyday and ritualized practices of transnational families. This also requires that researchers be wary of interpreting comments about family loyalty as mere descriptions of actions and intentions without acknowledging that migrants might shape their accounts for their own ends (cf. Grasmuck and Pessar 1991: 147). This approach then allows us to transcend an analytical framework that attributes changes to constraints imposed by (structural) factors external to the family and kinship (cf. Yanagisako 1979: 184; Ferguson 1999: Chapter Five). With this said, I do not intend to suggest that structural factors and individual agency are mutually exclusive.

All social interaction is characterized by constraint and freedom in that it demands the interplay of cultural dispositions, values, and ways of relating, on one hand, and individual abilities, competencies, unintended consequences, resource limitations, and historical precedent, on the other (Jenkins 1992: 72). The spaces, both literal and figurative, in which interactions occur provide sites for negotiation. The outcomes of interactions can be described in terms of social reproduction and change. Social reproduction refers to the process through and by which people learn, embody, and transmit social conventions. Social change, conversely, describes a transformation of existing conventions, marking a divergence from previous ideas and practices.

Sahlins' work on social reproduction is useful here. Rather than treating reproduction and transformation as discrete or opposed processes, he understands them to be complementary ones that necessarily entail each other. People replicate

the social order through their unreflective, daily practice and occasionally effect change unconsciously. This occurs as they draw on old ideas, norms, and practices, enacting them in different circumstances. At the same time, the contexts in which these practices are enacted also reciprocally shape their content and consequences in novel ways. However, change is not solely the product of rebellion or 'failed reproduction' (Sahlins 1981; Ortner 1984: 155-157), nor is it only about the loss of some practices or the adoption of new ones. Rather, change is better understood as the outcome of historical and social interaction.

It is important then to locate migrants in time and space, for which Englund's definition of emplacement[47] is helpful: a 'subject is inextricably situated in a historically and existentially specific condition, defined, for brevity, as a "place"' (2002: 267). Migrants carry with them – cognitively and physically – their experiences, which become emplaced through migration in the social reality of where they live and where migrants must negotiate and navigate norms and values, opportunities and constraints. Migration must then be understood as 'transition', Englund suggests, not 'transportation' such that in transitions, 'embodied pasts are emplaced anew as corollaries of migration' (2002: 267). Such an approach acknowledges that 'We are never anywhere, anywhen, but in place' (Casey 1996: 39). Accordingly, Guarnizo and Smith argue:

> Transnationals are not 'unbounded' or 'de-territorialized', but rather bounded in two senses: by understandings of 'grounded reality' socially constructed within transnational networks that people form and move through; and by policies and practices of territorially-based sending and receiving local and national states and communities (1998: 10).

[47] The notion of emplacement has also been conceptualized in the field of refugee studies in juxtaposition to that of displacement. Approaching the topic from the point of view of what 'the state of not being a refugee is', Malkki suggests that the question leads into 'consideration of citizenship and nationality, origins and nativeness, nationalisms and racisms, and of the concepts of identity, ethnicity, and culture, becomes important (1995: 515-516).

This grounding of transnationalism shifts attention to the practices of embodied subjects in specific localities at particular historical moments. In doing so, it allows us to contextualize and historicize migration as factor in their lives, thus, advancing our conceptualization of processes of social reproduction.

An important caveat to this discussion is that gauging social change is difficult in large part because there is typically no baseline of data with which to work. In this thesis I rely in part on existing ethnographic work conducted in Kenya, much of which was carried out between the 1970s and 1990s. This period coincides with when many of the younger migrants in particular were born and came of age. However, similar to any data available about how 'things were in the past', this data are themselves representations that require interpretation (cf. Hastrup and Hervik 1994). In keeping with my interest in the agency of transnational kin, it is possible to examine how people talk about issues of social and cultural continuity and change and the values they associate with each of them. Thus, a central part of the analysis is to examine: first, how migrants and their non-migrant kin describe how they stay in touch with each other and what transnational practices they actually engage in; second, the gaps between what they say and what they do; and, third, how those gaps are acknowledged and discussed.

In discussions of change and continuity, the notion of 'tradition' – expressed by my informants as 'this is how we do things' and 'this is our culture' – plays an important role. Geissler and Prince raise a crucial question that echoes my own experiences in the field with regard to the subject of 'tradition': given that current ethnographic practice is to attend to what happens, what has been and is becoming, and not to some timeless ethnographic present, how should anthropologists deal with informants who treat open-ended processes as if they are timeless and unchangeable

(2010: 143)? Taking heed of this tension, I understand 'tradition' to be a discourse used by informants that suggests invariance and refers to formalizing and ritualizing actions and practices characterized by reference to the past. Writing about the 'invention of tradition' in Africa, Ranger outlines how tradition in this sense can be manipulated by those with power to further consolidate their power: elders appeal to tradition to defend against the claims of younger people; men do so in order to preserve their dominance over women; and indigenous populations appeal to tradition to thwart the claims to political and economic rights of migrants who move to their region ([1983] 1992: 254-255). Yet, when people enact 'tradition', they do so in ways that often reveal improvisation, accommodation, and the transformation of cultural rules, rather than reflect some kind of mechanical reenactment (cf. Geissler and Prince 2010: 144; see Chapters Six and Seven). Thus, what emerges is that tradition itself is not only subject to change, but it is also open to ongoing debate and discussion.

All social relations, including among kin, are produced and reproduced in practice. Since migration physically separates migrants from their non-migrant kin, both of whom come to be emplaced in different contexts, it is necessary to consider the nature of the distance separating migrant and non-migrant kin and how it can be approached analytically.

Negotiating and generating distance: Simultaneity, imagination, and emplacement

Carling posits that the distance between migrant and non-migrant kin is fundamentally a geographic one because it defines kin in relation to one another (2008: 1473). Implicit in the understanding of geographic distance is the

concomitant physical separation of kin from one another. Through migration, migrants and non-migrants become emplaced in (at least) two different physical localities. Migrants remain socially emplaced in their relations with non-migrant kin yet emplacement as an embodied condition among co-present kin is largely denied by migration. Hence, sustaining transnational kin relations means navigating discontinuous experiences of physical co-presence between migrant and non-migrant kin.

Anthropologists and others have developed the analytical notions of simultaneity and imagination to advance the conceptualization of migrants and non-migrants as part of a continuous social field. They further efforts to examine empirically how relations are sustained across space or, phrased differently, to study lived experiences of distance. Levitt and Glick Schiller define simultaneity as 'living lives that incorporate daily activities, routines, and institutions located in a destination country and transnationally' (2004: 1003). M.P. Smith raises the point that, 'Co-presence in more than one spatial location (place/ country/ locality) is viewed as occurring in the postmodern "now" rather than as in earlier times, in sequences stages of time (before/ after), space (sending/ receiving) and place (here/ there)' (2005: 240). This conceptual development can be seen as a response to the limitations of early migration research that tended to approach migrants' lives as outposts of area studies where the place of origin was seen as an originary source of meaning and migrants as 'outposts of tradition, 'keepers of tradition', or 'losing tradition' (Raj 2003: 48). Simultaneity as a concept is linked to advances in information and communications technology (ICT) and transportation, which offer the means of staying in touch across vast distances. However, acknowledging that the ability to stay in touch is not equally accessible to everyone, Smith goes on to ask

two questions relevant to my analysis, 'what power relations mediate the politics of simultaneity', and 'what difference does simultaneity make in the lived experiences of translocal subjects'? (2005: 240).

Imagination is another concept that has been deployed to explain how the transnational social field is sustained (cf. Carling 2008). In early studies of transnationalism, imagination has been theorized as a source of motivation and aspiration, as well as for a sense of national belonging (see, for example, Appadurai 1996a; Anderson ([1983] 1991). While it has been understood as also being an individual cognitive faculty, imaginations' collective dimensions have been of particular interest to social scientists. Appadurai comments that, while migration is not a new phenomenon, the rapid flows of mass mediated images, scripts and sensations are new (1996a: 3-4). Both viewers and images are in circulation whereby more people in more parts of the world can imagine a greater range of possible futures for themselves (Appadurai 1996c: 53-55). According to this thinking, imagination emerges as central to all forms of agency. The force of imagination is thus understood as instrumental in inspiring increased migration flows and often in contributing to a sense of belonging among migrants, exiles, and refugees with a shared country of origin as a diaspora (Cohen 2008; Safran 2001).

My use of the term is informed by Bourdieu's (1984) idea of imagination as a 'social quality' such that there is a history and context to that which is imaginable. Accordingly, 'how individuals conceive of themselves and what they might imagine as their possible future are socially and historically determinate acts in themselves' (A. Smith 2006: 54). In linking the social quality of imagination to the social locations of subjects, imagination is productively understood as emplaced and thus socially constrained. What people imagine about something is based on what they

already know about it, however limited. As Beidelman suggests in his work among Kaguru people of Tanzania, imagination is rooted in convictions, aspirations and visions of our experiences and involves contemplation and speculation, as well as comparison (1986: 2, 6). It takes us outside of ourselves: we tend to focus on only a few facets of a place, experience, or thing such that those facets move to the foreground, as other aspects recede; in narrowing our attention, this selectivity 'allows an expansion, even luxuriation, of qualities and possibilities not encountered in reality' (Beidelman 1986: 8). The objects of imagination are thus never determinate wholes or well-rounded entities; instead, they are partial and, their partiality suggests endless possibility (cf. Casey 1979: 36-37).

Nonetheless, these imaginings are cultural constructions that also have real, material underpinnings and consequences. Imagination has 'a projective sense about it…[and]… can become the fuel for action' (Appadurai 1996a: 7). Phrased differently, it has affective dimensions. For instance, Vigh (2009) describes how some young men in Guinea-Bissau are willing to risk physical death by making treacherous migration journeys to Europe. The imagined opportunities in Europe make the risk preferable to the social death they experience in being stuck in the capital Bissau with few opportunities to marry and become socially recognized. These would-be migrants are 'trapped between the culturally expected and socially possible' (Vigh 2009: 94), with their imaginations mediating the divide.

The means for creating simultaneity and fueling imagination among transnational families are transnational practices that enable kin to engage across space. Various practices of relatedness, including telephone calls, text messages, remittances, visits, and celebratory occasions like weddings in which geographically dispersed families can be (re-)constituted, will be examined in Chapters Five and Six

respectively. Sustaining a sense of relatedness among transnational kin who are emplaced in different contexts is thus contingent on their transnational practices and may occur in virtual spaces via technological means. Shared imaginings can contribute to the social reproduction of transnational kin relations.

While the social construction of these two categories of kin will be discussed in Chapter Four, it is important to note here that the expectation to 'stay in touch' typically falls to the migrant, that is, the 'one who left'. Sustaining relations across space necessitate that migrants in particular take action and remain responsible to and engaged in kin relations transnationally in order to repay the 'gift of communality'. Migrants are thus in the powerful position of being the ones to stay in touch, on their terms, but that power also brings with it new expectations to do so, which can be experienced as constraining and burdensome.

Building from this, it is important to consider who is responsible for whom and how (cf. Shipton 1995: 172). Sahlins' discussion of *social* distance is helpful in examining the sense of moral and social obligation that people feel toward one another and for which they feel compelled to take responsibility (2004: 191-204). The thinking follows the general premise that the 'closer' one feels to another person, the more responsibility one bears for their wellbeing, but again this closeness can also spell ambivalence. How questions of familiarity and social distance interrelate with those of physical distance are crucial to keep in mind.

In her work on transnational Pakistani marriages where there is a preference for cross-cousin matches, Charsley (2007) describes how ideas of relatedness and geographical distance intertwine in discussions about how to manage 'risks' posed by marriage. She argues that 'geographical distance mediates "closeness" between kin in purely genealogical terms, through opportunities for visiting and the

promotion of familiarity, so that a first cousin in the same city in Britain will often be considered "closer" than another living in Pakistan' (Charsley 2007: 1121). Because kin relations, like friendships, can be made and unmade through actions like gift-giving, a family may in theory prefer a match with the child of a close friend in terms of security, rather than with a distant relative. This is because the closer the person is to the family, the more secure the latter is in their knowledge of the prospective spouse and, thus, the safer the marriage is believed to be (Charsley 2007: 1122). Thus, as she puts, 'kinship is relative'. At the same time, however, a woman can know her cousin who also lives in Britain 'too well' to marry him, which indicates that residential proximity is linked to emotional closeness and, thus, her cousin is too much like a 'brother'. Affinity, according to Carsten, 'is always a precarious balance between too much and too little closeness' (1997: 191).

While the specific focus of Charsley's work – transnational marriages – is different from my own, her discussion of how Pakistani families in Britain make social and cultural sense of both the geographical (and the accompanying physical) distance and its bearing on social (kin) relations is relevant. Following this line of thinking, I want to suggest that distance be understood as an effect of human action and inaction, and not solely as a given physical attribute evident in space (cf. Coe 2011b: 149). It is in this sense that distance can be seen as socially constructed. Such a conceptualization indicates that how migrant and non-migrant kin engage with the distance between themselves, which inevitably evokes questions of power, is important to understanding the social reproduction of transnational families.

Since migrants become emplaced in a different context from their non-migrant kin post-migration, it is necessary to delineate their emplacement in London.

Emplacement in London: The role of Pentecostalism and Pentecostal churches

Building on the previous discussion of emplacement as it relates to processes of social reproduction, I want to consider the specificity of Kenyan migrants' lives in London. In living their daily lives, they have emplaced themselves within new social relations in a specific social context and at a particular historical moment of increased and diversified migration to the United Kingdom (Chapter One).

Religion often plays a supportive role in migration, which can be a self- and life-transforming project and experience (Levitt 2007: Introduction; Ebaugh and Chafetz 2002; Warner and Witter 1998). Notably, many Kenyan migrants, particularly younger ones, converted to Pentecostalism post-migration and self-identify as Christians, an identification I have suggested should be seen against the backdrop of both the United Kingdom and Kenya (see Chapter One). Much of their time is occupied by participating in church services and other church-organized activities.

My understanding of Pentecostalism among Kenyan migrants is informed by the work of Meyer, Engelke, and van Dijk in particular. Pentecostalism's broad appeal can be found in its emphasis on individual salvation through the conversion experience of being 'born again'. Being born-again is an individual act of repentance and submission (Marshall 1991: 24) and an ongoing process of demonstrating one's commitment to God. Though much early analysis of Pentecostalism's appeal was rooted in structural factors related to experiences of deprivation, anomie, and marginalization (see, for example, Anderson 1979), such explanations have been criticized for being tautological in that they take the experience of conversion as proof of prior experiences of deprivation (cf. Robbins 2004: 124). In doing so, they neglect aspects of Pentecostalism, including its

emphasis on evangelization, its egalitarianism, its distinctively decentralized organization and transnational network, and the appealing spontaneity and exuberance of its ritual life, that contribute to its growth (Robbins 2004: 124-126).

In studies of Pentecostalism in Africa, as well as among African migrants in Europe and North America, many scholars consider how Pentecostalism transforms the societies where it is introduced.[48] In doing so, they discuss and debate whether Pentecostalism marks change, a striving for modernity, and thus discontinuity, or if it intertwines with tradition and can thus be understood in terms of continuity (see, for example, Englund and Leach 2000). A brief review of these debates is helpful for further situating my understanding of Pentecostal Kenyans.

The change and modernity meta-narrative highlights Pentecostalism's emphasis on individualism and suggests that it converges with global liberal capitalism and a new Protestant work ethic (Martin 2002; Meyer 2007). Central to this understanding is the notion of rupture (Meyer 1998, 1999) whereby converts are encouraged to break decisively from their pasts and, thus, often speak about their pre- and post-conversion lives. Meyer argues, 'What has struck me so much in Ghanaian Pentecostal discourse is the strong emphasis placed on the *wish* to be "modern," to "make a complete break with the past," to be "in control of oneself," etcetera' (2000: 242, emphasis added). While this rupture separates converts from their pasts, it also drives a wedge between them and the wider society of which they are a part. In becoming born again, converts develop a new-born self image and a new code of moral conduct. Pentecostal discourse further fosters a sense of moral superiority vis-à-vis the wider society through forbidding of the drinking of alcohol,

[48] Many scholars initially viewed Pentecostalism as a foreign import and discussed it dismissively in terms of fundamentalism and U.S. hegemony. See, for example, Brouwer et al. 1996, particularly Chapter Eight for a discussion of Pentecostalism in Africa.

extramarital affairs, gambling, and licentious behavior.

Engelke builds on Meyer's argument that breaking with the past is a 'wish', an impossibility, except discursively, and as such Pentecostalism provides 'an elaborate discourse and ritual practice to oscillate between both [a "past" identity linked to family and a "new, individualist identity"] and to address the gap which exists between aspirations and actual circumstances' (Meyer 1998: 340). He suggests that the notion of 'realignments of rupture' is helpful for understanding Pentecostalism in that it is not only about breaking with the past. Rather, it also signals the (re-)alignment of 'one's self in relation to an extant and imagined Christian history' (Engelke 2010: 179). In this way a new kind of continuity is forged.

An alternate understanding of Pentecostalism emphasizes tradition and, by extension, cultural continuity. Closely associated with Englund, this thinking questions the propensity of scholars to discuss Pentecostalism in universalizing and generalizing terms, as well as scholars' (over-)emphasis on elites and upwardly socially mobile worshippers in urban areas;[49] accordingly, Englund argues that conclusions drawn from research in middle class churches are then (wrongly) extended to more 'vernacular' forms of Pentecostalism (Englund 2007: 480-481). Based on his own research among non-middle class Malawians in Chinsapo township, Englund argues instead that Pentecostalism is more concerned with continuity with African traditional thought and urges attention be paid to the socio-economic status of congregants.

Pentecostal Kenyans in London reflect Meyer's and Engelke's interpretation

[49] He suggests this particular focus predominates in studies of Pentecostalism because elites' use of English and the churches' urban locations make them readily accessible to foreign researchers.

of Pentecostalism in many respects. For instance, they attend churches where all the services are conducted in English (see Chapter One), many exhibit middle class aspirations, for instance, evident in their elegant, formal clothes they wear to church and their weddings (see Chapter Six), and they strive to embody a moral asceticism of the kind mentioned above. The messages they receive at religious gatherings affirm their distinctiveness and moral superiority. For example, the evangelist at one revival event in Westminster proclaimed to those of us gathered before her, 'you did not come here to work. You came to bring this country back into the Kingdom of God'. In saying this, she (re-) framed migrants' migration projects in religious terms, rather than familial and cultural ones. Her comments reflect Pentecostals' engagement in 'reverse missionization' (Adogame 2001, 2009) northward and westward, that is, while Europeans spread Christianity southward (and eastward) to Africa in the past, Africans are now bringing Christianity back to Europe, which has 'moved away from God toward Satan'. This self-image serves to counter racist and negative images of Black Africans and African migrants prevalent in the United Kingdom, thereby helping them to forge a new place for themselves in the global power geometry (Massey 1993).

In converting to Pentecostalism and re-aligning themselves with an 'imagined Christian history', Kenyan migrants have become members of a global Christendom, which is not rooted in a sense of shared ethnicity or nationality, nor is the membership territorialized in particular localities (cf. Glick-Schiller 2008). Rather, breaking with the past can be seen as an exercise in boundary-drawing that allows Pentecostals to decide what counts as 'Christian' and on what basis (Engelke 2010: 184). Drawing boundaries inevitably entails social processes of inclusion and exclusion. Again, the boundaries are not ethnic ones, as they have historically been

in Kenya, or national or continental (that is, African) ones as they are, for instance, in British migration policy discourse. Rather, they mark the divide between this world and that of born-again Christians (cf. Englund 2004: 310).

Although Pentecostal Kenyans and the churches they attend in London would be considered part of the upwardly socially mobile Pentecostalism that Englund associates with the change and modernity narrative, his attention to questions of tradition and continuity resonate with how Pentecostal Kenyans themselves talk about their non-migrant kin and ties to Kenya more generally (see Chapters Six and Seven). Hence, I consider how and in what ways cultural traditions and values intertwine with Pentecostal ones both discursively and in practice.

With this review of debates in Pentecostalism studies in mind, it is important to relate it to earlier discussions of social reproduction and the role of distance. Van Dijk argues that Pentecostalism helps migrants to create *distance*, on one hand, from local, cultural traditions and migrants' past and, on the other hand, the practices of the host society (2004: 464-465). This particular distance is created and sustained in practice and is best understood as processual. It suggests that Kenyan migrants cannot be readily understood as replicating the traditions and values they carried with them to the United Kingdom, nor can they be seen as wholly embracing the new society of which they are ostensibly now a part. Rather, their lives and practices must be approached in more nuanced ways that can grasp elements of continuity and change. Finally, returning to the notion of emplacement, this discussion of Pentecostalism delineates the context in which young Kenyan migrants in particular engage with their non-migrant kin transnationally.

Similar to the problematic presumption that distance is primarily geographic and physical, I would argue, is then an a priori assumption that migrants seek to bridge the distance(s) separating themselves from their non-migrant kin. In this discussion, I have suggested that distance also be understood as socially constructed and mediated by the emplacement and imaginations of migrant and non-migrant kin. Therefore, I start from the premise that distance is not inherently problematic for transnational Kenyan families and leave the question of whether or not migrant and non-migrant kin aim to bridge physical and social distances open to empirical investigation. This accommodates the notion that bridging distances hinges not only on power and capacity, but also the desire to do so. The differing emplacement of migrant and non-migrant kin must be accounted for since it shapes their power and desire.

Moreover, since 'sociocultural phenomena are constitutive rather than merely expressive', emplacement must be understood as an embodied condition produced and reproduced in practice (Englund 2002: 276). Given that places provide the contexts for social relations in the sense of norms, values, and expectations, what does it mean that migrant and non-migrant kin live in different places and have to navigate multiple and different meaning systems? In light of the discussion on Pentecostalism, it is worthwhile examining the ways in which Pentecostalism articulates with migration to (re-)shape family configurations.

This line of argument runs contrary to the presumption implicit in much transnational family literature that migrants want to and do maintain kin relations (Beck-Gernsheim 2011; Parreñas 2001a, 2001b, 2005; Pasura 2008), though this is not to suggest that migrants from Kenya do not feel obliged to sustain kin relations or that they do not feel senses of emotional or social alienation living away from kin.

The presumption is arguably an artifact of research methodology in that those interested in studying transnational families, by definition, study migrants who have maintained kin relations transnationally. Nonetheless, it leaves unexplored how distance(s) offers a space to negotiate kin relations, including redefining what relatedness entails, and disconnecting from kin. In exploring such issues, this thesis aims to contribute to our understanding of the moral economy of transnational (kin) relationships.

Conclusion

In this chapter I developed the theoretical framework for approaching the study of transnational Kenyan families. The four parts of the chapter provide the conceptual and analytical tools for addressing the key research questions: how are senses of relatedness among transnational Kenyan families created, sustained, and imagined? What happens to kin relations under conditions of transnational migration?

I began by highlighting the importance of not conflating (economic) pragmatism with economic determinism when studying migration. Accordingly, I stressed the need for paying attention to the affective dimensions of migration and transnational relations among kin. Subsequently, I proposed viewing their migration projects as domains of interaction that bring both migrant and non-migrant kin into view. The concept of relatedness is helpful for analyzing kin relations transnationally because it provides a way of grasping the processual and dynamic nature of social (in this case, kin) relations that are constituted and re-constituted in practice. Being able to do so is constitutive of personhood and is thus a means of gaining recognition. In doing so, kin relations emerge as a social problematic, rather than as naturally and inevitably enduring social relations.

The discussion then turned to social reproduction and how senses of relatedness are reproduced. I have argued that migrants in particular need to stay engaged in and responsible to their non-migrant kin for relatedness to be sustained. In considering lived experiences of distance, I examined the notions of simultaneity, imagination, and emplacement – that I suggest shape migrants' transnational practices of relatedness and mediate the sense of distance. In particular I highlighted the conversion of many Kenyans in London, especially younger migrants, to Pentecostalism, which produces a distinct politics of identity (that is, a global Christian fellowship) and mode of being in the world.

Consequently, I have suggested that distance also be understood as an effect of people's actions and inactions, that is to say, people create social distance. In doing so, I have aimed to create the space to consider how migrant and non-migrant kin themselves try to sustain (or not) their relations and, importantly, how they make sense of any reconfigurations the relations may undergo under conditions of transnational migration. This is an important departure from much transnational family literature that primarily attributes changes that occur to kin relations to external, structural factors. The chapter thus provides the conceptual and analytical tools to grasp how transnational Kenyan families are socially reproduced and what mediates these social processes.

Chapter 3 – Migration as movement through life: The historical intertwining of physical and social mobility among families in Kenya

> How can we win honor, build a household and feed prosperity, and exercise the responsibility we owe our seniors and juniors?
>
> – Lonsdale (2003: 48)

Families are socially and culturally constructed; they are sites where social relations between generations and genders are enacted; they represent sets of material, productive relations; and they are topics of debate within families and more widely. In this chapter I examine how the 'family' has remained discursively and experientially central to the social status and moral authority of Kenyans, despite processes of colonization, missionization, and urbanization shaping and re-shaping families in Kenya over time.

I begin this chapter with a focus on the intertwining of social and physical mobility within families historically. Given the asymmetric incorporation of different ethnic groups into the colonial system and later an independent Kenya, I discuss how mobility and migration intersect with ethnicity. I focus largely on Kikuyus who predominate in London, though I also consider the migration histories of Luos and Luhyas, which differ in key ways to those of Kikuyus. The historical and sociological background offers a backdrop for considering issues of change and continuity in family configurations, bases of recognition, relations between generations and genders, and the moral and social discourses on which Kenyans draw.

In the second part I examine how urbanization, and rural-urban migration in particular, further shaped the physical and social mobility of Kenyans. Education is

crucial to this discussion, as it was seen as a primary means of ensuring social mobility until the 1980s. It influenced the aspirations and imaginations of Kenyans and, I will suggest, contributed to the coupling of becoming 'someone' and going 'somewhere'. 'Somewhere' was increasingly envisioned as referring to 'town', often Nairobi, and eventually as referring to somewhere 'abroad'. Finally, I turn my attention in the last part to the uncertainty that characterized Kenya in the 1980s and 1990s. By examining the political and economic climate during the period, I consider how people came to see Kenya as a place where their imagined futures could not be realized.

Lineage as a 'court of claims': Livelihoods, mobility, and family

'Between 1895-1905, "Kenya" went from a 1000-kilometer footpath to a colonial administration' and the imperialism of that time brought Kenya into the world capitalist economy (Lonsdale 1992a: 13).[50] Kenya's economy was restructured along lines similar to other colonies in that it was oriented toward the metropole as a major supplier of raw materials and cheap labor. This reworking of the economy demanded and depended upon the migration of Kenyan men to work as wage laborers away from their families and homes. It further signaled the social transformation of the household as the primary unit of production and distribution in society that articulated with relations between genders and generations.

As the British administration continued to entrench itself in Kenya in the early years of the 20th century, the need for an ever-larger labor pool grew. By the start of World War I, Kenyan men were employed in wage labor at high rates: in

[50] The history of the creation of 'Kenya' is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is important to recognize that the complex and often brutal transformation of Kenya into a British colony had significant effects on every aspect of people's lives (see Berman and Lonsdale 1992c and 1992d).

1926, one out of every three (33.8 percent), or 169,000, adult Kenyan men was employed (Berman and Lonsdale 1992b: 107).[51] Kenya had a larger number of Africans employed than any other colony on the continent with the exception of the Belgian Congo (Berman and Lonsdale 1992b: 107). Half of those employed worked in agriculture, while the rest worked in government or were engaged in commerce with the colonial state, including working on the railway, which was the largest employer. Most of these men were temporary, unskilled migrants, who were either single or 'temporarily single' in that they moved back and forth between 'African reserves'[52] – where their families lived – and settled towns.

Although mobility was part of Kenyans' lives prior to colonialism, migration in the colonial period played an integral role in changing their ways of life and relations. These changes disrupted the autonomous development of Kenya's pre-capitalist modes of production, namely, peasant commodity production in the form of subsistence agriculture that relied extensively on the household. The household served as the basic unit of production, consumption, and distribution, making an extensive network of kin essential to survival. Accordingly, decisions about marriage took into account familial, economic, and political interests, as well as personal considerations (Robertson and Berger 1986a: 5). Thus, '[b]efore the colonial conquest, African power had been stored in unequal human relations that were underwritten by an ideology of lineage seniority and kinship' such that lineage

[51] These statistics do not include a major form of labor in the estate sector, that of squatters or resident native laborers; if included, the numbers are likely to be significantly higher (Berman and Lonsdale 1992b: 108).

[52] The British colonial government established so-called African reserves. In settling people in designated areas, the reserves made governing an easier task and aided in the collection of taxes (Lonsdale 1992a). However, the reserves tended to be in areas with inferior land, which constrains people's ability to engage successfully in subsistence agriculture. Often, the reserves were over-crowded, thus creating problems of land scarcity.

is best understood as 'a court of claims [that determined access to resources and power] rather than a family tree' (Lonsdale 1992a: 21).

Prior to colonialism, relations between women and men reflected 'separate gender hierarchies with interlocking rights and responsibilities in production and reproduction' (Robertson and Berger 1986a: 11). Elders allocated land to men in their residential kinship units, and women in turn gained access to land through their fathers and later their husbands in accordance with virilocal traditions. The division of labor generally fell along gendered lines whereby men raised cattle and were engaged in long-distance trade and political affairs, while women were responsible for the work of social reproduction, including farming, water-carrying, fuel provision, food-processing, and child care (Nelson 1992: 112-113). Women were largely autonomous in managing their own labor, farms, and trading of surplus stocks.

The importance of generation within extended kin networks has implications for dynamics among women and among men. That is, the privileges of seniority overcame differences based on gender (Robertson and Berger 1986a: 22). This meant that older women could exert political power informally and had both higher status and greater access to resources, broadly defined to include land, cattle, labor, and education, than younger women and men. Differences in generation thus marked an important source of division and tension within families and among women and men.

The new modes of production did not entirely displace or dismantle the old ones, but rather co-existed with them in the 'dependent, underdeveloped' form in which capitalism took root in Kenya (Berman and Lonsdale 1992a: 84). As Akyeampong and Fofack explain, 'if pre-colonial Africa was not an era of perfect gender parity, colonial Africa clearly emerged as an era of institutionalized gender

inequality' (2012: 3). The increasing participation of men in wage labor employment had profound implications for household, generational, and gender relations, as did changes in production. These changes in the division of labor can be helpfully understood by seeing women's unpaid labor as subsidizing the proletarianization of men (Bujra 1986: 124-126; Meillassoux 1981: 138-144). More specifically, men increasingly lived in settled towns while they were working and, thus, apart from their families. But their immediate and long-term survival depended on maintaining a rural base, the responsibility for which fell to workers' wives and children. Given this arrangement, men could be and in fact were paid low wages and offered low prices for cash crops because they were expected to rely on women's subsistence, household, and child care work to ensure the wellbeing of their families (Bujra 1986; Gordon 1995). Colonization thus eroded the material basis of women's autonomy without offering other means of ensuring their security (cf. Robertson and Berger 1986a: 22-23; Kandiyoti 1988: 277-278).

The pressure to earn cash income often compounded women's existing responsibilities related to agricultural and other domestic work. Some women engaged in petty commodity trade, especially in towns and cities, while others started growing cash crops, along with subsistence crops. Their ability to do so was connected to whether or not their husbands sent remittances and the size of the remittances. For example, women who received large remittances were able to employ other women to assist them in their agricultural and household work so that they could turn their attention to income-generating activities (Bujra 1986: 127). In these ways, class began to emerge as a new source of power and authority among women, as well as between families.

While Kenya's dependent and underdeveloped form of capitalism retained much of the pre-capitalist mode of production, it also degraded it by destroying an earlier culture of production and self-sufficiency of families (Berman 1992: 134-135). These changes challenged the salience of people's lineage for their livelihoods and lives and undermined familial systems of reciprocity. The changes articulated with relations between genders and generations, exacerbating existing tensions and fissures between men and women, seniors and juniors.

A regional 'geography' of familial 'unease'[53]

Before 'Kenya' became a British colony, '[t]here were boundaries between [people], and they gave their neighbors different names, but these served to demarcate different environments and the different cultures that had grown up in their management, not absolute breaks in political allegiance and economic self-sufficiency' (Lonsdale 1992a: 19). For instance, in the Kenya Highlands where fertile land is found and where three-quarters of the population lived in 1890, mobility and the interactions between groups it engendered were central to people's lives. The livelihoods of the pastoralist Maasai and agricultural cultivators like Bantu-speaking Kikuyu and Kamba people were complementary. As cultivators, Bantu people often invested their surplus harvest in buying cattle from Maasai, which they could then use to make bridewealth payments, while Maasai reinsured their cattle against pestilence, drought, and famine by marrying Bantu women and

[53] The title is inspired by Lonsdale's (2003) 'Political geography of intimate unease' and his efforts to situate Mau Mau within the common history of Kenya, rather than as part of what he calls its 'divided memory'. In doing so, he examines 'how domestic desperation could detonate public violence and how it varied across Kenya's social geography' (Lonsdale 2003: 51).

developing friendships (Lonsdale 1992a: 20); in other words, trade, intermarriage, migration, and patronage 'knew no confines'.[54]

With the advent of colonialism, former cultural identities hardened into tribal ones by 'the factional politics of access' (Lonsdale 1992a: 13). Unequal access to land, markets, and education threatened the growing autonomy of households. What emerged though is better understood as a 'regional map', rather than a tribal one, that reflects the uneven impact of colonial rule and rural capitalism emerging in Kenya, as well as the respective responses to these changes by different peoples. Lonsdale raises an important question for my purposes: 'How far did households differ regionally in their hopes and fears for their future freedom to produce on their own land' (2003: 50)? Accordingly, ethnicity is best seen as the historical product of dynamic social processes that continues to have traction in political and public discourse among Kenyans.

In light of the notion of a 'regional map', it follows that the ambitions and activities of colonists and settlers affected those who lived near the rail line, Nairobi, or the White Highlands. I am referring here to Kikuyus who historically lived in Central Province and, thus, in close proximity to the main mode of transportation, the bustling city of Nairobi, and the fertile land that was to become the primary site of colonial agricultural production. Importantly though, this is not to say that peoples in other parts of Kenya did not suffer under colonialism, much less to suggest that their lives remained unchanged. Rather, it is to note that the nature of their struggles differed, as I will discuss below.

[54] For accounts of interethnic relations among the Nilotic-speaking Luo, Bantu-speaking Luhya and Gusii, Kalenjin, and Teso in western Kenya, see Cohen and Odhiambo (1989), Ogula (2002), and Were (1967).

From the beginning of the colonial era, Kikuyus predominated in wage labor. In the mid 1920s roughly three out of every four adult males (72.3 percent) in Kiambu District where Kikuyus lived were in paid employment (Berman and Lonsdale 1992b: 108); notably, many migrants to London who I met during fieldwork have familial ties to and/ or moved from villages in this district. In comparison, in what was then referred to as North Kavirondo District, an area in western Kenya dominated by Luos and Luhyas[55], less than half (48.2 percent) of adult males were employed (Berman and Lonsdale 1992b: 108). By the 1950s, almost one out of every three (30 percent) Kikuyus lived outside their reserves as farm-labor tenants or squatters, which gave Kikuyus the largest emigrant population in Kenya (Lonsdale 2003: 56). These changes contributed to the erosion of ties between labor, property, and reproduction historically important to Kikuyus.

According to Lonsdale, Kikuyus traditionally defined themselves in three ways: property, moral community and public honor (1996: 21). Phrased differently, these were key bases of recognition and, thus, ways of defining Kikuyu personhood. First, Kikuyus saw themselves as people who owned land that they tamed and cultivated to support their households. At the same time, the labor necessary to cultivate the land engendered conflicts and disputes between genders, generations, and clans. Second, they referred to themselves as *mbari ya atiriri* ('the clan of I-say-to-you'), which Lonsdale describes as marking a permeably discursive border encompassing any forest-clearing mixed farmers who identified with the moral issues under debate (2003: 19). Finally, Kikuyus valued self-mastering moral agency (*wiathi*) fostered by circumcision rituals that set adolescent women and men

[55] Luos were historically referred to as Nilotic Kavirondo, while Luhyas, along with Kisiis, were called Bantu Kavirondo (see Wagner 1949 for a discussion of the latter groups). Kavirondo is the former name of the Kavirondo Gulf, now Winam Gulf.

on an upward path of growth and straightness. Central to this morally upright sense of self was the importance of managing one's own household: 'a good leader begins in his own homestead', 'a man is judged by his household', and 'what a man achieves as a manager of a polygynous family, he is expected to do on a larger scale in the interest of the community as a whole' (Kenyatta [1938] 1953: 76,175, 315). Accordingly, wealthier men employed poorer ones, and juniors contributed to the wider households of which they remained members until that time when they established their own.

However, internal migration and land shortages subverted parental, as well as wider generational, authority. They strained relations between the generations in that parents could not facilitate their children developing *wiathi* through marrying and managing their own households. Rather than being united, albeit unequal, *mbari* (sub-clan) were dominated by senior men, who in turn excluded women and younger men. These generational tensions found wider social expression in the tensions between vertical kin-based lines of loyalty (*mbari*) and horizontal lines of solidarity based on age sets (*riika*), as Kikuyus grappled for power and authority in the face of the colonial government.

The introduction of individual land titles and agricultural loans under the Swynnerton Plan in the 1950s spurred the creation of a class of African farmers, triggering increased social differentiation among Kikuyus. Kikuyus were well placed to receive the infusions of capital from the plan to invest in growing cash crops, to pay for licenses, and to engage in contract work for the government (Parkin 1978: 247). But those households that lacked land titles and loans were left in a desperate position without access to a productive base on which to support themselves and demonstrate their social value. This further contributed to many

Kikuyus being unable to retain strong rural ties.

Many of those Kikuyu men migrated into Nairobi. Their urban lives and dependency on wages jeopardized their ability to marry and start families: 'single and landless, they were failing to attain the preconditions of moral responsibility' (Frederiksen 2001: 233; cf. Lonsdale 1992b: 357-58). Despite historical traditions of patrilineality and virilocality, many Kikuyu women established matrifocal families independent of men and were self-employed, thus extending a practice with historical antecedents (Nelson 1992; Parkin 1978).[56]

Many Luo and Luyha[57] men (up to half of male population) migrated throughout East Africa, working on the railway (Lonsdale 2003: 54). By the 1930s in Luoland, 'labor migration was the normal pattern of behavior for men under 50, and trade and marketing was a regular part of a woman's daily life' (Hay 1976: 88). Moreover, Luoland's location in western Kenya was distant from the coast and from trading routes, which meant there was less friction with colonial authorities. Unlike Kikuyus, Luos resisted land consolidation and privatization into the 1960s; this in turn insulated Luos from the kind of class differentiation experienced by Kikuyus. Rather, inequalities among Luos were more likely rooted in differences in

[56] Examples of Kikuyu women living independently in Nairobi, particularly in Pumwani, a neighborhood established for Africans, date back to the 1920s (Frederiksen 2001, 2009; White 1990).

Though there was increased differentiation among Kikuyus, Parkin made the point that the presence of two types of urban Kikuyu households at the time of his fieldwork in the 1970s – male-headed (though not necessarily dominated) nuclear and matrifocal families – cannot be seen as representing two incipient 'classes', the first a 'labor aristocracy' and the second a product of the 'culture of poverty'; instead, he suggests that the two types of families be understood as part of an 'ongoing [critical] dialectic being Kikuyu men and women' (1978: 279). Moreover, some women-headed families were wealthy, while some male-headed ones were poor, indicating that the classification above was overly simplistic.

