Identity & Return Migration: The Kenyan Case

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Cover Picture:

Kenya Heart Africa (Online image). (2016). Retrieved from: http://homecomingrevolution.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Homecoming-Revolution-Kenya-HeartAfrica-1.png Copyright 2018 Homecoming Revolution.

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Chapter 1: Topic Introduction

*"When abroad, life kind of changes a little bit, you don't get to hang or talk to your friends on a daily basis, or go out to have fun**. So at the end of the day part of you is missing**."*
-Andrew Ngugi Njonjo. (Lenmanciya, 2014)

*"When I went to work in Toronto I realized that this was a very corporate and cold place. If your car broke down, there was really **no neighbor you could go to and say**, 'can I borrow your car?', 'can I bum a ride?'… **So I just knew that coming back home I would have the networks, the support structures, the family, the opportunities**."*
- Angie Gachui (Lenmanciya, 2013)

These quotations of Kenyans who voluntarily returned from living in the global North diaspora to permanently live and work in Kenya originate from interviews by the Africa focused recruitment agency, Homecoming Revolution. These interviews and others like them demonstrate the centrality of the often neglected theme of identity in the growing trend of return migration. The term neglected is used because in the greater context of the full interviews from which these quotations were extracted and also in academic resources which document return migration, the prominent focus is overwhelmingly on economic and career building opportunity as the main driving factor of return migration (Cassarino, 2004; Mugo, 2013; Powel, 2012;). In the few cases where there is a focus on identity (Christou 2006; Sussman, 2010), identity related concepts such as conceptualizations of home and belonging take preeminence and identity as a whole is sidelined. However, the sentiments expressed in these quotations and also in other sources outlined below, hint at identity as a central factor in return migration. Therefore, this thesis focuses specifically on exploring the ways in which an individual's identity, particularly identity development processes, come into play in the decision making process which shapes return to Kenya. The research question examined here is:

- How did identity processes shape return motivations and decision making processes of Kenyans who lived in the global North and decided to return to Kenya? Do returnees seek to re-present themselves through return migration?

In order to explore this question, the following, more specific questions were contemplated during the research phase and will be discussed:

- What is the history and impact of Kenyan emigration to the global North?

- What are identity processes & how are they demonstrated as research participants talk about leaving Kenya, living abroad and finally about life upon return?
- What specific experiences abroad shaped the participants' identity related processes and what was the impact of these experiences on return motivation?
- What idealistic reasons do the participants give in regards to return? Do they relate to the pragmatic reasons for return which are well documented and established in return migration theory? If so, how are the idealistic & pragmatic reasons for return related?
- How did the participants reach their return decision?
- How do the research participants now experience their return?

A. Return Migration?

As can be surmised from the questions above, the research addressed in this thesis focuses on the migration pattern of young Kenyans who lived in the global north and voluntarily decided to return permanently to live in Kenya (henceforth referenced as return migration). This return migration pattern may not seem very peculiar, as most migrants do not leave their home country with the intention of never returning. However, it is a distinct migration pattern because of various and specific characteristics which distinguish it from other return migration patterns. For example there are older Kenyan migrants who make a living overseas and then return to Kenya to retire. These retiring returnees are categorized differently because during their immigration journey, they fell prey to the mythology of return (Carling et al, 2015; King, 2001) by delaying their return in order to fulfill specific life goals. These goals include ensuring children get a 'first class' education or making use of opportunities in the global north which allow them to make financial investments such as building a house(s) or saving enough money to retire in their country of origin (King, 2001). The migration pattern is also distinct from cases of forced return migration due to deportation or situations in which individuals are offered compensation if they volunteer themselves for return (King, 2001; Webber, 2011). The specific migration pattern to be investigated here involves those who are between the ages of 25-45 and who, in spite promising futures in the global north, take a risk. The risk entails leaving behind the lure of economic security which others fall prey to in order to build a future in a country with an economy which is perceivably less secure and stable than that which they emigrated to. Given an OECD (2012) report which shows that 42% of Kenyans between 15 and 24 would emigrate if they had the opportunity, it is curious that those within a comparable age category and who have attained this valued opportunity to build a life in the global north instead choose to return.

Because this is a nascent trend, there seems to be limited academic literature addressing the trend in Kenya. However, it is documented in various grey literature sources such as blogs, Kenyan

newspapers and even in a Dutch newspaper (but in the Ghanaian context) (Bossema, 2014; Mugo, 2013; Powel, 2012). One such blog entry, Shiko Nguru's *5 Reason's I'm glad I Moved Back to Kenya,* screams 'all sunshine and rainbows' (Nguru, 2015). Here, the author recounts the benefits of return: having house laborers, great weather, and a social safety net. Other articles such as the one profiling Suzie Wokabi's successful company, SuzieBeauty, are meant to spark an entrepreneur's imagination by highlighting the immense potential of the booming African market. Emphasizing a growing awareness of this nascent phenomenon, note that this particular success story has found its way into international newspapers such as The New York Times (Powell, 2012) and Forbes (Nsehe, 2017). And then there are also blog entries such as the one by Proud Terrysa and by Pauline Kairu which warn of the downsides of return (Kairu, 2015; Terrysa, 2016). These downsides encompass re-adjustment struggles such as feeling misplaced and difficulties finding jobs in spite of impressive work credentials (Kairu, 2015; Terrysa, 2016). Finally, there is the case of the recruitment firm, Homecoming Revolution, whose aims and goals are to connect African professionals living and working in the global north to various professional opportunities in African countries (Homecoming Revolution). They reference themselves the 'brain gain' organization.

What has thus spurred this trend of return migration? More specifically, what are the motivations for return? Kizuka points out that the 2002 Kenyan elections brought an end to the economic, social and political oppression of a 24 year regime (Kizuka, 2006, Wanjohi, 2012). It also brought about serious efforts by the Kenyan government to engage Kenyans in the diaspora in national development (Kinuthia & Akinyoade, 2012). In following with these observations, it is logical to attribute the return migration of Kenyans to improved economic and political conditions which allow for career and business building opportunities (Homecoming Revolution). Of course these play a major role in return. However, an approach to return migration through an angle which incorporates the perspectives expressed in popular culture outlets such as the ones highlighted above, opens the door for additional understanding. It behooves us as academics to take these perspectives into consideration because, ""Fiction" has always been a place to reflect on facts that cannot be spoken of as such" (Miller, 2007, p. 12). In other words, it is through popular expressions such as works of literature, blogs, internet video series, etc. that issues such as identities of Africans in the diaspora are examined and explored. As further elaborated upon below, popular culture explores the reasons for return migration that are not entirely practical or pragmatic.

B. Why a Focus on Identity?

In order to contemplate the many grey literature resources which explore the non-pragmatic motivational themes of return migration, we shift attention temporarily from the Kenyan specific

case to the wider African diaspora. Within the wider African diaspora, the issues of identity and return are prominent topics and are explored extensively through popular culture expressions of the diaspora population. One such example is the novel, Ghana Must Go. In this novel, one of the main character's return migration to Ghana is tied closely with his desire to re-anchor his identity upon losing a lucrative position as a surgeon in a major hospital (Selasie, 2013). The story line of his return explores how identity related life events, in the diaspora, played into his return migration. Furthermore, demonstrating that this connection between identity and return migration is more than a random occurrence in a random novel, take note of the article (Tukali-Wosornu, 2005) which attempted to put on the map a new identity marker for Africans in the diaspora: Afropolitan. According to its inventor, the term Afropolitan is meant to anchor the identities of those Africans in the Western diaspora who find themselves tossed about in the process of diaspora related identity and culture negotiations (Tukali-Wosornu, 2005). Another example that demonstrates the centrality of identity in return migration is the novel Americanah. In this novel, the protagonist, Ifemelu, has decided to return to Nigeria after 20 years in the United States (US). Much of the book is devoted to painting a picture of Ifemelu's identity centered motivations for return (Adiche, 2013). One final example which again demonstrates the centrality of identity in return is the web series, *An African City* which follows the life sagas of 5 women of African descent who lived either in the US or the United Kingdom (UK) and chose to resettle in Accra, Ghana (Amarteifio, 2014).

A publication within the field of geography makes a case for academic consideration of the ways in which the types of emotional and sentimental expressions conveyed through these publications shape society and space. The authors note: "social relations are lived through the emotions, but…the emotional qualities of social life have rarely been made apparent within the lexicon of social research" (Anderson& Smith, 2001, p.9). This observation expresses one reason why explorations of the link between return & identity are found in grey literature sources, such as those highlighted above, but not so frequently in academic literature. The observation by Anderson & Smith therefore supports an approach to return migration through the lens of identity: for the purposes of bringing to the fore facets of return migration that are often deemed as less relevant. These facets are often termed emotional or ideological and have much to do with internal emotional processes which are somewhat accounted for and investigated through identity theory research. This is explored further in chapters 4-7, however here we note that Anderson & Smith go on to state: "academic commitment to highlighting the emotional consequences of seemingly rational economic decisions is an important element in bringing these actions to account" (2001, p.8). The necessity of exploring the 'emotional' or ideological aspects of return migration is the evolving success of the aforementioned, South

Africa based company, Homecoming Revolution. This firm has innovatively capitalized on the emotions of return. On its website, Homecoming Revolution describes itself as a " "brain gain" Global Headhunting Firm for Africa…which specializes in headhunting and placing globally experienced African talent on the continent"[1] Homecoming Revolution is so thoroughly committed to African talent that it "only recruit(s) professionals who are African citizens/hold African nationalities."[2] In summary, although academic documentation of return migration does not adequately delve into identity as central to return migration, these examples warrant further exploration into exactly how and why identity is central to return.

C. Identity & Return in Kenya: A Personal Perspective

A 2015 OECD report notes that as of 2000 & 2010, Kenya was one of the top 5 countries sending migrants to OECD countries.[3] Since Kenya is only # 4, why not chose to focus on one of the other countries? My interest in the relationship between return migration to Kenya and identity was motivated by my own identity related experiences as a Kenyan immigrant and my own personal hopes of returning to Kenya. I was born in Kenya and immigrated to the United States at around the age of 9. Since this time, I have continuously and consistently been drawn to the idea of returning and resettling in Kenya. As of 2013, I had been living outside of Kenya for exactly 20 years and I wondered: is wanting to return a good enough reason to forsake the safety and security of living in the global north? Will return address my desire for rest, to belong, which I and other migrants I know constantly wrestle with? And what does it take to make it in Kenya? That said, choosing Kenya as a focus country was also a pragmatic choice. Because I was conducting research while also continuing in my role as a fulltime mom to a 2 year old, my already established network of friends and family could provide resources as well as support. I could ask for help in identifying research candidates or even in settling down. In the methodology section I will further discuss the benefits and detractions of researching a topic that hit so close to home.

D. Thesis Overview

Given these introductions to the motivations for the topic, let us look forward to the coming chapters. Chapter 2 provides the historical background or context which set the stage for the emigration and return migration of the research participants. This chapter also introduces the reader to the general emigration and return migration stories of the research participants. Thereafter, chapter 3 presents and investigates the strengths and the limitations of various academic publications which

[1] http://homecomingrevolution.com/about-us/
[2] http://homecomingrevolution.com/faqs-candidates/
[3] The top 5 are: South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, DRC (OECD 2015)

address the concepts of identity and return. In Chapter 4, there is a discussion of data collection using narrative interviews; the challenges and quirks of gathering data about identity development processes whilst participating in the very practices that shape the identity development processes. The concept that is put forward in chapters 3 & 4 - that identity is a lens or framework which can be used to examine return through the method of narration - is explored 5, 6, & 7. These are also the chapters in which the research data is presented. Note, these chapters reflect 3 key phases of the identity development processes which shape return migration, namely: emigration (chapter 5), life abroad (chapter 6), and return (chapter 7). Finally, chapter 8 presents a discussion and conclusion of the findings.

Chapter 2: A Synopsis of Kenyan Emigration & an Introduction to the Research Participants

This chapter functions similarly to the background settings of a stage, meaning that it is not the focus of the thesis but it plays an important part of the story that is told through this thesis. This is because the details of the larger story of Kenyan migration to the global North greatly influenced each research participant's life journey. All participants related that they had parents and or other family members who had emigrated before them and paved the way for them (see Annex A for some details). Therefore the chapter begins with a historical overview of Kenyan migration to the global North and the resulting impact on the nation, as related to return migration. It is important to understand this larger historical & political context because as will be introduced in the theoretical framework, occurrences within an individual's environment are a critical element in shaping that individual's identity development process which in turn shapes return. Furthermore, consider that the participants' stories would most likely not have come to fruition without these occurrences and their resulting effects. Note that the quantitative factors presented in this first section of the chapter are meant to demonstrate that there is a connection between the seemingly abstract academic deliberations regarding identity and return and the more tangible facets of return migration deliberated in the 'real world'. Given that quantitative factors preoccupy discussions within influential spaces of government and other bodies with the responsibility of setting return migration policies and agendas, it would be amiss to not to touch upon this connection. That given, remember that this context or scenery is a background factor, much like the scenery in a theatrical play. The story misses something without it, but a story can still be told without it. The fundamental attributes which actually determined each participant's return migration are found in the processes at work within each research participant's migration journey. Because of this, the chapter concludes with an introduction to each research participants and with a synopsis their migration narrative. Through these narratives we follow the historical & factual aspects of their emigration & return migration. Observe that the primary focus of the thesis is on these characters because it is their stories which bring life and meaning to concepts (identity & return migration) which would otherwise be mundane facts.

A. Historical Context: Emigration & Return Migration in Kenya

Immediately after Kenya's independence from Britain in 1963, the emigration of Kenyans of African descent was a nascent phenomenon (Ghai, 2005; Kinuthia, 2013; Oyelere 2007). In the 1960s and 70s, some Kenyans migrated to the UK, USA, the Soviet Union and India for education,

however, much of this was circular migration as many returned home eager to find roles in which they could serve the fledgling nation (Okoth 2003, Kinuthia, 2013, Rutten & Muli 2008). However, in the 1980s and 1990s, two factors caused an increase in the number of long term Kenyan emigrants. Both were related to the aftermath of an unsuccessful, 1982 military coup against then President Moi. This coup led to 10 years of "strongly coordinated elimination of crucial political freedoms, and a transfer of power from all branches of government to the executive branch" (Okoth, 2003). Due to these extreme measures, Okoth & Kinuthia separately note that educational opportunities that were once well supported by the government became harder to access (Okoth, 2003; Kinuthia, 2013 p.11-12). As such, the first factor that contributed to a rise in emigration was a demand for educational opportunities (Okoth, 2003). Starting in the 1980s, many begun to seek these opportunities abroad (Kinuthia, 2013). They did so mainly in the UK due to historical colonial ties and the US due to educational exchange programs (Kinuthia, 2013; Okoth, 2003). The second factor that caused an increase in emigration was an increase in economic hardship during the 1980s & 90s (Okoth, 2003, Ghai, 2005). In the 1990s, Kenya had a negative per capita income growth rate (-4% in 1992) and a deteriorating income inequality (Kinuthia, 2013, Ghai 2005).

This is the context under which most of the research participant's parents or in some cases, the research participants themselves emigrated from Kenya. The focus, however, is on their return and so we must also consider the context which created the opportunity for return. This context is of course marked by a turnaround of the context which caused many to leave: in 2003, the 24 year rule of Daniel Arap Moi was brought to an end when the presidential regime of Mwai Kibaki was voted into power. This new presidency was initially seen as the dawn of a new era in Kenya (Oyelere, 2007) and Kenyans in the diaspora were encouraged to come home. After this change of regimes[4], Kenya's GDP grew at a faster rate than ever before[5]. This fast pace of economic improvement was, however, marred by election violence in 2007, which caused the per capita income growth rate to fall from 4% in 2007 to -2.5% in 2008[5]. The post-election violence which lasted from December 2007 until around February 2008, threatened to flush away the promising changes that were recently experienced in the country. However, the formation of a coalition government which presided in Kenya from April 2008 until December 2013 allowed for stabilization to return once again to the nation. It is within this context that many of those interviewed for this study returned.

[4] It has been noted widely that there was not really any change in Kenya because there hadn't been any changes within the ruling class itself. The old guard was still in power (Steeves, 2006). However, to many Kenyans in Kenya and abroad there was a change that brought hope (see results p. 67-68 & narratives highlighted in ch.7).
[5] https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD.ZG?locations=KE

B. Numbers that Matter: How many Kenyans Actually Live Abroad?

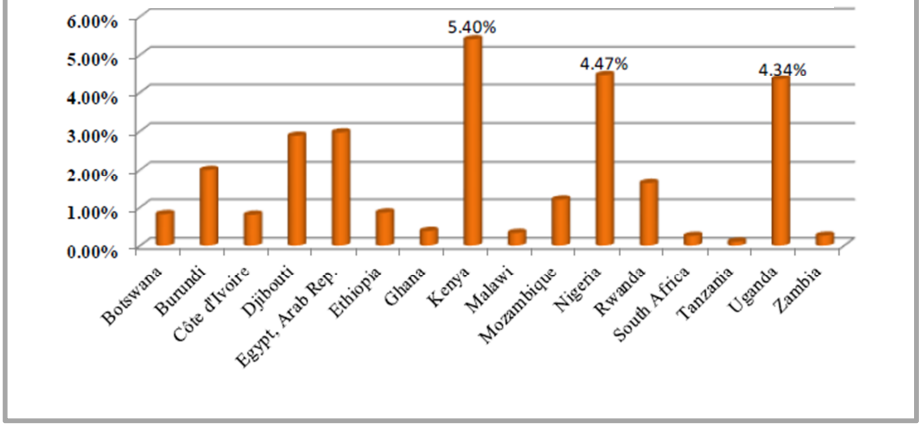
When we look at the overall number of Kenyans living outside of Kenya, the numbers are small: according to the OECD[6], in the year 2010, there were 286,400 Kenyan born persons (aged 15+) living abroad with 269,500 of those living in OECD countries (south to north migration)[8]. The top two migration destinations (in OECD countries) were the United Kingdom (47.8%) and United Sates (26.7%). The World Bank reports somewhat similar numbers; stating that in the year 2000, 374,200 (total) Kenyan born individuals lived outside of Kenya, with 223,800 of those living in OECD countries[7,8]. Although the exact figures prove somewhat unreliable, the point is that there are not millions of Kenyans living in the global north. So why pay attention this small group of people who represent .08% of the total population (age 15+) of the country? A good reason to pay attention this small group of people is because they are making a big impact on livelihood in Kenya. This is concretely demonstrated in that the remittances sent by these emigrants, exceed the amount of official development aid being sent into the country (Doyle, 2013; Kinuthia,2012; Nyamwange, 2013) and as of 2010, represented 6% of Gross National Income (Kinuthia,2012; Nyamwange, 2013) (see below figure 1). Although there may be disagreement about the significance of the economic impact these remittances (Tiemoko, 2004), the proportion of these remittances as also noted by Muli& Rutten (2008), underscores the potential economic power of this group of people. Given the establishment of their economic power, it is worthwhile to take note, document, and contemplate what impact their returns will have.

[6] http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/connecting-with-emigrants_9789264177949-en

[7] http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=global-bilateral-migration

[8] Regarding the OECD and Word Bank figures which seem to indicate that more Kenyan immigrants migrate to the global North than to other African countries: In publications such as Kinuthia, 2013, there seem to be indications that there are more Africans living in the global South than the Global North. The fact is that while the OECD and World Bank have reliable figures regarding the number of Kenyan immigrants in global North nations, the specific figures regarding the number of Kenyan immigrants in Sub-Saharan countries are not reliable. These numbers seem to even contradict other official documentation published by the Word Bank .The bottom line is that many immigrants in Sub-Saharan nations are not officially registered and limited resources have been invested in tracking them. It is therefore hard to know exactly how many more migrants live in other Sub-Saharan African countries than in the global North. Note that these figures are also not well tracked by the Kenyan government or the governments of the countries to which they immigrate.

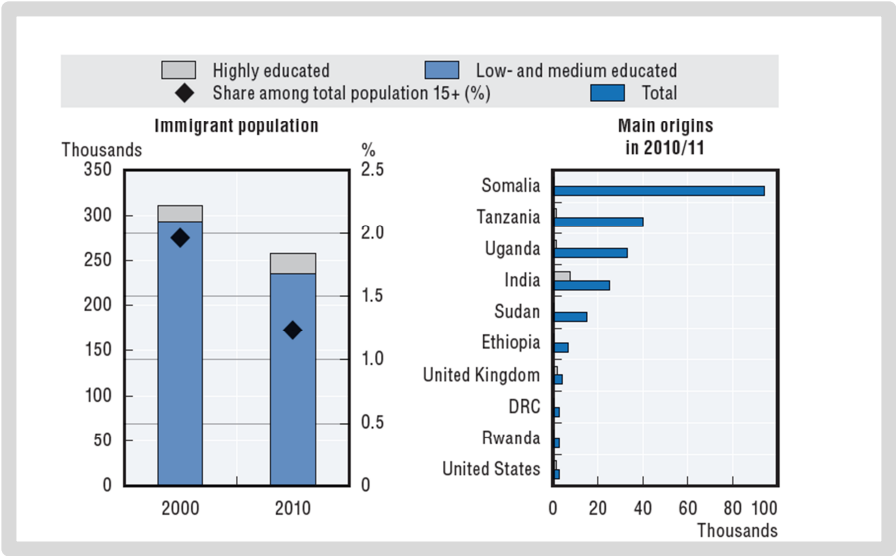
Figure 1: Remittances as a Share of GDP, 2010 (%)



Note. Reprinted from *Contributions of Remittances to Africa's Development: The Case Study of Kenya. 2013(p.16) by* Nyamwange, M.

Another hint of the impact and therefore importance of this small group of individuals is found in the OECD's 2015 statistics on the 2010/2011 immigrant population (those immigrating into Kenya). An unusual factor stands out: out of the 10 nations from which Kenya receives immigrants, 3 are not African nations (See below, figure 2). These three nations are the United Kingdom, the United States, and India[9]. This is markedly different from the OECD's immigration statistics for Kenya which were reported in 2012. The 2012 statistics show that in 2000/2001, only 5 countries had significant impact on Kenya's immigrations figures, and all were African nations. This immigration

Figure 2: Immigration Population, Kenya (15+)



Note. Reprinted from *Connecting with Emigrants, A Global Profile of Diasporas, 2015 (p.408), by OECD, 2015, Paris: OECD. Copyright 2015 OECD.*

[9] Note that Okoth points out: "By the 1970s, India was also emerging as a favored destination for Kenyans eager to earn university credentials abroad, but unable to independently fund the higher expenses associated with the U.S., the Soviet Union, and the UK". (Okoth, 2003)

from the global North & India seems to be a reverse of the well-established emigration of Kenyans to the United Kingdom and the United Sates. It must be noted that Kenyans continue overwhelmingly to immigrate, perhaps at larger numbers than before (OECD 2012, OECD 2015). However, here, we see an officially documented hint at the trend of return migration. How do we understand it? Again, one way is through the lens of identity.

C. The Kenyan Government and it's Diaspora

In order to gain further insight into the significance of the emerging trend of return, one last factor to consider is the burgeoning engagement of the Kenyan Government with its Diaspora population, particularly in the global north. The Kenyan Government's effort to engage this community, in spite of its small numbers underlines the significance, economically and politically of this group. To attend to this diaspora group, the Kenyan government created in 2007, an International Jobs and Diasporas Office within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). In 2014, a policy (MOFA, 2014) was created to guide the actions of this body. In regards to returnees, this policy took note of the importance of helping returnees to integrate upon return. A significant result of these political steps has been that in association with the Kenyan Diaspora Alliance (KDA), the MOFA hosted from 2014 onwards, a Kenya Diaspora Homecoming conference. Since then, this conference has been held every December when many Kenyans from the diaspora visit during the Christmas holiday. Although there is a different theme every year, the overarching focus of the conference is on attracting investment by Kenyans in the diaspora, on remittances, and on voting. By 2017, what used to be a one day convention had become a 3 day convention and 1,000 attendees were expected. Considering the growing recognition of the political and economic significance of the Kenyan diaspora population, the source of return migrants, surely a consideration of the identity related aspects of the returnee experience adds value to efforts to engage it more successfully.

