

**Belonging Behind Walls:
Race, Security, and Citizenship amongst Euro-Kenyans in Nairobi**

by

Graham Fox. B.A. (Hons.)

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Abstract

Africanist debates about citizenship, sovereignty, belonging, and other related topics are increasingly constellated around issues of insecurity, state recession, and other consequences of neoliberal adjustment. In this thesis, I examine the issue of security through the ethnographic purview of Euro-African citizens inhabiting the upper-class neighborhoods of Nairobi, Kenya. Of particular importance to my discussion are the staff and security guards that all Euro-Kenyans employ in their homes and businesses. Though paternalistic servant-employer relationships in Kenya are so historically significant as to have played a key role in the resistance and removal of British rule through the Mau Mau rebellion, I argue that subject making by Euro-Kenyans in the domestic sphere helps to establish their investment and belonging in Kenya, while constituting a grounded and discursive defence against crime and political insecurity. Also, I examine the methods by which Whites have integrated themselves into the project of security itself. As the rise of crime and the decline of police capacity have made private security an essential industry in Nairobi, I argue that Kenya's private security industry is a site in which Euro-Kenyans have solidified themselves as part of the insecure landscape. By founding, owning, and operating many of Kenya's largest and most lucrative private security firms, white Kenyans attempt to secure themselves on physical, economic, and socio-political fronts.

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List of Terms

<i>Askari</i>	Guard/watchman
<i>Ayah</i>	Nanny/childcare provider
<i>Dompass</i>	Pass book
<i>Matatu</i>	Mini-bus
<i>Mzungu</i>	White person/European
<i>Wahindi</i>	South Asian/Indo-Kenya

List of Acronyms

KSIA	Kenya Security Industry Association
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
PNU	Party of National Unity
PSC	Private security company
PSIA	Protective Services Industry Association
SUV	Sport utility vehicle

Chapter 1: Introduction

Of the many neoliberal predicaments challenging Africanist anthropology today, few are as encapsulating of both local and globalized conflicts as the discourse of 'belonging'. Interrogating the rootedness or entrenchment of people in both physical and imagined places, the urgency of belonging has been exacerbated by the ongoing economic challenges of neoliberal adjustment, as well as a disillusionment amongst Africans with the notion of a 'globalized' or cosmopolitan world as an inherently desirable ideal (Geschiere 2009; Geschiere and Nyamnjoh 2000). Sub-Saharan Africa is the primary site for socio-cultural anthropologists' conceptualizations and debates on the topic of belonging. This is not only due to the urgency of rootedness as 'access to resources' in otherwise impoverished contexts, but also due to the capacity for belonging to exacerbate the ethnic or political cleavages that have inspired numerous violent conflicts in Africa since the imposition of structural adjustments. Questions of belonging are especially contentious in contexts where rootedness, race, and domination are most visible and visceral – specifically, areas of Africa where 'outsiders' - however we conceive of them – struggle to orient or entrench themselves in places where historical and economic factors make their rootedness a highly politicized issue.

One of the most contentious issues within debates over belonging focuses on the topic of settlers – specifically, communities of Euro-African citizens who continue to live and work on the continent despite rhetoric questioning their status as landowners or privileged persons. In his book, "Whiteness in Zimbabwe: Race, Landscape, and the Problems of Belonging", Hughes (2010) demonstrates the problems and perils Euro-Africans face in attempting to maintain their livelihoods in the era of neoliberal

capitalism. They are resisting the politicization of their former colonial status, while inevitably reifying their privileged position through economic projects aimed at entrenching them as part of Africa's physical and social landscapes. In this thesis, I extend Hughes' discussion to a site in which questions of belonging amongst Euro-Africans are equally critical, but not thoroughly explored – an environ in which politics are less threatening to Whites, while race, privilege, and, increasingly, security, make the status of a community defined as 'settler' or 'non-African' highly problematic.

An amalgam of British, Irish, Polish, Afrikaner and other European ancestries, the European community in Kenya peaked in the 1950s at a population of about 80,000 (Wrong 2009: 47). Now estimated at about 20,000, Kenya's European communities were once the archetype of romantic colonialism, renowned for their hedonistic lifestyles, their infatuation with flora and fauna, and for spawning successive generations of conservationists, paleontologists and 'gentlemen farmers' (Uusihakala 1999). Clearly, the Kenya of 2011 is a vastly different place than the Kenya of the colonial era. In 49 years of independence, this post-colonial state has been an icon of development and stability while also the subject of much concern and debate. Despite the positive aspects of Kenya's recent past, ongoing issues of corruption and ethnic cleavage point to Kenya as an illustrative case study in the shortcomings of African neoliberalism (Brown 2003: 12). Though significantly integrated into regional and international economies, the inability (or incompetence) of the Kenyan state in supporting and protecting its population makes this dense and diverse country a challenging venue for governance, democratization and security.

As Kenya's economic landscape has changed drastically, so have the ways in which the white Kenyan minority imagine themselves within it. Though a global city of increasing geo-political importance, the Kenyan capital of Nairobi has long been reputed as one of the most dangerous centers on the continent, with stories of kidnappings, carjacking, home invasions, and muggings making Nairobi a markedly menacing place to live. Exacerbated by poverty, overpopulation, and inequality, issues of crime and insecurity are legitimate concerns for all residents of Nairobi, regardless of class, color or geographical orientation (Anderson 2002; Ruteere and Pommerolle 2003).

In this thesis, I examine the issue of security through the ethnographic purview of the Euro-African population inhabiting the upper-class neighborhoods of Nairobi and its suburbs. By investigating how Euro-Kenyans understand security and its implications, I demonstrate how belonging is achieved through a sense of transience and privilege, while also constituted through solidarity across racial and class lines. Of particular importance to my discussion are the staff and security guards that Euro-Kenyans employ in their homes and businesses. These master-servant relationships, and the spaces in which they unfold, are what I refer to as 'the domestic sphere'. This sphere is a private but highly dynamic setting, where race, history, economy, and politics are negotiated with great public implication. Though problematic paternalistic servant-employer relationships in Kenya are so historically significant as to have played a key role in the resistance and removal of British colonial rule through the Mau Mau rebellion (Anderson 2005: 84; Taylor 2000: 111), I demonstrate how subject making by Euro-Kenyans in the domestic sphere helps to establish their investment and belonging in Kenya, while constituting a

grounded and discursive defence against the crime and unrest that sometimes results from local poverty or other socio-economic pressures.

In addition to the Euro-Kenyans who must navigate this insecure landscape on a daily basis, I also examine the methods by which Whites have integrated themselves into the project of security itself. As the rise of crime and the decline of police capacity have made private security an essential industry in Nairobi, I examine Kenya's private security industry as a site of assertion in which Euro-Kenyans have solidified themselves as part of the insecure landscape itself. By founding, owning, and operating many of Kenya's largest and most lucrative private security firms, white Kenyans arguably attempt to secure themselves on physical, economic, and socio-political fronts. In combining perspectives of both these domestic and professional spheres of life, I provide an image of Euro-Kenyan existence in which belonging is imperfectly achieved – created and sustained through subject-making and performances of sovereignty – though equally problematized by the predicaments of modern citizenship, the instability of neoliberalism and – always – the problematic connotations of whiteness.

In the second chapter of the thesis, I establish a theoretical foregrounding in which neoliberalism, citizenship, sovereignty, and belonging are interfused and problematized. Specifically, I establish how neoliberal adjustment has made the notion of citizenship highly problematic in the sub-Saharan context, complicated by the changing configurations of power, and its risky outsourcing and appropriation by private and non state-actors. In examining other 'belonging' debates from South Africa and Zimbabwe, I clarify how situations of intense insecurity and politicization have altered popular conceptions of belonging to allow for an entrenchment highly intertwined with the fear

and production of violence itself, and entangled in an economy of abstract forms of cultural and symbolic capital. I then lay out my methodological approaches, clarifying certain limitations in my positioning as an ethnographer, including my own struggles to overcome security-related predicaments in the course of my fieldwork.

In the third chapter, I introduce the issue of security in Nairobi as a calamity of factors and attempt to historicize this dilemma as originating in the experiences of both white and non-white Kenyans during the tumultuous period of the Mau Mau rebellion. As British rule gave way to equally authoritarian systems of government-backed violence, I allege that Whites have maintained a problematic status of conditional citizens in Kenya, reflected in the practice of both social and economic livelihood.

As the private security industry in Kenya continues to flourish under the public's increased perception of crime, the fourth chapter examines ongoing issues of police-public relations in Nairobi. It demonstrates how white Kenyans capitalized on these problematic relations between the public and the state in crafting a new form of urban livelihood through the private security industry itself. Most importantly, I identify how private security is embedded within the project of state-backed policing, protecting the interests of white or upper-class clients through partnerships that are highly vulnerable to corruption and politicization.

In the fifth chapter, I examine the domestic security assemblage, that is, the complex and mechanized arrangements of security that nearly all white Kenyans utilize in their homes and properties. In particular, I examine how the ideologies of Kenya's private security industry capitalizes on perceptions of threat amongst their clients, including the utility of space as an idiom of racialized separation, and demonstrate how

private security agencies both exacerbate and reflect the anxieties of the white community.

The sixth chapter presents a closer examination of these factors, analyzing how aforementioned political-economic trends, capitalist practices, and racialized ideologies achieve, or fail to achieve, an unfettered sense of belonging amongst Euro-Kenyans. In explicating the ethnographic nuance of relationships between Euro-Kenyans, their workers, and the private security industry, I argue that the discursive relationships shaped by such perceptions of insecurity constitute a mutually recognized form of white entrenchment based not only on paternalism, but also on a mutual dependency essential for all parties seeking to weather Kenya's current economic and social challenges.

Examining the experiences of two particular Euro-Kenyan families, I illustrate how their social positions in Kenya are complicated by privilege, and reified by the practice of employing local Kenyans as guards, servants, or for other domestic duties. In contexts where local African neighbors are predominantly underprivileged or unemployed, I emphasize the importance of employer-employee relationships as a critical 'mode of belonging', or expression of investment, in the local community. While many black Kenyans are somewhat dependent on Euro-Kenyan employers for social security, Whites are also dependent on African staff as indicators of their social investment in the Kenyan nation. I attempt to capture the structures of power at play among Euro-Kenyans and the local Kenyans they employ, suggesting these relations constitute a mutually recognized form of white 'belonging' in post-colonial Kenya.

Looking to the future, however, I offer a more pessimistic assessment of the sustainability of Euro-Kenyan belonging – based on the forecasted decrease of urban

security in Kenya, the increasingly pronounced inequalities among the upper and lower classes, and changes within the security industry that make the provision of services less concerned with domestic, social relationships, and more in favor of cost effectiveness, mechanization, and spatial segregation. Euro-Kenyans, like their Zimbabwean counterparts in the 1980s and 1990s, have successfully navigated their country's political turmoil to the extent of transcending it or avoiding it almost entirely. Though with a recent re-drafting of Kenya's constitution and re-opening of debates about flexible or 'contingent' citizenships, whiteness in Kenya may be facing a new and problematic wave of politicization, the result of which, as demonstrated in the Zimbabwean case, can undermine belonging to dramatic and dangerous extents.

CHAPTER 2: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

Given the degree to which neoliberal economic adjustment has affected sub-Saharan Africa, critiquing this paradigm from an anthropological perspective requires certain clarifications. This chapter, constituting my theoretical framework, discusses how neoliberal structural adjustment has complicated issues of citizenship and sovereignty in Africa, especially with regard to ongoing debates about 'belonging'. Given that African citizens are oftentimes subject to private, rather than public, entities of power, I clarify how the recession of the African state has reconstituted sovereignty as a 'local' or non-state ideal, especially in contexts of insecurity, violence, politicization, or, in some scenarios, the outsourcing and appropriation of state power by private and non state-actors. I also clarify how situations of intense insecurity and politicization have altered popular conceptions of belonging, allowing for a socio-cultural entrenchment highly intertwined within the fear and production of violence itself, entangled in an economy of abstract forms of capital, and (potentially) regenerative of social, racial, and class division.

Neoliberal Disorder

Emerging in the 1980s, neoliberal adjustment forced African governments to privatize state assets in favor of import-substituted industries and the 'democratization' of their political and economic structures. Amongst other factors, Geschiere (2009: 18) explains that neoliberalism emerged from the realization that African states "[were] no longer a pillar but rather a major barrier to development", and must be subject to an

international regime of democracy and capitalism lest they become subject to competing spheres of economic or political influence.

As Ferguson (2006: 11) points out, “the idea that deregulation and privatization would prove a panacea for African economic stagnation was a dangerous and destructive illusion.” The recession of state services and employment in the 1980s and 1990s left large numbers of Africans unemployed, socially vulnerable, and with no recourse against states (Ferguson 2006: 10-15; Nguyen 2010: 137). As the presence of the state in much of Africa “barely extends beyond the boundaries of their capital cities” (Ferguson 2006: 10-13), remaining state entities have often been “hollowed out”, leaving political elites to “capitalize on conditions of insecurity and private violence.” The extent to which neoliberalism can be ‘blamed’ for the surge of conflicts that overcame Africa in the late 1980s and early-mid the 1990s is contentious, though critics have argued that the rise of non-state armies, gangs, cartels or other destructive entities since that time flows directly from the watershed of neoliberal adjustment (Mbembe 2001, 2005, Hansen and Stepputat 2005).

While poverty in Africa has increased since the advent of neoliberalism, the austerity created by these economic and political circumstances also forced individuals to re-imagine their capabilities as people – not necessarily as subjects of a state, but as subjects of ethnic, economic, or political communities in which their needs could be satisfied through any number of unconventional means. In Cote D’Ivoire for instance, Nguyen (2010) demonstrates how neoliberal austerity forced people to re-imagine themselves as agents of their own destiny, confronting unemployment, poverty and incurable disease through what Foucault (1998: 16-49) refers to as ‘self-fashioning’ –

becoming ‘entrepreneurs of the self’ in order to gain social mobility or access to life-saving pharmaceuticals. Despite the resoundingly negative impact of neoliberalism on the capacity of the state and its provision of services, Nguyen argues that this austere environment by no means stifled or extinguished civil and political life. As an entire generation “grew up feeling cheated of the promise of modernity” (Nguyen 2010: 145), young entrepreneurs became reliant on their own social capital. “Rather than breeding a culture of disappointment,” Nguyen (2010: 138) argues, “these unmet expectations [of capitalism] led to an entrepreneurial urban culture.” In the process of becoming subject to neoliberal adjustment and international health regimes, young, impoverished Ivorians generated networks for mobility and civil society engagement that might not have been possible otherwise. Neoliberal capitalism, as Gershon (2011: 542-543) explains, imagines the self as a ‘business’, leading individuals to “redefine their social worlds,” and making culture “a trait that can serve as a basis for or enhance people’s alliances with others”; in other words – creating openings and opportunities for new political or civil society networks.

While some scholars view neoliberalism as a recession of state power replaced by civil society initiatives and subject re-imagining, others see the state as simply changing shape – a series of side or *anti*-effects that transform governmentality into more elusive and less democratic forms (Ferguson 1994; Hale 2002). According to Abrahamsen (2000: 11), the ways in which underdeveloped communities have responded to or ‘coped’ with neoliberal structural adjustments are diverse and culturally specific. Over time, she says, “the internal and external have become interwoven in complex ways, so much so that we cannot with any degree of certainty say where one begins and the other ends”

(Abrahamsen 2000: 11). Neoliberalism, in this respect, is not only a socio-economic ideology, but also a political-economic watershed in which countless theories of culture and power converge and transact – a lens or perspective through which the ‘chaotic’ nature of postcolonial life can be ordered or ‘framed’ for the purpose of ethnographic study.

As a conceptual framework, neoliberalism is most useful in framing the ‘context’ in which the production of pseudo-sovereign authority and alternative modes of belonging play out. In certain parts of Africa, the decline of state power suggests that much of African life is now lived within a vacuum – not of cultural or political economic forces – but of the basic services, protections of life, or sentiments of nationalism (Comaroff and Comaroff 2004: 192; Gershon 2011: 546). Therefore, neoliberalism is best understood as the ‘gap’ or ‘margin’ in which alternative forms of authority operate (without normative legal or moral constraint), rather than as a form of power in itself.

To clarify, deploying neoliberalism as a framework involves an inevitable set of assumptions about the supremacy of the market in dictating people’s lives. Like globalization, Geschiere (2009: 20) warns that neoliberalism “is rapidly becoming a blanket notion facilely cited as the cause for a discouragingly wide range of phenomena”, and is Eurocentric in its assumption that market forces supersede all cultural or social ones. Though potentially reifying Africa as a ‘yawning gap’ or ‘absent object’ (Mbembe 2001: 1), considering Africa as the ‘exception’ to more rigid models allows us to implicate numerous anthropological perspectives without presuming or precluding others. By theorizing neoliberalism as an absence or margin, anthropologists can resist situating

people within normative roles or positions and explore alternative formations of power and subjectivity.

Citizenship

The anthropology of neoliberalism has also involved an intense scrutinizing of ‘citizenship’. Once considered as “the very icon of modernity” (Geschiere 2009: 24), the ‘natural’ or ‘inherited’ notion of citizenship has given way to a more fluid or subjective conception. Critical questions in this discourse include, “what is the impact of neoliberalism on the quality of ‘being’ a citizen?” Alternatively, if a people do not consider themselves unconditional ‘citizens’ of the state in which they reside, what are the dynamics or political-economic structures enabling or enforcing them to maintain this conditional way of being?

The importance of citizenship in both global and Africanist anthropology has been significantly influenced by Aihwa Ong. Defining citizenship as a “cultural process of ‘subject-ification’” – the fashioning of subjects through “relations that produce consent through schemes of surveillance, discipline, control and administration” (737) – Ong ascribes to Foucault’s (1977) suggestion that power is a ‘productive’ force, seeking to create ‘ideal’ citizens through the diffusion of power amongst welfare systems, transnational NGOs, and social networks themselves. In her ethnography of Asian immigrants in California, Ong conceptualizes American citizenship as a dialectic among people, the state, and civil society actors. South-East Asian immigrants, for example, manipulate the welfare systems of the state, ensuring a degree of financial stability, while simultaneously being segregated into racialized labor groups – abided by the transnational networks of non-governmental organizations helping to bring these

immigrants to America. Ong also highlights similar but contrasting trends amongst wealthier and more mobile East Asians who challenge the normativities of American citizenship by engaging in the economic practices of liberal democracy, while simultaneously refusing to symbolically 'whiten' themselves. This trend exemplifies what Ong calls 'flexible citizenship', a conceptual framework that understands citizenship as contingent or strategic – a manipulable tactic of contemporary cosmopolitans (Appiah 1997). This 'flexible' concept has inspired a range of similar analyses in Africa and beyond. David Hughes (2010: 105), for example, borrows Ong's conceptual apparatus in analyzing the experience of white Zimbabwean farmers during the strenuous period of the early 2000s. Hughes describes citizenship as something ascribed, something conditional – an arrangement of necessity and survival more than of nationalism or 'nature'. Though many white Zimbabweans farmers self-identified as patriots and chose to renounce European citizenship during this period of political tension, political pressures drove many Whites to reclaim the citizenship of their ancestors when socio-economic tensions and political instability became life threatening. The concept of citizenship, as a productive dialectic of agency and subjectification, is also utilized by Nguyen (2010: 91), who understands citizenship as a "political engagement" in state or non-state projects. From his perspective, citizenship involves sacrificing a part of oneself for the betterment of a political or moral project. For example, drug trials put ordinary people to work for the cause of HIV therapy, with a rational but abstract expectation that therapy would benefit those individuals in turn. Most importantly, Nguyen's application of 'citizenship' clearly demonstrates that being a

citizen needn't implicate the state, only some form of coherent, ideological actor with the real or perceived ability to protect or provide for its subjects.

In analyzing the methods and arrangements deployed by Euro-Kenyans in various economic 'projects of belonging' (Hughes 2011), I make use of the concept of 'global assemblage' developed by Ong and Collier (2005), also adopted by Abrahamsen and Williams (2010) in their specific study of the Kenya private security industry. According to Collier (2006: 400), "global assemblages are the actual configurations through which global forms of techno-science, economic rationalism, and other expert systems gain significance." As local projects of security in Kenya often involve a range of incongruent and unlikely, configurations and 'assemblages' refers to both physical and discursive measures employed within the Kenyan home for the purpose of making homes safe and suitable for European existence. As Collier (2006: 400) further points out, "the relationship among the elements in an assemblage is not stable; nor is their configuration reducible to a single logic. Rather, an assemblage is structured through critical reflection, debate, and contest" – a product, as Abrahamsen (2000: 11) and others would agree, of Africa 'turning inward on itself' (Mbembe 2001: 68) for the purpose of survival in a context of limited state protection.

A final predicament of neoliberal citizenship is the expanding possibilities of not only who, but also what, can be considered a citizen. In 1996, Saskia Sassen suggested "the most decisive form of citizenship within states, and internationally, now belongs to firms and market forces, rather than to individuals or groups of citizens" (cited in Hansen and Stepputat 2005: 309). As national economies are driven by the ventures of corporations or business, states must not only value 'people' as citizens but also value

corporations themselves. As Comaroff and Comaroff (2009: 118) point out, corporations, as a collection of people and agents, are increasingly personified as single citizens, saddled with the responsibility of law and taxes but with greater translucence, omnipresence and immortality. Hale (2006) similarly argues that neoliberalism seeks to fashion citizens as the homo economicus - manipulable beings “responsive to modification in [his or her] environment” (496) – more feasibly personified in a corporate agent than in an individual human citizen. Hale suggests that capitalism - if it has not already - will eventually favour corporate citizens at the expense of human ones, and would support the notion of ethnic incorporation as a way of asserting collective rights and assuring economic survival within a neoliberal state framework (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009).

Using the concept of ‘citizenship as dialectic’, however, is not without its liabilities. By presupposing the state-citizen relationship and pillars on which it is fabricated, anthropologists of the state, especially Hansen and Stepputat (2005), risk reifying the African post-colony as a place of ‘chaos’, madness, or lacking in certain ‘civilized’ qualities. While Nguyen (2010) emphasizes the inclusionary potentials of civil engagement, other scholars feel these adjustments “have encouraged the reaffirmation of fuzzy identities and a constant search for the exclusion of ‘strangers’”- attempts to “exclude certain groups from their full rights as national citizens”(Geschiere 2009: 17-25). Other authors criticize the concept of citizenship for its inextricability with the concept of rights, a concept anthropologists know to be contingent and relative. In her ethnography of crime, segregation, and citizenship in Brazil, for example, Teresa Caldeira (2000: 3) uses ‘citizenship’ as the crucible of basic rights and protections. Her

argument, however, is that the violation of basic rights by both criminal and law enforcements actors has “delegitimated” the notion of citizenship. When intertwined with projects of urban planning and spatialization, she demonstrates how a disbelief in the virtues of citizenship leads Brazilians to segregate themselves, to tolerate other forms of injustice practiced out of fear (such as vigilantism), and to actively favour private sovereigns rather than engaging the state in pursuit of their constitutional rights. In other words, Caldeira’s understanding of neoliberalism is the precise *antithesis* of citizenship – a political economic paradigm in which protecting life in cooperation with the state is fundamentally impossible. It is this fundamental disagreement between neoliberalism and citizenship, I propose, that makes the conceptualization of sovereignty and belonging of such critical importance to contemporary discourses on power and production in everyday postcolonial life. If violent or extreme forms of power so drastically impact neoliberal citizenship, we must strive to understand how that power is transacted within the state-society dialectic.

Sovereign(s)

Just as neoliberalism has exacerbated many of citizenship’s predicaments, new forms and configurations of power have had a drastic impact on the nature of power itself, as well as challenging who maintains the right to wield that power over others. While residents of Euro-American states are arguably subject to a more concomitant or coherent body of law and governmentality, the aforementioned ‘vacuum’ of governance created by neoliberalism leaves many citizens of the post-colonial world open to alternative and sometimes extreme forms of authority. As I demonstrate in this section, both physical and spectral violence, as extreme or grotesque forms of power, not only

intimidate or destroy life, but are also productive of new relationships and spheres of authority.