[57] 'Luhyas' took this collective name in the 1930s, bringing together 16 sub-groups, including Bukusu, Idakho, Isukha, Kabras, Khyao, Kisa, Marachi, Maragoli, Marama, Nyala, Nyole, Samia, Tachony, Tirki, Tsotso, and Wanga (Were 1967). The largest are Bukusu and Maragoli. The collective name Abaluyia was taken from the grove where elders met, *oluyia*; thus, there are many all over Buluyia, the land where they lived (Lonsdale 1996: 55). 'Luhya' is also spelled 'Luyia'.

educational attainment and clerical employment. As Lonsdale explains, 'new competitions in production did not yet subvert old reciprocities of patronage' largely because notions of Luo reputation were still linked to wealthy elders' ability to assist the poor among them (1996: 55).

With 18 percent of its population living outside its reserves by the 1950s, the Luhya group was the next largest internal migrant population after the Kikuyus (Lonsdale 2003: 56). Though linguistically Bantu speakers, Luhyas have had much culturally in common with Luos. They historically also lived in western Kenya away from prime trade and transportation routes and, thus, outside areas of pressing colonial interest. Nonetheless, the discovery of gold near Kakamega in the 1930s triggered an influx of prospectors, mines and others to the area. In displacing many Luhya, it contributed to their alienation from the land they needed for their subsistence and livelihoods, as well as to their migration (Shilaro 2002).

The patterns of cyclical migration among Luos and Luhyas established during the colonial era continued, with the periods of time workers were away from their rural homes extending from several months to a year and eventually to several years by the time of independence and afterward. Throughout the colonial period and beyond, many Luo and Luhya men retained their ties to rural areas where their families' households were located in contrast to Kikuyu men (cf. Grillo 1973; Parkin 1978). Their dual mode of life, rural and urban, allowed for the combining of urban family settlement and maintenance of families' rural interests, rather than being wholly urban or wholly rural (Parkin 1978: 49). As Grillo points out, rather than settling in towns, many railway workers developed complex circuits between town and country that encompassed areas which were to become Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania (2007: 211). The persistence of such ties challenged notions of an urban

proletariat being forged in towns and cities and caused concern among colonial officials who wanted to ensure the ongoing existence of the wage labor force.[58]

Luos adapted the practice of polygyny to their growing dependence on urban wage labor. Even as polygyny declined, Luos were still likely to maintain a rural household that required Luo women to travel between it and their urban household (Stichter 1987). However, at the same time, the rise of a capitalist economy challenged key Luo values at the core of which are questions related to kinship and children. The practice of having more children traditionally translated into greater prestige and higher status for men and their families. In competition with this view, however, was one that favored having fewer children, which a family could then afford to educate. The children would in turn be able to achieve economic security, thereby ensuring both personal and familial success (Parkin 1978: 271). Thus, a conflict over whether to invest capital in bridewealth or education emerged (Parkin 1978: 111).

Thus far, this discussion has highlighted the changing bases of recognition and production and their relation to changing family configurations. Following Lonsdale, I have suggested that some of the different familial dynamics, tensions, and configurations are related to how different ethnic groups were incorporated into the colonial state, processes that were shaped by regional opportunities and constraints.

[58] Rural-urban migration and dual modes of life were prevalent in other parts of Africa, for instance, in the Zambian Copperbelt where men migrated to work in the mines, while maintaining their ties to rural areas (Ferguson 1999). Such societal transformations became the bases of future studies of social complexity carried out by the Rhodes Livingstone Institute and later the Manchester School (see, for example, Gluckman 1961; Turner 1957; Mitchell 1956).

Education as a means to social mobility: Changing (familial) imaginings and aspirations

The introduction of formal education in Kenya accompanied and inflected the economic, social, and familial changes discussed above. Christian missionaries and the colonial government began establishing schools there in the early 20th century. Prior to this time, education was an integral and integrated part of daily life. Learning was achieved by doing, that is, through observation, imitation, and practice, which often entailed engaging in communal work. Kenyatta (1953), for instance, viewed education as a means for building the character of younger generations and ensuring social continuity. Closely integrated with cultural and social reproduction, indigenous education was practical in focus, with 'a high level of consistency between activities and desired outcomes' (Woolman 2001: 30; Agak and Agak 2002).

Kenyans' interest in formal education converged with that of colonists and missionaries to a certain extent, though they understood the fundamental purpose of education very differently. Many Kenyan parents viewed education as a means of social mobility and, thus, a path to a better life (Anderson 1970). It shaped people's aspirations and imaginings of their own future and those of their families. Mutongi quotes one mother as saying 'You sent your son to the new school because you wanted him to make enough money, to be seen as someone with *maendeleo* (civilization) and speak English like an Englishman' (2007: 106). Though colonial and missionary schools had a more individualistic focus than traditional forms of education, families still understood it in more communal terms: education was a means of social mobility for their children, as well as the entire families. Paying for a child's education was integrated into notions of intergenerational reciprocity common among Kenyan families such that parents who invested in the education of

their older children did so in part with the hope that the latter would help their younger siblings to attend school.

Accordingly, parents wanted their children to attend and excel in school in order to be able to assume positions of authority and obtain well-paying white-collar jobs then held by colonists. These positions were desirable because they were increasingly thought to be more secure and dependable, not to mention less strenuous, than manual labor. Receiving an education also meant they would be able to earn the money necessary to buy increasingly available consumer goods and realize their (new) material aspirations.

In contrast the colonial government wanted Kenyans to attend school because of their need for clerks and administrators to work in the colonial service. Schooling offered a way to socialize and train Kenyans as workers who could follow directions, making it integral to the government's efforts to constitute colonial subjects. Education, particularly in mission schools, also provided a means to make the reserves more orderly, clean and industrious areas. Kenyans were taught ideas about proper ways of living that included, for example, adopting the hygiene practices of missionaries, such as washing with soap, wearing clothes, and keeping their homes tidy (Mutongi 2007: 46). As a way of promoting education, students were offered financial incentives to attend school. For instance, churches compensated Kenyans to attend school, and white settlers in Central Province paid higher wages for workers who could read and write (Anderson 1970: 16). Whether under the auspices of 'saving souls' or 'increasing the tax base', missionaries and colonial officials wanted Kenyans to attend school (Ochwada 2002: 159).

During the colonial era, education was then not intended as a means for Kenyans' self-improvement, nor was it meant to equip them with the knowledge and

skills to question colonial policies. Colonial education policy was instead grounded in an idea of Kenyans as 'helpless natives' who could not act in their own interests. It followed a gradualist and developmentalist approach to teaching and learning which had its roots in theories of social evolutionism. Kenyans were thought of as being 'behind' Europeans in terms of their social evolutionary development. Accordingly, Kenyans could only be gradually educated over time to assume responsibility for themselves and their society (Anderson 1970: 40). It was this kind of attitude that parents throughout Kenya faced as they pushed for curricula comparable to that which the children of colonial officials and settlers received.[59]

The nature of education during the colonial era prepared Kenyans for jobs that were primarily to be found in the cities. This contributed to their migration into Nairobi and to 'town' coming to represent a 'better life' in many ways than what was possible in the country (Parkin 1975a: 8, 24). Becoming 'someone' became entangled with migrating 'somewhere'. A corollary to such imaginings is the shift in how rural life was viewed. According to Mazrui, 'Western education in African conditions was a process of psychological de-ruralization. The educated African became in a fundamental sense a misfit in his own village…. When he graduated from school, his parents did not expect him to continue living with them, tending the cattle or cultivating the land' (1978: 16).

It must be noted though that these imaginings co-existed with another (contradictory) discourse about urban and rural areas. According to Frederiksen, this

[59] In 1924 the Phelps-Stokes Commission, a white-led American organization concerned with the education of blacks in the American South, visited Kenya. Drawing parallels between Kenyans and American blacks, the Commission urged the colonial government to promote the development of Africans. Using the Commission's report to support the development of its educational policy, colonial officials focused on teaching Kenyans practical skills, while also improving rural life, with the expectation that Kenyans would return to the countryside after their studies (Mutongi 2007: 99-100).

discourse was grounded in a view of '"town" as associated with "women", idleness and immorality, and "countryside" with "men", hard work, honor and morality' (2001: 233-34). Accordingly, Kenyatta saw urban employment as a threat to Kikuyu 'culture' and called for migrant men to repent for their degradations (Lonsdale 1996: 26-27). I would suggest that such contradictions reflect the ambivalence of migrants and non-migrants toward their changing circumstances.

Imaginings of a 'better' future in town often did not match migrants' lived experiences, much less the imaginings and expectations of their non-migrant kin. Migrants were not paid well enough to afford a decent quality of life, leaving them dependent on their families in rural areas. Mutongi describes how Maragoli[60] men who migrated to Nairobi in the 1940s and 1950s were seen as 'men of means', 'of progress', 'of the city' who were expected to be providers and could not just sit around in the village without money in their pockets (2007: 107). These gaps in expectations and experience among Kenyan families living in rural and urban Kenya foreshadow similar tensions among transnational Kenyan families today, as do the contradictions regarding conceptions of 'town' and 'countryside', the traces of which are evident in ideas of Kenya and the United Kingdom (see Chapters Four and Seven).

Nonetheless, Kenyans of diverse ethnic backgrounds continued to move to Nairobi through the 1960s and 1970s, with the largest ethnic groups – Kikuyu, Luo, and Luhya – predominating there (cf. Parkin 1975; Stichter 1987). Kenyan independence in 1963 and the promises of modernization and development fueled their imaginings of the future. For instance, from 1969-1979, Nairobi's net in-migration increased 20 times (Oucho 2007: 91). By the mid 1980s, 15 percent of the

[60] Maragolis are one of the 16 sub-groups that comprise those referred to more broadly as Luhyas.

population lived in Nairobi (Nelson 1992: 111). Increased access to education led to women slowly being integrated into the formal workforce. In the 1980s, most increases in women's employment were in the service sector where women accounted for 97 percent of typists; 70 percent of nurses and midwives; and 61 percent of teachers working in primary schools (Stichter 1987: 139). The types of jobs they obtained reproduced gender-based occupational segregation evident in western capitalist societies (Bujra 1986: 31). Differences in women's employment were evident between women of different ethnic backgrounds: in the 1980s Kikuyu, Embu, and Meru[61] women had the highest rate of employment at 70.8 percent, followed by Kamba (63.3 percent), Luhya (56 percent) and Luo (41.3 percent) (Stichter 1987: 147).

Though many Kenyans remained outside the formal employment sector (see next part), men's and women's wage labor contributed to a nascent middle class. Families in which both parents worked in paid employment increasingly relied on house girls, who were often from the home area of either the husband or wife and who lived with the families, to handle domestic responsibilities. Though such urban families were seemingly free from domestic burdens associated with rural lives, such as, gathering firewood and fetching water, their aspirations for a middle class life were linked to the possession of material goods like appliances, clothes, and furniture that required washing, ironing, and polishing (Stichter 1988: 196).

The expense of living in urban areas meant urban households were often smaller than those in rural areas. The western Christian ideal of a conjugal nuclear family further encouraged the redefinition and subsequent re-sizing of families

[61] Meru and Embu people share linguistic and cultural characteristics with Kikuyu people. Like Kikuyus, they historically lived in Central Province, and many were displaced when colonists claimed their land in the 'White Highlands'.

(Gordon 1995: 906). Nonetheless, such changes did not necessarily indicate families were more nuclear. The boundaries of so-called nuclear families remained permeable, with extended kin continuing to stay for varying lengths of time as they finished their educations or searched for work (cf. Stichter 1988: 185-186; Parkin 1975b: 149). Instead, differentiation within extended families contributed to intra-family tensions and debate between those who could afford to disengage from wider familial ties and those for whom ethnic and familial institutions remained important to their economic and social security (cf. Gordon 1995: 902).

The (in)famous death and burial of S. M. Otieno in the late 1980s mentioned briefly in the Introduction illustrates the tensions and fault lines in public debates over familial relations during this period.[62] The death of Otieno, a prominent Luo-speaking attorney in December 1986, triggered a court case between his Luo clan and his wife, Virginia Wambui Otieno, a Kikuyu-speaking woman and former Mau Mau[63] fighter. The case centered on three key questions: who should bury Otieno – his wife or his clan? Should he be buried at his marital home in the Nairobi suburb of Ngong or Siaya in western Kenya, his natal village where he had never built a house? Should he be buried according to common law and Christian practices or Luo customary law? These questions were debated not only in court, but also in the press,

[62] The eventual remarriage of Wambui Otieno in 2003 at the age of 67 reignited controversy because her new husband was 39 years her junior. The controversy centered on the purpose of marriage and issues of gender and age, particularly the status of older, widowed women like Wambui. In other words, if marriage is intended to provide social and economic security for women in particular and is vital for reproducing the next generation, then how should the marriage of woman well past her child bearing years to a man younger than her children be understood? Media accounts depicted the marriage as travesty and attributed the sudden death of the groom's mother from a fatal heart attack to be the result of her shock (http://allafrica.com/stories/200407150664.html;http://www.nation.co.ke/magazines/saturday/-/1216/476880/-/item/0/-/sh0xf3z/-/index.html).

[63] The Mau Mau rebellion (1952-1960) marked the explosion of years of tension and grievances between British colonists and primarily Kikuyu-speaking people in Central Province. It has been the subject of extensive scholarly research, see, for example, Anderson (2005), Elkins (2005), and Lonsdale (1992b, 2003). In her autobiography, Wambui Otieno (1998) wrote about her experience fighting against the colonists.

in people's homes, and on the streets throughout the country (Cohen and Odihambo 1992). Underlying the questions were several related issues often expressed in polarizing, dichotomous, and mutually exclusive terms: should tradition prevail over modernity? Can Christian values and practices be reconciled with customary ones? What role(s) does a wife have, compared with that of her husband's extended family? How can the practices and values of people of different ethnic backgrounds be reconciled? In sum, complex issues of religion, ethnicity, gender and class were reduced discursively into two mutually exclusive characterizations: were families in Kenya better understood as modern, Christian, and national in orientation, or as ethnically-rooted, extended families committed to upholding 'tradition'?

Urbanization, reinforced by education and wage-paying work opportunities, was further spurred by the promise of independence, modernization, and development.[64] As I have discussed, the impact on families was uneven and marked greater social differentiation among families. The rise of an urban middle class raised questions about the salience of wider kinship ties to Kenyans' livelihoods and lives. Such questioning and discussion extend a historical pattern: 'the social transformations of family life, gender and sexuality since early colonialism have always given rise to heated public debates about the possible loss of African culture' (Spronk 2009: 508). They also indicate that relations within families, between genders and generations, and in wider Kenyan society must be seen as dynamic, a point that has great relevance for my effort to contextualize the role of migration in the social reproduction of transnational Kenyan families.

[64] See Anderson and Rathbone (2000) for a historical discussion of urbanization in Africa.

Unrealized promises and hopes: Kenya from the 1980s through the early 2000s

By the 1980s the political and economic climate in Kenya was becoming more and more uncertain. It eroded people's sense that Kenya was a place where they could meet their family's needs and realize their aspirations. Although I treat the political and economic spheres separately for the purposes of the discussion in this part, they are very much intertwined in practice.

Political repression and rising fears

In 1982 President Moi survived a coup attempt by the military. In the aftermath he sought to consolidate power and transformed Kenya into a *de jure* one-party state. The Moi regime clamped down on political freedoms with repressive tactics, ranging from arbitrary arrests, detention without trial, and disappearances to torture and police brutality. The state controlled the media, and KANU (Kenya Africa National Union), the sole and ruling party, controlled the parliament and the judiciary (Kamungi 2009: 350). The atmosphere was tense, and people were guarded with their criticisms and comments, unsure who could be trusted.

By the time of the 1988 presidential elections, the pressure to fall in line had become explicit and literal. A new voting system, *mlolongo*, or queue system, was introduced that required voters to form queues behind the photograph of their preferred candidate in the primary elections of candidates of KANU. Daily life was regularly interrupted by state-instigated displays of loyalty. According to one informant who was student and activist during that period and moved to London in 1994, the University of Nairobi was required to shut its doors in the middle of classes, so that students could file over to Kenyatta Avenue to cheer President Moi as he was driven through the city center.

Moi was intent on consolidating his position and authority. Rhetorically, he appropriated a range of domestic and foreign symbols, including Kenya's anti-colonial struggles in the 1950s, Kenya's constitution, and the World Bank's language of good 'governance', transparency, and accountability, to bolster his credibility as a leader (Haugerud 1993: 27). In this vein, he claimed critics of his regime were determined to destroy the country's prosperity. In doing so, he discursively linked order and stability to economic growth and development in what Atieno-Odhiambo refers to as 'the ideology of order' (1987: 191).

His consolidation also took more tangible forms, namely, the promotion of Kalenjin people and their interests.[65] Allies of his regime were appointed to government ministries and parastatal organizations, giving them access to public resources. Public investments in roads and health care shifted from Central Province to the Rift Valley where many Kalenjins lived. These actions contributed to the political and economic displacement of Kikuyus, who had dominated the Kenyan state and economy since independence (Parkin 1978: 247-248). They further politicized ethnicity by operationalizing people's ethnic background as a key criteria for determining access to opportunities and resources and, thus, power.[66]

A combination of public protests against the severe repression and international pressure ushered in multi-party politics in Kenya in the 1990s. In the lead-up to the first multi-party elections in 1992, the Moi regime was intent on remaining in power. Citing the struggles of other African nations, such as Liberia

[65] 'Kalenjin' is the Nandi word for 'I say to you' (Lynch 2011). In the 1940s, it became the preferred term to refer to an ethnic amalgamation of Nandi-speakers, including Tugen (President Moi's group), Nandi, Marakwet, Kipsigis, Pokot, and Elgeyo

[66] It is important to note the long history of ethnic politics and shifting ethnic alliances in Kenya, as well as the continuing ethnicization of politics that predominates in political and popular discourses. For further discussion of ethnicity and politics, as well as specific discussions of ethnic political associations and the role of ethnicity during the Kenyatta and Moi presidencies, see Hornsby (2012), Branch (2011), Haugerud (1993), and Schatzberg (1987).

and the Central African Republic, to become more democratic, Moi warned that Kenya was not cohesive enough as a nation to handle multi-party elections (Haugerud 1993: 27). Ruling politicians manipulated legitimate historical grievances over access to and control over land and resources. Mistrust, competition, and suspicion in such areas as Nandi in the Rift Valley, where Kalenjins, Luos, and Luhyas lived, fueled politically instigated inter-ethnic violence (Kamungi 2009; Cowen and Kanyinga 2002). In fact, however, many of these so-called ethnic disputes actually occurred between 'owners' and 'squatters' (Haugerud 1993: 41). The result was not only the re-election of Moi, but also widespread violence and the physical displacement of thousands of people. It marked a bruising first experience with democracy for Kenyans. Though Moi maintained that the introduction of a multi-party system triggered 'ethnic' violence, such a claim is a politically expedient characterization of a situation better understood as arising from the state's crises in patronage, class conflicts, and structural problems in the economy (see below).

Although similar violence and displacement followed the next multi-party elections in 1997, the opposition made a strong showing that year. They also successfully passed a law constitutionally barring Moi from running for a sixth five-year term in office in the 2002 elections. But Kenyans nevertheless feared that Moi would not step down on his own accord. These fears did not come to pass, and in 2002 Mwai Kibaki of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) was elected president. NARC represented a coalition of Kenya's political parties, and its victory fueled widespread hope for Kenya's future.[67] By that time though, many had already migrated to the United Kingdom.

[67] Also known as the National Alliance of Rainbow Coalition, NARC brought together the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the National Alliance Party of Kenya (NAPK). Prior to 2002 LDP was not a major party; but, as the election neared, it welcomed Raila Odinga and

'Kitu kidogo'[68]*: The Kenyan economy and the scourge of corruption*

When the oil crises of the 1970s triggered a global recession, Kenya, like other African countries that did not produce oil, faced rising energy costs and decreasing prices for their commodities (Rono 2002: 81). The collapse of the East African Community, which comprised Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, in 1977 compounded Kenya's economic issues (Mugomba 1978). The Kenyan government sought out loans from international lenders, which in turn imposed conditions on their lending. Once reliant on such loans, Kenya was increasingly vulnerable to new and more stringent conditions.

In 1980 the World Bank introduced structural adjustment programs (SAPs) in Kenya with the intention of creating sustained stabilization and economic liberalization, as it did elsewhere in Africa. The SAPs marked a larger shift among development institutions and bilateral aid agencies toward concerns about human rights and political liberalization that took shape over the course of the decade and into the 1990s. The conditionalities involved in SAPs were intended to 'enable the adjusting country to change the structure of its economy in order to meet its long-term needs of efficient utilization of factors of production to ensure sustained growth' (Milward 2000: 25). Major areas of reform included allowing the free market to determine prices, removing state controls on prices, divesting resources held by the state to the private sector, reducing the state's budget, and reforming 'state institutions to re-orientate the role of the bureaucracy towards the facilitation of the private sector' (Milward 2000: 33).

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disaffected members of KANU, with which Odinga had merged his National Development Party after the 1997 elections. NAPK was also a coalition consisting of the Democratic Party and 13 other small political parties that came together in 2000 (Mueller 2008; Wayande 2003).

[68] *Kitu kidogo* is Swahili for 'something small'.

Over the course of the 1980s, a series of loans were made to restructure the economy to detrimental effect in terms of economic growth and productivity. The terms of the loans pushed for the reform of the industrial, agricultural and parastatal sectors and the promotion of the efficient use of external resources. In 1988 structural adjustment loans were made to finance the reform of the education and health sectors with the intention of decreasing government expenditure and increasing the taxation of benefits through the introduction of user fees. By the end of the 1980s, the Gross Domestic Product growth was 4.8 percent, compared to the 8.3 percent it had been in the immediate post-independence period of 1969 to 1973 (Mwega and Kabubo 1993: 26). In the middle of the decade (1986-87), the budget deficit reached its highest point and was equal to 9 percent of the GDP (Mwega and Kabubo 1993: 30).

By 1991, some of Kenya's foreign aid was suspended by the World Bank pending further reforms in the management of its economy and political system. The aid was restored toward the end of 1993, though political and economic reforms were still called for. Tough economic conditions coincided with increasing problems with corruption.[69] Moi is said to have 'turned Kenya into his personal fief, a kleptocracy under which KANU leaders looted with impunity. Corruption became the principal mechanism for regime maintenance' (Barkan 2004: 89). According to the Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International, Kenya was perceived to have some of the most corrupt government and public officials in the world, and its

[69] The 1990s was also the era of the Goldenberg scandal in which Kenya is thought to have lost more than 10 percent of its GDP. Ostensibly to boost Kenya's foreign currency reserves that had been depleted by the withdrawal of international aid, the Kenyan government agreed to pay companies a bonus of 20 percent of the value of exported goods if they converted the foreign currency into Kenyan shillings (Branch 2011: 219-244). The underlying motive of the scheme was actually to aid the government's efforts to build a 'war chest' for the first multi-party elections in 1992.

ranking in the index has persistently been toward the bottom.[70] In 1997, in the midst of concerns about rampant corruption and political tensions, international lenders, such as, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, again withdrew aid to the country. These changes re-shaped systems of patronage, making less resources available to politicians and other elites and, thus, to their clients and followers.

Accompanying these changes was growing unemployment. The structural adjustment programs took aim at the public sector, the largest employer, by limiting expenditures. Increasingly, fewer employment opportunities meant that university and college graduates had trouble finding jobs and either had to develop income-generating activities in the informal sector or joined those who were unemployed. According to figures between 1988 and 1993 – a period when many of my informants were leaving Kenya or making plans to do so – the labor force grew from an estimated 8.6 million people to 10.6 million, while employment only grew from 1.37 million people to 1.68 million (Mwega and Kabubo 1993: 35). This meant 8.92 million people were left to find jobs in informal sector or remain unemployed.

Competition over scare resources and opportunities contributed to a growing problem with corruption in the daily lives of many Kenyans. *Kitu kidogo*, or 'something small', refers to the bribes ordinary Kenyans needed to pay as a regular part of their daily lives to various 'gatekeepers', including minor bureaucrats, policemen, security guards, administrators, and car park attendants, to name only a few. It served as inspiration for songs and plays, such as Eric Wainaina's song *Nchi*

[70] In 1996 when the index began, Kenya ranked third from the bottom of all countries surveyed. Its ranking did not improve through the early 2000s, instead staying within the bottom ten countries: 90th of the 99 countries surveyed in 1999; 82nd out of 90 countries surveyed in 2000; and 84th out of 91 countries in 2001 (http://www.tikenya.org/faqs.asp).

ya Kitu Kidogo (Swahili for 'A country of small things') about corruption that was released in 2001.[71]

This combustible, uncertain period helped to usher in a new era of migration as greater numbers of Kenyans began to migrate. With economic opportunities limited and concerns about the future looming, families of all social classes became increasingly compelled to try to send members abroad to ensure basic survival, escape brutal attacks or meet aspirations for accumulation and education. While the physical and subsequent social mobility of many Kenyans had more reliably translated into opportunities and assistance for their extended families in the past, kinship ties had come to sit awkwardly at the center of two countervailing forces during the 1980s and 1990s when Kenyans began migrating internationally. According to Gordon (1995), the increasing privatization of land and growing land scarcity, rapid population growth, a concentration of wealth, a slow-growing economy, and the imposition of structural adjustment programs undermined the familial mode of production and challenged the control of elders over female and male dependents, which colonialism had already re-shaped. Nonetheless, many Kenyans remained dependent on their ties to kin because of the uncertainty of their economic and social prospects.

The period marked a change from the migration pattern of previous decades: in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, Kenyans were more likely to be circular migrants, but during the 1980s and 1990s migration appeared to be going in only one direction – out of Kenya. The sense of Kenya being on a downward trajectory during this era

[71] The use of song and theater as tools of political satire and criticism has a long history in Kenya; see, for example, Haugerud's discussion (1993: Chapter Two), Ngugi wa Thiong'o's play (1982) *Ngaahika Ndeedena* (Kikuyu for 'I will marry when I want) and his novel, *Petals of Blood* (1977).

was reflected in analyses of Kenya, which until the early 1990s considered the country to be a 'beacon of success' and an 'economic miracle'. But, after that time, it became linked with the kind of endemic corruption and government repression just discussed. Haugerud argues that, in such analyses, Kenya was depicted as embodying one side of numerous polarities, including 'cohesion and conflict', 'order and disorder', and 'security and danger', such that an 'analytical opposition was transposed to a historical sequence: from miracle to disaster' (1993: 4-5). In other words, just as Kenya's avoidance of these problems prior to the 1990s was seen as miraculous, its descent during the 1990s was deemed inevitable.

This discourse conceals the ways in which Kenya as a nation-state is and was constituted by wider, intersecting historical processes and in relation to other nation-states. Thus, rather than being seen as a country occupying a structurally weak position in the wider geopolitical order, Kenya was seen as a 'discrete functional unit' whereby all of its problems and difficulties were understood primarily with reference to itself, (Haugerud 1993: 5). The place-specific nature of the discourse implies that such problems were endemic and inevitable. Consequently, Kenya was understood as being unable to change. As I will discuss in the next chapter, this kind of thinking informed Kenyans' decisions to migrate to the United Kingdom and interpenetrated kin relations post-migration.

Conclusion

The lives of earlier migrants linked multiple places in much the way that transnational Kenyan migrants' lives do today. At the time, their migrations were understood within a rural-urban discourse, rather than a transnational one. But after independence, their lives and livelihoods could rightly be characterized as

transnational: they engaged in all the kinds of activities and transactions that are associated with transnational migrants today, namely, sending remittances, exchanging presents, building houses, purchasing property, making philanthropic gestures, as well as participating in rituals of birth, marriage, and death, and in political and association activities (Grillo 2007: 211).

Taking a historically informed perspective of Kenyan families and migration, as I have done in this chapter, allows us to challenge the view that movement and mobility are abnormal and inevitably create disruptions. It problematizes the corollary point – that is, staying in one place is the norm – making it possible to see the long-standing links between physical and social mobility in Kenya (de Bruijn et al. 2001a: 1-2). Thus, seen in historical perspective, migration among Kenyans emerges as an aspect of life that makes it possible to pursue the sort of lives family members value, and not necessarily as something unusual or requiring a special explanation (Olwig 2003: 787, 793). It is a livelihood strategy and part of a life-making project that can help migrants become full social persons and gain recognition (Sørenson and Olwig 2002; Olwig 2003; Åkesson 2004). Accordingly, I propose that the meaning and significance of migration among transnational Kenyan families is more productively explored by framing it in terms of their movement through life, rather than primarily in terms of movement between places (cf. Olwig 2003: 800).

Historically, family aspirations and material needs linked physical and social mobility among families in Kenya. At the same time, processes of colonization, missionization, and urbanization (re-)shaped familial configurations. The responses of peoples in different regions of Kenya to these historical processes revealed the varied impacts of these processes and the increasing differentiation of Kenyan

families and society over time. As I have shown, this differentiation cannot be reduced to ethnic or class terms or understood solely in terms of rural-urban dynamics. Rather, it reveals a complex interplay between ethnicity, class, and rural-urban dynamics. Formal education introduced by colonists and missionaries, which was seen as a path to self-betterment and familial advancement, also contributed to familial and social differentiation. The emergent middle class in Nairobi following independence has further challenged the centrality of kinship ties to people's lives, livelihoods, and senses of belonging and traditional patterns of gerontocratic and patriarchal authority.

As I have discussed, these changes were met by ambivalence, evident in the contradictory images of 'town' and 'country' held by many Kenyans. Was 'town' a place of civilization and advancement or a place of amorality and corruption? Conversely, was the 'countryside' backward and uncivilized or the site of cultural tradition and familial continuity? I have argued that these partial images were dialectically produced by migrants and non-migrants and shaped their imaginings and expectations of one another. In doing so, I have sought to demonstrate that familial relations in general, and relations between the genders and generations in particular, are not static, but rather dynamic and changing. Kin relations are constituted in practice and debated in discourse. If migration is conceptualized as movement through life, then imaginings of different places can be seen as part of the debates about what kinds of lives are meaningful to live and in which places it is possible to lead such lives. The answers to such questions inevitably vary among families with different social positioning, as well as shift as different generations navigate changing historical circumstances.

In the next chapter, I turn to the migration stories of Kenyans who left Kenya in pursuit of betterment and opportunities for themselves and their families. In doing so, I examine similarly contradictory images of 'Kenya' and the 'United Kingdom' and begin to explore how they inform transnational familial relations.

Chapter 4 – 'Bettering ourselves' and 'meeting the needs of our families': Aspirations, obligations, and ambivalence in Kenyan (family) migration

> I was excited to leave. My mother told me, if I studied hard, I could go abroad for university. It was the time when I was growing up. Everyone I knew wanted to go out [abroad]. Abroad meant success.
>
> – Mercy, a woman in her mid 30s who migrated to London in 1998 to study, though she had already secured a place at the United States International University in Nairobi

> Going out [abroad] meant that they would have better education, better job opportunities. As soon as they got on the plane, they were set. They were destined for better lives. Those who stayed behind like me thought we were doomed…unless they [migrants] helped us.
>
> – Anthony, a man in his early 30s living in Nairobi who has a sister and several cousins in London

Migration is a morally-laden social process that engages migrant and non-migrant kin. While it encompasses economic concerns, it cannot be reduced to them. Rather, the quotes above reflect the promise, possibilities, and (rueful) optimism many Kenyans associate with migration abroad. While Mercy quote's focuses on *her* future, Anthony's comment conveys an understanding of his fate as a non-migrant as inextricably linked to his migrant kin. Both of the quotes allude to how people and place are intertwined in imagination: those who were 'going out' were 'destined for better lives', whereas 'those who stayed behind' in Kenya were 'doomed'. Nonetheless, through their kin's migration, the opportunities and benefits of abroad are frequently seen to extend to those who do not move. The distance separating

migrant and non-migrant kin is then not solely geographic and physical, but also social: will migrants like Mercy remain implicated in a transnational moral economy of relatedness and assist those who remain in Kenya?

This chapter is divided into three parts. In the first part I examine the two reasons for migrating most commonly cited by Kenyans respectively: to 'better themselves' and 'to meet their family's needs'. Examining the migration stories of individual Kenyans, as well as their non-migrant kin's perspectives, facilitates our efforts to understand what migration means to individual migrants and their families, while also helping to make sense of Kenyan migration to the United Kingdom more broadly. I analyze the stated reasons along several different axes that emerged from my research: life stage, generation, and gender. The second part builds on the previous chapter's discussion of the links between migration, imagination, and place. In particular I consider the role of imagination in motivating migration to the United Kingdom and shaping individual and familial expectations of what migration means. The United Kingdom emerges as a largely *imagined* place, though not an arbitrary migration destination. Finally, I consider the social construction of 'migrant' and 'non-migrant' kin as categories inflected in kin relations across space. I argue that, while imagination can propel migration, disjunctures of imagination arise post-migration that can undermine kin relations.

Stories of migration: Meanings of migration

How should we treat the general and seemingly straightforward reasons – 'to better themselves' and 'to meet the needs of their families' – Kenyans give for migrating? As Parkin points out in relation to Luo-speaking urban and rural dwellers in the 1970s, 'the repertoire of possible "reasons" for leaving are wide, being limited only

by what is recognized and therefore acceptable in that particular culture' (1975a: 11). I suggest we treat the reasons as departure points for understanding Kenyan migration, while also using them as counterpoints against which to consider the statements and practices of migrant and non-migrant kin.

Though seemingly individual and family-oriented, the reasons commonly cited for migrating can be seen as part of a larger culturally and socially acceptable narrative of migration. A normative expectation of generalized reciprocity among kin remains prevalent in Kenya, despite historical changes to families and households as units of production, consumption, distribution, and reproduction. In migrating, migrants are entrusted with familial aspirations and come to embody the hopes and expectations of their non-migrant kin, along with their own. Accordingly, non-migrants turn to their migrant kin to ensure their own security and wellbeing. The latter are expected to respond because they are part of a moral economy of relatedness that now stretches from Kenya to the United Kingdom. Migration thus illuminates the comingling of economics and affection, pragmatism and aspiration.

The specific reasons Kenyan migrants give for migrating tend to reflect their particular generational cohort. I use generation here both as a structuring principle of society, that is, 'a mode of categorizing and grouping members of society in terms of both biological position and progression through life course' (Whyte et al. 2008: 4-5), and as the 'location(s)' of age cohorts in history (Mannheim 1952). Generation in the first sense – that is, life stage[72] (particularly in terms of marital and parental status) – is helpful in understanding the social roles and obligations that inform

[72] I am mindful of anthropological criticisms of the concept of life stage (see, for example Johnson-Hanks 2002; Bledsoe 2002). I agree with Bledsoe's comment that 'our lives... do not unfold as a simple response to the passage of time, but are contingent on unpredictable events and turnings (2002: xii). While acknowledging this, it is also important to recognize that particular life stages have different normative moral considerations and expectations attached to them, which shape people's ideas of who they are and how they should conduct themselves.

migration decision-making and travel with migrants when they move. More specifically, my informants who said they migrated to 'meet their families' needs' were typically married and had children at the time of migration; most of them were women. Those who said they migrated to 'better themselves' include both women and men who were mostly unmarried and without children when they migrated. Thus, two transnational family configurations emerge: younger migrant women and men (that is, adult migrant children) and their non-migrant parents, and older 'transnational couples' (Charsley 2012) where the women have migrated and whose non-migrant children were at the time of fieldwork in their teens or 20s. I only encountered a few families in which parent(s) and child(ren), or both husband and wife, migrated. While two of these families were examples of 'typical' family migration in which kin were reunified, that is, one person moved and then sponsored other kin to do so, members of the other two families each pursued their own migration paths to the United Kingdom.

In light of the different ages of migrants and thus different eras in which they were born, it is also helpful to approach Kenyan migrants as comprising two different historical generations. Most migrants in transnational couples ('older migrants') were born in the 1950s, while 'younger migrants' were born between the late 1960s and the late 1970s. According to Mannheim, people who are in the same age group occupy a 'generational location', that is, 'a common location in the historical dimension of the social process' (1952: 289). They are predisposed to certain characteristic modes of thought and experience; they are also limited to a specific range of potential experiences (Mannheim 1952: 291-293). However, the social significance of a historical generation is not found in biological factors. Rather, according to Mannheim, people who share a 'generational location' become

a ‘generation as an actuality’ when concrete bonds form between members of a generational location by ‘being exposed to social and intellectual symptoms of the process of dynamic de-stabilization’, such as, during a time of war, the (de-) colonization of a territory, or a severe financial recession or depression, to name a few examples (1952: 302).

In the case of Kenyans, older migrants came of age in the early days of Kenyan independence, which signaled fundamental changes in all aspects of life and spurred great optimism. They were exposed to greater opportunities than previous generations had enjoyed, particularly in relation to mobility and education. Conversely, younger migrants were born in an era when Kenya was economically strong and the promise of modernization and development still prevailed. However, by the 1980s, Kenya was struggling with economic recession and political corruption, and opportunities were shrinking for young and old (see Chapter Three). Migration outside of Kenya emerged as an important, though unevenly accessible, means for people to realize their own aspirations and those of their families.

In employing the notion of generation, it is important to note that I do not use the definition prevalent in the immigration literature. In this literature, Kenyan migrants I worked among would be considered ‘first generation’ immigrants, as they were born and socialized in Kenya, migrating later as adults; the children born to these migrants in London post-migration are the so-called second generation (Rumbaut 2004: 1165-1166; Eckstein 2002; Levitt and Waters 2002). As with many ‘second generation’ populations, the children of Kenyan migrants are both few in number and still very young, with most being under 10 years of age at the time of fieldwork (cf. Levitt and Waters 2002: 3-4). Given my focus on transnational kin relations, this understanding of generation is less salient.

In what follows, I explore their migration stories, situating them within wider familial, social, and structural contexts. I first consider those who say they migrated to better themselves, before moving on to examine those who say they moved to 'meet their family's needs'. In doing so, I will show that the difference between the reasons exists more at a discursive level that reflects the different social positioning of older and younger migrants, than at the level of practice where the aspirations and expectations of migrants and their non-migrant kin overlap, regardless of differences in life stage, historical generation, or gender.

'Bettering themselves': The social becoming of young migrant men and women

Robert and I met for the first time over coffee at a Café Nero along his bus route home to Greenwich from the insurance company where he worked in North London. An acquaintance had given me Robert's name and suggested I get in touch with him. A short, slim, well-dressed man with a good sense of humor, Robert chatted easily about his move to London and life there. He explained to me that he had migrated there from Nairobi in 1998 to study information technology. His decision to migrate abroad for his studies, he said, offered him a way to 'better himself'. It was an extension of what 'men in [Luo-speaking] Nyanza have done for a long time': they migrate into 'town' to work and then return 'upcountry'. Referring to his migration to London, Robert added, 'it's no different than when my father moved to Nairobi. Now that communications and transportation are so much better, it's easy.'

In Nairobi I met Robert's elder brother Geoffrey at the Coffee House on Mama Ngina Street. Unlike Robert, Geoffrey was a tall, large-framed man with a more casual sense of style, yet he shared his brother's sense of humor and was quick to laugh. As we chatted, I asked why he had not gone abroad to study like his three

younger brothers. Geoffrey explained that he had finished his studies, while the fees were still covered by the government. But when his younger brothers were nearing university age in the mid 1990s, the fees were higher and the sole responsibility of students and their families. He added that their parents realized their salaries as a lecturer (father) and secretary (mother) would not cover the university fees of their three younger sons. At the time, the young men could not count on working in Nairobi to earn the necessary funds because un- and underemployment were widespread. However, if they went abroad, for instance to the United Kingdom, his brothers could work while studying, since there were 'lots of opportunities there'.