D. The Research Participants

Given the details above which set the stage for the story of return migration in Kenya to be told, we now turn to an introduction to the actors, the individuals who narrate the story of return migration in this thesis. Through a short narrative, each of the research participants is introduced. These narratives will further be elaborated upon in chapters 5-7through the word by word account of participants' responses to my queries. This shift of attention from the quantitative to the qualitative is critical given that it is the decision making processes of individuals such as these which shape the tangible and measurable elements noted above. For example, the participants were, before their move back to Kenya a part of the noted influential diaspora group whose economic influence caused

the Kenyan government to engage with its diaspora community more seriously. Furthermore, it is most likely these individual's returns (and others like them) which have caused the noted upturn of immigration **from** the US and the UK. To better grasp these measurable factors, it behooves us to contemplate the processes these individuals passed through in order to make the return decisions that made and have the impact that they have.

Note that the introductions are reflective of the fact that this information was gathered in 2015. Although the participant's narratives could be categorized based upon specific characteristics such as year of migration or time spent abroad, perhaps based upon age, I have chosen to introduce them as I met them. This honors the progression of insights that I gained during the interviews. The importance of honoring this evolution of understanding is highlighted in chapter 3 (the methodology) where I highlight that the 'discoveries' made in one interview went on to shape subsequent interviews. Note: all the names of all the participants have been changed. Furthermore, in annex A, is a table with an overview of the participant's biographical details as well as a summary of other interesting identity and return related facts.

1. **Kinuthia –**a single 32 year old man who had lived and worked in the UK for a total of 10 years. At the time of the interview, Kinuthia had been back in Kenya since 2013, for 2 years. Since returning to Kenya, he had transitioned from a career in the financial world to a career as an independent entrepreneur concentrating on construction projects. Kinuthia was recruited to participate in my research efforts through an introduction by a Kenyan friend that I had met during my university years. It is worthwhile to note that Kinuthia went on to connect me to many other returnees. In terms of his emigration background, Kinuthia had immigrated to the UK twice, first in 2002 to pursue his undergraduate degree and again in 2010 for his MBA degree. He stated that he had an open mind to stay in the UK but both times, his hopes were affected by the legal realities of visa regulations which underwent stricter revisions during his time in the UK. His initial return to Kenya in 2008 was closely tied to the global market crash in 2007 during which he was 'surplused to requirement'. Although he tried to 'ride out the storm' by completing an educational course and therefore ensuring he could legally stay in the UK, he found this purposeless and decided to return to Kenya in 2008. In Kenya, he was able to utilize connections through his mother to find employment in a stock broking company and later investment banking. Dissatisfied with the high pressure environment at the investment banking company, he then returned to the UK in 2010 to complete his MBA, again with the hope of staying on in order to build up his work experience. Unfortunately by the time he graduated, the UK had again imposed tighter visa

restrictions. Before these restrictions, students had a grace period of one year to find employment in the UK, after the restrictions, students without legal employment at the end of their study period were required to return to their country of origin. Kinuthia was therefore in a way forced (although he would disagree) to return in 2013 and make it in the Kenyan job market. As I would learn through his and others narrations, the Kenyan economic market is friendly to the entrepreneur but not to the employment seeker.

2. **Laura –** a married 56 year old woman, a preacher with 4 children who had lived and worked in the US for 3 years: form January 2000 - December 2002. I was introduced to Laura by a friend of my father. It had been 12 years since her 2002 return to Kenya. In the context of the rest of the participants, her story was unique in that she traveled abroad to the US at the age of 41 solely for the purpose of earning enough money to build a dream home in the affluent neighborhood of Runda in Nairobi. She accomplished her goal within 3 years. Laura's opportunity to travel to the US was unique in that long before she had any plans of emigrating, she acquired a 5 year visa to travel to support her ailing pastor as he received medical attention in the US. I did not ask during the conversation but I assume that while in the US she worked as most non-residents with travel visa do – using the social security number of another individual or under the table. Laura worked in a field that is desperate for laborers - for a hospice company which provided care for elderly individuals. She stated during the interview that she worked 16 hours a day, 6 days a week. Only on Sundays when she attended church, did she work 8 hours a day. Having left a husband and two children behind in Kenya, she remained immovably dedicated to her cause to earn enough money to build her dream home and accomplished it.

3. **Warari** – a single 35 year old property developer who, had lived and worked in the UK for 15 years and returned in 2013. In 1998, at 18, Warari had migrated overseas to the UK because the opportunity to study abroad was a sort of a 'rite of passage" for students in his school, beginning at age 16. His door to emigrate was also open given that his brother studied at the same University that he would eventually attend. His initial hopes for emigration were dashed when at 16, Warari's father refused to allow him to leave Kenya at 16, sighting that he first needed to grow into his identity. This spontaneous emphasis on identity during the interview was critical as it meant that throughout the conversation, Warari had a very clear sense of his identity and its development. He provided insights on his identity that were detailed and clear. That said, I did often wonder whether he provided these insights because

he knew that they were what I was looking for. Warari was after all, the only participant who asked me outright: *"I want to understand the conclusion before so that it informs the discussion. What do you want to achieve, why?"* Warari was also the first participant to state that he consciously longed or desired to return to Kenya when he left. Most other participants expressed that while they wished to return, they first wanted to explore. This outright desire to return significantly shaped his experience abroad and although he ended up staying in the UK for much longer than he desired, he utilized this time to set up his successful 2013 return. It is noteworthy to mention that Warari had secured UK citizenship during this time in the UK.

4. **Paul –** I was connected to Paul, a 30 year old, single independent business owner by Kinuthia. He returned to Kenya in 2014, only a year before the interview, and was working on developing a marketable business plan for his real estate finance company. Paul had immigrated to the US in 2008 and had spent a total of 6 years abroad. Throughout the conversation he presented himself as a strategic and objective thinker who made his life decisions calculatedly and purposefully. For example, in talking about his decision to migrate to the US, he stated:

   > *I always knew I wanted to get a Master's degree. I wanted a different experience, something totally different. I didn't want to go to England. I went to English high school there. More than anything I left because I wanted a career change.*

   Like Warari, Paul also left Kenya with very clear intentions to return. However, unlike Warari, he left with very clear intentions to make the most of his time overseas by strategically making the most of his 'African' identity in his networking. This strategic positioning led him to migrate again in 2010, to the UK. In the UK he worked for a well-known and prestigious company at their Africa Desk. Unhappy with his work because he sensed that he was not building relevant skills, he decided to move back to Nairobi. When I asked Paul if he took this risk because he knew he could fall back on his family for support if things went wrong, he responded honestly by pointing out that not only was his immediate family financially comfortable, but so was his extended family.

5. **Erica –** a 34 year old single woman, the first person under 40 who had been back in Kenya for longer than 5 years; she had been living in Kenya for 8 years. I made contact with her through a cousin (living in the US). I hoped my interview with her would give me a

perspective on what return looks like in the longer run. However, her story proved that for those seeking employment, life as a return migrant was largely as unsettled as that of those who had been living in Kenya for less than 5 years. Erica had returned to Kenya in 2009 after spending 7 year there. She attributed her return to various personal struggles she encountered. These struggles were related to her legal status and minor mental-emotional struggles. Originally, Erica had traveled to the US in 2002 to pursue her undergraduate education and had an open mind to stay. She had some extended family in the US, mainly cousins that supported her in her efforts to remain. However, unable to legally attain a residence permit; she opted to return in 2009.

6. **Pam –** Speaking to Pam was unique in that she was the first woman I spoke to who had moved back to Kenya with her whole family – her husband and 2 children. I recruited her through a cousin. Pam was 41 at the time we spoke and she and her family had moved back in September 2014 and thus had been living in Nairobi for less than 1 year. She had lived in the US since 1992, for 22 years. When she had migrated as a teenager with her parents to the US, she did not foresee returning to Kenya. As such her focus was on building a stable life in the US: she had acquired US citizenship and lived a financially stable life working as a pharmacist. She however gave up this lifestyle when an opportunity was afforded to her family. When her in-laws could no longer take care of their business in Kenya, she and her husband saw an entrepreneurial opportunity they could not pass over. Her family therefore moved to live in Nairobi and her husband commuted, weekly, back and forth between Kitale and Nairobi; a journey of about 400km. The decision to return was premised on the fact that the move afforded her husband an opportunity to rise above the career ceiling which he encountered in the US. The move also offered an opportunity to secure her descendant's financial future as it offered investment opportunities that they could not tap into in the US. Financially, Pam noted: "w*hat do we have to give our children when we retire. Other than our 401K?"* In regards to family, she reveled in the peace of mind she had in Kenya as compared to the US: she loved that she was able to give her two boys the opportunity to get away from the racially tense climate that haunts many black male children living in the US.

7. **Nadia –** a single woman in her mid-30s who in 2009 had migrated abroad to the UK for the sole purpose of pursuing her master's degree. She was in the UK for a total of 4 years, for 2 years she studied and for 2 years she worked. Her perspective was unique in that she had received her undergraduate education in Kenya at United Stated International University and

had also worked for a short period of time before migrating abroad. She returned to Kenya in 2013, and therefore had been back in Kenya for 1.5 years upon our conversation. She seemed to be the well-adjusted of the group, both emotionally and practically.

8. **Ama –** 52 year old woman who had returned from the US 11 years before, in 2004, with her husband and 4 children. I met her because I rented the guest house located on the family's extensive compound. At the time of the interview, she was a lecturer at the University of Nairobi and otherwise spent most of her time coordinating the schedules of the 3 teenage children who still lived in Kenya, her eldest had returned to the US. The family had been living in Kenya for 10 years and therefore Ama had the most seasoned insights about dealing with the difficulties and frustrations of living in Kenya. In regards to her emigration, Ama had migrated to the US in 1987 on the heels of her fiancé, who later became her husband. She completed her master's degree and spent much of her 27 years in the US investing in raising her children. I found her journey interesting in that she had lived in the US for 27 years and yet she and her husband had never bothered to acquire citizenship. She insisted, their focus had always been to move back to Kenya, but they were just waiting for the right timing. That timing came when the Moi Era came to an end. What is also interesting about Ama's narrative is that although she made the immense decision to return together with her husband, she never gave me any real insight on her husband's perspective on the move. Never the less, her narrative proved insightful from other angles, particularly as she spoke about the reasons for and benefits of moving with children. Many of her insights corroborated those given by Pam and shed a light on the ways in which personal perspectives on race shift as migrants become more integrated in race-tense societies such as the US.

9. **Angela –** a single woman in her mid to late 30s who had returned to Kenya in 2010 after living in the US for 12 years. She had therefore lived in Kenya for 5 years at the time of our conversation. She had emigrated from Kenya in 1998 for the purposes of furthering her education. She noted, much like Gachigi who also emigrated around during the worst period of Moi's rule, that attending university in Kenya was a farce because the professors were constantly on strike. Unlike Kinuthia, Warari, Paul, and Nadia who were undoubtedly clear at the time of emigration that they would return, she, like Gachigi and Pam, was ambiguous about her return. She arrived in the US open to an experience that would convince her to stay but instead had an identity related experience which opened her up to consider returning.

10. **Gachigi –** a married woman in her 40s who after 24 years in the US, had returned to Kenya in 2008 with her husband and children. The move was spurred on by a visit to Kenya in 2006 during which her and her husband noted encouraging economic and political changes in Kenya. Her husband also identified a business opportunity that he eagerly wanted to pursue. Gachigi had originally emigrated from Kenya to the US for educational purposes with the intention of living there for 10 years and then returning. At the time of our conversation, Gachigi had been living in Kenya for 8 years and highlighted the difficulties of finding employment in Kenya.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Angela's Experience Abroad: A Demonstration of the Identity Development Process

The excerpts below, from one of the research participants, Angela's, interview, detail experiences which impacted the development of Angela's identity and serve to provide a basis through which to illustrate this thesis' working concept of identity processes. When asked to speak about her migration to the United Sates (U.S), Angela recounted the experiences documented below. The dialogue focuses on her experiences in 1998/1999 upon her immigration first to North Lake University and then to Southern Methodist University. Although the statements below have been separated into 3 sections, they were made consecutively.

1. *"Uhhhh we were the first Africans in the school. Yea, Yea, the first Africans. I mean sooo the first Africans but not the first A…you know African Americans; there were African Americans but they were the minority. So it was predominantly white. But yea, I remember going there and they had* (white Americans) *they had this very… obviously they didn't know much about Kenya, they didn't know much about Africa at the time. So everyone was very intrigued about you know, how we lived where we're from you know, how we learned English and all that stuff."*

2. "And *I remember my first encounter with African Americans. I thought: "wow I'll connect to them". But you know, it is very very different meeting them for the first time. Our first interaction was the same* (as with the white Americans) - *like you know where are you guys from? You know - wanna tell us a little bit about yourselves? Then later on like even just the small things you know the things they were interested in, I couldn't, I just could not find any frame of reference so I was like I, I, I know I don't get these people. You know? But they were very intrigued by us again. Again because I think there was something about us that suggested that we were different. We were very ummmm how do I say it? Not assertive but we were very bold in how we would just go and you know, talk to anyone and everyone. Ummmm and we were very open to the idea of exploring our surroundings. And I think they were intrigued by that. And so by default we ended up hanging out with a few of them. Not many of them because many of them did not get us so they were like ugghhhh who are these girls? Who do they think they are? You know? Ummm sooooo so that I remember distinctively*

because it concerned me. You know I was like why, why is it that things are not working out ummm I connected with the white people but also to a certain extent."

3. *And so by that time I was thirsty and hungry to connect with people like me. Ummmm so I found myself kind of gravitating towards ummmm immigrants, people who had moved there, you know you just find a lot more in common…you find that you're driven in a different way. Whereas you are driven because you know what you've left at home, you know that you have to make it.*

These excerpts, when taken together, underscore three important aspects of identity that are the focus of this thesis. First, that identity is not necessarily a concrete entity but a process that aims at "becoming not being" (Hall, 1996, p.4). Even when it is referenced as a concrete entity, behind that entity are various processes that have been given a label such as Kenyan. Second that identity development is shaped through our interactions with others around us, specifically, through the discourses that we engage in. And third, our reactions (behavior) to how we have been represented or misrepresented in these discourses can relay a great amount of information about a person's identity development processes. These points about identity are based upon Stuart Hall's conceptualization of identity, which states that:

> "*though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are 'or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves" (Hall, 1996, p.4).*

In examining the specific ways in which Angela's experiences closely align with such a conceptualization of identity, first note that Angela did not describe her identity in terms of how she thought of herself or who she thought she was at the time of these discourses; the 'who we are' aspect underscored in the quote above. Neither did she reference her experiences in comparison to her past; the 'where we come from' aspect of Hall's explanation of identity. For example, she never spoke of how the interactions outlined above clashed or contrasted with how she had been raised or was expected to act in Kenyan society and by her family in Kenya (her past). Instead, her reflections are more in line with idea of becoming, of being shaped by the representations that we encounter, Angela spoke of the various discourses she encountered during her university life and addressed these discourses in terms of how they were confounded by her presence and also how they confounded her and who she wanted to become.

The second crucial factor to consider about identity development is that it is shaped through the discourses which occur between our social environment and us. This is underlined by Ybema et al who state that "it is the varieties of 'self-other' talk which emerge as the critical ingredient in process of identity formation" (Ybema, et al, 2009, p.299). From this perspective, identity is understood as the self that is formed in "conversation' between internal ideas, wishes, and affections and external images and evaluation" (Ybema, et al, 2009, p.303). The emergence of identity through discourse is closely related to the third important factor about identity: that our reactions to other's (mis)representations of our identities both conveys information about our identity and is pivotal (plays a central role) in further shaping the identity construction process. Both of these factors are demonstrated in that there are other ways in which Angela could have chosen to speak about her identity during her time at University. She could have spoken more about her personal goals and the academic challenges she faced in attaining these goals (instead of speaking about how relationships with others impacted her identity) (Vignoles, et al, 2011 p.3). Yet during the interview, she selected and detailed specific discourses to describe moments during this period of her life in which she encountered (mis) representations of her identity which perturbed her. In this way, she herself emphasizes that these specific representations can be understood as having shaped the formation of her identity at this time of her life; as shaping how she decided to represent herself. Hall underscores: 'identities are constituted within, not outside representation' (Hall, 1996, p.4), in other words, in reaction to it.

It is critical to underscore the connections between the remarks of the research participant and this conceptualization of identity because these connections underscore the thinking that led to the formulation of return as an identity related act of representation or re-presentation. I wondered: since we react to the ways in which we have been represented, could it be that such negative encounters would lead one to knowingly or perhaps even unknowingly represent (or re-present) themselves through return to one's original country of migration and in order to 'become'?

A. Defining Identity: Grounding Context in Theory

In order to address the above question regarding the ways in which an individual may represent or (re-present) themselves through return, a more concrete understanding of identity is necessary. Unfortunately, identity is an elusive concept with different yet overlapping definitions in society as well as within various academic fields (Anthias, 2008; Berezin, 2010; Jenkins, 1996; Stryker& Burke, 2000). Berezin notes that identity can be 'a noun and verb, singular and plural, and denotes subject and object: I identify as; I am identified as; my identity is; your identity is. We are; we are identified as. Identity, identities, identification, identifies' (Berzin, 2010). For the sake of this thesis,

I begin by defining identity based upon the perspective of identity theory, a branch of social psychology. From this perspective, identity is seen and depicted as the 'parts of a self (which are) composed of the meanings that persons attach to the multiple roles they typically play in highly differentiated contemporary societies" (Stryker & Burke, 2000). In other words, at a basic level, our identities are composed of the thoughts and feelings we carry about our 'selves' relative to the relationships (shallow and deep) that we have with others around us. A key aspect emphasized throughout this thesis is therefore that understanding identity requires an investigation of the inner processes at work in our thinking and feelings as we relate to others around us. It also requires an investigation of the external processes (or dynamics) at work as we engage and relate with others.

As demonstrated in the identity model (figure 3), identity theory provides the grounds upon which to think about the underlying factors of identities (these underlying factors being our thoughts and feelings and the ways they are affected by and react to others around us). This model categorizes into two groups, the factors or processes which are at work in the expression of our identities (Stryker & Burke 2000, p.288); namely into internal and external structures. The internal structures are comprised of processes which act upon thoughts and feelings while the external structures are comprised of the dynamics and processes which govern the interactions and engagements we have with others around us. From the angle which focuses on internal structures, Burke theorizes that identities are shaped by internal processes which aim for coherence between the internal meanings an individual holds about their identity and the meanings of their behavior. In his words, behavior is "a function of the relationship between what a person perceives in (a) situation and the self-meanings held by the individual" (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 288). From the angle which focuses on external structures, Stryker theorizes that identity is shaped by the receipt of affirmation within the relationships one has with others in their social network. This process in turn shapes an individual's behaviors. Stryker puts it this way: behavior of an individual is shaped by identity salience (in simpler language, the solidness/concreteness of an identity) and identity salience is in turn shaped by 'commitment' or the affirmation of an identity by (trusted[10]) others within one's social network (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p.286).

[10] In Identity Theory, the importance of affirmation by others is emphasized. But this emphasis is problematic in that as seen by the accounts of the research participants, people can and do hold on to their identity even when it is not affirmed. Because of this, it is important to note the caveat that identity salience is not directly determined by every relationship that a person has. Salience is therefore affected by the type of relationship (of trust, of ambiguity, or of no trust) that an individual has with a person within their social networks.

It is critical to understand that the internal and external processes and dynamics of the identity process are not mutually exclusive but feed upon one another in a process that expresses our identities through the evidence of behaviors (Stryker & Burke, p. 288). This is best seen through the identity model diagram (See figure 3). Looking at the diagram, we see that the processes through which internal meanings (our thoughts and feelings) are academically understood and deliberated are: input, perceptions (identity salience can also be slotted here), comparators, and outputs (Stets & Burke, 2009, p.62). The outputs of this process are social behaviors which impact external structures (others around us) and create the relationship dynamics referenced as 'reflected appraisals'. These reflected appraisals then become a part of the input process which causes the cycle to then repeat itself.

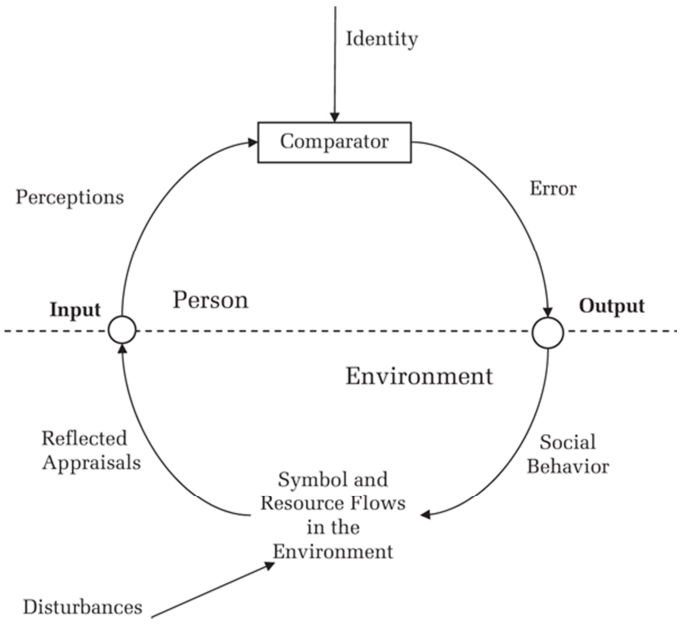


Figure 3: Identity Model. Reprinted from *Identity Theory* (p.63), by Burke, P., & Stets, J. (2009). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Copyright 2009 Oxford University Press.

A demonstration of the workings of the identity model using the narratives of the research participants will be given in the results sections (chapters 5) as well as further analysis and discussion (chapters 6&7). What is important to note at this juncture is that the processes and dynamics captured by this model reflect this thesis' assertion that identity is a dynamic process of becoming, not a static process of being. Furthermore, it is clear that identity is deeply influenced by our interactions with others around us, it does not come to be in isolation. Finally, others representations or misrepresentations of us comprise the pivotal aspect of this process. Given these factors, the link between identity and behavior can be established and return can be theorized as an act of representation or re-presentation.

B. A Challenge to the Role of Identity in Motivation for Return Migration

Empirical and theoretical findings often stem from puzzlement about what does not make immediate sense and, therefore, a basic wonder about contradictions and 'counterintuitions' may be useful throughout the research process – in generating data, developing interpretations, enlivening the empirical narrative, and clarifying the relevance of the

findings. It is in this sense that we may view ethnographic fieldwork as a process of puzzling over and struggling to solve paradoxes. (Ybema & Kamsteeg 2010, p 105-106)

During the research process, it became evident that the link between identity and return migration as an act of representation is not as straightforward as I theorize above or as it was accounted for in my research proposal. This is demonstrated by the rejection by a majority of the research participants of the idea that the challenges that they faced due to identity (mis)representations could directly be linked to their return. Note that the participants were never asked if their return was CAUSED by identity related challenges but only whether and how identity played a role in their return. In fact, during the flow of conversation, I emphasized that there are other factors which come into play in return motivation but that the particular focus of my research was on identity. In spite (or perhaps because of) this clarification, many rejected the idea of a link between their identity development process and return.

Instead of breaking the link between identity and return, this seemingly discordant finding calls for further investigation of the link between identity and return because it demonstrates the intricacies and complexities of identity related processes and dynamics. Hall states, "identities are …multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and **antagonistic**[11], discourses, practices and positions" (Hall 1996, p.4). In support of the complexities of identity construction, Ybema et al also state that the social processes implicated in identity formation are complex, recursive, reflexive, and **constantly 'under construction**[12]**'** (Ybema, et al 2009,p.301). If one accepts that identities are constructed in this way, the participants' rejection of the connection between identity and return calls for further exploration, not the conclusion that identity does not play a role in return.

One framework from which to understand these complexities of identity processes is the Intersectionality framework. The Intersectionality framework pushes the perspective of identity theory out of a one to a two dimensional axis (Crenshaw, 1989, p.39). This is necessary because although identity theory shows the connection between identity and behavior, it's considerations of identity do not allow for the nuances of antagonistic interactions between an individual and those they are relating with or antagonistic interactions between the multiple identities an individual may carry. This was highlighted in footnote 10 above and is seen in the following statements:

[11] My emphasis.
[12] My emphasis.

