# THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF KENYAN ETHNICITIES IN ONLINE POLITICAL TALK

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS, UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE.**

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## KEY WORDS

Discourse

Kenya

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Ethnic polarisation

Media

Facebook

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Engagement

Face-work

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# ABSTRACT

Multi-paradigmatically qualitative, and largely in the fashion of the critical theory, this study seeks to explore how a selection of Kenyans construct, manipulate and negotiate ethnic categories in a discussion of national politics on two Facebook sites over a period of fourteen and a half months, at the time of the 2013 national elections. Kenya has at least 42 ethnic communities, and has been described as a hotbed of ethnic polarisation. The study is interested in how the participants use language to position themselves and others in relation to ethnicity, as well as to draw on or make reference to notions of Kenyan nationalism.

The data for this study is drawn from Facebook discussions on two different groups: one 'open' and one 'closed'. The data also includes participants from different ethnic groups and political leanings. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Engagement and Face-work are used as theoretical frameworks to explore how participants draw on different discourses to construct their ethnicities and position themselves as Kenyan nationals. The analysis also explores how informants expand and contract the dialogic space, as well as how they perform face-work during these interactions.

CDA is important since the study examines ways in which participants participate in societal struggles through discourse, as either effectively supporting, sustaining, reproducing or challenging the status quo or power imbalances, especially as members of particular ethnic groups. The theory of Engagement is also important for the study since it helps explain how participants source their value positions and align each other as they open up or close down the dialogic space in their arguments or discussions. The notion of Face-work is used as an important complement to Engagement to further explore the nature of interaction between participants.

The data has been analysed in two main ways: linguistically and thematically. The linguistic analysis generally reveals that the participants in the closed group paid much more attention to face-work, and used both expansive and contractive resources of Engagement almost in equal measure, while their open group counterparts tended more towards contractive resources and paid less attention to face-work. The interactions of both groups, however, point to the existing ethno-political mobilisation and polarisation in the country. The study also teases out several extra discursive strategies which it proposes for consideration as possible add-ons to the Engagement framework. Lastly, the thematic analysis reveals new important ways through which participants conceive ethnicity, especially as constituting interethnic relations.



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# DECLARATION

I declare that *the Discursive Construction of Kenyan Ethnicities in online Political Talk* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Evans Anyona Ondigi

Signed

March 2019

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# DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my late paternal grandfather, Mr Karani Makora Ondigi. You were a very good natured soul, generous to a fault and, in the true sense of the word, honest. You were not only a companion as a grandfather in our homestead. You were also a true friend. You are an example of those who, so early in life and far back in time, already knew the value of formal education. For instance, you defied the odds and traveled to a missionary school so far from home. I am proud to have eventually gone to the same prestigious primary school as you! You also defied the odds to take your children to school. I cannot forget the teaching you always gave me at home, both formal and informal. What I never told you is that, though at a very tender age, I already envied you so badly for all your knowledge and brilliance. I feel I am now competing with you. Anyway, Grandfather, I still look up to you, and I will always do so. May we, all your people, live to preserve your legacy.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEY WORDS ..... ii
ABSTRACT ..... iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... v
DEDICATION ..... viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS ..... ix
LIST OF FIGURE AND TABLES ..... xiv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS ..... xv
CHAPTER 1 ..... 1
INTRODUCTION ..... 1
1.1 Introduction ..... 1
1.2 A multi-ethnic Kenya ..... 1
1.3 Background ..... 2
1.3.1 The Politics of Ethnic Mobilisation ..... 3
1.4 Immediate context: the 2013 general elections ..... 6
1.5 Main Research Aim and Specific Questions ..... 8
1.6 The informants ..... 8
1.7 Analysis of data ..... 9
1.8 Overview of the chapters ..... 10
CHAPTER 2 ..... 12
KENYA'S POLITICAL BACKGROUND ..... 12
2.1 Introduction ..... 12
2.2 The making of a pluralist state (from 'autonomous ethnic nationalities') ..... 13
2.3 Short history of early political parties ..... 18
2.3.1 Struggle for control of the post-colonial Kenya ..... 19
2.4 President Jomo Kenyatta's Reign (1963-1978) ..... 22
2.5 President Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi's Reign (1978-2002) ..... 23
2.6 Return of multiparty politics (from 1992 to the present) ..... 25
2.6.1 Multi-ethnic coalitions (from 2002) and President Mwai Kibaki's Reign ..... 25
2.6.2 The 2007 Elections and Post-Election Violence ..... 26
2.6.3 The 2010 Constitution ..... 27
2.7 The 2013 general elections: Immediate Context for this study ..... 29
2.8 Summary ..... 32
CHAPTER 3 ..... 33



UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE
http://etd.uwc.ac.za/

LITERATURE REVIEW (I) ..... 33
ETHNICITY ..... 33
3.1 Introduction ..... 33
3.2 Race ..... 34
3.3 Ethnicity ..... 37
3.3.1 From tribe to ethnicity ..... 38
3.4 Approaches to Ethnicity ..... 39
3.4.1 Primordialist approaches ..... 41
3.4.2 Constructivist approaches ..... 51
3.5 Summary ..... 63
CHAPTER 4 ..... 66
LITERATURE REVIEW (II) ..... 66
POLITICS AND MEDIA ..... 66
4.1 Introduction ..... 66
4.2 Politics ..... 66
4.2.1 The government ..... 67
4.2.2 Opposition parties ..... 68
4.2.3 The citizens ..... 68
4.3 Political communication ..... 70
4.4 Media ..... 71
4.4.1 Chronological development in the media ..... 72
4.4.2 Interactivity and participation ..... 77
4.4.3 Facebook ..... 79
4.5 Summary ..... 81
CHAPTER 5 ..... 84
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ..... 84
CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS, FACE-WORK AND ENGAGEMENT ..... 84
5.1 Introduction ..... 84
5.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) ..... 84
5.2.1 Theoretical approaches to CDA ..... 85
5.2.2 The main tenets, characteristics and aims of CDA ..... 87
5.2.3 Analysing data: The three stages ..... 94
5.2.4 Criticism of CDA ..... 99
5.2.5 Actively Emancipatory ..... 101
5.3 Engagement ..... 102
5.3.1 Functional Grammar ..... 102



UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE
http://etd.uwc.ac.za/

5.3.2 The 3 Metafunctions of language: ..... 104
5.3.3 Appraisal ..... 109
5.3.4 Engagement ..... 110
5.3.5 Bare assertions ..... 112
5.3.6 Dialogically Expansive Resources ..... 112
5.3.7 Dialogically Contractive Resources ..... 114
5.3.8 Neutral resources ..... 117
5.4 Face-work ..... 118
5.5 Summary ..... 122
CHAPTER 6 ..... 124
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ..... 124
6.1 Introduction ..... 124
6.2 Development(s) in research ..... 125
6.2.1 Quantitative research ..... 125
6.2.2 Qualitative research ..... 126
6.2.3 The eight historical moments in qualitative research ..... 127
6.3 The main paradigms of qualitative research ..... 129
6.3.1 Ethnography ..... 129
6.3.2 Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology ..... 130
6.3.3 Conversation analysis and Discourse analysis ..... 130
6.3.4 Protocol analysis ..... 131
6.3.5. Symbolic interactionism ..... 131
6.3.6 Grounded theory ..... 132
6.3.7 Ethogenics ..... 132
6.3.8 Constructivism ..... 132
6.3.9 Critical theory ..... 132
6.4 Qualitative researcher as a bricoleur ..... 134
6.5 Vindicating (critical) qualitative research ..... 136
6.6 Research design ..... 139
6.6.1. Collection of data ..... 140
6.6.2 Participants ..... 140
6.6.3 Data selection and analysis ..... 145
6.6.4 Ethical considerations ..... 150
6.6.5 Financial support or obligations ..... 150
6.6.6. Challenges ..... 151
6.6.7 Summary ..... 152



UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE
http://etd.uwc.ac.za/

CHAPTER 7 ..... 153
DATA ANALYSIS ..... 153
LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS: CLOSED GROUP ..... 153
7.1 Introduction ..... 153
7.2 Chat 1 ..... 155
7.3 Chat 2 ..... 168
7.4 Critical reflections of the closed chats: Discursive Strategies ..... 183
7.4.1 Likes (soft support) ..... 183
7.4.2 Criticism ..... 185
7.4.3 Vouching for other interlocutors (flattery) ..... 187
7.4.4 Expletives (emotional outbursts) ..... 188
7.4.5 Warnings ..... 190
7.4.6 Shifting the topic: ..... 191
7.4.7 Silence: ..... 192
7.5. Summary ..... 196
CHAPTER 8 ..... 199
DATA ANALYSIS ..... 199
LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS: OPEN GROUP ..... 199
8.1 Introduction ..... 199
8.2 Chat 4 ..... 199
8.3 Critical Reflections of the Closed Chats: Discursive Strategies ..... 223
8.3.1 Likes and laughter ..... 223
8.3.2 Criticism ..... 225
8.3.3 Mockery ..... 226
8.3.4 Insults ..... 227
8.3.5 Warnings ..... 229
8.3.6 Threats ..... 230
8.3.7 Shifting the topic ..... 232
8.3.8 Silence ..... 234
8.4 Summary ..... 236
CHAPTER 9 ..... 242
DATA ANALYSIS ..... 242
THEMATIC ANALYSIS ..... 242
9.1 Introduction ..... 242
9.2 Nationalism ..... 243
9.3 Ethnic membership: ..... 246

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE



http://etd.uwc.ac.za/

9.4 Dominance/hegemony: ..... 249
9.5 Culture: ..... 251
9.6 Hierarchy ..... 255
9.7 Ethnic elites: ..... 258
9.8 Reciprocity: ..... 260
9.9 Territory (geographical regions) ..... 262
9.10 Ethnic polarisation: ..... 264
9.11 Summary ..... 266
CHAPTER 10 ..... 267
CONCLUSION ..... 267
10.1 Introduction ..... 267
10.2 Summary of the key findings of the analysis of the data ..... 267
10.3 Recommendations ..... 276
ADDENDUM ..... 295

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WESTERN CAPE



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# LIST OF FIGURE AND TABLES

**Figure 2. 1: Ethnologue Map (2016 SIL International) of languages spoken in Kenya.** ..... 21

**Table 2. 1: An overview of presidents, running mates and main opposition leaders (1963-2017)** ..... 15

**Table 7.1: Campus Group participants' Ethnicities and Preferred Candidates……**154

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

A.D. – Anno Domini

AIDS – Acquired-Immuno Deficiency Syndrome

AKA – Also Known As

ANC – African National Union

C. – Century

CAPU – Coast African People Union

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

CKRC – Constitution of Kenya Review Commission

CLA – Critical Language Awareness

CLS – Critical Language Studies

CoE – Committee of Experts

CORD – Coalition for Reforms and Democracy

CP – Cooperative Principle

DA – Dispositive Analysis

DHA – Discourse-Historical Approach

DP – Democratic Party

DP – Deputy President

DRA – Dialectical-Relational Approach

EAA – East African Association

ECK – Electoral Commission of Kenya

FB – Facebook

FORD – Forum for Restoration of Democracy

FTA – Face Threatening Acts

GEMA – Gikuyu Embu and Meru Association

HIV – Human Immuno-deficiency Virus

ICC – International Criminal Court

IDP – Internally Displaced Persons

IEBC – Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission

KADU – Kenya African Democratic Union



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KAMATUSA – Kalenjin, Maasai, Turkana and Samburu

KANU – Kenya African National Union

KASU – Kenya African Study Union

KAU – Kenya African Union

KPP – Kenya People's party

KPU – Kenya People's Union

KSHS – Kenyan Shillings

LOL – Laughing Out Loudly

MAU MAU – Mzungu Aende Ulaya Mwafrika Apate Uhuru [Whites to go to Europe, Africans to get Independence]

MR – Members' Resources

MUFO – Masai United Front

NARC – National Rainbow Coalition

NDP – National Democratic Party

NKT – A Kenyan onomatopeaic expression of annoyance, as in clicking

NYS – National Youth Service

ODM – Orange Democratic Party

OMG – Oh My God

PEV – Post Election Violence

PHD – Philosophy of Doctorate (degree)

PM – Prime Minister

PP – Politeness Principle

PS – Permanent Secretaries

PS – Politeness Strategies

PSC – Parliamentary Select Committee

RA – Redressive Actions

RAO – Raila Amollo Odinga

RM – Running Mate

SAA – Social Actors Approach

SCA – Sociocognitive Approach

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SFL – Systemic Functional Linguistics

SIL – Summer Institute of Linguistics

SIT – Social Identity Theory

UK – Uhuru Kenyatta

VP – Vice President

WASP – White Anglo-Saxon Protestants

WDM-K – Wiper Democratic Movementy-Kenya

WSR – William Samoei Ruto

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

This study is a critical exploration of how a selection of Kenyans discursively construct, manipulate and appropriate their (and others') ethnic categories in discussions of Kenyan politics on two Facebook sites. It looks at how these Kenyan informants use language to position themselves and others in relation to ethnicity. Thus, the ethnicising discourses and strategies which they bring to bear to that end will be of critical interest. This study also examines if and how the national identity is negotiated. In addition to that, the study explores the extent to which the participants expand or contract the dialogic space in these political discussions. To do this, and as will be indicated towards the end of this chapter, there is a two-fold analysis of the data: linguistic and thematic. For this, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Engagement and Face-work have been employed as the analytical tools. The preview of the chapters of this study also comes at the end of this introductory chapter. However, before then, the following are also given: a very brief overview of Kenya, especially with regard to ethnicity and politics; the main research aim and questions; and the informants' profiles.

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## 1.2 A multi-ethnic Kenya

As Ghai and Ghai (2013) explain, owing to such historical conjunctures as conquests, colonisation, decolonisation, and immigration, most countries can be described as constituting different collectivities: races and tribes. Writing about Africa, Posner (2005) states that it is the continent with the most ethnically divided societies; the region has very many ethnic communities. In this respect, Kenya is a good microcosm of the continent. Whether we subscribe to either primordialist or constructivist approaches to the subject of ethnicity, the discussion ends up in the fact that, generally, Kenyans still affiliate or identify on an ethnic basis. This discussion is centred on such factors as common descent, history, language, culture and the regions inhabited. However, constituting many ethnic communities is not enough reason or justification for the polarisation which has come to be a hallmark for the country. As Ghai and Ghai (2013:7) put it, "national and ethnic identities are not by nature oppositional." Lending credence to this, McNee (2013:vii) points out that despite being "(o)ne of the world's most ethnically diverse societies, Canada is also one of its most peaceful and prosperous."



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## 1.3 Background

Though colonialism takes its fair share of the blame for dividing people into ethnic cleavages and sharpening their ethnic consciousness, this study assigns a sizeable degree of responsibility to the Kenyans themselves. There are three reasons for this. First, the country has adopted a zero-sum (winner-takes-all) system. Secondly, the political leaders have inherited the art of ethnic mobilisation from the colonialists and perfected it, pitting Kenyan citizens against each other on the basis of tribe. Thirdly, the ordinary citizens (voters) have played along the politicians' dirty game. With the zero-sum system of democracy, the winner takes everything and the losers languish in alienation. For instance, in Kenya, the presidency has always had considerable powers and privileges. This means the president controls many things, including distribution of financial resources and public appointments. The president, as head of the Executive, also normally unduly controls the other arms of the state: the Legislature and the Judiciary. The Legislature is wont to do the president's bidding due to the higher numbers enjoyed by the ruling party or coalition. Even in situations where the ruling party or coalition have fewer numbers, opposition parliamentarians are normally compromised with the help of 'dangling carrots'. This can explain why the presidency is a very attractive position to hold.

Political elites in other capacities (such as members of parliament, governors and senators) are also bound to benefit from huge salaries, allowances, influence and patronage, among others. Because of this, these 'leaders' are accustomed to looking at populations as voting automatons and regions as vote baskets. They would want to control these 'resources' in order to continue feathering their nests. They will also have the tendency to consider themselves entitled to their tribespeople's loyalty and votes. (The term 'tribe', also possibly contested owing to its racist connotations, is used in this study as a synonym for 'ethnic group', at least in Kenya, as also discussed in section 3.3.1 below). This breeds ethnic mobilisation, whereby the citizens are manipulated into voting their 'own' at the expense of voting competent individuals. This way, political elites, by use of ethnically oriented parties or coalitions, will only compete to outbid each other in the scramble for the country's resources (Kanyinga, 2013). This study argues that the ordinary citizens, by virtue of their intransigent loyalty to their ethnic elites, have been willing accomplices. Against the backdrop of a zero-sum democracy, the 'tribespeople' of presidential candidates would look forward to 'eat together with them'. Once their own wins, the tribespeople would claim or expect a share of their 'pork barrel' (Ngau and Mbathi, 2010). Here, the 'pork barrel' includes political appointments and distribution of financial and other resources. As scholars (such as Kanyinga, 2010 and Posner, 2005) have pointed out, the



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tribespeople also enjoy psychological benefits when one of their own is in power. The rest of the citizens, of course, would only be filled with deprivation and indignation; this can only result in or exacerbate ethnic polarisation. It is the discursive manifestations of such a politics of ethnic mobilisation and polarisation that this thesis seeks to subject to closer analysis.

### 1.3.1 The Politics of Ethnic Mobilisation

It has been shown how, since independence in 1963, the state, led by the president, has orchestrated ethnic mobilisation (Atieno-Odhiambo, 2002; Ajulu, 2002; Ogot, 2012; Kanyinga, 2013). For instance, Ajulu (2002) singles out the 'Kiambu Family', the Kikuyu 'cabal' surrounding President Kenyatta (1963-1978), as a very powerful clique, which worked to entrench Kikuyu hegemony and supremacy at the expense of the other tribes. President Kenyatta's government was also suspected of having been involved in the assassination of Tom Mboya, a charismatic and influential Luo politician (Ogot, 2012). This was symptomatic of the underlying ethnic hegemony of the Kikuyus and polarisation, whereby Kikuyus were also basically estranged from other Kenyan tribes.

Ajulu (2002) states how President Moi's (1978-2002) 'Kabarnet Syndicate' took over from the 'Kiambu Family' and 'Kalenjinized' the public institutions hitherto dominated by the Kikuyus. President Moi's last ten years in office were to be characterized by multiparty politics (as fought for and re-introduced in 1992 by leading dissenting politicians). A concomitant of the inception of multiparty politics was the two-term limit for the presidency. This meant that if President Moi won both the 1992 and the 1997 elections, he would have to leave office in 2002. Though in smaller proportions (than the 2007-8 post election violence), the violence accompanying the general elections of 1992 and 1997 also had an element of ethnicity in it. This was experienced especially in the Rift Valley and Coast Provinces. And, as Posner (2005) points out, President Moi's government would not be exonerated from this ethnically-oriented trouble. Though also blamed for fanning tribal chaos during the general elections and generally favouring fellow tribespeople (the Kalenjins) with regard to appointments, President Moi's victory in the elections was guaranteed; the opposition leaders always went to the ballot divided, with each basically being voted by only their tribespeople.

It is important to state here that Kenyans had not had expectations as high as those following the 2002 general elections. First, President Moi's reign (1978-2002) had been brought to an end. President Moi had inherited and perpetuated Jomo Kenyatta's dictatorship, especially from 1978 to 1992, when Kenya was a dejure one-party state. Second, unlike the previous



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elections (in 1992 and 1997), the main opposition leaders – drawn from all dominant ethnic communities – had 'a unity of purpose' in 2002. With the slogan 'The Second Liberation', these opposition leaders, led by Mwai Kibaki, were voted into office on an 'anti-corruption platform'.

However, as this study argues, President Kibaki's incoming government instead stretched the blight of tribalism far more than his predecessor, President Moi. In fact, Kibaki's government seemed to compete with Jomo Kenyatta's. This is notwithstanding the fact that the times had changed; Kenya was now a 'democratic' multi-party state and its citizens were better educated and more politically aware. Kanyinga *et al.* (2010:10), in their side-notes, give a sense of the situation characterizing President Kibaki's first term in office (2002-2007):

> Increasing ethnicisation of the top echelons of key institutions of state was always an object of open and quiet resentment. For example, members of the Gikuyu/GEMA community dominated the security, finance, and justice and law institutions–ministries where real state power is domiciled. In the ministries of finance, and security, both the Minister and the Permanent secretary were from one community, as was [sic] most of the heads of departments and directorates. In the justice sector, the Minister and the Chief Justice were also from the same community, and a purge of the judiciary that saw many judges removed from office was seen as an 'ethnic cleansing' move in the judiciary, even though there were legitimate concerns about the integrity of that institution.

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The bungling of the 2007 elections by the Electoral Commission of Kenya was to break the camel's back. Going into the elections, President Kibaki faced a 'banquet' of strong(er) opposition in Raila Odinga. Generally speaking, this study contends that Raila Odinga symbolized the aspirations of many Kenyans – perhaps except President Kibaki's fellow Kikuyus. In Raila Odinga, many saw liberation from the yoke of Kikuyu supremacy. I, as the researcher and concerned citizen, vividly remember the streaming of the results, as shown by the national television. Before the televised tallying went off-air (with no satisfactory reason being given), well past mid-way, Raila Odinga had a comfortable lead. This tallying was also systematic, showing votes for each candidate from each constituency. However, when the televised tallying resumed, only the totals for each candidate were being updated. The initial elaborate reportage of the results, from constituency to constituency, had been done away with. Things took a swift turn, and, soon, President Kibaki reached and overtook Raila Odinga.



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President Kibaki was to 'win', eventually. To give some more background, the then Chairman of the Electoral Commission of Kenya, Mr Samuel Kivuitu, was on record to have publicly said (on national television) that 'something was cooking' in reference to, inter alia, the delayed tallying from President Kibaki's strongholds. Everything then culminated in the controversial swearing-in of President Kibaki at night, past 7:00pm.

Below, Kanyinga *et al.* (2010:14) safely explain the handling of the 2007 presidential elections:

> Problems arose during vote count. Complaints of flawed counting and general irregularities in tallying of the presidential vote featured prominently at the central tallying point in Nairobi–the Kenyatta International Conference Centre. Notwithstanding the hotly disputed presidential vote tallying, the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) announced the incumbent, President Mwai Kibaki of PNU (Party of National Unity), as the winner.

Kanyinga *et al.* (2010:14-15) continue, giving the statistics left in the wake of the post-election violence, ethnic in nature and also implicating the state:

> No sooner had the announcement been made than violence erupted in at least five of the country's eight provinces. The uprising mutated into an ethnic conflict in a period of about two days. About half a million members of the Gikuyu (Kikuyu) ethnic community were displaced from their homes in Rift Valley, Western and Nyanza provinces. Displacement of thousands of other ethnic groups in Gikuyu dominated areas also followed as the conflict escalated. By the end of it, no less than 350,000 Kenyans had been internally displaced. Over 1,100 had died, many women raped, and about 3,560 suffered serious injuries. Strikingly, in some ODM (Orange Democratic Party: the main opposition party) strongholds such as Nyanza, over 80per cent of the deaths reported were from gunshot wounds. Over 36 per cent of the total deaths reported were from gunshot wounds. This suggests that the state was active in the conflict. Indeed, the geographical distribution of deaths tend to indicate that there were more ODM than PNU supporters who died from gunshot wounds.

While the international community mediated and brokered some political peace, which eventually led to a ceasefire and a power-sharing deal, a long-lasting solution had not been found. However, fortunately, the year 2010 was to be marked by an approval of a newly drafted



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vibrant constitution. Observing that for consummation, this needed an implementation in spirit and in deed, McNee (2013) reflected:

> ...but with a new constitution, to implement, the country now stands at a crossroads. The time has come for Kenyans and their political leaders to choose. Will the country continue along the same dead-end road of ethnic competition and ethnic politics, or will Kenyans forge a new path aided by the mechanisms of choice and compromise defined by their new basic law?

While McNee's (2013) profound reflection would have been the perfect overture into the main research aim and the specific research questions of this study, I have to punctuate this transition with the eventful general elections of 2013, the immediate context for this study.

### 1.4 Immediate context: the 2013 general elections

The general elections of 2013, the immediate context for the political discussions used for this study, was, unsurprisingly, also to have an ethnic ingredient. According to the newly promulgated constitution, every presidential candidate has to have a running mate. The side that came to win in yet another disputed election had Uhuru Kenyatta (a Kikuyu) as the presidential candidate and William Ruto (a Kalenjin) as the running mate. They ran on the Jubilee party ticket. However, both politicians had been indicted at the International Criminal Court (ICC) for their perceived roles in the 2007-8 Post-Election Violence. Again, in this violence, it is their people (Kikuyus and Kalenjins) who were predominately at loggerheads. Then, Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto belonged to different political camps. As Kanyinga (2013) reports, when campaigning among their tribespeople in the 2013 elections, Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto appealed to 'peace and reconciliation'. However, this can also be conceived of as strategic ethnic mobilisation – because all Kenyans need to co-exist peacefully. The two politicians also presented themselves as victims of the 2007-8 Post-Election Violence. Cottrell and Ghai (2013) also make a reference to the catch phrase 'tyranny of numbers' as insisted on by a Jubilee-leaning political commentator Mutahi Ngunyi, a Kikuyu. As Cottrell and Ghai (2013:110) explain, according to Mutahi Ngunyi, the winners and losers of the 2013 elections had already been decided by the registration pattern: "Ngunyi's analysis pointed out that the areas of the country dominated by Kikuyus (Kenyatta's tribe) and Kalenjins (the community of Kenyatta's running mate, William Ruto) had registered over 6 million voters, whereas the core support for Odinga's alliance, CORD (Coalition for Reforms and



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Democracy), reached only 2.5 million." However, Cottrell and Ghai (2013) admit that Raila Odinga's support was more widespread than Kenyatta's in the 2013 general elections.

Pointing to some contestation over the presidential results, as announced by the new electoral body, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), Cottrell and Ghai (2013:108) state that "the results announced by the IEBC remain the object of suspicion in the eyes of many Kenyans." Raila Odinga was to take the dispute to the highest court in the land: The Supreme Court of Appeal. However, despite acknowledging that there were irregularities and illegalities in the tallying of the results, the Supreme Court ruled that these were not enough to nullify Uhuru Kenyatta's victory. It is also noteworthy that some evidence was thrown out due to some technical reasons (such as late submission). As some scholars (such as Atieno-Odhiambo, 2002 and Ajulu, 2002) have argued, the presidency and its powerful cabals tend towards appropriating state institutions to entrench their hold onto power and perpetuate ethnic hegemony.

It is in the wake of all such ethnically-oriented conjunctures that this particular study was conceived. The study also considered the period running up to, during and (immediately) after the 2013 general elections the best time to collect political discussions for a critical analysis of ethnic mobilisation in Kenya. This is because this study investigates how the informants campaigned for their candidates in the 2013 elections. This study also explores how the same informants made sense of the voting (patterns) and the handling of the elections by the electoral body. The contestation of the presidential results also provides interesting ground for discussions. With the legitimacy of President Uhuru Kenyatta affirmed by the Supreme Court and consummated by the formation of his government, this study was curious to find out how the two main opposing sides reacted and what this would mean for discussions about ethnicity in the country's politics. To already give some insight, and at the risk of coming across as ethnic-essentialist, this study looks into how, generally (but not absolutely), Kikuyus and Kalenjins would celebrate their 'victory' and how Luos, Luhyas, Kambas, Coasterians (the people from the Coast Province) and others would express their anger and frustration at having been 'robbed of their victory'. By this ethnic-essentialist token, therefore, Kikuyus and Kalenjins would be expected to assume the role of 'gatekeepers' while Raila's supporters would act the short-changed and alienated outsiders or even 'leftists'.

To hark back to McNee's (2013) compelling reflection, this study contends that Kenyans' fate lies squarely in their own hands. To paraphrase McNee (2013), as much as the vibrant



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constitution has clearly illuminated a path free of ethnic competition and ethnic politics for Kenyans, theirs is to do the walking. Curiously, therefore, this study is interested in critically examining whether (some) Kenyans have started (or continued) this gallant journey. The study also critically explores how or if some Kenyans are frustrating or discouraging the journey. This is, at least, going by the informants who partook in the Facebook political discussions which this study captured. On this note, the main research aim of the study as well as the specific research questions follow.

### 1.5 Main Research Aim and Specific Questions

The main research aim of this study is to explore how ethnic categories are discursively constructed and manipulated in discussions of Kenyan politics on two Facebook sites. The following are the specific research questions examined in this study:

(1) How do the study's informants use language to position themselves and others in relation to ethnicity?
(2) Which ethnicising discourses do the informants use?
(3) Which stereotypes do they draw on or challenge?
(4) Which discursive strategies do they use to negotiate their ethnic and national identities?
(5) To what extent is the dialogic space contracted or expanded through the interactions on the different Facebook sites?
(6) How do the participants perform face-work while engaging in these interactions?

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### 1.6 The informants

As indicated, the object of my study are political discussions on Facebook, as held from 2013 to 2014. The informants for this study belonged to two groups: an open group and a closed group. The open group, 'Baraza La Wananchi' (The Agora of the Citizens), had 106 active participants (out of a membership of slightly over 30,000). The closed group, 'The Campus Group', a college cohort, had eighteen active participants (out of a membership of 200). I used five different chats from the 'Baraza La Wananchi' group and three from the 'Campus Group'. Being a concerned and active Kenyan citizen, I also took part in selected discussions as a participant researcher. The data was collected for the period of the 2013 general and presidential elections.



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Both groups included informants from diverse ethnic and political backgrounds. As will be shown in the Data Analysis chapters, individuals almost naturally aligned in two corresponding ways: ethnically and politically. By the same token, I was interested in the extent to which participants would pledge allegiance to (the political parties or coalitions of) their 'ethnic messiahs'. Most names were also indicative of the informants' ethnic backgrounds; normally, African names point to people's ethnicity in the country. A few of them, however, used English or Kiswahili names, which made this inference difficult. The main reason for using both an open group and a closed group was to make a comparison of how individuals from each group drew on particular discourses and stereotypes as well as how they expanded or contracted the dialogic space. This is because members of the closed group know each other (closely) while those in the open group do not necessarily do so. The study was especially interested in how interlocutors who knew each other disagreed, and how those who did not (necessarily) know each other did so in an open group.

### 1.7 Analysis of data

To analyse the data, I have used two main theoretical frameworks: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Engagement (a sub-system of Functional Grammar). I have also used the theory of Face-work to supplement that of Engagement. CDA is the overarching framework. This is because the main research aim, in exploring how the study's informants appropriate, construct and manipulate their own and others' ethnic identities, is expected to reveal the role of language in these processes. While doing so, this study also hopes to look out for any dynamics and relations of power among (certain) ethnic communities, as indexed by the informants. As has already been mentioned, ethnic mobilisation is a hallmark of Kenya. And, as has also been mentioned, while at it, ethnic elites also use, depend on and benefit from state and other institutions to create and sustain unequal relations of power between ethnic groups. These unequal relations of power, as Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) point out, are mostly concretized, taken for granted and made to look natural. All this is to maintain the status quo.

The essence of CDA, here, is that it seeks to unveil and expose these pseudo-natural constraints and attendant shared false consciousness. Unfortunately, as Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000:136) explain, most of the society wallows only in the surface structure: "the world in which individuals lead their conscious lives, where things are natural and existence is, or can be made to be, rational and comprehensible." However, fortunately, with CDA, researchers and, by extension, others, can access the deep structure: "those unquestioned beliefs and values



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upon which the taken-for-granted surface structure rests" (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000:136). CDA, therefore, is supposed to be emancipatory in function; it affords a critical reflection and interpretation that involves waking people up to the political nature of their social phenomena (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). This way, the critical perspective on events and phenomena allows people to change their society for the better, if they can take it upon themselves.

Functional Grammar suffices for a good partnership with CDA. The essence of Functional Grammar is to explain in detail how the language we use has social meanings. The meanings focused in this study are interpersonal meanings: the use of language to interact with people, to establish and maintain social relationships and to express our viewpoints and attitudes about the world and to possibly change the viewpoints and attitudes of others. More specifically, the sub-system of Interpersonal meaning used in this study is that of Engagement, which can also be explained in terms of the *dialogic perspective*. The dialogic perspective deals with "the linguistic resources by which speakers/writers adopt a stance towards the value positions being referenced by the text and with respect to those they address" (Martin and White, 2005:92). Face-work also supplements Engagement. This study also explores the extent to which participants perform face-work as they partake in potentially sensitive political discussions, which may tend towards incriminating others in two ways: on the basis of belonging to certain ethnic communities and (or) simply because they hold and express certain political views.

To conclude, therefore, a combination of CDA and Engagement as tools of analysis gives the researcher more insight into the relationship between the language used by the informants and the larger society, as defined by power relations and struggles: including to the processes of reproduction of unequal power and the resistance of it.

### 1.8 Overview of the chapters

This thesis has been structured into ten chapters. This is the first and short introductory chapter. Chapter 2 discusses Kenya's background, giving a summary of the country's political conjunctures. Chapters 3 and 4, as constituting the literature review, are Ethnicity, Politics and Media, respectively. The theoretical frameworks: CDA, Engagement and Face-work follow in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 is a discussion of the research methodology. There are three data analysis chapters: Chapters 7, 8 and 9, respectively. Chapter 7 is a linguistic analysis of the first data set (closed Facebook chat group). Chapter 8 is a linguistic analysis of the second data set (open Facebook chat group). Chapter 9 is a thematic analysis of both sets of the data (open and closed



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Facebook chat groups). Finally, I conclude the thesis in Chapter 10, wherein I will also give recommendations on possible areas for further study.

Chapter 2, which previews Kenya's political background, follows below.

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# CHAPTER 2

# KENYA'S POLITICAL BACKGROUND

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a historical context for Kenya's politics. It starts by showing how the country is a colonial construction, hitherto constituting of ethnic collectives, which, though considered distinct, were not entirely separated or isolated from each other. Brought under British colonial rule from the late 19th Century up to 1963, when it got its independence, Kenya has always been characterized by its unique brand of politics: from the reigns of its presidents, to democracy, governance and ethnic mobilisation. In keeping with the main research aim and the specific research questions of this study, which are mainly centred on how informants in two Facebook groups construct their own and others' ethnic identities in political discussions, this chapter foregrounds the role of ethnicity and ethnic mobilisation in the country's politics. In this regard, Kenya's ethnic composition has been captured and presented below. The ethnic affiliation of the country's presidents, a very important ingredient in the country's politics, has also been given. The historical context in the chapter culminates in the March 2013 elections, the immediate context for this study.

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Kenya is an East African country, bordering Tanzania, Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia. According to the Ethnologue Languages of the World, the Kenyan population stood at 47,615,000 in the year 2016. From the earliest history accessed by this study, Kenya's (or a part of it) first contact with the outside 'world' was in the 16th century, when the Portuguese came and fought the Swahili, Arab and other local Muslim communities in Mombasa. Eventually, the Portuguese lost the war and cleared off. As Abubakar (2013) wonders, who knows what might have been had the Porturguese won the war? Perhaps, Kenya, like Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea Bissau, would have been Portuguese colonies. That was before the coming of the Western Europeans, mainly the British, in the 19th century, and to whose conquest and colonization 'Kenyans' eventually succumbed. As reputed Kenyan historian Ogot (2012) states, in 1895, the East African Protectorate, as including Kenya, Uganda and Zanzibar (which eventually became part of Tanzania) was declared. This marked the beginning of an earnest imposition of British colonial rule in the region. As Ogot (2012:35-36) narrates, this group of immigrants was made up of adventurers and settlers who were keen



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to make this part of the continent their home and even control its people by some way of feudalism. As Atieno-Odhiambo (2002:236) reports, from 1902, this alliance of settlers and colonialists was to expropriate a lot of land from the African communities since, now, Kenya had officially become "a white man's country".

However, though a 'white man's country', Kenya, as Ghai (2013) explains, constituted three main racial groups: Europeans (colonizers, settlers, adventurers and missionaries); Asians, who were mainly made up of Indians (Badalas and Goans), the Buluchis (whose roots are traced to Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan) and Arabs (who had come from the middle East to trade and spread Islam); and, finally, African communities, who were both the indigenes and the majority. As Atieno-Odhimbo (2002) and Ogot (2012) note, just as in many (if not all) parts of the world, the racist discourses or ideologies espoused by the Europeans prevailed in the country: they considered the Europeans the most superior race, followed by the Asians, and, lastly, the Africans. By this token, Ogot (2012) states that this superiority index was translated into corresponding treatment: Asians, though not as privileged, received better treatment than Africans. Atieno-Odhiambo (2002) even adds that among the common European notions, 'Africans were not ready for independence'. While, as already noted, the Europeans reigned supreme, Asians mostly traded and also worked in the public service. Africans were generally forced to become squatters and work as labourers. Though not on a large scale, as in South Africa, the Kenyan spaces had the mould of segregation. To give an example, Atieno-Odhiambo (2002:237) describes the Nairobi (Kenya's capital city) of the time as "a segregated city where Africans lived on the edges of the city, while Asians and Europeans lived in Garden City and its suburbs."