Sovereignty - as an analytical concept - has been used to conceptualize power in many types of polities. Theorists such as Giorgio Agamben (1998) have used sovereignty in explicating the authority of kings, as inseparable from land, burdened with the sins of the people, sanctioned by the divine and so on. With the decline of European monarchies and serfdoms, the power that authoritarians held over people was not relinquished but simply re-fashioned. These re-formations of power are what Foucault (1977) conceptualized as the “bio-political regime” - states that use rhetorics of improvement to legitimize the total governmentality of populations. These bio-political regimes, according to Hansen and Stepputat (2005: 302), “reconfigured rather than superseded sovereignty as a mode of power...creating an ostensibly depoliticized government in the name of scientific rationality and improvement of the life of citizens and populations.” Furthermore, they argue that European colonies, many located in Africa, became virtual laboratories for experimental powers, that is, “a twilight zone of multiple, indeterminate configurations of power” where control was outsourced to numerous private or local actors, and where absolute power often existed alongside absolute lawlessness (Hansen and Stepputat 2005: 302).

While Agambian perspectives on sovereignty (critiquing the status and power of the state) have dominated sovereignty debates since the mid-1990s, recent critiques scrutinize this approach as constrained by Eurocentric presumptions about the universality of statehood as a normative model for political modernity. Jennings (2011: 51), for example, argues that using sovereignty as a basis for understanding political life

is counter-productive, as scholars tend to “entangle themselves in theoretical commitments to a series of categories based on retrograde and reactionary modernist accounts of power and political history.” Given these theoretical shortcomings, Jennings (2011: 40) endorses an Arendtian approach, understanding sovereignty as “constituted power” in contexts where “constituted power is no longer recognized as having a claim.” While Agambian critiques of sovereignty interrogate pre-existing structures of power, often in the form of states, Arendt assumes all political communities to desire order, liberty, and recognition with or without centralized governance, necessitating an examination of sovereignty from a grassroots, rather than a top-down, approach (Jennings 2011).

A breadth of recent Africanist literature reflects an interest in Arendtian understandings of sovereignty, as it strives to understand political communities as exceptions to, rather than the result of, various state-centric structures of power. In neoliberal Africa, Mbembe (2001), Jensen (2005), and other scholars argue that environs of lawlessness and alternative sovereignty characteristic of the colonial era have become commonplace, as states privatize, outsource, or sometimes abandon spheres of control for the sake of their own fiscal survival. According to Chalfin (2008: 522), this “re-ordering” of state power transforms the nation state into “mosaics of ‘zones of special sovereignty’”, occupied and controlled by various corporations, NGOs and armies. According to Mbembe (2005: 153), the propensity of such entities to undermine the state has fostered a sense of emasculation, inspiring states to lash out at their people as a desperate and grotesque performance of their dwindling right to govern. A prime example of these ‘grotesque’ gestures has been the impunity and violence of police

officials throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Logistically and symbolically weakened by neoliberal adjustment, police are known to exercise public, spontaneous and extra-judicial killings and other violent gestures in an attempt to stabilize their highly compromised monopoly over the right to exact death (Abrahamsen and Williams 2010: 197).

With the (d)evolution of the African state into a symbol of illegitimacy and mistrust, the project of life preservation becomes one of private and local concern. As Mbembe (2001: 154) explains, “from this [predation by the state] stems the necessity for subjects to immunize themselves against it in advance, by measuring, at every stage, the risks that such a challenge would involve for the preservation of life itself” (2001: 154), that is, to protect oneself from the lawlessness of a weakened state as well as the predation of that state against the people themselves. ‘Immunizations’, as Mbembe (2001: 154) refers to them, have taken the form of spectral gestures of violence, such as surrounding communities with walls and barbed wire, vigilante justice, the exhibition or brandishing of weapons, and the subversion of police or government efforts. Using these modes of self-preservation, individual or localized groups inflect a right to exercise sovereignty over themselves, and to ‘excuse’ their communities from normative arrangements of state-provisioned security (Jensen 2005: 219; Steinberg 2008: 179). By examining how individuals or groups attempt to ‘immunize’ themselves from the state, ethnographers can glean insight into how political communities seek to construct themselves apart from the (nation) state, as well as how those communities conceptualize and interact with the entity of the state itself.

An ethnographic example of how alternative sovereignties destroy while producing social relationships is demonstrated in Loren Landau's (2010) ethnography of the xenophobic violence that overtook South Africa in 2008. Describing the reluctance of police to intervene as residents of Johannesburg attacked and killed migrants from Zimbabwe, Mozambique and elsewhere, Landau (2010: 216) argues that both legal and illegal (state and non-state) forms of violence served to "entrench a form of spatial control, political authority, and sovereignty." Here, extra-judicial violence should not be seen as a sign of state corrosion or civil chaos, but of a citizenry appropriating state mechanisms of forceful power for the purpose of delineating and enforcing their own political or moral interests. "While specific incidents may be driven by competition or criminality," says Landau (2010: 229), "the constructed social spaces within which the violence occurs functions on a set of norms, values, and bureaucratic practices that have become all but invisible" (Landau 2010: 229). From an anthropological perspective, this 'invisibility' of bureaucratic practice is a clear example of 'productive' tendencies of power (Foucault 1977). As Hansen and Stepputat (2005: 308) argue, "the outsourcing of everyday policing [is] less a sign of weakness of the state than as a way of incorporating segments and zones where state sovereignty was never effective, and where low cost forms of policing poor neighborhoods are developed." In other words, the negligence or incompetence of the state in protecting these migrants had the conjunctive or side effect of 'producing' new powers amongst an otherwise marginal community of urban dwellers. "Rather than resisting the oppression of the state", says Landau (2010: 217), "this [extra-judicial] violence acts as a demonic proxy for it," – shifting the responsibility to punish or

expel away from the state and towards the citizenry itself, and creating new modes or agencies in which membership in the moral community can be qualified.

As Hansen and Stepputat (2005: 297-302) argue, “sovereign power can be fruitfully regarded as the central, if often unacknowledged, underside of liberal forms of highly codified and regulated self-government...fundamentally important to any understanding of the character of postcolonial states and political formations in post colonial societies.” Unlike Ong’s discourse of citizenship, sovereignty is a discourse that recognizes that life must not only be manipulated and utilized in the neoliberal project, but sometimes banished, segregated or destroyed. As “the fear of death and the will to survive” has become the “dominant imaginary of sovereignty in contemporary Africa” (Mbembe 2001: 154), examining how state and non-state sovereigns express or exact violence is essential in understanding the production of authority and the citizen-subjects it acts upon. As Landau’s ethnography demonstrates, violence is not always a deconstructive gesture of dominance. Rather, it can be a constructive, civil activity in which citizens of various polities are actively engaged – defining and enforcing the boundaries of a moral or political community, and charting new pathways or modes to belonging.

Modes of Belonging

Given the problematic nature of citizenship under neoliberalism, belonging provides a framework for understanding the conjunctive effects of alternative authorities or subjugations. If neoliberal adjustment leads people beyond the state for the preservation of life, then what is the entity to which or under which they ‘belong’, and

how does the changing nature of sovereignty provide new or alternative ways of defining or conceptualizing what belonging is?

Several socio-cultural anthropologists have attempted to study belonging through a conceptualization of its 'modes' – examining the “routinized discourses, social practices and institutional arrangements through which people make claims for resources and rights” (Rutherford 2008: 79). A provocative example of belonging analyzed from a framework of 'modes' or 'projects' is Hughes' (2010) ethnography of white farmers in post-independence Zimbabwe. Given the unwillingness (or failure) of white farmers to integrate themselves socially with the Zimbabwean population, Whites attempted to articulate their physical investment and moral attachment to Zimbabwe's landscape through hydrological engineering projects and the construction of artificial lakes. Hughes (2010: 24) explains that white Zimbabweans understood these projects as shielding them from the political or economic hostility of the Mugabe regime. By creating a space in which Whites were physically, socially, and economically segregated from Blacks, Whites were able to feel a genuine sense of attachment and entitlement to Zimbabwe at a time when generalized poverty and a problematic history of colonialism made their position in the country controversial. As Zimbabwe's political climate became tense and farmers were evicted from their lands, Hughes (2010: 110) explains how white Zimbabweans quickly and drastically shifted their modes of belonging. As farming and hydrology were predicated on an attachment to land, from which they were evicted, their ability to belong became immediately perilous. Whites reacted by re-fashioning themselves through new livelihoods, some as religious workers, some as tourist agents, some as development workers. These efforts summarily represented an effort to re-claim

a niche in which Whites had some contributing role in the nation-state. If unable to retrench themselves within Zimbabwe's social or economic landscape, Whites faced the possibility of expulsion or violence (Hughes 2010: 117-118).

In addition to Zimbabwe's physical landscape, projects of belonging were also undertaken on the domestic front – in the micro-governmentality of staff or farm workers that white Zimbabweans employed in their agricultural and hydrological projects. In his analyses of paternalistic farmer-worker relationships in Zimbabwe during this political turmoil, Rutherford (2004) explains how Euro-Zimbabweans strategically drew on these domestic relationships as a mode or demonstration of belonging. Using the framework of 'internal frontier', Rutherford argues that the subjugated figure of the farm worker acted to display an 'intimacy' with the local people, "and in doing so, help[ed] to constitute the [white Zimbabwean] public identifications" (Rutherford 2004: 544). By articulating their social connectedness to their "racial other", regardless of the power structures that governed it, the relationships among settlers and their workers were "used to establish an index of morality and political legitimacy of [W]hite[s]" and "used to try and paper over the public ambiguities of identifications for white farmers" (2004: 551). Much like in Zimbabwe, Euro-Kenyan domestic life is often characterized by intimate but problematic relationships with domestic staff. Though the Whites on whom I focus are not engaged in 'local governmentality' to such a tremendous degree as white Zimbabwean farmers (Rutherford 2001, 2008), the possibility of Euro-Kenyans utilizing master-subject relationships as a political modality of belonging is significant.

Analyzing or conceptualizing such modes in the context of alternative sovereignty also requires an understanding of the abstract forms of capital exchange particular to

environments of violence or insecurity. In examining private security in the global or macro context, Abrahamsen and Williams (2010: 107) borrow from Bourdieu in remarking that “cultural capital takes many forms, but, broadly speaking, it can be understood as recognized status or authority...deriving from personal charisma and social backgrounds.” In examining modes of power deployed by participants in the domestic or personalized setting, I extrapolate on Abrahamsen and Williams’ theory to account for the abstract forms of capital transacted in the project of privatized home security. As Abrahamsen and Williams (2010: 107) point out, symbolic capital is “grounded” and exchanged “pre-eminently through systems of practice and language.” Within the domestic setting, I interrogate how private security actors establish forms of symbolic or cultural capital, specifically in styling themselves as ‘authoritative’ or ‘suitable’ providers in projects of domestic security. In demonstrating the extent to which the staff or guards, as figures, are themselves racialized as dangerous or untrustworthy, the fact that they remain a key feature in the project of home security is indicative of their power in a more abstract cultural form. As the work of Charles Briggs (1996; 2007) has repeatedly enforced, anthropologists must not only examine the uses of power by authoritative actors, but question how figures ‘become authoritative’ at the meta-discursive level.

Race and Exile

While many modes of belonging attempt to articulate or ‘perform’ integration in a particular place, other contexts show proverbial outsiders attempting to preserve their alienness as a mode of transience or superiority. In Johannesburg, for example, Landau (2006) – against the aforementioned backdrop of violence – describes immigrants as superseding idioms of citizenship or belonging by asserting their identity as superior

outsiders belonging within a state of cosmopolitan exile. By voicing their indifference to citizenship or inclusion, migrants style themselves as ‘mobile’ and ‘elite’, and create a protective distance from the citizenship struggles that materialize around them. This quality of ‘belonging in or as exile’ is also demonstrated by Hughes (2011: 25), who claims “by writing themselves so single-mindedly into the landscape, [white Zimbabweans] wrote themselves out of society.” Their imaginative neo-Europe acted as “terrain[s] of power” or “third natures” where Whites could exist in exile from their African neighbors, and “maintain” themselves in the face of antagonistic politics (Hughes 2010: 108; see also Malkki 1995).

Though the limits of cosmopolitanism beyond African cities require concepts of belonging as ‘exile’ to be deployed cautiously, ethnographies from beyond Africa demonstrate the extent to which neoliberal capitalism has altered the landscape on which outsiders may achieve ‘belonging’ through modes that are explicitly economic and dismissive of social or political landscapes. In her ethnography of Indian merchant businessmen in the United Arab Emirates, Vora (2011) argues that the landscape of global capitalism has enabled ‘exile’ to be a valuable form entrepreneurial capital. In the context of the U.A.E.’s highly capitalist market wherein actual citizenship privileges are extremely exclusive, the ability to exact efficient and productive commerce allows Indian gold-merchants - as an exceptional category of pseudo-citizen - to enjoy a moveable form of belonging unattainable by more fragmented or less delineated ethnic groups. By articulating ‘Indianness’ as a specialized ethnic incorporation, Indians effectively monopolized the Emirati gold market, while exercising a ‘flexible’ right to repatriate their wealth to India and, in effect, succeeded to ‘belong’ on a cosmopolitan or global

level. These Indian merchant businessmen also deploy narrative strategies, in crafting an oral autobiography wherein “they built the country [of the Emirates]” (Vora 2011: 306), invoking individualistic, masculine, and entrepreneurial motifs in asserting their role within Dubai’s history as a ‘rugged frontier’ – not unlike the archetype of the ‘romantic adventurous settlers’ characteristic of European colonialism in Africa (Hughes 2010: 6). Instead of ‘belonging’ as a pure qualification of insiders or outsiders, Vora (2011: 313) argues that the privileging of groups according to economic rather than political categories has become a common “rationality of [neoliberal] governance”, which could have profound implications for how we understand belonging in other global centers.

As discussed earlier, the recession of African states and the ‘opening’ of the marketplace is an ongoing process, and the outsourcing of sectors such as violence demonstrates the extent to which capitalism is taking an exponential hold on the African economy. Cultural particularities notwithstanding, Vora’s argument is an impetus for questioning if exclusion in Africa can constitute a mode of belonging in itself, through the ability to consume, to capitalize, and to be alternatively ‘entrenched’ within an otherwise exclusionary or zero-sum environment. Though Dubai’s economic environment is the result of complex historical and demographic processes, only loosely comparable to those of Johannesburg or other African centers, the notion that capitalism has ‘opened’ cosmopolitan centers to innumerable and alternative understandings of belonging is noteworthy. These three ethnographies – of Zimbabwe, Johannesburg and Dubai – are all examples in which the neoliberal order allows the limits of belonging to be actively contested. Though ‘excusing’ oneself from conventional forms of integration may seem antagonistic, Landau (2010: 326) demonstrates “the forms of belonging we see

in many African cities are often side effects of efforts to achieve other economic, social and occasionally political goals.” As the groups discussed by Landau (2010), Hughes (2010) and Vora’s (2011) all faced waves of politicization and degrees of threat stemming from those discourses, ‘belonging’ becomes a quality not only of integration but also of exile – belonging at a locality despite its exclusionary features through projects of protection or immunization. In some cases, these protections are discursive, in other cases, they are physical and grounded. Divergent as these social, political, and economic contexts may be, they demonstrate that belonging in fractured, failing, or highly capitalist states is as much a project of segregation as integration – and as much a project of sustaining oneself *against* the landscape as sustaining oneself within it.

Though urban crime and insecurity are most detrimental to the wellbeing of Kenya’s poor, security issues are a significant preoccupation for all of Kenya’s socio-economic groups. While most studies focus on residents of informal settlements, other studies highlight the scale and prominence of ‘corporate’ or privatized security measures through which wealthier residents of Africa seek alternative forms of protection. Though the perceptions of insecurity affecting these communities are argued to be fear driven rather than incident driven (Allen 2002; Smiley 2010), the security strategies deployed as a result of these fears are another example of how sovereignty and citizenship are being drastically reconfigured in many African cities.

Though high rates of crime in many African cities do bring a degree of realism and urgency to issues of security, several studies suggest that perceptions of insecurity amongst white, wealthy, and/or expatriate communities are often highly disproportionate (Allen 2002; Smiley 2010). More importantly, scholars also claim that strategies used in

mitigating fears of insecurity have deconstructive social impacts. Especially in South Africa, scholars argue that irrational perceptions of danger have had a significant impact on race relations and a visible impact on urban geography. Describing urban planning as a highly racialized project, Allen (2002: 57) claims that the design and designation of urban space in South Africa has created normative 'spaces of whiteness' from which the threatening elements of 'black' are excluded. "Fear of crime in Johannesburg," she says, "has resulted in higher walls, increased security, and fenced off neighborhoods, which is reinforcing the compartmentalized nature of the geography of the post apartheid city", threatening, she argues, "to further entrench already stark social and economic inequalities" (Allen 2002: 55).

In Caldeira's (2000: 19) study of security and segregation in Sao Paulo, she demonstrates how 'talking about crime' also exacerbates perceptions of fear and insecurity. "The repetition of histories", she says, "only serves to reinforce people's feelings of danger, insecurity and turmoil...the talk of crime feeds in a circle in which fear is both dealt with and reproduced, and violence is both counteracted and magnified" (Caldeira 2000: 19). Though studies on urban (in)security in Kenya, South Africa, Brazil, and elsewhere identify women as more vulnerable to crime than men, few efforts have been made to explicate how fear, sexuality, paternalism, and other gender-based issues influence perceptions of (in)security amongst women, especially within the recent bifurcation of public and private security. In the case of Johannesburg, Allen (2002: 65-67) explains how fear amongst white women is voiced in a language indicating clearly racialized and sexualized ideas about black males, especially the belief that Blacks are 'vengeful' against white South Africans - influencing the 'whitening' of spaces as

normative and secure, and exacerbate racial cleavages within this fledgling nation. In regard to urban spatialization, Caldeira (2000: 292) also argues that fear often manifests itself in the geography of large cities, as spaces of (in)security are demarcated by fences, barbed wire, and other symbols of segregation. By creating enclaves defended and demarcated such physical measures, she claims urban dwellers create an imagined space in which outside threats are innocuous, while, within the walls, anxieties thrive over the danger of all areas outside them (Caldeira 2000: 293). According to Smiley (2010: 35), fear amongst segregated classes “is better classified as fear of the unknown, the uncomfortable and the unfamiliar.” The popular method of dealing with fear is often complete avoidance that, unfortunately, “exacerbates existing segregation and limits social interaction, ensuring that exclusionary spaces persist” (Smiley 2010: 38). So long as wealthy and/or minority groups physically and socially segregate themselves from the ‘others’ around them, the possibility for cooperation and an unperturbed sense of belonging are unlikely and sometimes threaten to divide communities from within (Kalaora 2011: 757).

While South Africa’s struggle with crime has been widely studied, the nexus of race, class and security in Kenya is only beginning to be understood. Kenya has also experienced a large increase in the proliferation of private security, coinciding with the increase in urban crime the country experienced in the late 1980s. Though black and lower-income Kenyans staff the majority of these security firms, security services in Kenya are dominantly owned by and marketed to the white and expatriate population. While smaller in scale than its South African incarnation, Kenya’s private security industry is also a fast-growing and highly profitable industry, involving, for example,

alarm services, video surveillance, dog training, personal defence courses, road rescue, and evasive driving. Like South Africa, Brazil, and elsewhere, the growing popularity of privatized home security Kenya also begs the question of how the private security sector capitalizes on gendered aspects of (in)security. As it is in the clear interest of capitalist firms to strengthen their client base and revenues, encouraging fear amongst clients may be a tacit strategy in their business operations. If other studies suggest women are especially fearful of crime, the role of companies providing home security must certainly be analyzed. These strategies may attempt to take advantage of aforementioned racialized or sexualized attitudes, especially in strategies that serve to physically separate residents from their staff or the perceived threat of home invasion, such as panic rooms, panic buttons, rape gates, etc. Though the degree of crime affecting poorer parts of Nairobi requires all residents to be mindful and vigilant, the possibility that corporate security firms deploy fear tactics, or evoke gender-directed strategies in marketing their services, is significant.

Methodology

Field research for this thesis was conducted over eight weeks in June, July and August of 2011, during which time I resided in a small rental flat in the Nairobi neighborhood of Woodley estate. The black Kenyan owner of the flat was a former Nairobi city counselor, who had purchased several two-room flats in the neighborhood some years earlier. She had the walls repainted and the bathrooms fitted with hot water pumps to rent out to foreign students, usually from neighboring African countries. As an added feature of my weekly rental fee, a young woman from the area would come to my apartment every Friday to clean and do laundry. Though residents referred to the

tenement as a compound, it had no actual security features, other than dogs that roamed the compound freely. As a way of orienting myself in the area, I introduced myself to every individual I passed in the courtyard, as well the vendors who sold fruits or phone cards on the nearby street. Not knowing how my presence in the area would be received, I felt the best way to ensure I was not resented or looked at with suspicion, was to make my status known, and to evince the local people I was modest and respectful.

The primary participants in my study were Sheila and Henry Cranford, two Anglo-Kenyan retirees who lived only a ten minute walk from my flat in the more affluent neighborhood of Kilimani.¹ I visited their home on several occasions: for tea, Sunday night dinners, as well as accompanying them to lunch dates with their Euro-Kenyan friends. I also joined them to visit their grandchildren in Lavington, an upper-class neighborhood a few kilometers away. Five weeks into my stay, Sheila and Henry left for the United States to visit their son. Before departing, they invited me to return to their home in order to spend more time with Phillip, the 45-year-old black Kenyan man working as their cleaner and cook.² The Cranfords insisted my study would not be complete without the input of “the local people,”³ and suggested Phillip would be more comfortable to talk with me once they were out of the house. I returned to the Cranfords’ house several times in the next few weeks to speak with Phillip, chatting in the kitchen, in Phillip’s servant’s quarters, as well as bars and restaurants nearby.

¹ Individual participants in this study have all been given pseudonyms. Neighborhoods, streets and landmarks in Nairobi retain their actual names. Company and organization names – if not withheld – are also real.

² If not by his first name, Phillip is always referred to by the Cranfords as their ‘houseboy’ as shorthand for the fact he performs a range of domestic duties, as opposed to being a ‘cook’ or ‘gardener’. Participants with female staff used ‘housegirl’.

³ Few participants used the term ‘Black’ when referring to Afro-Kenyans - sometimes ‘African’ but usually ‘local’.

On nights when the Cranfords were unavailable to spend time with me, they offered me the phone numbers of several of their Euro-Kenyan friends in Nairobi, and the surrounding areas. I made several excursions to the Westlands, an affluent suburb in the northern area of Nairobi, meeting with other older generation Whites, usually for coffee or lunch. One weekend, I spent time with Adam Wellesley, a Euro-Kenyan who manages a group of successful wholesale businesses in Nairobi, who took me to dinner with his extended family and also introduced me to his circle of friends, some *Mzungu*,⁴ some Indo-Kenyan, and some expatriate.

During the weekdays, my research focused on Kenya's private security sector. I made arrangements by email to meet with members of the security industry prior to embarking for Kenya, and met with six members of the security community over the course of only a few weeks. An interesting revelation in this study was the significant number of security managers and executives who happened to be Anglo, Greco or Indo-Kenyan. I did not profile my participants when seeking interviews with security firms. I sent a large number of emails to a large number of firms, and the majority of those who agreed to speak on record were, coincidentally, white, or of another visible minority. Of the six individuals I interviewed, three were Euro-Kenyan citizens working for Euro-Kenyan owned security companies, one was an Afro-Kenyan managing director of a Euro-Kenyan owned security company, one was an Afro-Kenyan director of his own, smaller scale security company, and one was a Euro-Kenyan working for numerous security firms in the capacity of 'consultant'.

⁴ 'White person' or 'European' – term used throughout East Africa. It's definition is highly contested. Black East Africans occasionally refer to each other as *Mzungu*, such as a person in a position of authority who forces subordinates to be punctual or is perceived to be abusing their power (Mbele 2005: 7).