> *"identities may or may not be confirmed in situationally based interaction…if the process is unsuccessful, the salience of the identity is likely to diminish, perhaps considerably. (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p.289).*

> *"If more than one identity is activated in a situation, we expect that the identity with the higher level of prominence, or the identity with the higher level of commitment, will guide behavior more than an identity with a lower level of prominence or commitment" (Stets & Burke, 2009, p.133)*

Here we see that Stryker & Burke expect that in a situation in which a person's identity is not affirmed, that this identity would lose its significance. And in the case of multiple identities in conflict, Stets & Burke state that hierarchical control comes into play. Intersectionality provides for greater nuance in these circumstances in that it goes beyond "mutually exclusive (identity) categories of experience and analysis" (Crenshaw, 1989, p.39) to consider the "multiple, shifting, and layered" (Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008) reality of identities. Samuels & Ross-Sheriff state that the value of Intersectionality is that it "avoids essentializing a single analytical category of identity by attending to other interlocking categories" (Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008). The consideration of identity from an intersectional perspective therefore allows us to understand the participants' rejection of the idea that identity played a role in return from a different angle. Intersectionality challenges us to consider that other, previously encountered discourses were at play during the interview process.

The necessity of understanding the research participants' reaction to my queries through an intersectional framework was underscored by an ironic occurrence: during the interviews, those who rejected identity as influencing their return also **still** recounted discourses which misrepresented their identity & therefore challenged their integration into the host country and influenced return. When I pondered why their responses played out in this way I realized two things: first that because identities are shaped through each and every discourse we encounter, the participants were encountering my questions to them as a discourse aiming (unintentionally) to represent them. And since identities are about becoming, then in that moment the participants had to weigh what I proposed against the other discourses they had heretofore accepted. At that moment, the research participants had to decide to either accept or reject the new discourse which I introduced. Most chose to reject that which I proposed and continue forward in the discourse with which they had thus far aligned themselves.

What does this all have to do with return? Upon understanding that it is impossible to expect a straightforward answer to a question which itself comes across as a (mis)representation, that there

are multiple external discourses at play in the conversation, the next step is to consider these what these discourses may be. The participants themselves disclosed what some of these external discourses are when they gave their reasons/factors for return. If these given factors/reasons for return are taken as discourses, then no matter what factor is attributed/ given for return, it still points back to identity. How? The discussion above presents identity as a process of becoming, a process in which one encounters and either adopts or rejects various discourses which aim to represent them. If the reasons/factors that the research participants gave for return are taken as discourses or at the very least as factors derived from discourses attempting to represent the research participants, then one sees that through an internal dialogue, the participants had to decide: how does this factor fit into my idea of what I want to become? In doing so, the research participants went through the process of identity develop,ent defined and demonstrated above. Therefore, the link between return and identity is further established. This argument will be further expounded upon on below as the complications and complexities of return migration are themselves teased out and discussed.

Angela Explains: Why I Returned to Kenya

Within return migration theory, an understanding that identity can play a role in return migration motivation is an acceptable stance due to the fact that "return migration is a *process* initiated by various '*casual factors'*" (King, 2001, p13 - 14). King categorizes these factors as economic, social, family/life cycle, and political (King, 2001, p13 - 14) and identity related factors are identified under the social and family/life cycle categories. Before delving deeply into a theoretical discussion on return migration, let's take a step back to consider some excerpts from the interview with Angela in which she explains why she returned to Kenya. The excerpts demonstrate the causal factors and realities that shaped her decision for return and which are considered and discussed by various return migration experts (King, 2001; Cassarino, 2004; Sussman, 2010; Cerase, 1974).

"…one of the reasons that made me realize I need to come back home was the fact that in America I realized that everything was working. They had a system that was working which was great but I couldn't feel my relevance. You know? And that frustrated me. You know? It did, it frustrated me and then I was restless. I became very very restless to a point I was working and I was doing well at work but there was a part of me that felt like there was something missing in my life and I couldn't put a finger on it and it was only when I came back in 2009 that and I think that at that point, was like ahh there was quite a bit that was going on in Kenya. That was after the post-election violence ummmm I mean things were still difficult here. Don't get me wrong. But all I could see was opportunity. I was

like oh my God this is where I need to be. And then that connection with family! I was like wow. Because usually when I would come back previously I would only stay for like three weeks but this time I stayed for three and a half months and so I really had time to spend with family time to look around to see what's working what's not working and that's when I made up my mind that like I have to come back I don't care! I have to come back. So I went back and I went back for I think maybe 9 months. Moved 2010."

A. An Exploration of Return Migration Theory

Overall, in regards to return migration, King states that "the causes of return migration are many and varied, and that a migrant may decide to return home for complex of reasons rather than just one" (King, 2001, p13 – 14). This is demonstrated in the responses of the research participants interviewed for this study (see results in chapter 6). For example, much like Angela above, many spoke of the limitations/ceilings they faced in the work place and at times of the push of tightening immigration policies in the US & Europe. This, when combined with the pull of business opportunities in Kenya (given Kenya's improving economic and political climate), resulted in an irresistible, once in a lifetime window of opportunity. Others also included in their reasons for return, the pull of family ties (i.e. wanting their children to have relationships with their Kenyan relatives) and of desires to find a marriage partner in Kenya. In other words, in different combinations, they exemplified causal factors from all of the categories King theorizes and they also demonstrated his assertions that return is variegated (Ibid).

In the same way that reasons or motivations for return migration are numerous and complex, it is critical to step back and note that the theories of return migration (under which these motivations are deliberated) are varied and complex. The term is often utilized to encapsulate forms and versions return that often have different causes, processes and end points. To understand the importance of this, consider that return migration can be voluntary and/or forced, it can be international and/or intra-national, it can be the end of migration but often may be the beginning of transnational migration and between these dichotomies there may be, of course, aspects of return that cannot be ascribed to either end of the spectrum. In this way, discussions of return migration (much like identity) result in convoluted, overlapping terminology (King, 2001) and aspects that are 'multifaceted and heterogeneous' (Cassarino, 2004) and which converge and diverge in various ways.

Therefore, in order for a productive deliberation on the motivations of return migration, it is critical to set the parameters of the conducted research and therefore the discussion at hand. The following are therefore the key factors which were taken into consideration regarding the return migration of the research participants are made:

- the research conducted focused on the identity related motivations for return (As opposed to other aspects of return such as re-adjustment upon return or potentiality of economic impact upon return. Note that in focusing on identity during the interview process, the research participants were not precluded from discussing other motivations for return).
- the research was intentionally focused on a category of non-retired returnees, roughly between the ages of 25 – 45.
- the type of return migration addressed in this argument is international in scope, often following some kind of historical line or link such as colonization (King, 2001, p. 9-10; OECD, 2015, p.364).
- The return migrants understood their return as voluntary (they demonstrated agency) and although tightening immigration policies may have played a hand in their return, their journey was distinct from those who are been 'forcefully' repatriated.

In the process of digging through the standing academic deliberations on return migration motivation, I quickly encountered limitations in relating my findings to the theories that governed the discussions of various authors. This was despite the fact that there were publications with comparable or somewhat similar topic parameters. For example, Anastasia Christou's work *Narratives of Place, Culture and Identity* explores whether "second generation returnees construct their return migration project as a search for identity" (Christou, 2006, p.18). Although there is a focus on identity and return in this publication, the discussion that ensues in Christou's work is one that focuses on the concepts of home and belonging in regards to return motivation. This was contrary to my expectation of a thorough discussion of the role of identity in return. Here, a slightly different focus on a specific attribute of the return migrants – in this case being a first verses second generation migrant – resulted in a different focus in the deliberation and conclusions regarding their motivations for return.

I understand this kind of discrepancy the same way I understood the contradictions discussed above regarding the identity construction process: through Intersectionality. This is because in the development of a thought framework, Intersectionality allows one to hold antagonistic or seemingly unrelated aspects of a concept in juxtaposition to each other and still have a whole, rather than

discarding what initially does not seem to fit. In particular case, we see that although return migrants may be on a similar journey, the factors that shape this journey play out differently depending on various contexts or characteristics of their journey such as environment, society, and historical time period (Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008). Never the less, although these factors play out differently, they point to a larger process that is at work in shaping return migration motivation. Further examples of such discrepancies and their interplay are given below. They are given with the intention of underlining that although different authors have different understandings regarding the motivations of return migration, this does not automatically mean that their concepts are in conflict with one another. Through Intersectionality, seemingly disparate conceptualizations of return can be brought together to paint a larger picture of the dynamics that are at work in the motivations of return migration. In fact, as I reviewed these various theories with this mindset, I noted a pattern: all the return factors and their motivations either reflected internal or external factors which shape & drive return migration. This pattern demonstrates just how much return migration is about identity. Why? Because as was outlined earlier in this chapter, identities are developed through processes in which internal factors and external factors act on a person and shape their actions, their behaviors (Stryker & Burke 2000). There will be more on this later, for now, we focus on outlining some key theories of return migration motivation and point out their limitations when they are considered in isolation instead of concurrently.

One of the theories in which there is a convergence in a focus on motivations for return migration but a divergence in the thinking that guides the ensuing deliberation is Cassarino's 2004 work. Here, the author a focuses on return migration motivation as is related to hope for development. To understand motivations for return, Cassarino explores various migration theories but finally only adopts aspects of transnationalism and social network theory because these theories bring to the fore the cross-border social and economic networks that returnees can tap into as social agents of development (Cassarino, 2004). But what about factors that interact with and that influence the impact of these social and economic networks? For example, in one research participant's case, she returned because of the business networks her father had in Kenya. However, she first also considered the political context. Had the political context been negative, she would not have returned in spite of the strength of her economic & social network. So while economic and social networks do play a role in return motivation, their impact is also impacted and influenced by other return factors. Focusing solely on the economic and social factors is limiting in that it blinds one from the larger 'dance' which is at play in the motivations of return. King's thinking supports this notion when he

notes “the causes of return migration are many and varied…a migrant may decide to return home for a complex of reasons rather than just one” (King, 2001, p13 – 14).

Another face or angle from which return migration motivation can be contemplated is through Cerase’s proposed typologies of return (Cerase, 1974). Cerase proposes four types of returns: 1.) a return of failure, 2.) a return of conservatism, 3.) a return of retirement, and 4.) a return of innovation. In discussing these types of return, Cerase theorizes that the ways in which the returnee experienced their time in the host country determines their motivation to return. Those who fall into the category of return of failure obviously return due to an inability to adjust to life in the new country both socially and economically. Those who fall into the category of return of conservatism find a way to make it economically, but not socially as their minds are “ever fixed” on the improved livelihood they can have upon gathering enough funds to return home. Those who return to retire may adjust both socially and economically but the roots of their social lives do not sink as deeply in the host country and they therefore desire to return to the family network they know. Finally those who fall into the category of return of innovation are drawn to return by ambitions to impact the society they left behind with the “means and skills they have acquired” (Cerase 1974, 251). In considering Cerase’s typology, the overarching weakness that stood out was that it is limited to its historical period of analysis (1876-1968) – a time of different immigration policy in both the USA and Italy – the countries of focus in his study. As will be seen later in the accounts of the research participants, immigration policy is a peripheral but integral causal factor of return. It is worthwhile to note that this weakness is evident and filters through to other academic criticisms of Cerase’s typology which take into account the recent history of changing immigration policies. For example, King’s criticism of Cerase’s typology notes: “the migrants with the most drive and ambition, who succeed in the destination country, are those who are least likely to return” (King 2000, 13). The limitation of Cerase’s typology and therefore the root of this criticism is made clearer when one considers that more open immigration policies in the period of his study allowed for more opportunities for migrants to risk taking second or even third tries at making it in America. The possibility of this less restricted type of migration was recorded by Cerase himself (Cerase 1974, 254). Therefore, if an individual returned with the intention to innovate but did not have the expected impact in their country of origin, they could always go back to the USA and try again. In the modern world, even at the time of King’s criticism (2000), this was no longer an option due to tightening immigration policies and also cost.

Another return migration publication to consider is Sussman’s study which considers return migrants who fall into much the same scope as those studied for this thesis. Her return migrants are

first generation migrants, follow an international path of migration, return voluntarily, see their return as permanent, and are non-retirees. However, her approach to understanding their motivations for return is based on analyzing the impact on their psyche of migration. She then uses this analysis of the psychological impact of migration in order to understand their re-adjustment upon return; Sussman aims to understand how cultural transition in the country of adoption affects repatriation experience (Sussman, 2010). Therefore the framework which she develops regarding return motivation meets her goals and aims but is limited in painting a more complete picture of the motivations of return migration because by only considering the psyche, it leaves out an analysis of the other causal factors such as the economic and the political. To this regard, her approach seemed somewhat reductive.

As mentioned, in reviewing these various theories which deliberate return migration motivation and factors, a pattern arose above the varied focal interests of the authors. Remember that King notes four different categories of causal factors under which return migration motivations can be understood: economic, social, family/life cycle, and political. These categories are demonstrated above in the review of various authors' theoretical approaches to return. When one notes this while also contemplating the place of identity in return, a pattern rises above these categorizations: that is that the theories which the authors utilize to discuss the causal factors or motivations of return focus on either the internal or external factors that shape return migration (or both aspects congruently). This is integral to underscore because it brings us back to the concept of identity development as a process that occurs through the interaction of internal and external discourses of representation (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Additionally, as noted earlier, "identity formation involves a process of negotiation between social actors and institutions, between self and other, between inside and outside, between past and present" (Ybema 2009, p.303). It would therefore be beneficial to approach return through a consideration of how internal and external identity factors interplay to shape it. Because of this, it is proposed that the specific causal factors analyzed in various theories of return migration may be understood as internal and external discourses which aim to represent migrants in their identity development process. Return migration can then be understood as being shaped much more by identity processes than has previously been considered.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Before utilizing this concept of exploring return through the lens of identity processes, there must first be a discussion regarding the data collection process & its implications. The concepts of identity & return as well as the nature of the research question lent themselves to a specific approach in data collection. That is a narrative focused approach. The discussion below therefore begins with an overview of the practical steps which were taken during the data collection & analysis in order to capture & process data using methods which reflected the concepts presented in the last chapter. Thereafter, the chapter delves into the strategy or thinking which shaped these practical steps, specifically, the nuances and complications of narrative data collection. This chapter is therefore a bridge between the concepts presented in chapter 3 and the data presented in chapters 5, 6, & 7. It explores the ways in which I aimed to gather data which was representative of the internal and external processes at work in return migration motivation.

An Overview of the Research Methods

The data collection process itself was straight forward: ten in depth interviews were conducted in Nairobi, Kenya from March until April 2015. I returned to the Netherlands in May 2015 with the intention of continuing again in June & July 2015. However, extenuating personal circumstances prevented a return to Kenya and the research process was cut short. Because of this, planned data collection opportunities during focus group discussions and follow up interviews were lost. One consequence of a shortened research period was a homogenous group of research participants, with one or two exceptions. In other words, the data which resulted from the interviews is representative of a very specific group of individuals. This was not intentional as I was aware of the varied approaches to research participant selection which aim at avoiding bias. However, because Kenyan returnees are not a generic, well documented category of individuals who can easily be located and sampled, I could not begin with such approaches. I therefore began sampling using snowballing and hoped to eventually develop a method for ensuring that the representation of returnees fairly reflected the Kenyan return migrant population.

I used a personal network to recruit research participants: I relied on Kenyan friends from my years in an American University and family members both in the USA and in Kenya for connections. I also attempted to make connections through social media. For example, I joined a Facebook *group America-Educated Kenyan Returnees* which at the time of posting (March 19, 2015) had 65 members. Snowballing, introduced bias. There is class bias as nine out of ten (9/10) of the research

participants were university educated, seven (7) of those were educated up to Master's level. There is also an ethnicity bias as eight (8) of the participants came from the Kikuyu subgroup, which is only one of the 44 subgroups found in Kenya. There is a gender bias; only 3 of the participants were male. There is also a city –suburb bias, all lived in Nairobi during the time of the interview and had grown up in or around Nairobi. Finally, there was also a host country representation bias as all migrated to the US or to the UK. This differs from the observations of scholars such as Kinuthia who notes that the majority of Kenyan migrants migrate to other African countries with Asia and the Western hemisphere as the second and third destinations, respectfully (Kinuthia, 2013)[13].

Normally, such a degree of bias should render an academic work impracticable as the credibility of the research process is brought into doubt. But in this case, the resulting bias or homogeneity of the research participant group was an asset as it is generally representative of the group upon whom this thesis is focused: individuals who emigrate from Kenya to the global north for educational purposes; individuals whose impact on the Kenyan economy has been widely documented[14] (Kinuthia & Akinyoade 2012; Nyamwange, 2013; Rutten & Muli, 2008). As we saw in chapter 2, Kenyans emigrate for educational purposes, tend to come from urban areas, and travel mostly to the UK or the US. Further supporting the credibility of such a focus is a 2015 study of the Kenyan population in the United States which notes:

> *The Kenyan diaspora population in the United States is well educated, economically successful, and has a labor force participation rate that far exceeds the national average. A larger share of Kenyan diaspora members in the United States holds bachelor's degrees and advanced degrees than the U.S. population overall, and over one-quarter of the population is in the nursing profession. The median annual income for Kenyan diaspora households in the United States is $11,000 above the U.S. national median, and two in five are homeowners* (Migration Policy Institute, p.1, 2015).

[13] The OECD and Word Bank figures presented in Chapter 2 seem to indicate that more Kenyan emigrants migrate to the global North than anywhere else. The fact is that while the OECD and World Bank have reliable figures regarding the number of Kenyan immigrants in global North, their figures regarding the number of Kenyan emigrants in Sub-Saharan countries are not reliable as they even contradict other official documentation published by the Word Bank. The bottom line is that many of these emigrants are not officially registered and limited resources have been invested in tracking them. It is therefore hard to know exactly how many more migrants live in other sub-Saharan African nations than in the global North. Note that these figures are also not well tracked by the Kenyan government or the governments of the Sub-Saharan countries to which they immigrate. Because of this, Kinuthia's general stance that the majority of Kenyans migrate to other sub-Saharan African countries stands as it has also been documented in other publications (Crush 2011). However, as presented in ch. 2, there are still many reasons to pay attention to Kenyan immigrants in the global North.

[14] Remittances to Kenya have been shown to come mainly from the global north (Nyamwange, 2013, p.14-15). Furthermore, the Kenyan government's intensified focus on Kenyans in the global North (Kinuthia & Akinyoade, 2012) supports this fact.

Therefore, the bias or homogeneity of the group composition allowed for a focused exploration of the specific category of returnees described in the introduction. As will be seen in the presentation of the data in chapters 5-7, the homogeneity of the group allowed for unexpected insights to arise as the research participants independently asserted certain specific sentiments. For example, I did not expect the participants to complain about the limitations of the western career path. Given that there are many seeking the benefits afforded through such career paths, such a sentiment seems illogical. Given such a finding, it is obvious that certain insights would have been lost if the representation of the participants had not been focused on highly educated, city based migrants who had traveled to the global North as opposed to the global South. Additionally, the depth as well as intimacy of the conversations had with the research participants given the level of their education as well as their time in the global North would have been lost. As such, the bias or homogeneity in the combination of the research participant group actually established the credibility of the accounts presented in chapters 5-7.

Upon recruitment of the participants, each participant was invited for an initial interview whose duration was 1.5 – 2.5 hours. The interviews were structured and yet un-structured in that there was a question guide (see annex B) but I encouraged the participants to focus on telling me their story. The interviews begun with an introduction to myself and to the topic: I shared with the participants that I was a research student at the African Studies Center in the Netherlands who was also a potential returnee. The idea of research was not foreign to any of the participants as most had a Master's level education or were familiar with the concept. I then introduced the topic and emphasized that while return is widely understood to be motivated by practical and pragmatic factors such as improved political and economic climate, I was interested in the role of ideological reasons in return. I then collected baseline data points (name, birthdate, etc.). Note that this baseline data was necessary to ensure that my focus remained on the category of return migrants who were of interest in this thesis. Where there were any deviations (i.e. with Laura and Ama), the data gathered during these interviews served as a point of contrast or comparison. Note that the baseline data points also set an official tone to the interviews and kept the interview sessions from becoming too familiar. As discussed below, I was careful to ensure that I did all I could to allow the research participant and I could relate to one another (see section c in this chapter). Although this was meant to be an asset, it also had the potential to become detrimental in that if the interview became too informal the interview objectives would be lost. Therefore, establishing the legitimacy of the interview as an official process was integral. After this tone was set, I then also explained that I would give the participant 'freedom' to talk about the three (3) aspects of their migration journey noted below.

1. Their emigration & experience abroad as related to identity;
2. thinking about and deciding to return; and
3. life upon return.

Note that in an attempt to shift the focus off of the questions themselves and unto the construction of narratives, I sent all but two of the participants the questionnaire in advance. By sending the questionnaires, I hoped to prime the participant's reflection and thinking processes before they came to the meeting. There were exceptional cases in which it was not possible to send the questionnaires and these were the conversations which seemed a bit more rigid in that the participants waited for me to ask questions for them to answer instead of telling their story. When this became apparent, I tried to emphasize that I was interested in the participant telling me their story as opposed to their answering my questions. At times this approach worked, in some cases not. This had much to do with the personality of the research participant and whether they relished telling and or felt safe enough to tell their life story or not.

All the interviews were recorded and I personally transcribed all of the interviews. This was a daunting task but given that the interviews were the only available data point, I decided to utilize the transcription process as a time for reflection. Transcription proved to be quite overwhelming not because of the time and effort that it took up; but because I was quite emotionally sensitive during the period of time that I took on this task. I therefore found myself to be overly critical of myself in terms of the mistakes I made in the process of interviewing. Interestingly, during this data analysis process, the sections of data of which I was overly critical proved to be the points that produced the most interesting observations. This is keeping in line with the observations of Ybema & Kamsteeg that:

Without wanting to romanticize the frustrations that come with doing fieldwork, we believe that confusion, estrangement, loneliness, wonder, annoyance, and any other distancing emotion experienced during fieldwork ,while hardly joyful, can be vital sources of inspiration for a researcher (2010, p. 106).

As I will discuss below, one of the greatest hurdles I faced was that when I listened back to the interviews, I was reminded of, and frustrated by how inconsistently I introduced the research topic – as though I was unsure of what I was doing. I was frustrated because I saw these mistakes as wasted opportunities. I was sure that I had somehow ruined my data set by not explaining myself well. However, further reflection upon these parts of the interviews drove home the critical fact that an interview focused on the topic of identity is not objective, sanitized moment in a laboratory but a

very part of the identity development process which I was studying. The moments that created tensions between myself and the research participant allowed for the process I was studying to come to the fore during the interview.

After completing transcription, I combed the transcriptions for places in which the participants expressed overlapping sentiments about their migration journeys. By this I mean that I looked through the texts of transcribed interviews in order to identify similarities in the ways that the participants communicated about particular topics; for example about facing discrimination or about working in the global North. Several scientific publications note that the focus of such a narrative analysis is on identifying thematic content (Bramberg 2012; Josselson, 2009). Specifically, Josselson states that 'narrative inquiry does not test hypothesis; instead patterns are inductively adduced, documented, and conceptualized (Josselson, 2009, p. 650). Note that I was not looking for my own pre-prescribed thematic topics but for those which were introduced by the research participants themselves. Off course, one can argue that I pre-prescribed the topics through the questions that I asked the participants. However, my thought in regards to this is that where an issue consistently arose in these separate conversations, I could understand it as originating from the participants instead of the researcher.

It is worthwhile to note that originally, I intended to pursue a critical discourse analysis of the transcriptions. However after reviewing, more closely, the publications which outline and detail the techniques utilized through this approach (Ainsworth & Hardy 2004, Alvesson & Kareeman, 2000), I found CDA methods to be deterministic. This is because although CDA focuses on making knowable the social processes of meaning making by teasing out "the connection between language and social context" and facilitating a bridge between text and context (Ainsworth & Hardy 2004, p.237, 239), Ainsworth and Hardy assert too boldly that "discourse constructs identities by defining groups, their interests, their position within society and their relationship to other groups (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004, p. 240)". Because this stance does not account for the agency of the individuals in creating or engaging with created discourses, I turned instead to narrative analysis which also closely examines meaning making in discourse, specifically in narratives, while also acknowledging the agency of the human agents who use narrative as a "device for the organization of self and modern identity" (Bramberg, 2012, p. 79).

After identifying the various themes which arose during the interviews, I then utilized various identity and return focused academic publications (Cassarino, 2004; King, 2001; Stryker & Burke, 2000; Stets & Burke 2009) to frame an understanding of said themes and plots. I avoided developing

statistics on the participants because the numbers of participants was too small to be of statistical relevance. I also eventually came to see that in the case of this thesis, it was more useful to focus upon the broader concept of identity as an overarching framework which shapes all the causal factors of return migration (see theoretical framework p 32).