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Below, on pages 14 and 15, a tabular presentation of Kenya's presidents, running mates and main opposition leaders is given. It includes the years and parties they ran on or ruled with.

**2.2 The making of a pluralist state (from 'autonomous ethnic nationalities')**

Eventually, like in other parts of the African continent, the east African region had to be 'impaled', divided and redefined in terms of 'colonies', later to become nation-states or countries. In other words, the African communities, by dint of colonial imposition, were to be lumped together and described as belonging to 'countries'. This was a new phenomenon. Borders, mainly ethnic (and regional), were to be defined and drawn for these different groups of Africans. Based on distinctions set up by the colonial administrators at the time, the African communities in Kenya are commonly divided into three main language groups: Bantus, the



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majority; Nilotes, the second majority; and, lastly, the Cushites. The communities belonging to the same language groups also share a common ethnic origin or ancestry. Before identifying the ethnic communities in Kenya, it is important to serve a caveat. The naming of specific ethnic groups has been based on three main factors: their own self-ascription; the languages they speak; and the way they are referred to by out-groups (including scholars outside of Kenya). Because of this, the names of these ethnic groups may vary phonemically and orthographically. That is why, for instance, this study may refer to the Abaluhya people as the Luhya or even Luhyas, and the Abagusii people as the Gusiis or Kisiis.

The Bantu communities belong to the Niger Congo language phylum and Benue Congo language family (as said to have originated from the Cameroon region). Kenyan Bantus are classified according to the regions they traditionally inhabit in the country. That is why they are Western Bantus (Abaluhya, Abagusii, Abakuria and Abasuba); Central Bantus (Kikuyus, Merus, Embus, Mbeeres); Eastern Bantus (Akamba); and Southern or Coastal Bantus (Taita, Taveta, Mijikenda and Pokomo). The Nilotic people migrated from Sudan and moved along the Nile River. Hence, their name (Nilotes) has been derived from the 'Nile' River. They are made up of three main groups: Highland Nilotes (including Kalenjins, Tesos, Sabaots and the Okiek); River-Lake Nilotes (the Luos); and Plain Nilotes (Maasais, Turkanas and Samburus). The Cushitic people include Somalis, Rendilles, Oromos, Boranas, Daasanach, Aweers, Waatas and Yaakus. It is, however, important to note that some of the ethnic communities comprise smaller sub-ethnic communities. For instance, the Kalenjin group encompasses the Kipsigis, Nandi, Keiyo, Mrakwet, Pokot, Sabaot and Tugen sub-communities. The Abaluhya group contains the Bukusu, Idakho, Isukha, Tirichi, Kabaras, Maragoli, Tachoni, Nyala, Marachi, Bunyole, Marama, Ikhayo, Ishisa, Itsotso, Wanga and Samia sub-communities. Ethnic communities which belong to the same language groups are also not necessarily close geographically. A good example is that of the Abagusii (Bantus), whose immediate neighbours (Maasais, Luos and Kalenjins) belong to the Nilotic language group.

In total, the number of ethnic communities in Kenya is (generally) said to be (around) 42. However, as will be explained in the Literature Review, there has been a lot of contestation around the actual number. Abubakar (2013:31), for instance, talks of "the listing of the mythical 41 communities" and argues that the "42$^{nd}$ category was created to accommodate the 'other'.



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***Table 2. 1: An overview of presidents, running mates and main opposition leaders (1963-2017)***

| Years | President | Running Mate/Vice President | Main Opposition Leader |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1963-1964 | Jomo Kenyatta<br>Kikuyu<br>KANU | Jaramogi Oginga Odinga (VP),<br>Luo<br>KANU | Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi<br>Kalenjin<br>KADU |
| 1964-1966 | Jomo Kenyatta<br>Kikuyu<br>KANU | Jaramogi Oginga Odinga (VP),<br>Luo<br>KANU | ___ |
| 1966 | Jomo Kenyatta<br>Kikuyu<br>KANU | Joseph Murumbi (VP)<br>Kikuyu<br>KANU | Jaramogi Oginga Odinga<br>Luo<br>KPU |
| 1967-1978 | Jomo Kenyatta<br>Kikuyu<br>KANU | Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi (VP)<br>Kalenjin<br>KANU | Jaramogi Oginga Odinga<br>Luo<br>(Opposition parties banned) |
| 1978-2002 | Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi<br>Kalenjin<br>KANU | Mwai Kibaki (VP), Kikuyu, KANU [1978-1988]; Josephat Karanja (VP), Kikuyu, KANU [1988-1989]; Prof. George Saitoti (VP), Maasai/Kikuyu, KANU [1989-1998 & 1999-2002]; Musalia Mudavadi (VP), Luhya, New KANU [2002]; | (Opposition parties banned until 1992)<br>Kenneth Matiba<br>Kikuyu<br>FORD ASILI [1992-1997];<br>Mwai Kibaki<br>Kikuyu<br>DP [1998-2002] |
| 2002-2007 | Mwai Kibaki<br>Kikuyu<br>NARC | Michael Kijana Wamalwa (VP), Luhya, NARC [2002]; Moody Awori (VP), Luhya, NARC [2003-2007] | Uhuru Kenyatta<br>Kikuyu<br>Jubilee |
| 2008-2013 | Mwai Kibaki<br>Kikuyu<br>NARC | Moody Awori (VP), Luhya, PNU [2008]; Kalonzo Musyoka (VP), Kamba, ODM-Kenya [2008-2013] | No significant opposition; coalition government in place. |
| 2013-2017 | Uhuru Kenyatta<br>Kikuyu<br>Jubilee | William Ruto (RM and VP)<br>Kalenjin<br>Jubilee | Raila Odinga<br>Luo<br>CORD |

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As is the norm, the contestation pits 'lumpers' against 'splitters'; the former would give a smaller number (than 42) by virtue of treating separate groups as being putatively the same while the latter would, by means of considering some groups as inherently variegated, give a higher number (than 42). This study, in giving primacy to self-ascription, would liberally



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follow the lead of the latter (splitters) to come up with a much longer list of Kenya's ethnic communities. Abubakar (2013:32) gives the sense:

> The first state effort to enumerate all Kenyan communities (outside the mythical 42 conceptualization) was undertaken by the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC) [from November 2000 to April 2004]. Although the list developed was extensive, the Commission recommended an open-ended approach that [sic] to allow self-identification by the communities themselves. This approach was designed to allow for a framework that would not exclude any community as well as accommodate future development. It also enabled every community to define itself on its own terms.

Among the crucial issues which the commission needed to address was the fact that some communities (including Badalas, Goans and Buluchis) are considered non-Africans due to their Asian extraction and physical appearances (Abubakar, 2013; Ghai, 2013). Some communities were also colonially constructed to become single 'monolithic' ethnic groups. Cases in point are the Kalenjins (whose sub-communities I have mentioned above) and Merus. Ogot (2012:33-34) explains the Meru 'ethnic' community thus: "The Chuka, Tharaka and Meru – comprising Tigania, Igembe, Imenti, Miutini, Igoji, Mwimbi and Muthambi – were all part of the so-called Meru people, which perhaps was more of a territorial name rather than a 'tribal' one." Similarly, such an ethnic community as the Swahili is, as Ogot (2012:24) states, made up of "Twelve 'Tribes' (communities)". Over and above that, as Abubakar (2013:30-31) shows, some communities are so 'small' that they have just been obliterated by their neighbours or have not got official recognition yet:

> The colonial practice was to associate one dominant community with every district and to have no more than two to three dominant communities in a region or province. The relatively smaller communities across the country have had to develop various mechanisms to cope with this situation, including accepting co-option in larger ethnic arrangements or even assimilation by the numerically dominant community in their neighbourhood… The majority of the communities not linked to a territory found themselves lumped together in this category. A simple category will show that they occupy the lowest levels of any human development index. Many Kenyan communities such as the Munyoyaya, Elwana,



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> Dasnaach, Okiek, Elchumus, Segeju, Sakweri, Elmoro, Sabaot, Terek, Sengwer, Nubi, Boni, Sukaye, Waata and others still await official recognition.

Now, what followed the ethnic (or/and regional) boundaries, which had been drawn, was some kind of divide-and-rule policy of administration by the colonialists. These boundaries included native reserves. Movements and interactions across these ethnic boundaries or reserves were restricted and discouraged. For better control, Africans were made to carry 'vipande', a Swahili word for 'passes'. For this reason, Ogot (2012) points out, the social, economic, political and cultural relations and integration, which were the order of the day among these African communities, were rudely interrupted and choked. This, as Kanyinga (2013) aptly puts it, was the beginning of the sharpening of ethnic differences among the communities living in what would be Kenya: a colonial construction and a barrier of sorts. As Ajulu (2002) notes, for example, such dealings as 'barter trade' started to be displaced by western modes of trade. Money was to be used as the sole 'legal tender'. Tax was to be paid to the colonial government. A lot of land was expropriated and the erstwhile African owners were transformed into squatters and labourers, on their own farms. To add, and as will be explained below, there was also to be uneven development of capitalism in the country, which worsened social, economic, political and even cultural relations between different ethnic groups.

Thus, Kanyinga (2013:53), among others, argues, "ethnicity and its salience in politics has origins in the colonial situation." Ajulu (2002) recounts how the colonial government, paranoid over purposeful African solidarity, put out any form of nation-wide political activity; the colonial policy only encouraged tribal associations. The political parties which survived were only those within district borders. Not beyond. As a corollary, the activities of these district parties would only be confined to narrowly-defined tribal issues. "Consequently, the society became ethnicised. Each group undertook its own activities without reference to others" (Kanyinga, 2013:53). Ajulu (2002) goes into detail:

> Given the absence of a solid foundation for national political organisation, the already entrenched nature of regional (tribal) associations was bound to be the predominant feature of political organisations. Not surprisingly, the period leading up to the first independence elections in 1963 saw a proliferation of regional, ethnic and, at the very worst, clan based political organisations… These district-based political organisations were to constitute the most effective recipe for the politicisation of ethnic cleavages. The settler community, intransigent and resentful



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> of the prospect of a unitary state in which their small numbers would permit them very little say, soon took advantage of the possibilities for ethnic division. The burning question then was which group would secure control of the independent Kenyan state and what would they be capable of doing with this control. (Ajulu, 2002:257)

Below follows an Ethnologue Map (2016 SIL International), which helps detail the languages spoken in Kenya. The map has left out English, an Indo-European language, which also happens to be the country's official language. Generally, these Kenyan languages, most of which are indigenous, correspond to the specific ethnic communities in the country. In the same way, this Kenyan linguistic map also reflects the colonial district (now county) boundaries, also seemingly corresponding to the different ethnic communities. However, as can be seen in the linguistic map, there are 58 different languages vis-à-vis at least the 42 Kenyan ethnic communities. This is mainly because the languages of the sub-communities (such as Lubukusu and Lulogooli) have been considered distinct, as opposed to only having the macrolanguages (such as Luhya).

### 2.3 Short history of early political parties

This subsection gives a brief history of political parties in Kenya, as well as the different reigns the country has had, up to the present. In doing so, both Ajulu (2002) and Kanyinga (2013) are mainly drawn on. The former comes in handy with regard to Kenya's early life of political parties while the latter also helps with later and (almost) current political life, including the period after the 2013 elections.

The first Kenyan political organisation was the East African Association (EAA), formed in 1919. EAA's leadership comprised the dominant ethnic groups in Nairobi's incipient labour market: Kikuyus, Luos, Kamba, Luhyia and some Ugandans. Ajulu (2002) describes it as 'a truly pan-tribal political organisation'. Following the Nairobi protests and riots of 1922 (against such things as hut-tax, forced labour and the pass book), its leaders (including Harry Thuku, Waiganjo Ndotono and George Mugekenyi) were arrested and deported. This saw a proliferation of tribal associations. The first national organisation to be formed was the Kenya African Study Union (KASU), in 1944. However, as Ajulu (2002:255) states, KASU was "an organisation created by the colonial state to act as an advisory group to the first nominated African member of the Legislative Council, Eliud Maithu." As turned out, KASU soon assumed its own momentum and metamorphosed into the Kenya African Union (KAU) in



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1946, as an outfit seeking to unite all Kenyans. In 1947, Jomo Kenyatta became KAU's president and brought into its fold the political constituency of one of the oldest Kikuyu associations, the old Kikuyu Central Association (KCA). At about the same time, the leadership of the labour movement also joined KAU and brought along its militant political constituency – the 'urban crowd'. However, as Ajulu (2002:256) points out, KAU was not so representative: it constituted mainly "the urbanised, proletarianised and educated sections of the society."

Nevertheless, and as expected, the KAU was not going to indulge for long. In 1952, with the declaration of the state of emergency and the beginning of the MAU MAU rebellion, the entire leadership of the KAU was arrested and put behind bars for nine years, until 1960. In the following year, 1953, KAU was to be proscribed, and, as a result, political activity reverted to tribal and welfare associations. A ban was also slapped on political party activity on the national arena, until 1959. The MAU MAU rebellion – arguably the biggest and the most immediate rebellion – was defeated in the mid-1950s. This generally put out political activity perhaps where it mattered most: in and around the city of Nairobi. To be sure, Nairobi was already strategic politically for Kenyan Africans owing to the fact that it was both a 'melting pot' and geographically central.

### 2.3.1 Struggle for control of the post-colonial Kenya

In 1959, the colonial state removed barriers to the formation of national political organisations, and, as Ajulu (2002:257) offers, "the struggle for control of the post-colonial state began in earnest". As the national arena was already characterized by a deficiency of political activity (and/or parties), the stage had been set for tribal or regional parties to thrive. Ajulu (2002:257) goes on, "the period leading up to the first independence elections in 1963 saw a proliferation of regional, ethnic and, at the very worst, clan based political organisations…" Having witnessed the colonial state's undertakings and manoeuvres, (most) African political players must have been alert to the dynamics and prospects of wielding state power: state control was (and still is) akin to holding the key to the gold mine. The colonial framework that privileged Europeans and Asians at the expense of the Africans was soon to be turned on its head. Premonitions of the nationalist state (in the sense of favouring only the African communities to the 'detriment' of other groups: Europeans and Asians) were to be confirmed before long. A case in point is the fact that, in post-independent Kenya, Asians generally lost their trading licenses and jobs in the public service (Ghai, 2013). However, though Kenya was to become an African nationalist state, all was not rosy for the so-called 'independent' Africans. "During



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this crucial period of imminent transfer of state-power into the hands of indigenous classes (the Africans), ethnic identities appear to have been constructed as instruments of negotiating access to that power" (Ajulu, 2002:257). The emphasis was soon to shift "to intra-African competition which has remained the dominant theme of Kenya politics" (Ghai, 2013:83).

KANU (having sprung from KAU) and KADU, were the main nationalist groups going into the first independent elections. Ajulu (2002) describes KANU (Kenya African National Union) as an alliance of urbanized, proletarianised and relatively more educated sections of the indigenous groups, which, for historical reasons (such as earlier contact with the Europeans), came from the Kikuyu, Luo, Kamba and sections of the Luhyia. On the other hand, KADU – an alliance of parties (Moi's Kalenjin Political Alliance [KPA], Ronald Ngala's Coast African People's Union [CAPU], Ole Tipis' Masai United Front [MUFO] and Muliro's Kenya People's party [KPP]) was formed on the platform of 'guarding against the domination of majority ethnic groups' (as constituting KANU). KADU (Kenyan African Democratic Union) also got the support of the white settlers (who faced a lot of uncertainty over their welfare in a post-independent Kenya). The party advocated for 'majimboism' (a quasi-federalist constitution), and by extension, it was synonymous with ethnic separatism. KADU was to lose the 1963 general election for this; KANU (a rather 'centralist' party) appealed to more Kenyans. In giving a brief discussion of the different presidents Kenya has had, this study lends credence to Ghai (2013), who argues that even if Kenya is fortunate not to have a tribe that can ordinarily dominate others, there are five big tribes (Kikuyu, Luo, Kalenjin, Luhya and Kamba) which hold appreciable political leverage. Below, this study gives a brief account of the different regimes the country has had, as well as their roles in ethnic mobilisation and polarisation.

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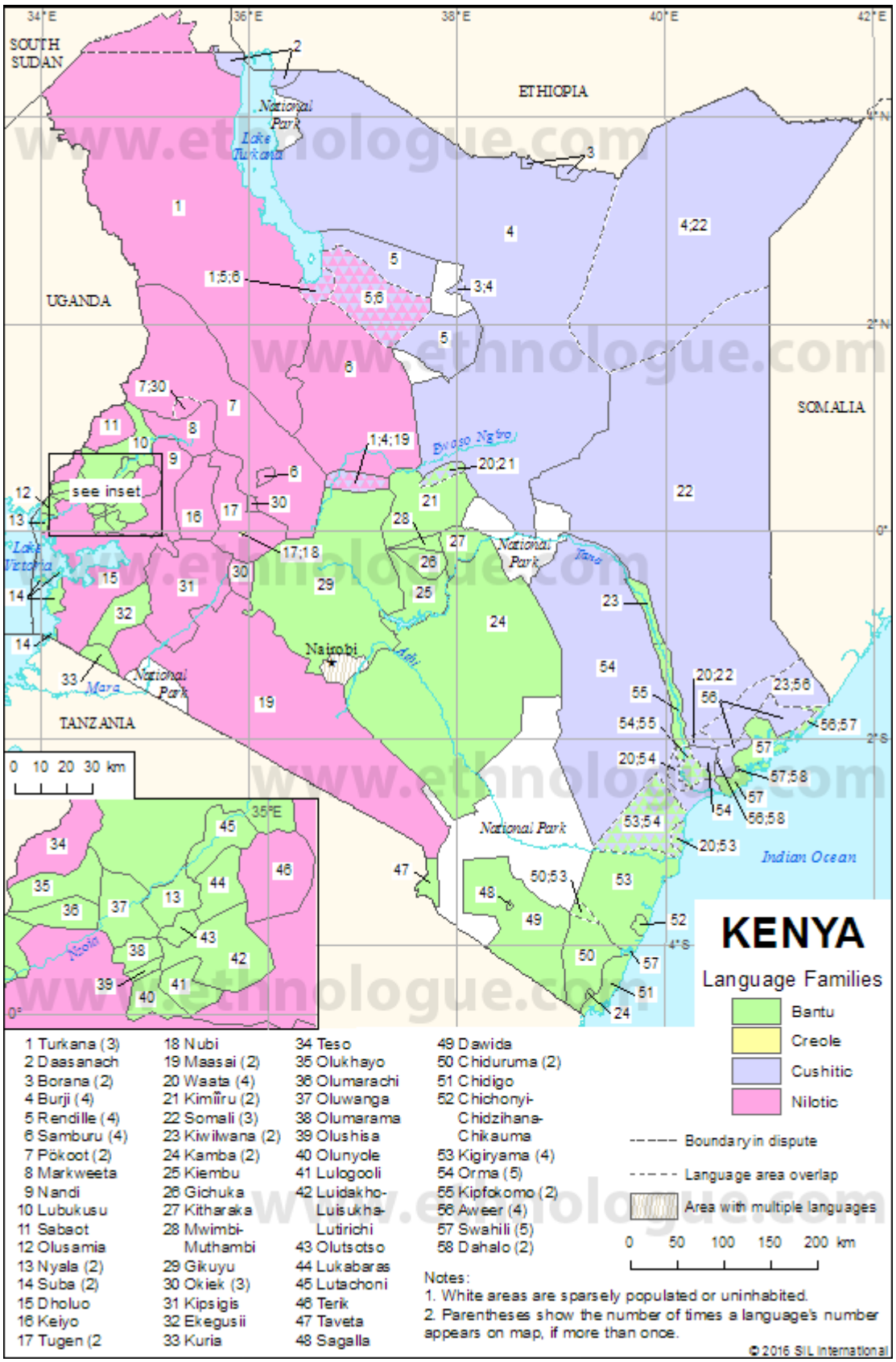
***Figure 2. 1: Ethnologue Map (2016 SIL International) of languages spoken in Kenya.***



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## 2.4 President Jomo Kenyatta's Reign (1963-1978)

KANU, seen as a 'centralist' party, easily sailed through the first general elections in the post-independent Kenya in 1963. Its leader, Jomo Kenyatta, a Kikuyu, became the first prime minister before becoming the first president. Towards the end of 1964, KADU (a party for the 'minority' tribes) dissolved and joined KANU, which thus started enjoying (much more) nationwide mandate. However, in 1966, differences which had started simmering between Kenyatta and his Vice President, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, reached a crescendo when the latter defected from KANU and formed the Kenya People's Union (KPU). Commentators (including Kanyinga, 2013; Ajulu, 2002; Atieno-Odhiambo, 2002; Kanyinga, 2013; and Ogot, 2012) have accredited this breaking away to ideological differences between Jomo Kenyatta and Oginga Odinga. Kanyinga (2013), for instance, states that one of the reasons for the fall-out was that Oginga Odinga questioned Jomo Kenyatta's land (grabbing) policies.

However, as Ogot (2012) argues, these ideological differences were turned into rivalries between Kikuyu nationalism (as represented by Jomo Kenyatta) and Luo nationalism (as represented by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga). Atieno-Odhiambo (2002) adds that this marked the beginning of an extension or imposition of the Kikuyu notion of civil society to the national political arena. According to Kenyatta and a good number of fellow Kikuyu politicians, Luos (including Oginga Odinga) were inferior citizens of the country. This is because Luos, unlike Kikuyus and a majority of Kenyan tribes, were known not to circumcise. As has been explained elsewhere in this study, circumcision marks transition from childhood to adulthood in the communities it is practised. In addition, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga's KPU was labeled a Luo party by Jomo Kenyatta's regime. The Kenyatta regime also appropriated state machinery – including the police – to frustrate KPU's undertakings. For instance, the police were used to disperse KPU's political rallies. KPU lasted only from 1966 to 1969, when it was banned. Jaramogi Oginga Odinga was also to be imprisoned. Kenya soon became a de facto one party state.

Towards the end of 1969, Tom Mboya, a Luo, was assassinated. This stoked a lot of ill feelings against the Kikuyus, especially among the Luos. This, Ajulu (2002) notes, led to the Kiambu Family – Jomo Kenyatta's inner cabal from his Kiambu District – to call for oathing in order to defend the Kikuyu community against the outsiders (other ethnic communities). This oathing included the vow to ensure that the presidency never leaves the Kikuyu community. The relationship between the Jomo Kenyatta-state and the Kikuyus was also largely symbiotic; the



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Kikuyu people always came first before the other Kenyans. In the same vein, Atieno-Odhiambo (2002:242) contends: "Kenyatta was obligated to the Agikuyu in specific ways, but to Kenya in general ways. He chose to be self-regarding and inclusive toward all Gikuyu, the limit of his moral ethnicity (Lonsdale, 1992), and to be other-regarding toward the rest of the Kenyan society, his subjects."

In explaining how Kenyatta and his fellow Kikuyus benefitted from the state at the expense of other tribes, Ogot (2012:64) states:

> The 70s saw Kikuyu hegemony or ethnic sovereignty expand over economic and political life. Central province became the most developed area. The business domination enjoyed by Kikuyu and related groups (including Merus and Embus) assisted their aggressive land acquisition in the Rift Valley, at the coast and in major towns beyond their 'homelands'. Many members of his government came from his home district of Kiambu. In addition, Ministers drawn from the GEMA (Gikuyu Embu and Meru Association) communities held the key portfolios of state: defence, foreign affairs, finance, economic planning, local government, agriculture, lands and settlement and Attorney General. By the end of 1971, four of the eight Provincial Commissioners were Kikuyu; and of the 25 Permanent Secretaries, eleven were Kikuyu. It could truly be said that they owned Kenya, and controlled its state. Kenyatta became an Imperial President, owning vast properties and businesses all over the country. Kikuyu ascendancy caused fear and resentment among other communities who felt marginalized and alienated.

In 1978, Jomo Kenyatta, the first Kenyan president, died. His place was to be inherited by his Vice President, Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi, a Kalenjin. It has not been lost on many scholars that Kenyatta had given Moi the vice presidency so as to appease the Kalenjins, whose land had been given to Kikuyus in the Rift Valley by the former's government (Ogot, 2012).

### 2.5 President Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi's Reign (1978-2002)

As already mentioned, the second Kenyan president, Moi, came from the Kalenjin ethnic community. Kanyinga (2013:58-9) explains how, by dint of ethnic elites from each community, Moi was to entrench himself in Kenyan politics:

> The single political party, KANU, was reactivated to constitute a platform on which Moi would entrench himself in politics and the society in general. Rather than use



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> an ethnic welfare group to advance political interests, Moi opted to revamp the political party and to appoint new elites to act as party patrons for different ethnic groups. Each community had an ethnic patron in this respect. This had the consequence of deepening political patronage, which in effect became embedded in the society as Moi sought to entrench himself.

As already explained, many other communities generally resented Kikuyu hegemony and their nationalistic and exploitative tendencies. Now, Moi seemed to strike a chord with the rest of Kenya by carrying out an undertaking akin to affirmative action or positive discrimination. Below are the two ways he did that, in no particular order. First, as Kanyinga (2013:60) states, he "scaled back the influence of the Kikuyu by reducing the number of Permanent Secretaries in the government – from 30% in 1979 to 22% in 1988 and to 9% in 2001, when Moi was leaving office." Second, as Ajulu (2002:263) states, Moi shifted "the distribution of patronage and resources away from the Kikuyu to the 'disadvantaged ethnic groups' previously marginalized by the Kenyatta coalition, and which, therefore, bore real economic and political grievancies against the Kenyatta coalition. This period constituted the populist phase of Moi's regime."

However, though more populist and accessible, Moi still perpetuated some of his predecessor's negative legacies. First, as Ajulu (2002:263) observes, his "regime eventually came to rest on a small clique, most notably the Kalenjin." As Kenyatta's centre of power rested on the 'Kiambu Family' (or the 'Family'), Moi's lay on the 'Karbanet Syndicate' – from his Tugen sub-tribe of the Kalenjin tribe. Second, as Kikuyus generally benefitted from the Kenyatta presidency (at the expense of other tribes), Kalenjins would also do the same under Moi's rule. Mentioning an attempted coup that might have re-conscientized a more solid Kalenjin identity and safeguarded their hold onto and ensured their benefit from state power, Ajulu (2002:263) explains:

> Ultimately, patronage and resources came to be concentrated around president Moi's own ethnic group, the Kalenjin in general and the Tugen in particular. This process coincided, as it were, with the consolidation of his coalition in the aftermath of the 1982 coup attempt… To paraphrase Mamdani (1996), the new power was self-consciously a Kalenjin power, institutions previously dominated by the Kikuyu were 'Kalenjinised'.



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Moi's authoritarian rule was not any different from his predecessor's. Kenya was to continue being a de jure one-party state. The state's paranoia ensured that political pluralism and civic engagement were stifled. This was until 1992.

### 2.6 Return of multiparty politics (from 1992 to the present)

Eventually, and fortunately, owing to local and international pressure and the amendment of the constitution, there was a return to multiparty democracy. The 1992 general election marked this return. FORD (Forum for Restoration of Democracy) was one of the first opposition parties to be registered. However, this promising party – as well as any other 'meaningful opposition' – was to disintegrate. Each of the other dominant ethnic communities had a party to support. As Kanyinga (2013:62) details, "(t)his fragmentation saw KANU's candidate, President Moi, win the election with about 36% of the vote. The combined opposition lost with about 64% of the total votes."

In the 1997 elections, the opposition was divided again. Each of the five dominant tribes (Kikuyu, Luhya, Luo, Kalenjin and Kamba) had presidential aspirants. By the same token, each main presidential aspirant from these five dominant tribes was guaranteed their tribespeople's votes. For this reason, President Moi, on account of his incumbency and getting a few votes from all over the country, easily sailed through, again.

#### 2.6.1 Multi-ethnic coalitions (from 2002) and President Mwai Kibaki's Reign

From 1992, Kenyan politics had been pluralistic. The civil society, too, was vibrant. But, to KANU's advantage, the opposition was still fragmented along ethnic lines. However, 2002 was to be the turning point in more than one way. First, President Moi committed to the constitutional amendment (of 1992) that restricted a president to two terms. Second, ethnic elites from the opposition formed a broad-based coalition in the name of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). Third, this new and broad ethnic alliance was to hand a defeat to KANU in the 2002 general and presidential elections. KANU had been in power since Kenya gained its independence, in 1963. The 2002 elections gave Kenya its third president: Mwai Kibaki, NARC's candidate. According to Kanyinga (2013), there had been intense pressure from the civil society and religious groups for the opposition to unite and even develop a memorandum of understanding for the purpose of fielding one presidential candidate. However, as Kanyinga (2013:64) notes, though campaigning on a 'reform platform', the winning alliance (NARC) "was not necessarily the result of ideological commitment but the result of a growing passion at that time to defeat Moi and KANU". Seeing off his presidential career, Moi had decided to



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throw his weight behind Uhuru Kenyatta, a son of his predecessor (Jomo Kenyatta), and a relatively political tenderfoot compared to other hopefuls in the New KANU (a merger between KANU and Raila Odinga's Liberal Democratic Party) such as Raila Odinga and Kalonzo Musyoka. Raila Odinga is the son of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Kenya's first Vice President and Jomo Kenyatta's eventual fiercest political nemesis. Raila Odinga and Kalonzo Musyoka – among others – were to join the NARC coalition. Many, thus, saw Uhuru Kenyatta as a symbol of the perpetuation of Jomo Kenyatta's and Moi's authoritarian legacies.

However, NARC was to be overwhelmed and eventually fragmented owing to the individual and ethnic interests its elites harboured. Kanyinga (2013:65-8) explains:

> Although Kibaki shared the cabinet posts equally among the numerically large groups that supported NARC, the distribution of PS (Permanent Secretary) posts drew protest from some members in the alliance who felt the distribution was tilted in favour of the GEMA community, the President's region. The Kikuyu and the Meru got about 37% of PS posts. The Luo, Kamba and the Kalenjin had 15% each while the Luhya had 7%. To some groups (especially the Luo and the Luhya) in the alliance, Kibaki and his GEMA elites had settled on dominating these posts because the PSs are critical for making decision-making and implementation. They were keen to acquire and accumulate power for the regional elites and therefore promote regional interests rather than common good… Due to internal divisions, it became difficult for the government to pass bills in Parliament. The government resorted to courting support from other groups including KANU in order to push its legislative agenda through the house. To solidify this new relationship with other parties, Kibaki increased the size of the cabinet and brought in other parties to constitute a 'Government of National Unity'… Through this new approach, the number of Luo and Luhya in the PS (Permanent Secretary) posts was reduced… This action… deepened ethnic hostility and inter-communal rivalry especially between the Kikuyu and the groups that had delivered the bulk of NARC's support but which now found themselves marginalized in the government.

### 2.6.2 The 2007 Elections and Post-Election Violence

The above-mentioned marginalization of other elites (and by extension, their regions) and the attendant inter-communal tensions, especially pitting the Kikuyus against other Kenyan groups, constituted the main backdrop to the 2007 general elections. The results, bar for the



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total number of votes, were instructive: the incumbent led only in his Central Province, with Raila Odinga leading in the other provinces except Eastern Province (which is predominated by Kambas), which went to its ethnic son: Kalonzo Musyoka. These elections are notable for putting Kenya on the spot for the ethnic-based violence which ensued. Eventually, a compromise coalition between the government and the opposition helped ameliorate the situation. Kanyinga (2013:69) gives the details below:

> The contested outcome of the general elections held in December 2007 halted the domineering influence of the President in appointing public officers. The election occasioned a dispute between PNU, the party of the incumbent President Kibaki, and the main opposition party, the ODM, over the flawed count and the final result. The dispute resulted in a violent conflict in which over half a million people were displaced from their homes and over 1000 were killed. International mediation persuaded the two parties to form a Coalition Government for the purpose of undertaking far-reaching reforms, especially addressing the factors that caused the conflict.

Following and binding this newly found coalition, the National Accord was to become the point of reference. It, among other things, checked distribution of government jobs, including cabinet positions. The PNU (Party of National Unity) and ODM (Orange Democratic Movement) factions were to nominate officials on an equal and a slightly equitable basis. For this reason, though the coalition government was deficient of cohesion, a healthier number of ethnic groups was represented in the political appointments. This was a first in Kenyan politics. The coalition government also facilitated the passing of a new constitution in 2010.

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### 2.6.3 The 2010 Constitution

As has been mentioned, the newly promulgated constitution has been lauded as one of the best things to ever happen in Kenya's politics. It has been described by many as a solution to Kenya's political challenges (such as uneven development, corruption, tribalism, ethnic hegemony and impunity). However, as Ghai (2013), a constitutional expert himself, points out, there were missed opportunities in the final drafting of the constitution, which means that Kenya is not out of the woods yet. Taking us through the actual drafting of the Kenyan constitution, Ghai (2013:86) explains that there were two main phases: the first one, from November 2000 to April 2004, as "conducted by the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC) and the Kenya National Constitutional Conference (popularly known as



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Bomas)" and the second one, between early 2008 and August 2010, as "led by the Committee of Experts (CoE), which resulted in the current constitution." Though neither draft was retrogressive, Ghai (2013) points to a case of misdiagnosis: he significantly argues how the earlier draft, by the CKRC, would have directly addressed the scourge of tribalism (which, of course, is the biggest source and cause of all the problems the two drafts were looking to solve):

> Where the first phase was driven by the search for democratisation and human rights, the 2008 phase, coming in the wake of ethnic violence, was driven by the need for national unity and reconciliation. It is therefore somewhat ironic that the CKRC paid much more attention to the causes of ethnic conflict and how it could be overcome than did the CoE, which retained the executive presidency, a largely centralized state, and the first-past-the-post electoral system. Although not many among those who made submissions to the CKRC said much about ethnic discrimination, the CKRC was aware of the damage done to the nation (in political and economic terms) by the ethnicisation of politics and saw a close connection between ethnicity and corruption. The domination of the state by one ethnic group had led to uneven development; exclusionary policies; massive violation of human and community rights; wide-scale corruption; impunity; and… the lack of a common, national identity. The CKRC approach was first to understand the causes of the emergence of ethnicity in public life and second to decide how the constitution should seek to reduce its salience. (Ghai, 2013:86-87)

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As a corollary of this, putting 'national unity' and 'reconciliation' first, before 'human rights' and 'democratization' was tantamount to jumping the gun and addressing a serious problem superficially. In other words, at least in the Kenyan context, it would be a long shot to afford executive presidency to a (fallible) human, in a centralized system, and yet expect the spirit of pluralism to blossom. This would not be at a far remove from the imperial presidency, as enjoyed and abused by all the three presidents Kenya had had: Jomo Kenyatta, Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi and the then-incumbent Mwai Kibaki. Ghai (2013), therefore, regrets the fact that the CKRC's draft was not fully implemented, especially in its provision for devolution of power. This devolution of power would "facilitate the participation of people in the governance of the country" (Ghai, 2013:89). Inclusion would also be promoted and one or two ethnic communities would not monopolize or duopolize state power at the expense of the others.



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Insisting on the importance of the CKRC draft, Ghai (2013) gives an account of events which lay blame on complicity on the part of the politicians in the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) as well as the mandated Committee of Experts (CoE): "Although the CoE's harmonized drafts had largely adopted the CKRC model, the Parliamentary Select Committee inserted an executive presidential system – and the CoE did not claw this back, as it did with some other provisions" (Ghai, 2013:102). This was unsurprising, and it persuades one to hark back and join the dots. Earlier on, the state had sabotaged this progressive and liberating CKRC draft. The then head of state, President Mwai Kibaki, with his ethnic cronies, had stood in the way of this draft. Ghai (2013:86) explains further:

> It (the CKRC draft) produced a draft constitution whose adoption was sabotaged by President Kibaki and his faction, itself an ethnic reaction to the attempt at a non-ethnic political order. Two major proposals were seen by the Kikuyu faction around Kibaki as undermining Kikuyu hegemony: the abolition of the imperial presidency and the devolution of some state powers to provinces. Nor did this faction support proportional representation as recommended by the CKRC. A referendum in 2005 held by the Kibaki regime on a constitution without these features was heavily defeated (Yash Ghai and Jill Cottrell, 2007).