Robert typifies a broad group of Kenyan migrants in London who said they migrated to 'better themselves'. They tend to be both women and men who migrated in their late teens to mid 20s. Most were living with their parents or other family members prior to their migration, had just finished secondary or vocational school, and were looking for jobs or further educational opportunities. In the dominant 'social imaginary' (Taylor 2002: 106-108), Kenyans understood educational certificates and degrees to be closely linked to personal and social development. Such credentials could in turn be materialized in the form of steady incomes and materially comfortable lifestyles, as well as translated into social prestige and recognition. These imaginings were linked to their ideal life course and, thus, their social becoming (cf. Vigh 2006b).

This generation was both the beneficiary and casualty of changing education policies in Kenya. President Daniel T. arap Moi's continued Kenyatta's policy of expanding access to education as a crucial strategy in promoting national economic development. This led to building more schools and training additional teachers. The government progressively abolished direct school fees throughout the decade,

extending free education from the first four classes, for which fees were abolished in 1974, to the next two classes in 1980, and to the final class in 1985 (Bunyi 2006: 3). Between 1979 and 1989, the number of pupils enrolled in primary school rose from 3,698,196 to 4,994,300 and in universities from 7,292 students to 29,900 students (Mwega and Kabubo 1993: 33). Nearly a third of public spending went to meeting the government's commitment to provide primary school education to all children (Branch 2011: 146).

Over the course of the 1980s, structural adjustment policies were introduced that progressively shifted public investment away from education and resulted in the implementation of a cost-sharing system by the end of the decade. Moreover, investment in expanding higher educational opportunities did not follow investments at primary and secondary levels, despite the demand from the fast growing and increasingly educated population. By the end of the 1980s, there were only four public universities in the country; the number increased to six universities by the mid 1990s.[73] For those finishing their educations, the Kenyan economy was growing worse throughout this period, which meant few job opportunities of the kind that their educations had prepared them for.

If education was understood as generating expectations of inclusion in the modern sector, as a means of realizing the promise of modernization and gaining recognition, then the frustrations of the generation that came of age during the 1980s become more comprehensible.[74] Young people's ability to embark on a normative

[73] The four universities were University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Moi University, and Eggerton University. Maseno University and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology were awarded university status in the early 1990s. During the late 1990s and especially the 2000s, numerous private universities were established in the country.

[74] This sense of dashed hopes and mounting disappointments remains prevalent in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa. For example, Geissler and Prince refer to pervasive feelings of 'sense of loss' among Luo-speaking people in western Kenya with whom they worked, though there is no consensus on what has been lost (2010: 2-3).

and desirable path to adult responsibility and higher social status and recognition – namely, through securing a steady income, marrying, and starting a family – was uncertain. The 1990s also coincided with the so-called youth bulge, a large cohort of young people coming of age in the wake of Kenya having had one of the highest fertility rates in the world.[75] The trend Parkin (1975b) identified in Nairobi in the 1970s of unemployed people often being better educated than employed people only grew more pronounced during the period (cf. Mwega and Kabubo 1993).[76] Without decent wages, the middle class lifestyle and prosperity promised by independence was slipping further out of reach. This created a frustrated cohort of people, many of whom yearned for different lives than those of their parents and/ or grandparents. They feared 'social death', that is, 'the absence of the possibility of a worthy life' (Hage 2003). Thus, not only were Kenyans then struggling with an economic crisis during this period, but also with a crisis of meaning linked to the failings of development (cf. Ferguson 1999: 13-16).

While most younger migrants I met moved to London from Nairobi, those migrants who were living elsewhere prior to their migration tended to be from the Kikuyu-speaking Kiambu District in Central Province. Many were raised in villages and towns that run along the northern border of Nairobi. These areas were once colonial labor 'reserves' in a region where land has only grown scarcer as the population has continued to increase, and work opportunities in rural areas continue to decrease (see Chapter Three). For both urban young people and their rural peers,

[75] According to the Population Council, Kenya had one of the highest fertility rates in the world in 1977 (Askew et al. 2009: 3). While the rate began to decrease dramatically over the subsequent decades – dropping from a high of 8.1 births per woman in 1977 to 4.7 births per woman in 1998 – the children born prior to that drop were entering their teenage years at the start of the 1990s.

[76] Immediately following independence, efforts to 'Africanize' government ministries and the public sector led to Kenyans being rapidly promoted, sometimes above their level of qualifications (Anderson 1970: 80).

the lives they imagined did not seem attainable in Kenya in the late 1980s and 1990s. Physical mobility within the country would not necessarily translate into social mobility the way it had for many in the older generation, including many of their parents, when they were coming of age.

Migration projects of young Kenyans like Robert, I would argue, should also be understood as familial endeavors because their realization hinged on the involvement and assistance of kin. In turn, by bettering themselves, these young migrants would be better positioned to assist their non-migrant kin eventually. In light of this, it is important to consider next those who cited their family's needs as the reason they migrated.

'Meeting our families' needs': Negotiating familial tensions among older transnational couples

'Why did you come to London'? I asked Jane one evening when I was staying over at her flat in Greenwich. A large woman in her mid 50s with a warm manner and a penchant for brightly colored dresses, Jane was born in Kikuyu-speaking Murang'a District in Central Province. She migrated to London in October 2002 to assume a position as a nurse at a NHS[77] hospital. Her five daughters remained in Nairobi with her husband. She said that she and her husband were not earning enough at the time to be able to send their four younger children to reputable schools.[78] Her husband's work as a lecturer was not what she called 'transferable', but her work as a nurse was. 'Transferable'? I asked. She explained that her husband would not be able to get a

[77] The NHS, or National Health Service, is Britain's publicly funded health care system. It also refers to two of the other publicly funded health care systems in the United Kingdom, those of Scotland and Wales.

[78] Her five daughters were aged 11 to 25 years old at the time of fieldwork. The eldest had finished university, the second-born was attending university, the third- and fourth-born daughters were in boarding secondary schools, and the last-born was still in primary school.

comparable position in London the way she could, so she was the one to move. 'How did you tell your daughters you were going so faraway'? I wondered. 'I sat them down and told them I was thinking of moving to [the] UK. I explained that I could earn more money there as a senior nurse.' She went on, 'it was difficult for all of us, but they understood why I was doing it – I was trying to give them opportunities. If they'd objected, I wouldn't have gone.'

Many older migrants like Jane had already migrated once before, internally to Nairobi during the 1960s and 1970s to obtain the kind of work that their formal educations had prepared them for and which could only be found in cities (Oucho 1996: 12-13; see also Chapter Three). Prior to their migration to London, they worked in professional jobs as teachers, accountants, nurses, secretaries, and administrators. Employed in the formal sector, they were likely to be affected by the sectoral reforms that came with structural adjustment loans in the 1980s. The aspirations of these largely middle class families were undermined by these cutbacks such that some decided their ambitions might be better pursued elsewhere.

The year Jane moved to London – 2002 – the United Kingdom faced shortages in unskilled and skilled occupations, including nursing. The NHS was recruiting highly skilled nurses from abroad, often from poor countries in the Southern Hemisphere.[79] Based on data from the U.K. Nurses and Midwifery Council, Kenya was the 11th largest sending country in 2001-2002 – the peak year for overseas recruitment – and accounted for 10.5 percent of newly registered overseas nurses (Nursing and Midwifery Council 2004: 10).

[79] The recruitment of highly skilled workers, in this case nurses, was part of the Labour government's efforts to link business interests and migration in order to advance Britain's position globally (Flynn 2005; see Chapter One). However, overseas recruitment sparked controversy because it was seen as fueling nursing shortages and service gaps in the nurses' countries of origin, thus, exacerbating public health problems (Volvqvartz 2004; McVeigh 2006).

While some husbands joined their (nurse) wives as secondary migrants (Buchan et al. 2005: 7-8), others like Jane's husband stayed at 'home' with their children (cf. George 2005; Pasura 2008). The emergence of this particular configuration of transnational Kenyan families – transnational couples – is often explained with reference to the so-called inherent qualities of women. As many (male and female) informants explained to me, women's innate 'flexibility' and 'patience' allows them to 'adapt to change'. Combined with their 'natural know-how' as carers, they are considered well suited for migration to the United Kingdom and for the kinds of work opportunities available there.

The migration of older women appears to challenge the historical pattern of internal male migration in Kenya (see Chapter Three). However, it cannot be assumed that their migration reflects greater autonomy or hints at some kind of liberation from gendered social constraints. Instead, their migration is better understood as reflecting the ways in which gender shapes and structures who moves and who stays (cf. Pessar 2003). Many older men did not see the need to try to migrate internationally because of prior experiences of patriarchal authority that have enabled them to assert their power even when absent. Kenyan men – for instance, Luo-speaking men like Robert's father (Oucho 1996; Parkin 1978) – who migrate into Nairobi and leave their wives in rural areas, often still retain decision-making power over affairs at 'home' (Nelson 1992: 121-129). Older women's migration to London then emerges as a case of prescribed mobility within a discourse of familyhood, that is, their decision to migrate was deemed essential to advancing the well-being of their families. However, this discourse obscures the kinds of tensions within families discussed below, which have also contributed to married women's migration.

While in Nairobi, I met Jane's eldest daughter Rose, whose perspective on her mother's migration further complicates Jane's story. In her early 30s at the time of fieldwork (she was born in 1977 at the peak of Kenya's fertility boom), Rose works as an account manager at a multinational company in Nairobi, having been promoted over time from an entry-level administrative position. As we got to know each other, I learned to count on Rose's candidness regardless of the topic. According to Rose, the family's finances were not tight because Jane and her husband were not earning enough money as I had been told. Instead, it was because Rose's father had stopped paying his children's school fees years before. By way of explanation, Rose said:

> He comes from a generation in which men's main role was to be a provider and to have many sons. But he only had daughters, and for a long time mum had been the provider. It was hard. Mum expected him to be a provider too. But when she started providing, she displaced him. He started drinking more and more.

This left the responsibility to Jane whose salary could not cover all of the family's expenses.

Based on the experiences of other informants who are contemporaries of Rose's mother, her husband's refusal to pay school fees was not unusual: domestic budgeting has often been a source of disagreement in many middle class families (cf. Stichter 1987, 1988). According to a spending survey of middle and lower middle class households in two estates in Nairobi, it was common for women's salaries to be spent on household and children's expenses, particularly domestic help (Stichter 1988: 191). Conversely, men paid for more expensive items, such as furniture, clothing, and cars, as well as spending money on entertainment and investments in their rural home areas. I found this to be the case for many of my older, middle class, married women informants across ethnic backgrounds. This indicates that having a waged job more often than not translated into women having increased financial responsibilities for their families, which challenges the presumption of a natural link

between control over resources and increased autonomy (Robertson and Berger 1986a: 17).

Adding to the complex picture that was emerging of Jane's migration is the fact that, at the same time as Jane applied to work in the United Kingdom, Rose said Jane had applied for a better-paying nursing position at another hospital in Nairobi. When Jane sat down with Rose and her younger siblings to talk about the move to London, Rose said she was surprised that her mother was thinking of migrating. Ever since Jane had started working longer hours when Rose was a teenager, Rose had taken over many responsibilities at home as the oldest daughter and was privy to how much their monthly bills were. According to her, the salary of the Nairobi-based position, which Jane had also been offered, paid more than enough to cover their expenses; but the salary was not as high as that of the position in London, nor as prestigious. Though Jane had told me that her children understood she was moving for *their* benefit, Rose said to me matter-of-factly: 'Mum left because she didn't want to deal with Dad. I understand her choice. People always say they migrate for the "good of their families," but they do it for themselves. But you can't say that.'

Several older women informants, including women of Kikuyu, Luo, and Luhya backgrounds, who moved without their husbands described similar kinds of power dynamics within their own marriages. Two of them joked with me about how living in London was 'a holiday from their lives in Nairobi' where they were responsible for dropping off and picking up their children from school, feeding, bathing, and putting the children to bed, and then cooking for their husbands. Though they may have employed house girls, the latter could not be allowed to cook for and serve their husbands because 'there are certain things the wife has to do'. The image of the strong male 'provider' looms large for many women, who acknowledge it as 'how

men of our generation are'.

Situations such as Jane's reveal differences within families that run along lines of gender, as well as tensions that play out across generations. The desire to migrate often intensifies in light of conflicts within individuals' spheres of primary social relations (cf. Åkesson 2004: 63). Migration by older Kenyan women, it seems, is a socially acceptable way for families to meet their needs, while arguably also addressing marital discord among couples. There are numerous historical antecedents of Kenyan women migrating, in their case into Nairobi, to escape familial and marital conflicts, widowhood, and childlessness (Bujra 2005: 124; Frederiksen 2009: 75). Adopting a narrow economic perspective on migration would eclipse the kinds of socially informed dynamics within families, which are particularly relevant for understanding transnational kin relations.

Thus far, I have discussed the reasons Kenyans cite for migrating, disaggregating who gave which reason in terms of their life stage, before situating the migrants and their reasons within wider familial, social, and structural contexts. These contexts reveal that many kin were involved in the dreaming and planning of migration, as well as in the efforts to make the actual move possible. Moreover, their migration has historical antecedents of internal mobility, which contributed to international migration being seen as a means of fulfilling individual and collective aspirations. At the same time, I have suggested that the two reasons are part of a socially acceptable discourse that nonetheless blurs at the level of practice. Younger migrants moved to better themselves, but also carried with them their familial expectations of reciprocity, while older migrant women migrated to meet their family's needs but also to manage marital tension and gain the social prestige associated with working abroad.

In the next part, I turn my attention to how imaginings of 'abroad' fueled their migration and contributed to the expectations of transnational kin, migrant and non-migrant alike.

Imaginings of 'abroad': Migration, imagination, and place

> 'People say that because he has finished all the learning in Kenya, he will now go far away to...'
> 'England.'
> 'Or Burma.'
> 'England and Burma and Bombay and India are all the same places. You have to cross the sea before you can reach there.'
>
> – wa Thiong'o (1987: 4)

Lucy, a slender, 40-something year-old woman who wore her hair in long, thin braids, and I met at a Pentecostal church service in Greenwich one Sunday morning, near where she lives with her 10-year old son who was born in London. Over several lengthy and emotionally intense conversations, she eventually shared her migration story with me, a journey that took her from Nairobi to Athens, Greece and eventually London. Lucy was raised in both Kiambu District where she lived with her grandmother, and in Nairobi where her mother moved to work as a police officer after the death of Lucy's father when she was still a child. Always a diligent student, Lucy was encouraged by her mother to study and speak English and Swahili, not her mother tongue, Kikuyu. Her mother promised she would help Lucy to attend university abroad if she did well in school. As she explained to me, she had little idea what 'abroad' meant, though she imagined it would be 'better' than Kenya: 'I associated the places white people came from as being better than African places'.

However, as Lucy remarked to me, 'no one back in the late 1980s in Kenya would wake up and decide to migrate if they didn't already know someone who was abroad.' In her case, she had a cousin who was living in Athens with her Kenyan

husband. Each time Mary visited Kenya, Lucy explained, they would discuss the prospect of Lucy joining Mary in Athens once she had finished her studies. Lucy's younger brothers were eager for her to move, hoping she could eventually help them migrate. Her mother began collecting the money for Lucy's airline ticket through a combination of her own savings and raising funds from family members, friends and others at numerous *harambee* gatherings.[80] In 1988 19-year-old Lucy left Nairobi and headed to Europe with plans to study law at university in Athens.

The notion of imagination is an important element in trying to understand what informed Kenyans' migration decisions. Imaginings are often expressed geographically in the sense of people holding socially and culturally constructed conceptions of particular locations, spaces, countries, and the people who inhabit these physical spaces (cf. Massey 2006; Gregory 1994). For many Kenyans, notions of 'abroad' are associated with ideas of success and social status, which are themselves historically connected to education and social status.

Though the mass media has featured prominently in anthropological discussions of imagination and migration (see, for example, Appadurai 1996a: 5-11), it is hardly the only source of images to fuel people's imaginings. Notably, the period in which Kenyans began leaving the country in greater numbers in the 1980s largely predates a world in which 'many people watch the same television shows and long for the same commodities wherever they are' (Glick Schiller 2003: 126). The 1982 presidential coup attempt had led to a crackdown on political and press freedoms. With the introduction of multi-party politics in 1992, however, the

[80] The practice of coming together to achieve a shared goal or to help another is embodied in the spirit of *harambee* (Swahili for 'let us pull together'), which refers to a sense of mutual assistance and responsibility and community self-reliance that Kenyatta popularized in the early days of Kenya's independence. It is a fundraising gathering that takes the form of a party where the organizers host the guests with the expectation that the guests will make a financial contribution. *Harambees* are held to raise funds for a communal goal, such as school or church building, or for a wedding (see Chapter Six).

liberalization of mass media began, albeit in an unregulated manner (Mbeke 2008). The number of television channels started expanding, as did the programming. However, access to television was still confined to wealthy people, especially in urban areas where the electrical grids could support such technology.

What fed Kenyans' imaginings of 'abroad' and the 'west' then? Prior to the mid 1950s when the Royal Technical College was established in Nairobi (it became the University of Nairobi in 1970), there were no institutions of higher education in the country or the region. In that era, continuing one's education necessitated leaving Kenya, and where better to pursue one's studies than in the country of the colonizing government? The most famous Kenyan to study abroad is perhaps the first President of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, who studied anthropology under Bronislaw Malinowski at the London School of Economics in the mid 1930s. Many of those students returned to Kenya to become leaders in government and business, particularly in the post-independence period (Okoth 2003). Even with the establishment of universities in Kenya, studying abroad has retained its prestigious allure with students attending universities in Britain and professionals like nurses, doctors, and engineers being remanded to British institutions to develop further their skills and knowledge. Time abroad and enhanced social status are thus associated in the minds of Kenyans.

In addition to the political, social, and educational legacy left by Britain's colonization of Kenya discussed in Chapter Three, Kenya, particularly Nairobi, has long been a hub for trade, finance, and international development and humanitarian activities in the East African region. Many United Nations offices for the region are located there, as well as hundreds of international nongovernmental organizations that fund programs in the country. Integral to the local political and economic

landscape, diplomats, expatriate employees, foreign donors and investors are part of the imaginations of Kenyans. Their presence in the capital contributes to ideas about who foreigners are and what life 'abroad' is like. Moreover, Kenya was and still is a popular destination for tourists to visit wildlife game parks for which Kenya is famous and yet which many Kenyans have never visited because of the prohibitive expense of doing so.

Thus far, the discussion of Kenyans' associations with the idea of 'abroad' has said little about the particular places which constitute 'abroad', such as the United Kingdom and London. Instead, 'abroad' has emerged as part of the larger aspirations for one's life. This makes sense because for many migrants, their imaginings of 'abroad' reveal more about their social ambitions and predicaments in Kenya than any actual locality abroad.

Younger Kenyan migrants in particular in the 1980s and 1990s understood their inability to engage in the process of social becoming, to become 'someone', in Kenya in spatialized and 'place-bound' terms, that is, it was specific to Kenya and its social problems and limitations (Carling 2002). In other words, if Lucy, Robert and their peers were in a different (and thus better) place abroad, they would be able to succeed. Unlike older generations, the 'somewhere' thought to be necessary in order to become 'someone' was re-conceptualized as somewhere abroad – preferably the United Kingdom or the United States – rather than 'town', that is, Nairobi (see Chapter Three).

I would argue this understanding of Kenya is related to the geographical imagination of many Kenyans I met, both migrant and non-migrant. They saw Kenya as 'behind', 'backward', and needing to 'catch up' with 'advanced' countries like Britain. Though rooted in real material disparities between Kenya and the

United Kingdom, these comparative and relational images also have symbolic significance. The dialectically contrasting images of homeland and receiving countries are 'the ideological concomitant of international dependency' (Gardner 1993: 1). Similar to what Gardner identified among Bangladeshi migrants in the United Kingdom, western countries, referred to in her case by the Bengali word 'bidesh', are understood as 'metaphors for power and advancement. While expressing the life force of foreign countries, it [bidesh] is also a metaphor for all that is wrong with home' (Gardner 1995: 16). Moreover, this conceptualization reflects an understanding of places (in this case, countries) as being on a single path toward development such that 'geographical differences (real, co-existing differences) are transformed into places in a historical queue' (Massey 2006: 49). Differences between countries are thus rendered temporally in terms of history such that Kenya and the United Kingdom are not understood as co-eval, the implications of which I return to in Chapters Five and Seven.

Notably, the notion of Kenya as 'behind' can also be understood with reference to different parts of the country itself. In discussing recent Luo history, Geissler and Prince make the point that:

> colonial and post-colonial constructions of space fused the then-now dichotomy with spatial dichotomies in western Kenya: the colonial categorization of Luo space as a 'reserve' – a remote and undeveloped space of the past – created a geographical framework in which time figures – development, progress, modernity, Tradition and nostalgia – were rendered spatial: rural, agricultural, Luo, black spaces versus urban, industrial, white spaces (2010: 50).

The desire to migrate for Lucy and others of her generation may be understood as a stronger impetus than being motivated by a concrete idea of moving to a specific country or city. The United Kingdom as the place on which many Kenyans' ideas of 'abroad' became fixated and to which they migrated, I would argue, emerges as a largely imagined one for many Kenyans prior to their migration. However, this does

not mean the choice of the United Kingdom was arbitrary. Just as aspirations are not imaginary, but real, even if inaccessible (Bourdieu 1984: 150), the United Kingdom was not an arbitrary destination, though it was an imagined one. As I will explore below, such imaginings can have real consequences for migrants' lives and transnational kin relations.

The making of 'migrant' and 'non-migrant' kin: Emergent transnational family dynamics

> It was a big deal taking people to the airport back then [in the late 1990s]. Once my sister passed through airport security, I saw her through the glass window. She looked so happy, like where she was going was better than here. On the other side of the window, we stood watching, as the security guards badgered us to keep moving.
>
> – Emma, a woman in her early 30s living in Nairobi whose sister Mercy[81] lives in London

> It is very hard to be there [Nairobi] when people are hungry and you are eating.
>
> – Helen,[82] a woman in her mid 50s living in London with her husband, who is the eldest of nine siblings, most of whom still live in Kenya

Thus far I have discussed the reasons migrants gave for moving to London and introduced the role of imagination in propelling their movement. While I have argued that their migration be understood as familial endeavors, the act of migration emplaces kin in different localities and further differentiates families, giving rise to 'migrant' and 'non-migrant' kin. The quotes above convey the tangle of emotions

[81] Mercy's quote opens this chapter. She is Emma's older sister.
[82] Anthony whose quote also opens this chapter is the youngest brother of Helen's husband.

and images that infuse subsequent transnational kin relations. Emma's quote hints at her yearning and envy of her migrant sister, as well as resentment at being stuck 'on the other side of the window'. Conversely, drawing on the metaphor of 'eating' common in Kenya, which means having the resources to provide for oneself in this context, Helen's quote is suggestive of the tension and guilt that migrants feel vis-à-vis their non-migrant kin who may be struggling in Kenya.[83] Both quotes speak to expectations of familial reciprocity, while also hinting at new sources of tension and distance among kin, which play out between parents and children, siblings, and couples, and articulate with differences rooted in gender, generation, and mobility opportunities. Finally, they allude to the salience of particular places to Helen and Emma's understanding of the good fortune of migrants and the predicament of non-migrants respectively.

Carling suggests that the categories of 'migrant' and 'non-migrant' can be analyzed at two levels: at the individual level, which concerns relations between migrant parents and non-migrant children or migrants and non-migrant parents and siblings; and at the societal level in terms of the socially constructed categories of 'migrant' and 'non-migrant' (2008: 1456). By interpenetrating kin relations and generating these categories, migration becomes another differentiating force within families, in addition to generation, age, and gender.

Similar to the Cape Verdeans Carling studies, experience of life abroad is salient to Kenyan ideas of migrants as a social category (2008: 1456). Migrants are transformed into 'Kenyans in diaspora' – a term many migrants use to refer to themselves – through the act of migration, making the fact that they live abroad

[83] It is also used to refer to political corruption and the misuse and abuse of public resources for private gain in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa (Wrong 2010; Bayart 2009; see also Chapter Three).

central to how they are seen (cf. Carling 2008: 1456). Being abroad is considered an achievement in itself, perhaps *the* achievement. Moreover, it is also considered a *familial* achievement – that is, it is not only an achievement for those who migrate, but also for their families on whom their relative's migration reflects well. Though migrants left Kenya as members of different historical generations and were diverse in terms of life stage, class, gender, and ethnicity, I would argue that, through migrating, migrants from Kenya became one 'migration generation' vis-à-vis their non-migrant kin in Kenya (see Chapter Five) and vis-à-vis the United Kingdom in that they arrived during the same period (cf. Berg 2011; see Chapter Six). In this way, the diversity evident among Kenyan migrants with regard to occupation, financial resources, and legal status, not to mention gender, age, marital status, and ethnicity, is largely leveled. This point is particularly important with regard to expectations of familial reciprocity in that *all* migrants by virtue of being migrants are expected to assist their families. As will be discussed in Chapter Five, however, other aspects of social differentiation within families – especially in terms of gender and marital status – re-emerge as salient to migrants' negotiation of such expectations.

There is one important point of differentiation among migrants that has (perceived) implications for kin obligations: a correlation between the length of time abroad and a migrant's success. According to Emma, people often ask different questions about her and her siblings based on where they live. A person will inquire about what kind of jobs she and her brothers who live in Kenya have and how long they have worked there. However, Emma explained to me with exasperation, when the person learns her older sister lives in London, only one question is of interest: how long has her sister lived outside Kenya? It does not matter what migrant kin are

doing abroad, only the length of time they have been away. Many Kenyan migrants believe the expectations of non-migrant kin toward them increase the longer they are away. The comment of Fred, an informant in his mid 30s who migrated to London to study in 2000, captures this sentiment: 'it's hard to go back because people expect a lot from you. The longer you stay away, the bigger the expectations grow. Someone who doesn't go home for six years is expected to be six times richer.' This belief is reinforced by another one evident in a later comment of his: 'when you don't go home, they assume you're on holiday at the beach', which suggests migrants believe their lives are seen by non-migrants as being 'easy'.

'Non-migrants' as a social category are constructed in relation to migrants. They are the people who migrants stay in touch with via telephone calls and text messages and from whom migrants receive updates about what is going on at 'home'. They may take care of migrants' homes and other property while the latter are abroad, or oversee the building of a new home. They are the recipients of gifts and remittances. Non-migrant kin also welcome migrants back to Kenya and into their homes. The fact that non-migrants remain in Kenya becomes salient because of the symbolic power of Kenya in the imaginings of many migrants that emerges post-migration. It is an important and contradictory corollary to the negative images of Kenya mentioned earlier: though migrants consider Kenya to be 'backward' and 'behind', many also refer to it as 'home' and express longing and nostalgia for their country of origin.[84] As Isaiah whose wedding I attended (see Chapter 6) told me, 'Kenya is a beautiful country. People are healthy and eat organic food that they

[84] In migration and refugee studies, the idea of 'home' is often understood in terms of a 'myth of return' (Anwar 1979), implicit in which is ideas about places of origin being natural and inevitable sites of belonging. However, Zetter suggests that it is more productively thought of as the 'myth of home', referring to what has been left behind and reflecting a homeland orientation among migrants and refugees (1999: 6-7).

grow themselves.' Notably, implicit in his description of Kenya are issues of concern to (middle class) people in Britain, namely, health and the quality of food, suggesting that his image of Kenya is dialectically produced vis-à-vis the United Kingdom.

This discussion reveals that the categorization of kin based on their mobility is a homogenizing and binary process, just as imaginings of Kenya and the United Kingdom are an essentializing process. Yet, as we have seen, these processes draw on images that are in fact the opposite: they are internally diverse, even contradictory, and indefinite, rather than uniform, coherent, and bounded.

Given that migration is seen as a familial achievement, these ideas about migrants and non-migrants, as well as about the United Kingdom and Kenya, play out transnationally, shaping kin dynamics across space. Having kin abroad is a source of pride that elevates a family's social status and also signals the prospect of future financial or other assistance for non-migrant kin. Assisting kin in whatever form is a normative ideal for most Kenyans that has historical and familial antecedents, even if its realization has become increasingly unreliable in practice over time. For instance, Jane whose migration story was discussed earlier, along with most of my older informants, benefited from the assistance of elder siblings and other relatives who helped them move into Nairobi around the time they finished their own educations and began looking for work in the 1970s. In the opening vignette of the thesis, Margaret's maternal uncle paid for her secondary school education, just as Lucy's cousin helped her pursue her own education. Examples such as these are important not to lose sight of because they provide a context for understanding non-migrant expectations, and the discourses they draw on, that will be discussed in the next chapter.

Based on his work among Luo-speaking urban and rural dwellers in the 1970s, Parkin pointed out: 'they [migrants] are even greater sources of patronage for rural kin than they might otherwise be had they remained at home' (1975b: 149). If imagination spurs migration, then I would argue that based on the earlier discussion migrating internationally, especially to the United Kingdom, contributes to higher expectations among both migrant and non-migrant kin than had the former only migrated within Kenya. More specifically, migrants have high expectations of what their lives in the United Kingdom hold for them, and their non-migrant kin possess their own high expectations about how they might benefit from having a relative abroad. But, as I will argue below, imagination may be a motivating force for migration, but it may also be a potentially corrosive one for kin relations.

Gaps in imaginings and experiences

While going abroad is indeed an achievement, realizing one's aspirations once there may be another matter. It is in this space between migrant aspirations and non-migrant expectations, on one hand, and lived experiences, on the other, that the contours of the tensions and contradictions in transnational kin relations become visible. Lucy's story is again illustrative here. Immediately upon her arrival in Athens, she began a job that her cousin had arranged for her – working as a live-in au pair for a Greek family during the week and returning to Mary's home on weekends. After Mary 'took' Lucy's first few paychecks to pay the overdue rent, she told me, Lucy decided to stop working. But being around her cousin's house, she went on, meant she was now expected to 'cook meals and care for her cousin's six children' while their parents were working.

Though Lucy expressed anger at her situation when she first arrived in Athens, it is hardly unusual for senior kin to expect a junior relative to assist and even to make decisions without involving the person in question. Even the ways Lucy was expected to contribute are not unusual among Kenyans: whether through monetary support of one's family or by helping out with domestic chores, including caring for nieces and nephews and cooking meals, such familial assistance was and is a (gendered) social norm in Kenya. This point is important to note because it underscores how, as social relations get stretched across space, they are still infused with particular social and cultural expectations, norms, and values, in particular generational and gendered ones. Expectations of familial reciprocity that arise post-migration are in fact embedded in existing social relations.

The gap between Lucy's expectations of migration and her new life in Athens was not only evident in her kin relations, but also in her own life. When Lucy tried to apply to university to study Law, she learned that she needed to speak Greek. Given that she moved with the intention of studying, this gap in her knowledge meant she had to defer her plans even to apply to university. This gap, I would suggest, arises from the particular social and historical moment in which she first left Kenya in the late 1980s when media access and coverage in Kenya was limited. Migration stories like hers reflect Smith's point (2006) that imaginings are socially and historically determinate acts. Three years after first arriving in Athens, she finally applied to begin her studies, only to find she was not accepted to study Law, but rather Philosophy and Psychology. Making matters worse, neither of the subjects was eligible for government funding, and she did not have enough savings to cover the fees.

Devastated, Lucy realized she would be unable to study, so she began working

illegally on her student visa. During a police raid of the restaurant where she worked as a waitress, she was arrested. She refused to give the police her name or tell them her country of origin: 'I couldn't go back', she said to me matter-of-factly. 'I still had no degree. My friends were finished with their studies, and some had married and started having children. Yet I was supposed to be the clever one in our family and among my friends.' In her imagination, the 'future' which migration had promised her was at best deferred, while the lives of some of her peers in Nairobi progressed. As she said ruefully,

> You're never doing what you want, but what you have links to. You are always doing something else in order to pursue them [your dreams], but never doing them, which also means you're never getting where you want to go. Your dreams are always just out of reach.

Despite her struggles, her mother and younger brothers' expectations of assistance weighed heavily on her, propelling her to migrate to London in 1993, rather than return to Kenya.

She told me that she knew of several Kenyans living in the United Kingdom and decided she would try to go there. At the time, Kenyans did not need visas to travel to either the United Kingdom or Germany, something she had learned from other migrants. Believing the Greek authorities would not let her leave Athens with a return ticket nor would the British authorities let her into the country if she had a one-way ticket, she bought two one-way tickets – one from Athens to London and another from London to Frankfurt.

As mentioned earlier, simply going abroad is considered *the* achievement among would-be migrants and non-migrants alike. But, having migrated, many migrants learn that it is not that simple. If leaving Kenya is the key to one's success – if success is 'place-bound' and they have moved to a country full of opportunities – then how can migrants (or their families) make sense of such difficulties? The

essentialized images of Kenya and the United Kingdom referred to earlier contribute to migrants' consternation and predicament, shaping their understanding of their own agency and sense of possibility. They are 'the ideological concomitant of the dominance of the capitalist "core" over its "periphery"' (Gardner 1993: 8).

Following this line of thinking, the seemingly logical explanation is that it is their own fault, a consequence of their weaknesses and failings.[85] As Lucy said to me, 'how could I explain? I couldn't go back.' Her comments reveal the intertwining of temporal and spatial dimensions at the level of lived experience. More specifically, Greece and later the United Kingdom were where her future was supposed to be, while Kenya represented her past where she had no future. Yet in migrating, she became stuck in time *and* space. Thus, her lived experience defies the idea of simultaneity holding together the transnational social field at the level of practice (cf. M.P. Smith 2005: 240).

Lucy's struggles did not mesh with her own imaginings of life abroad, much less with those of her non-migrant kin. While her network of kinship ties made possible her migration and life outside Kenya, the network proved to be a structure that also constrained her (Brettell 2002; Boyd 1989). Her story illuminates the social and personal stakes in transnational kin dynamics. I would suggest that the gaps in information and understanding that arise are closely connected to transnational kin being emplaced in different contexts; such gaps create what I refer to as disjunctures of imagination.

[85] Vigh makes a similar point about the young men among whom he worked in Guinea Bissau, stating that 'rather than seeing themselves as inhabiting a history of exploitation and degradation, my informants described themselves as the producers and bearers of a history of decline and destruction' (2009: 100). In other words, they do not interpret their predicament as related to the current and historical position of Bissau (the capital of Guinea-Bissau) within the geo-political framework of nation-states.

Conclusion

In this chapter migration has been approached as a domain of interaction such that it is understood as embedded in wider social relations between migrant and non-migrant kin. While the stories of migration have reflected economic concerns, I have shown that pragmatism cannot be conflated with (economic) determinism. I have argued instead that these stories of migration are better understood as stories of 'family migration' that reveal the long-standing links between physical and social mobility among Kenyans, which now extend to the United Kingdom.

However, Kenyan migration does not conform to the more typical types of family migration (Kofman 2004) – namely, family reunification, marriage migration, or instances when an entire family migrates at once. Instead, it supports an expanded conceptualization of family migration whereby 'a family migration event is helpfully understood as one in which a migration decision is made within the context of a family even if only one family member migrates' (Cooke 2008: 260). Arguably, this is the case for migrants from many parts of the world, which the analytical focus on economic explanations has long obscured. In doing so, another difference from much of the family migration literature emerged in that the families of older migrant women were not only prepared to live apart for prolonged periods with little intention of reunifying in the destination country, but that it was culturally acceptable to do so (cf. Sørenson and Olwig 2002).

Generation in the sense of life stage, I suggest, is a productive starting point for contextualizing Kenyan migration within the lives of migrants themselves and their kin. A migrant's life stage at the time of migration shapes which reason they give to the question of why they migrated – to 'better oneself' or to 'meet familial needs'. These reasons must be seen as part of the same social and cultural narrative

of migration. Gender also plays an important role in shaping who migrates, particularly in the case of older migrants. What emerges are two main groups of migrants and, thus, two transnational family configurations: younger migrant women and men (and their non-migrant parents and siblings) and older women migrants (older transnational couples with non-migrant husbands).

The familial dynamics discussed further illuminate the non-economic dimensions of migration. In doing so, it is possible to see how migration articulates with socially shaped and interpersonal tensions between (older) couples and familial generations. The migration stories demonstrate that transnational households must be approached as centers of potential struggle *and* as moral economies based on solidarity and reciprocity. Compared to instances of internal migration, it was older Kenyan women who migrated, rather than Kenyan men. While they may have moved to meet their families' needs, the tensions among married couples suggest that migration also provides a socially acceptable means of managing these tensions, though, as I will show later, marital friction often follows them to London. For younger migrants, migration offered a way to pursue their aspirations and engage in the process of social becoming that seemed increasingly unattainable in Kenya in the late 1980s and 1990s. But they migrated, entrusted with familial expectations that, as we will see later, they try to negotiate and limit.

I have also shown that disjunctures of imagination emerge between migrant and non-migrant kin as the lived experiences of migrants conflict with their shared (and largely imagined) expectations prior to migration. I have argued that imaginings of both Kenya and the United Kingdom, which were neither uniform nor bounded, but rather diverse and indefinite, interpenetrated transnational kin relations. The gender and generational tensions within families complicate the dominant

cultural narratives of migrating for familial needs or to better oneself. Together, the stories of older and younger migrants highlight the intertwining of economics and affection, pragmatism and aspiration.

From this discussion, it is clear that migration does not create a blank slate for kin relations, but rather becomes another vector through which tensions and opportunities, expectations and obligations flow, and feelings of guilt and envy, sorrow and joy, ambivalence and determination travel. Moreover, these relations cannot be taken for granted when there are limited opportunities for regular interactions to sustain relatedness. This necessitates the contextualization of migration and related structural factors as causes of changes in transnational kin relations, and reinforces the need to pay attention to the perspectives and (in)actions of transnational kin.

In the next chapter I shift my attention to everyday transnational practices of relatedness. I further consider how sustaining kin relations across space entails negotiating the physical distance generated by international migration in order to prevent its (further) transformation into social distance.

Chapter 5 – 'What happens there happens here': The moral economy of transnational kin relations

The notion that 'what happens there happens here' implies a normative obligation for migrants 'here' to assist non-migrants 'there'. As one younger migrant man explained to me, 'When the situation degenerates there, those here must reach deeper to help them.' Transnational practices of relatedness offer kin the means of bridging the (geographic) distance that separates them and, thus, of re-paying the gift of communality.

In this chapter I consider everyday practices of staying in touch, such as the exchanging calls and text messages, visiting Kenya, and providing financial assistance. Divided into three parts, I consider in the first part the gap between possibilities of (increased) contact and support through advances in communication and travel technology, on one hand, and the various efforts of migrants to stay in touch, on the other. In doing so, I argue for the need to contextualize transnational communication practices within migrants' familial relations and their wider lives. The second part features several cases and vignettes of interactions between migrant and non-migrant kin that illustrate particular dimensions of transnational kin dynamics. Approached in terms of notions of recognition and humiliation, the cases highlight gaps in understanding and perspective, expectation and imagination, which arise from differing expectations of intergenerational familial reciprocity. Importantly, I do not mean to suggest that such gaps do not arise between those who migrate within Kenya and their non-migrant kin, or among kin who live in Nairobi, for that matter. Rather, I aim to explore how gaps develop and play out in transnational kin relations, a subject that has received less attention, for instance,

than how advances in communication technology facilitate the sustainment of social relations across space.