Reflections: Collecting Data Using Narrative Interviews

Narrative interviews (Beech & Sims, 2007; Adler, et. al, 2017) were the select method of data collection due to the relevance of discursive forms and their analysis to identity studies (Ybema, et. al., 2009). Ybema, et. al. state that discursive forms include autobiographies, narrations, stories or even every day interactions and that they can "*illustrate how individual agents experience, shape, reconstruct and are subject to the situational and structured 'realities' they inhabit" (Ibid, p.300).* Furthermore, in regards to the focus here on the link between identity & return, the same authors also indicate that

> *"identities are, to a greater rather than a lesser extent, more accurately seen as co-constructed or dialogical entities which are 'fabricated' through discourse, 'staged' through performance and 'fictionalized' through text" (Ibid, p.305)* .

Finally, I also focused on narrative interviews because Bramberg asserts that narration or story telling is a way of exploring who one is (or who we/ others are) that provides a researcher data to analyze when seeking insight into the experiences of individuals or a group of individuals

But what exactly is narrative? Narrative involves telling a story which is focused perhaps on self or at times on experience (s)[15]. This storytelling "weaves together the reconstructed past, the perceived present, and the imagined future, providing the individual with a sense of unity and meaning" (Adler et al, 2017, p. 519). Narrative is a distinct and valued tool of inquiry and analysis in this thesis due to the fact that one of the primary focuses of narrative inquiry is on elucidating meanings narrators give to experiences that they have had (Adler, 2017, Bramberg 2012). Such a stance is reflective of the focus of the research question on return as shaped by the meanings one holds about their life experiences. Furthermore and in alignment with the thinking presented in the theoretical framework, Adler et al note that it is in the interaction between internal processes and external sociocultural contexts in which the meanings of experiences are exemplified (2017). These meanings are conveyed in narrations when individuals "lay out how they as individuals experience

[15] Note that in this thesis, the focus is on both on the self (identity) and on experiences (migration).

certain events and confer their subjective meanings onto these experiences" (Bramberg, 2012, p.77). It is critical to state that narratives are not measures of identity but demonstrations of its workings in that narratives are "constitutive of identity" (Adler et al, 2017 p. 520). This is because "how we make sense of our experiences and who we perceive ourselves to be are reciprocally related" (Adler et al, 2017, p. 520). Note that these same attributes of narrative research and analysis also distinguish narrative methodology from everyday sense-making-strategies. This is because a focus on the functions and relationships between the details of an experience (as opposed to the details themselves) allows narrative inquiry to be a scientific process rather than an opinion generating process. As Adler states, the value and strength of narrative approach is that its focus is not on the veracity of the memories of the narrator. Below, some embedded challenges of utilizing this process of inquiry are discussed.

A. The Co-Construction of Identity

Given these perspectives on narrative, I approached the interviews with the mindset of providing a stage for the research participants to narrate the story of their return as it related to their identity development process. However, in order to maintain a level of focus and direction during this process, a question guide (annex A) was developed and utilized. Maintaining a healthy tension between these two objectives was imperative and challenging. The first challenge which arose out of the tension between allowing the participants room to narrate a story while providing a structure which would keep the conversation on topic was in explaining the strategy behind the interview and behind the questions I would ask. It was necessary to make clear to the participants that the research objective was to get beyond the practical, pragmatic reasons of return. But I was, at the time, unsure about how to convey this objective without setting a biased tone for the conversation. At the beginning of each interview, as I chatted about the basic details of their and my life, I tried to read each individual, to gauge their responses to my engagements with them, in order to frame my objective accordingly. I contemplated: how does this research participant tend to think/see the world around them? Subjectively- through their emotions or objectively – through rationale and reason?[16] Therefore how could I most effectively explain the purposes of my study in order to provoke a somewhat authentic personal dialogue/narrative from them? How would they conceive my

[16] This is not to say that a person can only be either subjectively or objectively oriented/ have either an objective or subjective frame of reference. But, every individual has overarching tendencies (that can of course change from setting to setting and interaction to interaction). These 'tendencies' are an expression of a person's identity given that identities are: "parts of a self, composed of the meanings that persons attach to the multiple roles they typically play" (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p.284).

introduction? Many times, I felt as though I blundered through this introductory phase therefore making the initial interactions between the participant and myself awkward instead of easy. As I spoke to some of the participants I felt as though we missed each other. There were times when I felt that I was objective (pragmatic) when I should have been more subjective (emotive), and vice versa. This is critical to take note of because it had a great impact on how I would later process my data. It contributed greatly to the frustrations which clouded my transcription & analysis of the interviews. Fortunately these frustrations served a purpose as they became markers of points in the interviews which I should pay special attention to as they led to greater insights into the identity related processes at work during the interview. In addition to these aspects of my own internal processes, there was the additional fact that the participants were also reading me and framing their understanding of what I was explaining accordingly. This interplay, the co-construction of the interview process is seen clearly in the interview with Warari. After giving him my best elevator pitch of the interview focus, Warari, a very objective thinker, asked for a clearer explanation so that he could determine how to ensure he met it. The following conversation ensued:

> **Warari***: What is it that you feel would be the most important thing to achieve from your thesis? Whilst that's the topic…*
>
> **Njeri***: Ok, the focus was on identity and development, like I said. How your identity is shifted while you are abroad and how that may contribute to return as an act of re-,re-representation of yourself. Sort of fighting back: I've been changed so I'm fighting back.*
>
> ***Warari****: I hope I'm not being awkward. It's just that I like to understand the conclusion before so that it informs the discussion. It's good to know: what do you want to achieve, why. Cuz sometimes, wanting to achieve something doesn't commiserate with the reasons why (*you're doing what you're doing). *If I can be cognizant of (*what you want to do and why) *during the conversation, it will help. So basically, you want to understand people's mindset, people's sort of social positioning how it's changed while they're abroad, what impact it would have on their socioeconomic outlook."*
>
> **Njeri***: Yes*
>
> **Warari***: Alright fine.*
>
> **Njeri***: I'll be honest and also a little personal, like I said I'd like to return and I want to hear about others experiences so why not use my degree to do that?*

Warari's response to my last statement was a big mmmmm! An indication that in his own way, he now understood my objectives. In the next conversation, with Paul, I chose a subjective approach to introduce the interview objectives. I hoped that such an approach would better convey my objectives as it was more reflective of my general life perspective. Interestingly, this approach seemed to annoy him and I noted that he responded by challenging my subjective standpoint and giving me responses which strongly and clearly demonstrated the benefits of undertaking a strategically cunning and objective approach to life decisions. After transcribing these interactions, what I noted of these engagements was that the interview process was a dance between myself and the research participants' personalities. This interaction between Warari & I demonstrates the assertion by Ybema, et al that identity is co-constructed, fabricated through discourse (2009). Therefore, during the data analysis, I finally came to understand these setbacks as an acceptable function of the narrative data collection process. They were acceptable because the process allowed for the identity co-construction process to play out. By this, I mean that in the same way the processes of identity development are at work in our daily interactions, they were also at work during the interviews.

B. Maintaining Flexibility and Using an Interview Guide

After the introducing the interview objectives and structure, attention shifted to the main part of the interview, the questions. While I did utilize the interview guide, I did not rigidly ask every question in every interview nor necessarily ask the questions in the same way. Furthermore, as the conversation progressed, I tried to interject with questions where they were relevant or they fit into the flow of the conversation. In this way, I hoped to allow a narrative to take shape and build upon itself. Although this approach worked against the data collection process in that certain questions were overlooked, this approach proved useful as there were topics which in preparation for the interview, I overlooked or did not think to address, but which came up in the conversations. For example, when Warari interjected that understanding his identity upon leaving Kenya was integral to understanding the transformation of his identity while abroad, I ensured to include this aspect in the interviews with other participants. A whole chapter & data point for analysis would be missing from this thesis if an allowance for such interjections was not made.

Taking note of interesting and unexpected facets of the interview and also of the questions and tactics which worked and which did not was another aspect of managing the tension between guiding the conversation while allowing for a personal narrative. In regards to these unexpected and interesting facets, when I received such information during one interview, I ensured to present them to other research participants in order to gain others' perspective and triangulate data. An example of this is the case where two research participants related that they avoided the Kenyan community

while abroad. After hearing this, I asked other participants how they engaged with the Kenyan community in order to understand whether this was a common factor between the research participants.

In regards to the questions, after each conversation, I assessed which questions I had to revise, which questions were dead ends, and which questions I had to ensure not to skip. This circular, instead of a linear process of data collection allowed for a feedback loop which helped me fine tune the data collection process to give further room and space for the participants to tell their story, instead of the story I wanted to hear. For example, I noted that on one of the questions regarding identity, my original focus had been being Kenyan, on national identity:

> *How did you identify while abroad? As Kenyan? A hybrid Kenyan? How did this identity transform over time?*

This question at times received puzzled reactions and at other times the participants went with the concept but were clearly not convinced and therefore provided information which conflicted with other statements they made at other points in the conversation. I eventually realized that the issue had to do with the concept of identity itself. The participants often did not think of identity in the same way as me or as those within the academic sphere (see Theoretical Framework pg. 22-27). Upon further literature review, I came to discover that this was a general issue related to the concept of identity. I therefore dropped this specific question and focused on a more open ended question which allowed for the participants to express their understanding of identity. So the question became:

> *How did you think of yourself while abroad and how did this identity transform over time?*

This adjustment resulted in more free-flowing responses as most participants had a concrete personal perspective on their identity development process.

Throughout the conversations, I was conscious that there were times when research participant responded in a particular way because of the way I'd asked a question. Sometimes this meant that they gave me the answer that I wanted, other times it meant that they strongly opposed something that I expressed. Yanow observes that when research participants are "asked directly to explain their acts and/or beliefs,…[they] are likely to report what they think the researcher wants to hear, or what they believe is socially acceptable, or simply what they think they believe or value" (2006, p.19). I tried to address this challenge from several angles. The first was to follow the cue of Soss who recommends utilizing the interviews themselves to explore the possibility of deceit (2006, p. 132-133). For example, during much of the interview with Paul, he emphatically stated that he

ensured that his friendships were not based upon ethnicity or country of origin but on common life interests. Because I was struck by the forcefulness of his response, I intentionally allowed him the room to express himself without challenging his stance. This allowed him, I believe, to later reflect that one of his most important friendships in University was not based on common goals and interests but grew out of an encounter at an ethnicity based event[17]. Another tactic I used to address deceit was not to ask questions where the participants expected me to but to allow the discomfort of silence to cause the participants to continue talking. In this way, I was able to create room for discrepancies and therefore pinpoint inconsistencies within and between narratives and declarations (Soss, 2006, p. 133).

C. Getting Personal to Gain Perspective

A focus on allowing the participants to build their personal narrative was greatly shaped by the idea that a researcher must aim to "gain a deeper and broader understanding of what is happening to research participants by getting alongside them (i.e. in a collaborative and participative relationship), rather than researching them from afar through methodologies that 'subject them to scrutiny'" (Broussine, 2008). Therefore, an approach, which encouraged dialogue by emphasizing a genuine interest to learn by hearing about the participants' experiences, was of value. In order to get along-side the research participants, I adopted several tactics. First, paying attention to the setting of the meetings was important. I met all of the interview participants in neutral, relaxed locations. Located conveniently across Nairobi, Java House and Art Café are two trendy cafes which cater to the growing Kenyan appetite for Western diversions with a touch of Kenyan flavor. These spaces provide a casual atmosphere and are where many in the growing middle class are likely to catch up with friends over coffee or lunch. In addition to the right physical setting for the interviews, I was conscious of creating the right contextual setting: I wanted the research participants to experience the interview process as a conversation. Therefore, when introducing myself and the interview subject, I shared that I was interested in returning to Kenya and would like to learn from the returnees' experiences. I often made the joke that I was 'killing two birds with one stone' by utilizing the completion of my Master's degree as a personal reconnaissance survey. Finally, where occasion arose and was appropriate, there were times in which I utilized past personal experiences to explore past the walls and barriers that are often at work when meeting any individual for the first time. For example, Pam had gone to University in the same state where I had lived in for 4 years and so I was

[17] In most American Universities, there is an Office of African American Affairs which caters specifically to the minority black community in order to close the gap between black & white students which has been created by the opportunities which for decades were afforded to white Americans but not black Americans through segregation and other such form of disenfranchisement. The event which Paul referenced in our interview was a networking event in which such students were encouraged to meet and support one another.

able to ask pointed questions that I otherwise would not have been able to ask. Being able to show familiarity with the experiences of the participants also encouraged them to open up: where Paul, Angela, Erica and others expressed the challenges of the American University system, I sympathized and shared my own thoughts and experiences. This tactic was especially successful with the two mothers in the group who related to my struggle to determine which country to raise my son. Aware of this factor, they gave insightful perspectives on the way in which their ideas on race & identity transformed and played out differently in the lives of their children in comparison with to their own lives (see results section chapter 6).

In creating an atmosphere of an open dialogue, I was conscious that in traditional Kenyan culture, it is rude to ask direct, personal questions and foolish to answer such questions. Providing such information leaves one open to exploitation[18,19]. The reality of this factor set in when 10 minutes into her interview, Ama said to me: *"Ok so parts of this* (interview) *he's (*her husband*) is not to hear."* This sentiment communicated to me that although we all had exposure to western sentiments and perspectives regarding openness in communication, Kenyan cultural guidelines could at times come into play. In spite of my hesitations the researcher in me dared to ask the sensitive question about legal status and family background and received fairly helpful answers. At times, boundary lines were drawn. I sometimes chose to cross such boundary lines when the tone of the conversation indicated that the individual would not easily be offended and clam up. For example, with Paul, I noted a tension in the conversation when he spoke about his father. Cultural cues would have advised me to avoid this personal subject topic, however since Paul had been unashamedly expressive of his onions, I chose to gently push this matter by asking him if he faced any notable challenges involving family. He responded: *"I didn't want to bring it up but you've asked…"* and proceeded to explain to me that there are many benefits of returning to a family support system but also how burdensome this same support system can become because one worries that his family is worried about him.

D. Room for Improvement

It would have been relevant to the methodology to look at the trend of return migration at different points of its progression. Adding interviews with individuals living in the global north & contemplating the move would have given a different angle from which to contemplate identity &

[18]Exploitation is not really the right word. However I am unsure how to express the sentiment that if you give someone information about yourself, they could, even unintentionally, open the doorway for someone else to use it against you therefore causing unnecessary complications in your life.

[19] Grey literature is full of observations regarding cultural communication i.e. https://www.adventurealternative.com/culture-tips-kenya/ . The Kenyan specific observation made here is based upon personal experience. However, there are generic academic discussions regarding cultural communication styles.

return. In this regard, at a minimum, surveys should have been included as part of the research process. Alverson & Sköldberg highlight,

"although statistics on social phenomena often contain ambiguities, and conceal the social norms on which classifications are based, they may nonetheless sometimes have a certain value as background material in qualitative research" (2000, p.4).

Therefore, the surveys would have allowed for fine-tuning of the data collected in the interviews. Another tactic which would have allowed for fine tuning of the data is one which explores the co-construction of identity at the level of the research participants (Ybema, et al, 2006) instead of just between the participant and the researcher. The observation of this identity co-construction process could have been attained through focus groups aimed at stimulating conversations between small groups of returnees. Finally, follow up interviews would also have added to the depth of the data gathered. As mentioned above, there were cases in which participants went along with ideas that I presented as I framed my questions to them. Perhaps they reconsidered these stances or other matters that came up in the interview. Follow up interviews could provide further insight.

The result of passing the data gathered in the narrative interviews through these additional filters is more reliable data. Had these extra steps been possible, the next step to take with the data would have been discourse analysis:

> *"taking language seriously enables researchers to begin to unravel the complexities of the processes of identity formation and construction: it can offer insight into how identities are constituted and, over time, reconstituted in everyday…talk and texts, it may reveal how dominant…discourses play out in members' identifications, it can illustrate how discourses inscribe particular subject positions, or be deconstructed to demonstrate how discursive strategies may encourage or marginalize the adoption of certain meanings" (Ybema, 2009, p. 303-304*).

E. A Reflexive Look at the Data Collection Process

The reality of the research process is that the focus on return & identity was much very closely entwined with my own personal life journey. This had many consequences, the most prominent being that as I took hits in my own personal life, the research process also suffered. When I moved to the Netherlands from the United States in 2012, my heart was set on returning to Kenya, or at the very least, a sub-Saharan African country. In 2013, beginning the research master's program was a step for me in that direction. However, between 2014 & the end of 2015, my plans slowly

came to a halt as I reality indicated that I would be living in the Netherlands for the foreseeable future. One unexpected result of this is that I found that I was more sensitive to what happened to me or what was said to me during the research process than I would have been if I was more detached to the subject matter. The result: there were moments when I should have been more pragmatic, when I had a hard time reading & interpreting the data I collected. For example, in the interview with Paul, I decided to test out being more forthcoming with my very subjective perspective of return. Paul was the wrong (in many ways the right) person to test this out on as his persona was completely the opposite: very strategic and objective. Towards the end of our conversation, Paul said:

> *"I really hate that. When someone tells me I came back to build the country and whatever, I stop listening. No one….ok, some people think like that. But there's more to it. I don't like sound bites that just sound nice."*

After hearing this, I found myself wondering: do I have it all wrong? Are people and their returns really more calculated and driven by motivations to optimize opportunity than I understand? The factor which brought redemption to my research process was time. Restricted by extenuating personal circumstances, I stepped back from my data for about a year and took another year to write this thesis. During this time, I detached from the emotions of the data collection process. When I came back to the interview with Paul, I found it to be the most fascinating and helpful interview. I was able to see that he was challenging my stance because my stance challenged him! This realization then enabled me to recognize that I should examine objections that arose during the interviews more closely. This realization is in line with Ybema & Kamsteeg's observations that a researcher who is overly familiar with their field of research must make an extra effort to problematize that which seems familiar by investigating more closely that which creates the most discomfort (2010).

Chapter 5: Emigration
(Results & Analysis Part I)

In the previous chapters, the framework of thinking about the relationship between identity and return has been set and the methods of data collection expounded upon. We therefore now transition in the coming chapters to the presentation of the data and its resulting indications. In this particular chapter, we begin with a presentation of the research participants' thoughts about their emigration. Through the presentation of their thoughts about their emigration journey, the aim is to demonstrate the ways through which the identity processes discussed in chapter 3 is at play in shaping return. As such, below are the thoughts of the research participants regarding two factors: 1.) the reasons for their emigration and 2.) their personal perspective on (reflection upon) their identity at the point of their emigration.

Before building upon these thoughts, it is key to first state some general factors and observations of these participants' emigration. As such, we can contextualize whom & what we are talking about. In regards to the reason and the timing of emigration:

- 7/10 research participants left in the late 1990s (the worst period economically in Kenya) or early 2000s (before the change in government) to pursue educational opportunities.
- 1 Left in 2000 as a Labour Migrant.
- 2 (siblings) went after 2003 (to pursue Master's level education).

Note that the one participant, who did not emigrate for educational purposes, was a labor migrant. In the case of those who emigrated for educational purposes, all shared the mutual factor of having parents or close family (siblings, aunts, uncles, etc.) that also traveled abroad (U.S., U.K, or India) for educational purposes. Also note that not all the research participants were asked about their perspective on their identity processes at the point of emigration. This aspect spontaneously came up during the third interview and I did not realize the value of addressing this point until I reviewed my transcripts. Although I only discussed this point with 5 of the research participants, I still find their responses extremely insightful.

Personal Perspectives on Emigration & Identity

In the first interview during which the issue of identity at the point of emigration came up, the research participant, Warari answered a question about his identity while abroad by giving contextual background information on his identity when he left. He asserted that in order for me to understand

his experiences abroad as related to his identity, I would have to understand a significant incident which occurred, two years before his emigration. At 16 years of age, he wanted to immigrate to the UK, just like many of his friends were doing at that time. His father however, refused to allow him. This refusal was premised upon the idea that it was important for him to stay in Kenya between the age of 16 & 18. These were, after all, the years in which 'you develop the fastest in terms of getting to know who you are'. Warari explained his father's stance:

> *"That's the time you need to spend in Kenya to identify as a Kenyan. If you leave before, there is sort of a high risk that you'd lose that opportunity. And I was a little bit upset but I was like, ok fine. So all my friends left. My really close friends especially. It was a bit annoying. But anyway, so I stayed. And true to form, those years, those two years definitely changed me…They made me who I am, even today. Because whilst I was sort of intrigued about going to the UK, I got to understand (that) hold on, at the end of the day you're Kenyan. And I got to meet a lot of Kenyans who were not a part of my school, which was before, predominantly, my social life, was just my school mates….by the time I was leaving at the age of 18, I had more of an understanding of my Kenyan self…. If I left I would have thought Kenyans are Kenyans. (But because I stayed) I had friends from school, Asian friends, Caucasian friends, Kenyan friends. And not just friends, older people I got to know from playing golf. That interaction was really important because it made me realize that being Kenyan carries a lot of weight. And going away from Kenya, having a better understanding of that, my roots, made a difference…. Kenyan friends who left at 16 (today) hang out mostly with expatriates because that's probably who they identify most with. Others never returned. ."*[20]

The point of highlighting this and the other selection of interview portions found below is not to draw similarities between particular details found in these narrations. Instead, the goal is to accentuate aspects of the internal conversations and external inputs that drive the identity process. The outcomes of the identity process at this period of the participants' lives would go on to impact other similar process during other phases in the participants' life journey.

[20] Interview 03-26-15 " 17:00

This given, we note, from the extract above, that Warari identifies his father as a prominent figure within his external social environment. His narration thus begins with a reflected appraisal from his father which serves as the input which kick started an internal conversation represented in the top half of figure 3. Warari goes on to discuss his perceptions of his father's appraisal: he did not appreciate the input he received. He then went on to weighs the input against his identity standards at that time. Note, he did not explicitly mention his identity standards but hints at the comparator stage of the process when he says he accepted this input. The resulting behavior was that he accepted to stay in Kenya for 2 years, instead of resisting his father's input. Here, and later, in the interview Warari himself highlighted that this identity related process played a key role in his return to Kenya, therefore linking return & identity to each other. He noted in his own words that the key difference between himself and those friends who left at 16 is that: "*Kenyan friends who left at 16 (today) hang out mostly with expatriates because that's probably who they identify most with. Others never returned.*" [20] Note, there is much within the field of social psychology to be deliberated upon regarding each of these stages of the identity theory's model highlighted above. But those lines of deliberation are not the focus of this thesis. The focus is to make a connection between the identity process and return by demonstrating how identity processes contribute return migration.

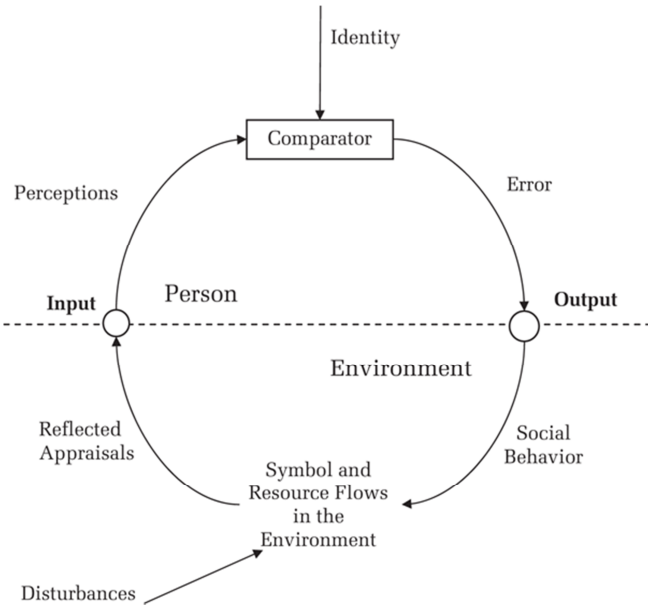


Figure 3: Identity Model. Reprinted from *Identity Theory* (p.63), by Burke, P., & Stets, J. (2009). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The next interview in which the issue of identity before emigration came up was Paul's. Several times as we discussed his emigration, he distinctly made it clear that his emigration was not an open ended adventure, but an adventure which had an absolute end (although the timing of this end was open). When I asked him why, when he emigrated, he felt so sure that he would return, he said:

> *"I had a very good life here, even before I left. I enjoyed myself a lot. I just felt like Kenya would be the best of all worlds. Well, east Africa. If you do well professionally here, you can make a lot of money. Socially, your support system, your friends, family (are here). So*

leaving was about an adventure…There was no one thing that shaped that really. Maybe both my parents went to school abroad and they came and did good things here. So it was never a big step in the family for one of us to leave. In fact, most of my relatives have gone to school abroad. Only a handful haven't come back." [21]

Here, we see that Paul highlights several identity related external factors that served as input during his decision making processes on return. Although he gives no insight into the internal process to which we can relate these external factors, it is still safe to understand these factors as demonstrations of the two-way dialogue between the external and internal that shapes identity formation (Ybema, et al, 2009, Swartz et al, 2006).