**2.7 The 2013 general elections: Immediate Context for this study**

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As has already been mentioned, the immediate context for this study is the 2013 general and presidential elections. The data used for this study is centred around (though not limited to) the 2013 elections. The 2010 constitution, already compromised by the Selected Parliamentarians and Committee of Experts, would obviously set the stage for a hotly contested election in March 2013. Kenyans would go into the 2013 elections knowing that the stakes were to be as high as those in the previous elections. It was all a zero-sum affair, as always. To continue joining the dots (by drawing on Ghai, 2013), since the outgoing president (Mwai Kibaki) was Kikuyu, just like his now blue-eyed tribesman and prospective heir, Uhuru Kenyatta, this study suggests that if someone else badly wanted the presidency, the Kikuyus would also be desperate to retain their ethnic hegemony over the rest of Kenya. Below, Ghai (2013:102) explains both the allure and the curse of the executive presidency in Kenya:

> And so the presidency remains the one big political prize that all communities covet (urged on by manipulation by politicians), for which people are willing to kill others (as most past presidential elections have shown). Already it is clear that the



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> politics of accession to the presidency remain the major pre-occupation of politicians, the media and, to a lesser extent, the general public. The presidency will most likely remain the foundation of ethnic hegemony and exclusion.

Tellingly, the 2013 elections would be an interesting scenario. Considering the allure of the executive presidency in a zero-sum democracy, President Kibaki's fellow Kikuyu, Uhuru Kenyatta, would generally promise continued Kikuyu hegemony. Uhuru Kenyatta also clearly had the support of the state (President Kibaki had already joined hands with him). In addition to that, he had a Kalenjin running mate in William Ruto. It can also be said that William Ruto easily reminded Kenyans of Moi's (another Kalenjin) reign, from 1978 to 2002. In other words, both Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, with the blended campaign name 'Uhuruto', brought memories of the duopoly of Kikuyus and Kalenjins. Interestingly, again, as has already been mentioned, Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto were also indicted at the ICC for their alleged roles in the post-election violence of 2007-8, in which their tribes were generally pitted against each other. And, as Kanyinga (2013) and Ghai (2013) note, this allowed the duo to invoke 'reconciliation' before their tribespeople. Their ticket, the Jubilee Party, suggested their hopeful emancipation from their 'victimhood' at the ICC. On the other hand, Raila Odinga (Uhuru Kenyatta's rival) was a Luo and, therefore, symbolized a break from the past or even freedom from Kikuyu hegemony.

To canvass and prepare Kenyans for an Uhuru Kenyatta victory in the 2013 elections, Mutahi Ngunyi, a Jubilee-leaning political commentator, coined the slogan 'Tyranny of Numbers', arguing that the number of the registered Kikuyus and Kalenjins (Uhuruto support base): '6 million', far outweighed the '2.5 million' for Raila Odinga (Cottrell and Ghai, 2013). This is an essentialist and shameless simplification and objectification of people as tribal voting automatons. However, drawing on everyday discourses on voting patterns, this study also suggests that elections are generally looked at as 'censuses'. Uhuru Kenyatta was to beat Raila Odinga in the elections, even though the latter had more widespread support. As expected, the presidential results were disputed by Raila Odinga. Cottrell and Ghai (2013:108) add that these results, as announced by the IEBC, have remained an "object of suspicion in the eyes of many Kenyans." The dispute terminated in the Supreme Court. Interestingly, again, though acknowledging irregularities and illegalities on the part of the IEBC, the Supreme Court decided that a nullification of Uhuru Kenyatta's victory was not warranted.



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Therefore, Uhuru Kenyatta was to become the fourth 'validly elected' president of the Republic of Kenya. With regard to his powers to make certain crucial appointments, including the formation of his cabinet, and in the wake of more awareness about tribalism, some Kenyans may have been keen to judge his commitment to a more inclusive Kenya. Cottrell and Ghai (2013:100), for instance, refer to the rubric on virtues of 'representation' and 'proportionality' in the new constitution: "The national executive (that is, the President, Deputy-President and the Cabinet) must reflect the ethnic and regional diversity of the people (Art. 130(2)." However, perhaps pointing to an inherent loophole (in the constitution), the afore-mentioned scholars state that it is not clear how this provision would (will) be enforced (as much as Parliament would need to approve presidential nominations).

At this juncture, it is important to note that this study, in recognizing that tribalism and ethnic mobilisation have always been a major challenge for the country, uses the political discussions of the March 2013 general elections as its immediate context. To do this, three important periods were considered for the collection of political discussions which constituted the data used for the analysis of this study: the run-up to the elections; during the elections; and the aftermath of the elections, especially as following important political appointments, including the cabinet. That is why this chapter, an overview of Kenya's political background, is important to this study.

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Against this background, this study is interested in exploring how the citizens, whether identifying as members of particular ethnic communities or not, campaign for their presidential candidates in two selected online (Facebook) chat groups. The study also intends to look at how the citizens, especially as supporters of the different ethnic and political sides, conceive of the presidential results in the elections. Equally important is also for this study to examine how the supporters of both sides react to the attendant public appointments. This study is curious to investigate, inter alia, to which extent the winning supporters celebrate their victory and defend the distribution of resources (especially public appointments). In the same way, the study has the curiosity of finding out how the losing supporters express their anger and frustration at the election results and over the distribution of resources. This study also explores if and how the two kinds of supporters indicate their belongingness to particular ethnic communities, and the importance they attach to that belongingness in Kenya's political ecology. Lastly, this study also seeks to explore the ways in which these few Kenyan informants expand or contract the dialogic space while discussing or arguing about their country's political ecology. Of course, such discussions would necessarily be sensitive,



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especially when the informants would position themselves and others as members of certain ethnic communities in an ethnically polarised country. For this reason, this study is also necessarily curious to investigate the performance of face-work by the participants.

### 2.8 Summary

This chapter has given an overview of Kenya's political background. It has generally reviewed the history and origin of Kenya, constructed as a nation during colonialism during the 19th Century deliberations at the Berlin Conference, from previously independent ethnic collectivities. As has been, and will still be, pointed out, ethnic polarisation in the country is attributed to the British colonialists, whose divide-and-rule strategy guaranteed and lengthened their hold on the colony. The British colonialists also imposed their systems onto the conquered people, which, up to today, have gone a long way to determining how the colonies' different ethnic collectivities coexist. Among these are the western 'democratic' and 'capitalist' systems. In the wake of all these conjunctures, therefore, though constituting an independent nation, 'Kenyan citizens' have come to show or learn that their ethnic ingredient is very important in their political economy or ecology. The reigns of the country's presidents, as has also been highlighted here, is attestation to that. The country has progressed from a one-party state to a multi-party state. There have also been amendments to its constitution. However, none of that has been a silver bullet to Kenya's syndrome of negative ethnicity or unhealthy ethnic politicisation. Significantly, the chapter concludes with the period in the run up, during and closely after the 2013 general and presidential elections, which is the immediate context for this study.

On this note, Chapter 3, which presents an overview of the literature on ethnicity, follows below.



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# CHAPTER 3

# LITERATURE REVIEW (I)

# ETHNICITY

## 3.1 Introduction

This study focuses on how a few selected Kenyans construct and manipulate ethnic categories in discussions of Kenyan politics on two Facebook sites. Therefore, and as will also be explained under the research methodology chapter, this study – although linguistic in orientation – is also necessarily eclectic and interdisciplinary in purpose. For this reason, the study has had to draw on other disciplines: politics, media, sociology and anthropology. For manageability and convenience, hence, this study has two literature review chapters. This, the first, deals with Ethnicity. It will be followed by the Politics and Media chapter. To give an overview of ethnicity, the discipline of anthropology has been drawn on substantively, as well as sociology and politics. Among others, this chapter has largely drawn on the following scholars of ethnicity: Omi and Winant (1986), Jenkins (1997 and 2008), Downing and Husband (2005) and Eriksen (2010).

The notion of ethnicity concerns a form of identification used by and for people. Such other notions include race, class, religion, sex and gender. Among others, these forms of identification attempt to 'help' to define and explain the nuances that characterize the human nature. However, these notions, though always in use, in a casual or considered sense, have always been characterized by contestation and even indeterminacy. At times, there is even an overlap or confusion between some of the notions. A case in point is the relationship between race and ethnicity. While some scholars have suggested that the studies of race and ethnicity cannot be distinguished, many argue that ethnicity is the wider of the two, and that race relations ought to be looked at as a special case of ethnicity. On the other hand, many more scholars, such as Banton (1967, in Eriksen 2010), posit that there should be a boundary between the two terms. This study, while recognizing that ethnicity subsumes race, also admits that the two terms relate, intersect and overlap. It is for this reason, therefore, that this study suggests that the two terms be treated separately, but also as having useful parallels. On account of that, this study gives a brief overview of race before fully embarking on its main focus: ethnicity.



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Where compelling, examples will be drawn from the notion of race in the discussion of ethnicity.

### 3.2 Race

First of all, it is important to note that, as a notion, ethnicity is rather viewed in neutral terms, at least in the general sense. On the other hand, race has come to evoke negative feelings, based on global, political and social conjunctures, past and present. However, as sociologists and psychologists have always pointed out, it is normal for human beings to categorize either as in-groups or as out-groups; this also usually tends to go with positive self-reference and negative ascriptions for others. Now, because of this and certain political and historical events, ethnicity can also be viewed the same way as race. This, inter alia, will be discussed, after a brief overview of race.

Though the notion of 'race' has come to gather 'negative' and 'divisive' meanings, its first or earlier use is described as having been merely descriptive or neutral. In his footnotes, for instance, Montagu (1945:18) describes Francois Tant's (reportedly the first person to use the term 'race') use of the term (in his book 'Thresor de francaise', in 1600) thus: "Tant derived the word from the Latin *radix*, a root, and stated that it "alludes to the extraction of a man, of a dog, of a horse; as one says of good or bad race"". In this sense, therefore, 'race' did not mean more than a type, a breed. At this juncture, it is important to point out that race has mainly been regarded by scholars as a social construction and not so much as a biological fact. While appreciating this stance, this study argues that race was originally a biologically neutral term which has now, unfortunately, been loaded with social meanings. In other words, in itself, race is supposed to be a genetic axis and a characteristic of human identity, along which people can differ (Montagu, 1945). Cases in point are the ways females and males do along the axis of sex, and short people and tall people do along the axis of height (Haviland *et al.*, 2008). To explain, there is no person, as a biological entity, that is distinct through and through. For instance, all kinds of people – with (their) different complexions – run into each other in many ways (Herder, 1803, in Montagu, 1945). What is more, race is not the only phenomenon loaded with social meanings. It is only that these meanings can pit the-supposedly-different human beings against each other in nasty and even uncontrollable ways.

In yet another instance of early usage of the term 'race', Montagu (1945:17) quotes the great mathematician Leibnitz, who was referring to a very brief anonymous essay published in the journal *Des Sgavans*, 24 April 1684:



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> During the whole of the seventeenth century only five discussions relating to the varieties of mankind were published, and toward the end of the century Leibnitiz, the great mathematician, summed up the prevailing view as to the nature of the peoples of the earth when he wrote: "I recollect reading somewhere, though I cannot find the passage, that a certain traveler had divided man into certain tribes, races or classes. He made one special race of the Lapps and Samoyeds, another of the Chinese and their neighbours, another of the Caffres, or Hottentots. In America, again, there is a marvelous difference between the Galibs, or Caribs, who are very brave and spirited, and those of Paraguay, who seem to be infants or in pupilage all their lives…"

As can be seen from the above quotation, Leibnitz not only identified the use of 'race' for different types of humans, but he also did so in ways which can be presently understood by some as pejorative descriptions of certain people and approving descriptions of others. Importantly, the quotation reveals subjective depictions of the different types – races – of people. Thus, building on Montagu (1945), Haviland *et al.* (2008) and Kottak (2011), among others, this study strongly argues that race has come to take on selectively-substantiated or biased social and political meanings. Unfortunately, these meanings have even come to stick in the perceptions of many people. As Montagu (1945) points out, some extreme racializers have even intransigently implied that 'race' is a 'fixed unchangeable part of the germ plasm' and a 'prime determiner of all the important traits of body and soul, of character and personality, of human beings and nations'.

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Drawing on many scholars (including Montagu, 1945; Omi and Winant, 1986; Ratcliff, 2004; Kottak, 2011), this study argues that the biased social and political meanings which have been lumped onto race (in the process of 'racial thinking' and 'racialization') are largely, or, only, concomitants of such phenomena as slavery, colonization and Enlightenment. Kottak (2011) specifically places the buck at the door-step of Europeans – as slave-owners and colonisers – and whom he describes as imposing and justifying their patronizing attitudes and dehumanizing actions over the other 'races'. He explains: "'race' was a mode of classification linked specifically to peoples in the colonial situation. It subsumed a growing ideology of inequality devised to rationalize European attitudes and treatment of the conquered and enslaved peoples" (Kottak, 2011:340). It has also not been lost on Kottak (2011) and other scholars that influential figures of the society thought in terms of race and racialized human beings. These influential figures of the society, who included natural scientists, social scientists, clerics and fictional



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authors, constantly reinforced and reproduced racist discourses, not only after, but also long before, the seventeenth century. Coming hot on the heels of slavery, the period of Enlightenment – as happened in the eighteenth century – also helped give race its current connotations. As Ratcliff (2004) explains, the Enlightenment period was characterized by radical intellectual endeavours, which, in a bid to make sense of the social world, set its (the world's) 'laws' and 'order', and provided the groundwork for racial classification. Referring to the differences in status, as brought about by slavery – such as between a 'white' master and a 'black' slave, Montagu (1945:20) describes how the biological differences between races have since been manufactured: "What was once a social difference was now turned into a biological difference which would serve, it was hoped, to justify and maintain the social difference."

To conclude, this study reiterates that race, originally an innocent scientific term for 'breed' or 'type', has, over the centuries, inappropriately taken on other meanings, especially social and political, which have come to corrupt it. According to Haviland *et al.* (2008) and Kottak (2011), there is even scientific evidence to the effect that biological differences within races can outweigh those across races. What is more, as has been mentioned above, these people of different 'races' always fade into each other. This is testament to the fact that differences between 'race' types have only been blown out of proportion. That is why this study contends that it is a crass misrepresentation of facts to purport that 'race' types will naturally determine individuals' personality traits or even the destiny of specific nations. It cannot be overstated enough that these claims are bereft of (credible) scientific validity. Ratcliff (2004), for instance, points out how such racist research projects kept proliferating despite the fact that methodological critiques exposed the inherent (cultural) biases. Ratcliff (2004) even reports how anthropological (or even other kinds of) data which did not fit the racist model would be dismissed as erroneous. In an ambitious endeavour to contribute towards institutionalizing 'race', with all its socially and politically biased meanings, data would be sacrificed on the altar of vested theory. By the course of nature, thus, 'race' is not only a contested notion, but also an emotive one. As a corollary, this study even suggests that there seems to be a tacitly safe consensus among scholars to reduce 'race' to a folk notion or even dismiss it altogether.

An overview of ethnicity, a much 'safer' concept, follows below.



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### 3.3 Ethnicity

Eriksen (2010) gives the historical and ideological etiology of the term 'ethnicity', right from the mid-14th century:

> It is derived from the Greek *ethnos* (which in turn derived from the word *ethnikos*), which originally meant heathen or pagan (R. Williams, 1976:119). It was used in this sense in English from the mid fourteenth century (14th C) until the mid nineteenth century (19th C), when it gradually began to refer to 'racial' characteristics. In the US, 'ethnics' came to be used around the Second World War as a polite term referring to Jews, Italians, Irish and other people considered inferior to the dominant 'WASP' group (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants). None of the founding fathers of sociology and social anthropology with the partial exception of Weber granted ethnicity much attention… With its emphasis on intergroup dynamics, often in the context of a modern state, as well as its frequent insistence on historical depth, ethnicity studies represent a specialisation which was not considered particularly relevant by the early twentieth century founders of modern anthropology. (Eriksen, 2010:4-5)

Jenkins (1997) and Eriksen (2010) both agree that as from the early 20th century, the term 'ethnicity' has become a household one, and has come to mean or refer to a collectivity of humans who live and act together. The two above-mentioned scholars point out that ethnicity started enjoying widespread anthropological use particularly in the 1960s, and in the Western world. Writing in the past century, Jenkins (1997:9) observes how the term has fallen into common use, while also hinting at its problematicality:

> Since the early decades of this century, the linked concepts of ethnicity and ethnic group have been taken in many directions, academically (Stone 1996) or otherwise. They have passed into everyday discourse, and become central to the politics of group differentiation and advantage, in the culturally diverse social democracies of Europe and North America.

Jenkins (1997) speaks to the Western World; however, this study proposes that the situation replicates itself the world over. Jenkins (1997) also explains that the term 'ethnicity' enjoyed preference in the field of anthropology as a basic analytical unit over race, culture and tribe. On this note, it is worth capturing the shift from 'tribe' to 'ethnicity'.



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### 3.3.1 From tribe to ethnicity

Unlike the term 'ethnicity', the origin of the term 'tribe' has not been fully accounted for. This study suggests that the notion of 'tribe' may have existed alongside that of 'ethnic group', and that its connotations were equivalent with those of the earlier meaning of ethnic group (as referring to others, especially 'inferior' people). However, drawing on Jenkins (1997), this study proposes that the term 'tribe' may have been predominately used by WASP social anthropologists to refer to the very distant and primitive people that they studied during the colonial and immediately post-colonial periods. Perhaps, to show 'forgiveness' or even sympathy to the other 'inferior' members of the same 'white race', such as, the Italians and the Irish, the Anglo-Saxon social anthropologists designated and preserved the term 'tribe' to the more 'primitive' conquered groups, such as Africans and Asians. Thus, as Ogot (2012) laments, 'tribe' has racist undertones. According to these Anglo-Saxon social anthropological researchers, the primitive people were organised into tribal groups. Jenkins (1997:16-7), in showing the centrality of 'tribe' (as a real and perduring social entity) to the theoretical and methodological development of social anthropology, quotes Malinowski, a founder of the ethnographic method:

> [The modern ethnographer] with his tables of kinship terms, genealogies, maps, plans and diagrams, proves the existence of an extensive and big organisation, shows the constitution of the tribe, of the clan, of the family… The Ethnographer has in the field, according to what has just been said, the duty before him of drawing up all the rules and regularities of tribal life; all that is permanent and fixed; of giving an anatomy of their culture, of depicting the constitution of their society. (Malinowski 1922: 10-11)

By the 1960s, as most scholars agree, the term 'tribe', which had increasingly become an embarrassing term with colonial baggage, paved way for its rather euphemistic equivalent: 'ethnic group'. However, as Jenkins (1997) notes, the underlying presumptions had not necessarily changed. All this time, the Western social anthropologists still 'othered' ethnic groups. Then, there was a breakthrough: first, emphasis shifted from the conception of tribe (and, by even unintended extension, any collectivity of people) as constituting a social structure to the conception of ethnic group as explaining social organisation; second, when, eventually, the Western social anthropologists also conceived of themselves as ethnic groups constituting a heterogeneity of all societies and, by the same token, worthy of the same social anthropological investigations.



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Since this study is Kenyan-based, it is worth mentioning – though at the risk of sounding biased – that the focus will mainly be on the black 'racial' group, which constitutes more than 95% of the Kenyan population. However, this racial majority constitutes different ethnic groups: at least 42. At the outset, this study would like to emphasize that though belonging to one race, Kenyan 'blacks' are not necessarily united by it. This study has set out to explore how a few selected Kenyans position themselves with regard to ethnicity in political discussions on Facebook: in simple terms, how, if and to what extent they are set apart by ethnicity. As has already been explained above, if race is/was only intended for physio-biological classification, just like gender and height, it is/was in itself not a potent notion; of course, this is until the notion gets/got corrupted. The same applies to ethnicity. As Kanyinga (2013) has observed, ethnicity in itself is even positive. But, this is only so unless it is activated and concretized to sharpen differences and incite animosity among people of the same race, continent or modern state. Cases in point are the Rwandan genocide of 1994, and the Kenyan post-election violence of 2007-8.

It is also worth noting that the two terms, 'tribe' and its epiphenomenon, 'ethnic group', coexist and that they can be used interchangeably, at least in Kenya. However, for purposes of clarity, Atieno-Odhiambo (2002) describes the term 'ethnic group' as being more 'esoteric': it is commonly associated with academics (especially anthropologists). On the other hand, 'tribe' is more 'exoteric': it is commonly associated with the laypeople. Below, this study gives an overview of the approaches to ethnicity and how these can be seen as constituting and describing the features of ethnicity.

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### 3.4 Approaches to Ethnicity

Ethnicity has been accounted for by two main approaches: the earlier primordialist approach and the contemporary social constructivist approach. This study proposes that though the two approaches conflict more than they are similar, and the former is less popular than the latter (across the scholarly field), an integrated approach which provides for both is a better way of understanding ethnicity. In other words, each approach speaks to particular dimensions of ethnicity. To be sure, in acknowledging the currency of the constructivist approaches, this study also proposes that the primordialist approaches have laid the foundation and paved the way for the constructivist approaches. Therefore, the primordial approaches can serve as good reference points, against which their constructivist counterparts are argued and validated.



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In this subsection, there will be an overview of the main features of ethnicity, starting from the earliest documented. This will be followed by subsequent developments, which include a revision and an addition to the earlier features. To do this, this study relies a great deal on such pioneers of the primordialist approach as Barth (1969a), (1969b), Banton (1967), Handelman (1977), Weber (1980) and Wallman (1986). To follow will be an overview of social constructivist approaches. These specifically look at ethnicity as performed. In addition to looking at these two types of approaches to ethnicity, this study also draws from every-day-life observations, in the hope of a clearer conception of the phenomenon. Since this study is based on Kenya, this discussion of ethnicity will necessarily use examples from the country.

Below, this study quotes Nasong'o (2015:1-2), who explains the difference between primordial approaches and the constructivist approaches to ethnicity:

> Scholars who take a primordialist approach… contend that such ethnic identities are natural phenomena and that ethnogroups are natural networks into which people are born and find membership. Members of such groups, it is argued, share objective cultural attributes including language, religion, customs, traditions, cuisine, and music, among other things. In addition, ethnic group members are said to share subjective or psychological aspects of identity distinctiveness, including emotional satisfaction derived from group belonging, a shared belief in a myth of common ancestry, and a belief in the sacredness of social relations that include the dead. For constructivist scholars, ethnic identities are not natural phenomena but enduring social constructions. They are products of human actions and choices, not biological givens. According to this approach, ethnic identities are derived from a cultural construction of descent with characteristics constructed to determine who belongs and who doesn't. Benedict Anderson (2003), for instance, argues that such ethnic groups are essentially "imagined communities" because members of even the smallest ethnic group will never know all their fellow members, meet and interact with them face-to-face, or even hear from them – yet the image of their communion lives in the mind of each.



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### 3.4.1 Primordialist approaches

Below, this study gives an overview of the primordialist conception of ethnicity.

Barth (1969a) has identified four theoretical features of the conventional, taken-for-granted model of the corporate, culturally distinct ethnic group. Firstly, an ethnic group was biologically self-perpetuating. Secondly, the members of an ethnic group shared basic cultural values, manifest in overt cultural forms. Thirdly, the group was a bounded social field of communication and interaction. Lastly, members of an ethnic group identified themselves and were identified by others, as belonging to that group. Beidelman (1997) adds 'landscape' (which Kanyinga [2013] refers to as 'territory'), food (which is essentially an overt cultural form) and gender (whereby, in interethnic marriages, children identify with the tribe of a specific parent).

For these reasons, ethnic groups are supposed to be fixed and corporate entities around which the features in question serve as boundary markers. Therefore, those keen on their ethnic communities would police along such boundaries as biology (or common ancestry), culture (beliefs, practices and commodities), communication (language), identification (emic and etic ascription), landscape (territory) and gender (male or patriarchal or even patrilocality versus female or matriarchal or even matrilocality). Ogot (2012), for instance, expounds on this rigid and even reductionist framework of ethnicity:

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> The boundaries were supposed to be clear-cut and obvious; and the members of an ethnic group spoke one language, held a distinctive [sic] of social practices, and shared a common system of belief. In short, their view was that ethnic groups were fundamentally cultural groups that had virtually impermeable boundaries and that had developed their distinctive features by virtue of their original (and enduring) isolation from each other. (Ogot, 2012:19-20)

Here, below, each of the above-mentioned features of ethnicity will be explored. As has already been mentioned, this study takes a double or eclectic approach. It is important to note this, lest this study be taken to lend unconditional credence to the rather rigid primordialist approaches and, in the process, reify the already mentioned features that supposedly define ethnic boundaries. To reiterate, however, the importance of the primordialist features of ethnicity is that they can serve as good reference points, which this study will then critique accordingly. This will then set the stage for the discussion of constructivist approaches.



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### 3.4.1.1 Common descent (and gender)

Common descent is one of the most basic (and even important), if problematic, features of ethnicity. 'A leaf does not fall far away from the tree' is a common English proverb. 'Mtoto wa nyoka ni nyoka' is a cautionary Kiswahili proverb which literally translates to 'The young one of a snake is a snake'. These proverbs point to the general assumptions, or even dictum, that biological workings are bound to be realized in the physical, social or other attributes of an individual. In other words, a group of people can, biologically, self-perpetuate. Eriksen (2010) simply refers to this biological self-perpetuation as (the workings of) 'blood' or 'bed'. As a corollary, an ethnic group has come to be regarded as having a common origin or ancestry. This notion is also normally backed by narratives passed down by the old to their younger generations. As Eriksen (2010) explains, those who are very keen to sustain the distinctiveness of their ethnic group may insist on the ideology of endogamy, whereby each member of the group marries only another ethnic colleague. On this note, another feature of ethnicity: gender, follows below.

In situations of intermarriages, however, the ingredient of gender (Beidelman, 1997) renders the determination of one's ethnic group more problematic. Strathern (2003) points to the fact that biological processes (genetic and birthing) can be pitted against each other with regard to claiming an offspring. In this respect, most Kenyan ethnic communities are patriarchal. This means that children identify more with the ethnic side of their fathers. They are also patrilocal or virilocal. In other words, a married woman moves into the home of the husband. In addition, both the children and wives take the names of the man. It is also worth mentioning, here, that African indigenous names can be important indicators of one's ethnic affiliation.

To critique, this study argues that common descent or biological self-perpetuation does not fully account for or guarantee a distinct or exclusive ethnic group. As has been shown (Haviland *et al.,* 2008 and others), characteristics or traits considered peculiar on account of common descent are widely spread across the human population. Not all people who share physical attributes share a common ancestry.

Secondly, biological self-perpetuation for a specific ethnic group is itself not sustainable. Humans have always married across various borders or boundaries (such as ethnic and racial). The world over, humans have come to be characterized by fluidity and hybridity. In giving the pre-colonial history of the indigenous ethnic groups of Kenya, Ogot (2012:20) observes how interethnic interactions have rendered ethnic groups fluid, multiple, fragmented, unstable and



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even contested; "(b)y the end of the Nineteenth Century, the African communities in the future Kenya were already all contaminated by each other in a complex, interdependent world. There were no watertight ethnicities. Clans, and lineages expanded and contracted, gaining and losing members across porous and cultural frontiers."

Sticking to Kenya, this study quotes Ogot (2012), who gives an account of the Abaluhya or Luhya (a Western Bantu group) and Luo (a River-Lake Nilotic group) assimilation and hybridization:

> In Samia and Bunyala (Abaluhya sub-groups), for example, many Luo clans such as the Abanyinek, Ababoro, Abanyakera, Abapunyi and Abamalunga were assimilated. Indeed, the present-day Banyala and Samia societies represent typical examples of hybrid populations, largely of Luo and Bantu groups. Among the Abamarachi, another Luhyia ethnic group, a royal clan, the Abafofoyo, had been identified with a royal lineage descended from Mareeba, a brother of Owiny and Adhola, eponymous ancestors of the Jokowiny and Jupadhola Luo clusters. (Ogot, 2012:26)

The Abaluhya also incorporated people from other ethnic groups. To give examples, Ogot (2012) mentions the following Abaluhya clans as constituting Maasais (a Plain Nilotic group): the Abashimuli of Idakho, the Abamuli of Bunyore, the Abashisa, Abamani and Abakhobe of Kisa, as well as the Banyala of Bunyala. Below, Ogot (2012) explains how the Luo (as found in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) are essentially a case of absorptive ethnic pluralism:

> The evolution of the Luo of Western Kenya into an ethnic group reveals particularly complex processes of cultural and social integration. By about 1300 A.D., the earliest polities of the Luo in their cradleland in Southern Sudan were already plural societies comprising the Luo groups, Central Sudanic groups (the Moru-Madi) and Eastern Nilotic clans. This absorptive ethnic pluralism became a distinctive and pervasive feature of Luo societies as they moved south into Uganda, Western Kenya and Northeastern Tanzania. Groups merged, amalgamated, and developed into new collectivities with new and/or emergent identities. Hence, the first Luo clusters and groups to arrive in western Kenya (the Joka Jok) between 1490 and 1517 A.D. had already incorporated many non-Luo elements (Central Sudanic, East Nilotic and Bantu). (Ogot, 2012:25)



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This fluidity or hybridization among the Kenyan indigenous tribes seems to have already been spread all over the region. Ogot (2012), however, suggests that this state of affairs was more pronounced along the Indian Ocean Coast. For instance, the Pokomo (Coastal Bantu) of the Tana River Delta, having moved and settled in the region towards the end of the 16th century, were to assimilate many Orma or Oromo groups (belonging to the Cushitic group). The Coastal region also has the Swahili people – a hybrid group of people resulting from the Arabs and the local Coastal Bantu – said to constitute twelve subgroups. To give the last example (from the northern part of Kenya), Ogot (2012) mentions the 'Nomads in Alliance' symbiotic relationship between the Samburu (a Plain Nilotic group) and the Rendile (a Cushitic group). As Ogot (2012) points out, some sections of the Rendile adopted Samburu clans, joined their age-sets and married 'their' women. On this note, it is important to consider the dynamics of gender, as determining one's ethnicity (Beidelman, 1997; Strathern, 2003). Nevertheless, as much as most Kenyan ethnic communities are patriarchal and patrilocal, not all children end up identifying with the tribes of their fathers (whether with or without their names). A child born to parents belonging to different tribes can choose to identify with a certain ethnic group depending on the parent they prefer or find more reliable. Some choose an ethnic group depending on their other experiences, including where they have been brought up or the group they simply have a liking for.

To conclude, as much as people may identify with certain ethnic groups on account of (the narratives of) common descent, they cannot empirically prove that their ethnic groups have always been sustained by endogamy. And, hypothetically speaking, even if that were the case, their physical (and many other) attributes would not absolutely distinguish them from other humans. As will be discussed under constructivism or performativity, despite being characterized by hybridization, and, thus, 'fragmentation', 'multiplicity' and even 'instability', people always tend to rely on the mere assumption or sense (often precipitated, enhanced and sustained by politicisation) of belonging to a particular and 'distinct' biologically perpetuated ethnic group. To add, in some cases, children may be taken away from their putative (biological) parents (and/or other relatives), to live and, hence, acculturate elsewhere. Dolgin (1990a and b), a feminist lawyer-cum-anthropologist, even presents an American case of the extreme whereby a boy wished to divest his mother of her parental rights for breaching her implicit 'contract': to nurture and bring him up. The boy, instead, wished to transfer the (traditional) parental status to a foster parent, who would meet their contractual requirements, and with whom he would henceforth wish to identify.



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### 3.4.1.2 Culture

Geertz (1973, in Kumaravadivelu, 2008:10) describes culture as denoting "a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life". However, as Huntington (1998) observes, culture is a multilevel conception; it could also refer to the highest cultural grouping: civilization (as marking different generations, and as distinguishing human beings from other species). Therefore, for the sake of this study, Jenkins' (1997:14) narrow conception of culture will do:

> Here, instead of culture, we find a model of different cultures, of social differentiation based on language, religion, cosmology, symbolism, morality, and ideology. It is a model that leads occasionally to the problematic appearance that culture is different from, say, politics or economic activity (when, in fact, they are all cultural phenomena). In this, the model is revealed as the analytical analogue of everyday notions of ethnic differentiation.

Drawing on Kumaravadivelu (2008), this study recognizes two main forms of the cultural: 'hard stuff' and 'soft stuff'. The hard stuff are the concrete (or easily observable) things like food, architecture, art and clothing. The soft stuff entails such things as beliefs, morals, and even superstitions. Cultural practices tend to be in between the hard stuff and the soft stuff, though they are more of the hard stuff (observable). This study proposes that an element of correspondence is assumed to exist between biologically perpetuated groups and their cultural forms. Due to the same (or similar) socialization, people claiming a common ethnic heritage are given to conceive of certain cultural forms as typically theirs. In the same vein, LeVine and Campbell (1968), in their 1966 investigation of ethnic groups in the newly independent Kenya, have classified the studied ethnic groups into three degrees of (cultural) similarity: 'similar', 'intermediate' and 'dissimilar'. To give examples, all Bantu groups were either similar or intermediate to each other. These Bantu groups were dissimilar to both Nilotic and Cushitic groups. The Bantu groups that enjoyed similarity relationships were those that were also close geographically, for instance the Kikuyus vis-à-vis the Embus and the Merus. This similarity framework, as LeVine and Campbell (1968) conclude, thrives on linguistic grounds, belief in common origin and cultural factors.

In discussing relationships and the perceived differences between ethnic communities, Harris and Rampton (2003) point out that the diversity which defines these groups can be translated



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into ‘deficit’ versus ‘adequacy’. Normally, the subordinate groups will be described as having ‘inadequacies’ that set them apart from the dominant groups. Within this differential arrangement, therefore, a group’s characteristics or cultural practices can be perceived as being responsible for its ‘high culture’ or ‘low culture’. The intervention strategy, usually tacit, then, becomes a socialization or assimilation into or towards the dominant group. This may explain why some individuals (whether associated with dominant or dominated communities) would over-communicate (emphasize) certain stuff which would be regarded as constituting ‘high culture’. In the same way, some, especially from the dominated ethnic communities, would under-communicate (de-emphasize) stuff of the ‘low culture’ because it could be stigmatized (Blom, 1969; Eidhem, 1969).

In addition to the terms ‘dominant’ and ‘subordinate’ being subjective, problematic and contextual or even fluid (in some cases, for instance, an ethnic group may be elevated into a position of dominance simply because a president comes from it), each ethnic group can be looked at as having certain ‘inadequate’ characteristics or ‘low’ cultural practices. Here, ethnocentrism may inform individuals’ or groups’ subjective judgement. For example, since the Luo males in Kenya have been known not to circumcise, individuals from other tribes may choose to exploit this as a deficit. This is despite the fact that other communities too, like the Turkanas and Tesos, do not circumcise their men. For this reason, this study argues that circumcision is used only strategically (or opportunistically) to disparage the Luos. Perhaps, this is because Luos have considerable political clout; thus, they may be a political threat to other dominant ethnic communities. It can, therefore, be suggested that certain cultural practices which are perceived to be peculiar to certain ethnic communities can be appropriated or exploited for various strategic (political) reasons, depending on which side one is.

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Despite the fact that some ethnic communities have come to be associated with certain cultural practices, which have also been tagged as belonging to either ‘high culture’ or ‘low culture’, what is on the ground, may, often times, be different. For instance, not all cultural practices or stereotypes associated with dominant groups may be conceived of as constituting ‘high culture’ by (other dominated) ethnic communities. Downing and Husband (2005), for example, point out that dominant groups may be tainted by (as) collective(ly) evil and, thus, even necessarily guilty and paranoid. On the other hand, members of the subordinate ethnic communities may be presented as inherently good and necessarily victims of the dominant ethnic communities. This framework is normally dependent on historical conjunctures which may have led to such asymmetrical relationships. In addition, it is important to note that members of an ethnic



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community are not necessarily cultural automatons of their stereotyped or perceived cultural practices. Not all members will subscribe to the cultural practices considered typical to their ethnic communities. If this study can draw on Van Dijk's (2006) analogy of ideologies – whose custodians are ideologues – and languages – whose custodians are linguists – not all members of an ethnic group will even be aware of their typical cultural ways, partake in them or even be able to explain them explicitly.

Similarly, this study suggests that a certain 'cultural practice' can also be imposed onto a specific ethnic community. An example of this is when certain deeds of an individual or a few individuals may be used to describe the ethnic communities they are affiliated with. What one individual does is mapped onto a whole ethnic community. If, for instance, an individual from a certain community does such a 'strange' thing as slaughtering a dog, cooking it and then eating it, others may start associating the practice of eating dogs with all the people from the ethnic community that individual belongs to. Then, therefore, from an isolated 'strange' deed, a whole 'cultural practice' may have been created for an entire ethnic community.