In the last part of the chapter, I discuss contradictions and tensions in transnational kin relations, thereby illuminating what is at stake for migrants and non-migrants in their interactions. In contrast to much transnational family literature, I argue that structural factors encountered through migration do not necessarily introduce conflicts and tensions into migrant families. Rather, they articulate with, and often exacerbate, existing fissures in family relations. The kinds of tensions explored in the chapter, coupled with moral obligation and affection, contribute to a sense of ambivalence among kin. I suggest that geographic distance can contribute to the redefining of social distance understood in terms of who is responsible for whom. In doing so, I reflect on the 'downside' of transnationalism, seeking to complement research in which transnationalism is still primarily understood in a positive light (cf. Carling 2008; Eriksen 2007; Levitt and Jaworsky 2007).

Staying in touch across space: (Unrealized) Promises of transnational communication

Everyday practices, such as telephone calls, text messages, remittances, and visits, enable migrant and non-migrant kin to stay in touch across what may be significant geographic distances. The transformational role played by information and communication technologies (ICT) and 'travel technologies' (Baldassar 2007: 389), such as, air travel, in making transnational lives possible has alternately been celebrated and questioned. Some scholars of globalization maintain that ICT and

new travel technologies reduce the 'friction of distance'.[86] Meanwhile, others highlight the 'impersonal' nature of communication mediated by technology and the challenges of trying to approximate closeness and co-presence across space. Such technology may help to create and sustain transnational social fields and, in doing so, reproduce a sense of relatedness; however, I will argue that it can also contribute to their erosion and undermine relatedness.

Keeping in touch via telephone calls offers a convenient, if not relatively affordable, mode of communication for many migrants. Vertovec (2004) discusses how 'cheap calls' allow kin to keep each other up-to-date on their daily lives and to exchange gossip about other relatives, friends, and neighbors. Calls provide a means of showing care and connection in times of crisis and moments of celebration (Baldassar 2007, 2008). They offer a way of sharing good news, such as the announcement of wedding plans, as will be discussed in Chapter Six, and sad news, such as the death of a loved one. Kin use calls to make arrangements to transfer resources and discuss how remittances are to be used (Lindley 2009). Finally, regardless of what is said, the act of calling itself is very important for helping to materialize transnational family relations (cf. Bryceson and Vuorela 2002: 14; Wilding 2006: 133).

In Kenya there were close to 20 million mobile phone users in 2009, or roughly 50 percent of the population.[87] The cost of international calls continues to decrease, especially in countries like the United Kingdom, which makes it that much

[86] The concept, 'friction of distance', is based on the notion that distance usually requires some amount of effort, money, and/or energy to overcome (Gregory et al. 2011: 281-82). Because of this 'friction', spatial interactions will tend to take place more often over shorter distances.

[87] Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook: Kenya*. Accessed on 30 April 2011. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ke.html.

less expensive for migrants to call kin in Kenya than in the past.[88] In addition to the lower cost, the ease, frequency, and immediacy of calls represent technological improvements over the lengthy intervals entailed in sending, receiving and responding to written letters.[89] The importance of calls for transnational Kenyan families was underscored immediately prior to and during my own visit to Kenya, which was facilitated by the exchange of numerous international telephone calls, text messages, and a few emails.

Many migrants from Kenya I know have two mobile phones. One tends to be dedicated to making and receiving calls in the United Kingdom. The other one is reserved for calls to and from Kenya. Having multiple phones enables migrants to negotiate their communication without even answering their phones, as does selectively sharing the phone numbers of one or both phones. Some migrants ignore the 'flashes' they receive. A common practice in Kenya, flashes result from non-migrants calling their kin in London and letting the phone ring once before disconnecting; the receiver then sees a 'missed call' message – a flash – and is expected to return the call, thereby incurring the charges despite not having initiated

[88] My informants in London typically made calls on their mobile phone to their non-migrant family members in Kenya. As of April 2012, rates for calling Kenya from the United Kingdom range 10-12p to £1.20 per minute depending on the mobile phone carrier (e.g., Vodafone, O2, and Orange). Texts tend to cost 20-25p per unit across the major carriers.

Skype and other VOIP (voice over internet protocol allows telephone calls to be made over the internet, rather than using public switched telephone networks) technology are not a common way to communicate among my informants largely because they require fast, reliable Internet connections, which are not widely available in Kenya. Connecting to the Internet from one's home is usually done via mobile broadband, which is too slow to support voice calls and requires having a personal computer, which most Kenyans do not have. There are Internet cafes, but they too can be expensive to use for calling. UNICEF estimates that only 9 out of every 100 people in Kenya were Internet users in 2008. (UNICEF, *Kenya: Statistics*. http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/kenya_statistics.html. Accessed 23 January 2012.)

[89] UNICEF reports that the adult literacy rate in Kenya was 87 percent in 2005-2008 (http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/kenya_statistics.html. Accessed 23 January 2012.) Nonetheless, I did not encounter any informant who relied on letters as a means of staying in touch with their kin.

contact. The presumption is that the person who receives the 'flash' is better able to afford the call than the initial caller. There are numerous reasons why flashes go unanswered, ranging from not having the phone at hand and the timing of the call being inconvenient, to migrants not having the resources to cover the cost of the international call or not wanting to be in touch with the caller. Nevertheless, not answering calls or returning a flash can signal a lack of attentiveness to the person trying to get in touch.

Similar to international telephone calls, flights between Nairobi and London are more frequent and cheaper than in the past. Three airlines offer regular direct flights between the two cities. If booked in advance, it is possible to get discounted tickets. Travelling at less popular times of the year ensures lower fares. Otherwise, migrants can often get lower-cost tickets by taking circuitous routes that include long layovers in places like Dubai before arriving in Nairobi or London. The variety of travel options and lower costs indicate that the means of visiting Kenya and the United Kingdom are available (though unevenly accessible). This in turn creates at least the imagined possibility of visiting for both migrants and non-migrants.

Among Kenyans, visits are at the core of sociality. Whether in times of celebration or crisis, as part of daily routines or for ritualized occasions, visits are a valued mode of fostering relations with kin and others (cf. Geissler and Prince 2010: 30). Regardless of the availability of communication technologies, most of my informants say they prefer seeing each other on visits to any other form of communication. As scholars have illustrated in relation to migrants from other parts of the world, visits to their countries of origin are particularly important in that they

enable migrants to renew their social ties with non-migrant kin. Taking the time to visit is understood as a demonstration of care and effort.[90]

When my own fieldwork visit to Kenya drew near, many of my informants joked about whether or not they might 'fit in my suitcase', and said they wished they could join me. Although some Kenyan migrants travel back and forth annually, or even a few times a year, most I know only travel to Kenya every three to six years. However, for many of them, there has been a long interval between when they left and when they first went to visit. Three younger Kenyan migrants I know travelled back to Kenya during the period of my fieldwork – their first visit since migrating in the mid 1990s.

The intervening time between migration and first visit – often a minimum of ten years – for many of my informants is significant to note. The interval roughly coincides with the period of time it can take to obtain indefinite leave to remain (ILR) in the United Kingdom. In addition to applying through permanent residency schemes, such as through one's employer or by marrying a resident or citizen, migrants can apply through one of two continuous residency schemes. After 10 years of continuous lawful residence in the country, migrants are entitled to apply for ILR, as are individuals who have 14 years of 'continuous residence of any legality'. At the time of fieldwork, applications through these schemes were decided on a case-by-case basis and consider such criteria as an applicant's age, 'strength of connections in the U.K.', 'personal history, including character, conduct, associations and employment record', 'domestic circumstances', 'previous criminal

[90] See, for example, Drotbohm (2009) on transnational Cape Verdean familial networks stretching between Cape Verde, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe, and the United States; Baldassar (2008) regarding Italians living in Australia; McKay (2007) on Filipino families; Olwig (2007) on Caribbean families with members living in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom; Mason (2004) on Pakistanis in the United Kingdom; and Salih (2002b) on Moroccans living in Italy.

record and the nature of any offence of which the person has been convicted', 'compassionate circumstances', and 'any representations received on the person's behalf'. In light of the non-specific nature of the Immigration Directorates' Instructions, individual applicants must determine for themselves how best to fulfill the criteria. Given that even those who can legally travel often do not, I would suggest that travelling to Kenya raises other social and cultural issues beyond having the legal *right* to travel, a point I develop later in the chapter.

In light of the importance of telephone calls and visits for kin relations, how can one make sense of not answering or returning call, withholding their mobile numbers, and/ or not visiting? Undoubtedly, structural factors, such as the costs associated with international calls and flights, as well as legal constraints, shape access to and use of communication and travel technologies. However, I want to suggest that to understand the 'human dynamics' (Carling 2008) that inform migrants' engagement transnationally, it is necessary to examine how normative expectations of kin are articulated and negotiated in practice.

Recognition and humiliation: Negotiating transnational familial dynamics

In this part I treat the experiences of four particular migrants and their non-migrant kin as departure points for discussing key tensions evident in transnational family dynamics. Together, they depict a range of familial relations among differently positioned kin: kinship generation (grandparent and grandchild; adult migrant children and non-migrant parents); gender and marital status (married migrant men; unmarried migrant women; transnational couples) and age (younger and older siblings).

I examine these ethnographic cases in terms of the notions of recognition and humiliation. The act of migration differentiates migrants from their non-migrant kin, giving rise to the self-ascribed migrant category, 'Kenyan in diaspora' (see Chapter Four). Their status as migrants interpenetrates their gendered familial positions and shapes expectations of how they demonstrate their relatedness. When migrants engage in transnational practices, they do so as *migrant* wives and husbands, *migrant* mothers and fathers, and *migrant* children and siblings. It cannot be assumed though that each of these subject positions inevitably or easily coincide, that is, what it means to be a good (gendered) family member may conflict with what is needed to become a 'successful' migrant. For example, recognition as a full social person engaged in reciprocal moral relations with non-migrant kin may necessitate having the legal right to reside in the United Kingdom.[91] Obtaining this right may constrain their ability to fulfill their familial expectations and create tensions, at least temporarily. Moreover, not acting in culturally normative ways may also provoke criticisms of migrants as 'forgetting where they come from' and, hence, of making themselves culturally unrecognizable. Given that migration is both a life-making project and a livelihood strategy, tensions that emerge between individual aspirations and opportunities and collective (familial) expectations have important affective dimensions to be considered as well.

I primarily concentrate on the way the categories of 'migrant' and 'non-migrant' interpenetrate kin relations (cf. Carling 2008: 1456). For instance, how do ideas about what it means to be a 'Kenyan in diaspora' play out in interactions between kin? How do transnational kin communicate their recognition of one

[91] Legal recognition in terms of visas, residency permits, and citizenship, is granted by the British government. While it appeared increasingly essential to my informants' ability to live and work in London, their legal status per se did not emerge as relevant to their non-migrant kin's perceptions of them.

another? How do they negotiate disjunctures that arise between normative expectations of relatedness and lived experiences?

Approximating co-presence: Ways of (not) re-paying the 'gift'

One afternoon in Nairobi, Joseph, the younger brother of a London-based informant, and I met at the park across from the Hilton Hotel and headed to a restaurant around the corner on Mama Ngina Street. The restaurant was busy, a mix of men and women in business suits and younger, casually dressed people chatting, texting and talking on their mobile phones. His shy smile and warm eyes immediately reminded me of his sister. I thanked him for meeting me and said, 'I really like your sister. We have fun together.' His face went blank in response, prompting me to ask, 'You don't think she's fun?' He replied, 'I don't know. I haven't seen her in a long time.'

Immediately, we began talking about how his family had not seen his oldest sister Faith since she had left Kenya in 2000. She went to study for her first degree in London and eventually married a Kenyan man there. Her husband had travelled back to Kenya since he left in 1998, but she had not visited, nor had their two young children. 'Is living in London really worth it if she can't come back for a visit?' he wondered aloud to me. Our parents haven't even met her kids, and she cries on the phone with our mother whenever they talk.'

Not long after I returned from Kenya, I attended church with Faith and her children in Ilford in northeast London one Sunday morning. After the 2-hour Pentecostal service, we went to a nearby Turkish restaurant for lunch with one of her close friends and her young children. Over lunch Faith remarked how glad she was that I had met Joseph. I smiled and told her what a lovely person I thought he was. Turning to her 5-year old son Mark, I asked, 'do you know who I met when I was in

Kenya? Your uncle Joseph. He asked me to say hello to you and give you a big hug.' I leaned over to give Mark his hug. The son of Faith's friend chimed in that, when he last visited Kenya, he had met Mark's grandfather, who asked him to bring Mark with him the next time he visited. 'Mummy, can Mark come with us when we go to Kenya again?' she asked. Neither Faith nor the boy's mother said anything in response.

Like Joseph, non-migrant kin find it difficult to make sense of, much less accept, why their kin are not staying in touch as they had expected them to. Situations of prolonged absence generate gaps in understanding for non-migrant kin, especially in light of the cultural importance attached to visits and to 'family'.

A particular sorrow is evoked by instances where grandparents and grandchildren have yet to meet. Historically, the grandparent-grandchild relationship has been socially significant in many parts of Kenya and Africa more generally, including among Kikuyu-speaking families like Faith and Joseph's.[92] Kikuyus traditionally acknowledged the importance of the relationship through the naming of their children. The first-born child took the name of the paternal grandmother or father depending on whether or not the baby was female or male (Kenyatta 1953: 15; Price 1996: 422-23). With each subsequent child, the names then alternated between the maternal and paternal side. Accordingly, it was traditionally important for Kikuyus to have at least four children, ideally two sons and two daughters, which ensured the re-birth of both maternal and paternal grandparents (Leakey 1977: 1105-

[92] For example, see Geissler and Prince (2004) for a discussion of grandmother-grandchild relationships among Luo-speaking people; see also Olwig (1999) on transnational Caribbean families and grandchildren staying behind to be cared for by their grandparents when their parents migrate. These examples highlight the wider familial networks in which children in these different ethnographic contexts are often raised.

1106).[93] In this way, couples were thought to give birth to their own parents.[94] Thus, an important dimension of this practice was the symbolic extension of the family.

In starting their own families in the United Kingdom, many Kikuyu-speaking migrants, including Faith and her husband, have continued the practice of naming children after their own parents. Naming practices were explained to me with pride, with informants often invoking the notion that this is 'how we do things'. Naming should not solely be seen as a communicative practice, but also as a substantive one that constitutes relations in practice (cf. Geissler and Prince 2010: 176-183). Kikuyu-speaking grandparents and grandchildren were symbolically considered to occupy the same age group, which repositions intergenerational relations. Speaking of Africa broadly, Radcliffe-Brown (1950) noted the 'friendly familiarity and 'social equality' that was often characteristic of relations between alternating generations. Kikuyu-speaking grandparents traditionally referred to their grandchildren with figurative terms of endearment: grandmothers called a grandson 'my husband' and a granddaughter 'my co-wife', while grandfathers referred to a grandson as *wakine*, 'my equal', and a granddaughter as *mohiki wakwa*, 'my bride' (Kenyatta [1938] 1953: 16). Traditionally, grandchildren would spend more time with their grandparents, particularly their grandmothers, than in the homesteads of their own parents.

Although migration inevitably makes this kind of frequent co-present interaction impossible, even the introduction of Faith's children to her parents, that is, themselves re-born according to traditional thinking, has been deferred to some

[93] According to Price, it is now considered 'irresponsible' to have so many children among young Kikuyu-speaking couples in Kiambu (1996: 423). My young migrant informants from Kiambu tend to have only two or three children per family.

[94] Notably, if a father had not paid bridewealth, a child was often named after the mother's parents, instead of the father's, to signal the child was not part of the father's family. This still remains the cases among those Kikuyu-speaking migrant women in London who were not in relationships with the fathers of their children at the time of birth.

unknown time in the future. Instead, they must rely on telephone calls to constitute their relationship. However, that too poses limitations and challenges. Telephone communication relies on voice as its primary mode of exchange. The issue of children of migrants only speaking the language of the country where they live and, thus, being unable to communicate with family members in their parents' home country is a common and significant one among transnational families.

A related issue is that of accent. For instance, Joseph told me that whenever his sister puts her son Mark on the phone to speak to their mother (the boy's grandmother), she can barely understand him. Like most of the children under five years of age who were born in London whose families I know, her grandson only speaks English. Understanding what he is saying is not the primary problem for his grandmother who speaks some English. Rather, Mark 'sounds British', that is, he speaks English with a British accent, not a Kenyan one. Having never met her grandson (her husband re-born), coupled with hearing a British (and, by association, colonial) accent over the telephone, contributes to the sense that she does not know Mark. Paradoxically, that which is supposed to connect people across space – the sound of each other's voice – *disconnects* them. Technology can thus not only lessen the distance between kin, but also increase it (cf. Wilding 2006: 134).

This discussion underscores the sense among my informants that one needs to be co-present to 'know' someone. Without that kind of interaction, kin can become unfamiliar to one another, as Joseph suggests with his comment that he does not know what his sister is like after a decade of not seeing her. As I will discuss below though, a sense of unfamiliarity can follow migrants on their visits to Kenya, suggesting that physical co-presence is not the panacea it is thought to be.

Importantly, it must be noted that the fact Faith wanted me to meet her brother (as did other informants who had not seen each other in many years) means that their relationship has persisted despite her prolonged absence. In meeting many migrants' kin in Kenya, I was able to serve as a proxy, relaying news of how they were and giving gifts they had sent with me, thus validating their presence in the world despite their absence from Kenya (cf. Baldassar 2008: 256-259). Similarly, her friend who we had lunch with in East London has also visited, suggesting that Faith has kept in touch with her family through her wider social network. In light of this, I would argue that Joseph's comment about not knowing his sister is better understood as a comment on what he views as her (inadequate) efforts to repay the 'gift of communality'. Staying in touch is part of a generalized system of reciprocity: in failing to visit since she migrated, Faith has not remained sufficiently engaged with her family in her brother's view, or shown proper respect to their parents by not introducing her children to them. In other words, her failure to meet familial expectations diminishes her own (cultural) recognizability, while her lack of visiting is perceived, by her brother, as a refusal to engage in reciprocal relations with their parents and, thus, as a denial of recognition. Her (in)actions left her open to moral criticism (cf. Baldassar 2007: 391).

It remains unclear to me why Faith has not returned to visit, and the subject was a delicate one to raise. Since her husband has travelled to Kenya, it seems likely that her own legal status would allow her to travel. They are also one of the financially better-off couples I worked with so limited financial means does not seem to a likely reason either. Finally, given her efforts to put me in touch with her brother and the calls she exchanges with her mother, they still retain a sense of relatedness. Her evasiveness when asked why she has not visited suggests that this

case is perhaps best understood in terms of how interpersonal dynamics and their affective dimensions can constrain one's mobility – the longer one has been away, the harder it may feel to return, even for a visit.

Regardless, the situation highlights that the *act* of staying in touch, as well as *how* migrants do so, are both significant for kin relations. I will further develop the importance of both the practice and substance of relating in the next vignette, with the focus shifting to the giving of money, rather than exchange of information and affection via the telephone.

'It's expensive to go home': The gendered 'expense' of visiting non-migrant kin

Beth, a slim, elegant woman in her mid-to-late 50s, invited me to stay at her house in Langata, a middle-class suburb on the southwest side of Nairobi, for a couple of days. It is a two-story house with three bedrooms, a large double-sitting room, and parking for two cars. Beth and her husband Samuel met and married in Nairobi in the 1970s, both having migrated from western Kenya, him to look for work and her to finish her studies.

While she cooked, I sat on the stairs opposite the kitchen talking with her through the doorway. Unlike many women in Nairobi, particularly middle-class ones like Beth, she does not have a house girl. Before moving to London in 1995, Beth employed a young woman to help her take care of the household, but now she said she 'does not see any reason to spend the money' since only she and her husband Samuel live there. Besides, she shipped a laundry machine and a dishwasher

to Nairobi to lessen the household work when she moved back from London a few months earlier.[95]

Her son Eric and his wife, daughter, and their house girl[96] turned up not long after I arrived. Once Samuel, who was similarly slim and elegant in both appearance and manner to his wife, came downstairs, we sat down at the dining room table. As we piled our plates high with roast chicken, fried tilapia with a sauce of tomato, onion, and cilantro, chunks of *ugali*, stewed plantains, and carrots and peas, we chatted about the upcoming Easter holiday. They were planning to travel to their house in Kakamega District where Samuel had been raised and where his siblings and their families still live.

'It's always so expensive to go home', Samuel said, fretting about the 'expense' despite his desire to visit. Beth responded, 'it doesn't have to be [expensive]'. I looked at one and then the other, wondering what 'expense' they were referring to. Beth went on, 'if you're not giving your brother enough resources so he can become independent, there's no point in giving.' Both Samuel and Eric objected, with Samuel commenting, 'I can afford to give them a few shillings. They can't buy much, but they can enjoy a small indulgence. Maybe a new book or some sweets for their children.' Yet Beth insisted, 'I worked too hard for my money, so unless they're ill or disabled, I'm not even giving them Ksh 100.' Her husband and son countered that Beth could 'afford' not to give their relatives any money because '*they* are the ones who give' on her behalf. Later in the evening, Samuel remarked to me that Beth

[95] Though such household appliances are sold in Nairobi, Beth found second-hand machines in London that she then shipped back to Kenya using a Kenyan shipper based in London. Advertisements for such services can easily be on websites that Kenyans visit, such as, www.misterseed.com.

[96] Unlike his mother, Eric and his wife employ a house girl, who Beth told me they treat as a family member, though she is not a relative of either family. Accordingly, Shiku ate dinner with us, rather than eating on her own in the kitchen or elsewhere, after everyone else has finished, as families who do see their house girls as employees.

'went away [to London] and came back a different person.'

I came to understand that the 'expense' to which they referred arises from differing senses of familial obligation. In remarking that 'no one should stay away from home because of others' demands on their money', Beth intimated that giving money was not the only way to show care. In doing so, she revealed that her perspective diverged from that of her non-migrant husband (and son): the men in her family felt compelled to give regardless of the amount and her own view that there was no point in giving if the amounts one was prepared to give would not make a difference in the receivers' material quality of life. In other words, they were debating who was responsible for whom and how should such responsibility be expressed.

In considering how the disagreement played out across the dinner table, it is important to note how gender and marital status were invoked as salient dimensions for understanding the differing ideas of what was expected of respective family members. Unlike younger migrants, older ones like Beth (and her non-migrant husband) already had families and houses of their own in Nairobi before they migrated to London. That is, they had attained a certain social and moral status in their families such that they were expected to assist their kin, even more so now after living abroad. By saying that Beth could 'afford' not to give because they (her husband and eldest son) would do so on her behalf, the comments indirectly highlighted that the men felt they must give because of who they were: married men and the eldest male siblings in their respective families. The implication was that, as a wife visiting her husband's family, she did not face the same kind of expectations or obligations. Consequently, there was little at stake for her in terms of social status in her refusing the requests of Samuel's non-migrant kin.

In contrast Samuel was adamant about the 'expense' of travelling upcountry. Giving money is part of generalized system of reciprocity among kin that does not require being repaid in any particular way at a specific time. Thus, giving is a familial and social obligation that he felt he could not contravene. His ability – that is, having ample financial resources due in large part to his wife's living in London for 15 years – to help members of his extended family only made doing so more imperative. None of the would-be recipients of such assistance even needed to be present to make him feel implicated in these reciprocal relations. Thus, the power Samuel enjoyed by virtue of his structurally superior position vis-à-vis his extended kin – that is, his gender, age, relative wealth, place in the family (eldest son), and status as an urban migrant and husband of an international migrant – did not insulate him from his moral obligations to his poorer relatives. Seeing them as part of the same moral community, he felt compelled to fulfill their mutual social expectations, thereby also enhancing his own stature.

Beth's view of the situation, however, threw these expectations and reciprocal obligations into question. This reveals how differently positioned family members can understand the situation quite differently. She wondered about her husband Samuel's insistence on giving money to his relatives if he was not willing to give them enough so they could become independent. And, she worried that, by contributing to their 'dependency', their extended kin would not learn to value work, much less respect themselves. Her view suggests that, rather than an expression of generalized reciprocity, remittances are a form of charity or aid and, thus, decisions about who is given what framed within the discourse of international development and notions of empowerment and self-sufficiency. She also disagreed with the idea that her giving, or lack thereof, reflected on her as a moral person or family member.

In fact, she intimated that helping their kin to become economically self-sufficient was the only morally correct action.

I would suggest that a situation such as this be understood as an effort to assert a different conception of familial obligations which could put migrants outside the moral economy of relatedness that giving among Kenyan families otherwise sustains. In an effort to distance herself from her husband's family, Beth's comments also generated (social) distance between herself and her husband, that is, he could not understand why she was treating his kin as if they were not related. Samuel's remark – his wife 'went away and came back a different person' – revealed that her behavior had made her (culturally) unfamiliar to him.

Samuel's claim that Beth 'changed' during the intervening years is in part rooted in the fact that she had herself benefited from numerous kinds of familial assistance in the past, as have many of her own family members. Her elder brothers run a law firm in Nairobi whose employees are predominantly their wives, siblings, children, and nieces and nephews. Beth herself had been employed by the firm, and its political and subsequent financial difficulties stemming from the two-year detention of her eldest brother, a prominent lawyer, by the Moi government in the 1980s and 1990s had contributed to her own eventual migration to the United Kingdom.[97] In light of her comments that evening, Samuel saw hypocrisy in Beth's refusal to help his relatives.

[97] Beth had first come to live in Nairobi from western Kenya at the invitation of her brother whose family she lived with and who had migrated there years earlier. When she needed a job, she accepted one at his law firm. According to her (see also Chapter Three), siblings helping siblings was to be expected, especially older ones helping younger ones. However, with his detention, the law firm began to struggle to stay in business. Clients left and the firm's other lawyers took positions elsewhere out of concern for their own livelihoods. Though she stayed at the firm out of family loyalty, she explained to me, Beth eventually left and moved to London.

In re-defining the social distance between herself and her husband's kin, she also implicitly renegotiated her own position vis-à-vis her husband. After 15 years of primarily living apart, with her in London and her husband in Nairobi, her actions suggest that she was unwilling to pool her resources with his so they could be used to aid his family. This disagreement resonates with the tensions over domestic budgets discussed in Chapter Four that contributed to some older women's migration.

If Beth made herself culturally unrecognizable to her husband by refusing to give to his family and to deny recognition to his kin, John's story below illustrates how giving, albeit on modified terms, can engender recognition in both senses.

'To work or study?': Emergent gaps between aspirations and obligations

Through migrating, people often come to be seen by their non-migrant kin as 'greater sources of patronage than had they stayed at home' (Parkin 1975b: 148). As Grasmuck and Pessar (1991) point out, there is a tacit assumption that migrants will take whatever work they can find in order to earn money. Many migrants and non-migrants alike hold such an assumption. The notion that 'any job is better than no job' must be contextualized in terms of the chronic un- and under-employment in Kenya at the time when many migrated and which continues to be the case there for many people.

Given how difficult it was to translate schooling into a well-paying job in Kenya during the era when they migrated, many remained skeptical that studying could be a strategy for success in the United Kingdom. And, given the availability of jobs in London, schooling did not appear necessary for achieving some aspirations. Echoing comments made by numerous informants, John described the situation to me in these terms, 'England was needy when we came, and we wanted jobs. There

was a balance between British needs and Africans needs, so many of us took the first available jobs'.

However, John himself, a man with a boyish face whose widening girth was the only sign of his nearing middle age, had followed a different path. The third-born in a Kikuyu-speaking family of six siblings, he had moved to London in 1994 from a village in Kiambu District. Though he had worked at a local supermarket, John had also enrolled in a social work course. When he later finished his studies, he took a job in the local council. He also met and married Dorothy, a tall, Kikuyu-speaking Kenyan woman, who had trained as a cardiac nurse and worked for a local NHS trust. Building up their savings 'slowly by slowly', they were able to move from a rental flat in East Ham in East London to their own two-bedroom, semi-detached house in Dagenham. Both in their 40s, they had two daughters, who were 11 and 7 years old at the time of fieldwork. Nursing eventually offered a pathway for the couple to obtain permanent residency in the United Kingdom. In the late 1990s and early 2000s when Dorothy trained, nurses were in short supply in the United Kingdom; thus, her training made her a vital worker in a high demand sector.[98] She obtained permanent residency in 2004, as did her husband John.

The desire to create a life in London has become increasingly contingent on obtaining permanent residency. While no migrants I spoke with said they migrated with the intention of moving permanently, the changing migration regime during the 1990s and 2000s in the United Kingdom arguably made securing that right more compelling for those living in the country. During this period, numerous policy changes were implemented that increasingly restricted who could enter the country,

[98] I met many young migrants (women and men) from Kenya who trained as nurses after migrating. This trend is an interesting counterpoint to the practice of hiring overseas nurses from countries, such as Kenya, by the NHS (see Chapter Four for discussion of the migration of Kenyan nurses to the United Kingdom).

created additional requirements for entry, limited lengths of stay, and reconfigured routes to permanent residence. These changes further suggest that concerns about not being able to re-enter and/ or to stay on their own timetable at the very least generated concern about the need to regularize their legal statuses. However, given the likelihood that there are many undocumented migrants from Kenya in the United Kingdom (see Chapter One), awareness and concern about changing immigration restrictions has not automatically translated into all migrants trying to regularize their status or obtain leave to remain. If they know they do not meet the requirements, there is perhaps no point in taking any action.

Doing so, however, creates another set of normative expectations that must be fulfilled in order to achieve legal recognition by the British government. According to Dorothy, she highlighted her training in a shortage occupation (at the time), her steady record of employment working for the same employer, her marriage and the birth of her 'British' children in the United Kingdom. Her self-presentation in her residency application reflects her interpretation of what the Home Office considers evidence of her good 'character' (see the first part of this chapter).

Developing a life that would satisfy the requirements for residency complicate efforts to sustain transnational kin relations, constraining migrants' capacity to fulfill familial obligations to those remaining in Kenya. For instance, steady employment and participation in various activities are time-intensive and necessitate continuous involvement over the longer term to demonstrate the sincerity of one's efforts. Moreover, prospective applicants need to save money to pay for the application fees, which cost a minimum of £750 in 2009, plus any legal advice that might be needed.[99]

[99] This fee is almost double (£335) what it had been as recently as 2007. http://www.visabureau.com/uk/news/22-01-2010/uk-immigration-fees-to-rise-in-april.aspx Accessed 20 March 2012.

To save money then entails working long hours and/ or having a well-paying job, which itself requires an investment of time and perhaps also money to develop marketable skills and expertise in order to secure such a job in the first place. Both their need to save and to secure a steady job shapes how much money they can remit to non-migrant kin. This in turn could affect the latter's daily quality of life, not to mention any hopes they might have, for instance, of starting a business using remitted money as the seed capital.

Though neither John nor Dorothy mentioned that their residency application had any bearing on when they visited Kenya, it is important to note that the first time they travelled there since migrating was in 2005 within a year of obtaining ILR. Situations such as these point to the conflicts of interest between individual aspirations and familial expectations and competing demands on limited resources that may arise post-migration.

It is important to see migrants' contact with non-migrant kin within the context of their migration aspirations and lives in London. In the case of younger migrants, their capacity to become valued persons who can participate fully in social life is tied to their migration. John's migration has arguably been successful: he has a steady job with the local council, is married to another Kenyan with whom he started his family, owns a house, and has permanent residency. In 'bringing forth his parents' by starting a family and by managing his own household, John has become 'an upright member of society' (Kershaw 1973: 47). However, I would suggest that migrants' ability to succeed and its contingence on becoming legal residents of the United Kingdom be understood as being at odds with achieving recognition as good kin, at least in the interim. In choosing to do so, migrants have proceeded down a path – a slow-going path oriented toward the future – that neither they nor their families

imagined prior to migrating because being abroad was considered *the* achievement (see Chapter Four). I would argue that John's aspirations to establish himself and his new family, thus, diverged from his familial obligations to non-migrant kin, contributing to gaps in expectations.

In contrast older migrants like Jane whose migration story featured in the previous chapter send much of their money 'home' – for school fees, to build new stone houses for their retirement, and to bolster ties to non-migrant kin. They migrated largely in order to facilitate their families' lives in Kenya, rather than to live out their lives in London. Though they might be able to earn more money if they studied, they are not planning to be in London that long. Instead, the logic is to make as much money as possible before moving back to Kenya. In some sense, these migrants would say they have 'no life' in the present, deferring it to the future when they return to Kenya. Legal recognition in the form of ILR is less important, as long as their current legal status does not impede their ability to earn. However, in Chapter Seven, I will complicate this picture particularly among older migrant women, some of whom may choose to indefinitely defer their return to Kenya.

When it comes to visiting Kenya, migrants have expectations to fulfill as 'Kenyans in diaspora'. For instance, on John's most recent visit to Kenya in 2007 for the wedding of one of his younger sisters, he invited his family to a dinner at a restaurant in the Village Market. Located in Gigiri (a suburb of Nairobi) near the American embassy and the United Nations compound, the Village Market is an upscale mall with shops, restaurants, and recreation areas with water slides and mini golf courses, built in the late 1990s after John had already migrated. Expatriates frequent the mall, as do wealthy African and Asian Kenyans. In choosing the restaurant, he joked with me that he would not have dared go to such a restaurant

prior to his migration because he would not have recognized the dishes on the menu, but now he 'knows what lasagna is'. The meal for his wife and two children, his parents, three siblings and their families at one of the restaurants serving international fare, he told me, cost Ksh. 40,000 (roughly £400). Given that a meal of stewed meat, roast chicken, several side dishes, and chai at an African restaurant in Nairobi can easily be purchased for Ksh. 50-100 shillings per person, John could have provided a meal for 400-800 people for the same price, rather than only 18 people.

But as he said to me, they 'see me as a diaspora Kenyan. I can't return and act like I'm at their level'. In being implicated in this moral economy of relatedness, he must embrace the expectations of who he is supposed to be; otherwise, he explained to me, he might 'offend' them. His demonstration of status enhances his social position within his family, particularly vis-à-vis his non-migrant brothers and brothers-in-law, which can also fuel rivalry among them (cf. Goldring 1998: 173-174). Migration has thus helped to further his effort to be recognized by his family in culturally congruent ways.

At the same time, he is not powerless in the face of familial expectations. With reference to his Pentecostal faith, John explained to me:

> I send money to my parents and take them out for meals when I visit, but I don't *support* [emphasis added] them. It would go against God if I were forced to choose between supporting my parents over my own children since God wants me to care for and nurture my family. Supporting my parents would disrupt things because I would become a parent to them. To support them would take a kind of power away from them and would disrespect them. It is easy to abuse that power.

His insistence on not becoming a parent to his parents re-affirms the traditional respect for the authority of one's elders. In describing his refusal to *support* his parents as refusing to 'go against God', John invokes a religious discourse. He

morally insulates himself from guilt or shame for not supporting them by re-asserting the generational hierarchy that migration has threatened to invert by putting him in a position to support his parents. Yet, at the same time, I would argue that his doing so also marks a claim on authority and contributes to the reconfiguring of generational relations within his family.

John's story helps to illuminate where migrants' aspirations diverge from familial expectations and collective obligations and contribute to a distancing of migrant from non-migrant kin. However, in keeping with an understanding of relatedness as processual, visits also afford opportunities to reconnect with kin. It is clear that these visits affirmed a sense of relatedness and demonstrated his social status, which was negotiated vis-à-vis his kin's imaginings of who migrants are. In fulfilling their shared expectations though, he also re-worked them, drawing on Pentecostal discourse simultaneously to reinforce his parents' (generational) authority and claim power of his own.

If John's story illustrates the ways in which transnational kin relations can generate recognition, Lucy's experiences described below in the last example of the chapter reveal the underside of visits that can make them humiliating.

'Available': Unmarried women migrants and the lack of social protection

Lucy, whose migration journey to London via Athens was discussed in Chapter Four, last visited Kenya in 2001 to attend her mother's funeral. The visit came at a time when her life in London was difficult, uncertain and tenuous. Though it had been almost 13 years since she left Kenya for the first time, she had not become the person she had intended to become when she migrated, much less a 'Kenyan in diaspora', married and working as a successful lawyer. The gap between her own self-image and how her non-migrant kin imagined her is evident in her description of the visit:

> My time there [in Kenya] was punctuated by a different relative coming to the staging area [bus station] every day looking for me and asking me for money. Many of them I didn't know and had never seen before. It was no different when I visited my grandmother in the village [in Kiambu District where she grew up]: everyone from the village was there to greet me. All my 'aunties' and 'uncles' were looking at me like I was a savior, their savior. I felt tremendous pressure, so I found an apartment in a part of the city where no one knew me, and no one could find me.

According to the calculus that the longer one is away, the more successful one should be, Lucy's situation reflected even greater failures. A few years earlier, at the age of 29, she had given birth to a son. By the time of his birth though, she was separated from her son's father, a Kenyan man she met in London.[100] When she became a mother, she decided to switch jobs from working as a night receptionist at a London hotel to doing administrative work in a 9-to-5 job with the NHS. Like many women and migrants, Lucy was contracted to work for the NHS through a temporary employment agency. This sector has grown with the introduction of neo-liberal reforms to the British welfare system in the 1980s and the subsequent privatization of services (Kofman, et al. 2000: Chapter Six). The resulting casualization of labor often marginalizes temporary workers in terms of pay, career opportunities, and working conditions.

Working on contract meant that she had flexibility in her schedule to handle her parental responsibilities, but it also meant she had been moved around to various departments depending on staffing needs. Lucy described her situation in terms of 'never doing what she wanted, but what she had links to'. The so-called links were not networks based on kinship or shared ethnicity or nationality this time (see Chapter Four), but the needs of the NHS. And, although she was able to travel to Kenya for the funeral, her migration status at the time was still temporary. She saw

[100] Given that Lucy and her son's father were no longer together by the time of the boy's birth, her son does not carry his paternal grandfather's name.

herself as not having 'gotten anywhere', a painful feeling she had already experienced while living in Athens and which she carried back to Kenya with her.

While in Nairobi for the funeral, she found herself unable to explain to her family or peers why she had not become what (she and) they had imagined she would. She remarked with frustration, 'They don't get it has nothing to do with talent', referring to her difficulties regularizing her status, pursuing her study of law, finding a well-paying job, and caring for her son on her own. Her inability to meet their expectations left her humiliated and alienated. Having to run her mother's *matatu* (small minibuses commonly used for transport) business,[101] while looking for a buyer for the business, meant she was 'available' to anyone who stopped by the staging area. Hounded by their 'demands' for money, she sought out a flat in an area of the city where 'no one knew her'. Although her visit collapsed the geographic distance separating her from her non-migrant kin, she still had to contend with disjunctures of imagination. In other words, despite their physical proximity, a sense of distance remained between them.

Lucy's predicament, I would argue, emerges from the problematic convergence of ideas about migrants as a social category and singlehood, on one hand, with her lived experience, on the other. Unmarried migrant women occupy a contradictory social position when they visit Kenya, particularly in terms of where they stay and how they are expected to 'assist' their non-migrant kin. Because they are unmarried, they are understood to still be part of their father's family, regardless of their age. Thus, they are able to stay with their parents. After all, they do not have a husband with whose family they could stay, so any expectations of following virilocal traditions are irrelevant.