One final demonstration of the procession of specific occurrences during the participant's migration journey through the stages of the identity processes is seen in the Erica & Ama's interviews. Both of these excerpts bring to the fore aspects of the identity standard against which the research participants Erica & Ama weighed the input they received from others in their social environment (the comparator point of the identity model).

Erica

Excerpt 1: (**Erica)** *I was raised by my mom a single parent and we were two kids: myself and my brother. So she raised us to be very, very, know- yourself strong. You know… And I think for me being around her and seeing how strong she was just made me independent. I went to boarding school since I was nine years old.*

Ama:

Excerpt 1*:* **(Interviewer)** *And I think (*based on responses given earlier in the interview*) that you identified yourself as someone who was ambitious and someone who was open minded. Would you say that?*

(Ama) *Off course! We in Kenya High School, we were influenced a lot by the lecturers in University of Nairobi. They would come and lecture to us in form 6. You know those days they were radical lecturers. They were like you know, all these activists. Hmmm. And we were very… we had lots of freedom to express ourselves in school.*

[21] Interview 04-10-15 17:00

Excerpt 2: **(Ama)** *Because from when I left here, that's the family I grew up in. Where we are expressive, where people dissent to your opinions, where you may argue about it. That's the family I came from and the schooling I went to, I never went to an authoritarian school. We were free to express ourselves. Off course when I went to the US, it was reinforced I'm sure. Off course! It must! About my own individuality. The fact that, you cannot come and dominate me. You can't. It doesn't matter.*

Remember, the identity standard is the set of meanings that constitutes how an individual understands themselves (Stets & Burke, 2009, p.63). These highlighted responses were given as contextual information regarding interactions that Erica & Ama had while abroad. But, in spite of this, I include them here because they are a reflection of how they saw themselves at the point of emigration. They are the resources of history and culture which feed the identity process of becoming (Hall, 1996, p.4). In other words, Erica and Ama were aiming "not towards a returning to roots but towards a coming to terms with 'routes'" (Hall, p.4, 1996).

Unique Perspectives & Standpoints

Identity theory as represented by the model and which has been explored thus far is limited in that it makes little or no room for antagonism within or between identities. Neither does it account for antagonisms in the dialogue/dynamics/process between the individual and his/her environment. This was discussed in the framework and Intersectionality introduced as an addition to the framework which allows us to take into consideration that which the identity theory cannot account for. It is important to account for antagonisms in identity development processes/ in identity theory because if identity theory/ the identity model is disrupted, the link between return & identity is also disrupted. Below is an example of a stance taken by one of the research participants regarding his identity. This stance confounds identity theory/the identity model:

Paul: *It was advantageous for me to play to my international roots, my African roots but also to the relatively high level of education that I already had. The schools had a quota.*

Interviewer: *At the time you left, how did you see yourself (in spite the pitch of the African guy)?*

Paul: *I can tell you what I was thinking: I was just trying to find my way. I knew that I had to be exposed to something global. I felt I was stifled here in Kenya. A lot more global than Kenya and more than Africa. I was very aggressive and ambitious. I was just happy to take the risk.*

Identity theory as presented by Stryker & Burke is built upon the premise that an individual has multiple identities (2000). In this previous anecdote, Paul demonstrates this: while applying for University before emigration, he strategically and intentionally played up an African identity[22] which he did not truly relate to (if this is related to the identity theory model, the African identity has limited significant/ meaning within his identity standards). Stryker & Burke note that if there are competing or conflicting identities, the identity which allows for one to be accepted in given situational interactions will prevail (2000, p.290). This can be true, but it is not always this case, as we can see with Paul. Yes, the African identity which allowed him to be accepted where he was going prevailed. But he was conscious and strategic about this – he demonstrated agency. How does the identity theory account for this? It does not, and Stryker and Burke also note this weakness of their theory (2000, p. 289, 290) yet they offer no solution. It is important to acknowledge this limitation of identity theory because it demonstrates that the correlation between identity and return (a behavior) is not direct or straightforward, nuances can be found in the relationship. These nuances do not mean however that identity processes are no longer relatable to return. It demonstrates a need for fine-tuning, to account for seeming contradictions.

The 'fine tuning' necessary to continue to apply identity theory/ the identity mode in cases such as this is provided through Intersectionality. The premise of the intersectionality framework is that identities should not be understood as one dimensional; we must instead accommodate (seeming) antagonisms. In regards to antagonisms, Stuart Hall notes, "identities are, as it were, the positions which the subject is obliged to take up while always 'knowing'…that they are representations, that representation is always constructed across a 'lack', across a division, from the place of the Other, and thus can never be adequate- identical- to the subject process which are invested in them" (Hall, 1996, p. 6). Hall calls the practice of taking up identities that do not align with an individual's primary view of themselves, suturing. Suturing, is the 'chaining'…of the subject into the flow of the discourse or practices which attempt to speak or hail the subject into place as the social subjects of particular discourses(Hall, 1996,p.6). In the example above, we see Paul doing just that: he knew what it would take to get himself into business school and to thrive there. He did what was necessary, but he knew this identity was not in line with his actual identity standards. Hall states that suturing allows for the construction of identity in that a subject must find a point of harmony between the "discourses and practices which attempt to…speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and… the processes which produce subjectivities, which

[22] Note that the term "African identity" is referenced here not as an academic reality but simply as the term used by the research participant to refer to one of his identities.

construct us as subjects which can be spoken" (Hall, 1996, p.6). In this way, an individual finds "points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us" (Idem). It is critical to take note of this suturing process because Paul would later go on to state that this stance was a key part of his strategic plan to position himself to return to Kenya successfully. Throughout his time abroad, he would continue to strategically call upon this 'African identity, utilizing it in order to position himself for his return. This was in spite of the fact that he knew that playing this role limited other, more significant identities.

One final example of this divide is found in an excerpt from an interview with Erica:

(Njeri) *Let's go back to your time in the US….I forgot to ask: I know you said that your friends called you the 'African friend', how did YOU identity yourself? Were you Kenyan, were you African…..?*

(Erica) *Kenyan! I don't know if you noticed, (but Americans thought) Kenya is a continent* (she meant Americans think Africa is a country)…

Here is a situation in which there is a conflict between how an individual is seen by others and how this individual sees them self. Identity theory as represented by Stryker & Burke states that "identities may or may not be confirmed in situationally based interaction…if the identity confirmation process is successful, the salience of the identity will be reinforced; if the process is unsuccessful, the salience of the identity is likely to diminish, perhaps considerably (Stryker & Burke, p. 289)". From Erica's narrative excerpt, we see this is not the case: Erica's identity as Kenyan did not diminish because others found it easier to think of her and speak of her as an African. Unlike Paul, she did not choose to play into this identity in order to make things easier for herself, instead she quietly resisted by continuing to hold on to her own ideas of who she was instead of allowing them to be changed by other's perspectives . How do we understand this conflict, this antagonism? In addition to what has been stated above, regarding Intersectionality, we also return to Stuart Hall who states: " identities are never unified…(they are) increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions(Hall, 1996,p.4).

In this chapter, the statements of the research participants are directly related to the concepts of identity process & return theory which were presented in chapter 3. Although this may seem a bit redundant, this step is important because it is the acknowledgement of this relationship which allows for the impact of identity processes on return to come forth. Thus the meanings and significance of

specific occurrences in the lives of research participants' and in regards to return can also be more easily derived. I noticed during the data analysis that if I did not keep the concept of this relationship at the fore of my mind, I easily overlooked details which the participants gave and which pointed to the impact of specific identity related events on return. For example, Warari's thoughts regarding his identity at emigration continuously impacted his thinking about return (see chapter 7, p. 72, p.77). Erica & Ama's thoughts about how their character had developed whilst in Kenya also impacted how they experienced their immigration and how they thought about return. Erica would recount separately that memories of how her mom had raised her encouraged her to return. And Ama's recollections of her school days shaped her desire to return with her family so that her children could have similar character strengthening experiences.

Remember that the continuity of the identity process is captured by the representation of Burke's identity theory model (figure 3) as a cycle which is continually receiving input and producing outputs which then go back to produce further inputs & outputs. The idea of a continuous and progressive identity cycle of input and output is also captured by Ybema et al who state that the identity formation process "produces a socially negotiated **temporary**[23] outcome of the dynamic interplay between internal strivings and external prescriptions, between self-presentation and labeling by others, between achievement and ascription and between regulation and resistance" (Ybema, et al, 2009, p.301). Given this perspective, the participant's statements highlighted above can be understood as snapshots of their identity process at the point of emigration. Similar snapshots of their identity processes while living abroad and upon their return are given in the chapters to come. As the sentiments captured above are related to these other sentiments by the participants regarding their time in the country of immigration and also upon their return, we gain insight into the ways in which shifts and changes in their identity relate to their return migration.

[23] My emphasis

Chapter 6: Living Abroad
(Results & Analysis Part II)

This chapter presents the experiences of the research participants while abroad. Through these accounts, the design of the research endeavor is further expounded upon: did experiences abroad challenge their identity in ways that caused them to desire to return? As noted in the theoretical framework, there are different categories of return factors and these factors cannot truly be taken apart to be considered separately because return is often the result of the interplay of at least several of these factors (King, Cerase). That said, the practical, the pragmatic, the economic, and political factors receive the most academic attention, as can be seen in Cassarino's publication (Cassarino, 2004). Similarly, in de Haas' publication, although there is an exploration of the ways in which integration is related to return, the focus is still overwhelmingly on economic theories of understanding return migration (2011). Therefore, with goal of demonstrating, the ways in which this interplay between return factors is at work through identity development processes, four (4) commonly held conceptions about return to Kenya are presented. These concepts were given by the research participants in response to the following set of questions (see Annex B for actual interview questions):

- *How did you experience life abroad?*
- *Did you face any challenges in terms of your identity? For example did you face certain challenges fitting into the new culture?*
- *How did these challenges shape and mold your identity? Did they contribute to return?*

Note that the responses detailed below usually were in direct response to the questions above but in some cases, the participants came back to the ideas presented in these questions whilst giving another account in response to another question. As you read, note that the first two concepts which a majority of the participants recounted are reflective of challenges to the internal components of the identity development processes. The last two themes reflect external realities which the participants accounted for as having an impact on their internal identity processes and therefore in shaping return. As these common sentiments and themes are presented, a short discussion will ensue of how/where they relate to the identity development process and or return. At the very end of this chapter, there will be a reflection of how all the narratives together relate to return.

The Impact of Internal Identity Development Processes on Return

1. The Concept: Identity processes were impacted by specific racially discriminatory incidents which the participants encountered. These incidents however did not contribute to return. (9/10 expressed this.)

One of the most intriguing outcomes of the interviews was the outright resistance by the majority of research participants of the premise that the racially tinged experiences they encountered while abroad, tainted their experience and could therefore be connected to[24] their return decision. This rebuff was jarring because the impact of racial tensions on identity is often featured in grey literature as an integral aspect which shapes a longing for home (Adiche, 2013, Selasie, 2005, Selasie, 2013). When this perspective is brought together with academic publications such as Hall's identity piece, there seems to be a plausible link between identity and return as an act of representation or re-presentation (Krishnan, 2014). Finally, in support of this premise, consider that King lists racial hostility as one of the social factors that could contribute to return (King, 2001, p.14).

In some ways, the resistance of the research participants was not so surprising given that it was reflected the noted divide between African and African American understanding and experience of race based incidences (Arthur, 2000; Darboe, 2006). By this I mean that often times, incidences which would be understood as discriminatory by an African American individual often do not have the same impact in the life of an African individual who has immigrated to America. As will be seen in the narrative below, African immigrants tend to rebuff these situations and blow them off as ignorance which deserves to be ignored. However, in order to understand the research participants' resistance of the correlation between racial tensions, identity and return, we direct our attention to their words. First, an account from Kinuthia which was given in response to my request that he speak more about the ways in which the racial tensions he experienced and had referenced earlier during the conversation impacted his identity development process:

Kinuthia*:* *"You hear all these stories about people's various experiences with racism and blah blah blah.* ***I did not experience racism. Overtly. But I did subtly***[25]*. In terms of you walk in a pub or nice restaurant and then heads have turned. Or you walk in a store and you are quote and unquote*

[24] The argument is not that these incidents directly cause return because that would rob the participants of their agency; just that the incidents contributed to it.
[25] Author's emphasis

profiled. There are other people in the store but they come to you as the black person and it's like, "excuse me, have you been helped?" And it's like, "I'm just looking around". And they're like, "oh, for what in particular?" You know, small things like that which other people are not asked: "what are you here for?" So small things like that…When you go to a recruitment agency and they check out your passport and your visa allows you to only work 40 hours a week or about 25 hours as a student. They tell you point blank in your face that your passport restricts you. We will look inward – UK, Europe, then the US. As in no lies (from the agency) *because it's easier* (for people from those countries) *to get a work permit. So your Kenyan passport already restricts you a hell of a lot... regardless of how qualified you are.*

Njeri: *So then, you don't feel like you struggled with your identity at all while you were in the UK?*

Kinuthia: *It becomes hard when you…so you have liberal sort of friends. Like say for instance all of my great buddies even now, I always say that I've only had 3 or 4 "proper English friends".*

Njeri: *What is a 'proper English friend?*

Kinuthia: *Like British. Irish guys (*are) *sociable. But you find that English guys stuck to themselves.*

Njeri: *So your friends were from outside the country?*

Kinuthia: *Well outside the country. So you have Dutch guys, German guys, Irish. But English, forget UK, English guys, they stuck, they were themselves. I found them harder to socialize with and to get along with. You get one or two but most of them…and it's like when you're having a tutorial and you are in a group of say 6 and you are the only non-British guy, then you have an identity issue. That's when you're like: whoa do I need to conform to something? Do I need to change up my accent? That's when you feel almost boxed in. And those were the main things. Cuz when you're done with classes, with the tutorial, its back to your buddies from whichever country. But when, if you're there with the English, Oh! It becomes hard. Oh! It becomes difficult. It's not an identity crisis, it's just you just feel like you don't fit in.*

Njeri: *And is that not something that you take outside of that space?*

Kinuthia: *No, you* (also) *feel it outside of the space. You feel like: am I? do I fit in? Is it me? Is it? What's up with me? So do you grapple with that often? No. But it is there. Oh, it is there.*

Njeri: *Can you give me a specific example if it's not too personal for you? A time you struggled with that….*

Kinuthia: *It was difficult, there was a time we finished doing a research thing. And so I thought: I got along with my groupmates all that kind of stuff. Everyone's like let's go for drinks after. I think we got our results back and we had aced it or whatever. And then…*

Njeri: *Sorry, was this MBA or undergrad.*

Kinuthia: *It was undergrad. So we go for drinks and everyone starts, the conversation shifts to people's like different places, you know back home. Like my mom used to blah blah blah. And it's like no one particularly gave two craps where I was from. No one asked me how was it when you were this. So it's like literally, I sat there floating. And everyone cracks a joke and you're expected to laugh. And that's when I started thinking: we were in a group the whole semester and this is the first time I've actually felt like that was purely business, that it was purely to get grades. And I was like is it me? Am I the only one thinking* (this) *up? And I felt boxed in. I like to think I'm social, outgoing guy. That was the time I was quiet, reserved. And at the end it's like almost like a by the way, an after factor: like, oh how it in was* (Kenya)*…so it was hard to fit in sometimes.*

Njeri: *And did that continue when you were working? When you went back* (to the UK)*?*

Kinuthia: *Yea, even working. But, I found it slightly easier in the work environment because there wasn't the whole clustering, group thing… But mainly again, you'd have the one English guy but mainly the guys that you get along with the most, are non-English. But you don't get, it's not even an identity crisis, you just feel I just don't fit in. And it gets to you because you're at home, and no one hollers for a plan, is it me??It gets tough.*

Njeri: *And did that feed into your thinking when you were thinking about coming back home?*

Kinuthia: *Absolutely. Absolutely.*

Njeri: *It did? And would you say a lot? Did it feed in a lot? Let me repeat the question. Give me your top 3 reasons for thinking about coming home. And if it's one of your top 3 reasons, is it number one two or three or is it not even in the top 3?*

Kinuthia: *No, it is in the top 3, I'd put it at (long pause). Ok so I talked about the work life thingy; that was for me number one. Number two there was that. Cuz in the end you end up feeling lonely and you end up feeling alone. I'm in this foreign land and try as you may… I'd say I'd put it at 2 and 3 Passport and Visa restrictions…*

(Discussion of other issues)

Njeri: *I'm surprised that you put it higher than the visa restrictions….*

Kinuthia: *It's hard vis-à-vis here (*Kenya*) where you get, you have the choice of going home* (after work)*, actually here (*Kenya) *you get the choice of turning down 3 plans. Because you wanna just go home and chill... In England you feel like when you are given such a plan, you're almost jumping at it because it's not that frequent. So it's hard. There's nothing worse than feeling lonely in a place that's not home. It's rough.*

Kinuthia's insistence that the incidents that he experienced were not overt encounters with racial discrimination was striking. Not only because he says so but, also because it is evident in the progression of his narrative: he begins by describing incidents in which he encountered racial discrimination and shifts to or mixes these with non-race based incidents in order to maintain that all these incidents altogether, not just discriminatory incidents caused him to feel lonely or alone in London. After listening to Kinuthia recount experiences which many others would account for as racially discriminatory (see Steele 1997, 1998), I was struck by the intentionality with which he opposed my perspective. It was clear that he was communicating something. But, I was unsure whether that was to me or to himself. I therefore contemplated whether I had somehow overestimated the link between racial tensions, identity, & return. So, curious to see how this topic would unfold in other conversations, I was further intrigued when in the next conversation, the issue of racial tension arose very clearly and was also firmly resisted as impacting return. Note that in presenting the question, I was unsure if the participant, Laura would understand what the question implied. So I tried to make my question more relatable by referencing the experiences of my mother, who worked in a similar field as Laura, as an example.

Njeri: *May I ask, since you were spending so much time at work, were there any incidents that sort of challenged you and your identity that really made you miss home. For example, my mom's also a*

nurse in the US and she would come home sometimes and say, a patient didn't want me to treat him because I am a black woman. So I'm wondering any sort of…not specifically racist incidents but incidents that made you feel….question your identity.

Laura: *Yea I remember there is one who kept on asking us, "you don't have a better job to do? Cleaning us up and dressing us?" She was mean all through. There was another one who kept saying "I wouldn't like to associate with a black person". "I wouldn't like my son or my daughter to be married to by a black person." And there's one who really insulted me one night. And said: "You said that you have a family you have four children and you're here 24 hours you don't love your family what are doing here?" And she really insulted me for a long time on the same. That one used to make you feel like, surely am I doing the right thing?*

Njeri: *Do you think you had a better sense of yourself and that is why you were able to be so focused and not let situations like that disturb you? Or did they disturb you?*

Laura: *They didn't disturb me because those are just a few. We took care of many and there were many who also appreciated. You'd go to a home or one of them and they would say: "you are so mature; you handle me in a mature manner". There are many who appreciate. I went to another one who told me, "you'll be my friend forever"…So there are some who would really encourage you on that. You meet some also who are Christian…And also we knew, especially me as a Christian, you're giving service to them whether they appreciate or not, you're doing your job and you're getting what took you there. So I never allowed it to bring me down at any one time at all.*

Here, as with Kinuthia's narration, it is clear that Laura understood that I was implying that racial tensions contribute significantly to return motivation but that she did not agree with my presumptions. Much like Kinuthia, she wanted to show that she did not allow these experiences to perturb her or derail her focus. Pam & Ama's account of their own experience gave further insight as to why the research participants took this obstinate stance. Note that these perspectives are in line with the aforementioned African America / African divide:

Pam: *We survived in the US because every person who behaved like that to us, we were like: look at this ignorant person.* (So) *it never bothered you. You know, you don't need an identity, you don't need that. It doesn't bother you. You know. And even at work sometimes there were even people who would come up (*to me) *and say: that was not cool for someone to say that (*to you*), that's kind of racists. I'm like oh? It is? It doesn't cross your mind. You know.*

Ama: *And the other challenge was racism. Off course for me, as a Kenyan, I think we deal better with racism because it's not something that we are preoccupied with. We just happened to uhhh confront it, because it's not something that we lived with. We weren't born with those things.*

In Pam and Ama's narratives, they pinpoint that they held a set of identity standards (see figure 3) which caused them to process racially tense incidents in a manner which allowed them to continue successfully in their journey of becoming (Hall, 1996). This is a demonstration of suturing. That is, they were able to find a way to repudiate what they experienced in order to prevent it from throwing them off their course. In these two cases, the way in which they both dismissed their negative encounters was through their understanding of their personal history as Kenyans. We see the same process of suturing at work with Paul when he shared with me his perspective of University based minority networking programs:

Njeri: *Was that important to you? How US schools create minority networks?*

Paul: *No it was not. It was bullshit. I just felt it was just diversity window dressing. Maybe for some people. But I didn't think I needed it. I didn't see myself as African or black until I left (*the US). *So for them to suddenly highlight it to me, I didn't need it! That was never in my mind. I didn't need to be in a black or African affiliated group when I wasn't here* (Kenya).

Considering these various narratives all together, what is evident is that given racially based incidences, the individuals sought to assert themselves instead of allowing the dominant discourse at hand to govern them. Utilizing the suturing tactic (Hall, 1996), enabled or allowed the identity development process to continue on individual terms. However, it is also clear that the racially discriminatory incidences they recounted left an impression on these individuals. Otherwise they would not have disclosed these incidences in a response to a general question about the situations which were a challenge to their identity development process. This given, it is not farfetched to consider that if these incidences had not transpired, if these individuals had more welcoming encounters, they would have had one less reason to return. Carling et al observe that those migrants who are caught by the myth of return continue to stay in their country of immigration in part because of the new attachments and new identities they establish (Carling et al, 2015, p. 3). Therefore, since it is possible to have experiences which create attachments and shift identity in a way that causes one to make a decision to remain in the host country, the reverse is also possible.

What convinced me further that racially tinged incidences played a role in the participants return was a contrast in perspective of the two mothers in the group when speaking about how they

personally experienced racial tensions verses how they experienced the racial tensions which impacted their children (below 18, still under their care). Remember, these perspectives are unique as only two other participants had children below the age of 18. For one, her underage children did not live abroad with her but remained in Kenya. For the other, we were not able to connect at this level. Therefore, only Pam & Ama had this insightful perspective to offer:

Pam: …*another factor* (of return)*, is family. It's a big deal. If you look in the States right now, what do you see in the news all the time? They shot a ka*[26]*-black kid. And then, I always used to wonder, what's up with our African American friends? Why are they so confrontational? The majority of them don't make it so much. And then I looked at it and I started seeing it for my boys. I took them to a private school. My son was the only black kid in the whole grade. If you want something nice, even in the neighborhood that we stayed, it was majority white until the Indians started coming in. The thing is that, I don't think he realized, but we as the parents actually realized that some of the things that he was going through, like sometimes not being able to fit in 100%. And then you can also see the stereotype is so true. That if a white kid comes, throws something on the floor, they say don't do that again, that's not good, punish then and that's* it. *A black kid does the same thing, go bring your parents, this kid is out of control.*

(a bit later) **Njeri:** *Is this happening, the incident with your child, the incident with your husband are they happening before you really started thinking about it* (moving) *or after*.

Pam: *It was really always in the back of our minds that I would really love my kids to know where they're from. Yea. But, never ever thought about it seriously until I stared realizing certain things.*

(end of interview) **Njeri:** *I was asking you why you're not discouraged by this stuff* (difficulties of life in Kenya). *You said because you were prepared….*

Pam: *Because I'm looking that the whole picture. My kids I think they've never been happier. They love their school. They love it. They have so many more friends than they did in the US. And not only acquaintances but people that we can actually build up friendships with that will last for a long time. Yea. Because even in the US even those white kids will be your friend but when it comes to certain things you can't penetrate, they will cut you off. Even you'll find later on in life, they will not want to be associated with you. Very few people really hold that close and dear to their heart. Who are pure Americans. And when I say pure Americans I mean they've been there for generations. You find that you end up bonding with people who have a certain background from a certain area of America. You*

[26] Ka- before a word in Swahili indicative the diminutive form of that word. So here: a small black kid.

even bond with Indian.