For the majority of interviews with security professionals, I scheduled meetings lasting about 90 minutes, usually taking place in their offices or conference rooms, and loosely adhere to my prepared questions (See Appendix 1).⁵ Meeting with security professionals in this context was productive though restrictive. While company representatives were eager to speak frankly about their industry and its challenges, our meetings were rigid, time-constrained, and offered little opportunity to witness these individuals or their colleagues going about their everyday work. Security at their offices was usually tight, and I was patted down, scanned for metals, and sometimes sniffed by dogs before being allowed into their highly militarized office complexes.⁶ When not conducting interviews, my movement within these complexes was strictly regulated, and the possibility of observing these individuals going about their everyday work was, unfortunately, not realistic.

One of the greatest challenges in conducting my research was movement. Densely populated and with an underdeveloped infrastructure, moving about Nairobi is an arduous and oftentimes dangerous activity. Road accidents are a leading cause of death in the country, and I had to excuse myself from several hired taxis because the driver was intoxicated. Given the costs, risks, and complications of using taxis or buses in Nairobi, I decided it was cheaper and, in fact, safer to walk, so long as it was daylight. Some days, I spent as long as five hours trekking to and from meetings at malls and business districts throughout central and western Nairobi. These walks proved to be a valuable component

⁵ The majority of security directors insisted *they* be the ones leading the discussion, as they usually assumed I knew little about their industry. This approach was beneficial as it allowed them to articulate the issues they specifically felt were important, without suggestions from the interviewer.

⁶ A typical headquarters for a private security firm would be a highly fortified compound in a suburban area of Nairobi. Vehicle traffic in and out would be regulated by several layers of barriers and fencing. Several headquarters featured large parade grounds where guards practiced marching in formation. Some featured barracks, canteens, clinics, armories, classrooms and centers for dog training.

of my fieldwork, as moving through streets and neighborhoods, away from the main thoroughfares, enabled me to experience Nairobi's public domain without the filter of car windows. In particular, I was able to examine and compare the different security measures Nairobians employ at their homes, and I often stopped to speak and socialize with the security guards manning the gates of various residential or commercial properties. I spoke to approximately ten guards over the course of my research. Also, I gained an appreciation of the extent to which the 'interior' of Nairobi life is separated from the 'exterior'. In many cases, security measures are configured so that homes or offices are not even visible to the public from the street. The walls, barricades, watchtowers, and razor wire make a stroll through Nairobi more akin to walking Baghdad's Green zone than an upper-class residential neighborhood.

As my study does involve a discussion of the Kenyan police, I should clarify the nature of my interactions with them and explain how this complicated my study. Midway through my research, I organized an excursion to the small town of Enduroto, where a large number of white Kenyans have lived since independence.⁷ I did so at the insistence of Lena Nowak, a Polish Kenyan resident of the town who I'd managed to speak to while she was in Nairobi on her way to the airport. She gave me a list of 'old colonials' she felt would be valuable to speak to for my study. Arriving in Enduroto by *matatu* (mini-bus), I had the misfortune of having my hotel room burglarized within only hours of checking in, losing my Canadian passport and a significant amount of money. When this unfortunate (and not unusual) mishap occurred, my role as ethnographer took a temporary, though immediate, backseat to my role as a traveling foreigner. Though I do

⁷ I borrow this town's pseudonym from Katja Uusihakala (1999), who conducted fieldwork in this same community in the early 1990s. Other than myself, she is the only anthropologist to conduct research on Euro-Kenyans since the end of British rule.

not wish for my study to reify the Kenya Police as predacious or untrustworthy, my knowledge and experience in the region informed me that dealing with the issue through conventional legal structures was impractical. However, the Canadian High Commission informed me that I must file a report with police in order to apply for replacement documents, and this would need to happen immediately. Filing this police report was a time-consuming and frustrating process. After two successive visits to the police station in Enduroto, I was told I could not file a report on the incident, as I could not provide 'proof' that the passport was stolen. The fact there were witnesses who observed strange men coming and going from my hotel room in my absence was insufficient, and I was forced to board a bus to Nairobi hoping I would not need to validate myself at any of the numerous police checkpoints.

Back in Nairobi, I was able to obtain the official document I needed, but only after printing out the forms myself and waiting in the local police station for several hours. In the process of being questioned about my passport, the police became suspicious that I might be in Kenya for reasons other than tourism. Giving them the address of my Woodley estate flat, it took several minutes to convince the police that a *Mzungu* (a White or European) was in fact living in that low-income area, and that I was not involved in any paid employment. The officer in charge insisted on driving me home, I suspect in order to investigate my story. Deciding I would prefer to end our meeting at the station, I insisted I was late to meet a friend and proceeded by foot towards downtown. The following week, I had been scheduled to interview representatives at Nairobi's police headquarters on the general subject of crime and security. I had identified myself on the phone as a 'researcher', though I now suspected this explanation

would not be so straightforward. Without proper travel documents, I decided this avenue would be best left un-traveled lest I be arrested, fined, or deported, and consequently did not speak with the Kenya Police as a formal component of my research.

In addition to the frustrations I experienced with police when my passport was stolen in Enduroto, I also faced security challenges within my own domestic space. After a Friday morning meeting during the second week of my stay, I returned to my flat to find my cleaning lady engaging in sexual activity with an unknown man in my bedroom. I was immediately startled and intimidated by the occurrence, and excused myself to a neighbor's flat to allow the unknown man to leave and for the bedroom to be re-arranged before returning to confront the young woman. She was apologetic for what had happened, and clearly more embarrassed by the incident than I was. Because of my lack of familiarity with what was acceptable or unacceptable behavior for a domestic worker in this context, I allowed my anxieties in the matter to fester rather than confront them. Not only was I deeply worried by the possibility of strangers occupying my apartment in my absence, my ability to trust the young woman in holding keys to my temporary home was compromised. Though I could have informed my landlady of the indiscretion and had the woman dismissed, I did not trust the landlady to take appropriate measures to ensure the girl would not return, or if there was any reason to be concerned. The limits of my cultural capital amongst lower income Nairobians was immediately apparent.

Interestingly, these challenges I experienced with my own domestic help provided a valuable inroad for conversing with my Euro-Kenyan participants. As a typical Euro-Kenyan household will employ several domestic workers, relationships with these individuals are a significant (though under-acknowledged) factor in the Euro-Kenyan

public image. They constitute an interface or internal frontier within which individual Whites experience and interact with Kenyan society as a whole. As my own socio-economic status in Kenya placed me in a similar relationship with lower-income individuals, my ability to converse with participants about my own experiences in the city created a dialectic in which the underlying anxieties of security issues could be teased out, and assumptions or vagaries could be questioned. Though of a very different cultural background than my participants, the fact that I was white and Anglophone gave them the feeling I was “like them” and as a result, I believe, many participants spoke to me with a greater degree of honesty than they might have with an anthropologist of a different background.

Given that many of my participants viewed my whiteness as having significant meaning in their world, the fact that I was living amongst “the locals” in a lower income complex with no security was almost unfathomable to both the Euro-Kenyans and Afro-Kenyans I encountered. In spite of the discomfiting incident with my cleaning lady, I felt reasonably safe in my area of residence in spite of being the only *Mzungu*, and in spite of the violence or crime my neighbors often spoke about. In spending an increasing amount of time with my study participants, I became increasingly anxious about being perceived as a privileged outsider in the neighborhood, and was driven to get a better understanding of the local perceptions of whiteness. During my free time, I would often take a broom and dustpan and sweep my verandah and the stairs leading to the roadway. The crowds of people streaming from Kibera to Ngong Road often stopped and gawked at the site of a white person performing their own household chores. “That *Mzungu* is crazy,” people would yell. “He can hire a Kenyan to do that for him!” Other neighbors, with whom I

became close, openly bemused at my willingness to pump my own water and to help my cleaning lady hang clothes. The complicated nature of my whiteness was also teased out in conversations with my friends and neighbors, who often insistently fed me, praised my willingness to live with them, and proclaimed I was “like no other *Mzungu!*” At the same time, more private and informal conversations often revealed a fascination with my material wealth and privilege, and people often asked if I could help with school fees, pay for relatives’ medical bills, or be tempted to purchase illicit sex or drugs. Though residents of the neighborhood were generally gracious and accommodating, they openly proclaimed that this was in ‘exception’ to the fact I was white – to the fact I was nothing like the former colonials living ‘lavishly’ in Karen or the Westlands. When I told my landlady (a self-identifying Kikuyu) I might like to return to Nairobi in the future to work or do further research, she fumed that “Kenya is already full of white people”, and that they “take too many jobs from young educated Kenyans.”

Overall, my position as ethnographer was certainly betwixt between two cultural worlds. Amongst the lower income Afro-Kenyans with whom I lived, I very much embodied the whiteness and privilege they associated with the Euro-Kenyans I studied. With my Euro-Kenyan participants, however, I was a more anomalous figure with unusual taste - sharing much of their cultural capital when it came to food, drink or humor, though very otherworldly in my willingness to walk, talk, and sleep among the ‘local’ Kenyan people.

Conclusion

In attempting to capture Euro-Kenyan perspectives on ‘belonging’, my discussion incorporates a large and complicated range of historical, political, social, and economic

factors. As neoliberalism has diminished the ability of the state to protect or provide for the populist figure of the African citizen, private or non-state actors now forge many of the subject-citizen relationships normative of liberal democratic states. In the project of maintaining or protecting individual subjects, the question of who retains the status of 'sovereign' over individual communities becomes highly contentious. Given the ambiguous, nebulous, or ephemeral nature of sovereigns and citizens in contemporary Africa, belonging, as the practice or project of entrenching oneself within socio-cultural landscapes, is, therefore, undertaken in highly individual fashions. Furthermore, questions of 'who belongs' and 'who is an outsider' are especially perilous and political in contexts of poverty or scarcity, as well as in places where social histories are marked by racism or domination (Geschiere 2009; Nguyen 2010; Hughes 2010). In deploying my chosen theoretical concepts, I attempt to resolve how, in situations lacking normative indicators of citizenship, sovereignty, statehood, do people such as settlers, exiles, outsiders, or strangers, construct a shared purpose or meaning on which the notion of belonging can be hinged? This framework is motivated, in part, by a categorical frustration with the anomalous figure of the 'white African' – a figure who, seeming so unambiguous in their status as outsider, possesses a formidable capacity to "belong awkwardly" in places where whiteness is such a potent symbol of problematic histories and relationships (Hughes 2010: 129). While many white Africans might insist that they've lived, worked and 'belonged' on the continent in spite of 30 years of structural adjustment, my intention, in deploying these theories, is to suggest they've belonged precisely because of it.

Methodologically, I attempt to investigate the perspectives of various actors without confining them within rigid categorizations of powerful or powerless. Though I do not attempt to obscure the history of Whites as former dominators of African subjects, these problematic histories require anthropologists to question how privilege, power, or racism, are remembered, or regenerated, in the present day context. Given my own discomfiting experiences with domestic labor during the course of my fieldwork, I will also engage in reflexive discussion in which I utilize my own experience as an inroad to better understanding my participants. Overall, I attempt to understand all people in my study as agents of livelihood, as entrepreneurs of the self, and to investigate the productive qualities of actions or discourses normatively considered alienating or socially deconstructive.

CHAPTER 3: Kenya and the People with too much history

Introduction

Historicizing security as a driving social force in Kenya requires a partial explication of the country's British colonial history. As the remnants of a system built and sustained by the labour of native peoples, Euro-Kenyan worldviews remain largely oriented around practices or discourses both dependent *on* and uncertain *of* cross-racial relationships with a range of African actors. In this chapter, I give a brief historical overview of security issues in Kenya, attempting to add context and continuity to the experience of an racial minority easily misunderstood by their local neighbors, Kenyan politicians, and the international community alike. In exploring the racialized practice and discourse deployed by Whites during restive later years of British colonial rule, I demonstrate how perceptions of insecurity amongst Euro-Kenyans have consistently been based upon highly racialized perceptions of Blacks, as well as an engrained mistrust in police by Blacks, Whites, and most segments of the Kenyan population.

White Kenyan History (as a history of securitization)

Large-scale European settlement in Kenya began in 1902 with the completion of the Ugandan railway, stretching from the port city of Mombasa to Lake Victoria - the 'Source of the Nile', and a much-coveted British imperial asset. Significantly over-budget, the colonial government attempted to pay for the project by selling off properties along its route, snaking from the barren shrublands of the Central province through the lush and fertile highlands of the Rift Valley. An attractive prospect for adventurous or landless aristocrats, life in British East Africa as a wealthy or privileged *Mzungu* came with many appealing benefits. "In the iconography of British imperial endeavor," says

Anderson (2005: 1), Kenya “was the land of sunshine, gin slings and smiling, obedient servants, where the industrious White colonizer could enjoy a temperate life of peace and plenty in a tropical land.” Racial supremacy was foundational to the colonial economy, and the majority of European homes and businesses benefited from the low-cost labor of local African people. Inspired by legislation passed in Rhodesia a year earlier, the Kenyan colony instituted the Master and Servant Act in 1925, entitling Whites to control and discipline workers with virtual impunity. Many white homes also employed ritual practices intended to delineate the subject position of Africans, such as uniforms, degrading nicknames, and the strict segregation of space (Kennedy 1987: 155).

Despite the leisurely lifestyles these labor structures allowed for, Europeans in Kenya were not always confident in the sustainability of their master position. As early as 1910, historians document problematic relations between Whites and their staff, especially from the perspectives of white women who supervised or worked alongside Africans in more intimate domestic settings. Kennedy (1987) recounts one case in which a white woman was stricken with anxiety after catching a servant away from his room visiting another staff member for a game of cards. Though the act itself was insignificant, Kennedy argues that these sorts of minor transgressions had an immense psychological impact on Whites. These subtle acts of resistance, he says, “raised the terrible specter in Europeans’ minds of a secret cabal of African conspirators in the shadows of their own homes” (Kennedy 1987: 152). As the master-servant relationship was the social interface in which many Whites experienced their control or superiority, dissent or resistance by staff was not only a nuisance but hinted at a catastrophic upheaval of their tenuous and inequitable position. Fear, anxiety, or suspicion of Blacks

is a recurrent theme across much anthropological literature on white settlers in Africa (Crapanzano 1985; Kalaora 2011). How Whites have sought to manage and overcome these anxieties throughout the course of their history, says Kennedy (1987: 153), is likely the most “intriguing problem” in the study of white Kenyan society.

When asking elder white Kenyans about their family histories in the country, narratives most always revolve around the tumultuous events of the Mau Mau rebellion, and narratives of how their families were able to ‘survive’ the violence and persist in Kenya despite the rebellion’s long-term socio-political implications. A loosely organized series of resistances and uprisings against the colonial government by ethnic Kikuyus in the Central and Rift Valley provinces between 1952 and 1960 – the Mau Mau rebellion, and efforts employed to counter it, resulted in a violent and costly conflict whose traces are apparent in Kenyan culture today. The precise social, economic and political factors that precipitated the Mau Mau rebellion remain debated amongst scholars, though historians often explain the movement as the product of half a century of economic deprivation of the Kikuyu by the Europeans and other settlers who staked claim to their traditional homelands (Berman 1990; Kershaw 1997). From the perspective of European residents, however, “the Mau Mau was not provoked by the denial of things to the Kikuyu but by their own inability to grapple with the challenges of modernity” (Anderson 2005: 280). Government discourse at the time employed eugenic idioms in delegitimizing African grievances, claiming the rebellion was a result of a pre-disposition for mental illness amongst the Kikuyu, especially amongst urban or uprooted Africans who were seen as dangerously ‘de-tribalized’. “Lacking the cultural and spiritual cocoon of tradition,” Anderson (2005: 281) explains, “the African in transition” was seen as

“vulnerable” to madness and violence – one of many cases throughout Kenyan history where people in positions of authority have attempted to de-politicize violence using racialized or ‘othering’ discourse.

One of the major anxieties complicating domestic relationship during this period was the fear of what became known as the Mau Mau ‘oaths’. Adopted or forced upon Kikuyus by the radical Mau Mau insurgents, Europeans in Kenya feared this oath as an elusive and uncivilized animistic ritual sanctifying Kikuyu commitment to the destruction of colonial invaders. As Shaw (1995: 170) points out, however, “European representations of Mau Mau oaths were exaggerated” – evoking a ‘savage’, orientalist imagery of violent ritual and sacrifice. Most interestingly, Shaw (1995: 149) also argues that representations of the rebellion – especially in the Euro-American media – were further racialized by the many debates churning the conservative political landscape in Euro-America, namely the rising support of civil rights for African-Americans, debates about the sexuality and domesticity of American women, and the threat of communist proliferation throughout the Third World. “Still there is a mystery about the actuality of the Mau Mau,” says Shaw (1995: 150), “in part because the movement was caught up in local specificity of rituals and loyalties, while at the same time making universalistic demands for self-determination and independence.” Like the experience of white Zimbabwean farmers during the political crises of the early 2000s, the image of the European householder ‘terrorized’ by the black insurgent captivated minds and tapped into latent anxieties. As a problematic misrepresentation of a justifiable, and likely inevitable, resistance, Euro-American conceptions of the Mau Mau – an iconic struggle in African anti-colonial movements – may be understood as a formative moment in what

Ferguson (2006: 7) has dubbed the 'shadow' cast over Africa by the West's own uneasiness with its privileged and inequitable position in the post-colonial world.

In attempting to deflect responsibility for the unrest through a discourse of racial demonization, the British government arguably exacerbated certain psychological aspects of the conflict, affecting Whites most dramatically. Though as few as thirty European settlers were actually killed during the conflict, incidents did occur in which Mau Mau fighters attacked or infiltrated white homesteads, often with the actual or suspected assistance of Kikuyu or sympathetic staff (Shaw 1995: 151). Given the aforementioned uneasiness of Whites with the African workers with whom they closely interacted, the fact that Mau Mau used staff to gain access or information on Whites' activities "tapped into a deep well of anxiety about their vulnerability amid a hostile African majority" (Anderson 2005: 84). Though some Whites had viewed their African staff as 'obedient' and unthreatening for upward of fifty years, "suddenly, overnight," says Anderson, "the smiling servant had become the murderous savage, enveloped in a wild, red rolling madness." One elder white Kenyan describes the mood of their community during the Mau Mau as "sheer, blind panic. Suddenly," they explain, "all our people were talking about being murdered in their beds, and once it started, there was no stopping it" (Taylor 2000: 111). Many European residents promptly fired any Kikuyu staff, and those that remained were sent home before dark or locked in their quarters (Anderson 2005: 77).

Demonstrating the extent of this paranoia, one white Kenyan widow who was a child during the Mau Mau rebellion recalls the assumption with which many Whites suspected their African staff. "A white household in that era would have a large staff of people", she explains, "so the implications were tremendous." Household staff

throughout the country were under pressure to provide insurgents with information about their white employers, she says, and “every house worker in the country was connected to the Mau Mau in some way.” Needless to say, the Mau Mau conflict prompted significant introspection as to the nature of white privilege in Kenya and its systemic use of low-cost labor, on which their lifestyle and culture problematically depended.

Following a string of home attacks and increased pressure from white residents, the colonial government declared a state of emergency in Kenya in 1952, and summoned hundreds of British troops from Egypt and other regional colonies to assist in ‘putting down’ the rebellion. As the Central Province and other Kikuyu areas became militarized, armed Mau Mau fighters fled into the dense forests while their sympathetic informants fell silent and more secretive (Shaw 1995: 151). Even with a strong presence of British forces in the region, Anderson (2005: 84) claims that many white Kenyans “feared the government was not taking sufficient steps to quell the unrest”, and some European communities launched independent initiatives to eliminate Mau Mau insurgents. Partnering with African police units, White-led ‘strike squads’ known as ‘Pseudo-Gangs’, launched a wave of assassinations and incursions against suspected Mau Mau, often donning blackface make-up and dreadlocked wigs, venturing deep into the forests beyond where British forces would go. The post-World War II period had seen a significant migration of demobilized British soldiers to Kenya, bringing with them a breadth of military expertise and a willingness to take up arms in defense of their new homesteads (Anderson 2005: 85). While conducting my research in Kenya, numerous informants boasted of the fact that their fathers or other family members fought in these

pseudo-gangs units – figures mythologized amongst older white Kenyans as guardians of the white community during this period of uncertainty.

In addition to counter-insurgency efforts in the Rift Valley and Central Provinces, the colonial government was especially concerned with safeguarding the country's economic and administrative capital of Nairobi. Unlike the rebels 'hiding in the forests' in the upcountry areas, the proximity with which Blacks and Whites lived and worked in Nairobi made identifying and combating insurgents an especially challenging task. As Nairobi was regarded as the "beating heart" of the Mau Mau insurgency, British and colonial forces began a large-scale occupation of the city in April 1954. In Operation Anvil, Kikuyu residents of Nairobi were subject to mass raids and arrests, with many Kikuyus detained in suburban 'gulags' or expelled from the city and 'repatriated' to their ancestral area. Carved up by barbed wire and roadblocks, Nairobi became a police state in which black movement was heavily regulated, and where "justice was too often an expensive luxury"(Anderson 2005: 211).

Demonstrating the degree to which Operation Anvil and other security projects of this period racialized the African population, police assigned each Kikuyu a color-coded threat status indicative of their corruptibility as a potential Mau Mau sympathizer: 'white' indicated a resident friendly to the colonial regime; 'black' indicated a resident deemed threatening, or likely to be an active terrorist (Anderson 2005: 203). Anderson also documents thousands of Nairobians being tortured and killed by colonial forces in the many 'gulags' or internment camps throughout Nairobi and the Central province. This period also marked the beginning of what Anderson refers to as Nairobi's "street children phenomenon" (2005: 204). With thousands of adult residents – male and female –

imprisoned indefinitely or repatriated without notice, families were often abruptly split up, and children were left to fend for themselves as their parents were dragged away by officials.

While the Mau Mau rebellion was symbolically effective in challenging white dominance in Kenya, historians also emphasize the extent to which Mau Mau and counter-Mau Mau activities were divisive and problematic for African communities themselves. Many White-led security operations took systematic advantage of sympathetic Africans, forcing them to act as fighters or informants, or risk being arrested and interred. Few counter-insurgency operations did not hinge somehow on inside information bought or tortured from native Kenyans, and Mau Mau fighters terrorized many communities to discourage them from cooperating with the government. Africans conscripted to identify Mau Mau often wore hoods or masks to protect their identity, and African civil servants became especially favorable targets for the Mau Mau, as they were seen as sympathizing with the British (Anderson 2005: 190). The thugs and thieves to whom these Africans were victim were not necessarily Kikuyu and not necessarily Mau Mau. In this period of sharpened segregation, increased unemployment and urban unrest, Kenya began its long and unfortunate struggle with urban crime and insecurity. Though attacks on middle and upper class Nairobians were sometimes committed for political reasons, the violence that came to characterize Nairobi during the Mau Mau was more often the work of unemployed, 'hot-headed' young opportunists (Anderson 2005: 196). As Nairobi became a city of suspicion and segregation, crime, says Anderson, "merged imperceptibly with rebellion" (2005: 196).

It was also during this period that scholars first made note of Kenya's challenge of police corruption. As going about life became increasingly challenging for African residents of Nairobi, the 'Home Guards' who policed the city began collecting bribes in exchange for allowing residents to move about undocumented. Soon this practice developed into a large-scale patronage system enveloping shops, factories, and other businesses, as employers were continually frustrated at having laborers spontaneously arrested and detained indefinitely (Anderson 2005: 211). During raids on the Eastlands and other areas where the majority of black Nairobian lived, Home Guards frequently stole money and property from residents while allowing weapons possession and other illicit activities to go unpunished (Anderson 2005: 212). Poorly paid, poor-trained, and with only a conditional commitment to justice, police forces in Kenya became a highly unaccountable entity with much public influence but little public trust.

While Euro-American scholars now understand this restive period as the product of years of social and economic deprivation of the Kikuyu and other Kenyans by the British rulership and its systems of governance, at the time of its unfolding, "the Mau Mau rebellion was nothing less than an assault upon the racial supremacy that was the foundation of their society" (Anderson 2005: 86). By deploying staff infiltration, home invasions and other psychological tactics, the Mau Mau succeeded in undermining Whites as untouchable masters, conjuring feelings of fear and vulnerability, which remain in some white Kenyan homes today. In addition to the complicating effects of the Mau Mau on settler-native relations, projects countering the insurgency have become historically iconic in white Kenyan history. In the stories of the young men who fought the Mau Mau, "the bravery and ingenuity of the canny white highlanders gives the tale its

glamour and excitement” (Anderson 2005: 285), romanticizing the struggle and celebrating the sacrifice as a form of white investment in the wild and untamed land.