[101] Lucy's mother started the transport business with seed money that Lucy had remitted to her.

In contrast migrant men, especially married ones, face an even more complex set of issues when it comes to the question of where to stay on visits. As discussed in Chapter Three, managing one's own household has been fundamental historically to normative ideas of uprightness and morality that are associated, for instance, with Luo notions of hard work, self-discipline and respect for others, as well as with Kikuyu ideas of self-mastery and self-restraint (*wiathi*) (Lonsdale 2003: 48-50). Regardless of their ethnic background, once young Kenyan men reach adolescence, they are not supposed to live in the houses of their parents, unlike their sisters. Among Luo-speaking people, for example, young men traditionally built a *simba*, or bachelor's dormitory, nearest the entrance in the homestead of their father. Young men lived there until after marriage and the birth of their first child, after which point they were expected to build an *ot*, or proper dwelling hut (Evans-Pritchard 1950: 138). Though contemporary circumstances, such as land scarcity, limited financial resources, migration, and HIV/ AIDS, complicate house-building practices, even putting it out of reach of some young people (cf. Geissler and Prince 2010: Chapter Four), the normative expectation remains among migrants. For those living in Nairobi where space is often at a premium, families are creative in the ways they meet this expectation. For instance, they might build a separate room outside the main house or add a small extension to the house, while others may arrange for their sons to live with relatives (cf. Spronk 2012: 194-195).

For Lucy's married male migrant peers, the issue is difficult to navigate because most moved to London prior to building a house, marrying, and starting families in Kenya. As shown in Chapter Four, their migration can be understood as part of their social becoming in that it was intended to enable them to create an ideal life, including marrying and starting a family, the focus of the next chapter. Unlike

their older male (migrant) counterparts, the only physical houses in Kenya many have are those of their parents. These ethnically specific traditions lead to much consternation among migrant men and necessitate extensive planning so as to avoid socially embarrassing one's family.

For example, John from the earlier vignette circumvented these expectations by arranging for his family to stay in a hotel when they visit Kenya. When asked why, he explained his choice to me in terms of practicality and material comfort, that is, he did not have a house of his own in Kenya and did not want his 'British' children to be without the modern conveniences to which they were accustomed. Although staying in a hotel reflected well on his economic standing, it made visits even more costly. Hence, married migrants (men and women) have to make specific arrangements for their accommodation, whereas unmarried women can re-join their parents' households when they visit.

As migrants visiting Kenya, however, unmarried women are expected to be *providers*, as are migrant men and Kenyan men in general. Many of my single female informants explained to me that 'even if people don't [ask for money], they still expect you to pay because you have foreign currency'; thus, they always need to 'keep a few shillings in their pockets'. The expectations contradict their status as 'girls', that is, young, unmarried women who are still considered children on some level and, thus, unable to fulfill reciprocal obligations. In this way, their migrant status neutralizes the gendered and marital dimensions of this expectation.

However, in being unmarried, they are left without crucial social protection that having a husband would afford. In particular it deprives them of a socially acceptable way of declining unwanted requests, that is, they cannot say 'I need to check with my husband' or 'I have responsibilities at home'. Instead, whether in

London or Nairobi, being single was often described to me in terms of availability, that is, a single person is 'available'. However, the meaning of available here is not in the sense of being free to date anyone they find attractive because they are unmarried. Rather, single people's time, attention, and resources are *available* to those who may need assistance. Notably, the kinds of assistance are often gendered. Requests for single migrant women's help might include doing the shopping and cooking for a social gathering, taking care of a sick acquaintance, and especially giving someone money.

Thus, unmarried women have to negotiate between, on one hand, the expectation that they can and will help in whatever ways they can and, on the other, the lack of a socially acceptable way of declining such requests without offending someone. The crux of the demands on unmarried women is that they are perceived to have fewer claims on their resources broadly speaking and, thus, to be potential sources of assistance, expectations which are compounded when these women are also migrants. This suggests a contradiction in the status of unmarried migrant women in that, while they are seen as providers of invaluable support at times of need, their so-called value does not improve their social status relative to others.

In reflecting on demands from her own kin and more generally, Lucy remarked that 'extended family is what holds Kenyans [in London] back. Rather than save £100-200 per month, they send it home. This means they can't save and invest. And, the cycle will never stop.' Similar to John, her ambivalence about giving her kin money should be seen in the context of her own Pentecostal beliefs that support her decision to prioritize herself and her son over any obligations to her

extended family (cf. van Dijk 2002a: 183-185).[102] At the same time, her prioritizing hints at the need to make such choices on an ongoing basis; thus, the 'break' from her kin is better understood as never fully achieved (cf. Meyer 2004: 257).

For Lucy, geographic distance gave way to disjunctures of imagination and, ultimately, social distance. Being co-present with kin in Kenya could not collapse the distance between them and in fact exacerbated it (cf. Carling 2008: 1473). She has not returned to Kenya since the funeral and, not surprisingly, expressed no desire to squeeze herself into my suitcase when I headed there myself. However, in disconnecting from her kin in Kenya, it is evident that the relations are still active ones in the sense that the disconnections came about through specific structures and processes (Ferguson 1999: 238). In other words, Lucy was *too* implicated in a transnational moral economy of relatedness; yet, in being unable to fulfill their shared expectations, she chose to curtail relations with her non-migrant kin.

Reciprocal relations: The moral economy of relatedness

The ability to keep in touch – that is, the existence of communication and travel technologies discussed earlier – raises expectations about doing so. And, the expectation to stay in touch tends to fall to the ones who have left – migrants. In moving to the United Kingdom, migrants emplace themselves in a context that is imagined to be materially rich and full of opportunities; in short, it is imagined to be 'better' than where non-migrants are. A significant way of participating in the lives of non-migrant kin at a distance, and what is migrants perceive to be the most expected way, is by giving some kind of financial assistance. At the same time, many of my informants complain about the constant stream of requests for money

[102] She became born-again a second time in London in 1999 (the first time was in Nairobi when she was 16) and regularly attends a Pentecostal church.

via telephone calls and text messages.

The experiences of migrants from Kenya support Sahlins' point that '[t]he greater the wealth gap... the greater the demonstrable assistance from rich to poor that is necessary just to maintain a degree of sociability' (2004: 211). Fred, a young male informant, complained to me that his siblings and other relatives often write to him asking for money – 'can't they use what I already send them?' – referring to the money he sends monthly. Yet, he said that he thinks 'if he were there', he would understand why they need the money and feel differently. At the same time though, he also commented that, 'I send money home to help a needy relative, but then my brother decides he's needy and keeps the money for himself'. The emergent gap in understanding and ensuing uncertainty leaves migrants ambivalent, vulnerable, and concerned that they are being taken for granted.

Several of the vignettes reveal different responses to expectations and requests for support. John and Beth attempted to negotiate how to assist their relatives and whom to assist respectively. In essence, they were re-working the questions of social distance understood in terms of who is responsible for whom. John tried to continue the practice of intergenerational reciprocity with his parents, but limit his responsibilities to 'assisting' not 'supporting' them, without falling prey to accusations of 'forgetting where he comes from', a criticism I return to below. In doing so, he both extended a tradition of respecting one's elders and reconfigured the extent of his obligations for the wellbeing of his parents. Importantly, the reconfiguration was framed within Pentecostal discourse that shielded him from accusations of having 'changed'.

Conversely, Beth's rationale for not giving to her husband's kin was that, if she could not help to make each person self-sufficient, there was no point to her giving

money when it is an insufficient, not to mention unsustainable, source of income. Reflective of development discourse, she implied that her approach was morally, if not socially, superior. Unlike John though, Beth's social protection lay in her marital status: her husband and son would give on her behalf, shielding her from criticism. In contrast to Beth, Lucy as an unmarried woman lacked the social protection of marriage to navigate familial expectations of support without causing offense or risking humiliation.

If migrants are primarily the ones to stay in touch, then non-migrants are by definition those who migrants stay in touch with. But if kin relations are reciprocal social relations, how do non-migrant Kenyans reciprocate? In Kenya familial assistance not only flows from urban areas to rural ones, but it also travels from those who remain in the countryside to those in the city. For instance, John's brothers who live in Nairobi rely on the produce grown on their family's farm in nearby Kiambu District to supplement their immediate families' incomes. Travelling with one of his brothers to his parents' house one day, we filled the trunk of his station wagon with crates of eggs, tomatoes, potatoes, and onions from their farm before returning to Nairobi. We dropped off some crates at his eldest brother's restaurant in the city and then left the rest with the wife of John's other brother, who runs a *duka*[103] (or shop) nearby where the goods would be sold, along with bottles of soda, sweets, mobile phone top-up scratch cards, socks, and other small items. This example of reciprocity reflects a trend whereby those in rural areas contribute to the livelihoods of their urban kin whose lives in the city are becoming increasingly expensive and, thus, more precarious (cf. Foeken and Owuor 2001: 125-126).

Yet the geographic distance introduced through migration to the United

[103] In this case, the *duka* is a semi-permanent structure with walls and roof made of *mbati,* or corrugated tin.

Kingdom denies this possibility. Nor can non-migrants provide other kinds of intangible forms of reciprocation, for example, offering their labor power. They are likely to send foodstuff, such as Kenyan tea and coffee and Royco, a seasoning popular among Kenyans, back with friends who visit Kenya, as several non-migrant kin did with me. In spite of their social locations, which might otherwise be culturally superior to their migrant kin, non-migrant kin's capacity to reciprocate is constrained. For instance, older siblings are expected to assist younger ones; inverting this pattern may provoke tension and resentment between siblings. The limited ability to reciprocate contributes to the moral superiority of migrant kin as givers and can be a source of humiliation for non-migrants (Eriksen 2007: 7).

At the same time, despite the constraints on their ability to reciprocate, non-migrants cannot be understood as passive (cf. Van Hear 2002). Their actions are arguably more intangible, even symbolic. It is common for non-migrants to criticize their migrant kin – 'you've forgotten where you come from' – in relation to their migrant kin not calling or visiting (often enough) or sending (enough) money. Reflecting a perceived sense of migrants' moral abdication of their kin responsibilities, non-migrants' criticisms can be understood as demands for their migrant kin to act in culturally recognizable ways and not to forget them – that is, those who are 'left behind' in Kenya – and, ultimately for recognition of themselves as kin. This thinking reminds us that transnational remitting relationships are embedded in existing social relations such that migrants do not initiate these reciprocal relations post-migration; rather these relations precede migration, which in turn extends, and sometimes transforms them. Importantly, this means that the roles of giver and receiver cannot be understood as isomorphic with the categories of 'migrant' and 'non-migrant', respectively.

Faith's lack of visits to her family in Kenya and her brother's claim of not knowing her in the chapter's first vignette are illustrative here. Similar to what Åkesson (2004) argues in the case of Cape Verde, when non-migrants complain that their relatives 'send nothing', this often means they send 'less than they ought to send' rather than sending literally nothing. Here again, it is that 'more' (however defined) is expected from migrants. Though not specifically about remittances, gestures of care matter: although Faith may call each week, she has not visited in a decade. By calling migrants 'ungrateful', non-migrants highlight migrants' lack of care toward them, thereby inverting the conceptualization of non-migrants as passive, especially prevalent in mainstream studies of remittances (Åkesson 2011: 337). In leveling such criticisms, non-migrants make a moral claim of their own, I would argue, that attempts to implicate migrants in a shared moral economy of relatedness.

From this discussion, it is apparent that migrants and non-migrants have different sources of power on which to draw in their interactions. In interpenetrating existing social hierarchies, the categories of migrant and non-migrant upend norms of relating that are linked to age (older), gender (male), and generation (senior). More specifically, the vignettes describe instances in which younger siblings criticize older ones (Faith's younger non-migrant brother criticizes her, his oldest sister, for not visiting); wives disagree with husbands (Beth challenges her husband's view that giving to kin is a social imperative); and adult children reject parental demands (John defies intergenerational expectations by refusing to 'support' his parents). In fact, it is only Lucy who becomes trapped between what is culturally expected and what is socially possible; rather than negotiating with her kin, she responds by cutting off contact with them when she is unable to meet the expectations they have of her as a 'Kenyan in diaspora'.

Migrants' power is largely rooted in their resources. Carling helpfully distinguishes their resources in terms of material and mobility ones (2008: 1467), to which I would add symbolic resources. Migrants' financial resources are at least imagined to be greater than those of their non-migrant kin by virtue of their living abroad, not least because of the price of goods in the United Kingdom compared to Kenya. Their power also stems from their access to mobility resources in the form of residency and citizenship rights in the United Kingdom; if migrants are fortunate enough to have these resources, they are able to move with relative ease between the United Kingdom and Kenya, as well as elsewhere. Conversely, non-migrants' power might be better understood as form of cultural power, or a symbolic resource. They can accuse migrants of forgetting where they come from. One never hears migrants make such comments about non-migrants, for instance, if the latter do not show (enough) gratitude for whatever migrants give them (cf. Carling 2008: 1460). By acting in ways that are culturally unrecognizable, migrants can become 'lost', that is, their kin may say 'we lost our son'. The efficacy of migrant and non-migrant power is contingent on the other's willingness to be implicated. In both instances, what is at stake socially is recognition and a desire to avoid its opposite, humiliation.

Complicating matters further are the affective dimensions of such interactions. Encounters between kin can generate senses of admiration, respect, responsibility, and affection. As one informant remarked to me, 'visiting makes us feel good about ourselves'. Migrants can fulfill expectations of being 'Kenyans in diaspora'. However, staying in touch can also trigger experiences of vulnerability, guilt, and sadness. In the literature on transnational families, the longing, sorrow, and pain of migration is typically understood in terms of the physical separation of kin engendered by migration (see, for example, Baldassar 2008; Parreñas 2001a, 2005;

Schmalzbauer 2004). I would suggest that behind Faith's silence when asked if her son can go to Kenya with her friend's young daughter to see his own grandfather is a dilemma faced by many migrants: she was silenced, on one hand, by having not visited and, on the other, by her sadness and guilt at the sense of being a (morally) bad daughter. Such sentiments can prompt migrants to keep kin at bay in an effort to avoid criticism and sadness.

At the same time, Lucy's experience highlights that being co-present is not necessarily enough to overcome such tensions. That is, social distance can persist in moment of physical proximity; it may even exacerbate migrants' sense of alienation. Lucy's alienation was further compounded by the difficulties she faced in London such that she did not feel she belonged among people in either place. The vignettes help to underscore the complex confluence of ambivalence, obligation, and affection that inhere in (transnational) kin relations.

The vignettes highlight the discrepancies between actual familial relationships and normative expectations of such relationships; 'it is perhaps not surprising [situations such as these], which also exacerbate the discrepancies, result in increased anxiety about the relationships themselves' and a 'focus on formal, that is, normative, ideas of kinship' (Miller 2007: 544). With the exception of Lucy's experience, the vignettes do not reflect migrants' efforts to curtail relations, but rather they illustrate how 'flexibility is almost always used to find ways to make a complex situation, where the rules are unclear, accord with and remain analogous to the basic principles generated by formal kinship' (Miller 2007: 539). Following from this, it is clear that no one was disputing the social and cultural importance of 'family', not even a migrant like Lucy. Rather, through their negotiations, they were debating who was considered kin (in the sense of whose wellbeing they are materially responsible for)

and how they should relate to each other in what can be seen as an effort to re-establish rules and norms of relatedness (cf. Eriksen 2007: 5).

Conclusion

'What happens there [Kenya] happens here [London]' encapsulates the reciprocal relationship between migrant and non-migrant kin. I have shown that, through migration, this moral economy of relatedness is stretched across space, with its members becoming emplaced in different localities. Staying in touch is a way of re-paying the gift of communality whereby the diversity of ways of doing so can be understood as expressions and enactments of generalized reciprocity. The vignettes describe encounters between kin and their ensuing negotiation of roles, expectations, and obligations in an effort to be recognized. Transnational practices of relatedness can be important for sustaining relations, and mitigating the geographic distance between migrant and non-migrant kin. Through such actions, it is possible for transnational families to remain socially and emotionally close, regardless of living at a distance from one another (cf. Drotbohm 2009; Olwig 2007; Goulbourne and Chamberlain 2001).

However, the implications of the normative expectation that 'what happens there happens here' reveal gaps between migrant and non-migrant kin – gaps in understanding and perspective, expectations and imagination – that play out at the level of lived experience. As transnational kin interact from their different social locations across space, these expectations can become burdens for migrants. As I have illustrated, recognition and humiliation are social and affective concerns for migrant and non-migrant kin. The structural superiority of migrants does not insulate them from possible humiliation, nor does the structural inferiority of non-

migrants resign them to disgrace or embarrassment.

They each have different sources of power and different forms of social protection on which to draw. Migrants' power lies in their material and mobility resources, which is then further shaped by their gender and marital status. While much is expected of married migrant men in terms of assistance, they also enjoy higher social status than unmarried migrant women in particular in re-working what is expected of them. The marital status of married migrant women also gives them greater room to maneuver in their relations without necessarily incurring criticism. In contrast non-migrants' power derives from cultural or symbolic sources, enabling them to criticize the (in)actions of migrants on moral grounds. The ways in which transnational family members tried to make sense of and resolve these gaps in the moment and upon further reflection, I have suggested, point to contested moral discourses and frames of reference.

Finally, this chapter has further revealed that distance in transnational families cannot be solely conceptualized in geographic terms, as Parrenas (2001a), Dreby (2006), and Schmalzbauer (2004) suggest. It necessitates considering how other kinds of distance between migrant and non-migrant kin may develop over time and/ or become transformed across space. Disjunctures of imagination with their affective dimensions can co-exist with situations of physical co-presence. In each of the cases discussed in the chapter, kin tried to (re-)articulate what it meant to be related. In keeping with a processual approach to kin relations, I have shown that degrees of social distance increase and decrease between migrants and various non-migrant kin through their actions and inactions. Thus, distance in studies of transnational families is better construed as both physical and social such that attention can be given to their interplay.

In the next chapter, I turn my attention to ritualized practices of relatedness, namely weddings. These important familial and social occasions offer opportunities to reconstitute families comprised of geographically dispersed kin. At the same time, they are moments in which new families are formed. Given the importance of marital status in defining personhood among Kenyans, what happens when processes of social becoming occur largely in London often without the presence and participation of non-migrant kin?

Chapter 6 – 'You come here to work or study, but then life happens': Weddings as transnational household rituals and occasions for community-building

I arrived early at the address of the wedding on a sunny, brisk autumn morning: an auto repair garage on the edges of Dagenham in Greater London. Looking across at the defunct Ford Motor Company factory, I wondered if I was in the right place. Slowly, other guests began arriving, including the friends who had invited me. Their cars stopped near an entrance to the A13, which links the City of London to East London, so that passengers could scramble out in their elegant clothes and polished shoes. With their eyes fixed straight ahead past rusted bumpers, stacked car doors, and old tires, they walked toward the entrance of the church. Once at the door, everyone was escorted upstairs to the service. Just as they had taken little notice of the actual physical location of the church earlier, no one around me seemed to notice the muffled noises underneath our feet either. As the keyboardist began to play, the music drowned out the sounds of grating metal and workers' voices. Everyone's attention was focused on what they were gathered for, and for which the space had been transformed: a wedding.

* * * * *

Marriage marks a transition in the life course of Kenyans through which their identity, status, and roles change in relation to their families and society. Being married is a status to which many Kenyan women and men aspire, whether migrant or non-migrant. Through marrying, they come to be seen as full social persons. Their roles as husbands and wives are significant not only in familial contexts, but also in social life more broadly. As discussed in Chapter Three, managing one's

household was traditionally considered the basis of authority, status, and power, though the ability of many Kenyans to engage in this cultural process of social becoming has been transformed historically (Lonsdale 2003).

Many Kenyan women and men migrated to the United Kingdom as single people in their early 20s, a typical age at which Kenyans often begin marrying.[104] As one male informant in his late 30s who married in London told me, 'you come here to work or study, but then life happens'. By 'life happens' he was referring to the fact that he and many of his peers had married and started families in London. It is worthwhile considering how migrants from Kenya engage with and mark this moment in their life courses. I ask in turn what their wedding practices can tell us about their relations with their parents and other kin, most of whom remain in Kenya.

I suggest that the weddings of Kenyan migrants are important for what they express as well as what they constitute. More specifically, I propose that weddings produce a set of performances and practices, rather than solely reflect a set of representations (Bourdieu 1977; Ortner 1984). The chapter is divided into three parts. I begin in the first part by describing what Kenyan migrants refer to as 'community weddings', which are seen as a normative ideal, and discuss their three stages. Though my focus is on migrant couples who marry in such weddings, there are migrants who marry in registry ceremonies, and others who form another type of relationship – a 'come-we-stay' or cohabiting relationship. I touch on each of these alternatives in the chapter.[105] Given that most young migrants in London live at a distance from their parents and extended families in Kenya, the second part focuses

[104] According to the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2008), the average age at marriage for women is 21.2 years and 26.1 years for men in Kenya.

[105] There are of course also migrants who remain single (see Chapter Five for a discussion of singlehood).

on ‘community weddings’ as a type of transitional household ritual in which geographically dispersed families have the potential to be both re-constituted and re-configured (Gardner and Grillo 2002). In the last part, I examine the weddings as occasions for community-building, asking who is included in this ‘community’ and how such a community is constituted.

If we understand weddings as occasions through which persons, families and emotionally and morally significant ‘communities’ are constituted, we need also to consider if the place in which they occur is significant. Place is understood here as ‘primarily relational and contextual’ in terms of the social relations that coalesce in a locality during the different stages of the marriage process.[106] Many migrants from Kenya claim that weddings in London are just like the ones they have in Kenya. Consequently, they say it ‘doesn’t matter where they marry’. Additionally, their behavior, as seen in the opening vignette, indicates that they are creating a parallel world.

Despite the apparent continuities in practices, I argue that the weddings contribute to a reconfiguration of migrants’ relations with their non-migrant kin, particularly along generational lines. Thus, while such weddings may facilitate the social reproduction of relatedness across space, they can also exacerbate the distance(s) between migrants and their non-migrant kin, many of whom do not attend. Moreover, I contend that by marrying in London, migrants emplace themselves in a new set of reciprocal moral relations primarily among other Pentecostal Christians living in the United Kingdom. These occasions serve to strengthen the conjugal families formed and sacralized through these weddings, rather than (re)affirm the continuity of their extended families.

[106] This is akin to Appadurai’s definition of locality, which he suggests understanding in these terms, rather than as scalar and spatial (1996b: 178).

'Just because we're here, we can't forget our culture. It's who we are': A picture of 'community weddings'

'Community weddings' among migrants from Kenya are multifaceted events. Bridewealth negotiations and pre-wedding activities are followed by the ceremony and reception. At the center of the activities are the family members of the bride and groom, which typically include parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. With each successive stage in the marriage process, ever-wider spheres of people become involved. The ceremony includes family members and friends, while participation at the reception widens not only to incorporate family, friends, and acquaintances, but others with more tangential connections to the bridal couple, such as, individuals who attend at the invitation of someone who knows the couple.

In this part I describe the three key stages of 'community weddings', drawing on my own observations of these activities, as well as the descriptions informants in London gave me. I focus on those weddings where the bridewealth negotiations were held in Kenya and the pre-wedding activities, ceremony and reception took place in London.[107]

Before proceeding though, it is worth noting that the term 'community wedding' is one that Kenyan migrants themselves coined. When I asked what it meant, I was simply told that 'everyone is welcome [at the wedding]'. Several informants likened 'community weddings' to those held in villages in Kenya where everyone in the village celebrates the couple. As I will discuss in this chapter, the term's usage is linked to the rise in popularity of such weddings, which informants date to around the mid- 2000s; prior to that point, many married in registry weddings.

[107] Since I only met a few couples living in London who chose to hold their wedding ceremonies in Kenya, this discussion does not encompass that particular variation of transnational weddings.

Given that London cannot easily be considered a 'village', I also consider how best to understand the 'community' which Kenyan migrants invoke with the term 'community wedding'.

'You're not married unless you pay dowry'[108]: Negotiating bridewealth[109]

Marriage among Kenyans has traditionally marked the joining of two families through the bridal couple. It is seen as creating the basis for raising a family, which is considered the foundation of the 'community'. Historically, marriages have also been occasions for generating wealth for extended families through the exchange of women, money, and goods. The bridewealth negotiating process, along with the associated payments, serves to establish the basis for a long-term relationship between the bride and groom's *families*, not solely between the bride and groom themselves. The bridewealth paid by the groom's family was traditionally raised collectively among the groom's agnatic kin. It was in turn incorporated into the bride's family for her own brothers to use as bridewealth when they married (Radcliffe-Brown 1950: 50-52; Kenyatta 1953: 165-167). Thus, individual and familial interests historically dovetailed in marriages, enabling young men and women to become full social persons and facilitating the efforts of families to advance their collective wellbeing.

Bridewealth negotiations remain the crucial first step in the marriage process for many migrants from Kenya, regardless of the type of wedding (to be discussed

[108] All of my Kenyan informants and acquaintances refer to the payment of livestock and/ or cash by the groom's family to that of the bride using the English word 'dowry'. In societies where dowry is paid, the roles of the bride and groom and their families are reversed: when she marries, the bride and her family give money, goods, and/ or property to the groom and his family.

[109] Following Evans Pritchard's (1931) definition of bridewealth to encompass a wide range of meaning and significance attached to the payment of property, goods, money, and so on by the groom's family to the bride's family or clan, I use the term 'bridewealth' unless quoting Kenyans directly.

later in the chapter). Since migrants' parents and extended families often still live in Kenya, marriage proceedings are transnational in character from the outset. Many initiate the process with telephone calls to their parents. The groom-to-be alerts his family that they should organize themselves and get in touch with the bride-to-be's family, while she notifies her parents that the groom-to-be's family will contact them. In the latter conversation, she may also try to get a sense of what her family might want for bridewealth.

The prospective groom's agnatic kin, often his father's brothers or his own elder brothers, act as representatives of his family. They are in charge of the negotiations on his side, and a comparable group of male elders handles the negotiations on behalf of the bride's family. Both the age and gender of the family representatives are significant in that women traditionally tended not to be formally involved in these discussions, nor is the young couple part of the process. Before embarking on the negotiations, the groom's elders investigate the prospective bride's family to gauge the character of the family. Most couples I know who have married in the United Kingdom met each other in London for the first time. This makes these negotiations particularly important because they help to ensure that 'you don't marry your sister', that is, it ensures exogamous marriages. For example, Michael, a man in his mid 30s told me how his parents sat him down on the eve of his departure to London to tell him about a woman he was likely to meet there. They instructed him to call the woman 'sister'. He told me this was odd since as far as he knew she was not his sister. They clarified that the woman's mother was his grandfather's sister.[110]

[110] In this case, the man and his 'sister' are both Luo. Luo kinship reckoning is historically lineal-cognatic whereby the rule of exogamy forbids marriage within the group, as well as prohibits marriage with a person of the mother's group (Radcliffe-Brown 1950: 67). The marriage practices of Kikuyus and Luhyas are also exogamous (Parkin 1978: 275-283; Cattell 2003: 247-248).

By calling her 'sister', they aimed to ensure that Michael developed nothing more than brotherly feelings toward her.

Once it is determined that the prospective bride and groom are not related and that both families are well regarded, representatives from both families engage in a series of conversations and meetings to get to know one another and eventually determine the amount of bridewealth to be paid. Various factors are considered in the process. An important one is the bride's level of education. Because education beyond the primary level is not free in Kenya, decisions about how many and which children to educate can be difficult ones for families, especially those with limited financial means. Thus, in the negotiations, 'more' education, that is, more years of schooling completed and/ or degrees of higher education obtained, is highly valued because it is seen as representing a family's investment in their daughter. Historically, the bride's responsibilities and roles within her family were another factor to be considered; traditionally once a daughter was married and moved to live with or near her husband's family, someone else had to assume her duties in her natal home. One older migrant woman explained to me that, during her bridewealth negotiations, her uncle jokingly invoked the traditional roles of daughters in rural areas, who from an early age help to secure basic food supplies, along with water and wood for cooking (cf. Hetherington 2001: 162). Even though his niece was already living in Nairobi by that time, he told the groom's family how important she was to the family – 'she collects milk for us. She tells stories that make us laugh. Who will do these things for us when she is gone?'

Bridewealth is initially calculated in terms of livestock – the 'cow-goat price' or 'sheep-goat price' – that is, the combined values of a specific number of heads of livestock. Following from the importance attached to education, bridewealth

amounts can also be expressed in terms of parents' estimated expenditures on educating their daughter. While it is hard to generalize about bridewealth values, many informants in London said values fall between £3,000-£10,000.[111] It has become increasingly common that the families convert the livestock value into cash, typically the local currency, based on current market prices for livestock in Kenya (cf. Shipton 2007: 121-131). These decisions largely depend on where the bride's family lives and what kinds of livelihoods they have. For instance, one woman who married another Kenyan in London 10 years ago told me that her widowed mother was paid in cash because she lives in suburban Nairobi, works in an office in the city, and has no space for cows or goats at her home.

'Do I turn up and help others?' Pre-wedding activities

Once the bridewealth has been negotiated, couples begin the next stage of the marriage process, that is, pre-wedding activities. To host a 'community wedding' requires ample financial and social resources. As one recent groom explained to me, the couple needs to assess if they 'turn up and help others', that is, if they are known to be people who support others, who in turn will support them. Whether in London or in Kenya, most couples and their respective families gather financial and other contributions from extended family members, friends, and acquaintances through a series of pre-wedding activities that culminate in a dinner to raise funds.[112]

Many couples begin the process by inviting close friends and selected family members who live in London to form a wedding committee. In joining the

[111] I also encountered several instances in which grooms had to pay a 'fine' of 1-2 extra goats to the bride's parents because she was pregnant or had given birth by the time of the wedding.

[112] The pre-wedding dinners are *harambees*, though my informants in London did not use that word to refer to them (see Chapter Four, footnote 80).

committee, each person typically contributes money to start the fund raising process, usually about £10-15. Committees consist of a core group of about 6-10 members. At the initial committee meeting, members will choose someone to chair the committee. Ideally, the chair is a person who is trustworthy, responsible and organized, especially because he or she manages the money that is raised. I was told numerous times that it is helpful to have a married couple on the committee because they are seen as experienced and knowledgeable about the process. A major task is to develop a plan and budget for the wedding and delegate tasks to committee members. Also, they need to consult a calendar, looking at different dates and inquiring about any other weddings or major occasions planned near their preferred date. If there are other events scheduled, it is suggested that the couple consider if they want to risk people choosing to attend another event instead of their wedding. This could result in their being unable to raise adequate funds to host the kind of wedding they envision.

At the pre-wedding dinner, usually held about a month before the wedding day at a hired venue, guests are encouraged to bring with them as many of their friends as they can gather. Not only do more guests mean more money can be raised, but those who successfully enlist others to attend also benefit by being perceived as influential. Their own status is boosted by their demonstration of social clout. There are typically multiple fund raising avenues during the event. Flowers and raffle tickets are often sold at the entrance. After the meal, the guests of honor are invited to gather at the front of the room. They are often people of influence who may or may not personally know the bridal couple; their presence is what is considered important in that it is viewed as a positive reflection on the couple, just as invitations to be guests of honor reflect well on the honorees. Each guest of honor is expected to arrive at the dinner with money he or she has already raised from his or her own

circles. They then take turns announcing to the guests how much money they have raised and encouraging everyone in attendance to give additional money. Guests at the pre-wedding dinner typically attend the wedding itself.

'Weddings are for the community': Ceremony and reception

The following vignette describes a wedding I attended in Hornsey in the borough of Haringey in North London. The pastor husband of Joyce, an informant, was marrying the couple, and she invited me to attend with her and her family. Joyce assured me the wedding would be 'just like the ones we hold in Kenya': a church service, followed by a reception with Kenyan dishes and speeches given by the bridal couple's parents.

On the day of the wedding, I met Joyce and her family at the Anglican Church in Hornsey at midday. In a moment when the groom Isaiah was alone, I took the chance to introduce myself, still feeling unsure whether it was appropriate for me to be there. Isaiah smiled and extended his hand, welcoming me as a friend of Joyce and saying that the wedding is 'open to everyone'. The church began filling up with guests: some women dressed in bold colored dresses with headscarves, others in neat pastel suits and patterned, colorful dresses. The men wore dark suits or African print tunics over trousers. Young children trailed behind their parents, girls in frilly dresses and boys in shorts and button-down shirts. Finally, the church pews were full of the 150 or so guests.

The bride and groom took their places at the front of the church, facing the Anglican priest, as well as Joyce's husband, Paul, a Pentecostal Kenyan pastor. The

priest and pastor shared the ceremonial duties.[113] The priest took Isaiah and Stella through their vows, the signing of the marriage papers, and finally the exchange of rings. Just after the vows, Paul took over the ceremony, calling out 'God is good', to which the guests responded in chorus 'all the time'. 'All the time', he said, and the guests replied, 'God is good'. Paul began his remarks, 'marriage is between a man and a woman, and lasts until death separates them. Divorce might be legal in [the] UK but it is not in the eyes of God. Marriage is a process, not an event, and the wedding is not a 'rehearsal'. He continued, switching from English into Kikuyu, the mother tongue of the bride and groom's families. Before doing so, he explained that the service was being filmed, so it could be sent to those in Kenya who could not be there in person.

While the bridal couple signed the marriage papers, a woman began singing a religious song in Kikuyu. She sang a verse and the other women guests, who were standing by now, responded with a verse of their own. As the song proceeded in this way, everyone clapped, swayed and cheered. Before the ceremony ended, the priest and pastor asked the other pastors in attendance to come forward so they could bless the couple. Seven or so pastors, mostly men, along with a couple of women, stood in a semi-circle behind Isaiah and Stella and raised their hands in the air with their palms facing the couple's backs. As the priest and pastor said the blessing, the other pastors joined in, some in whispers, others more audibly. The guests stood with their hands raised in the air and offered their blessings to the couple as well. After the ceremony, guests chatted and some exchanged driving directions to the reception,

[113] When Stella first moved to London, she lived near the church and began attending services there. She told me it was the first place she felt at home in London. Given this, she wanted to have the wedding there, while also having their Kenyan pastor conduct part of the ceremony. She said she was grateful that both priest and pastor agreed to share the duties.

which was being held at a comprehensive school in Barking in East London about an hour's drive from the church.

When we arrived, we found the school's gymnasium had been decorated with ribbons and banners. The bridal party's table was set up on the stage, a long table with a white tablecloth and small vases of pink roses facing the tables of guests on the floor. The chairs were all covered with white cloth tied on with blue ribbons to match the ribbon of the bride's dress and the groom's suit. The room was filled with round tables covered in white tablecloths. Encircling them in a U-shape were narrow tables with chairs on the outer side facing into the room. By the time the bride and groom arrived around 4 pm, after stopping to have their photos taken at the Alexandra Palace in North London, the gymnasium was filled with guests, easily double the number who had attended the ceremony.

Guests queued at the buffet, filling their paper plates with Kenyan favorites like roast chicken, a tomato-based stew of *nyama* (beef); *mukimo*, a mash of potatoes, peas, and maize; chapatti; *kachumbari*, a salad of lettuce and cucumber; and white and Indian-spiced rice. Bottles of water and cans of Coke, Tango, and Mirinda were on the table. As everyone finished eating, the MC asked for silence so they could begin the speeches.

Isaiah's father spoke first, urging his son to be a provider, a servant, a leader, and a lover to Stella. Next it was his mother's turn, and she invited her new daughter-in-law to stand opposite her. She handed her a *kiondo* (a woven basket with a leather strap), explaining that Stella should use it to carry food home from the market. Stella lifted the bag and placed the strap on her head so it rested just after the hairline started, and squared the bag on her back. Then she was given a *kijiko* (long-handled wooden spoon) and *gitariuro* (a shallow sisal tray used for sorting and

cleaning rice). With the *kiondo* still on her back, Stella took the *gitariuro* in her hands. Under her mother-in-law's guidance, she began to flick it gently in the air, mimicking the process of separating the grains of rice from any pebbles. A friend of the bride's father then spoke on the latter's behalf. He told her that everything that is his is also hers, and everything that is hers is also his. He thanked her for giving him another son and laughingly said that he has more daughters for marrying. Lastly, on behalf of the bride's mother, her aunt who had travelled there from Nairobi, placed a gold necklace around Stella's neck. It was her husband's job now, she told Stella, to give her gifts to make her beautiful.

After the speeches, the guests formed a queue that snaked around the tables and began giving the couple their gifts and having their photographs taken. Some guests held envelopes, while others carried big gift-wrapped boxes with ribbons and bows. When the last gift was given and photo taken, a cake with many white frosted tiers was brought out. Stella and Isaiah stood by the cake, along with Pastor Veronica, who explained to us that she had counseled them prior to the wedding. She asked them to hold the knife together and cut a piece of the cake: this was their 'first task as a married couple', and was symbolic of their 'need to work together'. Then the cake was cut into many small squares and placed on communal plates, which Stella and Isaiah carried to the tables at the front of the room where their families, along with such important guests as pastors were sitting.

As the reception drew to a close near 9 pm, guests began leaving. Many stopped to pick up plates of leftover food covered with cling film, along with bottles of water and soda, on their way out. A small group of guests methodically dismantled the space, dumping empty plates and cups into black plastic bags and

removing tablecloths. By the time I left with Joyce and her family, the space had metamorphosed back into an unadorned school gymnasium.

'Community weddings' as transnational household rituals

Against this ethnographic backdrop, I want to examine 'community weddings' as a type of 'transnational household ritual': bridewealth negotiations primarily take place in Kenya, while the pre-wedding activities, ceremonies, and receptions occur in the United Kingdom. Gardner and Grillo suggest that examining these rituals and the meanings attributed to them can help us understand 'relations between place, culture, ethnicity, and gender among migrants in a transnational world, and illuminate contemporary processes of globalization' (2002: 180).[114] Salih further asserts that these 'rituals become fertile and creative terrains in which ideas of traditional or modern, Westernized or authentic are moulded, subverted and reformulated' (2002a: 223).

In what follows, I offer a complementary analytical approach to understanding such life cycle rituals. Weddings are understood here as an example of the ritualization of social relations conceptualized as an 'ongoing dynamic process, rather than as static cultural events' (Gardner and Grillo 2002: 183). Accordingly, I suggest that we examine weddings among migrants from Kenya as a transnational ritual practice that helps to foster a sense of relatedness by bridging the distance between geographically dispersed kin. At the same time, because these occasions also mark moments of change within families, they afford individuals the space within which to contest their identity, status, and kin relations. Thus, distance(s) may not be bridged, and relations may be reconfigured in the process. 'It is the dialectic

[114] For comparative purposes, see also Charsley (2012) and Fuglerud (1999).

of continuity *and* change that is important with rituals and what might be thought of or represented as 'tradition' used to negotiate, and perhaps assert, new identities and status' (Gardner and Grillo 2002: 187).

I follow several analytical strands. First, I highlight the transnational organization of these ritual practices among younger migrants in London and their non-migrant parents and other kin in Kenya and the respective roles each plays. I contrast this with how I have been told such tasks would be organized if the weddings were held at 'home'. I contextualize continuities and discontinuities in terms of informants' own explanations and descriptions of such practices in Kenya drawn from existing literature.[115] I also consider such factors as legal constraints and financial circumstances that impinge on the decision-making of couples and their families.