Ama: *So I had called the kids for a birthday party for my little son. And nobody came, I think one person. And I wondeeeeered, you know I wondered. Then my daughter had a birthday party and I think she was 4 or something. And there were some, even black American twins who were with her in the class. I caaaaaled. I'm seeing: this birthday starts at 2 and it's around 4. So I wonder, ayee did they forget? So I walked to this black American's house where the twins were. And see her through the window; see you know it's a glass door. So I'm thinking hiayaa, so you've forgotten there's a birthday ddddd. But later on as I thought about it, they were not coming, and others didn't come. Then it occurred to me, as I talked to people, they told me, aha! You're in the south! In the south, it's not like Oregon*[27]*. (In) Oregon, they'll come to your functions, ok, they will try because they are liberals. In the south, black white, we don't mix. We can mix at work but when it comes (*down to it*) the Cubans have their own functions, the white, on their own, black Americans on their own. Oregon was more white and it was more social… in Oregon you would be in a rich neighborhood, you'd never see black people. Black people are a rare thing. When you go to Florida, you see biiig homes, black people. But nobody is mixing.*

…Plus you could hope, you could raise our kids here (Kenya), they would be able to make friends. I looked forward to them making friends. Friendships that are not real, I'm not saying real, I'm just saying the ones where you have conversations, you know you enjoy conversations. And it happened! I remember when we came here, my daughter she laughed and then fell to the ground! (excited clapping) I thought that's me! And then my son, the one who's doing medicine, I remember he didn't tell us because he doesn't talk a lot, but I remember he told us he misses year 11 because they used to laugh! And laugh with their friends with school.

(later) **Njeri:** *So, when we come to asking you about moving, I'm wondering when you moved, you really moved because you wanted to be back home? Or how would you put it?*

Ama: *Yes, I really moved because I wanted to be back home. Because I thought this was the best place to bring up my children. In terms of uh, I thought psychologically, I thought they would be better people, heart wise. Not in terms of skills or competence, they were exposed to that, they were exposed to American competence, efficiency. But what was important, is… I thought they would be better people, if they come here. They will be more people people. Than than, instead of just being*

[27] Where they lived before moving to Florida.

rule people… Whereby that human part uh uh uh uh the rule. You know, That extremeness. I wanted them to have that part of them that is more people oriented. Are you seeing?

Comparing the two positions of these women (the individual perspective vs the perspective they had about their children's experiences) demonstrates a shift in outlook on race and racial incidences towards what I had originally expected to encounter given the grey literature & Hall's writing. This shift seems to indicate that before having children, the participants had not really allowed themselves to integrate fully into the host country society. This is important to note because as will be discussed later, social integration is closely related to return. Therefore the link between identity and return is further validated.

2. Concept: Friendships, loneliness, & depression impact integration and therefore return.

The next point of interest that relates identity to return is derived from the responses given to a query regarding the types of friendships that the participants cultivated during their time abroad. Specifically, the research participants were asked whether they purposely sought out Kenyan communities or friendships during their time abroad. Given that I was speaking to individuals who had made a concerted effort and or taken a risk in order to come back to live in Kenya, I was taken aback when at times the response was a pointed "No! I purposely avoided them!"

Paul: *I didn't leave Kenya to see Kenyans. That sounds bad but, the affiliations are different. I would be more affiliated with someone who thinks the way I think. Or someone who interested in things that I'm interested in rather than someone who comes from where I come from. It's more intellectual, than just dumb luck. You were born here, I was born next door and because of that…yea. I built social support systems with people there that were more like me not in terms of where are we from originally but more in terms of what do we think of the world and what do we want to do with our lives and what motivates you.*

(Later) Njeri: *What was similar about you and your friends?*

Paul: *One was the classes we took. Classes were a reflection of what you want to do. Life ambitions and career plans were – not similar but were interesting to each other. It's interesting because my closest friend didn't do finance. He's not in finance. But all others after him were in finance.*

Kinuthia: *I didn't feel the urge to be more Kenyan when I was there* (in the UK). *In fact, I avoided hanging out with Kenyans cuz I'm like, if you're there, I'm there to sample various cultures. When I come home for summer, I'll be in Kenya. So I want to sample different cultures, meet different* (people).[28]

Njeri: *Was it a Kenyan church?*

Laura: *No I never went to any Kenyan Church. Yea.*

Njeri: *Why not? If you don't mind me asking? Because I know that there's a lot of Kenyans in Atlanta now.*

Laura: *Why I didn't want to go to Kenyan Church, to the Kenyan Church. Ok that's the first church I knew and I liked it, I liked the Pastor. Number two when I got to know about the Kenyan churches, when I go there, there will be so many functions and they will distract my attention, what brought me there. I'll get to know more, they'll have more parties, more things that I have to attend. You have to relate to them in what they're doing and I didn't have that time. I just went there to work.*

Njeri: *So as much as you were missing the social life here, it wasn't necessary while you were in the US to fulfill that need?*

Laura: *No, it was not my priority. I thought I could because I had friends and I knew them. But I didn't want to go into knowing them more because I knew there's a lot. There's the baby shower, there's the housewarming there are all those and I didn't have time for that. Because I wanted to invest all my time in working so I take the shortest time there.*

Given that the above responses came from individuals who had also stated that they knew that they were going to return to Kenya when they left, I first thought that perhaps this was the reason they avoided Kenyans. But when I asked this same question to Warari, who was the most expressive of his intentions to return, this line of thought was broken when he responded:

Warari: *My Kikuyu before I left was practically zero. And then when I went to Leeds, my first semester, 10-12 weeks, I spent one weekend in Leeds, and the rest of the time I ran around the country looking for Kenyans and doing stuff with Kenyans. I hardly engaged with my English friends. University coursework, yes, but I didn't go out of the way for the first few years. We were*

[28] Interview recording, 03-20-15

very close Kenyan community among students. I started then, sort of almost engaging in my Kenyan culture more. It's strange you got all the way from Kenya so when you're together you'll talk about home and your background started talking to each other in Kikuyu. By the time I left, I could converse comfortably in Kikuyu. It was very strange. So it enhanced my Kenyan-ness.

Above, I outline the participant's perspectives on friendship formation in order to compare it below, with their insights on their mental/ emotional well-being. This is important because the link between friendship and mental/emotional well-being is an indication of the socio-cultural integration, which is in turn indicative of an individual's level of return motivation. Meaning that the more secure friendships (attachments an individual has) the more likely they are to feel integrated and therefore to stay in the host country. Return migration scholars (Carling et al, 2015; Cerase, 1974, de Hass & Fokkema, 2011; King, 2001) and social psychology scholars (Sussman, 2000 & 2002) scholars separately take note friendship and emotional well-being as shaping socio-cultural integration. However, there is a lack of cross-fertilization in their thinking in that the migration scholars focus mainly on friendships while the social psychologists focus primarily on mental-emotional wellbeing. This is unfortunate as within individual lives, minds, and hearts, the interdependence of these factors is evident. This was illustrated when Nadia spoke about the friendships she had formed while in the UK, the limitations that governed these friendships, and the depression that therefore ensued. Take note that it is unique that Nadia spoke so openly about this matter. While all of the participants were generally open about the processes of cultivating friendships while abroad, not all of them were open about their mental/ emotional state of well-being and the processes that shaped this state.

Nadia: *Slowly depression started checking in...*

Njeri: …*And so did you not have any support systems, you said that your sister was there she'd been living there for 5 years?*

Nadia…*So you mentioned my sister was in England but then I told you the challenges about leaning on her. The school has all these things where you can call: a student support whatever, networks, I just felt like they would not understand. I mean, you don't understand where I'm coming from so how can you even help me? You'll just tell me, don't worry it'll get better. So I didn't even bother with that. So we just learned to support each other within our own group. Like I became very close to two Indian girls and one of the Nigerian girls. And like I said we would hang out together the Indians and the Africans. But still you don't expose yourself. You don't know them so you don't, you can't say everything. You can't say you know what, I'm so broke this week. It's crazy.*

Njeri: *So never, you never got to that point where you could complain about those things together?*

Nadia: *Mmm you could, but then at some point it's like you can't complain about it all the time. So now it's amongst yourselves, like who is the brokest here? Not really asking each other but you also have to help each other but you can't help each other cuz you don't have, you only have enough for yourself.*

After speaking to Nadia, I noticed that where the participants were open with me about their mental/emotional wellbeing, they also shared with me that their friendships tended to be with foreigners (Kenyans and others), like them, and not with native born inhabitants of their host country. This is again indicative of a lack of integration.[29] We see this pattern with Kinuthia who in the section above on racial tensions, spoke of feeling lonely and was clear that he pursued friendships with foreigners, not British natives. Another case which demonstrates this point is Warari's. In the narrative above (in this section on friendship), he stated that he sought out friendships with other Kenyans and did not invest in friendships with his British classmates. Additionally, Pam, above in the section on racial tensions noted that friendships with 'pure Americans' tended to be superficial and also spoke of the difficulties she encountered in connecting to Americans. This changed in university where her world became bigger and she developed friendships with foreigners. Below are Warari's comments on his mental/emotional wellbeing while abroad. Thereafter, Pam's comments which are indicative of the mental-emotional struggles she struggled with when she first moved abroad:

Njeri: *Did your mental state change because of the cold, did you struggle with….*

Warari: *They call it SAD...I did struggle with it. I'll tell you why: because it's always dark and cold. You have to wake up to go to university and it's dark. You got lecture at 8 and it's dark until 9. Get back for dinner (Tea is dinner. Dinner is lunch.). 3/4pm it's dark. This has a huge impact on wellbeing.*

Njeri: *Can you give me a specific example of a time when you experienced this?*

Warari: *There's no specific. It was a continuum. My favorite sports in high school were field hockey and golf. I could spend half the day out there. Both of those sports require consistency for prime performance. From Sept – March can't play in UK. Got me off Golf. Why does what I enjoy have to*

[29] Note that in the cases of those who did develop friendships with inhabitants of the country to which they immigrated, such as Paul, they had strong return intentions which impacted the degree to which they allowed themselves to integrate. This point will be considered at the end of this chapter.

suffer because of weather. I haven't played hockey since high school. Limits you from what you're used to and what you enjoy.

Njeri: *I would like you to tell me about when you first got there, you were in Boston right? Your identity how did you see yourself? Did you see yourself as a Kenyan in the US or…?*

Pam: *Oh yea. I saw myself so much as a Kenyan in the US. Yea.*

Njeri: *And what did that mean to you. I've talked to some people they say that they go to University and they're not interested in seeking out other Kenyans. Were you seeking them out or were you trying to create a new pathway for yourself while you were there?*

Pam: *Oh no I already met a group of people from my uhh…the Kenyan community then wasn't that big. And we were very proud all of us to be Kenyan. So we did really hang out together as Kenyans. So we really remained very Kenyan. When we had other friends, it was for me let me say for me, I didn't feel like I fitted in, with the students, the US students. I really felt strong about my identity as a Kenyan.*

Njeri: *And what exactly mean to you? Was it about Nyama Choma? Was it about familiar places?*

Pam: *Experiences that we had. Like we can talk about anything and laugh. Like even a t.v. show or something that you did or you know. Cuz I realized that, well I had friends from the other, like the Americans. But sometimes when you're in a group of people. If you're one on one I felt much more comfortable but with a group of them and they would talk about maybe some show or some experience they had; and you're like: what they are saying?... So sometimes I'm like ugh! I have to explain myself. Then it comes to...*

Njeri: *To the Kenyans?*

Pam: *No, no, no. To the Americans. And sometimes your accent was wrong. And they were like huh? What'd you say? What does that mean? So I really hung out with the Kenyans.*

Njeri: *And was it also Kenyans who were also at Northeastern or did you branch out because I know that there's a lot of Kenyans in Worcester from when I lived there…*

Pam: *No first of all I went my last year in high school there.*

Njeri: *Where in Boston or Worcester?*

Pam: *In Shrewsberry. And then after that I went to Boston. When I went to Boston it was different so I had a mixture of friends. Africans in general from all over. Malawi Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana. Cuz they had an African club. And then ummm also Kenyans. And then it also depends whatever major you are you also have those friends from your major so most of them were probably from…all over. They could be white Americans. Very few black Americans. Uh Vietnamese, Indians, yea so. Then I was more open because we now have something in real common. Like, we are studying together. And we created, now we created our own memories there… see sometimes when you go to high school it's very different. Those people grew together. I don't know how it is in the Netherlands or wherever. But in the US, a certain area, they go to school in a certain school. You live in this area you go to this school. You live here you go here. So now you can imagine, they've grown together and you are just a ki*[30]*-intruder. In the last year of high school.*

Njeri: *Which is the most exciting!*

Pam: *Yea, Yea. Verses going to University everyone has left their home, their comfort zones and were all coming to meet here. And so there was not too much of like you know oh like 'when we used to'. So we used to mingle even with like the Americans cuz everyone is new.*

The Impact of External Factors on Identity Processes & Return

3. Concept: An entrepreneurial ceiling in the Global North drives return (4/10 reported this as a reason for return).

The next factor that stood out in the interviews as the research participants relayed the identity related experiences which they encountered and which contributed to their return was the limitations they encountered in the western job market. In words of the participants:

[30] Augmentive –prefix. Loosely, this indicates that she felt that she was seen as excessively intrusive to the status quo of the highschool students she encountered.

Warari: *There was no fit for me in the UK society, especially not in the long term. The biggest deterrent: the way things are structured in the UK. You graduate, you get a graduate job, you get a graduate placement, you get a promotion, etc. You can track your salary from when you graduate to when you retire. Very little flexibility. Especially in civil engineering. That rigidness put me off. No flair for going outside the norm. And in answer to your question, it's one of the key reasons for return to Kenya. Because in Kenya, it just depends on how things work out for you. And that's why I was convinced I had to return to Kenya.*

(Later in the conversation) *I remember one of my colleagues is an English guy; he's probably the only English guy that was entrepreneurial. Most people I engaged with were very:" I'm an engineer and this is my job and that's it. I'm a lawyer, I'm a doctor and this is it."*

Angela: *So I was involved in so many of these associations, conferences communities and everything. I tried to join an American one and one of the things I realized and I think that was that was one of the reasons that made me realize I need to come back home was the fact that in America, I realized that everything was working. They had a system that was working which was great but I couldn't feel my relevance. You know? And that frustrated me. You know? It did it frustrated me and them I was restless. I became very very restless to a point I was working and I was doing well at work but there was a part of me that felt like there was something missing in my life and I couldn't put a finger on it and it was only when I came back in 2009 that and I think that at that point, was like uhh there was quite a bit that was going on in Kenya. That was after the post-election violence ummmm I mean things were still difficult here. Don't get me wrong. But all I could see was opportunity. I was like oh my god this is where I need to be. And then that connection with family? I was like wow. Because usually when I would come back previously I would only stay for like there weeks but this time I stayed for three and a half months and so I really had time to spend with family time to look around to see what's working what's not working and that's when I made up my mind that like I have to come back I don't care! I have to come back. So I went back and I went back for I think maybe 9 months. Moved 2010.*

(Later in the conversation) *So I'd usually go to a java or a coffee house (in Kenya) and I remember going to this coffee house and I meet this Japanese guy there. So we started talking and ummm he works for the embassy and he was there like on a two year contract and so I looked at him and I asked him like dude. So be real here with me. This is home for me and I am here. Why are YOU here? You don't have to deal with the potholes and no electricity and everything. And this is how he described it: Japan we're like the super 8 power part of that you know the top countries right now*

economically we are doing really well. And this is where we are. This is where you are right now. You can only go up. And it's that hope that he that he's like I want to be part of that. And that's the reason I came home. I wanted to be part of that story. Yea.

Pam: *It was as if the trend was made: you go to school, you get a good education, and you get a good job. There was no push in entrepreneurship or anything like that. Because when you're in a developed country, I think you have to think very hard. You have to have a niche for you to make it through. You know, cuz everything you're thinking about it's been done. They have all the farms they can do large scale. But when we came to Kenya and we looked at the potential. There was a potential for anything. Anything and everything we've been exposed to, you can bring it here. It's not here yet, or you can make it better for people.*

(later and separately) **Pam:** *Now they start recruiting the people, you know after a certain point, it's like whom do you trust to have your back. Because all the people can very much do the job. But I'm only going to hire you, I'm going to hire you because…we can talk, we can hang out and you always have my back. You know what's going on more closely* (beyond) *our work relationship… And* (so) *you see there's a time if you don't have a godfather, someone who's pulling you up, you get frustrated. ..So he* (her husband) *experienced those kinds of frustrations. You know that you're more qualified than someone but you're not getting the job.*

*(*Later and separately*)* **Njeri:** *Off the top of your head, why would you say people are coming back?*

Pam: *Opportunities here. Economic opportunities….yea. Or also social opportunities? Mm mm and also because you're tired of being employed and you're like what's my way out, I want to be a business person, I want to be an entrepreneur. America is so tired, all these things have been done they've made how much capital or whatever. And here, just imagine that if you bought a house today, sell it next year, you're double, triple the money. So people saw opportunities and they're like yea.*

These reasons for return, related to the economic ceiling seem at first glance to be simply pragmatic and practical reasons for return. They seem to fall in the category of economic factors that cause return migration (King, 200, p. 14), which is correct. Specifically, they align with the thinking developed through the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) which views return migration as the logical result of strategic decisions made at the family or household level in order to achieve specific goals or targets (Cassarino, 2004, de Haas & Fokkema, 2011). However, there is more to the story. From the anecdotes above, we see that these very pragmatic aspects are also closely

interconnected with the research participant's identity development process; with how these individuals thought of themselves and what they wanted to become. In this way, even the practical and the pragmatic has very much to do with identity and therefore, the link between return and identity is further made evident. We see this same pattern between the pragmatic and the identity process repeat itself below when the participants spoke about how the political and economic climate in Kenya during the Moi Era kept them from returning.

4. Concept: The political and economic climate during the Moi era greatly impacted the participants' desires to return (6/8 reported this). Note, that two of the ten participants traveled after the Moi regime had lost power.

Warari: *When I finished* (undergraduate education), *I was focused on how to enhance what my parents had worked for. How can I make sure it wasn't all a waste of time? I wanted to get a good graduate program. Get good training good experience because I couldn't do that in Kenya in 2001 because of the economy and the government. Civil engineering in Kenya was dead. As a civil engineer, there were little or limited opportunity to learn and grow my career – no mentors. But there was fantastic exposure in the UK. That's what convinced me to stay (in the UK).*

(Later in the conversation and in reference to the same situation) *When my dad came to visit, while I was 1st year into my first job. I said that I was going to come back after 4 years max. There was a large debate about coming back (I remember this very well) because Dad wanted me to stay for 10 years and I wanted to stay for 4. Dad said that without at least 10 years' experience, its' hard to command a good job. He said: 10 years make you more marketable. Yea whatever, I kept quiet.*

Njeri: *You didn't want to come home in spite of these interactions:*

Gachigi: *No because even though this was home, you'd still come back and struggle. You would hear and struggle. It depended what group you were from to get a job. We understood what Kenya was going through. Especially during Moi era. And the attitude of people – no one was optimistic. It was a living day to day. Though it was home, I was better off where I was.*

Njeri: *So you're thinking these things, but you stayed for so long. 87-2004. What kept you there?*

Ama: *Well, '87, well he was doing his PHD and he finished his PHD in '93. Off course by that time we had bought a house. You know, you know once you're working, but those thoughts were still there, we're going to go home. But then, at that time, Moi was in charge. The guy was just plundering the country left and right. You know, because even as you read the news, we umm, when it looks to gloomy, no jobs, bad road, you can't just uproot your kids and bring them! So because you must come to a place where you think there's hope! You can live a comfortable life. Mmm. So so so we kept saying that we'll go home. But since we had a nice, job, everything was ok, we had a house.*

These snapshots of the research participants' identity development processes during this phase of their migration journey demonstrate the typical struggles that migrants face in terms of integration & adaptation to the country of immigration. Namely, migrants struggle with the psychological and physiological shock of immigration (Cerase, 1974; Sussman, 2000). To this regard and in relation to return, academics note that the degree to which an immigrant integrates to the country of immigration is correlated to return[31] (Carling et. al, 2014, De Haas & Fokkema, 2011). According to de Haas, "sociocultural integration has a negative effect on return migration intentions, while economic integration and transnational ties have more ambiguous and sometimes positive effects (de Haas, Fokkema, 2011, p. 755)". Note that sociocultural integration is understood as the cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinal changes that lead to conformity to the dominant norms of the host country (de Haas & Fokkema, 2011). Given this definition, it is clear from the narratives, particularly those about facing racial discrimination and about friendship, that most of the research participants were not well socially integrated, even the participants who were ambiguous (open to) staying in the host country made statements which indicated that they did not fully integrate. This link between a lack of integration and return was most clearly demonstrated by the shift and difference in the experience of the mothers in the group. Recall that when they faced personal racial tensions, the moms in the group indicated that these incidences did not contribute to return. In fact, they went ahead and did their best to integrate into the American society – in Pam's case, even moving into the typical American suburb. Yet when their children faced racially tense situations, their perspective shifted and in the interview, they accounted for these situations as contributing to return. It is useful to emphasize the experience of these mothers because in accordance to the definition given above of integration, the mothers were the most integrated among the group of

[31] De Haas notes nuances in the correlation between integration and return in cases involving transnational migrants. When transnational migration is part of the equation, then the transmigrating individual who integrates in the host country is more likely to return. None of the research participants in this study were transnational migrants and therefore, those nuances are not taken into account.

research participants. Yet, pervasive race tensions limited their ability to integrate therefore demonstrating one way which the identity related issue of race contributes to return. A lack of integration is also reflected by the participants' remarks that their friends tended to be with foreigners or Kenyans but rarely natives of the host country. Further affirming and supporting de Haas' argument, that social integration is more critical in determining return than economic integration, note that all of the participants returned in spite of the fact that demonstrated economic integration: they had careers, not just jobs, which allowed them to live at or above the average lifestyle of individuals in their host country. In the case of the individual who carried out manual labor, she was still economically integrated as with her income, she was able to rent a house and buy a car in the US while also building a home for her family in one of the most affluent neighborhoods in Kenya.

When these observations regarding integration are considered in light of the narratives which address identity before emigration (chapter 5), it also becomes obvious that those who originally expressed strong return intentions approached their integration (often strategically) much differently than those who did not. Therefore return intentions combined with integration experiences contribute to return. Specifically, Kinuthia, Lucy, Warari, Paul, and Nadia all expressed clear return intentions and fall into this category. This aligns with Carling et. al's observation that return intentions shape the migration experience, affecting behavior about investment, relationships, skills, and or assets (Carling & Pettersen, 2014). In the narratives by the participants, it is exceedingly clear that their intentions shaped their integration behavior. Lucy's example is the most obvious in that the ways in which she engaged with her environment was dictated by her determination to return as quickly as she could. And although intentions do not always actualize into return, they do play a significant role in determining return *(*Carling & Pettersen, 2014) and therefore must be treated as an integral factor of understanding return. In relating intentions back to identity, note that intentions have to do with becoming, a central aspect of identity. Specifically, in the identity model (figure 3, p.24), intentions can also be understood as a component of the identity standard, in identity theory, these are the meanings against which an individual weighs the inputs they receive from the external environment. We therefore see again, that return and identity are closely intertwined.

Chapter 7: Return Migration
(Results & Analysis Part III)

This final & data focused chapter, begins with a reflection upon the decisive point during which intentions of return truly became a reality. The first section considers how various decisions, mired in identity development processes, resulted in return. Following this are the participants' perspectives of life upon return. Here, the focus is on their reflections upon their identity development process whilst living in Kenya. What do their post return thoughts about their identity development process tell us about how the process as a whole shapes return? Unlike the last chapters where I categorized the participant's experiences according to common themes and sentiments, in this chapter, I present the data as it was conveyed by each participant. I have chosen this approach because although all the participants returned, the progression of each journey reflects a unique set of circumstances which should be accounted for as such. Allowing for the nuances of these individual processes allows the interplay of the multiple factors which are a part of each individual's identity development process to come to the fore. Note the similarity of the interplay of these return factors to the interplay of the "resources which shape identity" (history, culture, experience, etc.) which Hall references in regards to identity development as coming together to shape the process of becoming (Hall, 1996). Also take note of the interplay between the internal and external aspects of identity in shaping return decision making process.