More importantly, however, historicizing security in Kenya must include the question of if or how activities of the Mau Mau, and pseudo-gangs deployed to fight them, set a problematic precedent for how policing is conducted today, and for how police bodies are seen as sovereign entities in Kenya. As “a certain level of violent suppression and expression has always been a part of the country’s politics” (Landau and Misago 2009: 103), threats of brutal violence and fears of racialized conspiracy by both state and non-state actors have been historically fundamental in Kenya’s political landscape. While independence was a time of optimism for newly self-determined Africans, Whites wishing to remain in Kenya faced numerous challenges in reconciling their historical or racial identities with the political and social realities of a black majority state. Unlike neighboring Tanzania, where white landowners were aggressively expelled at the time of independence, the Kenyatta regime in Kenya maintained a rhetoric of ‘forgetting’ and ‘forgiveness’, a call to white and Asian business people to stay on in the country and help to build a prosperous future together (Leys 1975: 53-54). As independence struggles in Kenya had very much transformed the political consciousness of the country, Doro (1979: 49-50) claims it also bifurcated white communities along the lines of more conservative colonials and more forward looking ‘pragmatists’. As more conservative Whites packed up their farms, sold their lands to the government, and left for South Africa, Australia, Canada or elsewhere, many Whites choosing to remain in Kenya faced a landscape in which livelihood and belonging needed to be carefully re-forged.

Coping with Change

Given the option of ‘becoming’ a Kenyan at the time of independence, Doro (1979: 44) claims that many European settlers remained “ambivalent” about their position as potential ‘citizens’ of a newly independent nation. As *jus sanguinis* (right of blood) policies in Britain ensured that a white Kenyan could always reclaim the citizenship of their ancestors, the decision to register as Kenyan (necessary if one wanted to retain land) may – as the first in many instances – have been a practice driven by necessity rather than allegiance or identification.

As the white community pondered their future, Doro (1979: 49) claims that some underwent a critical but unacknowledged change in their attitudes towards their African neighbors. As the more racially conservative Whites had never been able to envision themselves under a Black-governed state, the Whites that remained were dominantly a more pragmatic group willing to align themselves with promising black business people in an attempt to capitalize on Kenya’s optimistic future. These new attitudes materialized in the formation of civil society and interest groups, most notably The New Kenya Group, founded in 1959 by high profile members of the white regime to promote multi-racial partnership through knowledge sharing, international capital investment and the exploration of new and free markets. When the independent government officially came to power, the New Kenya Group and many of Kenya’s wealthiest white businessmen such as Michael Blundell, Ernest Vassey and Phillip Rogers achieved guarantees from Kenyatta’s regime that white businesses would not be nationalized. These informal agreements safeguarded the economic investments of this structurally privileged

community, arguably in 'exchange' for the silencing of their voices in the country's politics.

While many of the political dialogues energizing independence in Africa sought the 'Africanization' of economies and states, the state-protection of White-led business in Kenya is a first of several significant instances of government-private cooperation in Kenya contradictory to prevailing Africanist rhetoric. "For various and often contradictory reasons," says Doro (1979: 50), "white and African leaders shared the common belief that it was necessary to preserve the capitalist structure created under the settlers' influence in order to promote economic and political stability." Though Kenya's future was uncertain for rural white smallholders (such as many Afrikaner farmers who eventually returned to southern Africa), Kenya's white, urban elite remained at "the commanding heights of the economy" (Hazlewood 1979: 189). However, the 1960s and 1970s were also time of more generalized prosperity for the Kenyan economy, and a new class of African landowners also turned profits in coffee, tea, tobacco and flowers. While White-owned agriculture has been foundational to Kenya's economy since the late 19th century, the diverse sectors of support services financing, maintaining, marketing, and transporting agricultural products and services throughout Kenya also constituted a significant portion of white ownership in more diversified areas of the economy. Many Whites, who had opted to sell their land through the limited nationalization project of the British government, chose to capitalize on their knowledge of fauna in developing Kenya's tourism and safari industry, itself becoming a vital cog in Kenya's long-term economic engine.⁸

⁸ One Euro-Kenyan family, in particular, the Leakeys, made significant moves to integrate themselves during this period through their work as naturalists and anthropologists. Patriarch Louis Leakey, born to

Collectively speaking, the 1960s and early 1970s in Kenya were a period in which Whites underwent a drastic re-imagining of their economic role in the country. As the most profitable sectors of the marketplace were no longer exclusive to the British gentry, maintaining their livelihoods in Kenya required a re-adjustment of business practices to both cooperate and compete with a more democratic marketplace. Critical to this process, says Doro (1979: 47), was the realization by white commercial stakeholders that their business could serve black entrepreneurship as effectively as it had served the colonial regime. Similar to Hughes' (2010) description of the re-marketing of whiteness into new niches or professions during Zimbabwe's time of crisis, we can understand these livelihood changes amongst the white community in Kenya as attempts to retain or re-fashion a form of capitalist livelihood in a context where remaining, after the fact of dominance, requires compelling investment in the future of the country's economy. Though the agenda of rapid state-led development was initially an accommodating landscape for Kenya's residual privileged Whites, the effects of global processes on the Kenyan economy would ultimately problematize that accommodation. As sustainable economic progress is also hinged upon social and political stability, the advent of neoliberalism in Kenya would force the livelihoods of all Kenyans into question.

While the Mau Mau rebellion did catalyze Kenya's political and economic Africanization, hopes that independence in Kenya would improve security or make policing more accountable were arguably misguided. From the earliest days of Kenya's

British missionaries in Kenya and raised in a Kikuyu village, made a number of renowned archeological discoveries in East Africa over the course of his career. His son Richard became a respected paleoanthropologist in his own right, and was appointed head of Kenya's civil service in 1999 following concerns by international financial institutions that the Moi government was endemically corrupt. Richard's brother Philip was the Member of Parliament for the seat of Langata from 1979-92 (Bowman-Kruhm 2005).

independence, both the project of policing and the crime it is designed to combat have been immensely complicated by systemic corruption – itself a result of poverty both within and beyond official bodies and structures. For white Kenyans in particular, present configurations of police power are a strange inversion of the ‘white-friendly’ regimes characteristics of the Kenyan police origins. While police brutality and corruption during the Mau Mau was driven by a white desperation for dominance, brutality and corruption in the present day is similarly experienced, though seemingly without allegiance to any particular actor or group. Trained by the British to be ruthless and indiscriminate, the Kenya Police, as Ruteere and Pommerolle (2003: 591) describe, were “born with the marks of a punitive citizen containment squad.” Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, President Kenyatta routinely utilized police as a tool of state repression, becoming even more severe during Moi’s presidency (Ruteere and Pommerolle 2003: 592). Since independence, political structures in Kenya have ensured police remain an unaccountable and politicized body, as the President of Kenya retains direct power to appoint or dismiss police commissioners - therefore exerting a direct influence on policy and procedural operations (Abrahamsen and Williams 2010: 203). “At the heart of Kenya’s and Nairobi’s security anguish,” say Abrahamsen and Williams (2010: 197), “is a political regime that over many years has privatized violence (and appropriated much private violence) in order to secure its own survival at the expense of its citizens.” While South Africa’s post-apartheid transition involved efforts to make police more transparent and representative of their communities, both recent and historical controversies surrounding Kenyan police forces paint a more problematic picture.

While violence and police impunity set a problematic precedent during the period of anti-colonial struggle, security professionals today characterize crime at the time of independence as being low, unsophisticated, and not a pressing concern for government, businesses, or the public. With Kenya's remarkable economic growth in the early years of independence, however, so came the effects of a capitalist economy in which some benefited but many were left wanting.

Many older white participants in this study also speak of crime as a matter of 'then and now' - many indicating a gradual heightening in perceptiveness to crime throughout the late 1970s. When asked to recount her family's history in Kenya, one white woman began by specifically emphasizing the (perceived) decline in security between her childhood in the 1950s and adult life in 1980s. "Well for starters, there were no fences, no security bars, we walked the streets freely with nothing to worry about." As Kenya was one of the first countries in the world to be subject to structural adjustment programs (Abrahamsen 2000: 28), it was also one of the first to experience the pronounced worsening in inequality, corruption, and the detrimental side effects attributed to it. With the weakening of the Kenyan marketplace, the increased destitution of the population, and the inability of the state to provide the conventional range of social and protective services, Euro-Kenyans again underwent a re-fashioning of their livelihoods in order cope with this challenging new environment.

According to Mr. Kelly, the Euro-Kenyan managing director of one of Kenya's leading private security firms, security became a pressing issue in Kenya as the world markets developed an insatiable appetite for Kenyan-produced coffee. As this local industry ballooned, Mr. Kelly explains that Kenyan business and financial services

supporting the coffee industry immediately became flush with large quantities of cash. Like in any boomtown, the newfound wealth of coffee industry leaders was not always inconspicuous, and criminals began taking advantage of this successful industry by robbing banks, stealing vehicles, and raiding on the homes of the wealthy Kenyan business people – Blacks, Whites, and Asians alike. As the Kenyan coffee industry flourished and benefactors grew increasingly wealthy, Mr. Kelly explains that police were growing increasingly incompetent in dealing with the surge of crime. Though the Kenyatta regime had initially invested heavily in maintaining the policing system developed by the British, austerity and dwindling of state entities left remaining police officers under-paid, poorly equipped and increasingly outnumbered when facing audacious criminals (Ruteere and Pommerolle 2003: 596; Abrahamsen and Williams 2010: 200).

Conclusion

Though rumors of sacrificial oaths no longer circulate so prominently in the Euro-Kenyan household, further chapters will demonstrate the ways in which fear and suspicion continue to influence domestic life in the Euro-Kenyan household and complicate the delicate nexus of race and power that constitutes the domestic security assemblage. While the experience of the Mau Mau rebellion did create a significant sense of unity and purpose amongst the European community as a whole, this chapter has demonstrated that the values upon which iconic counter-insurgency measures were based were highly reifying of racial supremacy and the ‘obligation’ of Whites to dominate and regulate the lives of unruly Africans. Discussions in the following chapters reveal that the Mau Mau rebellion continues to have a problematic impact on racialized perceptions of

fear amongst Euro-Kenyans, especially for the domestic workers they maintain inside their homes and the figure of the 'de-tribalized' African 'maddened' and demoralized by life in crowded urban centers. A classic example of the cash-crop/extraction economies that characterize Africa's 'peripheral' position in the neoliberal world, Kenya remains a highly capitalist environment in which many of colonialism's political-economic structures – if not retained by Europeans – have largely been passed on to Africans or multinationals with little consideration for transparency, equitability, or the 'trickling-down' of profits to Kenya's largely impoverished population (Brown 2003: 13).

Understanding the governmental shortcomings of neoliberalism as an opportunity to re-fashion themselves, Euro-Kenyans - as the following chapter demonstrates – seize upon the opportunities of this insecure environment as an apolitical terrain through which to further entrench themselves in Kenya's post-colonial economy.

In surveying Kenya's history from the early twentieth century to the present, it is clear that European colonialism, and the systems it has left behind, are inextricably entwined within crucial sectors of the country's post-colonial economy. While the privileged position of Europeans in Kenya in many ways facilitates certain forms of integration, securitization is also a highly problematic pillar on which to establish notions of belonging. Though security in Kenya remains a subject of critical occupation – further chapters demonstrate the negative impact of security-related discourse on both private and political spheres of Kenyan life, and the reification of race through fear, segregation and the exploitative capitalist practices.

Chapter 4: Perils and Predicaments

Introduction

As the restive period of the Mau Mau rebellion gave way to a period of democratization, Europeans in Kenya faced the dilemma of remaining in the country in spite of popular rhetoric challenging their status and privilege. In this chapter, I begin by discussing the investment of Euro-Kenyans in the sector of private security, and how worsening economic conditions in the country have continued to solidify this industry as an essential service for over 30 years. Clarifying some of the many problems complicating state-backed policing in Kenya, I also argue that the Kenyan state has failed to convey itself as a sovereign body in the minds of black and white citizens alike, permitting the private security industry to flourish with little or no government regulation. Within this context of poor regulation, I then illustrate how instances of partnership between private security and the Kenyan police is potentially detrimental to the security of middle or lower class Nairobians, as police forces are moved away from more crime ridden areas in order to protect suburban neighborhoods. Finally, I discuss the political implications of these public-private partnerships, suggesting a potential for racial politicization within the Kenyan private security industry.

(Post)Colonial Security

In order to understand precisely how Euro-Kenyans have entrenched themselves within the Kenyan private security industry, I spoke with Mr. Busolo, the Afro-Kenyan managing director of a company specializing in executive protection.⁹ According to Mr. Busolo, the founder of his company, Mr. Jones, was a former British soldier who gained

⁹ This term refers to the protection of diplomats, government figures or high-profile businesspeople.

notoriety in the 1950s for leading counter-insurgency efforts against Mau Mau rebels. After independence, Mr. Jones continued to work for the Kenyatta government in an informal capacity, advising and consulting Kenyan police and military, but never holding an official position.

As previously mentioned, the mid and late 1970s in Kenya were a period of both growth and contraction. Though many Euro-Kenyan and other land-owning entrepreneurs became wealthy in tourism and cash crop agriculture, the incapacity of the state in servicing or employing Kenyans allowed crime to flourish, especially in the capital of Nairobi. With a clear public demand for security and inability by the state to provide it, many white Kenyan men with similar experience as Mr. Jones invested or banded together in founding the Kenyan private security industry. With a surplus of trained police officers recently laid-off from duty, many of Kenya's largest and most enduring private security firms were founded and entrenched in a period of only a few years.

In the case of Mr. Busolo's company's founder specifically, Mr. Jones, the founder, gained considerable favor with Kenyatta's successor, President Moi, by playing a key role in the foiling of a coup attempt by senior military officials in 1982. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Jones capitalized on his sterling reputation with government officials in founding a security firm specializing in executive or VIP protection. Mr. Jones passed away in the 1990s, but his company remains under the ownership of his widow and family. Mr. Busolo began working for Mr. Jones in the 1980s after leaving the Kenya Police, and ascended to the position of managing director after the founder's death.

In a recent studies specifically examining Kenya's private security industry, Abrahamsen and Williams (2010: 196) characterize this sector as "increasingly

indispensible and highly controversial” - a multi-million dollar industry operating throughout the country, and employing more than 50,000 security guards (Abrahamsen and Williams 2010: 198). While increases in crime and the privatization of government services in 1990s South Africa was accompanied by legislative policies tightly regulating the country’s private security industry, an unwillingness by the Kenyan government to oversee the activities of these companies have left the private security industry “almost entirely unregulated” (Abrahamsen and Williams 2010: 197). Though black, lower-income Kenyans staff the majority of these security firms, the direction, management, and ownership of these companies – with the exception of Securicor (recently bought out by global security giant G4S) – remains largely in the hands of wealthier white Kenyans. In the South African and increasingly the Kenyan context, Abrahamsen and Williams (2010: 180) describe private security as “enjoying an unprecedented acceptance and endorsement of its contributions to safety and security” – a highly lucrative industry providing an increasingly essential service to government, corporate, and private citizens’ interests. “Private security is not only crucial to an understanding of global security governance,” say Abrahamsen and Williams (2010: 18), “but also provides a particularly useful window for understanding the complex contemporary relationship between productive and coercive (or governmental and sovereign) power” (2011: 18). In examining the extent of both the proliferation and ‘integration’ of private security in Kenya, these capitalist ventures provide a ‘lens’ in understanding the forms of power they utilize as well as political or cultural projects of belonging in which the industry is closely enveloped.

Predicaments of Policing

In interviewing Euro-Kenyans on the subject of security in Kenya, perceptions of the police are a primary indicator in evaluating how they understand the state's contribution to the project of urban security, as well as how Whites themselves evaluate the Kenyan state as a legitimate, coherent, or accountable governing body. For the majority of Euro-Kenyans with whom I discussed the police, dealing with them involves the cautious reconciliation of the legitimate need to rely on police for certain logistical or security needs with the desire not to dignify an organization known to be corrupt and untrustworthy. One white Kenyan female schoolteacher described the Kenya Police like this:

In my area, certainly, they change, all the time. The man in charge of the office, you get to know him, and he's going to help you and support you, and the next you go down he's been transferred and you've got a new person. There's just no continuity and, it's always good to build a rapport up with the local police. Whether they're the traffic police, the local police...[long pause]...I'm skeptical. I'm probably more skeptical about the traffic police. If they pulled me over and stopped and wanted something, I would sit there for an hour and a half if I had to, because I will not bribe. On principle, I won't do it. If I'm guilty of something, fine me, I'll pay. But I'm not sitting there at their convenience to pay a bribe. And my opinion is you see a lot of these traffic police with great big fat potbellies. I mean at one time I thought if the police got paid more and they were respected more and got accommodated better, and they were trained better, it would stop the corruption. But, until it stops from the top, I don't think it will.

The woman's comments refer to two sites of interaction, one at the police station when she seeks out police help, and the other on the roads when police stop her without apparent reason. In the first scenario, the woman is clearly frustrated with the limited capabilities of police, owing in large part to their disorganization and other challenges characteristic of neoliberal adjustment. Important, however, is her acknowledgment of

the police as body in which she is personally invested. Having built a rapport and positive relationship with certain officers, she feels that competent or trustworthy officers are an exception to the greedy or untrustworthy majority. In the traffic scenario, the woman demonstrates a common practice amongst Euro-Kenyans, as many claim that principle will not permit them to bribe the police without reason. Interestingly, lower-income black participants I spoke with claim that such a practice is only tolerated amongst Euro-Kenyans or expats. While a police officer will often allow a Euro-Kenyan or expatriate to go free after a prolonged protest, Afro-Kenyans unwilling to pay bribes can expect to be beaten or arrested.

Though the interactions described by the schoolteacher are relatively reducible as a minor form of corruption, other informants to whom I spoke understand the Kenyan police as a far more predacious entity. When stopped by police, one Euro-Kenyan informant says that his refusal to pay bribes often leads to giving the police a lift to the local station where the issue is escalated and, ultimately, dismissed. Once when driving his two young daughters to school along a familiar route, Charles was stopped by two policemen he did not recognize. Alleging they had seen him smoking in his car – a finable offense under Kenya law – the police became angered with Charles when he refused to pay the hefty bribe they demanded. As the situation became more tense, one of the officers entered Charles' vehicle and pointed his rifle at Charles' head. As the officer cocked his weapon, the two girls in the backseat became hysterical, crying for the policeman not to kill their father. Charles claims the tension escalated like a mafia standoff - the officer screaming at Charles to silence his children – Charles pleading with his daughters as they gazed terrified at the barrel of the weapon pointed at his head.

Realizing Charles was not worth their trouble, the officers eventually chose to let him go with a warning. Infuriated by the incident, Charles filed a series of official complaints against the officers, who, he ultimately learned, were from an adjacent police jurisdiction and were using their uniforms and weapons to extort motorists while on suspension for other offenses. Charles spent months pursuing the issue with the help of a lawyer, and eventually the policemen were permanently dismissed.

Though Charles' tenacity in pursuing due process was able to bring two corrupt individuals to account, other Euro-Kenyans express a high degree of frustration with the Kenyan state's inability and/or disinterest to prosecute or imprison individuals found guilty of various crimes. The perception, as one participant suggests, is that correctional systems in Kenya are virtually non-existent, and that in addition to poverty, some Kenyans are emboldened to become criminals by the virtually non-existent threat of being imprisoned or punished. "The judicial system here is a joke," says one middle-aged Euro-Kenyan business owner:

If you are found guilty, you'll go to prison, but because of the space problem inside a prison, after a period of time there are six people in a bed, 20 people in a cell, so eventually every now and then the prisons department goes 'we can't cope'. Why don't we just do a declaration of amnesty - select the well-behaved ones and just release them? That's not good! Another problem is - it's not just this country it is every country in the world - because of the shortage of prisons, you're getting petty criminals put in the same areas as hardcore criminals. So it's a training ground - an introduction area - for a petty criminal to become worse.

Like scholars, commentators, and many civilian residents of Nairobi, private security's perception of the Kenya Police articulates common frustrations with the poor governance and capability commonplace under neoliberalism. "If you've got a problem," Mr. Kelly told me, "please, it would be immature to think that the police will come, carry

out an investigation, take you to the station, draw up a statement, arrest someone, take him to court, put him in prison. Don't get me wrong, it might happen. Maybe one in three thousand." Mr. Gibbons echoed his perspective:

I don't blame the policeman in the police station. It's not really his fault. It's just the whole organization, too few vehicles; it's basically just a complete lack of support, you could say, from the main headquarters. Listen, if there was a good police force we wouldn't need to be operating. Unless it's a very serious case, they're not really interested.

Demonstrating the extent of this 'disinterest' by police, and the audacious forms of criminality it has led to, I recount the experience of Robert, a 40-year old white Kenyan who has lived in Nairobi his entire life. Less than a year ago, Robert was driving home alone late one night and noticed a luxury SUV on his tail as he drove through the automated gate to his compound lot. Normally, someone so close on his tail would arouse suspicion, but he explains that since it was an expensive-looking vehicle, he did not believe it could be intruders. As the gate behind him began to close, the SUV pulled beside him, and two men with automatic rifles emerged. They pulled him from his car and forced him to let them into his home. After taking all his valuables and threatening to shoot his sleeping daughter, the carjackers forced Robert and his wife into the trunk of Robert's vehicle and took off for downtown Nairobi. They drove to three different ATM outlets, holding his wife hostage in the car, while Robert was forced to withdraw all cash possible from their bank accounts. The hijackers then drove Robert and his wife north of Nairobi and dumped them on a deserted side road. They eventually arrived home to find their daughter safe and both police and private security on the scene, but no suspects were ever arrested, and no leads were ever declared. One benefit of poor policing in Kenya, Robert explains to me, is that the fact that police do not investigate crimes such as these,

which makes abductors far less likely to kill their victims. In South Africa, he explains, carjackers take too big a risk by letting you go alive. “If you get carjacked in South Africa and you see the hijackers’ face, chances are you’re dead. In Kenya, they couldn’t care less. I’ve never heard of a regular carjacking being investigated.”

In addition to demonstrating the audacity of urban criminals in victimizing middle/upper class residents of Nairobi, Robert’s experience illustrates the extremely limited desire and ability of police to protect citizens from the ravages of urban criminals. With the advent of neoliberal adjustment in the 1980s, Brown claims this type of complacency became commonplace amongst officials, as the international donor community expected little of President Daniel arap Moi’s regime other than to maintain political stability through firm, one party rule (Brown 2003: 93-109). According to the prevailing neoliberal ideology, the best way to ensure civil stability and security was to ensure political stability, maintaining Kenya as a regional economic powerhouse (Brown 2003: 93-109). In reality, however, this period of neoliberal adjustment forced even privileged officials into highly compromised positions. With the inability of the state to provide police with stable or sufficient salaries, Kenya’s police engaged in more widespread, small-scale extortion and corruption in order to supplement their incomes (Abrahamsen and Williams 2010: 201). Throughout Africa, conditions of neoliberal adjustment and the dual nature of police, as both ‘servants of the state’ and monopolizers of violence have been problematic. As policing bodies are usually subordinate to higher governing bodies (unlike – sometimes – the military), the austerity of neoliberalism increases the likelihood that their salaries or pensions will suffer relative to more powerful officials. As their ability to provide for their families diminishes, many officers

prey upon the very people they require to reify their legitimacy – if not for a sense of entitlement than for the basic purpose of economic survival. In centers like Nairobi, Abrahamsen and Williams (2010: 214) claim, “the position of the state is paradoxical and is marked by its simultaneous symbolic centrality and weakness, its retention of the monopoly of armed force and justice yet its incapacity (and sometimes unwillingness) to deliver security.” In a context where deteriorating security should make law enforcement’s duties more defined, the tendency for police to be perpetrators as well as combatants of crime makes them an especially dangerous and untrustworthy entity.