To conclude the discussion of culture, this study suggests that it is not possible to establish that a particular ethnic group has its own unique or pure culture. If, for example, as Ogot (2012) puts it, African communities in the area of present-day Kenya were already biologically 'contaminated' long before they were colonized, then, they had also already been (and continue to be) 'culturally' contaminated. Kumaravadivelu (2008) explains:

> All cultures are the result of a mishmash, borrowings, mixtures that have occurred, though at different rates, ever since the beginning of time. Because of the way it is formed, each society is multicultural and over centuries has arrived at its own original synthesis. Each will hold more or less rigidly to this mixture that forms its culture at a given moment" (Levi-Strauss cited in Borofsky, ed., 1994:424). In other words, no culture can exist in its purest form, every culture is, willy-nilly, a hybrid culture. Cross-fertilization of culture is as natural as it is endemic. (Kumaravadivelu, 2008:12)

#### 3.4.1.3 Language

According to Barth (1969a), language can be considered a distinct field of communication and interaction for members of a specific ethnic community, as passed down from generation to generation. As mentioned earlier, language can also be conceived of as a cultural practice or soft cultural form of an ethnic community. Generally speaking, Kenyan indigenous languages



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can also correspond to or be indicative of the country's indigenous ethnic communities. Cases in point are the Kikamba language, as spoken by the Akamba people, and the Ekegusii language, as spoken by the Abagusii people. The same goes to the Kalenjin community, a conglomeration of sub-tribes, notably the Kipsigis, Nandi, Pokot, Tuge, Elgeyo and Marakwet. These sub-tribes also share names with the languages their members speak. For instance, the Kipsigis sub-tribe speak the Kipsigis language. However, all these Kalenjin languages are considered to be mutually intelligible. In explaining the policing of ethnic boundaries, Downing and Husband (2005) point out that the in-group members can identify outsiders by dint of their language's modes of inflection, argots and transitory in-words. The argument is that even if an outsider learns their language, they may not master it so perfectly as to pass off as an insider.

In the same vein, Blossom (2009) gives an example of how language, as a form of encrypted communications, can be used by members of an ethnic group to discriminate against or even fight outsiders:

> In looking at current research into how languages evolved in the development of human society, it appears language evolved first as a system that enabled tribes of people to communicate with one another in a form that was not easily understood by possible competitors for food and other resources. This encoding was something that people in a very local region could use to flesh out who was on their side and who wasn't… This use of language as a tool to identify sameness and otherness continued to be the case through history. (Blossom, 2009:13-14)

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As much as a language can mark out an ethnic community, it is also clear that neighbouring communities can borrow (and share certain) words from that ethnic community. As different ethnic communities come into contact with each other, so do the languages they speak. To give Ogot's (2012) examples, spanning from the precolonial Kenya, there is a Kalenjin ethnic group which became a linguistically and culturally Luhyia group. The Kikuyus borrowed cattle-related vocabulary form the Maasai. "Today, the Korokoro or the northern Pokomo speak Orma language, and Pokomo dialects have many Orma loan-words" (Ogot, 2012:23). As an Omogusii by tribe, I can attest that, being neigboured by Luos on one side, some Abagusii people share certain words with the Luos by virtue of borrowing. An example is the word 'rirabwoni' for potato. Other Abagusii groups use the word 'ekiogokia'. 'Chibando' also seems to have been borrowed from the Luos' 'bando', for maize; however, other Abagusii people use



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'ebituma'. Originally, the Abagusii people used 'Engoro' for God. Now, 'Nyasae', with Luo roots ('Nyasaye') is more prevalent among the Abagusii. Despite the above examples, these groups, being Bantu (Abagusii) and Nilotic (Luos), are supposed to be originally, linguistically and culturally 'dissimilar' (LeVine and Campbell, 1968).

In addition, individuals can learn and master languages from other ethnic communities, to the extent that the insiders may not decipher that they are ethnic outsiders. This is especially so if these 'outside' languages are learnt in natural environments, and by good language learners. Similarly, language 'proficiency' or its use cannot effectively separate insiders from outsiders. As Blommaert (2005) and Van Dijk (2006) argue, linguistic resources are not equally shared or accessed by speakers of the same language. There may not always be a correspondence between members identifying or affiliating with a particular ethnic community and their language proficiency.

Lastly, not all Kenyan languages are associated with specific ethnic groups. In this sense, Kiswahili (both a national and an official language) and English (an official language) can be conceived of as 'neutral' languages: as languages that bring Kenyans together, despite their diverse ethnic backgrounds or affiliations. To distinguish the two languages, English is considered more elitist (as dictated by the curriculum, it is the main medium of instruction in schools and universities). While, generally, in urban schools, Kiswahili and English are taught as subjects, English is the medium of instruction. In the village schools, lower primary (from Standard One to Standard Three), both English and Kiswahili are taught as subjects, in tandem with an indigenous language. Here, the indigenous language is used as a medium of instruction. From Upper Primary (Standard Four to Standard Eight), the indigenous language is dropped altogether and English becomes the medium of instruction, in addition to being taught as a subject along with Kiswahili. This happens all the way through the secondary school to the university. At the university, even Kiswahili courses are taught in English. Thus, most formally-educated Kenyans write in English more easily. This explains why the data used in this study is predominantly in English.

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#### 3.4.1.4 Landscape

As Beidelman (1997) notes, landscape is a feature of ethnicity; ethnic communities can be delineated in terms of the land they occupy. Sometimes, geographical features, such as rivers and mountains, are referred to in association with some ethnic communities. These features can also be used as physical boundaries between ethnic groups. Kanyinga (2013) uses the term



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'territory', especially to give a sense of the landscape which ethnic members can feel an entitlement towards. However, it is worth noting that markers of ethnic boundaries in Kenya's landscape can be largely attributed or traced to the colonial administration (Atieno-Odhiambo, 2002; Ajulu, 2002; Ogot, 2012; Kanyinga, 2013). Until the promulgation of the new constitution (in 2010), Kenya had been divided into eight provinces: Nairobi, Coast, Rift Valley, Central, Eastern, Nyanza, Western and North Eastern. These provinces – whose origins are the colonial administration – were further divided into districts. Due to population growth and political expediency, these districts kept growing in number. The current constitution uses the name 'counties' in place of districts.

The British colonial government, by dint of the Divide-and-Rule system of subjugation and governance, created districts based on one dominant ethnic community. In other words, each district was to be synonymous with a specific dominant ethnic community. Also of note, however, is the fact that some minority ethnic communities were often swallowed or classified as constituting larger ethnic communities in the districts. The colonialists also ensured that provinces had at most two – or three – dominant communities (Abubakar, 2013). The colonial government, with the help of collaborative 'home guards', further prohibited indigenous Africans from moving out of their 'home' districts (Atieno-Odhiambo, 2002; Ajulu, 2002). The colonial government also confined political activities to the district level. This worked effectively to frustrate and eventually asphyxiate national political activities. By the time the ban on national political activities was lifted, indigenous Africans had been forced to use their home districts as inevitable reference points. These home districts and the ban on national political activities had an effect of alienating the indigenous Africans from each other. As many scholars have argued (notably Kanyinga, 2013), this has, to a very large extent, sharpened ethnic consciousness among indigenous Kenyans.

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Due to this history, counties have always, at least traditionally, come to be associated with specific ethnic communities. In fact, the names of some counties even correspond to the names of the ethnic communities traditionally living there. An example is the Kisii County, synonymous with the Kisii (Abagusii) people. This explains why one can easily figure out another's ethnicity if they mention the districts they come from. This has also given members of ethnic communities a sense of entitlement to their traditional counties. To give an earlier example, Ogot (2012:63) spells a stipulation of the Nandi Hills Declaration, as passed by Nandi elders in July 1969: "The entire Nandi district was declared to belong 'under God to the Nandi



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people; and every non-Nandi, whether an individual, a firm or a corporation farming in the district or in the Tinderet area is a temporary tenant of will of the Nandi.'"

To turn the argument of ethnic groups owning landscapes on its head, nearly more than 95% of the 'indigenous' Kenyan Africans migrated into Kenya. For example, as Akama (2017:5) explains, the Bantu speakers – who are also the majority in the country – are shown to have originated from "the grassland area of Cameroon and the adjacent Benue region of Nigeria in West Africa." The Nilotic groups of people in the country originated from the Sudan region (Ogot, 2012). When the current African communities migrated into their new Kenyan home, some fought and (were) displaced (by) other ethnic communities. Ogot (2012), for instance, explains how the present-day Bungoma County, currently associated with the Abaluhya people, got its name from 'Bongomek' (meaning a place of the Kalenjin people). Wrong (2009) also details how the Kikuyu people, whose 'original' home is Murang'a County, expanded into territories originally inhabited by the Maasai and Dorobo people.

In addition, some Kenyan communities have been so marginalized (especially because of their small numbers) that they have no territory linked to them. As Abubakar (2013) laments, these ethnic communities have come to be dismissively regarded as the 'other' Kenyans. These groups have also struggled to be accepted and recognized as Kenyans. Examples include the Munyoyaya, Elwana, Okiek, Elchumus, Segeju and Nubi. Such 'stateless' or marginalized ethnic groups normally live or exist in the shadow of dominant ethnic communities. Abubakar (2013:31) gives the example of the Nubi people, whose settlements are dispersed; some live "in Kibera in Nairobi, in the Rift Valley around the Eldma Ravine, on the coast around Mazeras, and in Kisumu." Lastly, it is also important to note that the Kenyan constitution provides for the citizens to move and settle wherever they are able or wish to. On this note, an overview of constructivist approaches is given below.

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### 3.4.2 Constructivist approaches

According to the constructivist approaches, ethnic groups are not natural or inherent; they are just a creation of humans, which they use to make sense of their social worlds. Thus, it can be said that people do not have ethnic identities: they perform ethnic identities. However, as this study posits, to maintain these social constructions (of 'distinct ethnic groups'), people rely on such primordialist concepts, as summarized above (Nasong'o, 2015). This study suggests that constructivist approaches are a reaction to the primordialist approaches. For example, such constructivist proponents as Kertzer and Arel (2004) and Ogot (2012) have pointed out that



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even if collective identities existed in the pre-historic times, they were characterized by fluidity as opposed to exclusivity. As has already been mentioned, "assimilation of others, comingling and miscegenation as a result of interethnic marriage" are already testament to the fact that there is no 'pure' ethnic group (Nasong'o, 2015:2).

Describing the collective identities in the pre-historic times as not necessarily characterized by their intrinsic belongingness to distinct ethnic groups or such consciousness, Kertzer and Arel (2004) state that, then, people often only had the sense of being from 'here'. It is by this token, therefore, that social constructivists conceive of ethnic groups (as well as states or countries) as a modern phenomenon, and especially as also activated or catalyzed by colonialism. This is why social constructivists attribute ethnic groups to economic and political conditions. Even if direct colonialism has generally ended, its vestiges – such as the inherited economic and political systems and situations – continue to breed the notion of 'distinct' ethnic groups. And, while all social constructivists agree that ethnic groups are constructed and interest-based, some have even suggested that these groups can eventually change or be superseded by other social or cultural forms (Kaufmann, 2012). Below follows an overview of the role of colonialism in constructing 'distinct' ethnic groups. This overview, while giving various examples, will afford special consideration to Kenya.

Kertzer and Arel (2004) and Goldscheider (2004) attribute categorization of ethnic identities to such mechanisms as the census, as employed by the colonial governments. While the statistical information gathered through census has always been contestable, its motivation has also been social, economic and political. Drawing on Anderson [1991] and Scott [1998], Kertzer and Arel (2004:5) explain:

> Much of the most influential literature on the role of statistics gathering in extending state control has focused on the colonial state. Anderson, in his influential book *Imagined Communities*, pointed to the census as one of the primary devices employed by the colonial state to impose a "totalizing, classificatory grid" on its territory, and hence make all inside it its own. For Anderson, the key was the ability to make distinctions, to draw borders, to allow governments to distinguish among "peoples", regions, religions, languages." The very boundedness of the state meant that its component objects were countable, and hence able to be incorporated into the state organisation… The state's goal here, as Scott… put it, is to "create a legible people."



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However, as much as census categorizations ensured easier control of the conquered peoples by the colonial governments, they were very simplistic and reductionist. As Kertzer and Arel (2004) observe, these census workings were mainly hung on the state's impressions and perceptions of the local people. Drawing on Cohn (1987), Kertzer and Arel (2004) give India's example, in which the censuses simplified and reduced the hitherto complex society to 'distinct' cultural and ethnic groups, setting the stage for politicisation of ethnicity:

> These census-takers were taught to think of the people around them as divisible into clear-cut cultural categories, and taught as well what the crucial distinguishing marks were to be. What previously had been part of the complex web of relationships, practices, and beliefs they shared now became something quite different. An identifiable, distinct culture was distinguished, allowing people to "stand back and look at themselves, their ideas, their symbols and culture and see it as an entity." Once they conceived of themselves as part of a culture in this objectified sense, they could then, as part of the political process, select aspects of that culture, and polish and reformulate them in pursuing their goals. (Kertzer and Arel, 2004:31-32)

Thus, censuses were not only used by the colonialists to observe, describe and map the indigenous people, but they also contributed towards shaping the people and landscapes to fit biased, selective, simplistic and reductionist observations. In the same line of thought, scholars (notably Ogot, 2012; Ghai, 2013; Abubakar, 2013) have described such Kenyan ethnic groups as the Abaluhya, Kalenjin, Mijikenda, Taveta and Meru as nothing more than mere colonial constructions, coined and, therefore, imposed identities. In brief, Ogot (2012:30) details the emergence of the Taveta people: "Their history reveals that refuge groups comprising the Pare, Shambaa, Kamba, Taita, Chaga and Arusha fleeing from the famines and conflicts in their respective home areas settled in the Taveta forest in the Seventeenth Century." Similarly, as Ogot (2012) argues, the name 'Meru' is territorial rather than 'tribal' or 'ethnic'. In addition to coining identities for fluid collectivities, the colonial government also ascribed onto others uncomplimentary and inaccurate labels: "Colonial forces labelled the Elwana community "Malakote" to imply they were vagabonds" (Abubakar, 2013:32).

This study, in lending credence to Kertzer and Arel (2004) and Abubakar (2013), also argues that the colonial state did not only shape and coin new identities; rather, they also 'destroyed' and 'invisibilized' other communities. As has already been mentioned, small communities



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(such as the Munyoyaya, Elwana, Okiek, Elchumus, Segeju and Nubi) were lumped onto their dominant neighbours or even dismissively classified as 'the other'.

In turn, post-colonial states inherited and perpetuated colonial ethos and discourses on ethnic categorizations in their countries. The subsequent censuses they carried out were, to a very large extent, modelled along those of colonial governments. Nasong'o (2015), for example, points to the case of Rwanda, where the Germans and Belgians had already constructed two tribes (Tutsi and Hutus) out of one community; occupational categories came to take on stratifying, symbolic and ethnic roles. Those rearing animals became Tutsis while those tilling the land became Hutus.

In Kenya, the imposed ethnic identities (such as the Abaluhya and Kalenjins) became assumed ethnic identities. As Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) explain, others (especially the politically powerful) can ascribe or impose identities onto others. The same identities are then assumed when the dominated people accept these new (imposed) identities. Perhaps following in the footsteps of the colonialists, some ethnic elites in the post-colonial Kenya set up to create new ethnic identities, especially by joining those ethnic groups which are perceived to be closely related. These communities, sometimes referred to as super-tribes (Atieno-Odhiambo, 2002), are the GEMA (Gikuyu, Embu and Meru Association) and KAMATUSA (Kalenjin, Maasai, Turkana and Samburu). This study suggests that, in addition to belonging to the same cluster of ethnic groups, these communities coalesced because of their geographical proximity. Though Abubakar (2013) states that these new amalgamated ethnic identities did not completely metamorphose, this study suggests that the member ethnic groups continue to relate very intimately, for example the GEMA associates of Gikuyu (or Kikuyu), Embu and Meru.

Most of those communities which were marginalized during the colonial period continue to languish on the periphery. In addition, the post-colonial Kenya can be described as being more nationalistic than consociational or multinational. As Ghai (2013) explains, a nationalistic state is based on the principle of the supremacist of one ethnic group over others. This study argues that, generally, the Kikuyu community has assumed supremacy in the post-colonial Kenya; more light will be shed on this below. Here, this study builds on Ghai's (2013) 'nationalistic' notion to explain how a few Kenyan communities of Asian stock, who, despite setting foot in the country way before the 18$^{th}$ century, have been condemned to oblivion. These communities are the Badalas, Buluchis and Goans (Abubakar, 2013). This study suggests that, owing to the fact that 'blacks' account for more than 95% of the Kenyan population, and that Kenya is



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geographically in the African continent, these communities of Asian origin are not considered Kenyan. For instance, the Kenyan school syllabus had only paid attention to the black Kenyans, which constitute Bantu, Nilotic and Cushitic language groups. Such cases of invisibilization bring to light the lingering contestation around the authenticity of the Kenyan citizenship. This prompts Abubakar (2013) to ask what it takes for one to be considered a Kenyan (indigene).

It is noteworthy, therefore, to state that constructivist theories foreground the performativity aspect of ethnic identity. In other words, ethnic identity (like any other aspect of identity) is not something that works a priori; it is not necessarily an automatic reflection of 'its members'. Rather, we do or construct particular ethnic identities. Following Cameron (2001) and Blommaert (2005), we have certain meaningful resources in our identity repertoire, and we only identify ourselves as belonging to a certain ethnic group the moment we begin to use those meaningful resources. Therefore, ethnic identity is what we do. Having already pointed out that our ethnic identities are hybrid, fluid, fragmented, multiple, unstable and contested, this study now moves on to show how people perform their ethnic identities. In this regard, this study suggests, ethnic identity needs to be looked at as being situational, relational, instrumental (strategic or transactional) and processual. These performance aspects are also interrelated, interdependent and overlapping. Their discussion follows below.

#### 3.4.2.1 Situational

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As already mentioned, this study approaches ethnicity as being both primordial and constructed. I argue that both perspectives necessarily complement each other more than they conflict. The argument this study makes is that, in the main, constructivist approaches help explain how the ('imagined') ethnic identities are reinforced and reified, thus performed. With regard to (the performance of) ethnic identities being situational, the recognition of the fact that our identities are multiple (as also including sex, gender, nationality, age, religion, profession and ability) reminds us that our lives cannot always be accounted for only in terms of ethnicity. Each situation invokes or activates a certain aspect of our identity. In Downing and Husband's (2005:18) words:

> We do not routinely proceed through our day perceiving everything through the self-conscious prism of our ethnicity. Similarly, we do not sustain a permanent self-conscious reflexivity in relation to our age, class, gender or the size of our ears. All of these may be made temporarily salient by the particular circumstances of the moment.



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On this account, Downing and Husband (2005) offer us a caveat: knowing someone's ethnicity does not endow us with the prescience to see how they read a particular situation. "Their ethnic sensibilities may or may not be engaged. Or their ethnic sensibility may be salient but essentially subordinated by another contingent identity cluster" (Downing and Husband, 2005:18). However, this study argues that since no one, not even a researcher, is free of subjectivity, we are given to suspect that many a reading are from a standpoint of one's particular aspect of identity. To give a rather digressive example, it might be easy to accuse a woman of being overly feminist if she makes a statement concerning how the womenfolk ought to rise up against sexism meted out by men. At the risk of defending such suspicious readings of individuals' stances, this study suggests that partisan perceptions are very rampant. Downing and Husband (2005:17-18) add to this:

> It is the ego-involvement of individuals in social judgements that provides the basis for selective perception and selective exposure… When it comes to judgements of our in-groups against critical outgroups, we are psychologically disposed to be willing participants in perceptual bias and cognitive distortion.

This, therefore, makes us expectant and careful and even suspicious when listening to or reading someone's work. Biased individuals do not always make their bias obvious. Usually, the bias is tacit. That is why this study proposes that as much as we are suspicious of others' motives and partisan perceptions and productions, it would help to back up our suspicions with corroborative evidence. Particular circumstances (aspects of situationality) which invoke doings of individuals' ethnic identity will be covered under other (relational and instrumental) aspects of the performativity of ethnic identity below.

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#### 3.4.2.2 Relational

For belongingness to a particular ethnic community, an individual is normally informed by some consciousness; actively, these individuals socio-psychologically engage with their ontological self as members of their ethnic communities (Downing and Husband, 2005). Similarly, the other members of the in-group have got to accept these individuals as being part of the collective. However, as Barth (1969a) has pointed out, outsiders (members of other ethnic groups) too have to identify an individual as belonging to a different ethnic group. This mutual identification, as pointed out by Barth (1969a), can also be considered a constructivist feature. Eriksen (2010) has used the terms 'emic' and 'etic' to describe ethnic identity; while the former concerns self-ascription, the latter concerns others ascribing (or even imposing) an



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identity to someone else. And, as Eriksen (2010) observes, both 'emic' and 'etic' ascriptions are entrenched in subjectivity, as opposed to objectivity. Such 'different' ethnic groups will consider each other 'unique' despite a lack of exclusive ways of being or living. As much as the powerful can impose an ethnic identity which the subjects may have to assume, members of other ethnic groups also have to mutually consider them so. Cameron (2001) and Blommaert (2005) describe this recognition by others as a co-construction of identity categories. In identifying ourselves as members of particular ethnic communities, we also rely on others' validation.

Eriksen (2010) notes that different ethnic groups relate in two main ways: matching (or complementarization) and contrasting (or dichotomization). When in a matching relationship, different ethnic groups relate on an egalitarian basis, as equals. When in a contrasting relationship, a group has its will over the other, in the abstract. During the precolonial times, indigenous communities in Kenya generally had a horizontal relationship, having to, among other things, barter-trade with and intermarry amongst each other. Truces would also prevail in the aftermath of wars. As Keertzer and Arel (2004) and Goldscheider (2004) emphasize, there was no furore within or among collectivities over cultural practices or other ways of living. At the onset of colonialism, feelings of indignation and the quest for freedom began to grow in the indigenous people. This, as Birnir (2007) points out, necessitated a strong communal identity among the indigenous collectivities; the colonizers were the external threat the indigenous collectivities were up against. This is despite the fact that the colonialists (had already) divided the indigenous collectivities along their 'ethnic' and district boundaries.

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However, at the onset of independence, 'national' identities or ethos generally retreated back into ethnic cleavages (already put in place by the already mentioned colonialists' 'divide-and-rule' frameworks). Kenya, the new polity within which the indigenous collectivities found themselves, was to be a totally new ecological system for the indigenes. In other words, as Ajulu (2002) observes, many ways of life were displaced by the colonialists. Cases in point are the tribal modes of governance which were to be replaced by such western values as 'national democracy'. Indigenous modes of production, for example 'barter trade', were also to be replaced by such Western modes as the 'legal tender' (money) and capitalism. This meant that the indigenous collectivities had to start engaging with each other anew and in a different context: on the 'Kenyan national plane'. This also meant that these collectivities, hitherto and still characterized by fluidity, now assumed a different outlook of themselves (as has been mentioned, the colonialists had already sharpened their ethnic identities) and were to be pitted



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against each other in the national context. Expressing their sympathy for ethnocentrism, Stull and Von Still (1994:7) warn "that individuals, for their own survival or in their own 'genetic self-interest', may cooperate and reciprocate within the group but not outside it".

In the same manner, to enhance their 'genetic self-interest', individuals would regard outgroups as inferior, weird, potential rivals or threats, or even, in extreme cases, enemies. Consequently, (some individuals from) ingroups would relate with outgroups contemptuously, superficially and suspiciously, even necessitating a proliferation of ethnic stereotypes to justify this state of affairs. Wrong (2009) and Ogot (2012) narrate how people – including senior politicians – have inherited colonialists' stereotypes and discourses about certain ethnic groupings in Kenya. To start off, Wrong (2009:105) quotes a British administrator, Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen (per his article in the *Kenya Diary*, 1902-1906), as waxing lyrical of the Kikuyu community:

> 'I am sorry to leave the Kikuyu, for I like them. They are the most intelligent of the African tribes that I have met; therefore they will be the most progressive under European guidance and will be the most susceptible to subversive activities. They will be one of the first tribes to demand freedom from European influence.'

In addition, for inhabiting fertile land and mainly practising agriculture, Kikuyus came to be regarded as industrious. In comparison, since Luo Nyanza is relatively dry (and thus not as favourable for agriculture), Luos came to be labelled 'lazy'.

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To show an inheritance and perpetuation of colonial discourses, Wrong (2009) has singled out Jomo Kenyatta for his Kikuyu-chauvinistic tendencies, for instance, at the expense of the Maasais, a nomadic and pastoralist community. Wrong (2009:104) quotes Jomo Kenyatta (in his book *Facing Mount Kenya*) thus: "The ability to force the land to yield its riches was what made a Kikuyu superior, in his own eyes, to the feckless Maasai pastoralists who roamed the Rift Valley." On his part, Ogot (2012:67) reflects: "Political stereotypes are a form of control. Kenyatta often publicly dismissed the Luo as lazy, unable to lift a jembe or hoe to save their lives, while repeatedly playing up the rhetorical stereotype of the industrious Kikuyu until it became economic and political reality." Such terrible stereotypes, among others, have held their ground. For some, the stereotypes are a justification for maintaining the political and, thus, economic status quo. These, coupled with certain cultural practices, as associated with particular ethnic communities, have also consequently played a role in arranging or stratifying Kenyan tribes onto some sort of hierarchical ladder.



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Drawing on Ghai and Ghai (2013), this study argues that a relationship characterized by reciprocity would surely guarantee a peaceful, meaningful and enriching coexistence in such a multi-ethnic and multicultural society as Kenya. As Ghai and Ghai (2013:3) explicate, reciprocity encompasses the condemnation of "the hegemony of one ethnic group" and the "affirmative action for the disadvantaged groups", whose precondition should include the sharing or rotation of the (executive) presidency and equal or equitable distribution of resources among ethnic communities.

#### 3.4.2.3 Instrumental

Ethnic groups interact with each other in different ways, according to the circumstances they find themselves in. In the new ecological system that is the post-colonial Kenya, 'indigenous' collectivities, whose ethnic consciousness have already been sharpened by the colonial mechanisms, are wont to perceive other 'ethnic' groups as possible threats. This is especially so in a modern capitalistic setting, characterized by the scarce resources which have to be shared, scrambled or fought for. Because of this, the actions or moves of ethnic groups would be necessarily strategic. To hark back to Stull and Von Still (1994), survival instincts would ineluctably take centre-stage. As Posner (2005) notes, ethnic groups would transact with others in order to maximize payoffs, rewards or advantage. However, and as will be shown below, these 'group' moves would be informed and driven by largely opportunistic ethnic elites who are filled with selfish economic and political ambitions.

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While Kanyinga *et al.* (2010:6) admit that in certain situations, ethnicity "is conterminous or co-extensive with an ideological or policy position", they contend that, in most cases, the voters are only mobilised by self-seeking ethnic elites who are keen to outbid competitors from other ethnic groups for state power. This is especially so for the highest office in the land: the presidency. Normally, ordinary members of an ethnic community are under the impression that their aspirations repose in their individual ethnic elites or 'messiahs' (Kanyinga *et al*., 2010). Things are made worse by Kenya's zero-sum aggregative democracy, in which the winner takes it all. As many authors (for example Ajulu, 2002; Atieno-Odhiambo, 2002 and Kanyinga *et al.*, 2010) have shown, state power can be used to reward or punish. In other words, the winning ethnic community or communities will benefit from the 'pork barrel' at the expense of the losers, who will be alienated from the sharing of the 'national cake'. Because of this longing for rewards and fear of punishments, the voters will tie their destiny with that of their



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leaders; "(c)ommunities are made to believe that they would rise and fall with the leaders who appear to represent their interests" (Kanyinga *et al.*, 2010:6).

Posner (2005:12) strips ethnicity of some of its perceived affect: "ethnic groups are mobilised or joined not because of the depth of attachment that people feel toward them but because of the usefulness of the political coalitions that they define – a usefulness determined exclusively by their sizes relative to those of other coalitions." As a corollary, Kanyinga *et al.* (2010) and Kanyinga (2013) point to how ethnic elites reduce their tribespeople into mere bargaining tools or voting automatons. On the other hand, the voters' intransigent loyalty to their ethnic elites is informed by prospective material and non-material rewards. To quote Eriksen (2010): What can your tribe give you? As much as the presidency cannot cater for all their tribespeople's employment or business needs, research has shown that, in Kenya, people from the president's ethnic community benefit the most (Ajulu, 2002; Atieno-Odhiambo, 2002; Ogot, 2012; Kanyinga, 2013). The non-material benefits – what Kanyinga *et al.* (2010) call 'esteem goods' – include the 'feel good factor' for the members of an ethnic group when one of their own resides in the highest office.

In consideration of Kenya's political realities, this study notes that ethnic mobilisation is not limited to separate single tribes. Over the years, there have been ethno-political coalitions. These are arrangements in which certain tribes coalesce with the purpose of outbidding other equally multi-ethnic coalitions. This is testament to the fact that the compass of the 'we' category contracts and expands according to the situation at hand (Eriksen, 2010). To give an example, going into independence in 1963, the most popular (and winning) party, KANU, was largely synonymous with the big tribes at the time: the Kikuyus, Luos and Kambas. KADU, deemed to champion for the rights of minority groups, was largely synonymous with Kalenjins, Abaluhya and the people from the Coast Province. Eventually, KADU was to be co-opted into the KANU government. President Jomo Kenyatta, a Kikuyu, would appoint KADU's leader, Moi, a Kalenjin, as Vice-President. As Atieno-Odhiambo (2002) argues, this was a ploy to appease the larger Kalenjin community. Jomo Kenyatta's government had earlier bequeathed Kalenjins' recovered land (from the colonialists) to his fellow Kikuyus in the Rift Valley (Kalenjins' traditional territory). In addition, as Cottrell and Ghai (2013) lament, all these ethno-political arrangements are not ideologically meaningful; the overriding factor is to mobilise bigger numbers so as to outbid the rivals. The contending ethnic elites "are not looking for ideologically like-minded groups. Almost any party will do, any ethnic group will do" (Cottrell and Ghai, 2013:112).



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With regard to the 2007 elections, generally speaking, the Kambas and Kikuyus were each on their own as the Luos, Kalenjins and many other tribes formed a potent coalition: ODM. The elections were to be botched, leading to the post-election violence. In the equally disputed 2013 and 2017 elections, the Kikuyus and Kalenjins teamed up together. In both elections, especially the 2013 elections, Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, the Kikuyu and Kalenjin ethnic elites, respectively, mobilised their constituents under the banner of 'being under attack from the ICC', for crimes against humanity in the 2007/2008 post-election violence. These ethnic elites also "launched a campaign in which they would tell their constituencies that they have allied for purposes of peace or so that the two communities would live in peace" (Kanyinga, 2013:72). However, outside their ethnic communities, they "spelt different messages including messages of generational change, employment for the youth, and the importance of implementing the devolved structure of government" (Kanyinga, 2013:72-73). Be that as it may, the general feeling among other Kenyans is that Kikuyus and Kalenjins have entrenched themselves in the system so firmly that they will retain their power even by unfair means. Since the onset of multiparty elections, Kikuyus are, generally speaking, also the only ones who are known for not supporting a candidate from another ethnic community. For this, they have been accused of ethnic arrogance and chauvinism. Going by these accusations, it is worth considering the classic sociological cliché: "Ethnocentric groups seem to survive better than tolerant groups" (Horton and Hunt, 1968:77).

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**3.4.2.4 Processual**

The reference of ethnic groups by their names or labels gives the idea of ethnicity as a situation in which distinct ethnic groups exist in isolation. However, as already discussed, ethnicity is more subjective than objective, and more relational and transactional than intrinsic. The ever perduring fluidity between collectivities is testament to hybridity and multiplicity, as opposed to exclusiveness. Yet, somehow, people talk and act in ways that seem to reify and objectify ethnic identities. That is why, as Ogot (2005:272) succinctly puts it, "ethnic identity is constantly being negotiated and defined, renegotiated and redefined, in everyday discourse." Therefore, ethnic identity should be conceived of as a process as opposed to an event. Downing and Husband (2005:14) explain: "Ethnicity is not a stable property of an individual, implanted, like some microchip at birth. It is a continuous process of identity construction in which individuals participate collectively in defining and valorizing a group identity."



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However, by stating that 'admission to a valued group has to be earned', Downing and Husband (2005) appear to reinforce the residual importance of the primordialist approaches. This is reminiscent of the boundary markers, along which an ethnic identity is policed. Similarly, Posner (2005) and Birnir (2007) state that an individual can only negotiate an ethnic identity that is within their repertoire of ethnicity. For instance, if one is born to parents who belong to different ethnic communities, they cannot claim an ethnic belonging outside those two communities. Posner (2005:15) elucidates: "When instrumentalists insist that ethnic identities are fluid, they almost always have examples of this sort of within-repertoire identity change in mind." As already explained, this study submits that primordial and constructivist approaches tend to complement each other; the former give the material on which the latter work. Reference to particular ethnic groups or geographical regions, using personal names (which may point to a particular ethnic community) and speaking a particular language or dressing in some way may be processes which index a belongingness to a specific ethnic group. To preview my analysis of data here already, some informants make references to certain regions and names as belonging to certain ethnic groups.

In conclusion, this study quotes a narration of an event which illustrates the working of all the aspects of performativity of ethnic identity (situational, relational, instrumental and processual). The quoted source (Ogot, 2012) details how, on Tom Mboya's (a charismatic and influential Luo) assassination, Kikuyu ethnic elites (led by President Jomo Kenyatta) responded to the rising anti-Kikuyu sentiments from other parts of the country. This dire political situation led to ordinary Kikuyus partaking in an oath so as to affirm group solidarity and vow to ensure that the national leadership (presidency) remains in Kikuyu land:

> Ethnic polarisation became total as the Kikuyu, led by Kenyatta, initiated a massive oathing campaign in which almost every adult Kikuyu male was forced to swear in mass ceremonies at Gatundu, the president's home, and on pain of death, to keep the presidency in the House of Mumbi, the Kikuyu Eve. Oath-takers pledged, ominously, to maintain Kenya "under Kikuyu leadership… no uncircumcised leaders will be allowed to compete with the Kikuyu leadership. You shall not vote for any party not led by the Kikuyu. If you reveal this oath, may this oath kill you", Njenga Karume, who was one of the people who took this oath at Gatundu, confirmed in his book (*Beyond Expectations*, 2005:206) the content of this pledge. One had to strip naked, chew some mucky stuff and pledge loyalty to Kenyatta, and his government and for ever to stand united with Kikuyu leadership. All this



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went by the euphemism *cai wa Gatundu* – Gatundu tea, but those who refused to drink it faced dire consequences. A Presbyterian clergyman, the Rev. Samuel Githinji Mwai and his wife were beaten senseless by *Jeshi la Mzee*, the Old Man's army. Githinji died two days later: his wife long nursed physical and psychological wounds. Since no cleansing oath has since been taken, one must assume that the oath still binds those who took it. (Ogot, 2012:65-66)

### 3.5 Summary

While acknowledging the importance of the constructivist approaches to the understanding of ethnicity, this study argues that primordialist approaches cannot be wished away. As will also be seen in the analysis chapters, the primordial stance pervades the informants' discussions. By the same token, this study reiterates the fact that though traditional and – somewhat – essentialist, primordialist approaches have set the foundation for the working of their constructivist counterparts. Primordialist approaches, therefore, become the reference point on which constructivist approaches are built. That is why, for instance, at least in the data used for this study, ethnic identities are understood to be constructed or performed around such boundary markers as common descent, ethnic names, landscape and language, as given by the primordialist approaches.

Secondly, though (some) constructivists have suggested that ethnic communities can be superseded (by transnational cultural forms) as long as material realities change (Kaufmann, 2012), this study contends that ethnic identities are a perduring phenomenon. Not only is ethnic affiliation desirable to many, but it is also tenacious and durable (Kumaravadivelu, 2008). Atieno-Odhiambo (2002:231), for example, points to Luos' shared history, which "is at least four thousand years old, and Kikuyus', which is at least "five hundred years." The historian Akama (2017) traces the history of the Abagusii (Gusii or Kisii) people to at least a thousand years ago.

Thirdly, Posner (2005) sounds a caveat: in the negotiation of particular identities, an individual cannot easily go beyond their ethnic repertoire. This persuades one to understand that even if ethnic identities are performed and constructed, the choices of individuals are limited. In other words, we can only negotiate our ethnic identities according to the already designated ethnic groups and within certain parameters or boundary markers. Posner (2005:14) gives examples:

> Take the case of an Igbo-speaking Ikwerre Christian from Nigeria. Depending on the context in which he finds himself, and the usefulness, given that context, of



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> each affiliation, this person could unproblematically claim membership in the community of fellow Igbo-speakers, fellow Ikwerres, or fellow Christians, for he is all of these things. But he could not easily claim membership in the community of Hausa-speakers, Tivs, or Muslims – that is, in other Nigerian linguistic, tribal, or religious communities – no matter what the payoffs for identifying himself in such terms might be. In Waters's [sic] (1990) terms, the former are 'ethnic options' for him, but the latter are not.

Lastly, this study suggests that the argument put forth by most constructivists, that there is no pure ethnic identity owing to hybridity and multiplicity, is *apophatic*. In other words, such notions as 'hybridity' and 'multiplicity' simply allude to certain ethnic identities that were once 'pure' or 'uncontaminated'. To be sure, 'hybridity' depends on or brings to mind a 'mixing' or 'interbreeding' of certain distinct ethnic identities. The notion 'multiplicity', too, evokes an idea of initially having exclusive or separate ethnic identities.