Deciding to Return

1. **Kinuthia** – Kinuthia returned twice to Kenya in 2008 and again in 2013. Both times, his returned was spurred by circumstances beyond his control. In 2008, he lost his job and this meant he could no longer legally remain in the UK. By 2013, visa regulations had become even stricter so that when a student did not secure work upon graduation, they were not eligible for a visa to stay in the UK. What was interesting about his return narrative is that he maintained that his return was not forced but voluntary given that he could have pursued other options for remaining in the UK (i.e. working a blue collar job). But he did not pursue these options because through his identity development process, he maintained that such a choice was purposeless.

2. **Laura** – Laura returned in 2002 after accomplishing her goal of gathering enough money to build her family home in Kenya. Laura had started planning her return before she even migrated to the US and in her narrative she indicated that her plans for return dictated how

she lived her life. She worked 16 hour days 6 days a week but worked for 8 hours on Sunday when she went to church. This church was specifically NOT a Kenyan church as joining a Kenyan church would cause her to become involved in social activities therefore causing her to work less and have to stay longer in the US. Through her story, we see what seem like very straightforward practical and pragmatic decisions, are very much rooted in the identity development process. This is because through the lens of identity theory, we note that her decisions were guided by her desire to *become* a house owner in a prestigious neighborhood in Nairobi.

3. **Warari** – Warari's 2013 return had many starts and stops and took many years to realize. Warari shared that he knew upon his emigration in 1998 that he wanted to return, he was not open to long term residence in the UK. After 4 years of university life, he was eager to return, however, the 2002 realities of the economic and political climate in Kenya kept him in the UK where he could build up his work experience. After another 6, years, he began to contemplate return again and began to seek ways to position himself for return. In 2010, he formed a company in UK with the intention of taking his experience, contacts, and other advantages acquired in the UK to form a bridge between the UK & Kenya. In the next years, he traveled between Kenya and the UK, building up business connections. It was during this process that he made contact with the company in which he worked when we met for the interview. Again, here is a process which is comprised of many practical steps intended to actualize his goal of return. But through the lens of the identity development process, we see more; these practical steps represent various points in the model. They are outputs, behaviors or actions that were the result of internal processes. These outputs acted upon the environment around him in ways that shaped his return journey. The identity process does not determine return, but it plays a major role in determining its direction. This is clear in that when I asked Warari if he would have moved without having found work, he responded that he would have been very reluctant to. This is an individual perspective as there were those like Paul and Angela who willingly took the risk of returning without work.

4. **Paul** - Paul stated that for a several years before his 2014 return, he found himself fed up with his job because of a poor relationship with his boss. Additionally, he indicated that he was frustrated because he was building highly specialized skills that were irrelevant to his long term interests. Paul was able to take the large risk of moving to Kenya without any confirmed work potentials because he was in touch with what was going on in Kenya: while

on business related travel on the continent, he stopped through Kenya every two months for 3-4 years.

5. **Erica** – Erica struggled immensely with structural and legal integration into the US and this greatly shaped her 2009 return. Faced with pressure to resolve her legal challenges by following in the footsteps of others who married American citizens in order to gain a residence card, she refused. She attempted to prolong her stay in the US by pursuing her Master's degree but then fell into a depression. While struggling to overcome depression, she came to the conclusion that it was better to leave before the realities of living on an expired student visa set in.

6. **Pam** – Upon immigration to the US, Pam was ambiguous about return. Nevertheless, in her narrative, she described several factors that pushed her family towards their 2014 return. But ultimately, the decisive moment came after a trip to Kenya during which she and her husband realized the potential of the Kenyan market. The time that passed between that moment and the actualization of the return was 5 years. Pam noted that during these 5 years they started making real changes, such as building up a savings, which set them up for return.

7. **Nadia-** Nadia spoke extensively of the clashes she noted between the cultural values of the British and the cultural values that she was familiar with given her Kenyan upbringing. In her narrative, she spoke of and gave many examples of the potential cultural challenges she foresaw in raising her children in the UK. For example, she told a story of seeing a family on a bus and noting that children were not disciplined in the same manner she was used to: "*why should a child throw a tantrum to demand things and a parent do exactly what the child is demanding"*, she asked. Due to such observations she told herself: *no, you can't live here forever, and I'm getting old.* Nadia was the only participant who was outspokenly declared that she returned due to the emotional pull of a desire to get married and start a family rather than being drawn by the potential economic benefits of return.

8. **Ama-** Ama gave a very long and poetic description of a walk through her neighborhood during which she contemplated her family's life and decided that the time had come to finally return. Before this, she and her husband had spent many years talking about the move, especially the 5 years before, but there was no real change in their lives. However, that day in

2004, they agreed upon the first real change that would set things in motion: putting their houses (2) up for sale. They moved within the same year, before the house was sold.

9. **Angela –** Angela emphasized that in the years before her return, although she had a great career, she had become restless in her work. Therefore, during an extended 3 month visit to Kenya in 2009, the period after the 2007/2008 post-election violence, she saw great potential in the Kenyan economy. In her words*: "Things were still difficult here. Don't get me wrong. But all I could see was opportunity. I was like oh my god this is where I need to be".* Within 9 months, in 2010, she had made the move, partnering with an American software company to distribute their software in Kenya.

10. **Gachigi –** Like Pam & Angela, Gachigi's decisive moment happened while visiting Kenya. This was in 2006. The time between this moment and the time of actualization was by her count, 2 years. This quick turnaround was determined by her husband's eagerness to introduce his business idea to the market. In preparation, the family ensured they acquired savings and purchased equipment for the business, in January 2009, they moved.

What is notable in these summarizations of the participant's narratives is that no participant could or would have moved back on a whim or purely for idealistic reasons. As we can see from the summaries above, they mainly gave practical and pragmatic reasons for return. But observe, again, that the practical is very much interrelated to the ideological through identity and the identity development process. This is true in cases where an external factor such as immigration law presents an individual with a reality which they acted upon or an internal factor such a depression that put limitations on one's ability to live life out to one's fullest. This is because making the return decision entails going through a cycle(s) of taking note of perceptions, weighing input from one's environment against personal standards and then choosing a behavioral output. Below, this same interplay between the practical and the ideological aspects of the identity process continues, and we consider whether the aims and goals developed through this interplay are fulfilled by return.

Life upon Return

There is much to be considered about life upon return and to this regard, the research participants had many interesting observations to share. For example, those who had come back seeking work (instead of as entrepreneurs) spoke about the challenges of overqualified resumes.

They related the pain and embarrassment of the moments during which they faced resentment from those who 'stayed behind'. Those who had pursued the entrepreneurial track shared that they longed to build a bridge between western/northern resources and the Kenyan market but were limited by a cautious western investors. All the participants spoke of the various practical challenges of readjustment: adjusting to poorer infrastructure: the roads, the banks, customer service, etc. Given the focus on the identity development process, however, a fitting end to the data section is with a focus on the participant's thoughts on how their identity once again shifted upon their return. With the exception of one participant with whom I did not cover the topic of identity upon return, below is what each participant spoke about when asked to reflect upon the identity related experiences of their return:

Njeri: *How do you see your identity? Are you (of the frame of mind) that it hasn't changed, I'm Kenyan, I don't think about it, or I'm a hybrid Kenyan*[32]*?*

Kinuthia: *Hybrid.*

Njeri: Yea?

Kinuthia: *Yea, a lot of inefficiencies here irritate the hell out of me. Deep down I'm Kenyan, Kenyan as hell. But I'd say hybrid.*

Njeri: *Ok. Talk to me in a little bit more detail about it. Other than the inefficiencies, or specifically the inefficiencies. What, why are you a hybrid? Why you are not just a Kenyan who has really has really high standards or who is really efficient?*

Kinuthia: *Ok, that I am but when I say, when I talk about hybrid, it's because I've always been a stickler for time before and after but I find that I have a westernized, when you're westernized you're more open minded. And a lot of people here are more conservative. And I have that clash. And that sort of thing also transcends business. There are people who are not open minded at all, they don't want to be diverse in their thinking and all that stuff. And it's highly irritating. But I will give credit to my open-mindedness coming from my time in England. Because when I went there, I wouldn't say I was closed, but I was more conservative than I am now, thinking wise. Just your spectrum opens you the hell up.*

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[32] This term has no real meaning but is a figment of my imagination which I included in the question guide in the hopes of triggering the research participants thinking without biasing their processes. This participant however, took it seriously however as it gave him a way to define how he experienced his identity development process since his return.

This next narrative from Lucy needs a special note: I almost disregarded Lucy's narrative about life upon return because we did not speak candidly or specifically about her identity development process upon return. However, looking back upon the transcription of our conversation, I realized that what she did share about her life since return has much to do with her identity development process. This is because upon her return, she attained her goal of become a home owner in Runda. A cycle "ended" and another cycle of becoming began: this time it was focused on dedicatedly serving her community. Below is an excerpt from our conversation regarding life upon return to Kenya:

Njeri: *Since you came back, do you prioritize, sort of, the idea of building Kenya or contributing to the progress of the country. The development of the country. Do you see that as something that you would like to do? Or has it never been umm something you have thought about?*

Laura: *Ummm developing Kenya. We do because we get involved even leadership. I've been working, I worked with FIDA they hired me to give civic education.*

Njeri: *FIDA? I'm not familiar with FIDA*

Laura: *FIDA is federation of women lawyers. And they give civic education and they assigned me an area to teach on how to get good leaders and all that. And so I'd go to villages and teach on the same. So in that I contribute. The other area I contribute is to educate your children to make sure that they also get into position where they can influence.*

Njeri: *How did you get involved with FIDA?*

Laura: *How I got involved is in church, they visited, one of them visited the church and came and saw what I was doing a community, it's not a big church per say. It's a small community church…*

Njeri: *Where is it?*

Laura: *In the village. Some place in the village here.*

Njeri: *Which village.*

Laura: *Gacharagi. Gacharagi is on your way to Ndendero. A small community church and one of the leaders even the chief, they visit so they saw what I'm doing. And they asked me they would like to help a few people to give civic education. So I sent them a few names. So I sent them names of some young people. But they say they want mature people. And they insisted my name must be there. I wasn't chosen but they insisted. So I gave them the names, mine included and they took us for training and they sent us to give civic education in Kiamba, Githuguri, Westlands.*

Njeri: *Let me take you back a little bit. What kind of work were you doing in your community that drew that organization to you?*

Laura: *Ummmm after working in a big denominational church, when I moved to this area, now Runda, I thought of starting a small community church and I went to Gacharagi. What surprised me, Gacharagi is a village very near Nairobi but people are very backward. You'd find children out of school people at class 7, girls very young, they have 2 children, 3 children and I thought you can teach them on how important the education is. Then you find my have big farm, you can advise them on just selling a piece of it and just developing the other part of. So more than just Christianity. I wanted to transform their way of thinking. That they can change their lifestyle, which they have done a lot. People I found they are so poor, if you go now, you can find people have their own permanent houses, their own rental houses and I'm I am very impressed by the progress.*

Njeri: *And why was it important to you to serve those people?*

Laura: *When I went there, like I didn't go there to tell them to change their lifestyle. I went there to preach the gospel. I just wanted somewhere I'd share, what was in me. Because I have been in the church, 30 years so I have something I can share with this small group. And I wanted to start the church here in Runda. But they don't allow churches in Runda, so moved to a place where we could get a church. And somebody offered a classroom. That's how I got to know this village. And I wondered how come they are so near Nairobi and they don't go to school? There's a lot that they can learn from me. So I thought it's a golden opportunity and that's what I do up to now. It's like a charitable thing. Yea, it's a charitable.*

Njeri: *Has it been difficult to be back?*

Paul: Yes!

Njeri: *Talk to me about that!*

Paul: *…Personally, it's also not easy. A big city like NYC, London allows you to be anonymous. Cities full of culture, different experiences. Things you can do on your own. Also full of foreigners. And so socializing is easy and interesting. People of different backgrounds. Circles, same people from 15- 20 years ago. Diversity lacking. Small city means not anonymous.*

Njeri: *What about expat circles?*

Paul: *Interesting experiences. I climbed Mount Longonot with 4 people. My friends here wouldn't do that. There are definitely those opportunities and I jump at them. But some of the things they want to do, I don't want to do. I don't want to go to the Mara!*

Njeri: *What else is difficult about being back?*

Paul: *Staying global. It's a big problem here in that, To make money here, you have to think very local.*

Njeri: *Do you want to move back for a short while?*

Paul: *I was just thinking about that this morning. Yes and no. Yes in the short term. It would be great, I would love it. Especially would love to go to the States. But I would be in the same situation. I'd be faced with this same situation as I am in now. Still have to come back and go through same thing. Finding what's relevant locally....*

Njeri: *As someone who talks of themselves as ambitious, why limit yourself?*

Paul: *The thing is… it goes back to where do I think my skills are relevant to can be relevant right now having worked here before, having worked on an Africa desk and wanting to go into real estate. This is the easiest path.*

Njeri: *Back to personal difficulties of return, what about family?*

Paul: *I didn't want to bring it up but you've asked. It's been very difficult. It's been good and bad. It's nice to be home and see parents. Nice. No problem there. But your family worries for you.*

Njeri: *And now? How do you see it? Upon return, are you still Kenyan?*

Erica: *Oh yes! So much!*

Njeri: *Tell me why you say "so much"!*

Erica: *I think it's because there is something about always knowing that you can go somewhere and you'll fit in. I can sit here and be comfortable. I can go to Kenyatta market at a nyama choma place*[33] *and be comfortable. I can go to Naivasha and talk to the locals there. I may not know Swahili or*

[33] Reference to Burma market in central Nairobi, a meat market which for years was known for being filthy and dangerous but has recently become infamous because of the tasty Nyama Choma (grilled meat) which many working in Nairobi frequent at lunch time. See http://www.okayafrica.com/video-nyamachoma-kenya-street-food/.

kikuyu very well but I can interact very comfortably. There is nothing like the assurance that you're home. Even though I don't know the place so well. Like I can't drive in town to save my life!

Njeri: *So even though you lived abroad and I'm sure your perspective was broadened from being abroad you still feel that people can relate to you?*

Erica: *Oh yea! You know what's funny is that when I worked at Checky I was still very much from the states. I still had the behaviors I would do things and the coworkers were always always make fun of me she can't speak a word in Swahili. I can though but you know that when you speak they want you to be like. .. they would always make reference she can't go with a Mombasa dealer and talk shit. The thing is that I took it in stride. I didn't take it personally cuz I knew that I could work around that. I was able to build the brand around the country and travel around the country. I think when it come to the aspect of feeling like was I kind of not really Kenyan, they did. But did that affect me? No, I just brushed it off and said oh well.*

Njeri: *Now that you're back in Kenya, we've talked about identity, how do you see yourself?*

Pam: *Oh my God, I don't know! I thought I was more Kenyan in the US than I think I am now. Cuz certain things I'm like: "you people!!" (unclear) It's like driving, you people! How do you do this?*

Njeri: *Does that discourage you from staying here in the long term?*

Pam: *No*

Njeri: *Why not?*

Pam: *Because you know those things are going to be hard to change. I've accepted that, I've accepted that I cannot change. And I came in knowing that there are some things that I'm going to have an issue with. I just didn't know what exactly…Because I'm looking that the whole picture. My kids I think they've never been happier. They love their school. They love it. They have so many more friends than they did in the US. And not only acquaintances but people that we can actually build up friendships with that will last for a long time. Yea*

Njeri: *Has your identity changed now that you're back? We talked about the fact that you valued so much being a Kenyan when you were abroad. Are you now still a Kenyan? Or a Hybrid*[34] *Kenyan? However you define that... how do you see yourself?*

Nadia: *I think I'm still a Kenyan. I think I wasn't out there for too long to have been…cuz I've seen some of my other friends really struggle, or relatives. You heard what Ken said, they come here are they lose their minds. They just cannot, I have cousins that have tried to settle and they just can't. For them things are not working I'm like: "hang on, just relax a little bit". They lose their minds and they go back. They're like I just can't. Things are not working there's too much traffic or the electricity goes off and we can't have a hot shower. And I'm like yea, so we just boil the water on the stove. I mean. So there's those things, yea it's like it's not such a biiiig deal…I find it's a nice thing to be laid back. I mean, it's part of the reason that I'm back. But there's so much impatience in me…the other challenge is hierarchy and authority.*

Njeri: *Talk to me a little bit about that...*

Nadia: *In the workplace?*

Njeri: *Wherever it is. Is it in the work place or is also in other….*

Nadia: *It's very prominent in the work place. So, here, you don't just tell your boss: "I don't think you should do that". Whereas in England it was: Yea, Please challenge me. In fact, that was a challenge I found when I went to school. It took me a while to challenge the lecturer whereas my colleagues from Europe and the US, they would be like, uhhh yea, I don't agree with that. I'd be like what's wrong with you? Do you want to fail??? He's the teacher! Nobody sees that he's the lecturer. So I came back here and I'd gotten a bit of that. And it worked against me in the beginning. Until one of my friends was like maybe you know, may you just need to tell them this isn't working but not in front of other people…. Apparently it would think this chick is insane! Who does she think she is? So there's that and so I've learned how to work around that… People are not going to change because I've changed. I went there, I adapted, I've come back, I need to adapt. Whereas I learned some things there I don't want to let go of, so I'm not going to be the relaxed type that's going to walk into the office at 9 or take a whole Friday off, I stopped calling for meetings on Friday afternoons because I realized it was a waste of my time. Half of the people when they're there,*

[34] Because of the insight on his identity development process that this terminology brought out during the conversation with Kinuthia, I continued to utilize it in cases where the research participants referenced their identity as a national identity, as something outside themselves. In this way, I hoped to gain insight on their identity at a more intimate, personal level.

they're not contributing because they're pissed off at me, not even because they're looking at the time. Ummm people are just not present or they think I'm a bitch; I don't have a life so I want their life to be over. So there's that challenge.

Njeri: *So what would you say were your challenges when you came back? You've talked about some now. But what would you say are your top 3 challenges upon return?*

Ama: *For me? For me there was no challenge.*

Njeri: *Really?*

Ama: *Even when I looked at the hot dusty roads I said, yes!*

Njeri: *Even with all these cars that are breaking down*

Ama: *No! I was so happy to be home. I was so happy! Even though, sometimes, the biggest challenge was the way people drive. Matatu coming I stop in front of them. Then the other challenge was integrating the kids into school. Those were my biggest challenge. But later, as the years go forward, the change is that, some of these people I have nothing in common with them (begins laughing).*

Njeri: *No, no, you're laughing as though it's a joke! It's true. I think once you've seen and tasted somewhere, your perspective is never the same. But why are you laughing?*

Ama: *Because I'm thinking to myself, first of all, in a way, I forced myself to adapt to many situations. Intentionally adapted to different situations. So I've reached a point, now where, I have told myself, I have nothing in common with some of these relatives. Because, whatever begun with my husband there, the sisters they're all the same here. I am a woman who, the challenge is now that cultural that cultural, what is it, how would I call it. Different cultural perspectives. It can't fit.*

Njeri: *Does that come from your time abroad?*

Ama: *No, I think it's uh no. Because from when left here, that's the family I grew up in. Where we are expressing, where people dissent to your opinions, where you may argue about it. That's the family I came from and the schooling I went to, I never went to an authoritarian school. We were free to express ourselves. Off course when I went to the US, it was reinforced I'm sure. Off course. It must! About my own individuality. The fact that, you cannot come and dominate me. You can't. It doesn't matter…*

Njeri: *How do you identify now that you're back? I should have asked you how you identified when you went to the US…*

Ama: *Are you talking about in terms of nationality?*

Njeri: *Yes*[35]

Ama: *Yes, I still love Kenya.*

Njeri: *So you were Kenyan then and you're still Kenyan? You wouldn't call yourself like a hybrid*[36] *Kenyan or something?*

Ama: *No, I'm just. I'm just…what do you mean by hybrid?*

Njeri: *I asked someone that question and they said yes I am a hybrid Kenyan because when I lived in the UK, I got used to the efficiencies of living there. And now, I just, I don't think like other Kenyans, I want things to be efficient. You know, if I say we meet at this time, we meet at this time. If I go to the bank, I want them not to…so in that way he has changed. But that may not be true of you. You might say, yes I adopted some of those values, but I'm still Kenyan.*

Ama: *I adopted some of those values and I've come to…ok I'm not that type in terms of efficiency. There are some things that I have it's not either one way or the other way, but it's about finding the middle ground. So like time, I bring myself to say, well, when you come into a country, that is just how they do things, you adjust a bit. There are some things you cannot change what is already there. And there are some things that you agitate against.*

Njeri: *So would you say that would make you a hybrid Kenyan or you're just a Kenyan with different values?*

Ama: *I'm still Kenyan but with different values. With different values that are that don't fit in with most of the traditional values.*

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[35] Although identity is not solely national identity, I responded affirmatively to Ama's query here because throughout her narrative, her perspective on her identity was mired in her national identity. I did not want to throw her off her own track with my ideas. She often spoke of her identity as a reflection of the ongoings in Kenya and how these ongoings shaped her. For example, at one point she shared how her independent spirit was imprinted upon her because of her high- school environment, an environment that was greatly shaped by lecturers who she described as activists.

Njeri: *Any regrets?*

Angela: *No oh my god! Let me tell you my biggest regret was that I didn't come back sooner.*

Really?

Njeri: *That's my biggest regret I wished I went to school worked a few years then moved straight back home.*

Angela: *Why?*

Njeri: *Because ummm when I look at the opportunities like right now I barely have enough the time to get to do the things really I want to do. There are opportunities everywhere… I LOVE being home I don't miss the US at all. The only thing I miss about the US is obviously my friends who were near and dear to me. Thankfully many of them are back home but there are many that are still there and I miss them terribly.*

Njeri: *When you moved here, how did you identify yourself once you moved?*

Gachigi: *Always Kenyan. They say now because of post-election violence you're always sensitive to that. And umm at the time you're almost afraid of saying…of identifying yourself along your ethnic lines. So you just say you're a Kenyan.*

Njeri: *Do you think your time in the US had any or has any influence of how you identify yourself?*

Gachigi: *As a Kenyan?*

Njeri: *mmmm*

Gachigi: *Yea, because basically when you ask someone where you're from? You have an accent, where are you from? You don't say I'm from central Kenya. You say that I'm from Kenya or from East Africa. If someone doesn't know where Kenya is, you tell them it's in the Eastern part of Africa. So I think may that did contribute.*

Njeri: *But now, so you wouldn't call yourself like a hybrid Kenya because you spent time abroad? Or maybe your values, your perspectives have changed?*

Gachigi: *No I'm still a Kenyan. Born and bred. And I'm proud of it.*

What is evident through these excerpts is that the identity development process is a process that aims towards becoming but whose hopes are never quite fulfilled, even upon return. Many of the research participants returned with hopes for greater contentment upon their return, only to find that much of the gratification they hoped for could not truly be fulfilled. For example, even though Ama and Angela's narrative above indicates great general satisfaction with return, they also expressed dissatisfaction within the external environment. For Ama, it was dissatisfaction with an inability to honestly express herself to her patriarchic, traditional in-laws. And for Angela, frustrations lay with the limitations she confronted in the workplace as a woman in a patriarchic culture. It was not just Ama and Angela who shared such sentiments, all the participants indicated frustrations with their family, old friendships, with their fellow countrymen, at the work place, etc. This is not really surprising given that as it has been noted:

> *"The appearance of stability in any given 'identity' is, at best, a transient accomplishment: discursive construction and reconstruction emerge as a continuous process and stability appears to be either a momentary achievement or a resilient fiction."* (Ybema et al. 2009, p.301).

I take this to mean that any stability that the participants obtained as a 'returnee' was temporary. This is proof of the dynamic and ever changing nature of identity as captured in Hall's conception of identity as a process of becoming. Such a definition indicates that if one is 'becoming', they never truly 'become'! What insight can thus be gained by this contemplation of the identity development process at different points in the return journey? I propose that the participants' inability to find 'closure' or rest at the point of return emphasizes the very centrality of identity and the identity development process to their return motivation. It emphasizes that although the participants resisted naming these non- pragmatic aspects as primary or even major reasons for return, they nevertheless played a major role in return motivation. Otherwise they would not have expressed the emotions of either overt enthusiasm (Ama & Angela) or wistful disappointment. Another reason why I find that the participants' hopes for return were not entirely fulfilled is that the sentiments shared above carry the same characteristics of unease and discomfort seen in chapter 6 when the participants struggled to acclimate to their new environment abroad. Therefore, understanding return through an identity driven lens or frame can garner new insights into the specific ways in which externally derived and internally derived return factors interplay with one another. This thought was presented in chapter 3, the theoretical framework and we return to it in the following section, the discussion.