Given the audacity of criminals in Nairobi, ‘dealing’ with crime, as a part of the white business and homeowner’s life, has developed an almost cosmological importance. Though many Euro-Kenyans maintain a higher standard of living than the black majority, the worldview that white Kenyan history is, in essence, a narrative of ‘survival’ against various threats was noted repeatedly over the course of my research. As the duties of a state-backed police force is (technically) to enforce national laws, communities historically alienated from the political process are unlikely to believe such measures exist for their benefit. “The desirability [of policing]”, say Ruteere and Pommerolle (2003: 588), “becomes particularly contested in contexts where there is no clear definition of what ‘crime’ is, where the police themselves are regarded as major perpetrators of crime, or where the composition of ‘communities’ is itself in dispute.” Rather than legitimate guardians of individual rights and safety, “the police [in Kenya] have been seen, by the public and researchers, as a means of maintaining a certain order and representing the interests of some dominant groups or individuals” (Ruteere and

Pommerolle 2003: 592). In contemporary Kenya, Whites perceive those interests to be of the corrupt officials and politicians and the conjunctive interests of criminals and gangs.

Perils of Privatization

Of the many controversies complicating the image of private security in Kenya, none is as crucial as the highly problematic relationship of this industry with the Kenya Police force themselves. While the successes of private security in South Africa have been greatly attributed to close private-public partnership, what cooperation does exist between the police and private security firms in Kenya “is haphazard, personalized, and negotiated on an individual basis. The results,” according to Abrahamsen and Williams (2010: 206), “[being] a highly fractured and intensely competitive security field, with profound implications in terms of equality of protection and access to security.”

Especially in neighborhoods exclusive to white or wealthy Kenyans, the unregulated and market-led nature of public-private cooperation is frighteningly indicative of a population ‘buying’ forceful authority at the peril of more vulnerable Kenyan communities.

Despite negative opinions of police as organized government entity, the Kenya police do maintain certain monopolies of force. Though private security firms in Kenya remain much less regulated than in South Africa, their capacity is less than their South African counterparts, in that Kenyan law forbids security guards to carry firearms. As Abrahamsen and Williams (2010: 211) explain, this makes the job of private security in Kenya highly perilous, as poorly trained guards are expected to defend clients from armed criminals with nothing but a whistle and baton.

Partially a result of their inability to carry firearms, many of Kenya’s private security firms are scrambling to form partnerships with police, specifically in

incorporating armed police units as part of their client response teams. According to security leaders, these arrangements are mutually beneficial. As the ability of police to respond to calls or incidents is hindered mainly by a shortage of vehicles or inability to physically reach callers, security industry leaders argue they are extending government capacity and helping police to do their jobs more effectively. From the private sector standpoint, partnering with police adds some much needed muscle to their public image, as well as a form of insurance in the event incidents turn deadly. As Mr. Ludmark, an Anglo-Kenyan security consultant, and former British soldier explains:

The police have this perception, which is, 'If you've got a big gun, then you're a big person.' So, when a would-be criminal sees us driving around with officers with their 7-foot long T3 rifles, they think 'don't mess with those guys, that gun is big.' The second thing that's important is, if a private security crew, with its own guns, were to get machine-gunned down and everybody died and the money went missing, it'll be on page seven of the paper, in very small print, as an incident, because face it, nobody gives a shit. But, if that private security vehicle had been mowed down by machine guns, and it wasn't only private security who was shot and killed, but it was also government police officers... front page! Very bold writing! And every single policeman and government official will very strenuously rush around Kenya looking for the crooks and dealing with it. Why? Because it's perceived, quite rightly, to be an embarrassment on government that its people should be so easily shot and killed. So they must act on it."

While the Kenya Police do often carry the public image of corruption or inefficiency, Mr. Kelly, director of a security company specializing in safeguarding financial institutions, claims that attempting to work with them is very beneficial to the public image of their company. "We have to work with police in order to be viable," says Mr. Kelly:

You cannot go to the client base and say 'the police are rubbish. We have nothing to do with them, we'll look after you'. It doesn't work. It will never work. We need police. We need them [in order] to do investigations properly. We need them to sit in our client response vehicles everyday, escort us. There's a whole host of things they're there for. And albeit, you know, they're not very good at it, but it's better than having absolutely nothing. You make an effort. I mean there is a good

side of the police. There are elements in it that try and do a good job, and do do a good job. So, you know, we must work very closely with them, and sometimes for them, to provide a common attack against a client with a problem. So yeah, we have to work with them. We *want* to work with them.

According to Mr. Kelly, the Kenya Police contract their services to private security companies on “basically on an equal basis”, though the unregulated nature of these partnerships makes this impossible to verify. Private security directors, with whom I spoke, claim police are not being compensated extra or differently when working with private security units. However, given the increased level of duty these officers must contend with, how they understand this arrangement as beneficial to them individually remains unclear. Most importantly, this vaguely transparent partnership begs the question of whether Kenya’s scarcely resourced and ill-funded police forces are being drawn away from more crime-ridden areas, and relocated for the protection of people much less vulnerable to crime. From a political economic standpoint, even the faintest possibility of this inequitable ‘buying’ of sovereign police power by the private security industry and its clients demonstrates the highly problematic nexus that capitalism and insecurity have created. As the duties of the Kenya Police are to provide security for all Kenyans, regardless of where they live, Abrahamsen and Williams argue that this collaboration for the benefit of clients already paying for a privatized security service constitutes a “privatization of scarce public resources”(2010: 212).

As many practices in the Kenyan private security industry are borrowed from models developed in Southern Africa, we must also be cognizant of how that region’s specific history and pre-occupation with segregation may have a negative influence on Kenyan communities not necessarily as occupied with race as in the post-apartheid state. In many South African centers, Benit-Gbaffou et al. (2008: 702) argue that of state-led

initiatives intended to make all South Africans more secure have been disproportionately and oftentimes advantageous to wealthier citizens exclusively. The South African Road Closures Initiative, for example, afforded communities the right to control and monitor the movement of people in and out of neighborhoods. As wealthier communities were able to afford professional security staff to monitor their roadways, the program became eerily reminiscent of apartheid's *dompas* system regulating the movements of non-white workers. Furthermore, they argue that private-public partnerships create the risk "the line between vigilantism and community policing becomes tenuous, opening up the possibility of [greater] violence and social anarchy" (2003: 603). In the long run, they claim, "There might be a risk that these 'partnerships' become de facto private and politically unaccountable governments, especially if public authorities abdicate their responsibilities in the partnership" (Benit-Gbaffou et al. 2008: 710). In adopting such initiatives, Benit-Gbaffou et al. (2008: 702) argue that upper-income communities stylize themselves as both vulnerable and privileged through the symbolic reification of their status and racism – reifying themselves as 'favorable targets' through inconspicuous spending, and inscribing their anxieties in visible urban form (Caldeira 2000: 4).

In addition to concerns about the privatization of public resources, we may also conceptualize these public-private partnerships in Kenya as deeply intertwined with white-specific projects of economic integration. Similar to Ferguson's (1994) seminal thesis of development organizations in Lesotho, privatizing services that are typically a governmental responsibility can serve to disguise otherwise highly political issues. In Ferguson's case, the privatization of development merely transformed the face of governance, casting it as a private interest and, therefore, exceptional to agendas deemed

'political'. In the similar Kenyan case of market-wide privatization, the re-casting of security onto non-governmental entities makes protection an apolitical project. As Hughes (2010) demonstrates in Zimbabwe, the sustainability of white African belonging is often hinged on an ability to cast economic interest as an exception to political issues, to integrate and normalize them to the extent that they are inextricable from the national economic fabric. In Kenya, the ability of Whites to dominate the private security industry is an example of the successful depoliticization of a highly politicized economic community. Even as White-led security appropriates state resources in the protection of the wealthy or the segregated neighborhoods, the Kenyan government praises them as an essential service to both the private and public sector (Abrahamsen and Williams 2010: 206). Most interestingly of all, White-owned security now partners with police forces themselves to the extent that they may now, or in the future, be capable of exacting influence or control over the everyday operations of the police. If police are, in fact, 'working' for private security, the identity of this industry as a white or 'settler' project could become intensely political should nationalist voices choose to engage it.

Racialized Discourse

These private-public partnerships and the dominance of this industry by the Euro-Kenyan population have not been entirely without controversy amongst Kenyans feeling disenfranchised by these practices. Within the security industry itself, a heated and polarized feud has emerged between industry organizations advocating for larger corporatized interests and those advocating for smaller independent groups, who increasingly market themselves as the 'indigenous' alternative.

Frustrated by several decades of worsening crime and a total lack of industry regulation, Kenya's larger private security companies began banding together in the early 2000s in forming a security industry organization. Modeled on similar industry associations in South Africa and the UK, the Kenya Security Industry Association (KSIA) advocates for tighter government regulation of the security industry, particularly in standards of vetting, guard compensation, taxation, and transparency. While the formation of the KSIA was a positive step towards more rigorous government regulation and partnership, many of Kenya's smaller security companies responded negatively to the organization, claiming that it amounted to an organized effort by white firms to push smaller 'indigenous' companies out of this lucrative industry. In response to the formation of the KSIA, a number of smaller companies established an industry organization of their own, the Protective Services Industry Association (PSIA). Though in general agreement that the security industry in Kenya is fraught with problems by a lack of regulation, the primary interest of this smaller organization was working against the KSIA lobby for the imposition of a minimum wage. While the KSIA argued that proper compensation was the best way to protect the industry from corruption and criminalization, the PSIA argued that security was becoming less affordable to the average Kenyan, that neighborhood-based security partnership were, in fact, benefiting wealthier areas, while slums and other marginal areas were left to fend for themselves. The KSIA went to considerable efforts to counter these arguments, noting that the lack of industry standards, such as minimum wages amongst smaller companies, was putting unsuspecting customers at risk (Abrahamsen and Williams 2010: 209). While the KSIA acknowledge that imposing minimum wages and employee benefit regulations may drive

companies to bankruptcy, allowing companies to operate irresponsibly is detrimental to Kenya's project of security.

In addition to the industry's conflict over regulation versus the free market, discourses emerging from it also point to issues of whiteness in inflammatory critiques against the KSIA's '*Mzungu*' proponents. In their 2010 analysis of this organizational rivalry, Abrahamsen and Williams noted that this conflict was being vocalized in a language of "nationalist discourse of White imperialism"(207), claiming that the PSIA was attempting to delegitimize the KSIA on the grounds that it is a front for 'settler' or white interests. The PSIA also accused larger security companies of utilizing whiteness as an unfair marketing strategy, claiming that there is a perception in the marketplace that anything 'white' is superior to the African or 'local' alternative (Abrahamsen and Williams 2010: 207). As the PSIA articulated the rivalry as the competition of 'indigenous' versus settler or imperial business, this critical debate within the security industry was overshadowed, in many ways, by politically racialized discourse. "While such conflicts clearly need to be understood as part of the broader commercial competition within the sectors," argue Abrahamsen and Williams (2010: 207), "they also reflect the manner in which the private security industry is often linked to sensitive political issues and struggles, and the forms of cultural capital that actors attempt to mobilize in [such] struggles." While this industry-specific conflict has yet to garner much media attention, and has been buffered by the presence of some 'indigenous' companies within the KSIA, the potential of the KSIA to become a political target for antagonism against Whites is important to consider, given the violent and racial politicization of White-owned farming industry in Zimbabwe (Hughes 2010).

As the majority of security directors I spoke to were themselves Euro-Kenyan, I attempted to investigate what impact their racialized identity may have on their positions within their company, or as security professionals, period. I would usually introduce the question of whiteness later in our interview, when we were both more comfortable with each other, and the participants had had time to assert the issues they felt were most pressing. I would often introduce the topic of whiteness by remarking that I was surprised to find many security directors to be of European descent, at least the ones who responded to my emails and agreed to be interviewed.

Of the two directors with whom I spent the most time, Mr. Gibbons and Mr. Kelly, their receptiveness to this topic differed substantially. Mr. Gibbons, an Anglo-Kenyan security director in his 50s who specializes in home security, was forthcoming about the fact that Euro-Kenyans have always been key stakeholders in the industry. Without any police or military training, Mr. Gibbons stresses he is merely a “businessman”, and became involved in the industry in the late 1970s when it was simply the most promising and lucrative industry looking to employ Whites.

Mr. Kelly, by comparison, was extremely guarded at the question of whiteness in the industry, and was entirely unwilling to give any information about his background or the position of Whites within the sector. He did, however, speak with considerable passion about some of the political issues complicating the security industry, and seemed genuinely concerned that political cleavages amongst its key players could be extremely problematic. Though I cannot assume that Mr. Kelly has himself been caught up in a particular instance of racial politicization, his vocal concern over the divisive politics between the KSIA and PSIA, accompanied by his total unwillingness to address issues of

whiteness, suggests he is cognizant of the issue. If not directly involved in the racialized politics developing between the KSIA and PSIA (Abrahamsen and Williams 2010: 207-209), Mr. Kelly seems cautious not to draw attention to his Euro-Kenyanness or privileged background, and cautious not to instigate perceivably racist discourse.

Following my interview with Mr. Kelly, I was escorted to the exit of his company headquarters, and waited outside for my taxi driver to fetch me. Given its importance as the headquarters of this major firm, the compound was guarded by an especially large contingent of guards, all very professional and well-behaved. This is to be expected, given the managing director could supervise the guards from the purview of his office window about a hundred yards away. With time to kill, I asked a group of three or four guards whether they liked working for the company. They responded affirmatively, but pointed out that guarding the main headquarters is a far safer posting than, for instance, a warehouse in an industrial area. As higher profile clients, such as company headquarters or shopping malls, often have armed police embedded with them, these postings are both safer and more exciting. On the inside of the company compound, I had indeed noticed a number of heavily armed Kenyan police officers pacing or idling about, adding to the feeling I was visiting a military installation rather than a corporate security headquarters.

I go on to ask the guards why they chose to pursue jobs in private security. All claim they had desired for some time to become soldiers or police officers, but that their school grades were too poor, or that Kenya's state-led security forces, in their opinion, only hire officers from certain ethnic groups. They then told me about some of the combative training they received when becoming private security guards, and gave me a

small lesson on how to effectively incapacitate someone by breaking their kneecaps using their heavy, lead baton.

I finally asked the guards what they thought of Mr. Kelly, and what was the extent of their interactions with him. They had each achieved some level of face time with the director, though only as a result of guarding the headquarters and the office where he works every day. They claim they thought he was fair and honest, with one guard stating he was “very professional, like a good soldier”. I brought up the fact he was *Mzungu*, and asked if this was of any significance to them. The guards merely reiterated he was a fair and agreeable employer, and joked that when they saw me leaving the headquarters after speaking with him, they thought I might have been there to interview for a guard position myself. After sharing a brief laugh, I asked if a *Mzungu* could or should be considered to work on the frontline of private security. They claim they would welcome the chance to work with a *Mzungu*, but that the high degree of risk and relatively poor pay would make their job undesirable for anyone with an education or other opportunities.

When I met with Mr. Busolo a week or so later, I was especially eager to hear his perspective on the issue of racial politics within the security industry, given he is an Afro-Kenyan holding a senior position in a White-owned firm. Mr. Busolo was well aware of the controversy between so-called ‘white’ and African interests, and explains that any industry where there is so much money to be made will invariably encounter some degree of politicization and aggressive competition. He further added that the propensity for corruption at every level of Kenyan business and government are extremely problematic, especially in the security sector.

Most interestingly, Mr. Busolo explains at length how he believes the KSIA-PSIA controversy is being quietly stoked by high-profile Kenyan politicians, specifically Kikuyu politicians who Mr. Busolo claims are major stakeholders in many of the smaller security companies currently failing to compete with the larger and better-established White-owned ones. I attempted later to investigate Mr. Busolo's claim about their ownership by researching a few smaller security firms online, though information as to their ownership or stakeholders is not made available. A few of these smaller, allegedly Kikuyu politician-owned companies appear on the list of firms who never responded to my request for interviews.

Before my meeting with Mr. Busolo ended, he offered to take me on a comprehensive tour of the company's sprawling, militarized headquarters on Western outskirts of Nairobi. As we walked about the parade grounds, the barracks, the dog kennels, and the medical clinic, I remarked that every guard or supervisor on the premises was black, and that had he not told me, I would have no reason to assume Euro-Kenyans had any role in the founding or leadership of the company. Mr. Busolo chuckled, and led me to an area of the headquarters designed for training - a series of two adjoined classrooms complete with desks and blackboards. Here, Mr. Busolo explains, is where newly recruited guards receive their preliminary orientation, as well as other lessons during the course of their training. Above the blackboard, next to the ubiquitous photo of Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki, hung a photo of Mr. Jones, dressed in his colonial-era uniform with a black beret balanced on his head and an ivory-topped Staff of Office clutched under his arm. Along the walls of the classroom, other photos feature Mr. Jones throughout his illustrious military career: as commander of a brigade during the Second

World War, posing and shaking hands with Presidents Kenyatta and Moi as their trusted advisor, and, finally, inspecting his guards as the leader of his own private security company in 1980s. In the cultural practices of this particular private security company, it is clear that Mr. Jones, though no longer living, remains an iconic or totemic figure through which new staff are educated or indoctrinated in the company's mission and philosophy.

Conclusion

While insecurity in Kenya is a product of numerous economic, political, and social factors, anthropological critiques of neoliberalism point to policing (or a lack therefore) as a fundamental weakness in the ability of African states to govern and secure populations on the road to economic prosperity (Ferguson 2006; Geschiere 2009). In Kenya specifically, perceptions of the police as exceptionally corrupt and predacious are indicative of a highly problematic relationship with the abstract entity of the state, and one which has a significant impact on the severity of crime in the country. For many residents of Nairobi, police are perceived as facilitators rather than combatants of crime, often in cahoots with criminals and gangs, especially in times of political or civil unrest (Anderson 2002: 542).

In modern day Nairobi, the severity of crime and inability of police to combat it has led Kenyans of all classes and colours to seek alternative forms of protection, be they neighborhood level gang syndicates or corporatized security firms. By examining these projects specifically from the Euro-Kenyan perspective, we can understand how this community understands and interacts with the increasingly abstract entity of the neoliberal state, as well as how they continue to protect and/or integrate themselves to a

context where almost everyone is untrusting of the 'official' modalities of sovereign power or forceful power.

This chapter emphasizes the problematic potentialities of current private-public partnerships between the government-backed police and the private security industry. As smaller or 'indigenous' firms have made gestures to politicize the White-dominated KSIA, the image of the security industry, as an important contributor to both the national economy and project of security, may be unsustainable if nationalist discourses effectively challenge its dominance as a project of white interest or integration. As democratization in Kenya has, in many ways, been a re-fashioning rather than a reversal of colonial ideologies, the various modes of violent power created and sustained by white colonists may continue to shape how politics is conducted in Kenya, and to whom Kenyans of all classes and colors turn to for much needed security or protection. I continue to investigate these non-state forms of protection in the next two chapters. First, through an examination of the domestic security measures used within Euro-Kenyan homes, and finally, in the relationships between Whites and the local Afro-Kenyans they employ.

Chapter 5: Domestic Security Assemblages

Introduction

In addition to security industry practices in the macro context, it is also crucial to examine the ways in which this industry is regenerative of racialized or ‘othering’ discourses in its smaller-scale, domestic security operations. In this chapter, I discuss the various security measures many white and other upper class Kenyans employ in their homes, constituting what I call the ‘domestic security assemblage’. Partially an expression of their own anxieties, and partially a result of directed marketing by security firms, the features and practices found within the Euro-Kenyan home are informative indicators of their spatial, racial, and social orientations. Arguing that domestic security measures oftentimes exacerbate racialized fears, I suggest that domestic security has a significant impact on the worldview of its clients or users, influencing their social movement both within and beyond the confines of their homes.

Securing Space

To discuss home security, other security industry members referred me to the office of Mr. Gibbons, reputed to be the leading provider of home security services for most of the neighborhoods of Karen, Langata, and Nairobi’s older suburbs. His company, founded during the boom from which other leading names emerged, attempts to market itself specifically as a home, domestic, and road rescue security service, catering especially to the upper class areas where, as Mr. Gibbons puts it, “the population of Nairobi lives”.

Arriving at his company’s offices, I’m greeted by a man who obviously runs his company in a hands-on fashion. Welcoming me into his office, Mr. Gibbons tells me to

wait while he attends to a quick matter in the car park. As I watch him from his office window, the large and tall man with greying hair and a protruding potbelly jogs out the entrance of the office building towards a group of black employees huddled around a vehicle on the other side of the lot. Unable to hear their conversation, I see Mr. Gibbons smile and pat a few of the guards on the back. The group then diverts their attention to the sport utility vehicle, somewhat derelict, with the company's logo emblazoned on the side. After a few minutes of discussion and 'head-scratching', Mr. Gibbons lifts the hood of the vehicle and he and his employees go about fixing it together. Within a few minutes, the men appear to have the vehicle running. Reveling in their collective success, Mr. Gibbons pats the guards on the back once again, and waves them off as they drive away to their jobsite.

Returning indoors, Mr. Gibbons begins our meeting by offering me copies of all his company's brochures and literature - neat and professional technologies of marketing through which the wealthier and expatriate classes are obviously being targeted. On the back cover of his road-rescue pamphlet is a young white woman in high heels and a mini-skirt, standing beside her broken down SUV on the side of Langata road. One hand clutching her cell phone and the other waving for help, the woman is depicted as being in a state of intense distress, and physically vulnerable, without the quick assistance of a private security provider.

In addition to 24-hour road rescue, which is likely a worthwhile service given the treacherous and unruly nature of Nairobi's roadways, Mr. Gibbons' primary business is consulting and installing in the market of the domestic security assemblages. When Nairobians buy or move into a new home, he explains, he goes to their home himself and

conducts a rigorous security audit. Considering the home's construction and a breadth of other factors, Mr. Gibbons then draws up a report to the homeowner listing a range of measures and renovations needed to make the property 'safe' for upper-income residents. "Security is largely common sense," Mr. Gibbons tells me. "You just need to be aware of what the problems are, and deal with them. The most important thing is to be pro-active." Security, he explains, begins at the outermost boundaries of one's home. It is essential to have a fence and gate, and while barbed or razor wire is certainly unattractive, giving one's property a more menacing look is an effective strategy in deflecting a burglar's interest. Within the perimeter of the gate, Mr. Gibbons recommends residential clients employ a guard, not necessarily as a 24-hour measure but to monitor the gate and walls of the property for the approximate 12 hours of darkness Nairobi experiences year-round.

At the threshold of the house itself, Mr. Gibbons describes the security measures about which he is especially excited. His company recently introduced pressure and motion sensitive detectors for windows, and claims that, when activated, this technology can detect even the slightest of movements, especially a would-be intruder taking a glimpse into a homeowner's window. If triggered, the sensors let off a roaring alarm system and flashing lights, as well as instantly notifying his dispatcher who will deploy a response team.

Where the fear conjuring qualities of these assemblages are most evident, however, is within the locked doors of the clients' homes. At the core of the domestic security assemblage, Mr. Gibbons tells me, is the 'safe area' – a fortified sanctum often within the sleeping area of one's house where residents are not only protected from intruders at the doors or windows, but also protected within the house should the

intruders breach the outer defences or the threat from employees or security guards themselves.

I asked Mr. Gibbons what constitutes a proper 'safe area'. Is it as simple as having a bedroom door that locks? He responds:

No, you have a proper grill gate, grills on the windows of the bedroom area. Some people have a safe room where they've actually concreted the roof and got a metal door. I normally advise that for people living on farms, where response might take a half hour or so. But what I have at home is a grill, a strong, robust grill that separates the living from the sleeping area. In the sleeping area, all the windows have proper burglar bars on them, and of course there is an escape hatch just in case there's a fire. So that gives the response crew a good ten minutes before the thief can get to me or my family. That's your safe haven.

In addition to physical fortifications, Mr. Gibbons explains that a typical client's house may be rigged with anywhere from three to a dozen panic buttons, strategically positioned by the front entrance, in the bedrooms, the kitchen, bathroom, and other high trafficked areas. Some of his female clients living alone have also requested panic buttons on the headboards of their beds, sometimes rigged to roof mounted sirens that alert both the dispatcher and neighbors if a client triggers it in the night. Clients can also purchase remote buttons that can be worn on the wrist or around the neck, which a client can trigger when tending to the garden or relaxing outdoors by their pool.