Second, I consider the importance of witnessing and participating in wedding proceedings. As Piot points out, much of what happens at weddings focuses on making visible actions and statuses not considered achieved until they are seen by others (1999: 101). As forms of cultural practice, life-cycle rituals are performances that engage those who are co-present, namely, the bridal couple and their families and guests; as such, they provide a rich sphere of activity within which to explore how people embody and enact cultural ideas and values through the performance. As discussed in Chapter Three, marriage is central to ideas of gendered, moral personhood and is part of a process of social becoming. The performative dimensions of rituals, in particular, are important for our understanding of personhood.

[115] The secondary literature cited in this section is primarily based on research that was carried out between the 1970s and 1990s, a period during which many younger migrants who have married in London were born, came of age, and migrated to the United Kingdom.

I argue that, while there may be continuity in some important wedding practices, power relations among kin are also being re-worked along generational lines. Key to this re-working is that most of the wedding activities take place in London and, thus, at a geographic and social remove from non-migrant kin, many of whom are not present throughout most of the marriage process.

Continuities and discontinuities in marriage practices

The ongoing practice of negotiating bridewealth among many migrants from Kenya indicates their interest in maintaining the continuity of such practices regardless of where they live. Although several aspects of these formal negotiations persist, they do so in a modified form, which suggests both a departure from traditional practices and an extension of changes in marriage practices evident in Nairobi at the time of their migration. For instance, concerns about 'marrying one's sister' have not arisen only because some Kenyans now live in large, anonymous, foreign cities like London; such concerns also play out among Kenyans of all ethnic backgrounds living 'among strangers' in Nairobi and other urban areas of the country (Frederiksen 2000: 216). This stands in contrast to the implicit assumption evident in early ethnographies (see, for example, Kenyatta 1953: 165-166) that the bride and groom's families knew each other prior to the wedding, making extensive investigations unnecessary.

Similarly, bridewealth can be paid in cash regardless of whether one is marrying in London or Nairobi. It was traditionally raised among the groom's agnatic kin, which was intended to further solidify the inter-familial links between the bride's and groom's families. However, this is not reliably the case for men marrying in London. Many pay the bridewealth themselves, and it is not uncommon

for their wives-to-be to contribute as well. According to Hetherington, similar variations in terms of who contributes to the bridewealth are evident among couples marrying in Nairobi (2001: 170). Furthermore, the bridewealth was traditionally paid in installments at particular moments: the first payment was made when the woman left her natal home, and later payments were made on the birth of children (Parkin 1978: 277-78). Parkin notes though that, at the time of his fieldwork in the 1970s, bridewealth payments varied significantly in size and timing among Kikuyu-speaking people living in Nairobi (1980: 217). This variation has also been noted more recently in the 1990s in Kiambu District where many younger migrants were raised (Price 1996: 418; Hetherington 2001: 169-170). I found the same to be true among my informants in London.

One noteworthy difference from traditional practices is that bridewealth negotiations among couples living in London are typically initiated by a phone call. In contrast, Kenyatta discussed the first stage in the marriage process among Kikuyus as traditionally being when the groom-to-be visited the bride-to-be and her family with a small group of his male friends to say he had 'identified a girl he would like to marry'; a visit by the groom's family to the bride's family then followed (1953: 165-166). I was assured that the couple's physical absence is not considered disruptive to the process because traditionally they did not participate in the negotiations anyway. Nonetheless, the parents of migrant brides and grooms may have little, if any, opportunity to acquaint themselves with their child's intended spouse prior to the wedding or until much later if they do not attend. This arrangement reveals that the negotiations in Kenya are isolated from other activities taking place in London. Despite this, the negotiations remain on par in terms of

importance with the religious ceremony that assures God's blessing and with the legal certification of a marriage.

Though younger migrants respect the bridewealth process for its cultural importance and the enjoyment they believe their elders get from participating, there is considerable ambivalence about it. Young migrant men who themselves paid bridewealth expressed their uncertainty about whether or not they would want to receive bridewealth when their own daughters who were born in London eventually marry. Their concern is rooted in the view that paying bridewealth is akin to 'buying' a woman, which gives the man the right to do what he wants with his wife. They expressed worries over how their daughters might be treated, and that their future sons-in-law will say 'I paid this much money and I should get what I want…. I paid dowry'.

A significant factor shaping their attitudes toward bridewealth is likely their Pentecostal beliefs. Many couples participate in marriage counseling prior to the wedding in order to discuss their expectations of each other as husband and wife (cf. Meyer 2004: 459-460). These expectations are framed within Pentecostal beliefs about the marital relationship and the appropriate roles of husbands and wives. For instance, at Stella and Isaiah's wedding, Pastor Paul intoned that 'women must respect their husbands. Men must also respect and love their wives. Women should submit to their husbands and they will in turn take care of them'. These comments allude to the complementarity of gender roles in Pentecostal belief and discourse. Their ambivalence raises questions about the continuity of this practice for the next generation. However, if the practice stops among migrants in the future, it may primarily be because of religious or social objections, rather than a lack of economic resources, which is more likely to be the case for delays in marrying among some

Kenyans in Kenya (Hetherington 2001: 168-174), including among the non-migrant kin of my London informants.

Just as many of my informants claim continuity in traditions by negotiating bridewealth, they make a similar assertion regarding weddings held in London. They maintain the weddings are 'just like the ones we have at home'. Nonetheless, the decision about where to hold the wedding entails a complicated calculus that takes into account the couple's ongoing ties to Kenya and new ones to London, as well as their financial and social resources. Other issues, including such structural factors as migration policies and more personal questions of control and autonomy, also shape decisions about where to hold the ceremony and reception.

Holding a wedding in London means the responsibility for raising the money and organizing the wedding ceremony and reception primarily lies with the couple itself. Several informants made the point to me that 'if we married at home, our families would have handled everything for us', discursively stressing that they did not view this change as desirable. But taking on this responsibility affords the couple a degree of power unavailable to couples marrying in Kenya. Engaged migrant couples make the decisions about the pre-wedding dinner, ceremony, and reception, and set the total budget at the amount they choose. It is their prerogative to decide not to spend all the money on the wedding itself if they choose. They can keep the remaining funds for themselves, an option made easier by the fact that most non-migrant kin still live in Kenya and, thus, it is unlikely they even know how much has been raised. In instances such as this, the wedding can be transformed into a means of capital accumulation for the new conjugal family, rather than for the bride's extended family, as has historically been the case (cf. van Dijk 2002a). While this is not to suggest that gaining responsibility and power are necessarily

reasons for choosing to marry in London, it is a consequence that cannot be ignored and which contributes to generational shifts in power and authority.

The process leading up to the ceremony and reception can take many months or even spread over several years. The pre-wedding activities are not ones that many non-migrant parents and other extended family members can easily and fully participate in since most still live in Kenya. Two particular issues shape their participation throughout the marriage process: the ability to secure visas and whether or not migrants have adequate financial resources to cover the costs of non-migrants' visits. Informants reported that the British Home Office scrutinized and ultimately rejected the applications of their non-migrant kin because of concerns that the latter may overstay their visas once they are in the country. Furthermore, as migrants, the bridal couple would typically be expected to cover the costs of their non-migrant kin's visits. At minimum, the costs for attending the ceremony and reception would include a round-trip flight to the United Kingdom; accommodation, transportation and food while in London, and wedding clothes and gifts. These costs would multiply if non-migrant parents and other kin were to participate in the pre-wedding activities.

Thus, despite the comments of some informants, there are important issues to weigh when marrying in London and which demand that families prioritize when non-migrant kin are present in London. The obvious choice is the wedding day itself, but even that might be in doubt, as we saw in the case of Stella's mother who was not present. Stella explained to me that, despite her mother having the right to reside in Canada, she could not get a visa to travel to the United Kingdom because of a 'technicality'. I remarked that it was fortunate her maternal aunt was able to travel from Nairobi and assume the mother of the bride's duties. She smiled weakly at me

and said she had never heard her mother sound depressed until their conversations in the months leading up to the wedding. The fact that her father, aunt and siblings were able to attend exacerbated the feelings of sadness, frustration, and guilt within the family. Of course, it is always the case that some kin might not be able to attend a given wedding, but the point here is that this is a decision that may largely be taken out of the hands of those closely involved and decided by the British Home Office on what many see as an arbitrary basis. If couples are unable to secure visas or cover the costs, then 'an obvious consequence is that transnationalism becomes a vector through which stratification [within families] takes shape and is expressed' (Gardner and Grillo 2002: 184).

Recording wedding ceremonies and receptions is a practice common to Kenyans, whether migrant or non-migrant.[116] While weddings are often recorded for posterity, these videos take on added familial significance for those marrying in London. They offer an important means of sharing the occasion with those who cannot be present. Doing so was given as the reason for conducting part of Stella and Isaiah's ceremony in Kikuyu (the mother tongue of their parents), which was otherwise conducted in English.

However, a video may also contribute to stratification between those who attend and those who do not. Videos of migrant weddings capture couples and their guests dressed in their best clothes, sitting before heaping plates of food, riding in luxury cars, and celebrating in a style that is usually quite different from their everyday lives. Such images may fuel non-migrants' imagination about their migrant kin's lives in London especially because they cannot see and judge for themselves. This asymmetry of information may compound the bewilderment that follows in the

[116] During fieldwork, I met several entrepreneurial Kenyans who have started filming and photography businesses for these occasions.

wake of being denied the opportunity to attend, whatever the reason, and create a gap in understanding (Carling 2008: 1467). Rather than reproducing a sense of relatedness, such experiences can create tension and resentment among kin.

Finally, the simultaneity of young migrants' weddings held in London and shared via video across this transnational social field cannot ensure a simultaneous co-production of meaning about the moral status and implications of these events for kin relations (cf. van Dijk 2004: 460). That is, despite the simultaneity of the event and its transmission to those in Kenya, non-migrant kin will not necessarily see the constitution and celebration of a nuclear, conjugal family through such weddings as exempting the newly married couple from their wider familial obligations.

Gendered, moral personhood: Making families of a particular kind

In becoming husbands and wives, men and women are formally socialized about the gendered expectations that accompany their newly acquired identities and roles. It is productive to consider the wedding activities in terms of their form (that is, leadership, organization and attendance) and content (that is, speeches and gifts) through which gendered responsibilities and expectations of husbands and wives are conveyed. In the earlier vignette, we saw that the couple's parents played an instrumental role in the speeches and gifts given at the reception, helping to effect the bride and groom's transition to being wife and husband.

There is a lot of pressure on the groom: in discussing his wedding with me, Isaiah noted, 'if you can't lead your own wedding, you can't lead your home'. Weddings are large, detail-laden events that require strong organizational and interpersonal skills. Doing so in London is considered even more impressive as it is a 'foreign' city of almost 8 million people. From the start, weddings are planned in

ways similar to running a business, complete with a budget, working committee, assigned roles and tasks, and strategies for raising money. While the wife-to-be is often involved in these decisions, the ultimate responsibility rests with the husband who oversees the work of their wedding committee. To hold a successful wedding requires keeping an eye on every detail, such as, organizing the ceremony; identifying and decorating the venue; choosing a caterer and planning the menu; deciding on the music and hiring a live band or a DJ with a sound system; and arranging transportation and accommodation for any family members and guests who are coming from Kenya and elsewhere.

Conversely, the bride's new identity and accompanying duties are more evident in the content of the speeches given by their respective parents and in the gifts she receives at the reception. In the earlier vignette, Stella's mother-in-law gave her the household items she would need to fulfill her new duties as a wife and eventually a mother as traditionally understood: a *kiondo* for carrying vegetables from the market; a *gitariuro*, a sisal sieve for cleaning rice; and a *kijiko*, a long-handled wooden cooking spoon. Other items given at weddings may include cooking pots, ideally at least two, I was told, because a wife should always cook more than one dish in case more people arrive than she had expected; a plastic jug for carrying water; and a special clay pot for *githeri*, a slow-cooked dish of maize and beans, among other items.[117] With each gift, the bride pretends to use the utensils as they are intended. In doing so, she symbolically demonstrates in front of all the guests her ability and willingness to carry out her new duties.

[117] I have been told that, while the actual gifts may vary depending on the ethnicity of the bride and groom, the nature of the bride's gifts is similar to those given at this wedding. In this instance, the particular gifts may be understood within the context of the bridal couple both being Kikuyu. With that said, *githeri*, a traditional Kikuyu dish of maize and beans, is now widely cooked and eaten by Kenyans regardless of ethnicity.

For most migrant Kenyan women and many of their peers in Nairobi, these gifts are largely symbolic. Their lives do not entail carrying food home from the market in a basket they strap on their heads, or fetching water from a communal well or nearby river or stream. They may choose to buy rice that needs cleaning, but they may also buy quick-cooking rice that requires no additional work. The continuing practice of giving such gifts suggests the persistence of symbolic gendered ideals of behavior regardless of the contexts in which many couples now live.

It is worthwhile noting who gives which gifts to the bride and the symbolism of their respective gifts for the relations among different generations of women. Traditionally, women moved to the homesteads of their husbands' families, becoming part of their clans and lineages (see Chapter Three). The giving of the bed – or bed linens, a pragmatic modification of the tradition that occurs in London and Nairobi – by the bride's mother symbolically marks a shift in the home of the bride: the bride's home is now literally with her husband and his family. If the couple argues, I was told, the wife must remember that she can no longer seek shelter with her parents. The gifts from the mother-in-law complement those of the bride's mother in that they are practical gifts that enable the bride to fulfill her duties to her husband.

While the gifts themselves are largely symbolic, the relations underpinning the gifts are also symbolic among migrant daughters-in-law and non-migrant mothers-in-law, perhaps even more so than among those who live in Kenya. Two women in their 50s in London described to me how their own mothers-in-law came to stay with them in Nairobi in the first months of their marriages to ensure 'they were taking care of their sons properly'. Both explained how they endured criticism over not preparing their new husband's favorite meals, their housekeeping skills, and

their appearance. One explained to me: 'it was hard. I wasn't used to being married. I was working and trying to be a wife. I had a house girl, but I'm the one who had to cook his food and serve it to him. She [the mother-in-law] would say to me that he wouldn't keep me around if the house girl did everything for him I was supposed to do. It was very hard on me'.

From the start of her marriage, however, a new migrant daughter-in-law is likely to be the head of her own household in London. Even if she were not, she would still not be living in a small house in her husband's family's homestead, often with shared cooking space. It is highly unlikely that her mother-in-law could simply drop by for a visit as in the example above, much less stay for an extended period. For this to occur in London, a mother-in-law would have to enlist the assistance of her son and/ or daughter-in-law to apply for the visa, arrange the travel, and cover various expenses, all of which might take considerable time to organize as well; this alone would constitute a significant shift in power to the junior woman. The physical distance separating migrant women and their non-migrant mothers-in-law offer opportunities to circumvent the generation-based hierarchical relationships with which many of their married peers in Kenya must contend.

In this part we have seen that the traditional aspects of the marriage process, namely the bridewealth negotiations, retain central importance. Even some of the modifications in this practice evident in London arguably represent continuity with practices in Nairobi during the period when many began migrating. Thus, they cannot be attributed to migrants living in another place. Similarly, the wedding speeches and gifts may be understood as largely symbolic in terms of the gendered roles they express. Yet these continuities, I would suggest, still re-shape kin

relations. For instance, some couples raise their own bridewealth money. In not turning to the groom's agnatic kin for the funds, couples limit their own reciprocal obligations to kin in the future. Thus, the tradition of paying bridewealth persists, but the implications of its meaning have shifted in practice.

At the same time, I have suggested there are several discontinuities in practice that also shape transnational kin relations. Most importantly, the roles of non-migrant parents and other kin are constrained by structural factors, which often limit their participation in this key life course celebration. However, it is necessary to consider that these discontinuities may have some welcome implications. The bridal couple assumes more power and authority over their wedding by marrying in London and controlling the funds that are raised. The social expectations surrounding particular sets of relations are mediated by the absence of key family members at various stages of the wedding and, later, by the physical distance that insulates new wives from the expectations of their mothers-in-law. In negotiating their respective roles, couples are simultaneously able to proclaim a commitment to 'tradition' and proceed with building their lives in London. Arguably then, the performative value of these weddings may be better understood by turning to consider those who are actually present to witness them, that is, the 'community' evoked by 'community weddings'.

'Community weddings' as occasions for community-building

In the discussion thus far, notions of marriage held by Kenyan migrants and non-migrants traditionally are that marriage is bond between two families and a foundation for the future. We have also seen how 'community weddings' engage a wider set of people beyond migrants' kin. In her work on funerals among migrants

from the Caribbean living in Britain, Olwig suggests examining 'how communities are constituted in concrete situations' (2009: 522). Following her thinking, I suggest an alternative approach to understanding what Kenyan migrants mean by 'community', which explores 'community weddings' as a form of ritualized social practice. Accordingly, the first section examines the internal dynamics of an emerging moral community. In doing so, we begin to see how migrants from Kenya emplace themselves in emotionally and morally significant social relations in London.

As a counterpoint to this discussion, I will consider registry weddings, which, I was told, were the more common ceremony among migrants from Kenya until recently. I suggest that examining the factors that have contributed to marrying in what many Kenyans, migrant and non-migrant, consider an 'un-Kenyan' ceremony can give us insight into the interplay of cultural and familial expectations, structural factors, and individual agency that shape important life course moments like marriage. I will also consider the shift from registry to 'community' weddings, which highlights the creativity and improvisation with which migrants engage and transform traditions (cf. Geissler and Prince 2010: 143-144).

Forging a moral community

As David, a man whose wedding I attended, remarked to me when we met to talk about his wedding, 'culture is not about the past, or our parents and grandparents. It's about us, it's who we are'. Taking this as a departure point, I examine several dimensions of the social significance of 'community weddings'. At their core, 'community weddings' are based on principles of trust, cooperation, and reciprocity. The bride and groom engage in a process of becoming social persons through the

various stages of the wedding, demonstrating their trustworthiness, respect for traditions, and sense of social responsibility. In doing so, they develop and mobilize a network of family members, friends, acquaintances, and others who help them make their wedding a reality and a success through contributions of money, time, and knowledge. These contributions can also be understood as embodying the guests' own hopes and expectations that when 'it is their turn', those they have supported will support them.

This kind of mutual expectation and support co-exists with another aspect of 'community weddings': they are public events where social status and differentiation are displayed. The social status of the couple and their families is reflected in the nature and style of the wedding, whereas guests' social statuses are demonstrated in their gifts to the couple. Money acts a symbol of status and power: by giving money, guests show their relationship to the couple marrying and their own standing in the 'community'. When the occasion involves socially prominent individuals and families, guests want to ensure that their gifts are acknowledged and, thus, they themselves are recognized. Such weddings, I argue, are constructively understood as communal celebrations, gift-giving occasions that engender reciprocal moral relations, and events where social differences among people are expressed.

For relatively new migrants who knew few people in the country prior to migrating, hosting a 'community wedding' means that the 'community' it invokes must be (re)constructed. According to Werbner, this is predicated on the 'reconstruction of a moral universe, and in order to achieve this reconstruction, migrants must reconstitute crucial moral categories of the person' (1990: 151). Those migrant couples who marry in this way seek to demonstrate their upstanding characters by upholding traditions and managing risks encountered during the

marriage process. A communal activity rooted in the values of generosity and reciprocity can be abused, or perceived to be abused which can be just as detrimental to one's social status. There are notable empirical parallels in between the community-building practices of Kenyan migrants and the Pakistani migrants among whom Werbner (1990) has worked, particularly on the roles of gift-giving and fund-raising in building trust among participants. By looking at the moments during which abuses may occur, it is possible to understand more fully how 'community weddings' constitute migrants from Kenya as moral beings who 'turn up and help others' and, thus, how a sense of 'community' is generated.

At each juncture in the marriage proceedings – bridewealth negotiations, pre-wedding activities, and the reception – money is raised, given, and spent. Each occasion is then a time in which the motives and the actions of the couple and their families may be scrutinized. Pre-wedding activities are the lynchpin of 'community weddings' because they are the point at which a wider circle of people become involved and the time when much money is raised. David described his pre-wedding efforts to me as a 'campaign'. Unlike him, his wife did not know many other Kenyans, though she had migrated more than 10 years earlier. Since 'no one owes you anything', he said to me, 'you need to go out and make yourself and your intentions known so people can judge your genuineness. If people don't see you, they won't give.'

Together, they set out to introduce her to other Kenyans and to make themselves known. They travelled all over London and as far as Manchester and Coventry to visit other churches. Sundays were particularly busy days for them: in the months leading up to their wedding, they would attend the 9 am service at one church, then the 11 am service at another, and finally a third service in the afternoon.

At each church, they sought to demonstrate to people that they were respectable individuals who honored traditions and could be counted on. When their energies waned, they turned to prayer as their 'fuel'. The husband told me, 'without prayers, the wedding wouldn't have happened… Weddings come from God, and only God can touch the hearts of men to give.'

Couples' efforts to show people the genuineness of their intentions to marry are implicitly and sometimes explicitly set against cohabiting couples who form what Kenyans, both migrants and non-migrants, refer to as 'come-we-stay' relationships. Though not uncommon, especially in Kenya (Frederiksen 2000), 'come-we-stay' relationships are viewed as socially and morally inferior relationships. They are forged between two *individuals* and, thus, not formally acknowledged by their families. The relationships offer a way to manage some of the challenges that migration brings by sharing costs. In particular many talk about the financial strain of trying to earn money to support oneself, while building a new life in the United Kingdom and sending remittances to family members in Kenya. Thus, 'come-we-stay' relationships may arise because of love, attraction and convenience. Though hardly unique to Kenyan migrants, these reasons do not necessarily speak to moral concerns about propriety or to a life-long commitment that has been blessed by God.[118] Consequently, the relationships are seen as oriented to the present, rather than the future and, by implication, as lacking a strong foundation for building a family. If cohabiting couples eventually decide to marry and bring their relationship back into line with social expectations, their motives might be questioned. For

[118] For instance, Pasura (2008) discusses the rise of 'move-in' relationships among Zimbabwean migrants in the United Kingdom, as does van Dijk regarding the different types of relationships among Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands, including those in which a man lives with a woman 'who is cooking his food', a euphemistic reference to their cohabitation (2004: 454).

example, such couples might be perceived as 'marrying for the money,' which is what Isaiah suggested to me in contrast to his own sincerity. These so-called individualistic couples are then not only depicted as selfish, but also as greedy.

Pre-wedding activities continue to be part of the cultural practice surrounding weddings among Kenyans. However, when wealthy families raise money they could otherwise contribute themselves, several issues emerge that point to stratification among contributors. Contributing to the wedding of wealthy families is seen as socially important in that it reflects well on the contributors in the eyes of others, allowing them to assert a connection to the family. This prompts even those people with limited resources to give money despite not really being able to afford to do so.

In talking with the male head of a wealthy family in London whose son married in a very large 'community wedding', I learned that he viewed his son's pre-wedding dinner as an essential component of the wedding process. As he bluntly put it, 'people wanted to contribute and wanted me to know that they had'. This highlights how weddings are not only celebratory occasions for the 'whole community', but also displays of social status for the couple, their families, and the guests. When I asked him why the couple did not choose to have a small wedding, he replied that their family and friends would have been upset with *him* because 'weddings are for the community'. His comment underscores the multiple, interrelated purposes of these activities – familial, social and financial.

'Community weddings' entail reciprocal obligations and expectations that link the bridal couple and the guests together: 'they [guests] buy rights to your wedding', Robert (see Chapter Four) told me as we discussed his decision to marry in a registry ceremony. Attending the pre-wedding dinner and contributing to the wedding is seen to give guests a 'claim' to the wedding at some level. They want to

celebrate and support the couple, but also to socialize and eat food from 'home' with friends and acquaintances they may only see at such times. Guests may travel long distances to attend; for instance, some who attended the wedding in the earlier vignette came from cities and towns across the United Kingdom, such as, Coventry, Milton Keynes, and Nottingham, as well as from as far away as Kenya and Canada.

Guests may be critical if the reception falls short of what they had hoped for. Because people come to eat and chat, there needs to be enough space to accommodate comfortably everyone who wants to attend. Yet the seating at receptions reflects a hierarchy among guests. Guests of influence and stature, such as pastors, leaders of Kenyan-related organizations, Kenyan media figures in the United Kingdom, and so on, tend to be seated at tables at the front of the room where they are served first. Other guests might sit in rows of seats facing the front of room and balancing their plates on their laps, or at narrow tables encircling and facing into the reception space. This is likely a pragmatic necessity given space limitations, but also a reflection of the relative status of the guests. There must also be enough food to satisfy guests' appetites at receptions. 'Enough' food means that not only are people sated when they leave, but that there are also extra bottles of water, cans of soda, and plates of leftover food they can take home with them.

The expectations may be even higher when the bridal couple or their respective families are seen as wealthy and influential: when a 'big' person hosts a wedding, it must be impressive because the person is in a position to raise lots of money by virtue of his social standing. The wedding of Peter, a younger man who migrated to London in the late 1990s, came under criticism by some guests, who grumbled that £30,000 was raised, but that the party did not reflect that: 'you can't raise that kind of money and then have a £5,000 wedding.' In response to my asking

if they had attended, two female informants described how everyone had to pay for parking and then walk to the venue. They found the venue so crowded that they, along with many other guests, were forced to stand in the entrance hall. Making matters worse was that there was not enough food, nor was it even of the kind that was widely expected. Rather than familiar Kenyan dishes like those served at Stella and Isaiah's wedding in the earlier vignette, Indian curries were served. These shortcomings were seen as an affront to some guests who were left hungry with no place to sit: they were seen as corrupting the reciprocal expectations inherent in gift-giving. It is understood that pre-wedding activities are a time for capital accumulation, but not when it comes at the expense of those who helped to make the celebration possible. Hence, accusations of greed are not reserved for cohabiting couples discussed earlier, but can also be leveled at couples and families who are seen as not generous enough.

Social risks are not only the concern of the bridal couple and their families, but also of some guests. Ensuring ample money is raised and many guests attend requires enlisting the aid of key people who can help realize these goals. The latter's involvement may put them in a position where they themselves also become the object of criticism. In the above case, I learned of the disgruntlement from several displeased guests. Several of his congregants, he said to me, were among those who were stuck in the entrance hall with half full plates of food; others chose to leave when they saw the crowds, returning to the cars they had only just paid to park. He had not realized this at the time because, as a pastor, he was seated at a table near the front of the room, together with other guests of honor who were lavishly taken care of. He explained that he felt badly because he had encouraged them to attend the wedding. In such a situation, the pastor becomes implicated in his congregants'

dissatisfaction. They are less likely to attend future events he mentions to them, or perhaps contribute less if they do attend. This, in turn, reflects badly on the pastor whose social stature is linked to his ability to raise funds on behalf of the next bridal couple and their families.

Given the notion that weddings make visible actions and statuses not considered achieved until they are seen, it is significant who sees the social transformations wrought by weddings. Of the couples whose weddings I attended and/ or discussed with them, the majority of guests were from Kenya. The couples were predominantly Kikuyu, as were their guests. Their shared ethnicity is significant to note in that ethnicity still matters in terms of who some Kenyan migrants marry. Yet there are limits to its significance in that couples socialize across ethnic and national lines: guests of other ethnic backgrounds from Kenya (including Luhyas, Luos, Kambas, and Kalenjins) attended, as well as small numbers of British people and other Africans from countries like Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, and Ghana. Most of the guests were roughly the same age as the bridal couples. I would suggest then that life stage – that is, young migrants who are marrying and starting families – is more important for understanding wedding attendance, than the particular ethnic backgrounds of guests (cf. Adogame 2009: 494-495). By implication, the community that such weddings constitute is better understood in religious terms as a nascent Pentecostal Christian community, a subject I return to in the next chapter.

Because the guests 'know' the bride and groom are now a married couple, their presence as witnesses becomes an important part of helping the couple stay together. This is the 'community' that is expected to intervene and help the couple if they encounter difficulties, rather than their respective families as was traditionally

the case. Seeking refuge with her parents after an argument with her husband is unlikely for most migrant women, and the distance separating non-migrant parents and their married migrant children further constrains the former's ability to support the couple. Instead, those among whom the couple married and who continue to live in London assume this role and responsibility. The 'best couple', I was told, plays a key role in that the bride and groom may turn to them for guidance. Hence, it is seen as important to choose a married couple to be the best man and matron of honor.

'Community weddings' help to constitute a new set of moral relations within which migrants are emplaced. They are then important for the couples, their families, and the nascent community that is emerging among Kenyan migrants in London.

Registry weddings: An 'un-Kenyan' alternative to 'community weddings'

With the discussion of 'community weddings' as community-building occasions in mind, I want to shift attention to registry weddings, which are considered an 'un-Kenyan' alternative. Based on many informants' comments about their own weddings, it seems that registry weddings were actually the more common type of wedding among Kenyans in London until the mid 2000s. How should we make sense of registry weddings among Kenyan migrants in light of the fact that most say they prefer 'community weddings'? The answer, I suggest, lies in part in pragmatism yet it is important not to reduce complex social motivations to a simple (economic) logic.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to describe what registry weddings entail. A registry wedding[119] is a civil ceremony conducted by an official at a register office

[119] This description is based on information available on the Directgov website at http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/Registeringlifeevents/Marriagesandcivilpartnerships/DG_175717, accessed 2 November 2011.

or another venue approved by the local authority. At the time of fieldwork, a couple was required to give notice, together and in person, of their intention to marry; the notice was then publicly displayed for 15 days, after which the authority for the marriage could be granted. Both the bride and groom had to live in the area where notice was given for at least seven full days immediately before giving notice. If either person was subject to immigration control, in addition to giving notice, each had to demonstrate that they were legally allowed to be in the country. On the day of the wedding, the couple was required to have at least one witness each, which means a wedding could take place with a total of two guests, a stark contrast to the many guests who attend 'community weddings'. The minimum total cost of a registry wedding was £77 (as of 2011), which covered giving notice before the wedding, registering the wedding at the register office, and receiving a copy of the marriage certificate on the day.

It should be noted though that choosing to marry in this way does not necessarily say anything about the religious affiliation of migrants, much less how observant they are. The majority of civilly married couples I know also identify as Pentecostal and attend Pentecostal churches. Thus, a registry wedding should not be interpreted as the choice of non-religious or non-church-going migrants.

The initial prevalence of registry weddings in the early to mid 2000s is likely linked to the youthfulness of Kenyan migrants both in the sense of many being in their late 20s and of having lived in London for only a short time.[120] If 'community weddings' are reliant on an extensive social network, then a nascent network of other

[120] Given that many Kenyans migrated in the mid to late 1990s, the early to mid 2000s was barely the first decade of their living in London.

I limit the discussion here to those of my informants who married in this manner in the past. However, my use of the past tense should not be interpreted as meaning that there are no Kenyan migrants who would still choose to marry in registry ceremonies. Nonetheless, they did appear to be less common at the time of fieldwork than they had once been.

young migrants who are studying and working hard to earn money was not likely to be well-resourced or necessarily willing contributors to such occasions. A conversation I had with two women at a party at an informant's home is illustrative of such considerations. One woman in her early 30s spoke excitedly about her plans to marry the following year. Rather than asking about the wedding details, however, the second woman cautioned her to consider how many 'real' friends she had who could and would contribute to the wedding. She urged her engaged friend to decide on a date quickly because, as a migrant and single woman, she herself would need to plan and save in order to be able to contribute to the wedding.

Immigration status is another likely reason that some Kenyan migrants have chosen to marry in this manner, though no informants ever explicitly mentioned this as a reason. If one partner had legal residency, then his or her partner could obtain the same status through marrying quickly. This is not to suggest such marriages were 'shams', but rather it recognizes the real obstacle that not having the legal right to reside in the country posed to people's lives. Thus, the social, familial, and celebratory aspects of weddings cannot be assumed to be of primary importance.

Finally, as I have argued in Chapter Four, migration is helpfully understood as both a livelihood strategy and a life-making project. The prospect of formalizing one's relationship raises several issues that migration exacerbates, bringing to the fore tensions between individual and collective desires inherent in migration projects. Like other migrants, many from Kenya have responsibilities to their non-migrant kin (see Chapter Five). A couple's kin obligations, along with the expense of living in London, may undermine their efforts to save 'enough' money to meet the financial needs entailed in hosting a 'community wedding'. As one married informant remarked to me, 'it's hard to have a family here'; the comment alludes to tensions

arising between the needs and aspirations of migrants' conjugal and extended families, which are compounded when Kenyans marry other Kenyans. Marrying in a registry ceremony can then be seen as a more budget-conscious choice.

It seems that the desire to continue one's life by marrying and starting a family in London prompted many younger migrants to seek a compromise in the years immediately following their migration. Registry weddings emerged as a socially acceptable alternative that allowed them to balance cultural norms and familial expectations associated with marriage with their efforts to further their own aspirations. Those who chose registry weddings typically still went through bridewealth negotiations.

If registry weddings are understood as a pragmatic alternative to 'community weddings' that address migrants' needs, what implications, if any, might they have for migrants' transnational kin relations? Among those I know who married in registry ceremonies, none of their non-migrant parents attended the occasions. Their absence highlights the disconnection between the different stages of the marriage process: the transnational division of ritual space between Kenya and the United Kingdom is barely bridged. This means there were no opportunities for the kind of speech-making and gift-giving of the 'community wedding' in which the couple are symbolically transformed into moral persons. Nor was there the ritualization of relations between mother- and daughter-in-law.

The experience of John (see Chapter Five) helps to illustrate this point. During a wedding reception, I re-introduced myself to John who I had met at a social gathering a few weeks earlier. Knowing he was married, I asked if he had had a big 'community wedding'. He remarked that he and his wife had married in a registry ceremony, something he regretted in retrospect. Elaborating further, he said he did

not realize what a loss it was for their families to marry as they had until they finally visited his village in Kiambu District together as a married couple in 2005. By that time, the couple had already been married for five years and had two young children. During their visit, they had to compress the celebrations of the familial turning points, which had accumulated in the 11 years since he left Nairobi, into their inevitably brief visit of three weeks. Consciously or not, their decision to marry in a small ceremony without their parents present deprived the latter of the experience of witnessing and participating in this moment and marking the symbolic extension of their own families into the future. The occasion as a constitutive act of relatedness was denied.

Marriage has often been important to settlement and community formation among migrants. Many informants told me that 'community weddings' are now not only the normative ideal, but also an increasingly common practice among Kenyans in London. I suggest that the transition from small, less expensive registry weddings to large-scale, often lavish 'community weddings' be understood as marking the constitution of a moral community within which migrants from Kenya living in London emplace themselves. Moreover, it signals that many are now more settled socially, financially, and legally in London such that they are able to organize events of this kind.

Community-building processes as illustrated through these weddings are akin to what Lonsdale (2004) refers to a process of 'ourselves-ing' whereby people determine how to behave among 'us, ourselves' and negotiate shared social mores.[121]

[121] While Lonsdale refers to this process as 'moral ethnicity', R. Werbner's term 'permeable ethnicity' (2004) is more appropriate, given that these weddings are not exclusive to an ethnically delimited in-group.

Described by Lonsdale as an internal discourse of social responsibility, I suggest that there are parallels between debates over morally upstanding behavior, expectations, and obligations among those marrying and attending such communal occasions as weddings in London, and those that took place among Kikuyu-speaking people during the colonial era in Kenya (see Chapters Three and Seven). The process of 'ourselves-ing' is a necessary one for these heterogeneous migrants from Kenya, most of whom migrated for individual and familial reasons, rather than as exiles or asylees. 'Community weddings' generate reciprocal links of obligation and cooperation that can be fraught with tension and expectation, and must be negotiated. We have seen how these weddings are also sites for the display of guests' social status, as well as the bridal couple and their families. Through voicing complaints and criticism, those of lesser social status are able to exert pressure on more influential people. Their critical comments also make others more wary of how they handle such occasions of their own. Thus, the community that is constituted through such occasions is a socially differentiated one.

Conclusion

There is a strong discourse of continuity in the marriage practices of migrants from Kenya living in London. This is epitomized by the comment 'weddings here are just like the ones we have at home', which suggests that the place where the wedding is held is irrelevant. I would argue that this comment implicitly suggests that the meanings attached to the practices, not to mention how the couple and their guests experienced these celebratory occasions, are also similar. However, in this chapter, I have proposed that the place where weddings are held – London – is significant and contributes to the reconfiguration of transnational kin relations.

In looking more closely at marriage practices, we saw evidence of both continuities and discontinuities. I urge caution in assuming that the discontinuities are solely attributable to migration, or that the continuities in practice are simply extensions of 'what we do at home'. At first glance, one might see particular discontinuities in practice like marrying in an 'un-Kenyan' registry wedding, as a consequence of migrants being displaced from 'home' and abandoning their 'traditions'. However, as I have suggested, this is too reductionist an explanation to manage the complex interplay of structural constraints, social and cultural expectations, and individual agency. Marrying, as we saw, was important to the process of social becoming for Kenyans. Yet doing so could conflict with obligations to non-migrant kin in that it would potentially divert significant resources to other ends. In choosing to marry in an inexpensive, small, civil ceremony, while still engaging their non-migrant kin to negotiate the payment of bridewealth, couples marrying in London navigated the tensions between trying to fulfill expectations without sacrificing their own aspirations to marry and invest in their lives in London. Nonetheless, their re-working of marriage traditions could erode the sense of relatedness that hosting a 'community wedding' with their non-migrant kin present might otherwise afford.

Continuities in practice can also produce discontinuities in transnational kin relations. As I discussed, bridewealth negotiations are still considered the foundation of marriages among Kenyan migrants. However, whereas individual and familial interests historically converged in marriages, enabling young men and women to become full social persons and families to advance their collective wellbeing, they were increasingly diverging. In paying their own bridewealth, couples did not rely on extended kin and, thus, did not obligate themselves to assist kin to marry in the

future as they might have in the past. In doing so, they transformed their reciprocal relations and created social distance between themselves and their non-migrant kin. Moreover, couples can use their weddings to build up their savings for their conjugal, rather than extended, family.

Another example I discussed was that the gifts given to the bride at the reception are largely unchanged, as are their symbolic meanings. But this symbolism now extends to the relations between mothers- and daughters-in-law. Most do not live in the same country, much less the same homestead, and they have little opportunity for regular, ongoing contact. The physical distance separating them negates the traditional reciprocity inherent in this relationship and contributes to generational shifts in authority.

It is worth returning to the comment of one groom: 'culture is not about the past… it is about us, it is who we are'. Migrant couples marrying in London arguably re-claimed and re-worked some marriage customs whereby the practices represent an intertwining of tradition and religion. By choosing to marry in London, their guests, and thus those to whom they might turn in the future, were largely other younger (Pentecostal) migrants from Kenya from varied ethnic backgrounds. Non-migrant parents and other kin were often only partially included. The latter's relative absence made them more observers than participants, much less organizers in charge of the occasion.

Having presented the weddings of Kenyan migrants as transnational household rituals, I also want to revisit the transnational aspect of them in light of this discussion. As we saw, much of the marriage process happens in parallel, with the bridewealth negotiations in Kenya and the pre-wedding activities, ceremony and reception in London. It is only the bridal couples who were involved in activities in

both Kenya and in London and, even then, they were likely to be absent from much of them. Filming the occasions and sharing stories over the telephone were instrumental in bringing the festivities to those who could not be physically present. At the same time though, I have also argued that the absence of non-migrant kin meant that practices that would otherwise be constitutive of relatedness became primarily symbolic.

Thus, 'community weddings' were better understood as community-building occasions that fostered a sense of belonging among those who migrants largely met post-migration and which emplaced migrants in a new emotionally and morally significant community. At the same time, the weddings created opportunities to reconfigure their relations with their non-migrant kin. These sets of relations were not inevitably antagonistic or incompatible with each other, but migrants' emplacement oriented them toward a future in London.