To conclude this chapter, this study argues that ethnicity, though a contestable notion or phenomenon, is crucial as a form of identity and classification in our social world, as at least constructed and manipulated by the informants in the data. In addition, the double-thought approach (primordial-cum-constructivist), which this study takes to ethnicity, is also essential to the understanding of ethnicity. While primordial approaches give a foundational dimension, constructivist approaches give an organisational dimension. Nasong'o (2015:3) sheds more light, especially by foregrounding the potential for politicisation:

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> Whether one takes the primordialist approach or the constructivist one in understanding the essential nature of ethnic identity, the fact remains that ethnicities in and of themselves are not problematic. The problem emerges when they are instrumentalized and used by individuals – especially the political elite – in pursuit of material self-interest. Hence ethnicity gains sociopolitical significance only when actors invoke and manipulate it to advance self-interest. Such mobilisation is used for offensive or defensive purposes or in response to threats or opportunities. Ethnicity is thus both a device and a focus for group mobilisation by political actors who seek to protect their own well-being and to gain political and economic advantages.

Ajulu (2002:252) finishes off by advising that ethnic affiliation "is a natural condition, and not a social pathology." This is, of course, until (such) ethnic solidarity begins to be mobilised



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against the other for, then, broader societal harmony will have started being jeopardized. On this note, an overview of politics and media follows in Chapter 4 below.

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# CHAPTER 4

# LITERATURE REVIEW (II)

# POLITICS AND MEDIA

## 4.1 Introduction

This is the second Literature Review chapter, and it gives an overview of both politics and media. This study investigates how participants construct their own and others' ethnicities in a discussion of Kenyan politics on Facebook. Tellingly, and as has been discussed, this study is necessarily interdisciplinary. This has, therefore, necessitated an exploration of both politics and media for a better grasp of the context of the data. In covering politics, the role played by the main stakeholders – including the citizens and the media – in Kenya's political life will be explored. A brief overview of the developments in the media will also be given. There will be more focus on Facebook, as one of the most current technological inventions in the media. This study will also examine how Facebook has enhanced citizens' participation in their country's politics, or, at least, political discussions.

## 4.2 Politics

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The section of politics has been divided into two main parts. The first part concerns the general understanding or description of politics, and it largely draws on Hay (2008). The second part identifies the various entities or stakeholders in a country's politics as well as their roles. Special attention will be paid to Kenya. As many scholars (such as McNair, 2011) have pointed out, the term 'politics' is not easy to define with precision; this is because, among other things, politics itself is multidimensional. For its multidimensionality, therefore, the notion of politics will be open to many definitions or descriptions. By this token, Hay (2008:65) offers the four main features which constitute all the dimensions and senses of politics: "choice, the capacity for agency, (public) deliberation and a social context." As McNair (2011) states, there are three main elements or stakeholders of a country's politics: political organisations, the media and the citizens. Of the political organisations, the government and the opposition parties are the most relevant to this study. Therefore, more specifically, an overview of the government, the main opposition parties, the media and the citizens will be given below. The overview of these will



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also be given in terms of Hay's (2008) four overarching features of politics: choice, capacity for agency, deliberation and social context.

### 4.2.1 The government

The government can simply be described as that organisation which wields considerable institutional political power. Talking about Kenya, a 'democratic' country, its government is supposed to draw its legitimacy from the public by dint of elections. In the same way, the government becomes the centre around which the politics of the country revolves. First, for purposes of clarification, there are three arms of government: the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. Second, these three arms are meant to work interdependently. However, as this study notes, at least in the Kenyan context, the term government tends to be associated with the executive arm more than it is with all of the three arms. This is because the executive arm generally has the most considerable political power than its two 'siblings'. Owing to this state of affairs, this study may use the term 'government' to refer only to the 'executive arm of government'.

Now, generally speaking, Kenya is considered a 'democracy' or a 'democratic' type of a country. As McNair (2011:14) points out, a democracy is a society "in which governments rule primarily through consent rather than coercion; where political leaders have popular legitimacy, if not necessarily always popularity". The consent through which governments rule in Kenya is derived from the votes of the citizens, in the general elections. This brings us to the conception of democracy which Fairclough and Fairclough (2012:30) describe as 'aggregative democracy'; "citizens' preferences are expressed by voting and each vote counts equally." In the Kenyan case, the presidential candidate with the majority of votes wins, after which they form their executive governments.

This brings us to 'deliberative democracy': the antithesis of aggregative democracy and the more ideal. As Fairclough and Fairclough (2012:30) explain, 'deliberative democracy' concerns a situation whereby "citizens' preferences are not only expressed but also transformed through public reasoning, in a process where everyone has the right to advance and respond to reasons, propose issues and solutions for the agenda, and justify or criticize proposals." This is reminiscent of Aristotle's participatory democracy, as taking place in the agora (public Assembly or courts) in the Ancient Greece (Cohen, 2004). Obviously, this kind of democracy would go a long way, including ensuring (or paying some attention to) equal or equitable distribution of resources across the nation, which is another important dimension to democracy



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(as opposed to the majority having their way, however questionable). As has already been mentioned, the Kenyan presidency or executive arm of the government appreciably presides over the distribution of the country's resources.

### 4.2.2 Opposition parties

Normally, the opposition parties are the antithesis of the government of the day. Opposition parties are generally those that lost in the previous elections, and, for this reason, they can be described as 'dissenters'. At the risk of digressing, this study wishes to point out that, generally, the main opposition parties in Africa tend to attribute their loss in the elections to fraud and (pre)rigging schemes. The government of the day is normally accused of organising and partaking in these fraudulent schemes, and, of course, being in cahoots with such state institutions as the electoral bodies, to whom they spread their tentacles. As has also been discussed, Kenya's last three presidential elections (2007, 2013 and 2017) have been marked by disputes. Though the Supreme Court has also always determined the disputes in favour of the incumbency, it has not been lost on many that Kenyan governments have had their validity and legitimacy put to question (Cottrell and Ghai, 2013).

The raison d`etre of the opposition parties is to check the government (against overstepping or even 'understepping' their mandate). This they are required to do according to the constitution, which also binds the government. Nevertheless, the second Kenyan president, Moi, is credited for the saying 'that there are no permanent friends or enemies in politics.' This explains, for instance, why members of parliament who were initially part of the government may start to rock their party from within. Such politicians may also defect to the opposition. Some in the opposition may also go the other way. Some governments have also been formed by virtue of some opposition parties working together with the (minority) ruling party. A good example is the Government of National Unity: a forced marriage between Mwai Kibaki's PNU, Raila Odinga's ODM and Kalonzo Musyoka's Wiper Democratic Movement-Kenya (WDM-K), from 2008 to 2013.

### 4.2.3 The citizens

The citizens are important players in a country's political life as everything revolves around them, directly or indirectly. Here, this study delves into the main ways the concept 'citizenship' is understood. This will be followed by the role which citizens play vis-à-vis the political life of their country. After this, an overview of political communication will be given. As will also



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be discussed, going into the next section: media, the citizens have come to play a more active role thanks to technological advancement in the media.

In simple terms, citizenship refers to the belongingness someone has to their country, as stipulated in the constitution. In Kenya's case, for instance, one has to have been born in the country or to Kenyan parents (even if abroad) to attain this status. However, harking back and lending credence to such scholars as Ogot (2012), this study points to the fact that in the precolonial times, individuals' citizenship was limited to their ethnic nations. Thus, the Kenyan citizenship, as experienced now, is a mere – yet inevitable – colonial imposition and relic. It is little surprise, therefore, that until now, there still seems to be tension between the Kenyan citizenship and the citizenship to specific ethnic nations (Ajulu, 2002; Atieno-Odhiambo, 2002; Kanyinga *et al*., 2010). In any case, the current 'Kenya' presupposes the need for all its 'citizens' to coexist. In this sense, Coleman (2001:110) describes citizens as needing to relate with other citizens as well as their state (government) "in political, economic and civic terms." Emphasizing agency, Coleman (2001:110) adds: "The socially estranged citizen is a contradiction in terms, for citizenship derives its significance from communicative acts between individuals and their civic, political, economic and moral environments." More importantly, it falls on the citizens to constantly seek political information, reflect over it, follow up on their representatives' productivity and deliberate diligently (Coleman, 2001; Cohen, 2004; McNair, 2011). By this token, a citizen "rules and is ruled in turn" (Cohen, 2004:24).

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Better still, recent technological changes witnessed in the media – and as represented by the Internet – have brought about a decentralization of power, and come to redefine and empower the hitherto 'passive' and 'homogenous' citizen (Coleman, 2001; Huggins, 2001; Blossom, 2009; Lincoln, 2009). It also needs to be stated that information or knowledge has been democratized more. At this juncture, it is also worthy restating that the informants for this study are Kenyan citizens who are engaging in political discussions about their country. This study is, in the main, interested in exploring how the study's informants construct and manipulate their own and others' ethnic identities in political discussions on Facebook chats. On this note, an overview of political communication follows below.



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### 4.3 Political communication

Drawing largely on Chilton (2004), for this section, this study wishes to emphasize that language or its use: communication, plays a very crucial role in politics. "However politics is defined, there is a linguistic, discursive and communicative dimension, generally only partially acknowledged, if at all, by practitioners and theorists" (Chilton, 2004:4). For example, this study takes cognizance of the fact that the data gathered for analysis, for the sake of the main research aim and the specific research questions, is all a work of language. In the same line of thought, it is also courtesy of language (including theory and the analysis of data) that we are able to make sense of the political working of our societies.

Chilton (2004) and Danler (2005) further explain that our language has come to evolve socially so as to serve our social functions – including politics and even sheer survival. These afore-mentioned scholars, however, make it clear that it is not language itself which has such social properties; rather, it is its use which serves these functions. "Linguistic structures are just linguistic structures. Human users can manipulate them (like one manipulates a lump of clay, for example) with goal-directed intentions" (Chilton, 2011:180). Danler (2005:46) elaborates: "Language use is subjective. Everything linguistically expressed is perspectivated. For this reason manipulation is, at least to a certain degree, inherent in 'language use'." As Chilton (2011) points out, verbal manipulation includes not only making another person 'form mental representations', but also driving them into performing actions as a consequence. Chilton (2011) also uses such terms as 'persuasion' and 'rhetoric' as meaning the same thing as 'manipulation'. However, in addition to manipulation or persuasion or rhetoric, Chilton (2011:181) points to the fact that there are also "other possible intentional deployments of language". Thus, and drawing on Habermas (1979, 1981), Chilton (2011), settles on the phrase 'strategic communicative action' as encompassing all these possible intentional uses of language:

> All this being so, it is more logical to investigate strategies (i.e. goal-directed plans of action, here verbal action) directed at deception or at changing a hearer's representation of social and physical reality. An example of such an approach is Habermas' notion of *strategic communicative action* (e.g. Habermas 1979, 1981). Within the context of language and politics Chilton & Schaffner (2002:1-41) propose 'strategies', recognisable as 'political': legitimization of the self, delegitimization of others, coercion, and dissimulation. To realise such strategic



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> ends speakers may use a variety of linguistic structures in interaction with context; there is no necessary correspondence between strategy and structure. (Chilton, 2011:181)

Therefore, as politically articulate animals, and to function in a polity, humans need to communicate. What is more, as Chilton (2011) observes, to survive or thrive, humans need to communicate strategically. Language helps us negotiate (our) representations with those we interact. Normally, we will also endeavour to have our interlocutors – as well as the others in the same polity – share or buy our representations. This also involves settling on a common view or even disagreeing. While doing this, our political discourse also operates indexically (Chilton, 2004) to signal our affiliations and memberships, predilections and choices. This speaks to the framework of dialogicality, which this study also sets out to apply in the exploration of the data. Below, an overview of the media – a critical arena for political communication – is given.

### 4.4 Media

The media completes the symbiotic chain of the important elements of a polity, along with political organisations and the citizens (McNair, 2011). The primary function of the media is to inform all its aforementioned co-elements. Therefore, both the professional politicians and ordinary citizens greatly depend on the media. The media too, also as a commercial enterprise, needs both politicians and citizens for the utility of its different kinds of information (Boyd-Barret and Newbold, 1995; Moog and Sluyter-Beltrao, 2001; Freedman, 2010; Fenton, 2010; Garnham, 1995; Phillips *et al.*, 2010).

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This section starts with the background of the media, before chronicling its transformation or expansion, as characterized by technological innovation. It also sheds light on how technological developments in the field of media have enabled and enhanced the citizens' participation in their country's politics. At this point, it is significant to restate the main research aim of this study: 'how participants construct their own and others' ethnic identities in political communication on Facebook'. The transformation in the media can be said to generally culminate in social media, of which Facebook is a very popular and important component. For this reason, this section, while paying attention to other media, will focus more on social media, and Facebook in specific.



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### 4.4.1 Chronological development in the media

Before chronicling the development or growth of the media, it is important to give the difference between the terms 'public sphere' and 'media'. The public sphere is broader and conjures images of people, whether as institutions or individuals, gathering to discuss issues of broader social importance (Habermas, 1995). On the other hand, the media is a particular mechanized and institutional forum for disseminating and sharing particular information. The media is also normally used as a collective noun to refer to various kinds of technologically validated public spheres, the main examples of which are the newspaper, radio, television, emails and Facebook. Therefore, while the media is largely representative of public spheres, it cannot be entirely constitutive of them. There will be a revisitation of this situation below, as overviewed by McNair (2010).

As Habermas (1995) states, the media can be traced to earlier – but not necessarily redundant – public spheres as coffee houses, cafés, salons and societies, from the seventeenth century. Habermas (1995) depicts these antecendents of the media as exclusive: they originally constituted the educated, bourgeois and the rulers. The selected few had the privilege to assemble and discuss issues of societal importance. They would, in addition, use their public gatherings for entertainment. All the while, the poor, the illiterate and even the women were locked out of these agora. Then, from the early eighteenth century, books and newspapers became the first media to be treated to the people, especially the above-mentioned 'cream of the society'. The TV was to follow in the mid-twentieth century. Murdock and Golding (1995) note that, at first, book and newspaper publications were small and personalized activities. The topics covered by the authors ranged from art, culture, philosophy, fashion and literature. These products (books and newspapers and the topics therein) were to eventually elicit correspondents, most notably 'art critics'. These 'art critics', inter alia, battled with the artists or authors in an endeavour for a 'better or rational argument'. By the same token, therefore, they both took the initiative or sought to be the 'educators' or 'spokesmen' of the public.

In the Kenyan context, the newspaper, radio and television are regarded as constituting the mainstream media, and also enjoying the most patronage. These three are also considered credible, especially with regard to the relaying of news to the public. Emphasizing its irresistibility, Freedman (2010:35) describes the news "as a habituating, slightly fetishistic, more or less entertaining experience that defines a broad common interest." The radio, newspaper and television are also easily regulated and, thus, legally mandated to abide by the



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public service commitment. Here, journalists' items are also bound to be scrutinized by the relevant editors or programme managers before they are served to the public. Thus, the news in the mainstream media is rarely 'altered' or 'cannibalized'. The government and opposition parties, as well as other 'important' political players also 'valorize' these mainstream media a great deal: for instance, they always give official press statements as well as other kinds of communication via these media.

For purposes of comparison of the mainstream media in Kenya, Nyabuga and Booker (2013) state that the radio is the most popular and accessible. Going by Nyabuga and Booker's (2013:18) statistics in 2013, "some 74 percent of Kenyans" had "access to the country's 120 radio stations". First, as Nyabuga and Booker (2013:18) explain, "at least 50 percent of people live below the poverty line" in Kenya. Therefore, very few would afford to buy a newspaper, which Coleman (2001:112) refers to as a "daily updated history textbook". Second, because of the same reason, not many households would be able to meet the expense of a television set. That explains why the above mentioned authors state that the television comes a distant second in terms of popularity, with only 28 percent of the citizens giving it patronage.

However, the downside is that the radio, newspaper and television are (or have) largely (been) monologic channels, which are wont to reduce or condemn the citizenry into the position of passive audiences. Since these types of media are under regulation from government institutions, they are also not free of government interference. At provocation, the government may revoke their operating licences. In addition to this kind of potential political interference, the journalists find themselves vulnerable to certain 'powerful' individuals. Nyabuga and Booker (2013:86) give an example: "in May 2005, the First Lady, Lucy Kibaki, stormed the Nation Media Group newsroom and harassed journalists and assaulted a cameraman, Clifford Derrick Otieno, alleging media interference in the affairs of the first family." Nothing was to be heard about condign measures or action taken against the above mentioned aggressor. Until now, things have not changed much either. Nyabuga and Booker (2013) observe that most mainstream media normally owe allegiance to certain political organisations and individuals. As a result, this greatly jeopardizes "media diversity, pluralism and independence" (Nyabuga and Booker, 2013:8).

The twentieth century was to usher in the Internet. The Internet – generally understood as 'the system through which computer networks are linked or interconnected throughout the world' – can also be referred to as the Web. As Blossom (2009) states, the five main developments in



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the Internet are – in chronological order – the News Page, the Newsgroup, Wikis and Weblogs, Web Search Engine, and Peer-to-peer Social Networking Services.

*Social media*

The above sites are generally referred to as early forms of Web 2.0 or social media, and they have been contrasted with the Web 1.0 or traditional Internet (Kushin and Yamamoto, 2010; Lincoln, 2009). The Web 1.0 or traditional Internet, though involving the Web to communicate, work(ed) the same way as the mainstream media (radio, newspaper and television) because they involve one party giving information to 'receivers'. On the other hand, as Kushin and Yamamoto (2010:611) explain, Web 2.0 or social media forms "rely on what Bruns (2006) terms produsage, an organic production model in which boundaries between producer and consumer are eliminated such that users create the content for each other. Such communities rely on user collaboration and an ethic of openly sharing user creations (Bruns, 2006; Kolbitsch & Maurer, 2006)." However, for the ambiguity which the term 'Web 2.0' may come with, many people prefer the term 'social media' (Lincoln, 2009).

Blossom (2009:29) helpfully defines social media as "(a)ny highly scalable and accessible communications technology or technique that enables any individual to influence groups of other individuals easily." To caution against technological determinism, however, Lincoln (2009) points out that social media is about behaviour, not tools. To foreground interactive and collaborative humans, Blossom (2009) and Lincoln (2009) describe social media as a(n online) community: people want to connect, talk, share and belong. Adnan and Mavi (2015:3) explain further: "Habitual interactions between online social networking users enable them to develop trust and norms of reciprocity which are both key elements in the community life." Lincoln (2009:14) concludes: "It is therefore the cultures behind the technologies that are fascinating, not the technologies themselves."

Thinking of 'community' and 'culture' (as mentioned in the above paragraph), and drawing on such scholars as Boyd-Barret and Newbold (1995), Sassi (2001) and Huggins (2001), this study situates media in the sphere of culture, in its wider sense; the media, though not wholly constitutive or reflective of culture, is a good outlet for and a mirror of a people's culture. The media also ought to be seen as characterized by a plurality of audiences, or, better put, citizens, including journalists and politicians. Significantly referring to the services provided by or via the media as 'media products' or 'cultural products', Boyd-Barret and Newbold (1995) dissuade against the thinking or assumptions that the processes of meaning generated in the



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interaction between such products and individual members of the audience can be described in global terms. The elucidation is that "(o)n the contrary, the meanings, experiences and pleasures which media products may help to generate are also uniquely particular to individuals, whose 'readings' of media 'texts' will also be an expression of their location within overlapping nexus of cultural, social, ethnic, gender, linguistic, occupational and other sources of identity, while also a product of the immediate social and physical contexts of 'reading'…" (Boyd-Barret and Newbold, 1995:3). Sassi (2001) describes the awakening to this situation in the academia as the 'cultural turn'.

Talking of 'media cultures', Huggins (2001:128) adds the dimension of power relations to this mix: "media cultures are not simply those in which a high level of communications media and processes are prevalent but in which, as Castells (1996) notes, cultural and social expressions and power relationships are mediated by electronic communication." This study also explores how participants, on their own or others' behalf, seek to, among other things, exercise, sustain and even challenge particular power relations in their discussions of politics on Facebook chats. 'Media cultures', thus, provide a good overture into the dynamics of social media, as overviewed below.

To quote Asur *et al.* (2010:10), "(s)ocial media has exploded as a category of online discourse where people create content, share it, bookmark it and network it at a prodigious rate." The fact that it is also easy to use, fast and transcends regional, national and continental boundaries has made it very popular. As has been mentioned, traditional or mass media have been (or are still) largely monological, and, thus, have (or continue to) condemn(ed) the citizens to the role of passive, impotent or helpless audiences. Thus, social media, courtesy of its collaborative nature, has upset the applecart of the hitherto few producers of information and given the ordinary citizen a new lease of life. Lincoln (2009) aptly describes social media as a revolutionary and liberative seed in communication and the society:

> By letting any individual participate, it has changed forever how messages are created. Social media shifts the balance of power; message creation has been lifted out of the hands of a tiny elite and is now in the hands of all of us. And this is big, big news. This is the best thing that has happened to communication and all of us in a very, very long time. (Lincoln, 2009:22)

At this juncture, it is important to give an overview of how the social media has come to impact the news. This is important because news, as Fenton (2010:3) puts it, is "the life-blood of a



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democracy – news journalism as contributing vital resources for processes of information gathering, deliberation and action." To give this overview, this study draws on Fenton's (2010:7) "three paired, central characteristics of the Internet in news production: speed and space; multiplicity and polycentrality; interactivity and participation." Already, the characteristics have been touched on; only that a further exposition is given below.

Fenton (2010:8) simply puts it: "more space equals more news." There is abundant space online, which provides for new or untameable possibilities for news presentation. The Internet is also an infinite repository of information and knowledge; the availability of archiving facilities too enables an increased depth of coverage; therein, the ability to update (and even correct or edit) is regularly enhanced. This unlimited space on the Internet also enables greater geographical reach. In other words, people from all around the world can be virtually brought together by the Internet. This widened reach also applies to the collection of data, whether by professional or citizen journalists or even researchers. These people do not have to be physically present to collect data; for instance, the journalist can access online stories from the comfort of their newsrooms. The space on the Internet also allows for multimedia formats, which enable an innovative and interesting presentation of news. In turn, more citizens may be attracted to political news. Lastly, this study adds, the Internet allows for sneaking of 'classified' or sensitive news to the public. This news would normally not be disseminated to the public via mainstream media, which may easily be constrained by the state. As Lincoln (2009:21) concludes, "(n)ews belongs to all of us."

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The Internet space also allows for a plurality of news providers. As it is now, all a citizen needs to assume the role of a journalist would be Internet connection and a computer, tablet, phablet or smart phone. Because of this, the professional or mainstream journalists or major news corporations no longer control the flow of news. The Internet readers are also having more freedom with regard to comparing 'reportages', checking their validity and even accessing the news sources referred to. The way the news is gathered has also come to be laid bare. By this token, such (mis)conceptions of journalistic 'objectivity' and 'impartiality' of professional journalism have come to be questioned; there is now an increased understanding of news as subjective and perspectivated (Fenton, 2010). In addition, as Fenton (2010:8) observes, "a proliferation of news platforms" caters for heterogenous and multiple publics, who are connected in key ways. Consequently, online journalism offers audiences a view of the world that is more contextualised, textured, and multidimensional than traditional news media."



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However, as Fenton (2010) points out, more speed and space or multiplicity and polycentrality do not always mean good things; it may also be a case of 'speed it up and spread it thin'. In other words, there may not necessarily be a variety in the news; cannibalism of the news is not unsurprising on the Internet. It is also easy to bypass the usual 'quality' checks of the news. This may, in turn, allow for 'churnalism': whereby largely unchecked stories as collected from 'unreliable' sources are released. This, as a consequence, jeopardizes original reportage (Freedman, 2010 and Fenton, 2010). This freedom which the Internet provides could also easily provide for the breaching of the following Neo-Aristotelian principles of ethical practice in journalism: accuracy, sincerity, hospitality, transparency and accountability (Phillips *et al.*, 2010).

### 4.4.2 Interactivity and participation

Invoking the working of social media's User Generated Content, Kushin and Yamamoto (2010) and Lincoln (2009) point to how the hitherto passive citizens have now been 'activated' and empowered. As opposed to being mere consumers, the citizens have come to be 'produsers' (Bruns, 2006). In other words, citizens have now taken on the roles of both consumers and producers of information. Comparing social media (Web 2.0) with its antecedents (Web 1.0 and traditional media), Lincoln (2009:8) waxes lyrical about the flexibility and fertility of the former: "A good way to picture Web 2.0 is as the world's biggest café, whereas the earlier web was the world's biggest library". Thus, as Kushin and Yamamoto (2010) observe, by increasing the accessibility and exchange of information, social media can be construed of as being an agent of democratization. The afore-mentioned scholars also argue that social media has enhanced political self-efficacy in the citizens thus:

> Young adults rely heavily on friends and the Internet for political information (Wells & Dudash, 2007). Rather than merely receiving political information from traditional news media sources, users can experience politics on a more familiar, personal level through the postings of friends and acquaintances. Such experiences would make politics more accessible, bringing it into the daily lives of young adults and affecting their interest in political situations. Moreover, as social media consist primarily of user-generated content, users may be able to encounter ideas and opinions not well represented in traditional news media (Gillmor, 2006), which likely increases their interest in further information seeking. (Kushin and Yamamoto, 2010:614)



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What is more, social media is also "non-hierarchical and coming from the bottom-up" (Lincoln, 2009:22). To explain, agenda-setting is no longer a preserve of professional journalists and politicians; ordinary citizens themselves are also able to bring up (even very contentious) topics for discussions, as unheard of or unseen in the mainstream media. These citizen journalists can even easily access, engage with and interrogate professional politicians (Kushin and Yamamoto, 2010; Nyabuga and Booker, 2013).

However, despite the gains the social media has brought to the society, not all is glossy. While techno-optimists are waxing lyrical about how the Internet has enabled citizens and reinvigorated democracy, techno-pessimists have discounted "the utopian vision of a brave new world with everyone connected to everyone else, a non-hierarchical network of voices with equal, open and global access" (Fenton, 2010:14). For instance, making reference to the vicious circle of liberal democracy, Goode (2005:41) observes:

> Participatory status is affected by socio-economic status but, also, socio-economic status is affected by participatory status. Socially disadvantaged groups can find themselves trapped at least partially by their low levels of access to the public sphere. If their voices are not heard then their interests cannot be advanced and the pursuit of greater social equality will be hindered.

Bringing us to the understanding of the Kenyan situation, Nyabuga and Booker (2013) have indicated that more than 50% of Kenyans live below the poverty line. Thus, it will be difficult to construe of this majority as constituting an active online community. Being online comes at a cost. What is more, most Kenyan media (be it social or traditional) tend to target the urban Kenyan population, at the expense of the rural population, who are in the majority. Therefore, it can be said that, to a considerable extent, my data reflects an 'elite' perspective. McNair (2011) also points out that many other public spheres, such as public bars, dinner parties, behind-closed door meetings of governments and face-to-face meetings between journalists and high-level sources, are normally left out or not accessed by the analysts despite the fact that they are crucial to the political process.

Reflecting on the quality of online political communication itself, Fenton (2010) argues that the limitless opportunities everyone is allowed leads to once-off fragmentary commentaries, 'deprofessionalized' gossip, fake news, populist ranting and even vitriol at the expense of investigative journalism and reasoned sustained analyses. This study adds that the provision for anonymity of online discussants also encourages and exacerbates the above situation.



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On his part, Coleman (2001:120) warns that online discussions may be at a far remove from "the real world of policy and politics… complex political relationships and institutions". Similarly, Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) point to the fact that decisions and actions taken in modern polities have got more to do with the demagoguery of the rulers than they do with informed debates from the citizens. "There is a tendency for oligarchic forces and interests in modern democracies to represent societies as more democratic than they actually are and to represent deliberation as closer to democratic ideals than it is…" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012:27). The afore-mentioned scholars continue, arguing that the oligarchy would still frustrate or even asphyxiate the democratic cause while giving an impression that it exists or thrives:

> Claims that politics actually is democratic deliberation, or that political decisions are actually made in ways which arise out of and reflect public debate, may be made descriptively as part of the business of sustaining and legitimizing oligarchic power, and may even come to be taken as mere common sense in some contexts, and work ideologically in helping to sustain the *status quo* and the social relations which constitute it. But we need to be careful not to allow this possibility to blind us to an alternative possibility: that such claims can be advanced normatively as part of an effort to advance democracy. (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012:27)

Before concluding this chapter, I give an overview of Facebook – the actual social media site from which the data used for this study was collected.

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### 4.4.3 Facebook

Valenzuela *et al.* (2008:5) give a brief history of Facebook thus:

> Facebook was created in February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes as a site for Harvard students only. Shortly after, it expanded to any college student with a .edu email account. Between Fall 2005 and Fall 2006, Facebook expanded to high school networks, first, work networks, later, and, eventually, to Internet users in general.

However, Facebook has grown exponentially, and is among the world's most popular Social Networking Sites. This has largely been helped by increased use of cell phones, which are used as a proxy for Internet access, the world over (Ndavula and Mberia, 2012). In Kenya alone, by 2011 (at least a year before the data for this study was collected), there were "over 2 million



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registered users on Facebook" (Ndavula and Mberia, 2012:304; Nyagah *et al*., 2015). Not long after, Facebook was to have "an average of 1.39 billion daily active users in February 2015" Antheunis *et al.* (2015:400). At this rate, the total number of Facebook members in the whole world, including those who do not patronize it on a daily basis, should now be much higher.

As Valenzuela *et al.* (2008) state, Facebook has two main features of sharing: messaging and news. The News feature, of which is not relevant to this study, keeps Facebook friends updated about their social circles. There are two types of messaging services: the private system and the public system. With the former, an individual messages another privately. Germane to this study, the latter, popularly known as the "The Wall" (Valenzuela *et al.*, 2008:6), allows 'friends' to "leave comments to the owner of the profile that can be viewed by other users." Facebook Groups are another important phenomenon in the lives of Facebook users. Gunter (2010:125) describes Facebook groups as "gathering places" within the Facebook community. Valenzuela *et al*. (2008:7) detail closely: Facebook Groups "allow users to create and join groups based around common interests and activities." Therefore, as Gunter (2010:126) explains, "(g)roups can also be a powerful tool to spread a message, organising people into grassroots movements, social causes, and more."

To add, as Gunter (2010:126) observes, "(e)lection years create a lot of groups on Facebook, as you can imagine." However, the two main groups this study has used were not exactly created for the sake of any particular election in Kenya. Rather, already existent, these groups became more active, and politically so, in the run up to, during and immediately after the 2013 general (and presidential) elections. Here, the period 'immediately after the elections' generally refers to the times during which the effects of the elections were still felt by the informants. This include times coming after political appointments, as made by the winner of the 2013 presidential elections. Naturally, these times necessitated and enhanced situational political involvement on the Facebook group chats.

Lastly, Gunter (2010:126) divides Facebook Groups into three main types: open, closed and secret. Open groups, as the name suggests, are free for anyone to join; by this token, these groups carry a lot of strangers, generally brought together by particular interests. On the other hand, closed groups "are more exclusive and require an invitation to join" (Gunter, 2010:126). One can also ask or be put forward by an existing member to be enlisted on the group; it is, then, up to the administrator(s) to let in or reject an additional member. The last of the three



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types are secret groups: those "not advertised anywhere on Facebook, and can only be joined by invitation" (Gunter, 2010:126).

However, it is important to point out that Facebook Groups do not necessarily imply that their membership are characterized by mutual or real friendship or even harbour the same interests or ideologies. Therefore, the term or phrase 'friend(s) on Facebook' is appropriated in the general sense to refer to a membership of Facebook. As has been explained in the Research Methodology Chapter, for instance, the informants for this study – belonging to both a closed group and an open group – are diverse ethnically and politically. As discussed in the Data Analysis Chapters, this diversity generally culminates in arguments, disagreements, insults, conflicts and other kinds of chaos as well. However, as Lincoln (2009) and Blossom (2009) point out, it is this mixture of fun, warmth, messiness, conflicts and collaboration that give Facebook its human touch. This is the main reason why, for political discussions in which informants construct their own and others' ethnic identities, this study chose Facebook.

### 4.5 Summary

Generally speaking, media is an important "site for the performance of politics in contemporary society" (Huggins, 2001:135). However, this study confined itself to Facebook, a Social Networking Site, from which it used data for analysis. While admitting that Facebook is only a fraction of the media, which is, in turn, a much smaller fraction of all public spheres, this study draws courage from the fact that societal discourses replicate themselves across many discourse planes (Jager and Maier, 2009). The technological advancement in the media, to which Facebook is testament, has also had such other transformations as its concomitants. Such transformations include and inhere politics, political communication, democracy, citizenship, political audience; political leadership, political parties and political modernity (Axford, 2001; Moog and Sluyter-Beltrao, 2001; Dahlgren, 2001; Sassi, 2001; Coleman, 2001; Huggins, 2001; Newton, 2001; Stromer-Galley and Jamieson, 2001; Wring and Horrocks, 2001; Street, 2001). However, the above-mentioned scholars are more hopeful than complacent about such transformations, which, as this study also adds, are on-going processes. For instance, Blossom (2009), Lincoln (2009), Fenton (2010), Kushin and Yamamoto (2010) and McNair (2011) wax lyrical of citizen journalism, which, as enabled by the Internet, has decentralized knowledge or information and also empowered the hitherto passive and 'monolithic' citizen.

However, on a note of caution, Coleman (2001) stresses that we ought not to be more euphoric about the advancement of technology and the expansion of civic space (Coleman, 2001) and



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even media literacy (Huggins, 2001) than we need political competence: to deliberate better, be more reflexive and hold our representatives to account. "One of the great paradoxes of free information is that people often do not know what they need to know" (Coleman, 2001:119). This study, in lending credence to McNair (2010) and Nyabuga and Booker (2013), argues that an informed and rational citizenry is more often than not presupposed. By the same token, it is a charade of democracy when the citizens are informed by their visceral feelings, and reduce themselves to bargaining tools or voting automatons of their ethnic elites. Making reference to the 2007 general elections, Kanyinga *et al*. (2010) decry at how such affordances of new technologies (soft power) as Short Message Services, the Internet blogs and email messages are used uncouthly and savagely in Kenyan electoral politics:

> Surprisingly, neither the civil society nor the political parties utilized the new technologies to provide civic education. Parties and their supporters predominantly used soft power as a stage for political dark arts: to promote certain prejudices and stereotypes that would undermine cohesion and motivate voters to select rather than elect their leaders. Such prejudices certainly have the effect of preventing voters from making democratic and informed choices, because the choices are already predetermined through carefully articulated stereotypes and propaganda. The democratic opportunity (in terms of free speech) and danger (in terms of inciting and hateful speech) sits right at the heart of the contradictions in Kenya's democratic evolution. (Kanyinga *et al*., 2010:19)

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While many critics have dismissed Habermas' foregrounding of 'rational consensus' or 'reasoned debate' (Thompson, 1995) as well as Bell's "vision of a rational, information-rich society" (1976, 1980, in Elliott, 1995:261), this study contends that these are ideals worth aspiring for, lest we, especially as intellectuals, be guilty of intellectual laziness or are shorn off of probity. For this reason, this study goes back to Bell's (1976, 1980) all important equation: that of "information plus choice equals social progress" (Elliott, 1995:261).

Thus, it can be said that language mediates information and choice, which, among other things, terminate in such eventualities as social progress. And, as Danler (2005:45) puts it, language is very crucial to a critical discourse analysis; language itself is "the primary material of discourse". While admitting that a thematic or content analysis is important to an analysis of discourse, Danler (2005:46) insists on the textual analysis, which "must necessarily consist of a minute linguistic analysis of the corpora." That is why, as explained in Chapter 5, which



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follows below, this study employs the theories of CDA, Engagement and Face-work to explore aspects of the language as used by the informants in their discussion of Kenyan politics. With CDA, Functional Grammar and Face-work, the researcher will have been equipped with the necessary tools to examine, inter alia, how informants manipulate and construct their ethnic identities as they discuss their country's politics.

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# CHAPTER 5

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

# CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS, FACE-WORK AND ENGAGEMENT

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter concerns the following three theoretical frameworks, which have been used to analyse the data: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Engagement (as subsumed by Functional Grammar and Interpersonal Metafunction) and Face-work. There are four main sections in this chapter: each giving an overview of each of the three frameworks, with the last being the summary of the whole chapter. The first section deals with CDA, the second Engagement, the third Face-work, and the last section offers a Summary.

## 5.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

To embark on CDA, its definition will be given. This will be followed by a discussion of its historical links. Its approaches and theories will then follow, before its tenets, characteristics and aims. To conclude, some criticism which has been levelled against CDA will also be considered.