Chapter 8: Conclusions & Discussions

Through a focus on Kenyan return migrants, this thesis explored the centrality of identity processes in return migration. Although this perspective is academically underexplored, there are efforts such as James Clifford's *Return*, through which this relationship has been investigated (although the focus is not on migration). Through this publication, Clifford explores concepts which were at the forefront of my mind during the initial stages and development of the thesis topic and therefore shaped my initial queries and questions about return migration & identity. Clifford focuses primarily on the survival efforts of people groups who have mounted up resistance against invasion & dispossession by finding ways to hold on, adapt, and recombine the remnants of an interrupted way of life and therefore create new path-ways in a complex postmodernity (Clifford, 2013) . He notes that often, such communities reach back selectively to deeply rooted, adaptive traditions in order to become (ibid). Observe that line of his thinking resonates with the concept of identity emphasized throughout this thesis: as a process which utilizes the resources of history, language and culture in a process of becoming (Hall, 1996). Note that in accordance to both Clifford & Hall's thinking the emphasis on reaching back is not aimed at going back but on moving forward. In considering these aspects of Clifford's thinking, I was driven to contemplate Kenyan return migration in a similar light: the migration return of Kenyan was a move which allowed these returnees to progress in their lives by going back to what they had before their lives were interrupted. Not only by the historical realities of invasion & dispossession during Kenya's colonization, but also by their immigration. Given that immigration in Kenya became a reality due mainly to political and economic realities (see chapter 2), immigration can be understood as an experience that results in invasion & dispossession. Particularly, the invasion & dispossession of self and of one's identity processes. The realities and complexities of cultural assimilation or acculturation are academically well documented (Carling et al, 2015; de Haas & Fokkema, 2011; Sussman, 2000). When the basic dynamics of these realities are combined with encounters or incidences that are intrusive and disturbing, such as encounters with racial discrimination in the global north (reference ch. 6 p. 51-60), one wonders, what are the consequences? Note that the premise here is not that the challenges of assimilation & acculturalization directly determine an immigrant's experience or their return. The correlation between the difficulties of the immigration experience and return was never understood to be 1:1. I was simply intrigued to understand the ways in which such experiences impact & shape return migration – especially considering for example, the ever growing tensions around racial discrimination in the United States and the idea of America (or the Netherlands, or France) for its

'native' inhabitants. Such was the perspective which drove my thinking during the proposal & research process. I hypothesized that jarring experiences impact identity and in turn shape return migration motivation. Thus, return migration is possibly reflective of efforts to resist the forces which as Hall puts it, threaten to hail many immigrants into place (1996).

As demonstrated through the results of the research investigation, the story of Kenyan return migration proved to be much less idealistic than I proposed. Through the interviews, I found that although academic publications attest to the challenges of post immigration adjustment (Carling et al, 2015; de Haas & Fokkema, 2011; Sussman, 2000), especially in situations where racial tensions are a reality (King, 2001 p. 14; Viruell-Fuentes, 2012), the research participants understood and contemplated the challenges they encountered and their impact on their identities from a more nuanced perspective. For example & as noted in chapter 6, although all research participants narrated experiences in which they were confronted by racial discrimination, they also narrated that these experiences had limited impact on their identity processes and therefore on their return migration motivations. In spite of these details, I also found that return migration can still be framed through the lens of identity & identity development processes. This was made evident when I grappled with the ways in which the participants subverted or in some cases, employed to their advantage, the forces of the discriminatory experiences (and other experiences) which attempted to pull them down or hail them into place (Hall, 1996). As I tried to understand these accounts based upon identity theory, the initial, most obvious and rational conclusion to make was that I had oversimplified and essentialized these participants' experiences. Fortunately however, through Intersectionality, I realized that these denials and especially the acts of subversion were an indication of the very impact of these incidences on identity processes and therefore on return. The concept of Intersectionality opened my eyes to the fact that I must account for the reality that the workings of identity processes are often seemingly contradictory and or antagonistic to that which is expected by an observer or conveyed by a narrator. By denying that the racially discriminatory encounters they accounted for impacted their identity & therefore return, the participants demonstrated the very workings of identity processes which aim at ensuring that an individual attains their goals of becoming. In this way, the research process was a journey in learning to "avoid (a) romantic celebration" (Clifford, 2013, p.13) of return migration while also defending my thinking processes from falling prey to "knowing critique" (ibid). Instead, I was challenged to embrace "an attitude of critical openness…a way of engaging with complex historical transformations and intersecting paths (of return migration motivations) in the contemporary world" (ibid).

The realizations highlighted above also allowed me to step back from an intentionally 'pigeon-holed' perspective of considering only the impact of the identity related, cultural adjustment challenges on return migration. Through the accounts of the research participants, I saw that it was not useful to separate the varied factors which shape return migration as the pragmatic vs. the ideological. Instead, it was critical to consider the relationship between the return factors which fell into these two categories. Upon further consideration, I realized that this interrelatedness became more apparent when investigated through the lens of identity processes as it is presented in the theoretical framework. Through this lens, it becomes clear that return factors are reflective of either the participants' internal identity processes or the external factors which impact these same internal processes. The interrelatedness of various return factors is not novel; however, considering these factors through the lens of identity processes provides a different angle from which to understand & contemplate the interplay of these factors. Specifically, when return is investigated with identity processes at the fore of the academic's thinking, lines of demarcation between various return factors are seen also as markers denoting potential areas of interplay and relationship. Bringing together the ideological and the pragmatic and investigating them through the lens of identity - as they actually function in human beings - allows us, as academics to grasp more fully the interplay of and relationship between various return factors. This way of looking at return through the lens of identity was seen specifically in chapter 6 where four return factors were highlighted and categorized as either being related to internal identity processes or external factors impacting the identity process. Within and through the narratives of the research participants, the relationship between the internal and the external was made obvious. For example, although Kinuthia returned because he could not extend his visa to stay in the UK (practical, external factor), he also returned because he did not consider it worthwhile to go through the trouble of fighting to find a way to stay (ideological, internal factor). And while Paul returned because he was dissatisfied with his job (ideological), he also had the liberty to take such a risk given that he had a safety net to fall back on – that is the financial stability of his extended family (practical, external factor).

This said, it is important to acknowledge some challenges of looking at return through identity processes. First, note the difficulty of honing in on an exact definition of identity. As can be seen from the transcriptions shared in the results chapters, the research participants often understood identity to mean their Kenyan identity or at times, an African identity. Therefore, the idea of identity as a process was often not conveyed through the participants' narrations. Perhaps this was due to my own conflations of identity as a function and identity as a process. However, given the widely noted difficulty within academia of garnering consensus regarding a definition of identity (Anthias, 2009;

Berzin, 2010; Jenkins, 1996; Vignoles, et. al, 2011), how much more of a rift is there between academia and society? Identity is a topic which is difficult to creatively construct and deconstruct. It is a concept which is difficult to definitively pin down and address as its defining characteristics can become antagonistic and divisive. Additionally, over time, identity has been extensively deconstructed (Hall, 1996; Vignoles et al, 2011). However, I chose to work with identity due to the fact that as Stuart Hall notes, it is a concept "without which certain key questions cannot be thought at all" (Hall, 1996, p.2). Hall also notes that the

"…fictional nature' of the process of identity construction in no way 'undermines its discursive, material, or political effectivity". This is true *"…even if the belongingness, the 'suturing into the story' through which identities arise is partly in the imaginary (as well as the symbolic) and therefore, always partly constructed in fantasy, or at least within a fantasmatic field"* (1996, p.4).

Given these observations, a case can be made for the 'messiness' that comes with working with identity. However, a concretely defined concept of identity and its processes was a point of weakness during the research process and it deserved more attention than I gave it. It was only in the writing stages that this weakness was identified. Therefore this thesis would have benefited from clearer distinctions between the concepts of identity & identity processes. This area should thus receive greater attention in any considerations of return through the lens of identity.

The second challenge that arises in attempting to understand return motivation through theories that explore identity processes, was that the antagonisms which occur within or between individual identities were not properly accounted for in identity theology. Remember that in the theoretical framework, it was noted that these same antagonisms also arise when academics from varied fields investigate the various factors that shape return migration motivation in isolation. Through this deliberation it became apparent that most return migration academics to focus on only one or two factors of return migration rather than being able to successfully bring together the various aspects at play in the return of an individual or a specific group of individuals. This was noted to be the case in Cassarino's work which begins with an investigation of various approaches to return migration motivation but ultimately prioritizes a conceptualization of return migration that focuses on the social and economic networks that returnees utilize in and upon their return (Cassarino, 2004). This therefore demonstrates the critical place which Intersectionality holds in the investigation of return. Intersectionality is a method which allows academics to hold various factors, especially seemingly antagonistic or contradictory factors in juxtaposition and therefore see more.

The third challenge of an investigation that focuses on understanding return through the lens of identity processes is actually a multilayered set of challenges. This set of challenges revolves around the complexity of accounting for the existence and effects of the varied identity processes which are at work during the various stages of the research and reporting. Note that the challenges of accounting for these processes are mainly related to the data collection method: narration. These challenges arise because narration closely resembles familiar life practices and makes room for the agency of the research participant to continue to operate. Thus there are various pitfalls which stand in the way of producing a reliable and reproducible qualitative study. However, such a study can still remain viable if the pitfalls of the process are acknowledged and accounted for. Collecting data, analyzing and reporting based upon narrative interviews therefore requires a close look at the varied identity related dynamics at work during the research process. For example, Josselson notes that an autobiographical memory is a process of reconstruction in which events may be constant but the vantage point from which one interprets transforms the meaning of the past (2009, p.647). This means that as the research participants recounted their return migration narratives to me, the way they told them at the time of the interview was different from how they would have narrated the same events immediately upon arrival to Kenya or even how they would narrate the same events in the future. Additionally, there is also the challenge that "the stories people tell about their lives are not necessarily true or accurate" (Adler 2017, p.519), meaning that as an individual narrates an experience or event, they are doing so with intentions or motives which are not apparent but which must be accounted for. Finally, there are various interpersonal dynamics at play: between the interviewer and the research participants, within the researcher themselves during the analysis and writing phase, and even between researcher and supervisor during the revision stage.

In regards to the concerns raised by Josselson and Adler, both can be addressed through a primary focus on the meanings that arise out of the information given during the narration as opposed to a focus on the factuality of the information. As long as the research question itself does not aim to assert truths about the participants (in this case the returnees) but to understand the workings of their motivations, the focus of the research is therefore on meaning, allowing one to avoid getting tangled up in proving statements that can never be proven as facts. Josselson herself notes if a researcher focuses on, for example, understanding why a narrator is telling the story they are telling with particular given details, much can be deciphered about the individual narrating the story (2009). While writing the thesis, I made an effort to ask such questions, for example in regards to the issue of the relationship between racial discrimination & return. When I initially focused on whether what the participants were telling me was true, I could see no value in my research efforts.

However when I redirected my attention to why the participants chose to express this particular sentiments, then I was able to see the meaning behind the sentiments. Additionally, it was the idea of paying attention to details given by the participants and treating them as valuable that allowed me to part from the original research design of a focus on the non-pragmatic reasons for return. Making room for the pragmatic reasons that the research participants gave as they narrated on their story allowed me to identify that the participants' focus on the pragmatic reasons demonstrated the centrality of identity processes in shaping return migration. This said, in aiming to decipher the meanings of the narrations, it would have added to the depth of the study if I had also considered how the research participants told their stories. By this, I do not mean the language that they used but the emotions that I saw on their faces or heard in their voices. These expressions were a key part of the sentiments expressed and therefore, exploring them may have given further useful insights as to the meaning behind what was said. With more time during the research phase of the research process, I would also have liked to explore the ways in which a return migrant's narration changes as they have lived in Kenya longer and the impact such changes have their recollection of their return motivations.

The challenges of the researcher- research participant dynamics were considered in the methodology chapter where there was a discussion of the ways in which I presented my research topic impacted the responses of the research participants. One question that was not directly addressed in this discussion was the reliability of the participants' accounts given these dynamics. How could I take seriously what the research participants had to say, considering that they could tell me what they thought I want to hear or what they want me to hear? There are several practical solutions to this such as focusing on sentiments that were consistently shared by the participants. Or in some cases, focusing on a striking sentiment that was shared only by one or a few of the participants and utilizing such a sentiment to dissect the statements of other participants. Such was the case in regards to Paul & Warari's challenges towards my mode of thinking. Their challenges caused me to go back and look for contradictions in the responses of the participants that did not challenge my thinking. Ultimately, however, the most straightforward way to account for the impact of these varied identity processes is to be reflective and reflexive. As we saw in the methodology, doing so draws out meaningful insights and better conclusions. To this regard, we saw that a my personal identity processes, as a researcher and also as an individual, when not taken into account may precluded one's ability to take note of important findings, especially when the research topic hits very close to home. However, if taken into account, they can add to the findings. For example, throughout the interviews, I wondered why, in spite our similar backgrounds and immigration

experiences, the participants reacted to their time abroad differently from me. By this I mean that where they reacted to the identity related challenges they confronted with subversion and at time exploit, I reacted with a deep desire to return to Kenya that was deeply rooted in a desire to affirm my identity. When I pondered this divide, I was able to identify one distinguishing factor which I otherwise would not have seen if I had ignored the tension between my immigrant experiences and the participant's immigrant experiences. Without this factor, I would not have taken my own research results seriously, I would have concluded that I had simply allowed my emotions and personal experience to cause me to hypothesize a research query which had no hold in the real world. The specific epiphany which allowed me to take my research results seriously occurred while reviewing Anastasia Christou's work (2006) which focuses on identity & return of 2nd generation Greek immigrants. Here, Christou's returnees carried sentiments about return which were similar to mine but which differed from those of my research participants. As I dug deeper into the differences between us (the immigrants) I realized that immigration and also return is experienced and contemplated differently by first generation versus second generation immigrants. In other words, how I and Christou's research participants experienced immigration because of having being raised primarily in the country of immigration was very different from the experience of my research participants all of whom had immigrated at the age of 16 or above. This realization was only possible because I was reflective and reflexive of the ways in which my own identity processes as well as the dynamics between my identity processes and the research participants' processes played off of one another.

In spite of these challenges, the reasons to consider return migration through the lens of identity processes as they have been highlighted here are many and hinge upon the observation by Anderson & Smith underscore that,

> *"academic commitment to highlighting the emotional consequences of seemingly rational economic decisions is an important element in bringing these actions to account. If the logic of efficiency depends on the silencing of the emotions, academics have a role in pointing out that this is an ethically questionable state of affairs."* (Anderson & Smith, 2001, p.8).

In addition to the academic gains to be reaped through a consideration of return through a lens which accounts for identity processes, such a perspective of return is also valuable in effectively shaping the policies and programs of host and sending countries which aim at this target population. Additionally, the thinking bolstered by the organizations with the responsibility of guiding return migration agendas could also benefit from adopting this lens. Effective policies or recommendations

for migration & return migration policies should take into account the internal (emotive) aspects of return because as has been demonstrated many times in this thesis, they are an integral part of the decision making process at work within migrants and potential return migrants. It was noted in chapter 2 that the Kenyan government drafted and instituted a Diaspora Policy which states that the Kenyan government aims to support Kenyan returnees in re-adjustment upon return. And in her full interview, Nadia recollected her disappointing experience with call-in support programs offered to struggling students at her university.

> **Nadia:** *The school has all these things where you can call: a student support whatever, networks, I just felt like they would not understand. I mean, you don't understand where I'm coming from so how can you even help me? You'll just tell me, don't worry it'll get better. So I didn't even bother with that.*

In both of these cases, the design of such support programs or projects could benefit immensely from an approach which accounts for the identity related reasons driving the lived realities of their target population.

I also think that return migration research that is identity focused can be utilized to shape the ways that stories about migration & return are told in non-academic spaces. When I began preparing to research this thesis, I came across many grey literature publications which explored the identities of the Africans in the diaspora (see chapter 1). Many individuals turn to such publications to inform themselves as they grapple with the struggle of finding their place in foreign, diasporic spaces. Including scientific evidence, particularly scientific evidence which utilizes the direct thoughts of those with similar life trajectories would add substance to such publications. By substance, I mean evidence that goes beyond the anecdotal and is grounded in intentional & methodical inquiry. For example, in my case, because of this thesis that I have come to a point where I have realized that what I seek to attain through 're-presenting' myself in a return to my birth country will mostly likely not satisfy me. This is mainly because as mentioned above, I noted that the participants I interviewed engaged differently than I did with the challenges they faced while abroad. This had very much to do with how much of their childhood they had spent in Kenya. Therefore their return was not ***driven*** by a need to affirm their identity to themselves and to others (though it was **shaped** by it) but to a need to take advantage of the benefits of a space which offers the resources they need to fulfill their personal life goals. This in turn enabled them better opportunities to build their lives in accordance to their dreams and ambitions. This distinction between return being driven by identity versus being shaped by it results in a very different experience upon return. This was fact

was well evidenced by Christou (2006) who documented the struggles of second generation Greek returnees whose return was driven by a desire to affirm their identity. Furthermore, the resources that I have access to given my life trajectory are different. For example, I have had to learn how to build my life in 3 different countries or contexts, this skill set would probably not benefit me in Kenya. It would lead to frustrations, many of which the research participants disclosed and were able to cope with given their longer upbringing in Kenya. Other factors such as the fact that my immediate family members (mother, father, etc.,) do not reside permanently in Kenya also preclude a successful return. It was very obvious that almost of the research participants benefited extensively from support of immediate rather than extended family members. Additionally, if I returned at this time, I would have to return without my son. Given that that my son is a greater priority than the re-presentation of my identity through return, I have concluded that return is not the most beneficial option of me at this time. Note that my choice is itself a reflection of the dynamics consistently highlighted in this thesis: of the interaction between external realities and internal identity processes. Therefore, the importance of engaging this dynamic in return migration investigations is again accented.

Annex A: The Research Participants

Name	**Kinuthia**	**Laura**	**Warari**	**Paul**	**Erica**	**Pam**	**Nadia**	**Ama**	**Angela**	**Gachigi**
Method of Recruitment	Friend of a university friend	Friend of a friend of Dad	Kinuthia	Kinuthia	Contact of my cousin	Contact of my cousin	Paul's sister	Landlord during stay in Kenya	?	Contact of cousin
Date of Interview	20 March 2015	24 March 2015	26 March 2015	10 April 2015	13 April 2015	14 April 2015	17 April 2015	21 April 2015	27 April 2015	22 April 2015
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Marital Status, Family	Single	Married, 4 Children	Single	Single	Single	Married, 2 children 5 & 10	Single	Married, 4 Children	Single	Married, Children
Ethnic Group	Kikuyu	Kikuyu	Kikuyu	Kikuyu	Kikuyu	Unknown	Kikuyu	Luhya	Kikuyu	Kikuyu
Age as of last birthday (2015)	32	56	35	30	34	41	30s	52	Mid 30s	Older than 40
Education Level	University, BA & MBA	Form 4 (Kenyan educational system)	Master's	Master's Finance	BA, Marketing & Finance	Doctor of Pharmacy	MBA,	Master's French	BA	MBA
Countries of Migration	UK	USA	UK	USA, UK	USA	USA	UK	USA	USA	USA
Time Spent Abroad	2002-2008, 2010– 2013 (10 Years)	Jan 2000-December 2002 (3 Years)	1998-2013, (15 years)	2008 - 2010 (USA) 2010-2014 (UK) (6 years)	2002-2009 (7 years)	June 1992 - September 2014 (22 years)	May 2009 - Sept 2013 (4 Years)	1987-2004 (27 Years)	1998-2010 (12 Years)	1984-2008 (24 years)

Name	**Kinuthia**	**Laura**	**Warari**	**Paul**	**Erica**	**Pam**	**Nadia**	**Ama**	**Angela**	**Gachigi**
How often did they visit Kenya		Not at all	Visited once or twice a year for Christmas and special family events	Starting about 2010 traveled to Kenya once every two months					Once every 3 years	?
Legal Status in Country of Migration	Visa	Visa	UK Citizen	Work Visa	Work Permit, unable to secure residence permit	Citizenship	Student Visa	Residency, Children Citizens	Residence Permit	Greencard (possibly citizenship, unclear)
Year of Return	2008 & 2013	2002	2013	2014	2009	2014	2013	2004	2010	2008
Initial Reason for Emigration	University Education	Labor (Work)	University Education - Leeds	University Education	University Education	Education High school & University	Education	Love, Education	Education	Education
Return Intentions			Clearly wanted to return	Clearly intended to return	Hoped to settle in the USA	Intended to permanently settle in the USA			I can't remember about thinking about NOT coming back home	

Name	**Kinuthia**	**Laura**	**Warari**	**Paul**	**Erica**	**Pam**	**Nadia**	**Ama**	**Angela**	**Gachigi**
Explicit/Implicit Reasons for Return	2008 Retrenchment -Stock market Crash found work in Kenya 2013 - Stricter Visa Laws in the UK	Had traveled to the USA to Raise enough money to build, upon meeting this goal, returned	Always intended to	Always intended to I hated my job!	Unable to attain work visa, get permanent residence (Explicit) Personal struggles (Implicit)	Opportunity with Parent's business, race relations in USA		Improved socio-economic conditions allowed her & family to fulfill their long standing desire to return.	Was inspired by the obvious business opportunities that she identified upon a visit in 2007/2008.	Husband identified business opportunity, improving socio-economic conditions in Kenya, Wanted children to connect with grandparents.
Family Abroad upon emigration? Before Immigration, Did they return?	Brother	Daughter Traveled first to the USA for Educational Purposes (Stayed in the US married to a white American, no interest in return)	Father abroad for 3 years in the 70s (returned) Brother was wrapping up at the same University when he moved to UK (returned) Sister in Germany PHD Sociology	2 sisters older and younger studied in UK. (Both returned) Parents had studied abroad and returned to Kenya	Cousins (Still living in USA)	Father, Mother, brother, sister (Parents were beginning return process during time of Interview)	Sister UK Brother was in USA Returned to Kenya	In laws (Still Living in US)	Brothers and Sisters traveled to India for education, Traveled to US with a cousin, otherwise, no other family in USA	Cousins, aunts, uncles have been educated in US. 8/10 of mother's siblings studied in UK, US and India o Family under scholarships through the JFK drive to bring African students to the US

Annex B: Interview Guide

Basic Info

*** Note all names will be changed in the write up of interviews*

a. Name: _____
b. Gender: ☐F ☐M
c. Contact Info: *tel no*. _____*email* _____
d. Age as of last birthday: _____ ____
e. Marital Status: ☐Single ☐Married ☐Divorced # of Children:_____
f. Education Level : ☐High school ☐University Bachelor ☐University Master's ☐P.H.D
g. Countries of Migration/ Time spent abroad: _____

Time Spent Overseas

Please tell me about the time you spent overseas:

a. Why did you move abroad?
b. What did you do while abroad? School? Work, etc.
c. What did you miss most about home? What did you miss the least?
d. How did you identify yourself while abroad? How did this identity transform over time?
e. Did you face any challenges in terms of your identity while abroad? For example did you face certain challenges fitting into the new culture? How did these challenges shape and mold your identity? Or did your identity as a Kenyan become stronger?

Moving Back

Please tell me about your move back:

a. When did you start considering moving back? What aspects did you consider? What were to practical/ financial reasons vs the more emotional reasons? What was more important to you?
b. Describe to me the stages of your thought process about moving back. How long was it between the fantasy stage and the 'making it reality' stage?
c. What were the challenges that you foresaw which made you hesitant/doubtful? What encouraged you?
d. How did you plan for the move? What ultimately caused you to move?

Tell me about life since you returned:

a. Are you employed? Where? How long? Related to previous employment?
b. Are you/were you part of any networks that helped you with your move? Helped you reintegrate?
c. Do you have any hopes or dreams of accomplishing something specific within the Kenyan society by moving back? Is it a priority?
d. Do you see your return as a permanent move?
e. In what ways has your identity morphed/grown/changed since you came back?/ How do you identify now that you've returned? Strictly as a Kenyan? As a hybrid Kenyan?

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