Finally, the act of marrying in community weddings engaged couples in a process of becoming moral persons. Subject to moral scrutiny, this process highlighted the social hierarchy of relationships with couples married in 'community weddings' at the top and 'come-we-stay' couples at the bottom. Thus, at the same time as migrants negotiated their relatedness with non-migrant kin, they engaged in a process of 'ourselves-ing' largely among other Pentecostal Christians in London. Their social and moral becoming was also closely tied to the specificity of London as the locality in which they live and which shapes the process itself, a point whose significance will be pursued in the next chapter.

Chapter 7 – Reconfiguring the relationship between economics and affection: The social reproduction of transnational Kenyan families

Concerns with 'family' and the obligations of migrants to their non-migrant kin are part of ongoing debate and discussion within transnational Kenyan families, as well as among Kenyan migrants living in London vis-à-vis wider British society. Thus far, I have examined particular issues facing migrants: how they stay in touch with non-migrant kin and how they handle (ongoing and often frequent) requests for support. I have also considered how they participate in each other's lives, including during such key life course moments as marriage proceedings when new families are formed and existing families are celebrated and symbolically extended. At the same time as they are engaging transnationally, I would suggest, migrants are also re-working what it means to be related in practice, in particular redefining for whom they are responsible and, thus, the relationship between economics and affection.

In this chapter I focus on the consequences of this re-working for their kin relations transnationally. I begin by considering the 'community' generated by such place-making occasions as weddings (see Chapter Six) vis-à-vis wider British society. I argue that, in developing reciprocal moral relations with others living in London, younger migrants in particular become dis-embedded from their relations with non-migrant kin in Kenya. In the second part I build on Chapter Five's discussion of the gaps between migrant and non-migrant kin to suggest that such gaps are rooted in problems of 'seeing' in two senses of the term: apprehension with one's eyes that requires (embodied) co-presence, and recognition of one another as kin. While physical co-presence is not necessary to sustain kin relations, when

misunderstandings and problems arise, imagination can fill the gaps and contribute to, rather than minimize, (social) distance between kin.

In the last part of the chapter, I examine how kin relations are being reproduced in practice. Central to the social reproduction of families are issues of social continuity and change. Migrants are re-working their relatedness within shared, albeit contested, moral discourses of religion and development, allowing them to claim social continuity. At the same time, discontinuities in practice are evident that raise important questions about what is being continued and what is changing. Within these morally charged discourses, 'change' is never construed in positive terms; instead, it is associated with 'becoming British' and 'forgetting where you come from'. I argue that the continuities do not reflect a reproduction of prior ways of relating and family formations, nor do the changes indicate the adoption of entirely new ways of relating that mimic what migrants see around them in British society. Rather, migrants from Kenya situate themselves at a critical distance from (their perceptions of) British familial practices, while also negotiating the expectations of and obligations to their non-migrant kin who remain in Kenya. What emerges is the redefining of relatedness largely along lines of generation by young migrant families, and the reconfiguring of gender roles and responsibilities by older migrant women in transnational couples, both of which have implications for intergenerational and familial reciprocity.

'I forgot to have a family': Creating a moral community vis-à-vis the United Kingdom

In the previous chapter's discussion of weddings, I focused primarily on the internal dynamics of community-building, treating them as ritualized forms of social practice

that contribute to a sense of belonging among participants. As Baumann points out, rituals such as weddings can also be examined as a means of 're-formulating the cleavage between "us" and "them"' (1992: 98). It is important to consider the locality and context in which these weddings take place – that is, London and wider British society – and the people among whom Kenyan migrants live, some of whom 'forget' to have families, as an elderly British man told one of my informants when asked if he had a wife and children.

Contrary to many of my informants in London, my contention is that 'place' matters. Kenyan migrants emplace themselves in a particular set of social relations occurring in a locality in which they are physically present. According to Massey, 'place' is 'constructed out of a particular constellation of relations, articulated together at a particular locus' (1993: 66). Following her, I suggest that when Kenyan migrants who we know are ethnographically heterogeneous and geographically dispersed throughout London and beyond in the United Kingdom come together on such occasions as weddings, we understand them to be engaged in place-making.

As part of their debates about 'family', many migrants invoke what they perceive as British attitudes toward 'family' as (im)moral counterpoints to their own views and practices. Importantly, I am not trying to establish here if their perceptions of British familial life are 'real' or 'imagined', but rather I am interested in examining how such perceptions are used. Two particular aspects of British familial life often arose in conversations with informants – namely, singlehood and elder care. While talking with Isaiah whose wedding I attended (see Chapter Six), he asked me to look around the café where we were sitting in Romford in East London. As I surveyed the space, he pointed out that the café was full of two- and four-person tables, except for the counter that was set apart from the main seating area and had

chairs arranged side-by-side facing out into the mall. According to Isaiah, the layout shielded single people from having to look at the couples and families all around them. He took it as evidence that being single is not 'right' because those who are alone act against God's wishes and do not respect their elders by 'raising a new generation'.

Another aspect of British familial life that Kenyan migrants remark upon is the treatment of elderly people. As my informants observed, 'old people are put in homes and forgotten.' Given that quite a few of my informants work with the elderly in London, they have a firsthand view of how elderly women and men are treated and how often (or not) their children, relatives, and friends visit. A sentiment I heard expressed numerous times is that, without migrants to provide elder care, there would be 'no one to do it'. As one male informant said, 'the BNP [the far-right racist British National Party] might want to get rid of all of us, but then who'll care for their grannies?' His comment speaks to migrants' awareness of tensions and hostility in public and political discourse in the United Kingdom regarding migration (cf. McGregor 2007).

As I have argued, in migrating to London, migrants from Kenya become part of the same migration generation vis-à-vis the British government and society. While their migration was in part motivated by their imaginings of what life in the United Kingdom might mean for themselves and their families, the capacity to realize a particular idea of oneself is reliant on access to economic resources and powers of symbolic legitimation, which are not distributed equitably; it raises 'enduring and complicated questions of access, opportunity, possibility and authority' (A. Smith 2006: 52). Rather than being the ones who imagine, A. Smith points out, migrants may find themselves *imagined* by those who reside in their new locality

(2006: 55), as well as by their non-migrant kin (see next part). By subjecting public and political discourse about singlehood, elder care, and migration to their own cultural critique, I would argue that migrants from Kenya attempt to counter British imaginings of them as migrants.

Moreover, their comments and actions convey their contrasting views of family and assert a morally superior position. 'Community weddings' are again illustrative here. They project an image of moral superiority rooted in migrants' Pentecostal beliefs (cf. van Dijk 2002a). Weddings assert the primacy of couples and their families as the foundation of society. As Pastor Paul in the wedding vignette (see Chapter Six) said, 'divorce might be legal in [the] UK but it is not in the eyes of God.' Weddings also mark the symbolic extension of the bride and groom's families into the future.

The sense of moral superiority is evident in how they conduct weddings, indicating that the weddings' performative aspects should be understood as not only addressing the guests in attendance, but also non-Pentecostal people and British society more generally. The weddings typically start by midday and finish early in the evening. The receptions are not alcohol-fueled affairs with late-night dancing and partying, as is common in British weddings. In fact no alcohol is served at the receptions; instead, there are soft drinks, along with bottled water and grape juice for the celebratory toasts. Only Christian music is played at the receptions because it is devoid of sexually suggestive or explicit lyrics. However, what qualifies as Christian music is a subject debate, as I learned while observing four pastors discuss the lyrics of a song playing at a wedding reception. Though the couple has chosen song list, one of the pastors approached the DJ and requested that he switch to a different song. This display of morality can be seen as a strong counterpoint to perceptions of heavy

drinking late into the night at pubs, loud, profane music, and permissive behavior of British people. In doing so, migrants engage in boundary-marking that distinguishes them from wider British society: they situate themselves as observant Christians in a country that is no longer part of the 'Kingdom of God' (cf. Engelke 2010: 184).

The style and fashions of the weddings also contribute to projecting a particular image of Kenyan migrants not only as a sign of social differentiation amongst themselves, but also vis-à-vis British 'others'. For instance, in the wedding described in Chapter Six, the couple were dressed in fine clothes – the groom in a light blue tuxedo with tails and the bride in a long white wedding dress with a light blue belt – as were their guests who came in their best suits and long, formal dresses. The bridal party travelled to the wedding and reception in a shiny 4-door Bentley and a sport utility vehicle stretch limousine, both luxury cars rented for the occasion. They had their photos taken at the Alexandra Palace, a grand public space built in 1873 with panoramic views of London. These images of material success displayed through fine clothes and cars may not be sustainable on a daily basis because many work as cleaners, care workers, and security guards. However, on this day, they were able to present alternate images of themselves. Their particular presentation of self and 'community' offer insight into their (material) achievements and aspirations.

Notably, the beautiful clothes and expensive cars stand in contrast to the actual physical settings where these weddings often take place. The location of many ceremonies and receptions often put Kenyan migrants at the literal geographic, if not social, margins of London and British society. These occasions necessitate having large spaces to accommodate many people. Whether the venue is a church hall, hotel ballroom, or multi-use setting like a school gymnasium, the actual space is often secondary to pragmatic issues of capacity and cost. This leads many pastors to rent

or borrow space in post-industrial areas. In turn they transform the interior of the spaces into celebratory places with music and decorations.

As I have described in various chapters, using spaces in non-traditional places for activities is common among Kenyan migrants in London.[122] Many of the churches they attend are also located in post-industrial zones. A particular appeal of buildings in such areas for Pentecostal Christians generally is that they are thought to be spiritually neutral spaces, unlike churches that are likely to have old demons trapped in them that must be dealt with (Krause 2008: 120). These areas have the added advantage of ensuring that congregants' singing and playing of musical instruments will not disturb anyone, nor will late-night comings and goings of congregants attending services that run through the night. Secular spaces, such as leisure centers and film theaters, as well as social halls on council estates, are other commonly rented spaces for religious worship and prayer and for associational activities. Migrants seem to exist in a 'parallel, transient world' (Krause 2008: 115), such that the place-making happens exclusively inside the building, screening room, or social hall.

I would argue that it is within this context that my informants' comments about weddings in London being the same as those in Kenya be understood: 'nothing is different', 'everything we have there, we have here'; and 'there is nothing to miss'. Among other things, these comments and their behavior imply that the location, London, does not matter in any meaningful way to the occasion. Approached from another angle, however, one may ask how they have rendered London socially irrelevant. In other words, dismissing the relevance of 'place' must also be understood as coming about through an active process (cf. Ferguson 1999: 238).

[122] Adogame (2009, 2010) discusses the prevalence of this practice among migrants from various African countries.

While much research has shown how Pentecostalism contributes to the breaking of social relations, it cannot be overlooked that it also serves as a basis for creating a different form of sociality among congregants who commonly refer to one another as 'brothers' and 'sisters' (cf. (Haynes 2012: 133-135; van Dijk 2002b: 61). Migrants' existence in a seemingly parallel world in London is premised on their emplacement within an 'imaginary social field of global neo-Pentecostalism' (Krause 2008: 115, 119) and on their radically deterritorialized view of their ultimate home as being the 'Kingdom of God'. However, as I have tried to underscore, 'place' remains an active force in shaping their sociality.

It would be misleading though to presume that the critical distance from which they engage with British society is necessarily indicative of their disposition toward their ostensible 'home', Kenya. Migrants' country of origin is not a 'natural' site of belonging to which Kenyan migrants unequivocally want to return, nor can their families and ways of being in London be seen as embodiments of 'tradition'. In the next section, I examine the distance(s) that emerge and are created between migrant and non-migrant kin and that mediate their senses of relatedness.

'If I were there, I would understand': Distance in transnational Kenyan families

In negotiating the gaps in understanding and perspective, expectation and imagination described previously, kin engage in a process of 'ourselves-ing'. Their debates about mutual responsibility and obligation to one another reflect an effort to (re-)establish formal, normative ways of relating across space. At the same time, their efforts allow us to see 'how the possibilities for the making, breaking and negotiation of social relationships change with migration, in which a person's calculation of another's social distance can be renegotiated through physical distance'

(Coe 2011b: 159-160).

As I discussed, people and place are productively understood as mutually constitutive. This is evident in the preceding discussion of migrants' place-making efforts through ritualized occasions like weddings, which constitute couples as moral persons and give rise to a new set of reciprocal moral relations among the guests. Conversely, many transnational Kenyan families have limited opportunities for place-making, that is, for constructing places 'out of the intersections and interactions of concrete social relations and social processes in a situation of co-presence' (Massey 1991: 277). Despite advances in communication and travel technologies, transnational kin experience a lack of simultaneity at the level of lived experience in terms of the co-production of meaning (cf. van Dijk 2004: 460).

What emerged from my fieldwork as central to understanding transnational kin relations is the notion of 'seeing'. Seeing has two important and intertwined dimensions: visually perceiving with one's eyes (which requires co-presence), and recognizing one another as kin by acting in particular ways. Both senses of seeing are reliant on and specific to 'place'. Carling argues that the inequality in relations between migrants and non-migrants is 'less what emigrants' lives are really like and more about non-migrants' inability to *see* for themselves' (2008: 1467; emphasis added). Migrants also experience this inequality in terms of the inability to see, that is, to verify, what the other is saying or asking or what is actually going on. In response to the numerous appeals for assistance migrants receive, many of my informants uttered the comment, 'if I were there, I would understand.'

A story which I heard from informants in London, and which Carling (2008: 1464) asserts is a common one among migrants from various countries of origin, illustrates this point well. Though no one who shared the story with me knew

someone to whom this had happened, each was convinced of its veracity. A migrant decided to build a house in Kenya and enlisted the assistance of a relative (a brother, uncle, or cousin, depending on who was telling the story) to oversee the construction. Each month, the migrant sent money home to pay for the labor and building materials. In return, the relative sent the migrant photographs of his new house to show the progress. When the man finally travelled to Kenya to see his finished house, he found that the house in the photographs that he had watched being built from the ground up was actually the new house of his neighbor.

Although migration often turns on its head prior relations of power based on generation, gender, and age, situations such as the one above defy straightforward structural analyses whereby migrants inevitably emerge in the more powerful positions. The geographic (and, thus, physical) distance contributes to a sense of vulnerability and being taken advantage of among migrants. In contrast non-migrant kin are more likely to feel they have been forgotten, abandoned, or neglected. In being unable to see, they are left with few answers as to why migrants do not send (more) money, visit (more) often, or help them migrate. Without such support and engagement, non-migrants are denied recognition as kin, just as migrants feel themselves to be when they are inundated with requests for support or deceived, as in the house-building example above.

These experiences highlight the gap between normative expectations of kin and discursive representations of family as harmonious and loyal, on one hand, and interactions between migrant and non-migrant kin, on the other. While all kin relations arguably have inherently exploitative dimensions to them, migration seems to exacerbate this aspect. Migrants and non-migrants both perceive themselves to have been mistreated and the other to have 'gotten something for nothing'. These

kinds of experiences are akin to what Sahlins refers to as negative reciprocity, which, according to his model, only occurs between strangers (2004: 195). Being unable to see for oneself is significant for both migrants and non-migrants, as is not being seen in the sense of not being recognized and, thus, treated as they expect to be as 'kin'.

While 'the flow of material resources is more important than physical presence in establishing and maintaining relationships, […] physical presence is important for making sure resources continue to flow and the relationships remain active and alive' (Coe 2011b: 150). Both migrant and non-migrant kin share what Boden and Molotch refer to as a 'compulsion for proximity', whereby being co-present is the most valued mode of communicating because the eyes are 'truth detection mechanisms' (1994: 258, 261). 'It is this richness of information that makes us feel we need co-presence to know what is really going on, including the degree to which others are providing us with reliable, reasonable accounts' (Boden and Molotch 1994: 259). This supports the point that, in addition to epitomizing sociality for Kenyans, visits help to resolve gaps and tensions between truth and distance (cf. Baldassar 2007: 403; König and de Regt 2009: 11).

However, as shown in Chapter Five, visits are not simply smooth social occasions where kin catch up on each other's lives and enjoy being in one another's company. Visits entail that migrants act in particular ways in order to be recognized as successful migrants and that demonstrate their recognition of their kin relations. Additionally, the co-presence afforded by visits is not necessarily a panacea for familial tensions. Rather, gaps emerge on visits to Kenya, an experience most vividly illustrated when Lucy travelled to Nairobi for her mother's funeral.

In trying to make sense of each other across space, transnational kin rely in part on their imaginations. The capacity to imagine can help to bridge the distances

separating transnational kin and hold together a sense of relatedness. But it must be noted that imagination can also play a constraining, de-motivating, or disabling force that undermines or erodes (kin) relations. This view of imagination expands upon its more common conceptualization as a source of motivation and action with implicitly creative and expansive underpinnings in social theory. How imagination shapes social relations is contingent on the images conjured and the associations people have with those images. The affective dimensions of imagination, I would argue, further mediate the sense of distance between migrant and non-migrant kin.

As I discussed in Chapter Four, prior to migration, would-be migrant and non-migrant kin had overlapping imaginings about what migration to the United Kingdom promised: (more) opportunities to earn money and a 'better' life that enable them to realize their (collective) aspirations. However, post-migration, their imaginings diverged largely because London was no longer primarily imagined for migrants, but rather the place where they lived. Similar to the way spatial resolution diminishes as the distance from a specific point increases, leading to a compressed and homogenized vision of faraway places, the distance separating migrant and non-migrant kin has a flattening and homogenizing effect on their understanding of each other and the places where they live.

Most non-migrants have not visited their kin in London, so they do not have first-hand experience of the place or their kin's lives there. Yet, in the intervening years since their relatives moved to London, the expansion of the media and telecommunications sectors in Kenya has meant more and more images circulate about life in such places that fuel non-migrants' imaginings.[123] Some described to

[123] Kenya has more than 35 radio stations, four daily newspapers, and eight television stations (http://www.pressreference.com/Gu-Ku/Kenya.html#b Accessed 13 April 2012). Wealthier Kenyans also have access to satellite television. Many of the foreign-produced

me what they picture as their migrant kin's 'easy' lives. Not only are migrants imagined to live in a place where 'money grows on trees like mangoes', but the nature of the work they do to earn that money is imagined not to be as physically taxing as work in Kenya, especially if non-migrant kin live in rural areas. Among those who would like to earn 'lots of money' themselves, but whose kin have not helped them do so, they feel 'left behind' in addition to being 'forgotten'. By being kin, non-migrants have the cultural and familial expectation that their kin will assist them; the fact that their family member is a migrant means that the expectations are even higher since migrants are presumed to be 'rich'.

Migrants play an important role in creating and perpetuating a particular image of themselves as 'Kenyans in diaspora' (see Chapters Four and Five). As one female informant remarked to me, 'they [non-migrants] have no idea [about our lives] because when they see photos, they are always of happy occasions and in nice settings. They are "holiday" pictures. That picture they see of you in Hyde Park doesn't tell them how hard it was to coordinate all of you showing up or what a long night shift you worked to be there.' The nature of photographs is perhaps inherently misleading in that photographs capture a moment, making the transient permanent. Regardless, photographs convey specific images that (intentionally or not) shape people's ideas about who and what are depicted that may or may not be accurate and are always partial. Embodying the image of 'Kenyans in diaspora' offers migrants a means of obtaining recognition, yet at the same time it raises the moral and social stakes, demanding that they meet their non-migrant kin's expectations or risk humiliation.

Regarding migrants' imaginings, some migrants see their non-migrant kin as

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television programs that air in Kenya depict affluent lifestyles of those living in western countries.

having a 'developing world mentality'. Such a mentality is understood to predispose them to waiting to receive assistance, rather than proactively trying to meet their own needs; in this configuration, migrants cast themselves in a role akin to that of foreign donors. Lucy's experience of returning to Kenya and feeling like her relatives' 'cash machine' in Chapter Five is the starkest example. It also highlights how some migrants experience their non-migrant kin as treating them first as migrants with money and then as kin. Some non-migrants are described as 'backward' or 'stuck' by their kin. For instance, James, an older male informant who migrated to London in 2002, described his eldest brother who lives in Kakamega District in western Kenya as 'living in the 18th century' because the latter insists on growing traditional maize because he says he prefers the taste and raising 'cattle with horns', which he will eventually use to pay the bridewealth for the marriages of his sons.

It is important to reiterate that these idealized and derogatory comments, characterizations, and images regarding migrants and non-migrants respectively often arise in moments of frustration, guilt, resentment, and/ or resignation as migrant and non-migrant kin grapple with difficult questions and decisions about how to care for one another across space. They sit incongruously with more flattering, fond, and appreciative memories and images of kin offering support, enjoying each other's company, and so on. James himself shared with me what he saw as his brother's stubbornness out of exasperation: his brother had rejected James' offer of money to start a business growing 'hybrid crops or French beans that could be sold to an Asian middleman and exported'. James saw this kind of business venture as a way for his brother to achieve greater economic security. Facilitating the self-sufficiency of his non-migrant kin was a priority for him in part because he was struggling to meet his children's needs, as well as those of his extended kin. At

the height of his transnational familial assistance, James supported 40 family members with his earnings from working long hours with youth at a community-based organization.

Similarly, non-migrants' aforementioned imaginings of their migrant kin's lives as 'easy' tend to arise when they reflect on the daily struggles they face or when expectations of assistance fail to materialize. For many young Kenyans, avenues for social becoming remain limited (cf. Frederiksen 2000). Turning to (older) siblings for help to study or even migrate themselves is common among Kenyans; in many cases, their migrant siblings have already assisted them in some manner prior to migrating to London. For instance, Thomas, another of Faith's younger brothers (Chapter Five), would like to migrate to London so he can earn the money needed to pay bridewealth and finally marry. However, he explained to me that his visa applications have been repeatedly rejected without explanation. When I returned to London after visiting their family home, Faith asked if Thomas had made any progress on building his house in the homestead.[124] Not sure what she was referring to, I mentioned the concrete foundation next to the main house where their mother lived; yes, she said, that is his 'house', or rather, it will eventually be his house. 'I'd like to be able to help him, but I can't,' Faith said to me. She felt implicated in his lack of progress on the house over the last several years and, by extension, his inability to marry.

A striking aspect of these images of 'migrants' and 'non-migrants' is their spatialized dimensions, as well as their geographic corollaries that highlight the intertwining of people and place. Non-migrants' view of their migrant kin as having 'easy' and 'better' lives finds parallel expression in their image of the United

[124] Since he reached adolescence, Thomas has lived with relatives in a nearby compound, so as to avoid staying in the same house as his mother (see Chapter Five).

Kingdom as a place of opportunity and wealth. It is the 'land of milk and honey' where streets are clean, and everything is orderly. Conversely, migrants consider Kenya to be 'behind' and politically corrupt, epitomized by talk of 'eating' and whose 'turn it is to eat' (see Chapters Two and Four). Several informants described to me incidents in which their 'cunning' non-migrant kin 'ate' the remittances they sent, depriving other kin of assistance and forcing migrants to scrounge up additional money to send. The associations of people and place reflect a particular and partial geographic imagination that hierarchically organizes migrants ahead of, higher than, and superior to their non-migrant kin in part because they live in the United Kingdom and the latter in Kenya (cf. Bhabha 1994).

However, it must be noted that, similar to their imaginings of each other, migrant and non-migrant imaginings of 'place' are not uniform, but contradictory. Non-migrants hear stories of how everyone in London is always so 'busy' that there is no time for a friendly chat over tea, and of how no one looks at, much less greets, each other on the trains and buses. Many have heard of or know Kenyans who have been deported from the United Kingdom, arriving in Nairobi empty-handed because they were not given the opportunity to collect their belongings, much less buy gifts and necessities for kin. Britain is also seen as a morally decadent place where few attend church. Meanwhile, migrants worry that they are not 'tough' enough to withstand material hardships or the dangers posed by carjackings, road accidents, or illness.[125] In short, they fear they 'couldn't survive in Kenya' after living abroad. Nonetheless, they also feel they have become 'fools' not only because of how they have changed, but also because the country has prospered in the intervening years; for instance, many are aware of the major building boom in Nairobi that is reshaping

[125] These kinds of safety risks are topics regularly featured in Kenya's daily newspapers that migrants in London read via the Internet, stoking migrants' worries and fears.

the cityscape.[126] Many wax nostalgic about the beauty of the country and the warmth and generosity of its people. Images and ideas like these reflect contradictions and gaps in information and understanding that generate uncertainty and ambivalence about their kin and the places where they live (cf. Carling 2008: 1462-1467).

Imaginings are thus productively understood as emplaced in the social location of embodied kin. When misunderstandings arise, transnational kin increasingly lack a shared moral framework for evaluating each other's comments and experiences. As they negotiate their relations, images such as those I have discussed may partially fill in these gaps. On the basis of such gaps and imaginings, migrants may put distance between themselves and their kin by reconfiguring their obligations or even letting their relations lapse. In other words, why would a migrant continue to help his brother who he has come to see as lazy? The affective dimensions of their imaginings and of transnational kin interactions themselves also contribute to a sense of social distance.

In James' case, after his brother rejected his help, he stopped sending him money. In other words, he redefined one aspect of what being related to his eldest brother entailed. Such an interaction highlights the struggle in reciprocal relations as people try to exert their power over one another: James offered a particular kind of support, his brother refused to accept it, and then James withheld future support (cf. Eriksen 2007: 1-2). Central to the struggle were their differing ideas regarding what had value: his brother wanted to raise cattle to pay bridewealth on behalf of his sons

[126] In 2011 the construction sector was a major driver of the Kenyan economy, with a growth rate of 8.1 percent in the first half of the year, compared to 2.2 percent at the same point in the previous year (World Bank, *The State of Kenya's Economy*, accessed 27 April 2012, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/KENYAEXTN/Resources/KEUDec_2011_State_of_Kenya_Economy.pdf).

and was willing to dedicate his land accordingly, whereas James saw this behavior as foolish since the bridewealth could ostensibly be paid with cash earned through the kind of export business James was willing to finance.[127] The business would also provide an ongoing source of income for his brother.

The nature of the images discussed above suggests that migrants and their non-migrant kin come to see each other and the respective places where they live in static terms, as if they are outside of time. This lack of simultaneity at the level of practice points to an important difference between analytical perspectives and lived experience (cf. Glick Schiller et al. 2011: 409). The analytical perspective, which holds that transnational processes occur simultaneously, provides a necessary conceptual corrective to the problem in migration studies of treating sending countries as static and frozen in time.[128] Nonetheless, living apart in practice can contribute to a denial of co-evalness such that people and places become reified. The simultaneity of transnational processes and practices does not translate into the simultaneous production of meaning among kin emplaced in different contexts.

Distance is inherent to migration and can be transformed through action and inaction. Imagination plays a significant role in bridging such distances, but it can also exacerbate them, underscoring the enduring salience of place. If social relations are mediated through practices understood to make and re-make people (Geissler and

[127] For other examples from Eastern Africa of differing categories of wealth, see Shipton (1989; 2007: Chapter Six) on 'bitter money', that is, money earned through bribery, selling tobacco or cannabis, or selling patrimonial land for individual purposes, which cannot be used to pay bridewealth. See also Hutchinson (1992) on the distinction Nuer-speaking people draw between the 'cattle of money' (that is, cattle bought with money) and the 'cattle of girls' (cattle received as part of bridewealth payments) and the uses to which the two types of cattle can be put.

[128] Fabian highlights a similar issue in anthropology more generally, which he criticizes for what he sees as 'a persistent and systematic tendency to place referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse', that is, the denial of co-evalness (cf. 1983: 31).

Prince 2010: 13), what might migrants' re-working of relatedness mean for the social reproduction of kin relations transnationally?

Change and continuity, generation and gender: The social reproduction of transnational Kenyan families

An important departure point for this discussion of the social reproduction of Kenyan families is migrants' own views on the topic. Kenyan migrants in London generally maintain a strong discourse of continuity. With pride, they invoke 'this is how we do things' or 'it's our culture, it is who we are' when explaining cultural values and practices and ways of relating. The discourse of continuity with regard to the ongoing importance of 'family' is particularly notable among Kenyan migrants, many of whom have converted to Pentecostalism post-migration, because it runs counter to Pentecostal thought that emphasizes discontinuity and rupture (Meyer 1998, 1999; Robbins 2004; Engelke 2010).

I would argue that migrants from Kenya are in a difficult position when it comes to the subject of change. Changing is often conflated with 'becoming British', which can be problematic given the ambivalence with which Kenyan migrants view the United Kingdom. As I previously discussed at various points, the United Kingdom is Kenya's former colonial ruler, while also being imagined as a place of opportunity, at least pre-migration. British people are seen as not valuing or respecting 'family', but rather as 'selfish' and individualistic. Pentecostal Kenyans in particular see the United Kingdom as having left the 'Kingdom of God' and moved toward Satan, and its people as being tempted by alcohol and sexual promiscuity. Moreover, the hostility expressed in popular and political discourse contributes to migrants' sense of not being welcome in the country. Thus, Kenyan

migrants seek to distance themselves from British society, a relational distance dialectically produced by their reception in the country and their perceptions of British life.

It is not only their historical relationship to the United Kingdom and their reception as migrants that make them hesitant to acknowledge change, but also the comments of many non-migrant kin in Kenya. As discussed in Chapter Five, the accusations of non-migrant kin (as well as other migrants) – for example, 'you've forgotten where you come from' – are laden with the implication that migrants have *changed*. Change in this context is inevitably cast as negative. To acknowledge having changed post-migration could be construed as a form of 'social treason' (Hage 2002: 204) and, thus, undermining of their transnational moral economy of relatedness. Importantly, such charges can be leveled at migrants, regardless of whether or not they have assisted their non-migrant kin prior to migration; in other words, the actual relationship between migrant and non-migrant kin is not germane to the charge, though it is important in terms of how guilty or ashamed migrants feel and, thus, if they feel implicated enough to fulfill the expectation. It is particularly ironic, that just as migrants are accused of changing (that is, becoming more British) by non-migrant kin, many feel unwelcome in the United Kingdom.

Migrants' own debates about social change and continuity regarding kin relations dovetail with important questions that I will consider in the remainder of this chapter: what is being continued and to what end? What, if anything, is changing? What role does migration play in shaping the social reproduction of kin relations? In light of the preceding discussion of change, how do migrants make sense of any changes that occur and on what discourses do they draw? To answer these questions, it is necessary to further historicize and contextualize the discussion.

Below I highlight two intertwined axes of social continuity and change within transnational Kenyan families – generation and gender. I first consider younger migrants and their families, before turning to older migrant women in transnational couples.

Younger migrants and their families

'Family' remains important to young migrant couples and is considered the basic building block of wider social life. As I have discussed, many marry in weddings that conform to customary expectations through the payment of bridewealth, while also fulfilling religious beliefs by marrying in religious ceremonies and legal requirements by obtaining official recognition from their local council office or an ordained minister. They establish households of their own on which their authority rests at least in part. Many Kikuyu migrants follow naming traditions when they start having families. Many stay in touch with their non-migrant kin through calls, remittances, and (occasional) visits.

These marriages and families share particular characteristics with traditional ideas about familial life and gender roles and relations in Kenya, while also emulating Pentecostal ideals. They represent a confluence of religious beliefs and (selective) cultural practices.[129] This confluence, I would suggest, is the basis of younger migrant women and men's claims of social continuity regarding their familial relations with those in Kenya. At the same time, I would argue that younger migrant families re-define the 'family' itself in practice. This redefinition points to a

[129] Piot makes a similar point in relation to educated Kabre in Togo and Ashanti in Ghana who are Pentecostal Christians: he argues that they differentiate between 'religion' and 'culture' in such a way that they continue to participate in some traditions, glossing them as non-religious, while forsaking others (2010: 112). He concludes that such traditions are then understood as being marginal compared to 'real religion' and, thus, their moral and social significance is diminished.

significant social discontinuity, along with the social continuity evident in the ongoing importance Kenyan migrants attach to 'family'.

I would argue that young migrants constitute their families dialectically vis-à-vis the place they live post-migration, that is, British society, and their non-migrant kin living in Kenya. In doing so, they navigate British norms and practices, as well as the traditions and expectations of their kin. In making this argument, I want to highlight three areas in particular: the gendered division of labor, (male) monogamy, and (generational) relations with non-migrant extended kin.

While similar to gender relations historically (see Chapter Three), gender dynamics among young migrant couples are nonetheless grounded in a different logic, namely, their Pentecostal faith. Pentecostalism supports the 'creation of monogamous, conjugal, but not necessarily equal relations between husband and wife' (van Dijk 2002a: 181). Men retain formal authority in these families, and women's submission to their husbands is secured by virtue of it being understood as God's will for them to occupy the position of 'helpmate' to their husbands. Ideally, couples work together as a team where their roles are clearly delineated: men are the providers and women are the caretakers of family and household.

Yet these delineations are malleable in practice. As Robert (see Chapter Four) explained to me, in his view,

> the kitchen belongs to her [his wife] and she is expected to do the cooking and housekeeping. It is not that she is a 'maid' or is 'enslaved' because I still can and do help and do these things. But it is important for the roles and responsibilities of each spouse to be clearly defined, even if things blur in the day-to-day. My role is to be the provider in any and all circumstances.

His comment reflects continuity with traditional gender roles whereby women were responsible for the household. Yet it also creates the space to accommodate the lives of many young migrant families in which men have to engage in more domestic work. This necessity arises not only from women working: with the exception of the

wife of one pastor I know, all younger migrant women I met during fieldwork worked as nurses, care workers, bank tellers, teachers, cleaners, store clerks, or ran small businesses, such as catering or event photography. Their work is understood as making an essential contribution to strengthening and sustaining their families. Rather, the flexibility in gender roles is also necessitated by not having house help as many of their peers have in Kenya.

Pentecostal ideas of familial life promote male monogamy, which indicates a modified idea of masculinity. Polygyny has a long history in Kenya among Luo, Luhya, and Kikuyu-speaking people. While it is less socially acceptable to have more than one wife in present-day Kenya, many (migrant and non-migrant) women and men remark that 'Kenyan men [still] like multiple partners' (cf. Spronk 2012: 216-218).[130] Rather than formalized polygynous relationships, however, they are often more informal ones, whereupon a man might have a 'wife', a 'mistress', and a 'girlfriend'. The terms are used to distinguish between different types of relationships, levels of support, and degrees of men's involvement.[131] Just as when polygyny was more common, men's ability to support multiple partners is linked to

[130] Such practices involve men at the highest level of Kenyan society, including President Kenyatta and the current president, Mwai Kibaki. Questions about whether or not President Kibaki has two wives flare up periodically in the international and Kenyan press, as well as on Kenyan blogs. He has publicly claimed that he only has one legal wife, but there are rumors that he married a second woman under Kikuyu customary law. The following news stories from 2004, 2009, and 2012 give a sense of the discussion:
http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A61727-2004Jan29?language=printer;
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/kenya/4940168/Kenyas-Mwai-Kibaki-in-foul-mood-over-second-wife-claims.html; and
http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/839046/-/view/printVersion/-/y190p9/-/index.html.

[131] The following definitions can be considered 'ideal types' based on conversations with informants in London and Nairobi. A wife is the legally recognized spouse whose husband is financially responsible for her material needs and who raises the man's children. Conversely, a mistress has no legal rights in relation to the man, though she may have borne his children, and her livelihood is at least in part dependent on his financial assistance. 'Girlfriend' refers to a woman, often much younger than the man, who provides more casual companionship without necessitating substantial, long-term financial commitment from the man. Instead, a man is likely to give his girlfriend(s) gifts and pay for meals and leisure activities.

issues of class and, thus, can be understood as an expression of their social status. Concerns with issues of monogamy also play out vis-à-vis British society in terms of migrants' condemnation of what they see as sexually permissive behavior among British people. In contrast however, for Pentecostal migrants, social status and Christian moral selfhood (Meyer 2004: 460) is best reflected in strong, thriving marriages that are honored through anniversary celebrations that mimic the festivities of 'community weddings'.

Requests for support from non-migrant kin are re-framed through a shift in loyalties. The sentiment 'once married, the next person to you is your spouse, followed by your children and then your parents come third' encapsulates the new familial configuration.[132] As I illustrated in Chapter Five through the story of John's visit with his family, John claimed that he does not support his parents because he does not want to undermine their parental authority, nor should he be forced to choose between supporting his two children and his parents. His comments draw a distinction between honoring his parents with meals at nice restaurants and supporting their basic material needs on an ongoing basis. Additionally, in Chapter Six I described how, when some migrant couples marry, they raise the bridewealth payments themselves and take responsibility for the fund raising for 'community weddings'. Doing so limits the reciprocal obligations to husband's extended kin and affords the couple discretion over how much money is spent on the wedding. Such actions signal a reconfiguration of ideas of entrustment in that they help to facilitate migrants' efforts to generate capital for their newly formed families, as well as

[132] This quote is from the writings of Pastor Wangaruro, a well-known figure among Kenyan migrants who travels throughout the United Kingdom and elsewhere with his wife and sons talking about issues related to marriage and family life. He and his wife also run a UK-registered charitable organization, Family Rebuild.
http://www.misterseed.com/familyrebuild/familyrebuild2008.html Accessed 4 April 2012.

insulate couples from the requests of their non-migrant kin in Kenya. Relatedness understood in terms of who is responsible for whom emerges as more or less restricted to immediate family members, namely, one's spouse and children, rather than including one's parents, siblings, and other extended family members such as uncles, aunts, and cousins. But, importantly, just as their relatedness is (re-) constituted in practice, their obligations are negotiated on an ongoing basis.

Though my attention is primarily on migrants' actions, it is important to reiterate that non-migrants cannot be considered passive actors in transnational kin relations. For instance, expectations regarding filial duty are not only changing because of the actions of younger (migrant) generations. Price discusses how many parents in his study of Kiambu District in the 1990s were already doubtful about relying for support in their old age on their children, some of whom had likely migrated into Nairobi (1996: 423). Consequently, they were open to favoring only those children who had met their expectations and provided support (including daughters), thus following bilateral inheritance.

The changes in familial relations that are occurring, I would suggest, cannot be solely attributed to the act of migration. Rather, they are better understood as arising from changing social and historical circumstances and younger migrants' responses to them. In an effort to contextualize migration as a factor in shaping intergenerational kin relations in particular, I want first to highlight a historical parallel, that is, the dynamics between older and younger generations during the colonial era that signaled the emergence of new, competing bases of power and authority. The historical example below also highlights how tradition is drawn on in the reconfiguration of social and familial relations, thereby allowing younger generations to maintain their moral standing. As discussed in Chapter Three, the

confluence of religion and education challenged the *mbari* (sub clan)-based authority of Kikuyu elders, which was traditionally rooted in their mastery of their own landed households. According to Lonsdale (1996), tension and division between male Kikuyu-speaking elders and younger men, such as Jomo Kenyatta, were evident in conflicts that began to arise during the 1920s and 1930s over what were considered legitimate sources of authority: on one hand, there was authority grounded in local, landed, and oral reputation and, on the other, the authority afforded by the wider reach of print communication.

Lonsdale suggests that during this time, for Kenyatta to assume a position of authority among Kikuyus, he had to overcome the image of him as a 'prodigal son' whose moral failings lay in his being a reader (that is, an educated person), his Christian disobedience as a politician, and his insolence as a literate opposition member (1996: 24). Kenyatta's successful transition from prodigal son to defender of Kikuyus was aided by the specific historical moment: Kikuyus needed the literate among them who could speak to wide audiences and understand the bureaucratic mechanisms and practices of the colonial government, such as, keeping minutes of meetings and opening meetings with prayers, in order to protect their collective interests in the face of British colonial incursions (Lonsdale 1996: 36).