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Of CDA's leading scholars, Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, Teun Van Dijk, Paul Chilton, Margaret Wetherell, Michael Billig, Christina Schaffner, Theo Van Leeuwen and Gunther Kress are the most notable. This study takes Van Dijk's (2003:352) definition and description of CDA:

> Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality.

From the above, it is indicative that CDA has been modelled along, or it is an offshoot of, Critical Theory, which is both a theoretical and methodological approach, as will be discussed



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under the Research Methodology chapter. CDA is a critical social science, with a focus on language and discourse, sharing a common inheritance with its contemporaries and counterparts, such as Critical Psychology, Critical Social Policy and Critical Anthropology (Billig, 2007). After variously labelling his several works as 'critical approaches' to discourse analysis, 'Critical Language Awareness' (CLA) and 'Critical Language Studies' (CLS), Norman Fairclough eventually settled on the terminology *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)* to "denote a distinct and substantial body of work" (Billig, 2007:735). Van Dijk (2003), Blommaert (2005) and Billig (2007) add that CDA also came to include Fowler, Hodge, Kress and Trew's (1979) 'Critical Linguistics'. The French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser's work on ideology and ideological state apparatuses, published in 1970, also became an ingredient in Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (Billig, 2007).

As Blommaert (2005) points out, Hallidayan Systemic-Functional and Social-Semiotic Linguistics are also a fertile ground on which the above-mentioned critical linguists have thrived. This will be discussed separately, especially under Engagement (itself a strand of Appraisal, which is, in turn, a strand of Interpersonal Metafunction, a strand of Functional Grammar or Systemic Functional Linguistics). Lastly, Slembrouck (2001, in Blommaert, 2005) gives another influence on CDA, that of 'British Cultural Studies'. Blommaert (2005:23) characterizes the 'British Cultural Studies' thus: "it systematically addressed social, cultural, and political problems related to transformations in late capitalist society in Britain: neo-liberalism, the New Right headed by Thatcher, racism, diaspora, the end of the welfare state, and so on."

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As already implied, CDA is necessarily eclectic; it cannot be accounted for by a single theory or approach. Here, drawing on Wodak and Meyer (2009), I will give the main approaches and theories of CDA, many of which also inform this study, avowedly a bricolage.

### 5.2.1 Theoretical approaches to CDA

This subsection highlights the several theoretical approaches within CDA as well as the various theories (of society, power, social cognition and grammar) they rely on. It is these theoretical approaches, which constitute the theoretical framework, which, we, in turn, as Critical Discourse Analysts, operationalize as we seek to make sense of the data we have at hand. The following are CDA's main theoretical approaches, as listed by Wodak and Meyer (2009): Dispositive Analysis (DA), Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA), Sociocognitive Approach (SCA), Social Actors Approach (SAA), Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) and Corpus-



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Linguistics Approach (CLA). It is also important to note, here, that, generally, I regard the first five approaches as related, overlapping and necessarily informing this study.

This study considers the Dispositive Analysis approach, whose founders are Siegfried Jager and Florentine Maier (2009), very foundational. As Wodak and Meyer (2009:25) state, the Dispositive Analysis, by drawing on "Michel Foucalt's structuralist explanations of discursive phenomena", helps explain how we create reality by assigning conventional meanings to stuff. By this token, this approach also lends its credence to Ernesto Laclau's notion of social constructionism: reality is socially constructed, not naturally given. There is no societal reality outside of the discursive. This study also considers the Dispositive Analysis approach an overture to the second, the Dialectical-Relational Approach. Fairclough (1989:23) explains:

> There is not an external relationship between language and society, but an internal and dialectical relationship. Language is a part of society; linguistic phenomena are social phenomena of a special sort, and social phenomena are (in part) linguistic phenomena. Linguistic phenomena are social in the sense that whenever people speak, or listen or write or read, they do so in ways which are determined socially and have social effects.

To be short, therefore, language is an inevitable part and process of the society, as conditioning and conditioned by other, non-linguistic, parts of the society. The main theoretical attractors for Fairclough's Dialectical-Relational Approach are Karl Marx and M.K. Halliday. The importance of Marxian traditions for this approach is that they focus on social conflicts, necessitated by dominance, difference and resistance, as manifested in discourse. Halliday's Functional Grammar "analyses language as shaped (even in its grammar) by the social functions it has come to serve" (Wodak and Meyer, 2009:27).

The Sociocognitive Approach, attributed to Van Dijk (2009) emphasizes on the importance of the societal psychology, cognition or even knowledge. By so doing, it relies greatly on Serge Moscovici's (1982) social representation theory. Social representations denote "a bulk of concepts, opinions, attitudes, evaluations, images and explanations which result from daily life and are sustained by communication. Social representations are shared among members of a social group. Emile Durkheim had already offered thus: 'The ideas of man … are not personal and are not restricted to me; I share them, to a large degree, with all the men who belong to the same social group that I do" (Wodak and Meyer, 2009:25-6). Theo Van Leeuwen's (2009) Social Actors Approach simply focuses on the primacy of action by people (social actors), in



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the process of establishing social structures. The Discourse-Historical Approach, as directed by Reisgl and Wodak (2009) points to the importance of a historical analysis of discourse. This approach also stresses that the contextual resource for any (and all) discourse(s) is a multi-prong of psychology, politics and ideologies.

Lastly, there is Gerlinde Mautner's (2009) Corpus Linguistic Approach: a quantitatively fashioned approach, which, as Wodak and Meyer (2009) put it, complements CDA's other approaches with its attention to detail. As Mautner (2009:122) herself notes, though "not yet generally regarded as being at the core of CDA's methodological canon", this approach is fast gaining its deserved ground and recognition. Mautner (2009) describes this approach as enlisting the support of a computer, the Corpus Linguistics Software. This software brings (much) large(r) data volumes to critical discourse analysts' reach, data they would not have accessed manually. At the risk of 'leading' others into the quantitative proponents' prescriptive traps (Higgs, 2001), Mautner (2009) explains that this software shows the critical researcher "computing frequencies and measures of statistical significance", which will, in turn, broaden the researchers' empirical base and even reduce 'researcher bias'. This is supposed to be an enriching quantitative ingredient. Mautner (2009:123) explains Corpus Linguistics' qualitative usefulness: the critical researcher can "qualitatively examine their collocational environments, describe salient semantic patterns and identify discourse functions."

### 5.2.2 The main tenets, characteristics and aims of CDA

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As already mentioned above, it is apparent that the different theoretical approaches constituting CDA also intersect, overlap and even relate symbiotically; they converge around common issues. For instance, by focusing on how individual actors constitute and reproduce (or even determine) the social structure, the Social Actors Approach naturally intersects with the following approaches: the Sociocognitive Approach, the Dispositive Analysis approach and the Dialectical-Relational Approach. The endeavours of CDA's theoretical approaches also tend to terminate in the same issues. In view of this, and drawing on Fairclough and Wodak (1997) and Wodak and Meyer (2009), this study lists the main tenets, characteristics and aims of CDA's theoretical approaches as: (i) CDA addresses social problems (ii) Power relations are discursive (iii) Discourse constitutes society and culture (iv) Discourse does ideological work (v) Discourse is historical (vi) The link between text and society is mediated (vii) Discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory (viii) Discourse is a form of social action (ix) CDA de-mystifies ideologies and power through the systematic and retroductable



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investigation of semiotic data (spoken, written or visual) (x) CDA is, effectively, interdisciplinary. To summarize, this study discusses the following five main areas, around which the above-mentioned tenets, characteristics and aims of CDA revolve: (CDA being) Critical, Interdisciplinarity, Power, Discourse and Ideology. Being problem-oriented is an overarching nature of CDA; by this token, therefore, these five areas will all be discussed in terms of their problem-orientedness.

#### 5.2.2.1 The Critical impetus

The label 'critical', as bequeathed from the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School, is indicative of the unique impetus that CDA has come to afford the academic field. Drawing on Billig (2007) and Wodak and Meyer (2009), this study breaks down the implications of this label. To do this, some sort of etymology may be important. Acknowledging the long history of the term 'critical' in the academics, Billig (2007) foregrounds its *apophatic* appropriation by Immanuel Kant. As Billig (2007) reports, Kant described his work as constituting 'a Critical Investigation of Pure Reason' (1781 (1964]:3) in the Preface of his great *Critique of Pure Reason*. However, Kant did not bring himself to admitting that he was referring to or he had engaged in 'a criticism of books and systems'. As Billig (2007:37) conclusively explains, therefore, "the term 'critical' inevitably bears a rhetoric of criticism. This is because the formulation of an academic theory inevitably occurs in the context of argumentation, so that the propounding of a theory involves the explicit, and sometimes implicit, criticism of alternative theories." As a corollary of this, if our work is critical, it follows, naturally, that we are doing a rhetorical antithesis of others' work (Billig, 2007).

To conclude, CDA, equipped with the 'critical' ingredient, exposes an otherwise veiled interconnectedness of things, bestows critical knowledge on the people and encourages them to do a self-reflection (thus creating in them an awareness of their own obligations, needs and interests) towards emancipating themselves and changing the society for the better (Billig, 2007; Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

#### 5.2.2.2 Interdisciplinarity

"CDA is still far from being totally understood as the result of a new move in the way scientific knowledge is conceived" (Gouveia, 2007:53). The main reason for this, seemingly, is that this new science, as Gouveia (2007) describes CDA, entails a transdisciplinary (or interdisciplinary) operationalization, whereby the logic of one (or other) discipline(s), for



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example, Anthropology, Sociology and Media, can be appropriated towards developing another, for instance, Linguistics. This points to the fact that CDA straddles various disciplines.

Referring to the problem-orientedness of CDA, Wodak (2011:54) expounds: "Problems in our societies are too complex to be studied from a single perspective. This entails different dimensions of interdisciplinarity: the theories draw on neighbouring disciplines and try to integrate these theories."

While some CDA critics may dismiss its shifting sets of theoretical resources and operationalisations as an incongruous and even chaotic motely, Gouveia (2007) conceives of this functionality as offering a necessary interconnectedness for explaining a 'multileveled and interrelated reality'. It is in light of this, therefore, that the afore-mentioned scholar reads CDA as "the continuum of an essential disciplinary trend of a discursive nature" (Gouveia, 2007:53). This study suggests that in this special continuum of CDA, the disciplines lie side by side according to their symbiotic relationship: what they give to each other. In fact, Gouveia (2007) implies that these disciplines, so positioned, should not be looked at as being fragmented, polarised or even competing. Rather, he advises, it is the themes (or problems) that are fragmented in CDA.

Therefore, as Gouveia (2007) concludes, if we stay true to our research aims, we will not be unnecessarily obstructed or distracted by disciplinary boundaries. We should, rather, allow ourselves to be led by the themes or problems we are exploring.

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Situating this study within this context, I, as a critical linguist, have drawn on concepts from Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology, Politics and Media to explore how a selection of Kenyans use language on social media to position themselves within the ethnically mobilised political landscape that Kenya is. To do so, I have used CDA, along with the linguistic theoretical frameworks of Engagement and Face-work to analyse the informants' discussions.

#### 5.2.2.3 Power

As Blommaert (2005) and Van Dijk (2003) point out, CDA is interested in the (reproduction of) social power of groups or institutions. Wodak and Meyer (2009:9) give the Weberian definition of power thus: "power as the chance that an individual in a social relationship can achieve his or her own will even against the resistance of others." Of course, here, an individual can also represent a group or an institution within which power resides. Here, also, power needs to be seen in terms of control. In addition, power itself is a scarce resource; therefore, access



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to it is a privilege (Van Dijk, 2003). To further explain, a powerful group or institution (easily) controls the acts, values and even minds of (members of) other groups. As Wareing (1999) adds, power also controls (the distribution of) resources. This is especially so for political power, which is liable to not only depend on the other types of power, but also to control them. The following are the main types of power: authority (office), expert (knowledge or information), culture, physical force, money (or financial) and status (or fame). It is also important to note that power "may be integrated in laws, rules, norms, habits, and even quite general consensus, and thus take the form of what Gramsci called "hegemony"" (Gramsci, 1971, in Van Dijk, 2003:355).

Power also normally depends on two main groups of people: the dominant and the dominated. Lest, there could not have been a case of one controlling the other. In the same vein, power is functional; it gives a sense of order when these sources of power (as entrenched in such systems as laws) are referenced to. It can also be exercised differently, depending on the situation: from violently (as when the state uses the military to quell riots or instil fear in the masses) to softly or subtly. Van Dijk (2003:355) gives an example of the latter, stating that it "may be enacted in the myriad of taken-for-granted actions of everyday life…" However, as much as power depends on and distinguishes the dominant from the dominated, some individuals from the two groups would overlap or even blurry the distinctions. Another way to explain this is the fact that, as Van Dijk (2003) puts it, not each and every member of a powerful group is always more powerful than every member of a dominated group.

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Lastly, the other important characteristic of power is that it is seldom absolute, permanent or undisputed. It can also be said that there is a lot of potentiality to power. For instance, as much as the dominated may accept, condone, comply with, legitimate such power or even find it natural, it is not a guarantee that the state of affairs will remain the same. After some time or because of some (revealing) circumstances, there may start to be resistance. Normally, when the dominated groups start to show signs of resistance, the dominant (or hegemonic) groups may find the need to reassert their control. And, the dominated groups' resistance may not terminate in merely changing the way things are done (such as changing the rules). Rather, they (the dominated groups) may also start to bid for or even wield power. Therefore, this aspect of 'potentiality' of power involves it being won, exercised, sustained, cut down, resisted, lost and even changing hands.



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### 5.2.2.4 Ideology:

The general definition of an ideology is "a coherent and relatively stable set of beliefs or values" (Wodak and Meyer, 2009:8). On his part, Van Dijk (1993b; 1998 in Wodak and Meyer, 2009:8) conceives of ideologies "as the worldviews that constitute 'social cognition': 'schematically organised complexes of representations and attitudes with regard to certain aspects of the social world.'" It follows, therefore, that there will be (different) ideological groups, as positioned along such axes as politics, economics, culture, race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality, with some of these axes also necessarily intersecting or clashing. As Wodak and Meyer (2009) add, ideologies are rarely short of connotations, especially positively self-ascribed and negatively other-ascribed. That is why, for instance, capitalists and communists may condemn each other as 'evil' or 'inferior' but self-regard as 'good', 'natural' or 'superior'.

This differentiation leads us to Fairclough's (2003:18) Marxist-oriented definition of ideologies, as pitting (whether obviously or subtly) the dominant against the dominated within a society:

> Ideologies are representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation. This critical view of ideology, seeing it as a modality of power, contrasts with various 'descriptive' views of ideology as positions, attitudes, beliefs, perspectives, etc. of social groups without reference to relations of power and domination between such groups… Moreover, if ideologies are primarily representations, they can nevertheless also be 'enacted' in ways of acting socially, and 'inculcated' in the identities of social agents.

Van Dijk (2006) explains that ideologies, which members of an ideological group generally absorb as individuals, can either be instilled in a rather natural manner or even inculcated formally. In the latter case, "(g)roups may organise the discursive acquisition and reproduction of ideologies, for instance through special forms of education, indoctrination, job training, or catechesis, and by specialized group members (ideologues, priests, teachers, etc.) and in special institutions" (Van Dijk, 2006: 730). However, ideologies are essentially lower than knowledge (which normally transcends ideological groups). This could be why, as Van Dijk (2006) points out, ideologies are not always necessarily stable or constrained. They can transmute over time. Nevertheless, in some cases, ideologies can still grow into (some kind of) knowledge or common sense; this is when they fall into common acceptance in an entire community. To



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illustrate, Van Dijk (2006) attributes some forms of human rights – including gender equality – to ideological beliefs that had long been espoused by socialist movements and feminists in an atmosphere where women had not enjoyed (universal) suffrage.

However, ideologies cannot be known equally by all group members. These members may have different levels of ideological knowledge or expertise. Their ideological knowledge is also not always very explicit. Though their actions and speeches are informed by some existent ideology, all these members are not always able to express the same ideology (or its associated beliefs) concisely and systematically. This is where experts, teachers and other ideologues come in: to teach, explain, inculcate and explicitly reproduce group ideologies. Van Dijk (2006:730) uses the analogy of natural languages to explain this characteristic of ideologies:

> Using an ideology is like being able to use a language without being able to formulate the grammar of that language. Many men are sexist and their sexist ideology may control much of their discourse and other social practices, but they need not always have explicit access to the contents of their ideologies.

In addition, ideological groups may be looked at as 'fuzzy sets of social actors'. As Van Dijk (2006) observes, not all members may identify with an ideological group in the same way, and equally strongly. To explain this, Van Dijk (2006) gives a three-point continuum of ideological collectivities: *an organised (coordinated or institutionalized) ideological group*; *a community of belief (or practice)* and *a mere social category*. An organised ideological group explicitly expresses its stand; a community of belief engages itself in the same discourse or actions, but much less saliently (than their organised counterparts); and a mere social category is the general population by virtue of its easily natural and observable distinctness. To give a Kenyan illustration, an organised ideological group would be active members of a particular Kikuyu social or political group which openly claims Kikuyu superiority over other tribes (and maybe basing this on, among other things, the fact that they have ruled Kenya for long). A community of belief would be members of the Kikuyu community who, in their discussions (even with members of other communities), boast about Kikuyu superiority. A mere social category would be all or any member(s) of the Kikuyu community, assumed to behave and think as other Kikuyu bigots.

The Kenyan political ecology – especially as an ethnically mobilised one – would require that during such national rituals as general elections, the organised ideological group depends so much on the lower groups, who are in the majority, to sustain their group's ideologies. Such



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dependence includes campaigning and, more importantly, votes for one of their own at the expense of individuals from other ethnic communities. As has been discussed under ethnicity, such arrangements require the ordinary people to be used as 'voting automatons'. To conclude, Wodak and Meyer (2009) point out that CDA takes more interest in the hidden and latent type of everyday beliefs as well as their functioning.

#### 5.2.2.5 Discourse

There are two main ways of describing or understanding discourse. First, it can be looked at as *a mere instance of language use* (Cameron, 2001). Here, discourse can be in form of a text; it is a concrete realization of abstract forms of knowledge, as visualized, spoken or written (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009). In this case, therefore, discourse is looked at as a *mass noun*. The second way of understanding discourse is *enumerative*; therefore, we have different kinds of discourses. In the same way, Terre Blanche *et al*. (2006:328) define discourses as "broad patterns of talk – systems of statements – that are taken up in particular speeches and conversations, not the speeches or conversations themselves. While Reisigl and Wodak (2009) use the term *text* to refer to discourse as a mass noun, Wodak and Meyer (2009:2-3) use the term *register*, to include and transcend texts:

> Discourse means anything from a historical monument, a lieu de me'moire, a policy, a political strategy, narratives in a restricted or broad sense of the term, text, talk, a speech, topic-related conversations, to language per se. We find notions such as racist discourse, gendered discourse, discourses of un/employment, media discourse, populist discourse, discourses of the past, and many more – thus stretching the meaning of discourse from a genre to register or style.

The above ways terminate in looking at discourse as t*he use of language*. This use of language has also been referred to as the *discursive*, as opposed to the *non-discursive* (practices which do not entail the use of language). At this juncture, it is important to make reference to the Dialectical-Relational Approach, which conceives of discourse as a part of the society, influenced by and also influencing other non-discursive parts of the society. This relationship between language (discourse) and the society is of special importance to CDA. Blommaert (2005:25) expounds:

> CDA focuses its critique on the intersection of language/discourse/speech and social structure. It is in uncovering ways in which social structure relates to discourse patterns (in the form of power relations, ideological effects, and so forth),



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> and in treating these relations as problematic, that researchers in CDA situate the critical dimension of their work. It is not enough to uncover the social dimensions of language use. These dimensions are the object of moral and political evaluation, and analysing them should have effects in society: empowering the powerless, giving voices to the voiceless, exposing power abuse, and mobilising people to remedy social wrongs.

Following Blommaert (2005), it is prudent to say that we are being constantly reminded of our role, as Critical Discourse Analysts, to not take language use for granted. Discourse does not only carry ideologies; the ideologies it carries can be said to be in a constant state of being sustained, reproduced and in conflict. In the same way, the social relations (especially those of power) are reflected in our discourses, though not always in a straightforward manner. Blommaert (2005) also reminds us that we should not achieve satisfaction at merely unearthing these (conflicting) ideologies or (unequal, exploitative or oppressive) social relations. Rather, it falls on us, as Critical Discourse Analysts, to partake in the emancipation of our society by helping remedy these social wrongs. As Blommaert (2005) states, CDA practitioners, in working at the intersection of language and social structure, tend to pursue applied topics within certain social domains (examples of which are political discourse, ethnicity, racism and media).

### 5.2.3 Analysing data: The three stages

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To restate, this study is interested in how a selected number of Kenyans construct and negotiate their ethnic identities in political talk on Facebook. To do this, there is a need for a critical analysis of the informants' data according to Faiclough's (1989) framework, which proposes three stages or dimensions: *description, interpretation* and *explanation*. These stages take place in and correspond with the following levels (or domains) of social organisation, what Fairclough (1989) refers to as the three 'elements of discourse': *text, interaction* and *context*. These three levels (or domains or elements) of social organisation can also, respectively, be described as: the *situational level*, the *institutional level* and the *societal level*. On his part, Van Dijk (2003) describes the first stage (description) as a *micro level* and the other two (interpretation and explanation) as *macro levels*. Description focuses on the linguistic or textual (or even formal) features: actual instances of language use, verbal interaction and communication. On the other hand, interpretation and explanation focus on social structures (or relations): power, dominance, and inequality (Van Dijk, 2003).



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Both Fairclough (1989) and Van Dijk (2003) identify *members' resources* (MR) as mediating between the text and the societal structures (or relations). (To be sure, Fairclough [1989] describes MR as the social knowledge or representations, as internalized in individuals, which are brought to bear on the *production* and *interpretation* of such social practices as texts. There is more discussion about MR in section 5.2.3.2 below.) As Van Dijk (2003) explains, CDA seeks to analyse and, thus, bridge these three levels, which (should) correspond to the actual (though almost always opaque) workings of the (a) society. "In everyday interaction and experience the macro- and micro level (and intermediary 'mesolevels') form one unified whole" (Van Dijk, 2003:354). Below, I give an on overview of the three stages.

### 5.2.3.1 Description

As Fairclough (1989) states, a text's linguistic features mirror the social structures and relations. However, as Fairclough (1989) advises, this relationship is not straightforward or direct; it needs to be mediated by MR. This will be elaborated under the stage of *interpretation*. In this subsection, this study gives a breakdown or account of the linguistic features as well as their workings. Fairclough (1989) categorizes linguistic features into three: *vocabulary*, *grammar* and *textual structures*. As Fairclough (1989:112) elaborates below, these linguistic features carry with them strategic social values (*experiential*, *relational* and *expressive*):

> A formal feature with *experiential* value is a trace of and a cue to the way in which the text producer's experience of the natural or social world is represented. Experiential value is to do with *contents* and knowledge and beliefs… A formal feature with *relational* value is a trace of and a cue to the social relationships which are enacted via the text in the discourse. Relational value is (transparently!) to do with *relations* and social relationships. And, finally, a formal feature with *expressive* value is a trace of and a cue to the producer's evaluation (in the widest sense) of the bit of the reality it relates to. Expressive value is to do with *subjects* and social identities, though only one dimension of the latter concepts is to do with subjective values. Let me emphasize that any given formal feature may simultaneously have two or three of these values.

To contextualise this study, participants or producers from opposing ethno-political divides in Kenya may couch particular words with opposing ideological values when referring to the same politician. A case in point is when a Kikuyu participant, who is a member of Jubilee party says that Raila (Uhuru Kenyatta's rival) *only wants to take power by all means*. The word 'take'



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(especially when collocated with 'power') has got connotations of 'overthrowing'. In the same way, this representation of Raila paints him in bad light: as being unable to get the democratic mandate of the people via the ballot; it is, thus, negatively evaluative. On the other hand, a Luo participant, who is a member of the CORD party, may use the biblical allusion (or metaphor) 'Joshua' in reference to Raila in order to point to *the untold suffering the other people will have to brave should Uhuru Kenyatta win the elections*. In some situations, a producer may decide to omit a particular agent of their sentence if they want to strategically imply or overlook certain things about them. This is why the second stage, *interpretation*, comes in handy: to show all these evaluative, ideological and social leanings as depending on the unexplicated MR, including common sense and background assumptions.

#### 5.2.3.2 Interpretation

"The stage of interpretation is concerned with participants' processes of text production as well as text interpretation" (Fairclough, 1989:141). The text is seen as a 'product' of the process of production as well as a 'resource' for the process of interpretation. Here, it is also important to note that both the participants and researchers engage in this stage; only that, eventually, as explained under the stage of *explanation*, the researcher has the privilege as the 'ultimate' interpreter: having to interpret what (the other) participants have already interpreted. However, drawing on Fairclough (1989), and as can also be seen, the term *interpretation* is used in two ways: the (second) stage itself and as an overarching term which includes both production and interpretation.

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The main point about this stage is that the MR determine the meaning of the text at hand. And, the same way both the participants and the researchers' interpretations are important is the same way their MR are important. The term 'MR' refers to everything that the interpreter uses to make meaning of the text at hand: what they produce and what they interpret. Fairclough (1989) describes the MR as including (but not limited to) *common-sense assumptions* (which, of course, can also be largely ideological common sense) and the *background knowledge*. For convenience, Fairclough refers to the MR as *interpretative procedures*. Building on that, this study refers to the MR as *interpretative resources*. For more specificity, Fairclough (1989) states that the MR constitute the following: *the interpreters' knowledge of the language in use*, *the situational context* and *the intertextual context*. Explaining the situational context, Fairclough (1989) states that the interpreters ought to be alert to how the physical situation, the kind of activity (genre of the communicative event) and the nature of the participants and their



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relationships contribute towards the meaning making of the text. For instance, if the chat at hand is argumentative in nature, participants are likely to be self-defensive and other-offensive. With regard to relationships, if the Facebook interlocutors already know each other off-line, they are likely to be more 'face saving' in their interactions than those who do not know each other off-line.

The intertextual context refers to the fact that the present text has drawn on or been influenced by earlier texts. To put it simply, producers of text are always in a dialogic relationship with earlier conversations, texts or producers. Therefore, whether indirectly or not, producers of text may borrow utterances or stereotypes or ways of speaking (in this case, interdiscursivity) from earlier speakers, either in agreement or in disagreement. If interlocutors in a text can identify with these earlier texts, then they will have a 'common ground'. In addition, here, content could also be presupposed for the other interlocutor. While drawing on intertextual context, Fairclough (1989) notes, the interlocutors may thrive on 'reciprocal assumptions'; they expect or take it for granted that the other party are equipped with the same interpretative procedures or resources. By the same token, it is indicative that there may be misunderstanding or even miscommunication in verbal interactions. In some cases too, even if interlocutors share the same situational or intertextual contexts, they may still interpret the same 'objects' differently.

Fairclough (1989:141) explains the interdependence of (the formal features of) the text and the MR: "formal features of the text are 'cues' which activate elements of the interpreters' MR, and… interpretations are generated through the dialectical interplay of cues and MR." A case in point is when a participant, in referring derogatorily to Luo men, says 'boys'. Though different cultural groups give particular meanings to certain cultural practices, which others may be oblivious of, the former will tend towards using their ways and meanings as the yardsticks, against which they will judge the latter. Therefore, outside the cultural sphere of Luos, the term 'boys' may refer to 'uncircumcised men', which is, of course, an insult to and a way of demeaning Luos. This, therefore, indexes power play, whereby the user of 'boy' insinuates that he is superior to the other. Below follows an overview of the third and final stage of analysis: *explanation*.

#### 5.2.3.3 Explanation

The third and final stage of analysis is explanation. Here, the analysis works by explicating the relationship between the discourse and the social structures. Fairclough (1989) shows how intricate this stage is: it entails a symbiotic (and often dynamic) relationship between



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discourses, reproduction, social processes, social practices and the overarching social structure. For more clarity, the definitions of *reproduction*, *social processes* and *social practices* are given below. "Reproduction is for participants a generally unintended and unconscious side-effect, so to speak, of production and interpretation" Fairclough (1989:162). For instance, when a participant from a dominated ethnic community laments about the dominant and hegemonic ethnic communities, they may be entrenching the belief (or assumption) that, somehow, it is almost impossible to change the status quo. Reproduction works as a medium through which discourse practices, social processes, social practices and social structures are enhanced and materialized. Social processes and social practices refer to the social struggles, as partaken in by social beings at these three different levels of social organisation (text, interaction and context). Social structure describes obvious and hidden relations of power.

Therefore, explanation not only shows how discourse is determined by social structures, it also shows how discourse can also determine the same social structures. Fairclough (1989:163) explains: "These social determinations and effects are 'mediated' by MR: that is, social structures shape MR, which in turn shape discourses; and discourses sustain or change MR, which in turn sustain or change structures." As has already been discussed under the previous stage (interpretation), MR is the interpreter's background knowledge (schemata) which they bring to bear when producing or making sense of discourse. It is also important to note that the MR, among other things, are not only commonsensical, but also ideologically commonsensical.

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At every level of social organisation (situational, institutional and societal), power relations or struggles are at play. For instance, at the situational level, a participant associating with the government will use such words to praise it: 'transformative', 'development oriented' and 'inclusive'. On the other hand, a critic of the same government will use the following words to condemn it: 'redundant', 'retrogressive' and 'exclusivist'. The researcher (as could also be expected of a participant), in applying their MR, may tell that certain participants are mainly supporting certain politicians by virtue of sharing an ethnic identity, or because their ethnic messiahs are aligned with those particular politicians. For instance, and at the risk of divulging the findings of the analysis of the data here, it is a general trend for participants with Luo names to attack Kikuyus and their politicians. The same applies to participants with Kikuyu names: they are also generally wont to attack Luos and their politicians. Putting all this in the societal context, the participants will only be representing bigger ethnic forces: either as those ruling the country (thus, being part of the system) or those in the opposition (and, thus, alienated or at the periphery).



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To conclude, I wish to point to the role of the critical discourse analyst in doing *explanation*. As has already been mentioned, the participants, too, partake in interpreting the discourse at hand. Therefore, for the critical discourse analyst to do justice to *explanation*, they need to be armed with two things: self-consciousness and necessary social theories. First, on self-consciousness, it helps when the critical discourse analyst is an insider. In other words, analysts essentially need to be 'insiders' in order to empathize with all the (other) participants and make sense of the text at hand; "to develop self-consciousness about the rootedness of discourse in common-sense assumptions of MR" (Fairclough, 1989:167). As already mentioned, I, as a critical discourse analyst, also happen to belong to the same Kenyan society I am doing this research on. For this reason, I can easily share or identify with (other) participants' MR. Second, the analyst needs to equip themselves with the necessary social theories which are pertinent to the research topic. Since this study touches on, among other disciplines, anthropology (for an understanding of ethnicity) and politics, it falls on me to have been conversant with at least the pertinent theories of ethnicity and politics. Last but not least, since this study is of critical nature, I could not do without an immersion in and understanding of CDA and its predecessor, the Critical Theory. An understanding of Engagement and Face-work would also stand me in good stead with regard to explicating the data at hand.

### 5.2.4 Criticism of CDA

In this section, the criticism which has been levelled against CDA will be reviewed. Much of this criticism centres on CDA's method, methodology and analytical approaches. Below, drawing on Blommaert (2005) and Gouveia (2007), this study spells this criticism and attempts to react accordingly. First, Widdowson (1995 and 1997), one of the most avowed critics, accuses CDA of being 'fuzzy': it works to blur "important distinctions between concepts, disciplines, and methodologies" (Blommaert, 2005:31). As has already been mentioned under interdisciplinarity (in section 5.2.2.2), discourse, by virtue of being "socially situated and contextualised", is intrinsically interdisciplinary (Blommaert, 2005:34). A further word, and as has also been explained above (in section 5.2.2.2), this interdisciplinarity offers a necessary interconnectedness for explaining a 'multileveled and interrelated reality' (Gouveia (2007).

Second, CDA has been accused of only providing a biased and partial interpretation. This is reminiscent of charges brought against Malinowski; could a Critical Discourse Analyst be guilty of claiming the 'all-knowing interpreter' status? Blommaert (2005:31-2) reads Widdowson's indictment:



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> Despite its theoretical claims to the contrary, CDA provides biased interpretations of discourse under the guise of critical analysis. CDA does not analyse how a text can be read in many ways, or under what social circumstances it is produced and consumed. The predominance of biased interpretation begs the questions about representativeness, selectivity, partiality, prejudice, and voice (can analysts speak for the average consumer of texts?)

To this, Gouveia (2007:57) responds:

> There is nothing wrong in providing only a partial interpretation, if one considers that there are no static structures in discourse and that one cannot ascribe it a definite reading because its potentiality is what lies in between readings, or observations and measurements, to use more scientific words… there is no value-free CDA… there is no value-free science.

In lending credence to Gouveia (2007), this study draws on Snape and Spencer (2003) and holds that CDA, in keeping with the principle of the Critical Theory, provides for open-endedness and even 'fallibilism'. Further, as Snape and Spencer (2003) note, there can be no fixed or overarching meanings. Such criticism of CDA, as led by Widdowson and others, gives one the false idea that CDA seeks some tyrannical status by claiming to give definitive or absolute readings. Rather, CDA should be conceived of as inviting and celebrating different readings by participants and analysts alike, in a bid to showcase a complex and multifaceted reality.

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On his part, Slembrouck (2001) is not too sanguine about the explanation stage in critical analysis of discourse. Here, Slembrouck accuses the critical Discourse Analyst of over-relying on (the) social-theories, or engaging in social-theory reductionism, at the expense of the participant's interpretation and voice. Now, to Slembrouck's (2001) concerns this study wishes to try and respond. First, as has been mentioned, researchers are a vital ingredient in a research; if research is not value-free, a researcher cannot be pulled out of an analysis. Again, the participants are not necessarily doing the research as much as they partake in it. Participants can also not always explain all their actions and interpretations. This brings us back to the social theories which the analysts rely on.

First, dependence on social theories does not necessarily make an analyst (to claim to be) the 'ultimate arbiter of meanings'. As has been said, there can never be a definitive reading; for instance, there can be two analysts applying the same theory who will come up with different



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readings of the same research. However, the caveat should be that a participant's contribution is not altered in any way. Thus, the worry should be more about the degree of *trustworthiness*, as constituted of *credibility*, *confirmability* and *transferability* (Leininger, 1994 in Higgs and McAllister, 2001). Higgs and McAllister (2001:37) explain:

> According to Leininger, credibility refers to the truth, value or believability of findings as 'known, experienced, or deeply felt by the people being studied' (Leininger, 1994:105). Confirmability refers to the obtaining of repeated evidence through participation, observation and participant feedback on findings. Transferability refers to the degree to which particular findings from a study 'can be transferred to another similar context or situation and still preserve the particularized meanings, interpretations, and inferences' (Leininger, 1994, p.106).

Second, relying on social theories should not always mean that an analyst has become a social-theory automaton, or that the view from above will always dwarf or obliterate the one from below. As Fairclough (1989) has already said, an analyst had better be equipped with insider's knowledge (MR) to the point of dialoguing with the participants. In addition, a social theory, as a reference point, can be engaged reflexively and, if there is need, critiqued, adjusted or improved accordingly. In other words, social theories should not be unnecessarily deterministic. As a rule of thumb, it falls on the analyst to work from their data, upwards; an analyst's input ought not to be a priori; an analyst should suit their social theory to their data, not the other way around.

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Blommaert (2005) has also expressed his concern about 'Eurocentric' or Western' inclinations of the work of CDA, which might be imposed on the Third World, which is a totally different context. The pioneers of CDA are all from (and have addressed issues in) the First World or the West. An example is Fairclough, some of whose notable work concerns the Great Britain during the Thatcher era. In response, this study affirms that CDA is already being localised in this part of the world (Africa). Therefore, the work of the pioneers of CDA can only serve as reference points, samples or models: to be appropriated and contextualised elsewhere, as I have attempted to do with this Kenyan study.

### 5.2.5 Actively Emancipatory

To conclude, this study draws on Billig (2007) and Gouveia (2007), who, in cautioning against complacency among CDA researchers, call our attention to CDA's noble cause: *emancipatory knowledge* (as opposed to *regulative knowledge*). While regulative knowledge only moves us



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from a point of chaos to a point of order, emancipatory knowledge moves us from a point of colonialism (social inequalities and injustices) to a point of solidarity (Santos, 2000, in Gouveia, 2007). However, Gouveia (2007) notes that, at times, CDA ends up achieving regulative knowledge while it had set sights on emancipatory knowledge. For this reason, Gouveia (2007) even calls for a more resolute CDA: *activist CDA*. Gouveia (2007) then sets a higher goal for this *activist CDA*, that of transforming its scientific (emancipatory) knowledge into (a new) common sense. Tellingly, *activist CDA* will not only genuinely speak for the participants, it will also give them a voice. As has already been mentioned, emancipatory research ought to plough research findings back to the environment from which they were generated (Snape and Spencer, 2003). This is as opposed to the findings ending up in the libraries, journals, bookshops and at the doorsteps of the critics.