While these domestic fortifications are effective in deterring most would-be criminals, Mr. Gibbons explains it is crucial that security companies ensure they can reach a client's home within three minutes – a challenge, I interpret, given the poor quality of roads and heavily congested traffic, even in the wealthier areas of Nairobi. Criminals are incredibly bold, Mr. Gibbons explains, and "If thieves really want to get in [your house], they can get to you no matter what [fortifications] you've got." In the duration of our conversation about these domestic security measures, Mr. Gibbons makes

no mention whatsoever of the motivations or interests driving potential home-invaders, or how a neighborhood-wide approach might address the factors that make these communities a target. Also, his pre-occupation with 'safe-areas' seems to be somewhat over weighted, given that criminals would likely be more interested in goods or electronics, though there was no single mention 'material security' in Mr. Gibbons' discourse. Security, as far as Mr. Gibbons' is concerned, is predominantly the project of safeguarding bodies – specifically white bodies from the predacious and irrational figure of the 'maddened' African criminal.

(re)Producing Fear

In much existing literature on cultures of crime in modern urban centers, scholars emphasize the resoundingly negative effects of preventative or anti-crime practices on perceptions of, or perceptiveness to, the threat of crime itself. Similar to South Africa, Brazil, and elsewhere, the growing popularity of privatized home security Kenya begs the question of how the private security sector capitalizes on the fear or perception of insecurity, specifically gendered dimensions in which idioms of minatory sexuality and/or 'black peril' regenerate racialized otherness as an inevitable threat. Though studies confirm that wealthier South Africans are far less likely to be victims of urban crime, they also demonstrate that white urban dwellers – particularly women - perceive themselves to be especially at risk (Allen 2002: 53). In her study of white women in Johannesburg, Allen (2002: 65-67) explains how fear amongst white women is voiced in a language indicating clearly racialized and sexualized ideas about black males, especially the belief that Blacks are 'vengeful' against white South Africans, and seek to victimize women as a form of white emasculation. These attitudes, she claims, are what

influence the 'whitening' of spaces as normative and secure, and exacerbate racialized practices such as segregation or avoidance.

As it is in the clear interest of capitalist firms to strengthen their client base and revenues, encouraging fear amongst clients may be a tacit strategy in their operations. If other studies suggest that women are especially fearful of crime, the role of companies providing home security must certainly be analyzed. These strategies may attempt to take advantage of racialized or sexualized attitudes, especially in strategies that serve to physically separate white residents from their black staff or the perceived threat of home invasion, such as panic rooms, panic buttons, rape gates, etc. Though high rates of crime in Nairobi do bring a degree of realism and urgency to issues of security, several studies suggest that perceptions of insecurity amongst white, wealthy and/or expatriate communities are often highly disproportionate given that crime is much more severe in townships or lower income areas (Allen 2002; Smiley 2010). Especially in South Africa, scholars argue that irrational perceptions of danger have had a significant impact on race relations, and a visible impact on urban geography. According to Smiley (2010: 35), fear amongst segregated classes "is better classified as fear of the unknown, the uncomfortable and the unfamiliar." The popular method of dealing with fear is often complete avoidance that, unfortunately, "exacerbates existing segregation and limits social interaction, ensuring that exclusionary spaces persist" (Smiley, 2010: 38).

While 'survival' is a theme through which many white Kenyans choose to narrate their histories, 'fear' is a theme that would be much better suited for some. Especially amongst older female participants, perceptions of African men as sexually menacing are clearly regenerative of racialized colonial ideals. Despite claiming never to have had a

security or crime incident in her life, one elder female participant, Sheila, explains to me her immense fear in having her home invaded by criminals. “In countries like Canada,” she explains, “criminals will enter your home for two reasons – either to rob you or to rape and kill you. One or the other,” she says, “but rarely the both. In Kenya, however, criminals have an appetite for anything they can get.” She claims that home invaders are often young men working in groups, often hopped up on Miraa (amphetamine), alcohol, or some other intoxicant. “My greatest fear,” she explains, “is of being gang-raped in my own home. I doubt I could ever recover from that. Just the thought of it makes me unbelievably sick.” While her concerns can partially be corroborated with the recent rise of drug and alcohol issues in Nairobi, the specificity of gang-led home invasions are possibly reminiscent of the Mau Mau stories her friends and family have told her. Though the motives of home invaders are now likely to be criminal rather than political, the narrative of home invasion by ‘maddened’, ‘de-tribalized’ and sexually connoted Africans bears a clear resemblance to colonial era discourse. As an early attempt to depoliticize violence in Kenya, we must be cognizant of how ‘madness’ or other idioms have evolved or been retained as modes of depoliticizing crime, or distorting issues such as inequality and historical marginalization.

As a matter of habit, another of my participants, Adam, never drives home by the most direct route. He always checks his mirrors to see if someone is following him, and before entering his driveway, he circles the block once to ensure he is not being pursued. A prominent figure in Kenya’s hotel industry, Adam admits he would make a desirable target for would-be hijackers. With a new SUV and presumably worthwhile amounts of cash, Adam suspects he is followed as often as three times a month. When he suspects he

is being followed, he drives directly to his local petrol station, parks in their lot, and waits for the hijackers to drive off or lose interest. Though he has not been carjacked in over ten years, he claims that constant vigilance is the only way to ensure one's own safety. He admits there have likely been occasions where paranoia got the better of him, though it is not a risk one should ever be willing to take.

In reflecting on my own experience, I am inclined to agree that the repeated discussion of security issues with others was more detrimental than therapeutic in overcoming my anxieties. Though I had initially attempted to resolve my security concerns by drawing on my rationality and knowledge of local customs, discussing these issues with my white Kenyan participants made me increasingly concerned that threats such as theft were systematic and conspiratory rather than isolated or a simple matter of 'poor luck'. Though I was initially willing to forget the incident involving my housekeeper, recounting and recalling it as a 'negative' or traumatic episode allowed the anxieties of my study participants to, in many ways, be instilled in me. Arriving in Kenya at the beginning of my research, I would never have assumed a referred domestic worker was untrustworthy, and would likely treat he or she better in not making that assumption. By the end of my stay, however, I confidently refer to myself as paranoid of anyone I did not know, and especially of people with access to my domestic space.

Speaking with Mr. Musya, the managing director of newer and much smaller security firm,¹⁰ he went on at length about the challenges his company faces in helping his white clients develop 'trust' in the guards he sends to their properties. Foremost, he

¹⁰ Mr. Musya's company is currently unaligned with either the KSIA or PSIA. He is seeking KSIA membership in order raise his company's profile and have access to better contracts, but has so far been unable to comply with the standards of practice the KSIA require for membership, namely the paying of minimum wages.

claims it is critical that he send the same guards to the same homes and businesses each day. Whenever a guard gets sick or is assigned another duty, he claims he often receives angered calls from clients entirely uncomfortably with the equally qualified replacement. When hiring and assigning guards, Mr. Musya claims he also takes great care and attention in identifying guards who are most personable, friendly and unthreatening. Regardless of other background or professional qualifications, a client's ability to feel safe with his guards on their property is based mainly on their ability to 'see' them as trustworthy and personable, oftentimes a matter of how 'good looking' a guard is, or nicely he smiles and greets the clients at their gate.

When walking in Nairobi and chatting with on-duty security guards, I often asked them if they had experienced any incidents on duty, or ever had to respond to a threat. The vast majority of the guards responded 'no', and given that they were young and uneducated transplants from outside the city, most expressed a general sense of satisfaction with the security work assigned to them and the compensation they received. I also asked guards if they would prefer to be carrying guns because, as Abrahamsen and Williams (2010) stress, guards in Kenya are often poorly equipped and likely out-gunned by any well-organized criminals. With few exceptions, guards agreed that arming the private sector would only make their jobs more dangerous. While carrying a firearm would provide a level of personal assurance, the risk that comes with carrying a gun is that criminals will hastily attempt to kill, you rather than tying you up or allowing you to flee.

Though impossible to gauge in such spontaneous conversations, I also tried to ascertain from guards how open they might be to cooperating with criminals or predators.

While every on-duty guard stressed firmly that he was honest and dependable, many guards did express that this was a problem in Nairobi. They noted that many new friends and colleagues, who had lost their job as security guards, did so because of some transgression, often minor in nature such as drinking alcohol on the job or failing to be congenial with the residents of the complex they were guarding. When speaking to one white Kenyan resident of the Westlands, I asked her about private security with the assumption that her apartment complex employed a guard. "Certainly not," she surprised me, explaining her neighbors had had many issues with private security, and came to consider them more of a liability than insurance against crime. "I don't trust those private security guards one bit," she says. "I don't know who they are. I don't know where they've come from. As far as I know, they're the ones letting the thieves in or giving away information on us to whoever wants to buy it on the street. Alarms systems are good, because a machine can't be corrupted. But a person... a person is too conflicted."

Despite some symbolic associations between corporate security firms and white capital, some Whites in particular are skeptical of private security providers due to histories of incidents or infiltrations by criminals or dishonest guards. Every security leader I spoke to acknowledged the challenge of vetting and ensuring they aren't infiltrated by criminals or dishonest guards, and admit this potential internal security threat is a threat to the reputation of the industry. Mr. Kelly explains:

A lot of the crime in this country is, generally speaking, an inside man, and we've had so many occasions where a robbery takes place and the guard disappears with the crooks. Why did he do that? Was he kidnapped? He could have been. But like I was saying, the cheaper security companies [are] saying 'look we vet our staff'. So now you've got these strangers coming to your house to guard you. The next minutes, they're in fact robbing you. In order to provide a proper service you've got to rely on people. And of course people have to be properly vetted, properly

understood, properly trained, or what chance have you got of providing, or a reasonable chance of success out in the marketplace.

The biggest challenge, he explains, is the industry's reliance on government bureaucracy in verifying the identities and backgrounds of security staff, as corruption within the government means that even an inexperienced criminal can easily acquire forged documents with little money and effort. To be eligible for hire as a security guard, all KSIA members require new recruits to obtain a Certificate of Good Conduct from Police, though, as Mr. Kelly explains, it is very simple to obtain these certificates, even for someone with an extensive criminal record.

Mr. Gibbons, on the other hand, has taken a more laborious initiative in verifying the backgrounds of guards before placing them at the homes of his clients. In addition to being referred by two existing staff members, Mr. Gibbons retains fingerprints, photographs, and detailed family information on all his guards. "We've got all their details," he explains. "We know where they come from, what village, what sub-village, sub-location, sub-chief, so we can actually go to exactly where they live if they decide to steal from the client."

Conclusion

As a means of overcoming or managing racial anxieties, vigilance, segregation and other racial-discursive practices in Kenya have been "as much an expression of insecurity" as "a manifestation of mastery" (Kennedy 1987: 151). While crime and insecurity are pressing and complicated challenges for many residents of Nairobi, this chapter suggests that such issues are internalized by members of the white community and have a significant impact on their understanding of the wider society and how they move, act, or understand themselves within it.

Though the innermost space of a white Kenyan household is unlikely to be dangerous or vulnerable, the extent to which both individuals and security professionals promote the physical fortification of this space may have a dramatic phenomenological impact on the heightening of fears in otherwise unnecessary contexts. The practices of the private security, I argue, capitalize on pre-existing feelings of fear, and potentially foster new fears where they previously might not have existed.

Given the importance of the domestic security assemblage in everyday Euro-Kenyan life, I argue that we must also appreciate the role idioms of security play in the meta-discursive formation of both personal and political identities. As a multitude of factors (not least of all economic) continue to make Kenya a challenging environ for all residents, security, as Buur, Jensen and Stepputat (2007: 12) have suggested, is not only a matter of protection and violence, but “also a way of representing particular problems in a manner that makes them exceptional and a question of survival.” As Abrahamsen and Williams (2010: 182) aptly point out, “The feeling of insecurity among the wealthy and the middle class may thus be linked to a broader sense of unease concerning the new political order and the transition to majority rule as much as to any real experience of crime.” In addition to the non-human measures utilized in these security assemblages, the Kenyan guards chosen as a part of these systems seem to represent the ‘problem itself’, in that many Whites are so untrusting of strange or unfamiliar black staff. In the following section, I reflect further on this master-servant relationship, describing how some Whites have overcome these problems as a critical mode in the project of belonging itself.

Chapter 6: Internal Frontiers

Introduction

My discussion thus far has attempted to problematize and historicize the issue of security in this dynamic context. Founded on models of colonial dominance and degraded by neoliberal economic austerity, the projects of security and statehood in Kenya have been challenging at the best of times. While the uncertainty as to the future of Europeans in Kenya did inspire many to leave around the time of independence, I have argued that in deciding to stay Whites have been forced to integrate themselves into economic landscapes while attempting to avoid practices that may politicize their privileged status. In this chapter, I pursue the issue of white privilege more aggressively, examining how socio-economic inequality is both reified and negotiated by individual white families. In examining the experiences of two particular households, I illustrate that ‘belonging’ in Kenya, as citizens of the post-colonial state, requires Whites to entrench themselves amongst their black neighbors through individual gestures of partnership or charity, often through the ‘mode’ of employer-employee relationships. In addition to the tasks of cleaning, cooking, guarding, or other household duties, I make the critical argument that arrangements between white and the black Kenyans they employ are the most fundamental and crucial gesture of belonging practiced by my white participants. Similar to Euro-Kenyan security actors at odds with disadvantaged black competitors, ‘commitment issues’ relating to Euro-Kenyan privilege and ‘flexibility’ makes conveying themselves as invested in their black neighbors crucial for their security and future.

Illustrating the extent to which citizenship and belonging in neoliberal Africa are constituted outside the normative model of a coherent and sovereign state, my

discussion also attempts to problematize Euro-Kenyan conceptions of a 'sovereign state' under which a coherent set of political values are (or are not) upheld. In investing their attention and charity in local rather than state-associated entities, Whites succeed in entrenching themselves through modes of belonging that are mutually recognized as 'agreeable' to Afro-Kenyan cultures or values. While my Euro-Kenyan participants do succeed in maintaining a degree of privileged status, I argue that they do so on locally favorable terms, and that these terms are what sanctify the legitimacy of their belonging in these otherwise impoverished, unstable, and highly political contexts.

Persistent Privilege

In her 1999 ethnography *From Impulsive Adventure to Post-Colonial Commitment: Making white Identity in Contemporary Kenya*, Uusihakala (1999: 30) remarked that the post-colonial Euro-Kenyan experience continues to be "about a constant negotiation and struggle for the making of identity and making of difference, about an everyday construction of boundaries on different levels and scopes." Furthermore, she observed that membership in the white Kenyan community was predicated foremost on one's "colonial Britishness" (1999: 29), and the maintenance of an aristocratic lifestyle and homestead regenerative of traditional colonial ideals. Citing my own observations in Kenya, the maintenance of a privileged lifestyle, only slightly more equitable than in the days of colonial rule, certainly remains the norm, and Whites in no way deny the fact that these systemic privileges are what make 'being a white Kenyan' continually desirable. As one middle-aged Euro-Kenyan businessman explains to me:

In a general [upper-income] home, you'll have a cook, you obviously have a guard, you'll have a gardener, and you'll probably have a maid as well, which

basically makes your life very easy. That's one of the reasons people live in Kenya. Because you're not working, you're having fun. Not that you don't have fun at work but, just saying. You don't have to think about washing the car, ironing the clothes, cleaning the house, that's all done for you. But it does come at a price, and that price is that sometimes the domestic staff are not entirely honest.

As his perspective implies, utilizing low-cost labor in Kenya is desirable but not without its liabilities. In spending an extended amount of time with participants Sheila and Henry Cranford, I attempted to achieve a nuanced understanding of these perceived benefits and liabilities, and what some of the side effects or unacknowledged products of the master-servant relationship might be.

The Cranfords

Having been born in the East African colony and lived her whole life in Kenya, Sheila explains she is used to being taken care of, and she does not even know how to boil an egg. "I'm helplessly dependent on Phillip", she admits, the Kenyan gentlemen in his forties who's cooked and kept house for the Cranfords for nearly ten years now. Originally from the Western region of the country, Phillip - a self-identifying Luhya – has made a living most of his life working for middle and upper class families in Nairobi, returning home several times a year, and sending money to support his extended family up-country.

When asked about their relationship with Phillip, Sheila begins by emphasizing the importance of hiring staff from the 'right tribe'. The Luhya, she explains have a disposition by far most suitable to domestic or household labor. She believes some 'tribes', specifically the Kikuyu, are far too 'cunning' to be trusted as domestic staff. Joining our conversation, her husband explains that hiring 'the wrong staff' poses a tremendous threat to the security of one's home and family. "You must work hard to find

the right person,” Henry explains, “and when you do, you must treat them well to maintain their loyalty.”

Disappearing to an adjacent room, Henry returns carrying a mid-sized cardboard box. Emptying its contents on the table, Henry begins assembling the inanimate parts together, saying how ‘excited’ he is by this newly acquired bit of technology. As the item takes shape, Sheila reveals it is a large portable solar lamp – they had recently acquired a whole shipment of them for Phillip to give his family. “Now the children can study at night,” explains Henry. “He has the only home in the village with any sort of electricity. Not even the chief has that!”

As we sit and admire the technology the Cranfords have proudly gifted to Phillip’s family, they anxiously begin to tell me about some of the other benefits they offer him. In addition to what they claim is a very generous salary (relative to the average Kenyan wage), the Cranfords have purchased Phillip a motorcycle for getting around, offered his family their used household furniture, and recently extended him an interest free loan of 5 million shillings for the purchase of land. “Land is a very big deal for local Kenyan people,” Sheila explains. “For us the price of a bit of land is really nothing to worry about but, for Phillip, it can help his reputation and the future of his whole family. When you find a good one you really must help them out,” Sheila says. “Phillip has been very good to us, and so we try and be good to him.”

The following weekend, Sheila and Henry invite me to lunch with another 60-something Euro-Kenyan couple they’ve been friends with for many years. Picked up from my flat, I enter their car to a tirade from Sheila about the treacherous traffic in my

area of residence. “This is what Nairobi’s become,” Sheila complains. “Driving is so terrifying, especially at our age. Anything can happen on the roads in this town.”

We arrive at the restaurant, a four star lounge within one of the Westland’s older shopping complexes. The security guard lifts the gate at the car park entrance, and Sheila and Henry immediately begin arguing over where to park. Henry favors a shady spot on the outer area of the lot, while Sheila insists they park directly in front of the restaurant so they can ‘check on the car’ if need be.

Inside, I meet William and Laura, a well-dressed couple and long time friends of the Cranfords. William – a retired businessman - is Kenyan born of British descent, and Laura, though having lived in Kenya most of her life, was born and raised in the former Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe).

As I attempt to order politely, our table becomes unruly with a cacophony of voices. Neither of the couples are willing to read directly from the menu, and insist the servers recite the features from memory while they listen diligently. Despite the selection of gourmet and nouveau dishes, all four decide to order fish and chips. An ‘old classic’, Henry explains, is always impossible to beat.

As we settle into our meal, it is evident the four friends have a great deal to catch up on. With a seemingly wide circle of ‘old colonial’ friends stemming back to their days in grammar school, the diners trade a wealth of updates and rumours about their many acquaintances throughout the world. Many of the friends of whom they speak have left Kenya, especially their children’s generation - twenty or thirty-year olds who are eerily absent from white Kenyan life altogether. Many, they explain to me, head to England or South Africa for boarding school or university, and upon finding a suitable job or

meeting a spouse or partner, 'coming home' to Kenya is a rare and difficult decision. I am truly bemused at my companions' penchant for gossip. I catch myself laughing on several occasions as they trade stories of 'who is sleeping with whom', or who recently got drunk and crashed their car into a river.

As I began to worry about my ability to use the occasion to ask my own questions, Henry interrupts his friend and insists I tell the story of the incident I had with my housekeeper. Recounting the incident with as much humour as I could muster, William and Laura find the story incredibly entertaining, and the Cranfords even more so the second time. William follows with a string of witty jokes about whether I'm "making commission" on my housekeeper's illicit activities, and if I've bothered to "steam wash" the flat since uncovering this unsavory activity.

As my dining companions get their fill of laughter, William wipes the smile off his face, and the conversation turns more serious. "You know you really must be careful with your self", he says. "You really never know what your staff might get up to while you're away. I myself have had a range of issues over the years. Once when I was younger," he says, "I hired a young woman to look after the house I was renting. She said she could cook, could clean, we agreed on a good price so I said, why not? That very same day I'd come home early, and it turns out she'd used the toilet and had no idea how to flush it." The ladies both gasped. "And there was also a small child who had appeared out of nowhere, certainly not the arrangement I'd agreed to." Laura suddenly pipes in: "We've all had shocking experiences with our help," she explains. "Having staff is so common for us. There really isn't anyone who hasn't got some funny or unfortunate

story. I once arrived at my sister's house to deliver a package, and found her children's nanny trying on all my sister's clothes, gallivanting around her house like the queen."

"The women are very bad for that," Sheila adds. "I have many friends who've caught their house girl stealing their clothes or make-up. I once came home and found our house girl singing in my shower, using all my fancy shampoos and lotions." The whole table enjoyed a laugh.

"But what about Phillip?" I asked. "He certainly doesn't try on your clothes. Have you ever had issues with him?"

"The men don't seem to care about our things,' Sheila explains, "They couldn't care less about my women's clothes or make-up. Truthfully, I think male help are much better in that respect."

To situate Sheila's perspective within anthropological debates about Euro-African domesticity, Schmidt (1992: 222) argues that a preference for male versus female house help is not usual amongst Europeans in Africa. In her historical ethnography in Southern Rhodesia, Schmidt argues that a breadth of cultural factors relating to the 'protection' or 'wealth' of women have discouraged African women from seeking employment as domestic workers (a sector of wage labour more suited to a man, working outside his own household). From the European perspective as well, Schmidt (1992: 224) points out that an undercurrent of black peril is what she labels 'yellow peril' – the fear of "miscegenation as a result of sexual relations between European men and African women" (1992: 224). Though this topic was never fully explored, William made mention in our conversation of a cousin of his who had fathered a child with one of his African

house staff. William's subtlety in mentioning the affair suggested some degree of personal and familial embarrassment.

As the conversation turns back to my own domestic incident, a debate ensues around the table about whether I should report the incident to my landlady. Both Sheila and Laura believe the extent of violation of my space is simply unacceptable, and that the young lady deserves to lose her job, or at least be reprimanded. William, however, presents a different perspective, suggesting the incident now gives me valuable leverage over my housekeeper. "You've got her under your thumb," he explains, "if ever want extra help or duties out of her, I don't think she'd be in her right mind to refuse. She knows how lucky she is to have her job." I mention that I've committed myself to staying around the house for each of her future visits, to keep an eye on things and assert my presence. The entire table agrees this is a very good idea.

When lunch is over, the Cranfords ask my permission to take a detour to visit their grandchildren who are spending the week with their *ayah*¹¹ while their daughter, a pathologist, is out of the country on a conference. En route to their daughter's home, Sheila explains how pleased the family is with the *ayah* and *askari*¹² their daughter has managed to acquire. She explains that Lulu, the *ayah*, is in fact a migrant worker from Uganda, and therefore, Sheila explains, "not corrupted" by the ethnic politics that sometimes complicates life for lower-income workers in Nairobi. Sheila explains that when politics flare up around election time, having a worker from outside the country makes it less likely they be targeted in violence or be swept up by other 'ethnic issues'

¹¹ Nanny or child-care provider – a term used in Kenya since the early 1900s – derived from Gujarati and/or South Asian languages.

¹² 'Guard' or 'watchmen' – used throughout Kenya.

that might distract them from their job or making them vulnerable to ‘politics’ or corruption.

Soon we arrive at the entrance to their daughter’s community, a neighborhood within a neighborhood employing a private security firm to monitor traffic in and out of the area with 24-hour roadblocks and electric fencing guarding its periphery. Seeing us approach, the security guard recognizes Sheila and Henry’s car and lifts the security barrier without questions or delays. Arriving at the house – itself surrounded by another layer of fencing - Henry honks the horn to notify the *askari* we’ve arrived. Promptly and professionally, the guard quickly opens the gate and salutes us as we enter the property.