In 1928 Kenyatta founded *Muigwithania* (Kikuyu for the reconciler), the monthly journal of the Kikuyu Central Association (a young Christian party), which gave him a political and social platform from which to speak. By reading aloud from the journal, he was able to combine oral and literate authority at once and, thus, reach a wide(r) audience; literacy made oral authority 'transferable' and 'portable' (Lonsdale 1996: 32). In seizing this power, he helped to reconfigure the system of generational authority, with Christianity used to legitimize the challenges to social

obligation.

With this historical antecedent in mind, it must be remembered that the migration of younger Kenyans was also inextricably intertwined with a particular social and historical moment: the unrealized promises of independence and modernization in Kenya during the late 1980s and 1990s. As discussed in Chapter Four, migration to the United Kingdom became an alternate path of social becoming for younger Kenyans, which brought with it new potential bases of power and authority. If Kenyatta was able to draw on the power that came with education and religion, younger migrants also have the power afforded them by the mobility resources they acquired through migration to the United Kingdom as an additional dimension of authority. In moving to London, and especially if they obtain permanent residency, migrants become gatekeepers for non-migrant kin who want to visit, much less migrate to, the United Kingdom. In addition to these mobility and information resources, those with well-paying jobs control access to material resources, giving them the power to send kin remittances or not.

Like Kenyatta, migrants have particular challenges to overcome if they want to remain part of the moral economy of relatedness with their non-migrant kin post-migration. They live in the country that was the colonial ruler of Kenya, which is viewed with envy (at least by some non-migrant kin), but also with much ambivalence. Similar to early ideas of Nairobi when Kenyans began migrating there (Lonsdale 1996: 26), the United Kingdom is largely seen as a god-less country full of temptations and sinful activities, in which migrants become implicated by living there. Through migrating, Kenyan migrants are transformed into a racial and ethnic minority that is politically and economically marginalized. Among other things, this constrains their ability to fully participate in familial and communal life in Kenya by

contributing to and attending such occasions as weddings and funerals. Yet, their migration abroad nonetheless raised non-migrant kin's expectations of support in that the imagined opportunities available in the United Kingdom suggested that migrants would have the material resources to actualize familial reciprocity in ways that many had been unable to do in Kenya during the 1980s and 1990s and arguably even earlier in many instances.

Against this backdrop, migrants' creation of nuclear Christian families becomes not only evidence of their moral uprightness, but also provides a new basis of recognition vis-à-vis their non-migrant kin, albeit rooted in different foundations than earlier generations. The previous discussion regarding migrant discourses of 'family' that disparagingly invoke British attitudes and behavior support the understanding of migrants' actions as a social critique of those among whom they now live and from whom they seek to distance themselves. In doing so, they articulate their own self-representation.

At the same time, as I have also discussed, the distance that arises between young migrants and their non-migrant kin as they redefine what it means to be related can neither be solely attributed to the physical separation of kin, nor can migrants' dis-embedding from familial relations and obligations be seen as an inevitable consequence of migration. Underlying these more structurally-oriented arguments about change post-migration are contradictory ideas about migrant subjectivity. The first idea assumes that Kenyans, like other migrants from Africa and other non-western countries, are primordially communal beings whose familial bonds are natural and enduring and who inevitably seek to maintain their relationships across space post-migration. It ignores the social differentiation within families that complicate kin relations, as well as how particular (in)actions produce

distance. Conversely, underlying the second interpretation is the image of migrants as maximizing individuals who rationally and strategically assess their options (cf. van Dijk 2002b: 57-58). This conceptualization overlooks the fact that migration decisions among Kenyans are socially embedded in wider familial contexts, as illustrated through their migration stories in Chapter Four, while disregarding how shared expectations of migration may diverge (Chapter Five). Both interpretations obscure the agency of migrants in negotiating their kin relations; they also conceal the sense of responsibility, anxiety, shame, and guilt such moral issues raise, not to mention the accompanying affective experiences that may compel migrants to reconfigure, or even disconnect from, kin relations.

Accordingly, migrants' dis-embedding and the subsequent changes in kin relations must instead be understood as an active process. Migrants' efforts to insulate themselves from the requests of non-migrant kin indicate the processual nature of disentangling themselves; the fact they are engaged in such efforts on an ongoing basis means that dis-embedding is not an achieved state of being (cf. Meyer 2004: 257). Similar to what van Dijk found among Ghanaian Pentecostals in the Netherlands, migrants from Kenyan have to fabricate their individuality such that 'individuality rests only in the making' (2002a: 192). Given their invocation of Pentecostal discourse, it seems that converting to Pentecostalism has contributed to the reconfiguration of Kenyan families, while also shaping the ways in which migrants make sense of such changes. Religion legitimizes challenges to their social obligations, helping to disentangle them from kin responsibilities. Importantly, this is not how my informants who are in such marriages and families describe their decisions and choices; rather, they do not discursively acknowledge contradictions or discontinuities in limiting how they are responsible for non-migrant kin. While some

younger migrants like Lucy have disconnected from their non-migrant kin, most are negotiating new norms of relatedness that entail re-defining degrees of social distance and, thus, obligation. Like young Kenyatta, a journalist, reader and junior elder who argued to Kikuyus that change guaranteed continuity (Lonsdale 1996: 45), younger migrant families claim continuity through change to their non-migrant families.

If many of the changes in kin relations for young migrant families are occurring between generations, it is along lines of gender that relations among older transnational couples are changing, to which I now turn.

Older migrant women in transnational couples

Given the intertwining of physical and social mobility among Kenyan families historically, I have argued that the migration of older migrant Kenyan women can be understood as a means of advancing the wellbeing of their families who remain in Kenya. Their migration in itself is not something unusual that requires special explanation. It is on this basis that older migrant women themselves assert claims of continuity. At the same time, their migration marks a shift in terms of who Kenyan migrants are: although men have historically predominated as Kenyan migrants, it is older Kenyan women who are migrating internationally. This discontinuity casts women squarely in the role of economic provider for their families, not only in practice, but symbolically. The changes in the material provisioning of families, I would argue, has consequences for gender relations and roles with older transnational couples, as well as for older migrant women's relations with non-migrant extended kin. The consequences, however, give rise to different challenges depending on the class position of migrant women.

Older women's migration and the subsequent transformation of their marriages and families into transnational ones have occurred within a socially acceptable and culturally intelligible moral discourse. I have argued in Chapter Four that their migration reflects the ways in which gender structures who moves and who stays. As wives, husbands, and children in such transnational families explained to me, it made sense for them (that is, the wives or mothers) to migrate, rather than for their husbands or fathers who they believed would not find work easily in London. In facilitating the lives and aspirations of their families, their migration highlights the intertwining of economics and affection and, thus, can be considered a demonstration of familial care and affection. While reflecting my informants' understanding of migration, this understanding also challenges the notion of their migration contributing to the commodification of kin relations (cf. Coe 2011a; Kastner 2010; Olwig 2007).

Unlike migrant mothers from Mexico, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines, Kenyan women are not stigmatized for their mobility (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Gamburd 2000), nor does their absence render their families 'broken' (Parreñas 2001a, 2001b, 2005). In fact, the rationale that women are 'flexible' and have 'natural' caring abilities not only leads to their being seen as better suited for migration to the United Kingdom, but also provides them with a form of social protection. This means that older migrant women can lead their daily lives in London without risk of being accused of abandoning their husbands and families, just the opposite in fact (cf. Åkesson et al. 2012; Olwig 1999). It is important to note though that this cultural logic does not preclude migrant Kenyan mothers and their non-migrant children from missing each other and experiencing sadness over being separated. Rather, it inhibits non-migrants from referring discursively to migration

as a force that harms families.

Migration also continues to offer a way of managing marital tensions. Bujra provides numerous historical antecedents to this point dating back to the early history of Nairobi where 'marital discords, childlessness, quarrels with parents, and widowhood would appear to have been significant' reasons compelling women to move from rural areas into the city (2005: 124-125). The experiences of international migrant wives vis-à-vis their non-migrant husbands suggest that a degree of social insulation is available to them that would not be if their roles were reversed, that is, if the women stayed in Kenya and their husbands migrated. While avoiding generalizations about split rural-urban households in Kenya, Nelson outlines two factors that shape marital relations that are relevant to our understanding of transnational couples (1992: 124-125). First, the physical distance between the family's home and where the migrant (men) works is important in that shorter geographic distances often signal men's greater involvement. Second, husbands' patrilineal extended families, particularly male affines and mothers-in-law, can exert pressure on non-migrant wives, constraining their actions and serving as proxies for absent husbands. However, in migrating themselves and living in the United Kingdom, these women are beyond the reach of their husbands and their husbands' families.

At the same time, I would argue that their positions *within* their families, particularly vis-à-vis their husbands, are being re-worked. Older migrant women do not have joint bank accounts with their husbands in London, as many did and still do in Nairobi. Based on comments from women themselves, as well as several of their non-migrant daughters, some also do not share with their husbands exactly how much they earn. They send money to their children to meet their needs and pay their

children's school fees directly to the institutions. This circumvents potential worries about money being diverted to other ends by their husbands.

Older migrant women voice such concerns within a gendered discourse about their husbands not taking care of affairs to their standards, implicit in which is that it is easier for them to take care of matters themselves. This discourse reflects a broader gender ideology that includes not only the idea of women being 'flexible', but also that the household and children remain the responsibility primarily of women. For instance, prior to her (intended) return to Kenya in the next few years, Jane plans to renovate her house in suburban Nairobi where her husband has been living on his own since she migrated to London in 2002.[133] According to her, he has let the house fall into disrepair; rather than have him organize the renovation, she prefers to handle the arrangements herself. This particular concern of hers should be understood against the backdrop of her experience of being left with the financial responsibility of educating their daughters (see Chapter Four), as well as the kind of familial deception encapsulated in the fraudulent house-building story described earlier. In embracing their culturally presumed responsibility for household matters, older migrant women re-define their positions vis-à-vis their husbands without directly challenging the latter's authority.

As I discussed in Chapter Four, these kinds of tensions over domestic budgeting are not new to many older (transnational) couples. Migration has enabled women like Jane to manage better their household expenses by affording them opportunities to earn higher incomes. Their move to London cannot then be said to create the gendered problem of husbands not contributing financially to their families'

[133] On visits to Kenya, Jane typically stays with one of her daughters, rather than at her own house. She has not visited her house in two years, despite making several trips to Nairobi during that time.

wellbeing. Instead, the gender dynamics of transnational couples post-migration are better understood as reflecting and extending changes that were already underway in Kenya prior to older women's migration.

However, although many older migrant women like Jane and Beth have retained their largely middle class status through migration, the transition has been more difficult for others who work in low-paying, low status fields, such as social care, in London. For poorer migrant women, migration can be a constraining and isolating experience (Pessar 2003: 85-93). As Sally, whose wedding I attended, remarked to me, 'when you are young, you can learn the [British] system and figure out how to make your way. It's a process that takes time. When you're older, you'll likely be in a worse position [when you come] and have to take low jobs.' She and her peers may have started in 'small' jobs like cleaning and care work, but having limited experience of working in Kenya means that such jobs have not represented a loss of social status for younger migrants, as they might have for older migrants.

Moreover, the socially acceptable veneer of their migration obscures the struggles poorer migrant women endure in being thrust into the role of economic provider for their non-migrant families. This complicates our understanding of Kenyan women's migration internationally, namely, not every woman has embraced her family's expectations that she should be the one to migrate. Compared to their better-off peers whose migration has given them greater autonomy and contributed to reconfiguring gender roles, the redefinition of poorer migrant women's roles vis-à-vis their husbands and extended non-migrant kin is not necessarily something desirable for them.

Most of my older migrant women informants say they want to return to Kenya when they retire. Returning to Kenya and to their families is presented as the

inevitable outcome of their migration and conforms to social and familial expectations. The question of return is then not a question, at least discursively, of *if* they will return, but rather when they will return and under what circumstances. In contrast, when I asked younger migrants about returning to Kenya, they answered by saying that their children are 'British'.[134] By way of clarification, they would add that, because they wanted to be near their children and eventually their grandchildren, they will continue to live in the United Kingdom. In this way, staying is not presented as a matter of personal desire, but rather as a familial obligation. Importantly, it must be noted that none of my informants, with the exception of Beth, had reached retirement during fieldwork, so the subject of return remains an emotive topic of (open-ended) discussion, rather than an imminent action to be taken.

According to my informants, the timing of their return is contingent on having particular preparations in place. For their return to Kenya to be an economic and social success, they need to consider two questions that highlight the intertwining of economics and affection in Kenyan families: how will they support themselves in retirement and to whom will they return, that is, who have they sustained relations with across space and over time? Ferguson's point regarding migrant mineworkers in Zambia applies here as well: 'Instead of thinking of "going back" as something people can *always* do if wage-earning *fails*, … it may be more realistic to think of it as something they can do *only* if wage-earning *succeeds*' (1999: 127; emphasis in the original).

Traditional notions of 'entrustment' represent a form of intergenerational social

[134] Migrant parents' reference to their children being 'British' highlights the contradictory and ambivalent nature of their views toward the United Kingdom. Here, being 'British' refers in part to the fact that most children do not speak any Swahili, much less one of Kenya's vernacular languages, and that some have never travelled there or have only spent a few weeks at a time there. Their main point of reference is United Kingdom.

security, which means, for instance, that an older person's investment in a younger person's education is seen an investment in his or her own retirement (Shipton 1995: 179). Yet as migrants, older women are seen as sources of patronage, rather than as receivers of support and assistance. Reminiscent of John's concern about not 'offending' his non-migrant kin by contravening expectations of who 'Kenyans in diaspora' are (see Chapter Five), older migrant women are expected to be able to support themselves in retirement. Unsurprisingly, ways to save for their retirement and how to establish small businesses that provide a steady income are subjects of great interest. Many participate in at least one *chama* (Swahili for rotating credit and savings association) with other Kenyan women.[135] Shipton makes the point that investing one's money in a *chama* provides a way to save and perhaps earn money; it also offers a socially acceptable means of doing so without the women appearing selfish and thus, leaving themselves vulnerable to social criticism (1995: 178-179). That is, when asked for assistance by their non-migrant kin, they can say that they have a responsibility to their *chama*, which leaves them unable to fulfill their relatives' requests.

The differing financial statuses of older migrant women mean they face different challenges with regard to answering these key retirement questions of saving and sustaining kin relations transnationally. Unlike younger Pentecostal migrant families, older migrant women do not explain why they do not (want to) 'support' their non-migrant kin with reference to their religious views, though some

[135] *Chamas* are an interesting and substantial topic in their own right, though outside the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, throughout fieldwork in London and Nairobi, I encountered many Kenyans who participated in at least one *chama*. The *chama* might include a group of sisters coming together, friends (often with a shared ethnic background), and/ or fellow congregants. The size of the groups ranged from as a few as six to as many as 15 members. Notably, most of the *chamas* were gender-segregated. For further discussion of these kinds of rotating savings and credit associations among Kenyans and more generally, see Nelson (1995) and Ardener and Burman (1995).

are also Pentecostal. Rather, many middle class migrants invoke notions drawn from development discourses, such as, independence, self-sufficiency, and empowerment, on one hand, and dependency and disempowerment, on the other. Accordingly, giving kin small amounts of money is not considered showing care because it will not contribute to their self-sufficiency. Where possible, many prefer instead to give kin a lump sum of money to be invested, for instance, in small businesses or to start businesses in Kenya themselves that can employ their non-migrant kin. Though this was more of an aspiration for many migrant women, one informant purchased a *matatu* (a small minibus used for transport throughout the country) for her sister's son, while another contributed seed capital so a niece could open a restaurant.

Their use of development discourse to negotiate moral obligations to kin, I would argue, is reflective of their particular historical generation. Coming of age during the era of Kenyan independence, many older migrant women like Jane and Beth were the beneficiaries of foreign assistance and investment in the form of scholarships and professional training opportunities. At the same time, they also benefited from familial reciprocity when they themselves were growing up, and many helped their younger siblings and nieces and nephews prior to migration. Having benefited from and given such assistance in the past, it would be morally difficult for those older women who are also Pentecostal to employ Pentecostal discourse regarding the prioritization of the nuclear family to claim that they were not similarly responsible to and for their kin.

In trying to make their non-migrant kin independent with their development-inspired expressions and practices of care, they sought to insulate themselves from ongoing requests. This would allow them to save for their own retirement, among other things. However, a shared framework does not mean it is an uncontested one:

older migrants may speak to their non-migrant kin in terms that are mutually intelligible, but the latter do not necessarily accept the consequences of applying development logic to their requests for assistance nor the implications for what it means for their relatedness. In choosing to invest selectively in the projects of kin, older migrant women have to consider its effects on their social network of familial ties on which they might need to rely in the future.

Meanwhile, the low incomes of poorer migrant women jeopardize not only their ability to support their kin in Kenya, but also to save for their own retirement. The fact that their migration has not proven to be a material success does not insulate them: because of their status as migrants, it will likely be harder for them to depend on their non-migrant kin in Kenya in the future (cf. Gordon 1995: 901-902). Their predicament may in fact complicate their returning to Kenya at all. Regardless of their financial statuses though, older migrant women share the need to navigate social and familial expectations, on one hand, and the immediate and future material needs of both themselves and their kin, on the other. What their varying ability to save for their own retirement and to materialize their kin relations transnationally means for their eventual return remains to be seen.

Older migrant women's intention to return to Kenya signals the different way in which they remain implicated in a moral economy of relatedness with their non-migrant kin, compared to young migrant families. Though I have discussed how wealthier migrant women may negotiate their positions vis-à-vis their husbands and kin across space, it may be difficult to sustain when they return to Kenya. Beth's disagreement with her husband over giving money to his extended family members (Chapter Five) indicates the resistance with which efforts to re-define what being related means, in the sense of financial responsibility, may be met. The social

distance between kin will likely continue to be re-worked when (some) older migrant women are reunited in retirement with their families in Kenya.

Conclusion

Given my understanding of kin relations as processual and as (re-)constituted through practice, I have considered how transnational Kenyan families re-work their relatedness in practice, particularly regarding questions of social distance and familiarity, that is, who is responsible for whom. Accordingly, I have suggested that it is not only physical, but also social, distance which migrant and non-migrant kin negotiate.

Central to transnational kin's engagement with distance are the concepts of simultaneity and 'seeing', both of which evoke the continuing salience of place in studies of transnational migration. Transnational practices and processes may occur simultaneously, but the production of meaning, that is, what those practices mean for their kin relations, is neither simultaneous nor synonymous. Recognition relies on shared frame of reference that is sustained over time. Since leaving Kenya in the 1990s and early 2000s, many transnational Kenyan families have had limited opportunities for place- and person-making, revealing the complex interplay between structural factors, cultural and social norms and expectations regarding kin relations, and individual agency and desire.

I have argued that imagination fills the gaps that arise between migrants and their non-migrant kin with often contradictory images of one another and of London and Kenya. The images inevitably engender affective responses that can strengthen familial bonds, but may also erode them, creating or compounding what I referred to earlier as disjunctures of imagination. Nonetheless, as I underscored, kin relations

are rarely broken; they are more likely to lapse, which means kin can always re-connect with each other and 'remember where they came from'.

Following Olwig, I examined 'how migrants [from Kenya], through statements and practices, create and sustain different forms of relatedness' (2009: 521). In the case of Kenyans, what we saw is that their statements and practices did not always coincide. Some even contradicted each other, revealing discrepancies that marked changes in kin relations. Both younger migrant families and older migrant women maintain the value of 'family', but they are also trying to define who they consider to be 'family' more narrowly than it has traditionally been understood among Kenyans.

In this discussion of the social reproduction of transnational Kenyan families, I tried to contextualize the role of migration, thus problematizing any presumption of migration inevitably disrupting kin relations. Relations between generations and genders within transnational families are shifting in ways that signal extensions of changes that predate migrants' moves to London. Accordingly, I highlighted specific historical antecedents. I also considered the shared, albeit contested, discourses on which migrant and non-migrant kin draw. The salient moral discourse for negotiating norms and expectations of relatedness was one of 'continuity' in which, by implication, 'change' was considered negative and synonymous with 'becoming British'. Given that many migrants also took a critical view of the United Kingdom as a country that had left the Kingdom of God, not to mention that it was the former colonial ruler of Kenya, such accusations undermined their own moral standing. In order to sustain a reconfigured transnational moral economy of relatedness, migrants needed an alternate culturally intelligible discourse with which to assert the morality of their actions. As I discussed, the discourses on which young

migrant families and older migrant women drew – Pentecostalism and development – reflect their respective historical positioning.

Migration articulates with ongoing familial negotiations over the relationship between economics and affection. In light of the intertwining of material and emotional well-being among Kenyan families that also highlights the historical entanglement of physical and social mobility, migration among Kenyans is more accurately construed as contributing to the limiting of migrants' material responsibility for non-migrant kin, as opposed to the commodification of care, as much transnational family literature, particularly on global care chains (Parreñas 2001b, 2005; Gamburd 2000; Yeates 2004), maintains.

Changes that occur among transnational families are better understood as reflecting migrants' critical engagement with both their perceptions of British society and with the 'way they (used to) do things' in Kenya. The distance they generate vis-à-vis both British society and their families in Kenya indicate that any changes must be understood as dialectically produced between people and place.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have examined the migration projects of Kenyans and their transnational families. In considering kin connections and disconnections, I have argued that both younger and older Kenyan migrants try to stay implicated in a transnational moral economy of relatedness, while often reformulating the terms of what being related entails. More specifically, the reformulation of familial reciprocity focuses on limiting migrants' responsibility for the material wellbeing of their non-migrant kin and, thereby, reconfiguring the relationship between economics and affection. In discussing my contributions to the fields of transnationalism and transnational families, African diasporas, and African anthropology, I have highlighted how my research demonstrates: first, the need to conceptualize distance in studies of transnational migration as geographic and physical *as well as* social; second, the significance of place and processes of emplacement in mediating transnational kin relations; and, third, the importance of factors in addition to migration, in this case religion, that shape the social reproduction of kin relations transnationally.

Migration as a livelihood strategy and life-making project: Contextualizing and historicizing migration within Kenyan families

Since sedentary and mobile worlds converge and diverge for many Kenyans (cf. de Bruijn et al. 2001b), my departure point for studying transnational Kenyan families was to contextualize and historicize migration among Kenyans and its relationship to families and livelihoods (cf. Olwig 2007; Coe 2011b). Prior to colonization, lineages were better understood as what Lonsdale (1992a) refers to as 'courts of claims'

whereby kinship, generation, and gender shaped access to resources and power. Such an understanding highlights the historical intertwining of economics and affection in Kenyan families. At the same time, the discussion of colonization, missionization, and urbanization in Chapter Three underscores how households and families in Kenya have been shaped and re-shaped such that the centrality of kin relations to Kenyans' livelihoods and as sites of belonging has shifted and changed over time. These transformations have exacerbated tensions between generations and genders within families. They have also fueled moral and social debates within Kenyan families and in wider Kenyan society about what it means to be related (Geissler and Prince 2010; Gordon 1995; Parkin 1978; Lonsdale 1996).

Important antecedents of Kenyan migration to the United Kingdom, particularly internal migration, have been noted that reflect long-standing links between physical and social mobility. Building on this discussion, I have suggested in Chapter Four that individual and familial aspirations converged in international migration projects. Because of the opportunities imagined to be available 'abroad', migration offered a way of realizing those aspirations, while also (re-)establishing kin relations as key means of doing so. On this basis, I assert that Kenyan migration is most productively understood as a form of family migration, even though it was typically only one family member who migrated (Cooke 2008). This understanding challenges more economic analyses of migration that dis-embed migrants from their social relations and reduce complex social aspirations to economic rationales.

Examining the reasons Kenyans cited for their migration – to 'better themselves' and to 'meet their family's needs' – in Chapter Four, I have shown that they reflected historically grounded, culturally intelligible, and socially acceptable explanations for leaving Kenya. Migration offered younger migrants a means of

obtaining recognition and engaging in the process of social becoming, while providing older women migrants with a way to continue to contribute to familial reciprocity among their kin as well as navigate marital tensions. I argue that it would be inaccurate to presume that migration was an atypical action for Kenyan families that required special explanation, or that kin inevitably experienced physical distance and the lack of co-presence as a problem for their relations. Instead, I suggest that migration be conceptualized as movement through life that entails movement between places (cf. Olwig 2003: 800). This interpretation foregrounds how migrants and non-migrants as historically situated subjects make sense of migration within 'specific conditions of action', rather than treating external forces, such as the Kenya's economic recession and political tension in the 1980s and 1990s, as the objective causes of their migration (cf. Englund 2004: 297).

Social expectations and norms were understood by migrants to travel with them such that migration articulates with existing differentiation within families. If migration is a morally-laden social process, which I argue it is, then how kin stay engaged across space reflects on them as moral persons. And, what it means to be a 'good' or 'bad' kinsman or -woman are topics of debate. Accordingly, I suggest that the 'choice' and 'negotiation' in transnational family relations highlighted by Bryceson and Vuorela (2002: 10) are better understood as part of kin's efforts to re-establish familial norms and obligations since they do not feel staying engaged is a 'choice' (cf. Miller 2007: 539). Thus, the transnational Kenyan families that arise through migration must be approached both as moral economies of solidarity and differentiated sites of struggle and negotiation.

In sum, the case of transnational Kenyan families, and my approach to studying them, suggests several points of divergence from much transnational family literature. Migration is a culturally acceptable strategy for fulfilling one's own aspirations and those of one's family; in other words, it is not understood by Kenyans themselves to be abnormal or to 'break' families, as has been suggested elsewhere (cf. Parreñas 2001a, 2001b, 2005; Pasura 2008). Moreover, these families do not consider physical distance an a priori problem for sustaining their relatedness nor is co-presence seen as a necessity (cf. Parreñas 2001a; Schmalzbauer 2004; Dreby 2006). Finally, the intertwining of material and emotional wellbeing in Kenyan families indicates that the argument that migration leads to the commodification of love and care (Gamburd 2000; Parreñas 2001a; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997) does not reflect how these families understand expressions of familial care (Coe 2011a).

Navigating physical and social distance: How emplacement mediates transnational kin relations

Employing Carsten's concept of relatedness, I have considered how migrants in particular stay in touch with their non-migrant kin living in Kenya and remain implicated in a transnational moral economy of relatedness. By considering their everyday and more ritualized practices of relatedness in Chapters Five and Six, I have examined how they navigate discontinuous experiences of physical co-presence. The concepts of imagination and simultaneity have been important in transnational research for conceptualizing geographically discontinuous spaces as a single social field for analysis. Nonetheless, I have shown the limits of these concepts at the level of lived experience, contending that place and processes of emplacement are

significant for understanding transnational kin relations, despite my informants' claims to the contrary. I suggest that the distance with which they have to engage is both physical and social.

I have argued that, while the imaginations of migrant and non-migrant kin play an important role in fueling migration, disjunctures of imagination emerge post-migration among migrant and non-migrant kin emplaced in different contexts that complicate kin relations. Much of the tension and conflict, as well as ambivalence and frustration, between transnational kin arise from what I have conceptualized in terms of 'seeing' both in the sense of comprehending with one's own eyes through co-presence, and of recognition. Even when co-present, these different forms of 'seeing' cannot necessarily be reconciled; that is, physical presence cannot overcome a sense of social distance. Their imaginings fuel the moral frames of reference migrants and non-migrants draw on in trying to make sense of each other's requests and responses post-migration as they seek to reconcile normative kin expectations and their lived experiences. The interplay of physical and social distance in transnational familial interactions thus becomes evident, making it imperative that distance be theorized as more than geographic.

If we conceptualize migration as movement through life, then imaginings of the different places where kin live can be seen as part of the debates about what kinds of lives are meaningful to live, in which places it is possible to lead such lives and, by extension, what kind of person one is – all of which are infused with morality. The spatial corollaries of these moral and social debates among Kenyans, I suggest, have historical precursors from the era of colonialism and later urbanization in Kenya. I argue though that these imaginings are not coherent, but contradictory, and that kin move between various images of both their family members and the places

they live. Their contradictory imaginings trigger guilt, shame, anxiety, envy, frustration, sadness, longing, and relief – affective dimensions that I suggest further mediate the distance(s) between kin.

The discussion of imagination in this thesis underscores the need to see imagination as emplaced in the social location of historically situated subjects and to incorporate its affective dimensions into analyses. It highlights the undermining effects that imaginings can have on social relations by contributing to migrants' disinclination to stay engaged with their non-migrant kin. In doing so, it adds further nuance to conceptualizations of imagination in studies of transnational migration and anthropology more generally.

In the course of the thesis, place and processes of emplacement have thus emerged as significant to analyzing transnational kin relations. Scholars of migration, transnationalism, and diasporas have long highlighted the importance of 'place'. 'Place' in this research typically refers to the place of origin, whether it be at the level of the nation, the region, and/ or the town or village where migrants once lived and to which they maintain transnational ties (Basch et al. 1994; Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Kearney 1986). It may also refer to a distant 'homeland' as a site of national, political, and social belonging important not only to the formation of a diasporic identity (Appadurai 1996a; Hall 1990; Berg 2011), but also for providing migrants with spiritual and moral sustenance (Gardner 1993, 1995).

In asserting that the 'place' (that is, the locality of London) where they hold their weddings, for instance, does not matter, Pentecostal Kenyan migrants imply that it also does not matter that these celebratory occasions do not take place in Kenya either. Pentecostal Kenyan migrants' attitude to place is consistent with what other scholars of Pentecostalism in Africa and the African diaspora argue:

Pentecostals envision their ultimate place of belonging in radically de-territorialized terms as being in the Kingdom of God (Englund 2004: 306; van Dijk 2002a). Unlike like Bangladeshis studied by Gardner, for instance, they see the Kingdom of God as possessing moral and symbolic power, rather than Kenya. It is this morally and emotionally significant community – the Kingdom of God – that they create through their weddings. Their view of place also supports the findings of African diaspora scholars (Krause 2008; Adogame 2010; van Dijk 2002a) who highlight how Pentecostals' parallel world allows them to transcend the specific post-migration locality in which they live.

Unlike most African diaspora scholars, however, my interest has been in the implications of Pentecostal Kenyans' sense of place and place-making efforts for their transnational kin relations. Drawing on Ferguson, I have suggested that rendering a 'place' (in the sense of locality) socially irrelevant comes about through specific structures and processes of disconnection (1999: 238) that are important to consider because it suggests the opposite – namely, that place matters. Physical co-presence arises as being important to transnational kin relations not so much because of how it shapes emotional intimacy, as much transnational family literature contends, but rather because of its significance for helping to create a shared social context and moral framework. As I discussed in Chapters Five and Seven in particular, the simultaneity of physical co-presence inevitably entails a different kind of communication with different repercussions for understanding than the virtual co-presence of communicating via telephone, much less text or email. That is, simultaneity generated through technology cannot ensure the simultaneous production of meaning regarding the moral status of such events as weddings (van

Dijk 2004: 460). Rather, migrants re-constitute moral categories of the person and develop new reciprocal moral relations with other Pentecostals in London.

This conclusion is particularly notable because Kenyan migrants' conversion to Pentecostalism post-migration coincides with the increasing popularity of Pentecostalism among Kenyans in Kenya, indicating that the transnational field forged through their migration is also a religious one. Nonetheless, this transnational field does not constitute a 'closed community' that can be approached and understood in 'group-ist' terms. As the debates in Pentecostal research among African anthropologists remind us (Meyer 1998, 1999; Englund and Leach 2000), Pentecostalism is not a unitary, monolithic faith to which all congregants regardless of background adhere in uniform or consistent ways across Africa and its diaspora. The fact that both migrant and non-migrant kin are Pentecostal does not mean that Pentecostalism offers an uncontested moral frame of reference for understanding (in)action. Transnational kin remain emplaced in different contexts that shape their religious affiliation and the meaning and centrality it has in their lives (cf. Englund 2007: 480-481; 2004: 304). In other words, Pentecostal Kenyan migrants may discursively claim that it goes against God 'to become parents to their parents' by supporting them, but their non-migrant parents and other kin do not necessarily see such customary support as incompatible with their faith.

In examining Pentecostal Kenyans' processes of religious emplacement, my research demonstrates the enduring significance of place in shaping relations, albeit in this case the 'place' is a de-territorialized one existing in a transcendent, parallel world. Moreover, Kenyan migrants' emplacement in a nascent Pentecostal community raises questions about the ongoing significance of Kenya to their lives. If place does not matter, as my informants maintain, then Kenyan migrants may be

quicker to sever their ties to their country of origin than other migrants living in the United Kingdom, such as Bangladeshis (Gardner 1995, 2002) and Pakistanis (Werbner 1990; Shaw and Charsley 2006; Charsley 2007). If this is the case, then the interaction between processes of immigrant incorporation and transnational attachments among so-called first generation Kenyan immigrants supports the argument that Pentecostalism creates an alternate pathway of identification and mode of incorporation that includes transnational links not primarily based on shared country of origin or ethnicity (cf. Glick Schiller 2008: 10-11). Pentecostalism helps migrants to generate a critical distance from which to engage not only with British society, but also with their non-migrant kin who remain in Kenya.

Given that most Kenyan migrants converted to Pentecostalism post-migration, it begs asking why they converted when they did. Several questions arising from these findings are worthy of further research: how does their conversion relate to the social processes by which identities and places are co-produced? Moreover, what does their religious identification mean for their notions of 'home' and belonging, especially in light of their physical emplacement in the United Kingdom where the tenor of public and policy discourse regarding migration is increasingly hostile?

Sustaining kin relations transnationally thus has significant moral and affective dimensions that underscore what is at stake in familial interactions across space. In approaching kin relations as constituted in statements and practices, I have suggested that how migrant and non-migrant kin negotiate and reconcile the distance between them is important for understanding the social reproduction of transnational families.

Continuity through change, change through continuity: Migration as a morally-laden social process

Through migration, moral economies of relatedness are stretched across space. Unlike some transnational family literature, migrant and non-migrant Kenyans do not consider their families to be 'broken', migrant women are not criticized as being 'bad mothers' because of their absence, and non-migrant men are not seen as emasculated. Instead, the predominant moral discourse invoked by transnational kin hinges on notions of 'continuity' such that change, by implication, is understood as becoming 'British' and is thus viewed negatively. Therefore, in negotiating familial obligations, migrants need a culturally intelligible discourse with which to assert that their actions reflected continuity, rather than change. This discourse contrasts with that which Geissler and Prince describe Luo-speaking Kenyans as deploying in their efforts to make sense of their current lives: they rely on notions of loss, rupture, and decline, though there is no consensus about what has been lost (2010: 3-4). Regardless of their different tropes, such discourses underscore the need to be attuned to both historical continuities and social change in moral and social debates, as well as in practice (cf. Cole 2010).

In Chapter Seven I discussed two discourses – religion and development – employed by young migrant families and older women migrants respectively vis-à-vis their non-migrant kin in Kenya. Among both younger migrant families and older women migrants, I found that they tried to reconfigure their relations with non-migrant kin, in particular to disentangle economics and affection, without jeopardizing their standing in a transnational moral economy of relatedness. Young migrant families claim continuity in terms of their ongoing engagement with their non-migrant kin, though, as I argue, the claim is better understood as one in which

continuity is pursued through change. Pentecostal Kenyans redefine 'kin' primarily to refer to their spouses and children, at least in terms of who they are responsible for. In trying to limit their familial obligations, they assert an alternate, but still intelligible, moral discourse that selectively draws on elements of Pentecostalism and tradition. It provides both a way to navigate competing values and a defense against any charges leveled at them that they have 'changed' and 'forgotten where they come from'. Their claims of continuity are helpfully understood as discursive, strategic, and ongoing, making it consistent with the findings of scholars of Pentecostalism in Africa (Engelke 2010; Meyer 1998) and the African diaspora (van Dijk 2002a, 2004).

Seen from a historical perspective, these changes in family ideology and practices cannot be considered entirely new. Relations between generations have long been subject to tension and conflict (Lonsdale 1996, 2003), and similar changes are evident among the families living in Kenya (Geissler and Prince 2010; Prince 2008; Frederiksen 2000; Price 1996; Parkin 1978). Rather, migration and conversion to Pentecostalism have created new bases of recognition and sources of power for younger migrants, as discussed in Chapters Five and Seven. Given that this younger generation largely grew up in Nairobi without extended kin nearby though, they were unprepared to be thrust into the role of provider for their families post-migration. The physical distances separating migrant from non-migrant kin facilitate migrants' redefining of the social distance between them.

While migration generates physical distance, religion – that is, their Pentecostal faith – contributes to social distance between migrant and non-migrant kin. Thus, this thesis demonstrates the importance of considering how other factors, in this case religion, articulate with migration in shaping migrants' lives and the

social reproduction of their families. In light of these findings, a longitudinal study examining the negotiation of transnational elder care between younger migrants (namely, adult migrant children) and their aging non-migrant parents in Kenya, for example, would advance our understanding of how intergenerational reciprocity is transformed across space and over time.

If young migrants discursively claim continuity through change, older migrant women advance change through continuity in practice. I have shown that they rely on existing cultural logic to navigate their gendered relations with their non-migrant husbands, as well as employ the discourse of international development in managing the expectations of extended kin. Their practices are largely transgressive in that they reconfigure their gendered obligations without overtly challenging the gender ideology and order within their families. In particular their 'natural' caring abilities not only make them (more) suitable for migration, but also insulate them from social criticism. I argue that the tensions among older transnational couples can be seen as extensions of similar kinds of conflict among middle class couples in Nairobi prior to migration. A key difference, however, is that the migrants are women, rather than men, as has historically been the case in Kenya. The power afforded them as their family's main provider is reinforced by the physical distance between London and Nairobi, which places them largely out of reach of not only their husbands, but also their husbands' extended kin. This autonomy is not equally embraced by all older women migrants, but rather is mediated by their respective class positions in London.

With regard to assisting their non-migrant kin, older women migrants spoke of empowerment and self-sufficiency, notions common to development discourse. I argue that their invocation of this discourse reflects their particular historical

generation. Having come of age during the era of independence, they were themselves the beneficiaries of the promises of development and modernization; they also benefited from familial reciprocity when they themselves were growing up. The fact that those older migrant women informants who were also Pentecostal did not turn to Pentecostal discourse supports the point that the discourses migrants employ are contingent on their own social location.

This thesis underscores the importance of adopting a generational, life-stage and gendered lens to the study of transnational families, situating migration projects within longer familial and social histories. It extends our understanding of the ongoing social transformation of Kenyan families along lines of generation and gender in particular. Moreover, it contributes to African diaspora research regarding how Kenyan migrants' religious emplacement in a nascent Pentecostal community is instrumental in the reconfiguration of their relations with non-migrant kin.

Many of the consequences of migration are complex, contradictory, inadvertent, and unforeseeable. In reflecting on how Kenyan migrants respond to these consequences, migration can thus be understood as a morally-laden social process where the terms by which one is judged are understood as contested. How transnational Kenyan families engage with physical and social distance points to the multitude of ways these different kinds of distance play out in their lived experiences. The consideration of kin connections and disconnections in this thesis, and contestations over how to *stay* related and what being related means, raises open-ended empirical questions. The potentiality of dormant social relations means they may be rekindled over time, while active relations may lapse over people's life courses, thus

necessitating a dualistic perspective in studies of transnational families in order to capture historical continuities and social change.

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