By the same token, I, as a reflective researcher with a commitment to CDA, will endeavour to use the insights I have gained and developed during this project to enhance the building of a critical citizenry, particularly in Kenya, through my engagements with others in different personal, academic and media fora.

The next subchapter dwells on Engagement.

### 5.3 Engagement

This subchapter gives an overview of Engagement, the second theoretical framework used to analyse the data of this study.

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#### 5.3.1 Functional Grammar

First of all, it is important to note that Engagement is a sub-system of Appraisal, which is a dimension of the Interpersonal Metafunction of Functional Grammar or Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Therefore, here, I will first introduce Functional Grammar before focusing on Engagement, of course, after Interpersonal Metafunction and Appraisal: its larger systems.

Functional Grammar is an approach to language which has been pioneered by Halliday (1994). Other scholars (notably, Bloor and Bloor, 2004; Butt *et al*., 2000; Collerson, 1994; Droga *et al*., 2002; Eggins and Slade, 1997; Gerot and Wignell, 1995; Lock, 1996; Martin *et al*. 1997; Morley 2000 and Unsworth 2000) have adopted and elaborated Halliday's (1994) theories of grammar. As has been discussed above, Functional Grammar complements CDA. However, Blommaert (2005) argues that Functional Grammar (or Hallidayan linguistics) has not been



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given the credit it deserves for having inspired CDA intellectually, at least historically. Below, Blommaert (2005) explains how Functional Grammar (as inspired by Foucault's, Bourdieu's and Habermas' social theories) marks a linguistic revolution that has come to inform CDA:

> CDA historically emerged out of Hallidayan linguistics, but this, in turn, needs to be contextualised. Post-Second World War developments in the study of language included the Chomskyan revolution and a number of strong reactions against this revolution, often focusing on the exclusion of social and cultural dimensions from the Chomskyan programme of linguistics. The emergence of sociolinguistics in the early 1960s was a reaction in this sense, as well as the result of an interdisciplinary dynamics in the social sciences of the day. Hallidayan linguistics, in turn, was inspired by a desire to incorporate social semiotic functions into a theory of grammar (Butler 1985, 1995; Kress 1976). In literary analysis, the (re)discovery of Bakhtin's work turned scholars towards voice and social layering in communication. Social theorists such as Foucault, Bourdieu and Habermas addressed language from a broadly social-semiotic viewpoint and offered new foundations for sociolinguistic and discourse-analytical work. Applied linguistics took hold and focused, among other things, on education as a field where social and linguistic forces met and often clashed. CDA was founded on the premises that linguistic analysis could provide a valuable additional perspective for existing approaches to social critique, and it attempted to combine (at least a number of) these post-Second World War developments. (Blommaert, 2005:22)

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As Bloor and Bloor (2004) state, Functional Grammar looks at language as consisting of a set of interconnected systems which offer the speaker (or writer) an unlimited choice of ways of creating meanings. To Functional Grammar, a language is a 'system of meanings'; thus, the reason for referring to Functional Grammar as 'Systemic Functional Linguistics' should be self-explanatory. In Functional Grammar, therefore, we have a tool that enables us to "see language as having a far more central place in human experience" (Martin *et al*., 1997:19). Learning and applying Functional Grammar can be semantically revealing and fulfilling. For this, Functional Grammar is of great necessity to CDA; Martin (2000) even recommends that CDA researchers need to apply Functional Grammar notions in their analyses (more) diligently. An overview of the three meanings (metafunctions or branches) of Functional Grammar is given below.



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### 5.3.2 The 3 Metafunctions of language:

As has been mentioned, Functional Grammar conceives of language as a resource for making meanings. As Bloor and Bloor (2004) explain, Functional Grammar categorizes language into the following three functional components, which have been described as metafunctions, meanings or uses: *textual*, *ideational* (*experiential*) and *interpersonal*. These metafunctions can be identified in different linguistic units (from word, phrase, clause, sentence, up to text), and they operate interdependently and simultaneously in the creation of meaning in relation to the context (Eggins and Slade, 1997; Bloor and Bloor, 2004). However, other linguists, notably Halliday (1994), consider the clause as the basic unit for analysis in Functional Grammar. The Textual Metafunction will be the first to be reviewed.

#### 5.3.2.1 Textual Metafunction

The Textual Metafunction concerns how a text is organised. As Bloor and Bloor (2004:84) explain, speakers (or writers) of a language, in ensuring that their ideas 'hang together', link the pieces of the language they are using accordingly: "A stretch of language which is coherent and 'makes sense' is said to have texture… texture is simply the quality of being a text, rather than a set of unconnected bits of language." Halliday (1994) states that the clause has the character of a message because it has some form of organisation giving it the status of a communicative event. According to Bloor and Bloor (2004), when organising the clause as a message, there are two parallel and interrelated systems of analysis of its structure: *information structure* (involving *Given* and *New*) and *thematic structure* (involving *Theme* and *Rheme*). Even though interrelated, these two systems need to be kept as separate tools of analysis.

In the *information structure*, the *Given* information is normally what both the speaker and listener are aware of; it is shared knowledge or mutual knowledge. Bloor and Bloor (2004) suggest that, usually, the *Given* is found at the beginning of a clause (of course, it can also be found elsewhere). The *New* information becomes the focus of the speaker's message; it is what the speaker highlights (and, therefore, should not be taken for granted). In the sentence *Kenya is a beautiful country* for example, *Kenya* is the *Given* information and *is a beautiful country* is the *New* information the speaker is highlighting. In the thematic structure, the *Theme* is the starting point of a clause while the *Rheme* is the rest of the message. In the same sentence given above, therefore, the *Theme* is *Kenya* and the *Rheme* is *is a beautiful country*. In the *thematic* structure, the *Theme* is the main focus of the clause. There are also three kinds of Themes:



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*Topical* (which is mandatory); *Textual*; and *Interpersonal*. Since Textual Metafunction is not the focus of this study, nothing more will be said about it.

#### 5.3.2.2 Ideational Metafunction

In explaining the Ideational Metafunction, Bloor and Bloor (2004:10) state that "Language is used to organise, understand and express our perceptions of the world and of our own consciousness." Ideational Metafunction is classified into two subfunctions: the *experiential* and the *logical*. The experiential focuses on content or ideas while the logical concerns the relationship between the contents or ideas. Let us consider the following sentence: *They are proud because the president comes from their ethnic community*. In this sentence, *They are proud* and *the president comes from their ethnic community* constitute the Experiential Metafunction while *because* expresses the logical relationship (of reason) between the two experiential clauses. Tellingly, the experiential subfunction assumes the whole status of the whole Ideational Metafunction in (many) Functional Grammar texts; because of this, experiential and ideational can be used as synonyms.

Halliday (1994:106) states that the clause, in its experiential meaning, represents patterns of experience; this way, "language enables human beings to build a mental picture of reality, to make sense of what goes on around and inside them." Halliday (1994) also describes these patterns of experience as 'goings-on' and categorizes them into 'happening', 'doing', 'sensing', 'meaning', 'being' and 'becoming'. For purposes of elaboration, Halliday (1994) proposes that the system of *transitivity* construes the world of experience as regionalized into these three subsystems: *process types* (verbs), *participants* (doers, receivers or sensers) and *circumstances* (under which the processes take place). There are three main process types: *material* (outer experiences, actions and events, as happening or done by actors), *mental* (inner experiences, partly a replay of the outer experiences, recording them and reflecting on them and partly a separate awareness of our states of being) and *relational* (as relating one fragment of experience to another). The other kinds of processes are intermediate, as located at the others' boundaries: *behavioural*, *verbal* and *existential*. The rule of thumb dictates that the process types determine the types of participants. For instance, if *the ordinary citizens are in awe of their ethnic messiahs*, the former are *sensers* (the entities which perceive) and the latter are the *phenomena* (the entities which are perceived). Correspondingly, the process type (being in awe) is *mental*. Since the Ideational Metafunction is also not the focus of this study, nothing else will be said about it.



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### 5.3.2.3 Interpersonal Metafunction

The Interpersonal Metafunction denotes the use of language to interact with people, to establish and maintain social relationships and to express our viewpoints and attitudes about the world and to possibly change the viewpoints and attitudes of others.

Here, as Halliday (1994) explains, the clause is looked at as an *interactive event*. It is seen as an 'interaction' or even an 'exchange': the speaker, writer and audience are interacting with each other. Drawing on Halliday (1994), this study uses the term 'speaker' generally, to refer to those people involved in the production of language in any instance. Since, at some point, the listener assumes the speaker role, the term 'interlocutor' has also been used for the interactants.

In explaining the clause as an interactive event, Halliday (1994) makes two basic distinctions: *the core types of speech roles* and *the nature of the commodities being exchanged*. The former are *giving* and *demanding*; the latter are *information* and *goods* or *services*. Basically, each clause either gives or demands one of the commodities (information, goods or services). Correspondingly, we have four main speech functions: *statement*, *question*, *offer* and *command*. To explain further, by giving either of the commodities, the interactant endeavours to trigger their interlocutor into receiving it. By the same token, should the speaker demand either of the commodities, they endeavour to trigger their interlocutor into giving it. However, interactivity is a two-or-more-way process, which also depends a great deal on the interlocutor's goodwill: the willingness to talk or keep talking. In fact, as social animals, we prefer that the interlocutor disagrees or gives a negative response rather than keep quiet. That is why, as Halliday (1994) offers, in addition to the expected or desired responses, the interlocutors have discretionary alternatives. To illustrate, the desired responses to the speakers' statements and offers are *acknowledgement* and *acceptance*, respectively. Their discretionary alternatives are *contradiction* and *rejection*. On the other hand, the desired responses to the speakers' questions and commands are *answers* and *undertakings*; their discretionary alternatives are *disclaimer* and *refusal*. Thus, as Martin *et al*. (1997) argue, Interpersonal Metafunction needs us to transcend a single clause by a speaker if we are to see the interactivity in its full element. This is because a dialogue "is essentially an interactive, collaborative process" (Martin *et al*., 1997:58).

It is also worth noting that not every speech function is clear-cut or congruent (Martin *et al*., 1997). By means of *interpersonal metaphors*, brought about by natural linguistic change, a



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speech function can be realized by a grammatical form which does not prototypically correspond to it (Halliday, 1994). Halliday (1994) also calls our attention to the fact that *propositions* (statements and questions) have a much more clearly defined grammar than *proposals* (demands and offers). This is because propositions concern information, whose only existence is in the form of language. This is as opposed to goods and services, the 'stock-in-trade' of proposals. Further, statements and questions serve as an entry to many other rhetorical functions. To be sure, as exchange commodities, propositions (statements and questions) "can be affirmed or denied, and also doubted, contradicted, insisted on, accepted with reservation, qualified, tempered, regretted and so on" (Halliday, 1994:70). Due to interpersonal metaphors, however, this study proposes that proposals can at times overlap with propositions, especially with regard to the intended meanings, in particular contexts.

*Mood*

The Mood is the principal grammatical system of the clause as an exchange (Halliday, 1994). It consists of two parts: the Subject and the Finite operator. The Subject, a nominal group, is mainly a noun, or, at times, a pronoun. The Finite is the verbal operator expressing tense, number (singular or plural) and person (first, second or third) as well as the speaker's judgement or polarity. Therefore, the Finite can either be a primary auxiliary verb or a modal auxiliary verb. However, in some cases, the Finite and the predicator (the word denoting a particular process) can be fused together. An example is *loves*: with the suffix *-s* indicating tense, singular and third person.

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Pointing to the importance of the Mood, Halliday (1994) states that propositions are inherently and typically expressed by it; when exchanged, the propositions revolve around the Mood. In a series of exchanges, it is the Mood which is essentially bandied around or tossed back and forth. This is testament that it is the Mood element which carries the argument forward. It is for this reason, therefore, that we should look at the Mood as being the gist or crux of the whole clause. With regard to semantic contribution, the Finite helps make the proposition finite; courtesy of the Finite, the proposition is singled out and made accessible to us. As Halliday (1994:75) elaborates, the Finite circumscribes the proposition: "It relates the proposition to its context in the speech event", thus making it something for us to argue about (in relation to tense, modality, affirmation or negation). The Subject is the entity against which the proposition in the clause is referenced. It gives the proposition its validity. Going back to the Ideational (Experiential) Metafunction, the Subject is the entity solely associated with the



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experience. That is why Halliday (1994) states that the Subject takes responsibility for the fact that the clause functions as an interactive event.

Beyond the Mood, the other part of the clause is called the *residue*, which constitutes the Predicator, Complement and Adjunct. The Predicator expresses the actual process in the clause. The Complement and the Adjunct help give more information about the Predicator. Vocatives and Expletives are the other elements which can appear in a clause as an exchange; but, they are outside of both the Mood and the Residue. Vocatives are employed by the speaker to address or invoke another person or thing. An example is 'Dear!' Expletives, also described as oaths or swear words, signal the speaker's attitude. This study adds that speakers can also use expletives to emphasize (feelings). Due to space and relevance constraints, nothing more will be said about any of the residue, vocatives and expletives.

*Tenor (social context)*

The unique feature of Functional Grammar, unlike (other linguistic) theories, is that it has developed as both an intrinsic and extrinsic theory (Martin and White, 2005). The metafunctions discussed above (Textual, Ideational and Interpersonal) are intrinsic in nature; in other words, here, language is looked at in isolation. When the metafunctions are projected onto the social context, then Functional Grammar is working externally. In this case, language is put into use in the real life. It can also be said that language is used to mirror the real social context. Put simply, language is decoupled from the textbook and mapped onto the society. As Martin and White (2005) explain, when this externalisation of the metafunctions takes place, we use the term *register*. Register refers to the analysis of language in its external use, and it has got these three categories: *mode*, *field* and *tenor*. These three categories resonate with the three metafunctions of Functional Grammar; mode is to Textual, field is to Ideational, and tenor is to Interpersonal. Since the study is interested in the Interpersonal Metafunction only, the category of tenor will be discussed below.

Halliday (1989:12) describes tenor thus:

> Tenor refers to who is taking part, to the nature of the (communicative) participants, their statuses and roles: what kinds of role relationship are obtained, including permanent and temporary relationships of one kind or another, both the types of speech roles they are taking on in the dialogue and the whole cluster of socially significant relationships in which they are involved.



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As Martin and White (2005) state, we are positioned in relation to tenor along the following five main factors: *generation*, *gender*, *ethnicity*, *capacity* and *class*. Martin and White (2005) add that the above-mentioned factors determine two main ways in which we relate: vertically or horizontally. When we relate vertically, issues of power (or status) come into play, pitting the superior against the inferior. When we relate horizontally, issues of solidarity (or contact) come in play, making us share an egalitarian relationship. Martin and White (2005:29) give an exposition:

> By generation, we refer to inequalities associated with maturation; gender covers sex and sexuality based on difference; ethnicity is concerned with racial, religious and other 'cultural' divisions; capacity refers to abilities and disabilities of various kinds; class is based on the distribution of material resources and is arguably the most fundamental dimension since it is the division on which our post-colonial economic order ultimately depends.

To put this study into perspective, the conception of tenor enables us to look at the participants in the text as social beings who are relating in terms of their generation, gender, ethnicity, capacity and class. Because the focus is how the selected (and ambitiously 'representative') Kenyans construct and negotiate their ethnic identities in Kenyan political discussions, this study will explore how they talk about politics in relation to their positionings as members of specific ethnic communities, in the ecological domain that is Kenya. And, to make this exploration, the study will mainly employ the system of Engagement, as subsumed by Appraisal.

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### 5.3.3 Appraisal

As Martin and White (2005) put it, the Interpersonal Metafunction is made up of three branches: *Appraisal*, *Negotiation* and *Involvement*. These three branches work in discourse by complementing each other. Negotiation complements Appraisal by focusing on the interactive aspects of discourse, speech function and exchange structure. For instance, a police officer would take charge of an interrogation, asking a witness questions, whose role will normally be passive. Involvement complements Appraisal by focusing on non-gradable resources for negotiating Tenor relations, especially solidarity. Here, those resources signalling group affiliation, such as terms of address (like *Dear* or *Sweet Cake*, as referring to lovebirds), specialized lexis or jargon (like *languaging*, as used by sociolinguistics) and expletives or taboo lexis (like *shit*, as annoying Mrs Grundy) are of interest. To indulge in another example,



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grandchildren may use urban slang to gossip about and exclude their rural grandmother from a conversation. Nothing more may be said about Negotiation and Involvement other than the fact that, at times, Appraisal will rely on and work with them in discourse. Below, an overview of Appraisal is given.

Martin and White (2005) describe Appraisal as a set of resources that are concerned with the language of evaluation. Appraisal can also be described as pertaining the kinds of feelings negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways value positions (or viewpoints) are sourced and readers aligned. This description of Appraisal corresponds with its three subsystems, respectively: *Attitude*, *Graduation* and *Engagement*. Therefore, Attitude concerns the participants' feelings, including emotional reactions, judgements of behaviour and evaluation of things. In the same way, Attitude is further divided into the following categories, as corresponding with its (above-mentioned) concerns: *Affect*, *Judgement* and *Appreciation*. In the sentence *I do not like politicians*, the word *like* shows Affect. In the sentence *He is a dishonest person*, the word *dishonest* signals Judgement. In the sentence *That was a powerful speech*, the word *powerful* shows Appreciation.

Graduation concerns the strength (or amplification) of the feelings. This means that the feelings expressed can be graded, so as to show how strongly (or lightly) speakers feel about something. As Martin and White (2005:137) state, "Graduation operates across two axes of scalability – that of grading according to intensity or amount, and that of grading according to prototypicality and the preciseness by which category boundaries are drawn." The term *force* is used for the grading according to intensity or amount, size and proximity. On the other hand, *focus* concerns grading according to prototypicality and the preciseness by which boundaries are drawn. To give an example, the word *very* in *He is a very corrupt politician* is a resource of *force*. In another example, the word *quite* in *She is quite a woman* is a resource of *focus*. Below, the sub-system of Engagement, which this study is particularly interested in, is overviewed. However, it is important to note that Engagement intersects and works together with and is even enhanced by both Attitude and Graduation.

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### 5.3.4 Engagement

As has already been hinted above (in the description of Appraisal), Engagement concerns the ways in which value positions (or viewpoints) are sourced and readers aligned. The sub-system of Engagement can also be explained in terms of the following two interrelated notions: *dialogism* and *heteroglossia*. According to Martin and White (2005:92), the dialogic



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perspective concerns itself with "the linguistic resources by which speakers/writers adopt a stance towards the value positions being referenced by the text and with respect to those they address". Martin and White (2005:92) explain how all communication is dialogic: "to speak or write is always to reveal the influence of, refer to, or to take up in some way, what has been said/written before, and simultaneously to anticipate the responses of the actual, potential or imagined readers/listeners." As Martin and Rose (2007) observe, even a monologue has an element of dialogism: the person doing the monologue either relates their utterance to earlier utterances from other people or to their own earlier utterances or thoughts. Voloshinov (1995, in Martin and White 2005:92-93) adds that dialogism also plays out in such 'latent' interactions as books: "the printed verbal performance engages, as it were, in ideological colloquy of a large scale: it responds to something, affirms something, anticipates possible responses and objections, seeks support, and so on."

The notion of heteroglossia, which Martin and White (2005) attribute to Kristeva, the French discourse analyst, refers to 'different voices' or 'multiple voicing' in all kinds of discourse. By the same token, Martin and Rose (2007) coined the term *monogloss* to refer to a 'single voice'. Building on this, this study will consider monogloss a thread in the heteroglossic network. In other words, any speaker, at any one time, is thrown into a host of other speakers; others will have spoken before him/her while others will (or may) speak in response to his/her utterance. Thus, with regard to the anticipatory aspect of a text (or any verbal performance), we, as analysts, should determine whether the value position has been presupposed as problematic or antagonistic, questionable, resistible or 'rejectionable' for the audience. Functionally, there are three main resources of Engagement: *expansive*, *contractive* and *neutral*. While Martin and White (2005) categorize most resources of Engagement as either working expansively or contractively, they have also pointed out that others function merely neutrally. Therefore, as will be seen below, both expansive resources and contractive resources will cover the most space. Neutral resources will be touched on after a discussion of the first two.

Before embarking on the resources used for Engagement, it may be worth noting that there are many different kinds of text: while some texts are basically arguments, others explain, narrate or even recount (Martin and White, 2005). The texts used for this study are basically argumentative since participants represent and argue for either ethnic communities or their favoured politicians, as pitted against their rivals. However, this does not mean that there will not be other kinds of 'subtexts'; this is because, normally, participants use different genres to



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help make their case. Because of this, there will be, for instance, cases whereby participants recount certain experiences as they look to argue their cases (more) convincingly.

### 5.3.5 Bare assertions

Drawing on Martin and White (2005), this study regards bare assertions, also referred to as categorical assertions, as a special type of dialogistic resources. This is because they basically function covertly: they do not express dialogicality in obvious ways. In other words, bare assertions appear to be 'factive', intersubjectively neutral' or oblivious of alternative viewpoints. For this reason, Martin and White (2005) advise that, as analysts, we had better be suspicious of bare assertions, lest we unwittingly buy into the impression they give. "Once we hold the view that all verbal communication occurs against a heteroglossic backdrop of other voices and alternative viewpoints, and competing viewpoints, a rather different picture emerges" (Martin and White, 2005:99).

Therefore, bare assertions should not be taken for granted. For instance, Martin and White (2005) point out that though monoglossically declared, these bare assertions would appear alongside a series of arguments which will then give the speaker/writer away as still construing their value position as very much at issue (debatable). These arguments, which are used alongside bare assertions, may be used intentionally: to construe a reader as "undecided and looking for further guidance, or who, while already leaning in the writer's direction, is still interested in further argumentation" (Martin and White, 2005:102). If the writer anticipates that the reader holds a diametrically opposed position, these arguments may be intended to win them (the readers) over. As can be seen above, I, following Martin and White (2005), have discussed bare assertions separately, owing to their covert functionality. However, for purposes of clear categorization, bare assertions fit the bill of contractive resources. On this note, a discussion of the overt dialogistic resources follows below.

### 5.3.6 Dialogically Expansive Resources

The two broad overt categories of Engagement are dialogically *expansive* resources and dialogically *contractive* resources. The dialogically expansive resources make allowances for dialogistically alternative positions and voices while their contractive counterparts fend off, or resist dialogistically alternative positions and voices. Therefore, while expansive resources open up the dialogic space, contractive resources close it down. The dialogistically expansive resources are also grouped into two broad categories: *Attribution* resources and *Entertain*



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resources. The dialogistically contractive resources, too, are divided into two broad categories: *Disclaim* and *Proclaim*. These categories are described in more detail below.

#### 5.3.6.1 Attribution

Attribution is concerned with "those formulations which disassociate the proposition from the text's internal authorial voice by attributing it to some external source" (Martin and White, 2005:111). In other words, the proposition is presented as not originating from the speaker/writer. Martin and Rose (2007) refer to Attribution as 'projecting of sources'. Attribution is normally achieved through the grammar of directly and indirectly reported speech and thought. Reporting verbs are mainly used in this case. An example is *He said he won the elections*. Reporting verbs can also be nominalized: *It is alleged that he stole the money* becomes *There is an allegation that he stole the money*. As can be seen from the examples, the externalized propositions are given as 'being some of the alternatives' (as opposed to 'being the only or absolute entities').

There are two categories of Attribution: *Acknowledge* and D*istance*. This study proposes that when Acknowledging, the speaker rather 'plainly' attributes the proposition to an outside source, with such above-mentioned reporting verbs as *state* and *declare*. When Distancing, the speaker expresses an element of doubt in the already externalized proposition. The commonly used reported verb here is *claim*. However, as Martin and White (2005) offer, we should also be on the lookout for words which may indicate the attitudinal stance of the speaker: whether they support or reject the value position at hand. An example is *What a compelling argument from the Mayor!* Here, the speaker already appears to be 'convinced' by the mayor. Another example is when a speaker decides to quote a high status source: *Obama said he would support the motion*. Here, there seems to be an attempt to 'constrain' the listener. In other words, Obama is supposed to be a 'highly regarded' individual, not to be easily thought of as a liar.

Interestingly, Attribution may also include or work with negative polarity. Normally, negative polarity is contractive in function; by dismissing a particular value position, the speaker already makes reference to it. Now, when this speaker is attributed to by another speaker, we would have such a negative statement: *He reportedly rejected the idea*. A speaker can also combine modality and negative polarity to show Attribution. This is especially so when the modal expressions used indicate compulsion or obligation. Thus, an external force (meant to constrain the listener or reader) is implicitly attributed to. This way, we can say that propositions 'fade



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into' proposals, at least pragmatically. An example is *Students must not smoke in the school compound* (perhaps, failure to which they will be liable to punishment).

#### 5.3.6.2 Entertain

From the term E*ntertain* itself, we get the idea that this category is more liberal or accommodating to alternative value positions than its *Attribution* counterpart. Martin and White (2005:104) describe Entertain as "those wordings by which the authorial voice indicates that its position is but one of a number of possible positions and thereby, to greater or lesser degrees, makes dialogic space for those possibilities." However, as Martin and White (2005) note, the resources of Entertain have traditionally been treated as belonging to *epistemic modality* and *evidentiality*: as dealing with *truth conditions* as opposed to showing dialogicality. Now, for dialogicality, these resources have come to be categorized as modals of probability. They are modal auxiliaries (like *can* and *must*), modal adjuncts (like *perhaps* and *definitely*), modal attributes (like *it is possible that…*), circumstances (like *in my view*) and mental process/attribute projections (like *I believe that* and *I am convinced that*). As can be seen from the examples above, Entertain resources are basically internalized: the value position is given as coming from the speaker themselves. This is still the case even in situations whereby the speaker Entertains implicitly (when the speaker does not make reference to themselves). An example of this is *It is likely to rain today*.

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Pseudo questions, also traditionally belonging to epistemic judgement, can also be used for Entertaining purposes. This is, as Martin and White (2005) state, especially so for the expository questions, which are (more) open-ended (than rhetorical questions). While rhetorical questions have the addressee expected to supply a particular (and, thus, obvious) answer, the essence of expository questions is to provoke the addressees into reflections, thus eliciting varying thoughts and responses. A discussion of dialogically contractive resources follows.

### 5.3.7 Dialogically Contractive Resources

As already mentioned, speakers use these resources to discourage opposing viewpoints, restricting interlocutors to their (speakers') ways of viewing things. To quote Martin and White (2005:117): "These are meanings which, even while they construe a dialogic backdrop for the text of other voices and other value positions, are directed towards excluding certain dialogic alternatives from any subsequent communicative interaction or at least towards constraining the scope of these alternatives in the colloquy as it henceforth unfolds." These contractive



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resources are also categorized into two: *Disclaim* and *Proclaim*. Disclaim resources work to directly reject or supplant certain dialogic alternatives (or construe them as not applying). On the other hand, Proclaim resources (while not rejecting contrary positions openly), work to confront, challenge, overwhelm or exclude dialogic alternatives by ways of authorial interpolation, emphasis or intervention (Martin and White, 2005). Below, the subtypes of Disclaim are discussed.

#### 5.3.7.1 Disclaim: Deny and Counter

*Deny* (Negation) and *Counter* are the subtypes of Disclaim. As Martin and White (2005) state, Denial or Negation resources, when looked at from the dialogistic or intersubjective perspective, work by bringing alternative 'positive' positions into the dialogue, and then rejecting them. As has already been mentioned, an element of Attribution thus underlies Denial resources; by mentioning the 'positive' positions, the author will have acknowledged them as existing in the colloquy or communicative context. Thus, Negation implicates two voices (as opposed to only the obvious negative). Positive polarity invokes one voice whereas negative polarity invokes two. Martin and White (2005:118) explain: "Thus in these dialogic terms, the negative is not the simple logical opposite of the positive, since the negative necessarily carries with it the positive, while the positive does not reciprocally carry the negative, or at least not typically."

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Counter resources work to directly reject value positions which are (or were) expected, judging from the flow of events; here, the speaker stands by contradictory propositions. Martin and White (2005) describe these propositions as 'adversative' for they express counter-expectation. Normally, conjunctions, continuatives and connectives, as well as comment adjuncts or adverbials are used to signal this counter-expectancy. An example is *I attended the party. Only that I did not eat*. Below, the subtype of Proclaim is discussed.

#### 5.3.7.2 Proclaim: Concur, Endorse and Pronounce

As has already been mentioned, Proclaim resources do not directly overrule contrary viewpoints. Rather, they limit the scope of dialogic alternatives in an ongoing colloquy. Here, speakers can use various forms of interpolation, emphasis or intervention. There are three subtypes of Proclaim, as will be discussed below: *Concur*, *Endorse* and *Pronounce*.



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*Concur*

"The category of 'concur' involves formulations which overtly announce the addresser as agreeing with, or having the same knowledge as, some projected dialogic partner" (Martin and White, 2005:122). Perhaps put more simply, the proposition is construed as common sense or common knowledge for both the speaker and the addressee. Therefore, when Concurring, the speaker gives the proposition as something the addressee should have already known. By so doing, the former expresses their reluctance to accept 'dissident' viewpoints. Such can be used as resources for Concurring: *of course*, *naturally*, *not surprisingly* and *admittedly*.

Martin and White (2005), however, state that there are two ways to Concur, which more delicate analyses could identify: *Affirming Concurrence* and *Conceding Concurrence*. Normally, when Affirming Concurrence, the speaker presents (a) viewpoint(s) as also (worth being) known, shared or accepted by the addressee. An example is *It is natural for the citizens to behave as voting automatons for their ethnic messiahs*. However, with Conceding Concurrence, the speaker gives two (or more) contrasting propositions, (at least) one of which the addressee accepts and the other which they are averse to. Martin and White (2005:124) explain how and why the speaker swings between this 'rhetorical pair': "the authorial voice first presents itself as agreeing with the construed reader with respect to a proposition, only to step back, so to speak, and to indicate a rejection of what are presented as the natural assumptions arising from that initial proposition." The 'tactful' speaker first concedes (agrees with their interlocutor or dialogic opponent) for the sake of solidarity, and then, afterwards, counters (disagrees) to bring up their primary argumentative position. We can also say that, here, the speaker hopes that their concession will 'stand them in good stead' when they come to disagree with their interlocutors; they endeavour to win over their interlocutors by asking of their empathy (concession) in return.

*Endorse*

Martin and White (2005:126) refer to Endorsement as "those formulations by which propositions sourced to external sources are construed by the authorial voice as correct, valid, undeniable or otherwise maximally warrantable. This construal is achieved indirectly by the use of verbal processes (or their nominalised equivalents) which portray certain acts of semiosis as providing the grounds for the speaker/writer to presuppose this warrantability." The verbs (or nominalisations) used here normally embody 'factivity': examples of which are *show*, *prove (proof)*, *demonstrate (demonstration)*, *find* and *point out*. While Endorsements and Attributions



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have in common the grammar of reported speech (and Endorsements are generally Attributions), the latter are expansive in nature, working to disassociate the authorial voice from the proposition and effectively setting up an accommodating stance towards alternative viewpoints. On the other hand, Endorsements are not mere attributions; the speaker indicates their alignment with their source (the external speaker) by investing in and taking some responsibility for the proposition. As Martin and White (2005:127) explain, "…crucially it is the inner authorial voice which does the rhetorical heavy lifting, so to speak, intervening in the meaning making to construe the proposition as 'proven', 'shown', 'demonstrated' and so on." Thus, by so doing, the speaker sort of endeavours to constrain the addressee to accept the proposition and, thus, join a consensual multiple subjectivity.

*Pronounce*

With Pronouncement resources, the speaker expresses their emphases, explicit interventions or interpolations. This is with a view to assert or insist upon the value or warrantability of the proposition at hand. Such resources used to Pronounce include *I contend, The fact of the matter is, We can (only) conclude that*, *Really* and *Indeed*. Martin and White (2005) add that, in spoken speech, Pronounce can be shown by appropriately placed stress. In written speech, this stress can be indicated by use of CAPITAL LETTERS. "Such insistings or emphasisings imply the presence of some resistance, some contrary pressure of doubt or challenge against which the authorial voice asserts itself" (Martin and White, 2005:128).

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### 5.3.8 Neutral resources

While there are mostly two divides (expansive and contractive) in a dialogistic interaction, we should not forget that there is also a neutral alignment. Martin and White (2005) have acknowledged the existence of neutral resources, though they have not discussed them at length; this is perhaps owing to the rather constrained nature of neutral markers. Following the discussion of their dialogistic counterparts above, this study suggests that neutral resources could as well have a few overt markers. The main example here could be *I am neutral*. However, like their counterparts again, neutral resources may be indexed by dint of 'invocation' or ideational constructions, examples of which may be *I do not take any side* or even *Both arguments make sense to me*. Since we usually 'take sides' in spontaneous or 'free' kinds of verbal interactions, this study suggests that neutral interlocutors could easily be accused of 'vacillation' or 'indecisiveness' or even, worse still, 'dormancy'. Some interlocutors, however, could still play the role of 'mediators'. This brings us to such structured



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discussions as interviews and panel discussions, where the facilitator is expected to be 'neutral'. At the risk of revealing the findings of data analysis here, silence – which has been described as a 'discursive strategy' doing dialogistic work – can also signal neutrality. In any case, it is worth pointing out that (some) interlocutors do not just or always 'blurt' out their value positions. By keeping silent or employing other neutral means, such interlocutors could actually be applying some *diplomacy* (Goffman, 1967) when engaging with others. On this note, the notion of Face-work is previewed below.

### 5.4 Face-work

Face-work is the last of the three main theoretical frameworks used for the analysis of the data of this study. As a way of restating, in this study, the notion of Face-work has been used to supplement and complement that of Engagement. The notion of Face-work is attributed to Goffman (1967) and also related and central to Brown and Levinson's (1987) notion of politeness. Therefore, here, the above-mentioned scholars will be largely drawn on, along with such others as Lakoff (1973b), Grice (1975), Migge and Muhleisen (2005) and Youssef (2005).

The notion of Face-work is important to this research project since the participants engage in a political discussion, which would, in the abstract, necessarily pit some interlocutors against others. The main reason for this is that the participants are drawn from different ethnic communities. As has already been explained, Kenya is a country which has been fragmented and polarised along ethnic lines. Such phenomena as general elections, one of which informs their discussions, have always generally set Kenyans against each other on account of ethnic affiliation. Normally, and, generally, the electorate (including the informants of this study) take political sides which also correspond with their ethnic membership. That is why this study deems it interesting to examine if, how and to which extent participants pay attention to their opponents' *faces* in a political discussion in which depreciating or unflattering stuff would potentially be said about ethnic and political 'opponents'.

Below, Goffman (1967:5) defines face:

> The term *face* may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes-albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself.



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Brown and Levinson (1987:61, in Migge and Muhleisen 2005:7) highlight the dynamic and delicate nature of face. According to them, face is:

> The public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself and it is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in an interaction.

Naturally, each of us, in whatever we do, wants to have a good image of ourselves. In other words, when we (or others) do or say things which present us in a negative light, then, inevitably, we feel rather bad. However, when positive things come from us, or are directed at us, we feel good. Usually, our feelings are attached to the images we give about ourselves to others or the images which others give to us in our everyday interactions. Goffman (1967:6-7) expounds:

> A person may be said to *have*, or *be in*, or *maintain* face when the line he effectively takes presents an image of him that is internally consistent, that is supported by judgments and evidence conveyed by other participants, and that is confirmed by evidence conveyed through impersonal agencies in the situation.

The *line* that a participant takes is, in Goffman's (1967:5) words, "a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself". He or she can be said to be in *bad face* or *out of it* when something which questions or compromises his or her social worth happens.

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It is obvious, therefore, that Face-work tends to prevail when two or more people interact. This is because we have the propensity to evaluate ourselves more thoroughly when in others' company than when we are alone. Besides, Face-work is mutual. First, an interlocutor may be responsible for *saving* or *threatening* another's face. Second, we tend (though not always) to sense if our fellow participants are *in face* or *out of it* at a(ny) given time in our interactions.