Stepping out of the car, Lulu and the grandchildren greet us in the driveway. I’m formally introduced to the security guard, Joseph, of whom the Cranfords seem most fond. As Lulu welcomes us inside and invites me on a small tour of the house, Joseph offers to take over for Lulu and supervise the two children as they ride their tricycles in the driveway. As we walk away, Sheila whispers to me about how happy she is that the kids have taken so well to Joseph, explaining that helping the *ayah* is well beyond his call of duty, and that this is truly ‘exceptional’ behavior for a worker typically expected to do little more than open a gate.

“The family are incredibly lucky to have them,” Sheila explains. As their daughter is a single mother, the fact of living in Kenya provides her a certain amount of freedom, thanks to the staff she has been able to employ. As a successful professional, she claims her daughter has had many opportunities to move to the United States, though, especially with young children, living in Kenya affords her privileges simply not possible elsewhere.

The following week, Sheila and Henry leave Kenya to visit their son, an MIT-educated engineer who took the opportunity to leave Kenya and now lives in Massachusetts with his wife. Though having met Phillip, their “house-boy”, on several occasions, Sheila recommends I take this opportunity to spend time with him one-on-one, to get his opinion on what it is like to work for an ‘old *Mzungu* family’.

On our first day of meeting, Phillip invited me to Sheila and Henry’s compound, greeting me at the gate and inviting me indoors before we go out for dinner. To my surprise, instead of heading towards the Cranfords’ townhouse, as we usually would do, Phillip leads me to an isolated and overgrown corner of the complex. Invisible to the residents of the compound, Phillip explains these are the ‘servants quarters’, a row of dilapidated wooden sheds secluded from the garden by a 10-foot concrete wall concealed in vines. Looking at the row of shacks, I count 12 sheds in all – one for each townhouse – customary, Phillip explains, at most middle or upper class compounds in Nairobi. Showing me the inside of his quarters, it is clear that Phillip sleeps, cooks, entertains, and spends most of his free time in this eight by ten-foot room. When I comment on how cramped it is, Phillip explains it is favorable to living in Kibera or other nearby slums, and the electricity feed from the townhouse allows him to have lights and a television – a privilege he points out, one would rarely enjoy in his village. After spending some time in his servant’s quarters, Phillip and I moved to a nearby pub, where he offers to buy me dinner and a round of cold beers. As I thank him for his generosity, he boasts how pleased he is to entertain a friend of Sheila and Henry.

I direct our conversation to the elder couple, attempting to gain his more casual insight into the ups and downs of working for them. He begins by acknowledging the

challenge of working for an older couple, as the Cranfords are truly an ‘old colonial’ family, and maintain many household customs that Phillip feels are archaic. As Henry is beginning to develop signs of dementia, Phillip explains that his forgetfulness and diminished capacity have, unfortunately, led to disagreements between him and his boss. Only a few weeks earlier, Phillip explains that Henry accused him of lying when he went to Henry claiming he had not been paid for the month. After a prolonged and strenuous argument, Sheila discovered Phillip’s paycheck sitting in the icebox beneath their leftovers – seemingly misplaced there by Henry in a moment of absent-mindedness. Embarrassed by the misunderstanding, Henry was profusely apologetic to Phillip, for questioning his honesty and accusing him so hastily. Phillip and Sheila later discussed the incident, he says, and resolved to work together to help each other ‘deal’ with Henry’s surmounting challenges in the future.

In the normal course of the week, Phillip explains that he is responsible for virtually all the Cranfords’ domestic needs. He cooks meals, does laundry, and keeps the house in a commendable state of care. He enjoys a few hours free time in the afternoon between preparing lunch and dinner, and enjoys Sundays off as the Cranfords go to church, and then to lunch to socialize with friends. He complains with good humor about accompanying Sheila and Henry on their camping trips up-country – taking Phillip along to help set up camp and prepare bush meals. He seems bemused at this distinctively *Mzungu* pastime. Why people would retreat to the bush when they have a lovely and comfortable condo in Nairobi seems utterly illogical to him, never the less, he respects their appreciation of the outdoors.

Above all, Phillip claims that ‘honesty’ is crucial when working for a *Mzungu* family. “When something is not right for you,” he explains, “you must go to tell the boss. Many workers say nothing, and they grow to hate their family.” He also says he prefers a *Mzungu* Kenyan employer to an American or a European, as they better respect his ‘culture’ having lived in the country their entire lives. While his job is challenging, Phillip tells me he far prefers *Mzungu* families to *Wahindi* (Indo-Kenyan) families he has worked for in the past. *Wahindis*, he explains, have a tendency to treat African staff like slaves. “I worked [when I was younger] for a *Wahindi* family who used to hit me and the other workers,” he says. “They often refused to pay us and would accuse us of stealing. They would lock us in the kitchen so we were never seen by their guests.”

As Sheila and Henry are out of town, Phillip mentions he would be spending the next four weeks up-country visiting his family on their new land. I ask him to tell me more about the plot the Cranfords mentioned financing, and he goes on for some time about how thrilled he is at the generous opportunity. Describing the quality of the plot, Phillip boasts about the maize, bananas and avocados his wife has already been able to grow there.

As I remark how thankful he seems for the loan the Cranfords have given him, Phillip tells me of other arrangements the couple had previously failed to mention. In addition to the loan and the donated lighting and furniture, the Cranfords also pay for Phillip’s daughter to attend a well-regarded private school up-country, and his eldest son to attend a polytechnic in Nairobi to study carpentry – opportunities, he explains, he could never afford without Sheila and Henry’s help. When I ask Phillip how he feels about being dependent on the Cranfords, he describes their relationship using an

intriguing analogy. “Kenya relies a lot on aid”, he explains, “the government, from the World Bank or the United Nations; we people, from the help of private donors like Sheila and Henry.”

Later, as the conversation turns to the security situation in Nairobi, I ask Phillip if he feels responsible for helping keep the Cranfords safe. He responds affirmatively, explaining how when amongst friends or other employees in the neighborhood, he is often asked probing questions about the Cranfords and their home, i.e. where they live, what they do, when they come and go, and so on. Adopting a more serious tone, Phillip explains that the Cranfords must remain anonymous to his friends and the people he associates with casually. Confirming that criminals often do put pressure on house staff to provide information or access to victims, Phillip claims that any indication that he works for a wealthier white family could put both him and the Cranfords in a highly vulnerable position. Though many lower-income residents of the area do earn their living working in upper class estates and compounds, Phillip claims he is an especially good employee in that he is committed himself to silence on the details of the people who employ him. The risks, he explains, are simply too high, and any breach in security attributable to his negligence or dishonesty would surely put an end to his favorable and well-compensated employment. Given the extent to which the Cranfords are invested in Phillip’s land and family, allowing them to fall victim to criminals would not only jeopardize his future, but the future of his children as well.

Exchange and Investment

As a few ‘days in the life’ of this retired white Kenyan couple and their worker, many aspects of their everyday habitus are in keeping with the ideals of a privileged

colonial life. When presenting this fact to Sheila, she was in no way resistant to the idea that ‘they had not changed’, while so many things in Kenya had. “It’s simply the way I was raised,” she explains. “We’re very much aware that we’re living in an ‘African country’ now, but being able to afford a privileged life and never knowing any different, doing [many] things for ourselves just isn’t who we are.” Despite current political problems in Kenya, the Cranfords - like their carjacked compatriot Robert - believe that Kenya maintains certain preferential factors making their lives more sustainable than in South Africa or Zimbabwe. Visiting friends in South Africa in 2004, the Cranfords claim to have felt very uncomfortable with the more extreme appearance of walls and barbed wire. Sheila also claims that people on the streets of South Africa seemed to fear one another. They also noted that when they waved hello to people, while on a morning jog in Cape Town, non-Whites sometimes lowered their eyes and refused to acknowledge them. When speaking about South Africa with Henry, he also cited the experience of their jog and explains he feels that being white is much more problematic in South Africa than at home in Kenya. In achieving majority rule much earlier than South Africa, Henry explains that their ‘survival’ in Kenya always depended on keeping positive relations with the ‘locals’. South Africa, by contrast, seems to have worked on fear and reverence – racializing privilege in a more dangerous and less durable fashion. In experiencing this tension first-hand, Henry explains he truly ‘appreciates’ the status of white people in Kenya, and though white lifestyles in Kenya in many ways remain paternalistic, he claims that Kenya has always been “the African peoples’ country”.

In examining the discourse of both Phillip and the Cranfords, the exchange between them is clearly reflective of a complex, nuanced, and absolutely critical

partnership. As both these parties' lives exist in some degree of existential peril (the Cranfords – political, and Phillip's – economic), the informal arrangements between them constitute a citizen-subject dialectic in which neither is secure without the presence of the other. While the Cranfords offer Phillip material compensation in exchange for cooking and cleaning, the assurance or 'privilege' his servant position ensures them likely embodies more than the freedom from doing their own housework. As a recipient of the Cranfords' generosity, Phillip is quintessentially the frontier on which Sheila and Henry craft their public image - not the image of colonial Britishness performed for their white Kenyan friends, but the investment or commitment to the nation of Kenya communicated in a more spectral fashion. As an equally powerful agent in this micro-citizen arrangement, Phillip's comments on 'securing' the Cranfords, indicate the alternative forms of capital they receive in the exchange. As a trusted local person whom they've integrated into their domestic lives, the Cranfords are both dependent on and vulnerable to Phillip as the 'outsider', defining them as having 'good and fair' relations with the local Blacks. In striving to 'respect' Phillip and his 'local cultural' needs, the Cranfords constructively objectify their worker as the figure of populist Africa in which they are sustainably invested. As a way of publicly demonstrating their investment to development or betterment of figures unequivocally 'African', the Cranfords' relationship with Phillip is productive of an alternative form of capital on which the 'belonging' of white Kenyans is critically and fundamentally hinged. In protecting their worker from the turmoil of an unstable economy, he in turn protects them from both the existential threat of political demonization and the more demonic threat of everyday criminal violence.

In a similar study conducted amongst Euro-African householders in Zambia In the 1970s and 1980s, Hansen (1989: 285) noted that, while consenting to work long hours for an often minimal salary, local domestic staff “also actively contest the hierarchical rules of the game, and class distinctions enter into the relationship between servant and employer and help to politicize personal relations.” By working so closely and extensively for their European employers, Hansen (1989: 285) argues that workers “use this skill politically, working no more and no longer than they themselves consider appropriate to their low wages.” Extrapolating Hansen’s theory to the wider spheres of life beyond the home in which they may or may not be confined, we can understand this “skill” as a form of cultural capital distinctive to the African domestic worker. Though workers may be dependent on their employer for a range of economic needs, the unease documented between white employers and African staff throughout the colonial and post-colonial period suggests that even subjugated domestic workers hold considerable power over their employers, through their ability to agitate perceptions of Europeans as racist, abusive, or exploitative (Anderson 2005; Hughes 2011; Kalaora 2011). As the employers’ dependence on the worker is essentially a political dependence, employers must maintain amiable relations with them. Otherwise, they may risk compromising the security and segregation of their household – possibly from criminality or, as is more often the case, the disruption of their unfettered sense of privilege through foot-dragging, sabotage, or other ‘everyday’ forms of resistance (Scott 1985: 37).

Commitment Issues

Though played out at the micro level in an abstract and nuanced fashion, the meta-discursive importance of these master-servant relationships is expressive of

'commitment issues', on which debates about whiteness are consistently focused in Kenya. In addition to white Kenyan life as a performance or nostalgia for the 'golden years' of colonial rule, Uusihakala (1999: 36) points to the 'commitment' of Whites as an explicitly contentious issue. Unlike in Zimbabwe where Whites attempted to integrate themselves economically through large-scale industrialized hydrology, the white Kenyan project of belonging, in both the private security and domestic citizenship modes, is a topic to which mainstream Kenyan consciousness is, in many ways, oblivious. In 1979, African Affairs expert Marion Doro remarked, "perhaps the most significant clue to the future of the Europeans in Kenya is that they have attracted little, if any, attention" (Doro 1979: 43). Despite their continued position as a privileged racialized minority, their successes in avoiding or depoliticizing issues of their status have made them less controversial, less visible, and far less talked about than their colonial era counterparts in South Africa or Zimbabwe. Undoubtedly, their success in avoiding the politicization of their status has been positive, as the political dialogues racializing Whites in southern Africa have not precipitated violence against white Kenyans. Because of this invisibility, however, it is fair to say that Kenya's 'national' debate about whiteness has, in many ways, never happened. As Whites continue to live in segregation, and excuse themselves from political discourse, their status as a privileged "other" is arguably being reified to the detriment of their public image.

Very recently in Kenya, the drafting of a new constitution focused some renewed political attention on Whites regarding an issue long uncontested. Included in the new constitution – elected via referendum and promulgated in August 2010 - is a bill formalizing the right to dual citizenship, or the ability to maintain one's Kenyan passport

upon acquisition of another (Kenya Law Reports 2010 Article 15:4). Since independence, Europeans, South Asians, and other immigrant non-indigenous Kenyans have been forced to renounce their secondary citizenship should they wish to obtain a Kenyan passport. As employment, land ownership, and other aspects of civil life are legally exclusive to 'citizens' of the Kenyan state, maintaining lands and livelihoods in Kenya necessitated that many Whites relinquish European status at the time of independence, and effectively become African by the act of registration (Doro 1979: 51). Though many Whites claimed they have always 'taken comfort' in the knowledge they can reclaim their European citizenship if necessary, the 'convenience' and freedom of having dual nationality is most certainly appealing. More important, however, are the potentialities of how Afro-Kenyans will perceive the passing of this bill: as potential legislation of privilege afforded predominantly to the Euro-Kenyan community.¹³ Like in Zimbabwe, whiteness has often been associated with a 'freedom of mobility' – a route of 'opting out' or 'escaping' the country should political, economic, or other factors make conditions intolerable. In countries where line-ups at foreign embassies for work or travel visas snake around the block, and where 'applying to go to Europe' (given the difficulty of finding work in Kenya) is something young educated Kenyans do often and at a considerable financial cost, the freedom of mobility available through dual citizenship constitutes a significant advantage over citizens who are unequivocally 'Kenyan'.

¹³ Many Afro-Kenyans will also be afforded dual citizenship under this new law, though these individuals are only a minute percentage of the overall Afro-Kenyan population. One Euro-Kenyan participant claimed that "all Whites in Kenya" have investigated the possibility of obtaining or reclaiming another nationality. *Jus Sanguinis* laws active in Britain, Belgium, Ireland, Greece and Italy mean anyone with a parent with citizenship in these countries is eligible. Jewish Euro-Kenyans, such as Lena Nowak, may also obtain Israeli citizenship (Bertocchi and Strozi 2010: 97-99).

In spending time with neighbors in my Woodley estate compound, I learned that nearly every young individual in the building claim to have applied for work visas to the EU or USA (some on multiple occasions and usually at numerous embassies). In addition to the many months it takes to get an interview for the visa, applicants complained about non-refundable application fees (between 80-150 USD), which are exorbitant for lower-income Kenyans. Though the reality of leaving Kenya has many financial and personal implications for Whites, it remains an opportunity most Kenyans cannot afford, making the notion of Whites as 'committed' to Kenya a problematic assertion. If exclusion and privilege are to be considered the keystone of the white Kenyan experience, we must also question the status of citizens as cooperative subjects in the project of national unity. Is 'being Kenyan' in fact important to white residents? Or is possessing a Kenyan passport merely a convenience of business or 'lawfare' should their status be scrutinized by political antagonists using nationalist rhetoric (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009).

Bridgid

While Sheila and Henry Cranford rely largely on Phillip, their houseboy, in crafting a positive public image, other Euro-Kenyans invest themselves more visibly through community based development initiatives, and an emphasis on local partnerships.

Bridgid, a Scottish-born Kenyan in her late 60s, has lived in Kenya since the age of five, when her father was given land for his services to England during the Second World War. Living an idyllic childhood in the 1940s and 1950s, Bridgid, like most of my older participants, reminisced at how lovely and peaceful Kenya was during British rule, before Nairobi was invaded by squatters, and the skies "poisoned by diesel fumes."

Bridgid's background differs from the Cranfords'. She describes her family background as more working-class than other Euro-Kenyan participants, and explains that her parents valued hard work and self-sufficiency rather than relying entirely on servants. Bridgid's lifestyle has also differed from the Cranfords in that she has lived her entire life in a more rural outskirts of Nairobi, and maintains a more bucolic lifestyle of subsistence farming and maintains relationships with a larger number of 'local' Kenyans.

Speaking to Bridgid at a coffee shop in the Karen suburb of Nairobi, she explains how her life has been complicated as of late by the passing of her husband, a man she lovingly describes as 'rustic', 'adventurous', and as "close to a white African as one could ever imagine." Bridgid explains that her husband, born and raised in Kenya, never left the country until he was 35 years old. She describes how out of place he was when visiting England for the first time, and invokes the archetype of Crocodile Dundee in New York City, overwhelmed and disoriented in such a populated and industrialized place.

When her husband passed away five years ago, Bridgid explains she faced a serious dilemma as to whether to remain in Kenya, or return to the United Kingdom. Having lived in Kenya all his life, she explains that her husband had a remarkable relationship with the Kenyan people, and an ability to relate to 'Africans' uncommon for most Euro-Kenyans. Fluent in several indigenous languages, her husband maintained life-long friendships with many influential Kenyans, and in his sudden absence, Bridgid feared the black community would no longer accept her. As Bridgid's public identity was significantly defined by her husband's, his passing made her wonder whether she could

maintain a good relationship with Afro-Kenyans, both as a single woman with poor Kiswahili, and not having been born in Kenya as her husband was.

Though Bridgid is not the only Euro-Kenya living in her area, the fact that her home sits on highly fertile land in close proximity to Nairobi has led local community groups to voice unhappiness with the fact its owner is a (perceived) wealthy *Mzungu*. She explains that her husband had been a savvy and successful small-scale commercial farmer, employing a few dozen local farmhands and selling staple to crops to local residents at affordable prices. While she maintains a portion of their earlier crops, such as fruits and flowers, she explains this family-run business “just isn’t its old self” without her husband’s leadership, and she has been unable to continue employing the majority of their staff. This recent shortcoming, Bridgid tells me, has exacerbated her fears that local community members may resent or demonize her. She continues to sell crops to the community for as reasonable a price as possible, but indicates her reputation has suffered, never the less.

Since her husband’s passing, however, Bridgid explains she has begun investing more of her time and money in supporting charitable causes. She spoke proudly and persistently about the work she does with physically and mentally handicapped children, through a small private school she set up herself and sustains with support of international donors. The small school, a few kilometers from her home, seeks out local handicapped children that families ordinarily would be unable or unwilling to send to school. In this small two-room institution, Bridgid and one certified local teacher (whose salary Bridgid pays), offer about two dozen local children a primary education free of cost to their families.

“I’ve done a lot of fundraising, and I like to think that I’ve helped a lot of people,” Bridgid tells me. “People say to me ‘why do I do it?’ and I say well, ‘I’ve had such a wonderful privileged life in Kenya. It’s my way to say thank you to Kenya’. And I think a lot of the local people probably know what I do.” Given her shortcomings as an employer of local farmhands, Bridgid has attempted to re-invent herself through a re-fashioning of her livelihood. As her husband’s death bequeathed her of the ability to ‘belong’ as the wife of a locally integrated farmer, Bridgid has been forced to become an entrepreneur of her own privilege. With some experience in education and an appreciation for the neglected needs of local handicapped children, Bridgid has recognized her ability to play a meaningful role in this much-needed local service. Though Bridgid’s concern for local children is legitimate, we must, given her emphatic testimony (of people ‘knowing’ what she does) as well as her local, political circumstances, question the ulterior motivations of her investment in children: to re-trench herself in a community where her belonging had been compromised.

In addition to her livelihood in the community, Bridgid deploys other modes of belonging in her own practices of securitization. While most Euro-Kenyan homes or homesteads in Bridgid’s immediate area employ human guards through a corporate security provider, she tells me she has chosen not to employ a uniformed, trained guard, opting instead to hire trustworthy, underemployed young men from her immediate area. “I do this for a number of reasons,” she says:

First of all, you never know who [your security company] is going to send you. They all claim they have the best vetting policies but the majority of break-ins are an inside job...It’s just a fact. Second, I’m able to compensate my guards in a way that’s more suitable to us both. The big companies give pay cheques and sometimes benefits, but I can give my guard food or clothing for his family...things that are worth a lot to him but that I have an excess of.

Dispensing payment in the form of food or clothes is clearly favorable to Bridgid, though whether this arrangement is favorable to her guards is unclear.

From a Foucauldian perspective, compensating her staff with staple or essential commodities gives Bridgid an increased level of control over them, and could serve to reinforce her paternalistic position. Elsewhere in our conversation, Bridgid expressed her reluctance to pay male staff in cash because they often spend the money on alcohol, a recognized problem amongst security guards throughout Kenya. Though her individual guards may prefer to spend their salaries at their own discretion, Bridgid's practice is arguably a legitimate attempt to protect the interests of her community as a whole.

Most importantly, Bridgid explains that having a guard from her immediate area ensures that individual guards are likely to do their job well, and ensures that her reputation as a fair and generous employer percolates amongst the people in her area. Though Bridgid chooses to employ guards from her local community, she also maintains a security contract with a large private firm who monitor alarms and panic buttons installed throughout her home. Bridgid explains she sought out these measures shortly after her husband passed away. Having felt safe in her home all her life, Bridgid's friends advised her that if she is to continue to live by herself, she had better install some additional security measures. On the day she had her alarm system installed, however, her local neighbors misinterpreted the presence of the private security company, and reacted in an interesting way:

When I was getting [my security company] to come and install my security system, I asked them to meet me at two o'clock at my house. And when they arrived they arrived, at top speed, flat out. I didn't realize they were trying to see how quickly they could get to my house from where they were based. And within about three minutes of their arriving, half the village arrived. All armed with clubs and spears and sticks, to see [if I was] all right, what was going on, cause they'd

seen all the security people. All that was very reassuring for me, to know that the local community around me also cares. And I don't know why they do it. They don't need to do it. And I don't know if it's because of my involvement with these children or what.

“So what you're suggesting,” I offer, “is that an ‘outsider’, who is seen to be making a contribution to the community, is essentially entitled to the same types of social security as anyone else?”

I can't actually generalize and say that. There's very much a difference between an expatriate, and – for want of a better word – a colonial. You know, you've got white people, and you've got White people. Having grown up and lived amongst the local people for as long as I have, you get to know the way they think, what they like, what they don't like, and at the end of the day, although I'm a Kenyan citizen, you have to remember we're living in their country, and you have to abide by their rules, their laws, and what is agreeable to them.

In addition to suggesting that Bridgid has succeeded in ‘belonging’ amongst her local neighbors, her experience in witnessing her community mobilize at the potential threat of violence against her is illustrative of the alternative forms of sovereignty constituted in this context. Though Bridgid's ‘sticks and spears’ imagery of villagers concerned with her welfare is suspiciously orientalist, the experience she describes illustrates the perceived acceptance of a Euro-Kenyan into the social networks of protection that predominate in many Kenyan neighborhoods (Ruteere and Pommerolle 2003). Given the extent to which governmental security bodies are being privatized in Kenya, Bridgid's experience demonstrates that security is not only a project increasingly absent of official police actors, but is also an exchange dictated by abstract and immaterial forms of social and cultural capital. Similar to Sheila and Henry Cranford, the fact that Bridgid feels she is ‘committed’ to her local community shapes the perceptions that she is informally entitled to protection by the Kenyans closest to her. While the Cranfords experience this protection as the vacuum from dangers that they have never

(apparently) had to deal with, Bridgid realized these arrangements by watching them play out in her front yard, and happily explains that it makes her feel “very safe” living where she does. As Landau (2006), Jensen (2005) and Mbembe (2001) have asserted, systems and practices relating to the project of life preservation constitute “the dominant imaginary of sovereignty in contemporary Africa” (Mbembe 2001: 154). As the protection and preservation of life in instances of insecurity are not always within the capacities of the Kenyan police, community-based security constitutes the most fundamental gesture of sovereignty a community can exercise, and underscores the importance of local or community relationships as forms of social security for Afro and Euro-Kenyans alike.

Further Frontiers

In future explications of the white Kenyan experience, scholars will invariably continue to question how Whites in Kenya construct their own superiority, not only as reproduction of colonial ideals, but also of how these ideals evolve into a more cosmopolitan, post-colonial world, in which overt acts of racism are less likely to be taken with a grain of salt. In examining the discursive practice of marginalized migrants in South Africa, Landau (2006: 125) remarked that protecting oneself from politicization involved the continuing performance of the ‘outsider’. This serves as a reminder to ‘locals’ that foreigners were indifferent to struggles of the local people as a means of depoliticizing their outsider status. “Instead of integrating or assimilating,” Landau states, “[outsiders] are rapidly forging a counter idiom that, to borrow from Said, fetishizes their position as the permanent outsider or wanderer, distanced from all connections and commitments” (2006: 136). While idioms of transience could most certainly be construed

as an act of detachment on the part of Whites, they continue, as Doro (1979: 43) pointed out, to make themselves 'invisible'. By constructing walls and maintaining their privilege behind them, Whites in Kenya effectively excuse themselves from larger social processes taking place outside. In the meantime, demonstrating one's commitment to Kenya remains a significant preoccupation for many Whites. While the Cranfords maintain their image of investment through more personal and/or domestic interaction, other Euro-Kenyans do so more publicly in a clear expression of the livelihood fashioning exemplified by Whites in Zimbabwe. Livelihood is a subject on which many of my participants spoke eagerly, and before I was able to come to such conclusions myself, Whites attempted to forcefully assert the qualitative and quantitative benefits of their jobs or businesses for their 'local' communities.

While my observations of both Bridgid and the Cranfords yield discursively positive conclusions as to the success and sustainability of belonging through various modalities of security, the practices in which other members of the Euro-Kenyan community are enveloped may not be so resoundingly positive. As both Bridgid and the Cranfords are of an elder generation of white Kenyans born, and raised before the rise of highly mechanized security, they demonstrate the inclination to choose human and cooperative forms of protection rather than the bars, buttons, and alarms recommended by private security industry.

I asked my security industry participants where they felt their industry was headed in the future, and while no one living in Kenya can 'hope' for a decline in personal security, it is clearly in the interest of the industry and its benefactors that the privileged public maintain a balance of fear and positivity. As both Mr. Gibbons and Mr. Kelly

suggested, if the police were doing a proper job, security firms would not need to be operating and, naturally, if wealthier residents experienced no fear of crime whatsoever, the private security industry would suffer irrevocably.

More disconcerting, however, is another neoliberal side effect threatening the individuals employed in private security. As Mr. Musya indicated, his operations are frequently complicated by the discomforts of his clients with the human components of the domestic security assemblage; clients are growing less eager to integrate local guards into their arrangements of household security. Another complication of KSIA-PSIA conflict, the industry has been enveloped in a contest over wages with companies (previously priding themselves on loyal, honest and well-compensated guards) having to slash salaries and benefits in order to compete with other leading providers. The future, as one security professional predicts, will be the eventual moving away from human guarding altogether. "To be honest," says Mr. Kelly, "in the domestic market, this country is going to get more and more ugly and mechanical...If you think it's bad now, it hasn't even started yet, in terms of walling your premises. You can take away that fear if you've got your wall, and your electric fence, and your electric front gate. So that'll be where the future goes."

According to Abrahamsen and Williams (2010: 110), the technological development of private security only further complicates the abstract systems of capital transacted in this economy. As mechanized security employs a range of expertise and knowledge often developed and produced outside the developing world, global and multi-national actors capitalize on this growth to the extent that local human forms of capital become increasingly valueless and eventually dispensable. Several security offices I

visited had established, or were in the process of establishing, breeding and training centers for guard dogs. Cheap to feed, free to use and unable to be bought or corrupted, several security directors vocalized that they were attempting to minimize their numbers of human guards and replace as much as a third of their workforce with canine security instead. Were this to be the case, *askaris* such as Joseph, the security guard who has bonded closely with the Cranfords' grandchildren, may soon be finding themselves out of work. Contracted as an employee of a KSIA member security firm, we can safely assume Joseph is paid a consistent and liveable wage, as well as health insurance in the event that he is injured on the job. Joseph and his family would not only suffer from the loss of his well-compensated livelihood, but also a new generation of white Kenyans would be alienated from the formative social relationships upon which racial harmony in a post-colonial Kenya (may) ultimately depend. Contracted guards in most Kenyan households are unlikely to hold as positive a status as Joseph. The importance of forging trustworthy and amiable relations with staff, however, as emphasized by both security professionals and everyday residents, suggests the centrality of these relationships in the everyday functioning of the domestic security assemblage, as well as for the public image of the Euro-Kenyan family. As the internal frontier of the young children's racialized world, under changing security industry practices, the figure of their African guardian will be pushed further away, and will be replaced by humming fences and barking dogs. As these economically vulnerable individuals are dismissed, or written out of the domestic assemblage, socio-economic pressures may ultimately force them to turn to crime or corruption in order to support their families.

Conclusion

In examining the relationship between Phillip and the Cranfords, it is clear their arrangement is one of mutual and considerable dependence. Choosing to segregate themselves from most black Kenyans, the Cranfords' eagerness to invest in Phillip and his family suggests they play a critical role in the Cranfords' political image. Knowing that Phillip is a sociable and respected member of the local working class community, the Cranfords see themselves as dependent on him to vocalize their positive characteristics. In reality, however, the most effective way for Phillip to protect the Cranfords is in keeping them anonymous. Despite the fallacy of their assumption about Phillip's discourse with the community, the notion of Phillip as 'an ambassador' of the Cranfords offers them a significant degree of re-assurance. In essence, the substantial economic investments the Cranfords have made in Phillip and his family are the core of their political identity as Kenyan citizens. If their integrity as householders is ever threatened by rhetorics of racism or privilege, the Cranfords' believe their economic relationship with Phillip would serve to demonstrate precisely how 'invested' they are in the well-being or development of the local community, and (hopefully) shield them from political antagonism.

In the case of Bridgid, it is also clear that the most crucial relationships Euro-Kenyans make in the project of belonging involves the people with whom they live most intimately. Living on a plot of valuable and coveted land, any perception by local people that Bridgid is abusing her privilege or not contributing to her community could lead to significant resentment. As these rhetorics took shape in Zimbabwe in the early 2000s, white citizens were shocked to find out that police and local officials were entirely

unwilling to interfere in the violation of property laws, vandalism, violence, and even murder (Hughes 2010: 108). Given these precedents, landowners such as Bridgid have a partial reason to be uncomfortable with their whiteness and privilege, and to make concerted efforts to combat negative perceptions for the preservation of their homes and livelihoods. Though the vulnerability she felt as a widow did inspire Bridgid to pursue professional, mechanized forms of security, her experience suggests these are only a supplement to the concern, cooperation, and long-term relationships she has built with her local community. Through her interest and investment in the development of local children and unemployed men, Bridgid constructs both a physical and discursive defence against both criminal and political threats.

As well as emphasizing the extent to which ‘belonging’ in Kenya is a project Whites undertake without the assistance of the state, this chapter suggests that Whites maintain a strong discomfort with their privilege and whiteness, and that they fear, given the wrong political instigation, that the Kenyan state could effectively turn against them by disregarding their rights as citizens. As the threat of state-supported violence “stems the necessity for subjects to immunize themselves against it”(Mbembe 2001: 154), Euro-Kenyans, in addition to utilizing flexible nationalities, look beyond and below the state for the forms of protection they feel are crucial to their preservation. As privilege and paternalism are both the current and historical reasons for their problematic political status, they challenge its negative connotations through charity and cooperation, making themselves inextricable from Kenya’s social landscape in the process.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Since the earliest days of colonialism in Kenya, the appeal of living in the colony was largely rooted in the comfort of lifestyle conducive to an economy of cheap and obedient labor. While racial and class segregation were part and parcel of early 20th century Britishness in Kenya, the political economic structures dictating such practices were fundamentally complicating of settler-African relations, demonstrated in the ‘psychological’ side-effects of the Mau Mau rebellion on racialized perceptions of threat, and the durability of these perceptions into the post-colonial era. As a political project energized through the fear and intimidation of both African and non-African populations, the tumultuous period of the Mau Mau rebellion was formative of a generalized sense of mistrust in bodies charged with providing protection for Nairobians. As black Kenyans were conscripted or otherwise integrated into the Mau Mau counter-insurgency project, the ability of the average Kenyan to trust in forceful state authority was fundamentally compromised. Established as a symbol of repression and systemic dominance, the image of the police force as an untrustworthy entity remains entrenched in the minds of many Kenyans today, and is compounded by their limited capabilities in the era of neoliberalism.

In addition to shaping popular perceptions of state-backed corruption and policing, the period of the Mau Mau was also influential in the racial complication of Euro-Kenyan domestic life. As the insurgency was widely perceived to utilize networks of domestic staff in infiltrating and targeting white households, Euro-Kenyans adopted a range of practices segregating themselves from their domestic staff, and creating a relationship of both dependence and mistrust.

While the Mau Mau rebellion, and the eventual loss of white dominance, did lead many Whites to relinquish their privilege and depart, those who chose to remain in Kenya have since been forced to reconcile their historical identities with a political landscape that – with only a few exceptions – has been dominantly exclusive of the former ruling elite. In the shadows of independent governance, however, neoliberal adjustment has made Kenya's economy vulnerable and highly penetrable to privatized ventures. In the context of unregulated capitalism, Whites – as a strange bedfellow to government-backed policing – have been successful in integrating themselves into the project of security in Kenya, and solidifying themselves as essential and immovable protectors. As the degrees of crime experienced in Nairobi can, in many ways, be traced to segregation during the Mau Mau uprising, the argument that Euro-Kenyans have created, sustained, and re-adopted Kenya's project of security is complex, contentious, but worthy of ongoing academic consideration.

Against a historical backdrop of racialized fear and unaccountable policing, recent events in Kenya have further solidified concerns about politicized violence, and illustrate to the extent to which security and policing are closely intertwined with ethnic and political struggles. Nairobi was an epicenter of violence during the post-election crisis of 2007 and 2008. Though no white Kenyans were directly targeted in the violence, the actions of both criminal and government actors have been disconcerting. Investigations into the crisis accuse police officials of deliberately perpetrating or instigating violence against residents. Human Rights Watch (2011a) reported that senior government officials ordered police not to interfere with the vigilantes carrying out ethnic cleansing, while a later report claims, "unlawful police killings accounted for as many as one third of the

total deaths during the post-election violence” (HRW, 2011b). The Police Commissioner at the time of the violence, Mohammed Hussein Ali, is among other high-level officials investigated by the International Criminal Court, alleging that police impunity during this crisis was not merely sporadic or spontaneous but, rather, an organized political initiative.

This crisis was also a blunt reminder to scholars of the extent to which localized monopolies of violence in Kenya have been outsourced or privatized, noting the many vigilante groups mobilized in targeting perceived supporters of both the ruling Party of National Unity and opposition Orange Democratic Movement (HRW 2011b). Uhuru Kenyatta, son of former President Jomo Kenyatta, is accused of employing the Mungiki sect - self-styled ‘soldiers of Kikuyu Redemption’ employing Mau Mau symbolism as anti-colonialists - to target opponents of Kikuyu politicians. As the son of the nation’s founding father and a highly influential figure, the eagerness of figures such as Kenyatta to associate with vigilante groups underscores the intense politicization of violence, and the degree to which political practice undermines the ability of police to be seen as sovereign wielders of violence. Kenya has a long history of vigilante activity, especially in informal settlements where migrants and minorities receive little actual or symbolic support from the Kenyan state. In addition to the Mungiki, the Taliban (no relation to the Afghan Islamists), the Baghdad Boys, and several other groups control large areas of urban settlement through informal policing, racketeering and arms dealing. According to Anderson (2002: 542), “One of the principle reasons for the existence of urban vigilantes in Nairobi is to be found in public anxiety about the levels of crime within the city and a perception of the incapacity of the police to tackle criminality effectively.” Anderson (2002: 543) claims that crime in Nairobi has risen steadily throughout the 1990s, with

approximately one quarter of Nairobi residents having been a direct victim of burglary or violent crime. He also notes that many residents view vigilante groups as a favorable alternative to state-backed policing, describing many of his study respondents as being extorted by police when attempting to report crime (2002: 544-545). According to Ruteere and Pommerolle (2003: 592-93), “The frontiers of what is criminal in Kenya are blurred by the persistent criminalization of political activities by the Kenyan government [and] the vague and shifting boundaries of de jure and de facto criminality render the very concept of crime in Kenya problematic.”

Given the complicated and dynamic nature of security-related challenges in Kenya, the security professionals at the center of this project face numerous racial, political, and economic predicaments. Expressing very different attitudes with regard to the issue of race within their industry, I question what experiences have helped to shape the engaged, and deflective, testimonies of Mr. Gibbons and Mr. Kelly, respectively. One cannot help but contemplate how, and if, political challenges have been posed to them by influential actors, such as industry competitors, high profile clients, or politicians. As Mr. Kelly expresses a willingness to accept the liability of criminal infiltration with a more lax approach to vetting, I question whether his ideology is reflective of uneasiness with issues of race controversy in the security industry, or a fear of being perceived as an overbearing or patriarchal employer. At the same time, Mr. Gibbons (who exercises more oversight on his staff and, from my observations, a greater degree of hands-on management) could certainly be perceived as a patriarchal employer, and make him a target of nationalist, or anti-colonial rhetoric. At the offices of Mr. Busolo, the same cult of personality ascribed to leaders such as Kenyatta or Kibaki are clearly being propagated

towards the company's white founder. Though potentially useful in cultivating morale and solidarity amongst recruits, utilizing the icon of a British colonial officer within a private security organization could be unsavory to many Kenyans, and serve the rhetoric that private security is an entity of whiteness continuing to dominate indigenous interests. As the issue of patriarchy between white commercial farm owners and their local African staff proved to be a political vulnerability during recent crises in Zimbabwe (Hughes 2010), it is difficult to assess who – Mr. Kelly, Mr. Gibbons, or Mr. Busolo (as a sympathizer to Mr. Jones) - is in a better position to defend himself against racial or political rhetoric within the Kenyan security industry. While Mr. Busolo is a black Kenyan and representative of the industry's (newer) Africanized business leadership, his company's symbolic association with a British colonial figure is clearly problematic and would be politically disagreeable to many Kenyans.

In examining the livelihoods of individuals like the late Mr. Jones, it is clear that Whites have utilized the security industry as an apolitical modality in which to assert and integrate themselves economically throughout a period of extensive political and social change. Utilizing the neoliberal environment for a re-fashioning of their professional identities, white Kenyans have developed a capitalist industry that is depoliticizing of their whiteness while simultaneously regenerative of its elitist, exclusionary, or anti-social connotations. In examining the practices deployed by contemporary security firms, it is clear that private security both reifies colonial notions of 'peril' and separation, while also forging close relationships with the African state in which monopolies of violence are increasingly distorted, and in which White-led security firms, as agents of white Kenyan belonging, become inextricably integrated into the project of security itself.

In order to understand security as an (a)political modality in this particular project of belonging, we also must appreciate the extent to which perceptiveness to crime and security related practices constitute both physical and psychological habitus amongst white Kenyan participants in this study. Indeed, the perceived worsening of crime in Nairobi, and the incompetence of police to deal with it. This is a subject to which many conversations with white Kenyans are tangentially related, and as security is an issue with which younger Kenyans have been brought up, a perceptiveness to, and avoidance of, certain places and scenarios deemed 'threatening' is clearly habitual in their everyday lives. Especially with regard to the police, the problematic relationship between Kenyans and this particular state entity reveals the deconstructive discourses through which the project of security is racialized.

Despite the deconstructive aspects of divisive and segregated domestic security practices, it is clear that this habitus of subjecthood and patriarchy are also productive of positive socio-economic relationships. As demonstrated in the experience of the Cranfords, Bridgid, and the local Kenyans they employ, 'belonging' in Kenya is arguably being forged around small but significant instances of domestic subjecthood and exchange. While security is a project often entangled in negative connotation, the relationships forged in that process can have, in the domestic settings, a definite and inalienable benefit. Though the 'master' position of Whites is certainly being reified through these domestic arrangements, the equitable benefits extended, for example, to Phillip's family and the children and young men of Bridgid's community, demonstrate their investment in the development of the local people, and this is symbolic of their investment in the local community as a whole.

In addition to the official arrangements that dictate this domestic partnership, Phillip and the Cranfords are also bound together in a localized project of security critical to their survival as a privileged and visible minority. As their productive partnership or arrangement is, in fact, exclusive to Phillip and his family, as a worker, he also has an obligation to discursively defend his clients from rhetorics of racism or other political antagonisms. Given the renewal of citizenship debates in Kenya stemming from the recent re-drafting of Kenyan citizenship laws, the question of whether Whites are 'committed' to Kenya is more contentious than ever, and made of particular concern to privileged citizens of European descent by recent violence and politicization in Zimbabwe. If whiteness in Kenya were to become politicized to the extent it did in Zimbabwe (Hughes 2010), Phillip would become immeasurably important to the Cranfords as the figure 'defending' them from the rhetoric of inequitable dominance.

Stemming from the issue of minimal or problematic state participation in projects of security, my discussion also speaks to ongoing debates about the nature of sovereignty in contemporary Africa. Counter to Euro-centric, Agambian models of modernist, state-constituted sovereignty, numerous Africanist scholars (Mbembe 2001; Jensen 2005; Abrahamsen and Williams 2010) argue that the preservation or destruction of life has become the "dominant imaginary" (Mbembe 2001: 154) in how residents of Africa understand themselves as 'subjects' to various social, political, or economic bodies. As globalization and neoliberal adjustment have eroded the sovereignty of the African-nation state, Abrahamsen and Williams (2010: 18) argue that both the logic and practice of securitization "provide a domain of action where claims can be made about rights, community and politics." In the case of white Kenyans, their eagerness to look beyond,

below, and above the Kenyan state in the preservation of their lives and livelihoods suggests that state sovereignty in Kenya has been significantly degraded. Most importantly, the privatization of security in Kenya, accompanied by the willingness of politicians to associate with vigilante groups, suggests that the possibility of Kenya becoming a failed or lawless state is legitimate and underappreciated.

I must also clarify that the particular age set of the majority of my participants itself poses a limitation. As pointed out, many white Kenyans closer to my own age (twenties) have a tendency to leave the country for work or school, and whether they choose to return to Kenya, given the current political and economic turmoil, remains to be seen. While crime for the Mau Mau generation (i.e. white Kenyans who were threatened or victimized by Kikuyu household staff) seems to have been understood as either racially or politically motivated, younger educated Kenyans are likely to understand urban insecurity as a consequence of poverty or social issues, likely articulated in their post-secondary institutions abroad. To be certain, an examination of ‘whiteness’ in Kenya is only a small and selective purview into one of the many socio-ethnic groups that make up Kenya’s vast and diverse ethnoscape. A study of equal, if not greater, socio-political importance should be conducted on the subject of ‘Indianness’ in Kenya. Indians far outnumber Whites and enjoy greater economic integration in Kenya, but they are often subject to high degrees of local politicization at times of civil or economic unrest.¹⁴

¹⁴ Indo-Kenyans to whom I spoke were eager to point out how dangerous a precedent was set by Idi Amin in his violent expulsion of South Asians during radical economic restructuring in the 1970s. A number of Indo-Kenyan families in and around Nairobi came to Kenya via Uganda after being expelled. Some have since returned to Uganda – many have remained in Kenya and acquired citizenship.

Furthermore, the premise and scope of my study has required me not to forcefully engage issues of ethnicity to an extent some might consider necessary in understanding Kenya's political economy. As my study is concerned more with ethno-racial *perceptions* than ethno-racial realities, I choose to address participants under the general and compartmentalized category of White, Black, Indian or so forth. This approach is admittedly dismissive of the various religious, ethnic, or class cleavages amongst these communities – cleavages that are by no means negligible when addressing social, political, and economic issues. Though white citizens of Kenya are grouped together as 'Euro-Kenyan', their various origins, interests, livelihoods and geographies make them socially, culturally and sometimes linguistically heterogeneous. In addition to the possibility of ethnic politics between and amongst white communities themselves, several of my participants, especially the Cranfords, expressed highly ethnicized perceptions of the black population – specifically perceptions of Kikuyu Kenyans as cunning, greedy or money-oriented, and Luhya Kenyans as being well domesticated and suitable for household labor. How Euro-Kenyans construct and interact with various categories of ethnicity in Kenya is another critical and unexamined issue.

With the exception of Robert – whose home was invaded and his family physically threatened – it is telling that most of my study participants had never experienced an incident of domestic security beyond the far lesser transgressions of dishonest or misbehaving staff. As my observations point out, the most perilous instance in the white Kenyan experience is when driving the roads outside of their compounds - away from the protection that their domestic security assemblage provides. As the next 'frontier' in the project of non-state security, Mr. Gibbons and security professionals like

him are attempting to extend the appendages of the security assemblages in seeking to secure their clients when away from the fortification of their wired and well-guarded homes. Through sophisticated, racialized, and gendered marketing technologies, security companies clearly evoke the vulnerability and peril of the white female motorist, depicting the sexualized young female ‘stranded’ on the roadway in a clear but secondary image of sexually connoted violence.

As a domain in which both clients and security firms have little or no control, fear of Nairobi’s roadways, and the government-backed bodies that police them, is idiomatic of segregation in Kenya. Outside the mechanized fortress, typical of the white Kenyan home, the ‘public domain’ of ‘local’ Kenyan life remains an uncomfortable location for this highly visible minority. As privilege and identity continue to be crafted within the confines of the white Kenyan’s domestic space, their integration into the wider Kenyan society will undoubtedly remain limited to the professional spheres of life that – in the case of private security – remain equally problematic as Whites often maintain privileged positions as owners or directors of security firms. In interrogating these practices in future research or analysis, ethnographers must interrogate the African perspectives on these practices. Though the experience of Phillip - as a representative figure – illustrates the productivity of white power within and beyond the household, the extent to which whiteness is reified through domestic relationships in Kenya is tangible, as demonstrated in my own experience as a white householder for the brief duration of my research.

While both my own study and Uusihakala’s research suggest a self-awareness amongst Whites of their problematic status, to which Uusihakala (1999: 32) labels “reflexive”, whiteness in Kenya is a relative notion, subject to the intensity of localized

discourse. Given the political and ethnic fragmentation that the wider Kenyan population seems to be undergoing, how Whites will, or will not, factor into such conflicts remains a vital but extremely complicated question. If security projects 'protecting' Kenya are themselves an entity of whiteness, the apolitical nature of security as a 'business' suggests a high durability of white Kenyan belonging regardless of political perspectives stating otherwise. If security becomes more segregated, however, as industry leaders express the intention of doing, the private security industry and its economic stakeholders are likely to benefit in the shorter term, while the relationship amongst peripheral stakeholders (white and black Kenyans alike) is likely to be further complicated. Security, insecurity, and their many political by-products, are ultimately the result of poverty and inequality, and, so long as Kenyans turn 'inward on themselves' in segregation and racial re-affirmation, the possibilities of improved security for any racial or class demographic in Kenya are resoundingly bleak.

Appendix 1: Sample questions for security industry professionals

1. Tell me about the history of your company/organization. When was it founded? By whom? What were the circumstances leading to its formation?
2. Tell me about the Kenyan security industry during the earlier years of your company/organization. What was the economic and political climate?
3. How has your company/organization changed from the time of its founding to the present? How has the security industry changed? How has crime or insecurity in Kenya changed?
4. What are the greatest issues or challenges facing your company/organization at present?
5. What is your company/organization's relationship with the Kenyan Police (both historically and at present)?
6. What is your company/organization's relationship with other private security companies or civil society groups?
7. What differentiates your company/organization from others? How do you strive to compete? Do you strive to compete or to cooperate?
8. Do issues of race or ethnicity play any role in your organization? How do you feel about to the popular perception that that certain self-identifying ethnic groups make preferential as security guards?
9. What has been the historical role of European-Kenyans in the private security industry? What is their role at present?
10. Has the industry been challenged or complicated by recent political and civil instability in Kenya?
11. Where do you see the private security industry (and your company/organization's role within it) headed in the future?

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