"Each person, sub-culture, and society", as Goffman (1967:13) points out, "seems to have its [sic] own characteristic repertoire of face-saving practices." In the same way, even though the participants in this research project come from different ethnic and political backgrounds, they are expected to come into the colloquy already equipped with some adroitness of Face-work. It is, therefore, interesting to explore how the informants of this study go about the discussion of politics in the wake of an ethnically polarised country. It is also interesting that there are two different chat groups for this study: a closed chat group and an open chat group. The



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participants in the closed group, 'Campus Group', already enjoy an off-line relationship; to say the least, they have been colleagues at college for four years. On the other hand, those in the open chat group, 'Baraza La Wananchi' (a Kiswahili equivalent of 'The Agora of the Citizens'), do not necessarily know each other outside of the chat group. However, this study does not rule out the possibility that some members may already know each other. Be that as it may, the study is curious to examine if, how and to what extent being on a closed chat group or an open chat group determines the performance of Face-work among the participants.

The notion of *face* is also central to the theory of *politeness*, as commonly associated with Brown and Levinson (1987). In giving an insight into the origins of politeness, Migge and Muhleisen (2005) invoke the work of earlier scholars, such as, Austin (1962), Searle (1970, 1972), Lakoff (1973b) and Leech 1983). In Migge and Muhleisen's (2005:8) words:

> Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1970, 1972) speech act theory as well as Grice's work on conversational implicatures provided the first theoretical ground for the exploration of linguistic politeness in the 1960s and '70s. Some of the early models of politeness were thus expansions of Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP) (Lakoff 1973b), or took CP as a starting point for a model of general pragmatics (Leech 1983) which would then include a Politeness Principle (PP) with six or more maxims (Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement and Sympathy).

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As Youssef (2005) notes, Grice's (1975) original four maxims, which guaranteed communicative or conversational fluency were *quantity, quality, clarity* and *relevance*. These four maxims are "required in any given situation" (Youssef, 2005:228). However, as Youssef (2005:228) points out, Grice (1975) also "acknowledged possible additional maxims of an aesthetic, social or moral nature such as 'be polite'". In the same vein, Lakoff (1973) had earlier on "envisaged underlying rules of pragmatic competence" as distinctively 'being clear' and 'being polite', but put a higher premium on 'being polite', which she described "as more significant to humankind" (Youssef, 2005:229).

Brown and Levinson (1987) describe *face* as consisting of two specific kinds of desires or *face wants*, as attributed by interactants to one another: *negative face* and *positive face*. Negative face generally entails the 'desire for autonomy' or the 'desire to not be imposed on'. On the other hand, positive face concerns the 'desire to connect and belong with others' or the 'desire to be liked, appreciated or approved of' (Youssef, 2005).



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As has already been pointed out, *face* and Face-work are dynamic and even delicate. Thus, to perform Face-work, we are not only required to possess the sufficient nous and awareness. We are also required to constantly modify our *acts* or *lines*, both prescriptively and proscriptively (Goffman, 1967). Goffman (1967:13) puts it aptly:

> If a person is to employ his repertoire of face-saving practices, obviously he must become aware of the interpretations that others may have placed upon his acts and the interpretations that he ought perhaps to place upon theirs. In other words, he must exercise perceptiveness.

However, as will be discussed in the data analysis chapters, having this perceptiveness or special skill does not always translate into the inclination to use them. At this point, it is worth mentioning two more easily discernible elements of Face-work: 'Face Threatening Acts' (FTAs) and their corresponding 'Redressive Actions' (RAs) or 'Politeness Strategies' (PS). Johnstone (2008) describes an FTA as a verbal act which has the potential to threaten the addressee's positive or negative face. As Youssef (2005) states, the most common speech acts carry face-threatening aspects. For instance, directives or requests can restrict an individual's claim to freedom of action and freedom of imposition, thus effectively being negative FTAs (Migge and Muhleisen, 2005). On the other hand, insults or criticisms may violate an individual's desire to be appreciated or approved of, thus functioning as positive FTAs. However, as Youssef (2005:230) reminds us, FTAs are not merely one-dimensional; they can also be 'double-edged'. In his words:

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> Requests threaten the negative face of the hearer, but if the hearer refuses, the positive face of the requester is affected; apologies demand a loss of positive face of the speaker but also threaten the hearer's negative face by demanding that he/she become involved in an exonerating response; compliments support the hearer's positive face but also have potential for negative face constraints; disagreements threaten the positive face of both hearer and speaker. (Youssef 2005:230)

On the other hand, redressive actions seek to mitigate, minimize or compensate for the FTAs (Goffman, 1967; Migge and Muhleisen, 2005). The following are the main types of redressive actions: *claiming common ground*, *noticing and attending to the hearer's interests*, *using in-group identity markers to enhance positive face*, *indirectness*, *apologies* and *impersonalizations* (Migge and Muhleisen, 2005) and *explanations* (Goffman, 1967).



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To conclude, the model of politeness, as put forth by Brown and Levinson (1987), is very useful for the explanation of Face-work and its dynamics. However, like many other theories, the model has been criticized. For instance, Johnstone (2008) argues that research on interactions in an Asian context suggests that Brown and Levinson's (1987) notion of negative face, or the desire to be unimpeded, was better adapted to Euro-American social reality.

Johnstone's (2008) contention, therefore, is that the notion of negative face may only be relevant in societies where a high premium is placed on the individual and in which people are regarded as relatively autonomous. Thus, as Johnstone (2008) implies, in supposedly more 'collective' societies, such as Asians', what spurs social interaction is the concern for the group's interests, rather than the individual's. For this reason, the notion of negative face may not apply to such 'collective' societies. However, I argue that the notion of collectivist vis-à-vis individualistic societies is neither clear-cut nor unproblematic. Again, as has been explained above, it is not easy for each societal member to be a 'cultural automaton'. To say this in another way, it cannot be that there is a single society where every member has the same experiences, same behaviour, same understanding of those experiences, and the same linguistic resources with which they are able to say and make sense of the same things. To speak about my positioning as an African, for instance, I have always been aware of such perceptiveness and all that pertains to Face-work and politeness. In addition, the different terms used in different African languages will easily be pragmatic equivalents of such English terms as 'Face-work', 'perceptiveness' and 'politeness'. As a corollary of this, I contend that the theory of politeness remains a useful analytical tool even in contexts which are not typically 'western'.

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### 5.5 Summary

This chapter reviewed the three theoretical frameworks used for this study: CDA, Engagement and Face-work. CDA, with an interest in power relations and struggles, as mediated in discourse, is the overarching framework for the study. Therefore, with CDA, this study seeks to investigate how the study's informants play out these power relations in their verbal interactions. The system of Engagement, as constituting dialogistic resources, is the most immediate model for the analysis of the data used for this study. In other words, the system of Engagement is supposed to pick the important textual features and, in turn, map them onto the macro system of power relations. However, as will be shown in the first data analysis chapters, the Engagement framework, as pioneered by Martin and White (2005), does not account for all the nuances of the data of this study. It is for this reason, therefore, that this study teased out a



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few other ‘discursive strategies’, which also functioned dialogistically. Lastly, as has been mentioned above, the notions of Face-work and politeness are also important for the analysis of the data because they are necessary accompaniments to the system of Engagement. As Goffman (1967:13) points out, “members of every social circle may be expected to have” some “tact, *savoir-faire*, diplomacy, or social skill”. That is why it is important for this study to investigate if, how and to what extent the study’s informants put their perceptiveness to work while expanding or contracting the dialogic space, or even while being neutral, in their discussions of politics, also especially as members of particular ethnic groups in a country which is a hotbed of ethnic mobilisation, fragmentation and polarisation.

Next follows Chapter 6: Research Methodology, in which the main research approach, as subsuming different paradigms, and the particular research design are presented.

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# CHAPTER 6

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology and design for this study. It begins by delineating the two broad areas of research. Thereafter, it zeroes in on the specific area to which this study belongs. An overview of the different paradigms in this research area will then be given. The sampling process undertaken will also be described. This will then be followed by a discussion of the collection of data, its transcription, and, finally, its analysis.

Traditionally, or, generally, research has been viewed from two angles: *quantitative research* and *qualitative research*. However, as will be shown below, some researchers have argued that contemporary research is better understood as belonging to particular paradigms as opposed to merely restricted to the quantitative-qualitative dichotomy. For instance, Higgs and McAllister (2001), Higgs (2001) and Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) have proposed that we should not be preoccupied with choosing between quantitative and qualitative approaches as the two fields can work complementarily. To illustrate, some studies can be triangulated, manifestly or latently. In the latter case, elements of one area constitute the background material to a study that is mainly categorized as belonging to the other area (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). Therefore, by rather foregrounding our specific research paradigms (as researchers), we are able to look beyond this quantitative-qualitative dichotomy. Terre Blanche *et al*. (2006) significantly describe 'paradigms' as those vistas which serve to show us what exists, how to understand it, and how to study it:

> Paradigms are all-encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their enquiry along three dimensions: ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Ontology specifies the nature of reality that is to be studied, and what can be known about it. Epistemology specifies the nature of relationship between the researcher (knower) and what can be known. Methodology specifies how researchers may go about practically studying whatever they believe can be known. (Terre Blanche *et al.* 2006:6)



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### 6.2 Development(s) in research

Before outlining the paradigm(s) used for this study, an overview of the shifts in the field of research, which have also come to shape the design of this project, will be given in this section.

As many a scholar (such as Snape and Spencer, 2003 and Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) have shown, quantitative research has traditionally pioneered and reigned supreme (at the expense of qualitative research). While Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) point to such development as the critical theory in the field of research in the 1920s already, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) observe that it is only in the 1960s when the proponents of qualitative research started to stake their claim and hold their ground against their mainstream quantitative counterparts. "By the 1960s, battle lines were drawn within the quantitative and qualitative camps" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:2). Therefore, as Snape and Spencer (2003) state, qualitative research should be generally appreciated within the wider context of the evolution of social research. As will be shown below, the rise of (the proponents of) qualitative research from the dominion of 'oblivion' or frustration was not an easy one. Reporting in the present tense, Denzin and Lincoln (2005:8) show how the defenders of quantitative research (drawn not only from the academia, but also from the political elite) often criticized and dismissed qualitative research:

> Politicians and "hard" scientists sometimes call qualitative researchers journalists or soft scientists. The work of qualitative scholars is termed unscientific, or only exploratory, or subjective. It is called criticism rather than theory or science, or it is interpreted politically, as a disguised version of Marxism or secular humanism.

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#### 6.2.1 Quantitative research

Quantitative research can be said to be synonymous with two terms in the area of research: *empiricism* and *positivism*. Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000:3) broadly define empiricism as "all research in which 'pure data' or 'uninterpreted facts' are the solid bedrock of research". Positivism, as Terre Blanche *et al*. (2006) state, entails a situation in which the researcher studies an external reality, which is considered stable and unchanging. Therefore, the researcher takes up an objective and detached stance towards that reality "and can employ a methodology that relies on control and manipulation of reality" (Terre Blanche *et al*., 2006:7). By so doing, the researcher endeavours to provide an accurate description of the laws and mechanisms that operate in social life.

Nevertheless, the two systems (empiricism and positivism), despite being traced to natural



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sciences, had long been imposed on social sciences. It is little wonder, therefore, that such notions as 'objectivity' and 'value free' research, which Higgs (2001) backhandedly refers to as 'gold standards of quantitative research', also constituted the prescription for qualitative research. These two notions will be critiqued in section 6.5 below.

### 6.2.2 Qualitative research

An overview of qualitative research, to which this study belongs, will be given in this section. This will include the paradigms within the qualitative field. The specific paradigmatic choice of this study will then follow. Afterwards, the reaction towards criticism or concerns from the 'quantitative defenders' will be given. The quantitative notions or 'prescriptive traps' (Higgs, 2001), as set by such ardent defenders of the quantitative research, will be zeroed in on. In addition, the term 'rigour' as 'hijacked' by the quantitative proponents, will also be discussed.

First of all, and drawing on other scholars, it would be prudent to state that "(h)ow qualitative method should be defined is by no means self-evident" (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000:3), and that "providing a precise definition of qualitative research is no mean feat" (Snape and Spencer, 2003:2). That is why, here, definitions and descriptions by different scholars have been given. The different ways in which scholars have construed qualitative research help highlight its different dimensions; it is diverse in both concept and practice. For instance, Higgs (2001:46), broadly speaking, points out that the term or notion *qualitative research* "has been used more as a rallying point for people who are willing to look beyond the dominant quantitative/experimental research paradigm or who find the restrictions of this powerful research system too great". In admitting that her simple definition of qualitative research as "research which relies on qualitative (non-mathematical) judgements" is neither straightforward nor providing for the diversity and depth that inheres in the qualitative field, Higgs (2001:46) suggests that perhaps a multi-pronged definition would do. According to Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000:3), "(t)he distinction between standardization and non-standardization as the dividing-line between quantitative and qualitative methods" can be helpful. Explaining its non-standardization nature, Higgs and McAllister (2001) argue that qualitative research allows for creativity and flexibility which the unpredictability of dealing with the people being studied (for their actions and interpretations) in their naturalistic environment requires.

In the same vein, this study quotes Berg (2001), whose conception of 'qualitative' is the 'essence' or 'ambience' of a thing, as entering into the perception of a person or people. Further



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drawing on Dabbs (1982), Berg (2001:2-3) elucidates:

> In his attempt to differentiate between quantitative and qualitative approaches, Dabbs (1982:32) indicates that the notion of 'quality' is essential to the nature of things. On the other hand, 'quantity' is elementally an amount of something. Quality refers to the what, how, when, and where of a thing – its essence and ambience. Qualitative research thus refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things. In contrast, quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things.

Observing that "there is fairly wide consensus that qualitative research is a naturalistic, interpretative approach concerned with the understanding the meanings which people attach to phenomena (actions, decisions, beliefs, values etc.) within their social worlds", Snape and Spencer (2003:3) conclude that we had better consider the 'generic' and 'all-encompassing' working definition as given by Denzin and Lincoln (2005:3):

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

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The argument this study makes is that a qualitative researcher is necessarily eclectic. This is owing to the fact that qualitative research constitutes a number of approaches and methods, also from various disciplines. Thus, to use Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) words, qualitative researchers are easily *bricoleurs*. This exposition of qualitative research as 'bricolage' will be given below, but after an outline of the eight historical moments in the field and an overview of its main paradigms.

### 6.2.3 The eight historical moments in qualitative research

To further explain the diversity and depth of qualitative research, which also correspond with its development, growth and revolution, a summary of the eight historical moments within the field is given below, as drawn from Denzin and Lincoln (2005).



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The first moment is called *The Traditional Period*, from 1900 to 1950. Due to its colonial association, this period has also been referred to as the *classical ethnography*: colonial ethnographers researched on the dark-skinned 'Other', an alien, foreign and strange person. This period was largely characterized by a commitment to objectivism, imperialism, monumentalism (whereby the culture studied would be displayed) and timelessness (the findings stayed the same). The second moment is called *The Modernist Period*, from 1950 to 1970. This period stood out for its insistence on 'rigour'. "For example, participant observation was combined with open-ended and quasi-structured interviewing, and then the materials obtained from these methods would be subjected to careful, standardized and statistical analysis" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:16). The third moment is called *The Blurred Genres Period*, from 1970 to 1986. Here, more pluralistic, interpretive and open-ended perspectives concerning human disciplines were quickly replacing old functional, positivist and totalizing ones. There was also a proliferation of theories (including symbolic interactionism, constructionism, naturalistic inquiry, phenomenology, critical theory, feminism and racial and ethnic paradigms). Researchers also started to work eclectically (doing a bricolage), learning to borrow models, theories and methods of analysis from other disciplines.

The fourth moment is called *The Crisis of Representation Period*, from 1986 to 1990. The highlight of this period is that research became more reflexive; qualitative researchers grew more critical of their role as producers of text as well as that played by their co-producers of knowledge (their informants). Writers increasingly challenged older models of truth and meaning while holding out to pattern and interpretive theories. The fifth moment is called *The Postmodern Period*, from 1990 to 1995. This period was marked by observers' shedding of their aloofness. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005:20) state, "More action, participatory, and activist-oriented research was on the horizon. The search for grand narratives was being replaced by more local, small-scale theories fitted to specific problems and specific situations." The sixth moment is called *The Postexperimental Inquiry Period*, from 1995 to 2000. What stood out during this period is its concern for literary and rhetorical tropes. Qualitative researchers experimented with "novel forms of expressing lived experience, including literary, poetic, autobiographical, multivoiced, conversational, critical, visual, performative and constructed representations" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:20).

The seventh moment is called *The Methodologically Contested Present*, from 2000 to 2004. Worth mentioning here is that the term 'Present' corresponds with the time the authors Denzin and Lincoln wrote and edited their book 'The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, 3rd



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Edition (2005)'. Predicated on the successes of the ventures of the fifth and sixth (*Postmodern and Postexperimental*) periods, the seventh period, as the name suggests, was characterized by attendant conflict and tension, with regard to the methodologies used in the field. Finally, the eighth period, which this study considers futuristic, is called *The Fractured Future*, as from 2005. This moment is concerned with moral discourse: it "asks that the social sciences and the humanities become sites for critical conversations about democracy, race, gender, class, nation states, globalization, freedom and community" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:3).

It is important to note, as has already been stated above, that the extent to which the genealogy of qualitative research has been translated into the eight historical moments is the extent to which each of them still speaks to qualitative research that we theorize about and practise today. Denzin and Lincoln (2005:3) account for this: "These moments overlap and simultaneously operate in the present". In other words, each attribute which made each moment distinct from the others still contributes to the overall nature of qualitative research today. Each attribute, therefore, is a brick that constitutes the edifice that is qualitative research today.

### 6.3 The main paradigms of qualitative research

Below, drawing mainly on Snape and Spencer (2003), I give an overview of the main paradigms (approaches or traditions) of qualitative research, their disciplinary origins as well as their aims. These main qualitative research paradigms are *ethnography, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, discourse analysis, symbolic interactionism, grounded theory, ethogenics, constructivism,* and *critical theory*. As will be confirmed, these research paradigms somehow or roughly correspond with the eight historical moments in the qualitative research, as outlined by Denzin and Lincoln (2005)

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#### 6.3.1 Ethnography

Ethnography is arguably the earliest qualitative research paradigm. It has its roots in Anthropology and Sociology. Ethnographic researchers immerse themselves in the communities of the people whose social world they seek to understand. These researchers typically give a detailed description of their informants, their cultural beliefs and practices. However, as Foley and Valenzuela (2005) have pointed out, ethnography is traditionally conceived of as being largely academic and structurally functionalist in nature, whereby the researcher is a lionized expert providing positivistic 'objective' and 'value free' knowledge about their subjects. As already mentioned, this school of thought is reminiscent of colonial tendencies which terminated in controlling the foreign, deviant or troublesome dark-skinned



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'Other' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Be that as it may, ethnography has now become a continuum thanks to such revolutionary researchers as critical theorists, versions of 'critical ethnographers'.

### 6.3.2 Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology

Snape and Spencer (2003) have treated both phenomenology and ethnomethodology as similar or co-paradigms. Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) point out that ethnomethodology is a direct heir of phenomenology. This study adds that phenomenology is more of a 'philosophical' concept while ethnomethodology is more of a 'procedural' strategy. Snape and Spencer (2003:12) conceive of phenomenology as being interested in "the 'constructs' people use in everyday life to make sense of their world." Snape and Spencer (2003) explain that, here, the main thing is the 'commonness of phenomena' to a group of people. They use the term 'universals' for these shared phenomena (which can also be understood as 'signifiers'), as embedded in the objects or the sensuous-concrete ('signifieds'). According to Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000), ethnomethodologists aim to spotlight social conventions, implicit rules and background expectations that govern our social practices and interactions. Thus, both phenomenology and ethnomethodology have an interest in shared meanings as understood explicitly or even implicitly in many kinds of behaviours (such as in texts and conversations). That is why, as Snape and Spencer (2003) state, both (especially ethnomethodology) lead(s) to conversation analysis and discourse analysis.

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### 6.3.3 Conversation analysis and Discourse analysis

Both conversation analysis and discourse analysis are interested in talk or transcripts. They are used to analyse talk as a "socially organised action that creates and maintains intersubjective reality" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:648). To distinguish the two, conversation analysis seems to be a more mechanical analysis of a text (this explains its linguistic roots); it is about identifying certain types of segments that appear in all conversations, regardless of the content or nature. An example of this is the expectation that conversations are often in three parts, introduction, main body and conclusion. Patterns are also of interest; for example, in doctor-patient and police officer-witness accounts, it is the doctor and police officer who dominate their patients and witnesses, respectively (this explains its Sociology origins). Discourse Analysis, on the other hand, is more 'abstract'. Here, ways of speaking are looked at as historically and culturally enabled as systems of knowledge that have come to construct us and our realities. Though discourse analysis is traced to Sociology, Snape and Spencer (2003) point



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out that linguistic styles and rhetorical devices are crucial to it. Foucault (1972:48-49, in Holstein and Gubrium, 2005:490) explains that discourses are not "a mere intersection of things and words: an obscure web of things, and a manifest, visible, colored chain of words." Rather, they are "practices that systematically form the objects (and subjects) of which they speak."

### 6.3.4 Protocol analysis

With Protocol Analysis, as attributed to Psychology, researchers examine and draw "inference about the cognitive processes that underlie the performance of tasks" (Snape and Spencer, 2003:12).

### 6.3.5. Symbolic interactionism

Snape and Spencer (2003:12) simply describe symbolic interactionism as concerned with "(e)xploring behaviour and social roles to understand how people interpret and react to their environment." Below, Blumer (1969), the founder of the term, explains:

> It does not regard meaning as emanating from the intrinsic makeup of the thing that has meaning, nor does it see meaning as arising through a coalescence of psychological elements in the person. Instead, it sees meaning as arising in the process of interaction between people. The meaning of a thing for a person grows out of the ways in which other persons act toward the person with regard to the thing. Their actions operate to define the thing for the person. Thus symbolic interactionism sees meanings as social products, as creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they interact. (Blumer, 1969:4-5)

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Be that as it may, Blumer (1969) cautions against taking symbolic interactionism to imply that particular communities (for instance speech communities) always have the same meanings of things. He argues that individuals within these communities can still have unique meanings of the same things: "While the meaning of things is formed in the context of social interaction and is derived by the person from that interaction, it is a mistake to think that the use of meaning by a person is but an application of the meaning so derived" (Blumer, 1969:5). Here, Blumer (1969) foregrounds an individual as a unique interpretative actor. The individual interacts and communicates with himself (as opposed to letting an interplay of psychological elements take over); interpretation, therefore, becomes a matter of handling meanings.



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### 6.3.6 Grounded theory

According to Snape and Spencer (2003:12), symbolic interactionism is a root to grounded theory, which they generally describe as an approach that involves "developing 'emergent' theories of social action through the identification of analytical categories and the relationships between them." Charmaz (2005), herself a Grounded theorist, states that grounded theory involves collecting data and analysing it simultaneously. This way, each (both the data collected and its analysis) informs and focuses the other. This early analysis of data, as Charmaz (2005) points out, helps determine further data collection, consequently refining emerging analyses: thus making grounded theory both a method of inquiry and a product of inquiry. Charmaz (2005) argues that grounded theory is particularly important for studies with an interest in social justice (for instance regarding equal or equitable distribution of resources and eradication of oppression).

### 6.3.7 Ethogenics

Ethogenics, an approach traced to Social Psychology, concerns "exploring the underlying structure of behavioural acts by investigating the meaning people attach to them" (Snape and Spencer, 2005:12).

### 6.3.8 Constructivism

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Constructivism, according to Snape and Spencer (2003:12), aims to display "'multiple constructed realities' through the shared investigation (by researchers and participants) of meanings and explanations." In other words, as Denzin and Lincoln (2005:184) explain, it "adopts a relativist ontology (relativism), a transactional epistemology, and a hermeneutic, dialectical methodology." Denzin and Lincoln (2005) add that this approach encourages experimental and multivoiced texts.

### 6.3.9 Critical theory

First of all, it is important to stress that as much as this study advocates for and takes a multi-pronged paradigmatic approach, it is largely in the fashion of the critical theory. It is also worth mentioning, at this juncture, that, as has been explained in the previous chapter, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which has been used as a theoretical framework for this study, is an offshoot of and has been modelled along the critical theory. In the same way, the critical theory, as a paradigmatic approach for this study, will also be considered here in terms of CDA. Therefore, CDA is used in this study as both a theoretical framework (read section 5.2 in the



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previous chapter) and a paradigmatic approach. For this reason, though at the risk of repeating myself unnecessarily, I will briefly restate that CDA necessitates a critical exploration of the relationship between language (discourse) and the society (social structure) with a view to lay bare instantiations of asymmetrical power relations, which interactants of a text seek to either sustain, perpetuate, reproduce or challenge. To do this, I will quote Alvesson and Skoldberg's (2000) explanation of *critical hermeneutics* below, but after giving Snape and Spencer's (2003) description of the critical theory.

According to Snapes and Spencer (2003:12), the paradigm of critical theory aims to pinpoint "ways in which material conditions (economic, political, gender, ethnic) influence beliefs, behaviour and experiences." However, lending credence to such scholars of CDA as Fairclough (1989) and Wodak and Meyer (2009), this study argues that the relationship between these material conditions and beliefs, behaviour and experiences is two-way: the latter also effect the former. "CDA states that discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned" (Blommaert, 2005:25). Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999:4) explain further: "It is an important characteristic of the economic, social and cultural changes of late modernity that they exist as discourses as well as processes that are taking place outside discourse, and that the processes that are taking place outside discourse are substantively shaped by these discourses."

Lastly, I suggest that CDA, as a research paradigm, relates to or almost 'subsumes' its previous seven counterparts, and has an extra rich ingredient: that of, by virtue of its critical impetus, seeking to understand realized patterns "in terms of negation, on a basis of their own opposite and of the possibility of social conditions of a qualitatively different kind" (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000:110). Thus, in seeking to unveil and crack the society's superficial – yet hard – surface, as constituting Habermas' (1973:176) "pseudo-natural constraints", for a more informed and ameliorated society, CDA is, indeed, emancipatory in function. To conclude, I use Alvesson and Skoldberg's (2000:144) explanation of CDA as *critical hermeneutics*:

> Simple hermeneutics – in social contexts – concerns individuals' interpretations of themselves and their own subjective or intersubjective (cultural) reality, and the meaning they assign to this. Double hermeneutics is what interpretive social scientists are engaged in, when they attempt to understand and develop knowledge about this reality. Social science is thus a matter of interpreting interpretive beings… The triple hermeneutics of critical theory includes the aforementioned double hermeneutics, and a third element as well. This encompasses the critical



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interpretation of unconscious processes, ideologies, power relations, and other expressions of dominance that entail the privileging of certain interests over others, within the forms of understanding which appear to be spontaneously generated. Critical interpretation involves a shift in focus, so that the balance between what appears self-evident, natural and unproblematic on the one hand, and what can be interpreted as the freezing of social life, irrational and changeable on the other, moves in favour of the second, thus enabling it to become the object of further scrutiny.

### 6.4 Qualitative researcher as a bricoleur

As has already been pointed out, qualitative research is not only diverse in its conception, but also in its practice; it is very much open-ended. For this reason, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) advise that there is no single, umbrella-like paradigm that can be thrust upon the whole qualitative project. Snape and Spencer (2003:2) explain that, indeed, qualitative research, by its nature, is an "overarching category, covering a wide range of approaches and methods found within different research disciplines." The aforementioned scholars explain further:

> How researchers carry it (qualitative research) depends upon a range of factors including: their beliefs about the nature of the social world and what can be known about it (ontology), the nature of knowledge and how it can be acquired (epistemology), the purpose(s) and goals of the research, the characteristics of the research participants, the audience for the research, the funders of the research, and the position and environment of the researchers themselves. (Snape and Spencer, 2003:1)

For the different approaches, methods, empirical materials, models, perspectives and theories available (some intertwined and even overlapping) within the field of qualitative research, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) significantly observe that the contemporary qualitative researcher is easily a *bricoleur*. They give an exposition below:

> The *bricoleur* is a "jack of all trades, a kind of professional do-it-yourself" (Levi-Strauss, 1966, p. 17)… The qualitative researcher as *bricoleur*, or maker of quilts, uses the aesthetic and material tools of his or her craft, deploying whatever strategies, methods, and empirical materials are at hand (Becker, 1998, p. 2). If the researcher needs to invent, or piece together, new tools or techniques, he or she will do so. Choices regarding which interpretive practices to employ are not



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> necessarily made in advance. As Nelson *et al.* (1992) note, the "choice of research practices depends on their context" (p. 2), what is available in the context, and what the researcher can do in that setting. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:4)

What is more, as Denzin and Lincoln (2005) offer, there are many kinds of bricoleurs: theoretical, interpretive, critical, narrative, methodological and political. A theoretical briocoleur reads widely to gain knowledge and an understanding of the many (sometimes competing and overlapping) interpretive paradigms, enabling them to work between and within them. An interpretive bricoleur, therefore, assembles a set of representations (bricolage) that they can bring to bear on (the specifics of) a complex situation. "The interpretive bricoleur understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her own personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity, and by those of the people in the setting." (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:6). A critical bricoleur appreciates and acknowledges the importance of interdisciplinary inquiry (dialectical and hermeneutic in nature); after all, the disciplines (that define the areas) of research are very much interdependent or symbiotic.

A narrative bricoleur shows how the story they tell mirrors not only the world they have studied, but also the ethos they espouse, for instance, as constructivists or feminists. A methodological bricoleur, on top of being able to collect data differently (for instance through interviews, focus groups and document analysis), also engages in intensive self-reflection and introspection. Lastly, a political bricoleur is awake to the fact that their scientific findings can have political implications. Political bricoleurs do not entertain the notion that (social) science is objective, neutral or value-free. They necessarily have a political stand, of which they are aware, and are not scared to let known. Normally, as Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000), Foley and Valenzuela (2005) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state, political bricoleurs espouse moral standpoints.

This brings this study to a point where the researcher has got to state their case. First, drawing on Denzin and Lincoln (2005), it is important to state that, I, as the researcher, am easily many types of bricoleurs at the same time. For instance, in my overview of the literature on ethnicity, I, as a theoretical bricoleur, have pleaded guilty of 'double-think', indicating that both primordialism and constructionism hold sway, but not losing focus on the complex situation at hand: ethnic mobilisation in Kenyan politics. As a critical bricoleur, I take cognizance of the fact that the interdisciplinarity or cross-disciplinarity of this study is quite enriching. As should be self-evident, this study has straddled many disciplines, among them politics, anthropology,



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sociology, psychology, media, CDA and Linguistics. In the same way, I have used CDA, Engagement and Face-work theories (which cannot be confined to Linguistics) as frameworks to analyse my data. As an interpretive bricoleur, I confess my situationality as a male scholar from the Gusii (Kisii) ethnic community, whose social and economic background is fairly modest, but whose political leaning in the Kenyan ecology is leftist, with a yearning for much needed political change. This already makes me a political bricoleur, who also understands that politics is inextricably intertwined with other spheres of human life. In the same vein, it is worth stating, here, that this study is against the backdrop of political conjunctures in and discussions about Kenya. As has been discussed in the analysis of data, ethnic mobilisation in Kenyan politics is sure to touch on such issues as 'undue power imbalances' and 'struggles': this being the reason why I lean more towards the approach of CDA or the critical theory.

On this note, I move to the next subsection, in which I vouch for qualitative research. Thereafter, I will move on to the section of the research design for this study.

### 6.5 Vindicating (critical) qualitative research

As a proponent of the qualitative research, it falls on me to defend it and champion for it. This is especially in light of the criticism that has been levelled against it, especially some of its tenets and practices, by quantitative researchers as well as some qualitative researchers (Alvesson, 2000; Berg, 2001; Carmody, 2001; Higgs and McAllister, 2001; Higgs, 2001; Snape and Spencer, 2003; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). My vindication of qualitative research may also, in the process, help allay scepticism, cynicism or uncertainty harboured about it from other quarters. To do this, I will mainly pay attention to three tenets or notions: value free (or value neutral) research, objectivity and rigour.

Berg (2001:140) gives a general understanding of 'value free' research or 'value neutral' research: that "social scientists are expected to study the world around them as external investigators. This means neither 'imposing their own views' nor taking any stand on social or political issues." However, drawing on at least the aforementioned scholars, I argue that because of the humanistic, naturalistic and interpretive nature of social research, it will be inimical for a researcher to distance themselves from it or to be its external investigators. It should be difficult for social – especially critical – researchers to maintain "the façade of neutrality" (Berg, 2001:141).

Researchers do not easily decouple their partiality or bias from the research they are partaking in. Carmody (2001) points out that other than taking sides, social researchers are themselves



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ingredients in their research. As has already been mentioned above, social research, being an interactive process, is largely shaped by, among other things, the investigator's biography, social class, language, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and ability (Carmody, 2001; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). By the same token, social research necessitates an intimate relationship with the informants. Researchers cannot adopt such stances as Malinoski's (as in the classical times of ethnography), whereby they were/are lionized as 'knowledge experts'. In fact, as Denzin and Lincoln (2005) offer, postmodernists have even called for an egalitarian relationship between researchers and their informants. Reality is made up of complex layers and fault lines; therefore, by incorporating our informants' different vantage points, we can only yield different and more types of understanding of our world, and, thus, enrich our research (D'Cruz, 2001; Snape and Spencer, 2003; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

Closely related to the tenet of 'value free' science is the notion of 'objectivity'. However, 'objectivity' also evokes an element or feeling of 'accuracy' and the assumption that there can only be one unchanging answer to our problems, which is also sought in a particular way. Thus, objectivity is as formulaic as it is restrictive; it also speaks to the ontological position of *realism*, whereby there is 'some unchanging external reality, free from people's beliefs and understandings of it'. Below, Snape and Spencer (2003), in making reference to earlier scholars (such as Isaac Newton, Francis Bacon, David Hume [1711-76] and Auguste Comte [1798-1857]), show the foundation of this insistence on objectivity – empiricism and positivism – and 'value free' research, tenets which came or have come to be prescribed for or imposed on the social sciences:

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> Knowledge about the world can be acquired through direct observation (induction) rather than deduced from abstract… all knowledge about the world originates in our experiences and is derived through the senses. Evidence based on direct observation and collected in an objective and unbiased way are the key tenets of empirical research... the social world can be studied in terms of invariant laws just like the natural world. (Snape and Spencer, 2003:6)

Such a position clearly laughs off or is oblivious to metaphysical phenomena that abound in the social world and as brought out in social or qualitative research. In response to this, as Snape and Spencer (2003:6-7) show, Immanuel Kant (1781) – in his *Critique of Pure Reason* – explained:



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- perception relates not only to the senses but to human interpretations of what our senses tell us.
- our knowledge of the world is based on 'understanding' which arises from thinking about what happens to us, not just simply from having had particular experiences.
- knowing and knowledge transcend basic empirical enquiry.
- distinctions exist between 'scientific reason' (based strictly on causal determinism) and 'practical reason' (based on moral freedom and decision-making which involve less certainty).

Kant's elucidation, therefore, exposes and indicts these quantitative notions of 'objectivity' and 'value free' research, questioning their tenability with regard to accounting for social phenomena. Emphasizing that human beings basically make sense of their everyday interactions through social structures, social roles, rituals and language (the common denominator in all these), Berg (2001:7) cautions against quantifiable determinism: "If humans are studied in a symbolically reduced, statistically aggregated fashion, there is a danger that conclusions – although arithmetically precise – may fail to fit reality (Mills, 1959). Qualitative procedures provide a means of accessing unquantifiable facts about the actual people researchers observe and talk to or people represented by their personal traces (such as letters, photographs, newspaper accounts, diaries and so on)."

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Equally dismissing this notion of 'objectivity', Snape and Spencer (2003) point out that (external) reality is itself diverse and multifaceted. As has also been mentioned above already, the multiplicity of perspectives brought into research by investigators and their informants only help to account for this multi-layered reality, thus enriching our outlook of the world. Snape and Spencer (2003:9) conclude: "It is argued that there are no fixed or overarching meanings because meanings are a product of time and place. The researcher cannot produce a definitive account or explanation, and any attempt to do so is a form of tyranny because it suppresses diversity." By the same token, while I admit that the findings of this study cannot be comprehensive or exhaustive of the Kenyan political discourses on ethnicity, they should be left to stand as honest analyses and representations, at least from my perspective and those of the informants.

Generally, 'rigour' refers to the feature of being 'thorough', 'diligent' and 'valid'. Therefore, qualitative researchers, like everyone else, would naturally desire to be described as having done their investigations rigorously. However, unsurprisingly, proponents of quantitative



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research have tended towards unduly 'capturing' or 'hijacking' the notion of rigour. Thus, along with 'value free' research and 'objectivity', rigour has been their other watchword. As Higgs and McAllister (2001) state, these quantitative diehards failed to realize that rigour is involved in qualitative research, leading them to dismiss qualitative research with such names as 'soft science', 'journalism' or 'mere commentary'. That is why Horsfall *et al.* (2001:12) protest that the notion 'rigour', has been unduly associated with positivist research, and that, therefore, we need to "reclaim it; indeed, to liberate it." However, in asserting that qualitative research can be very rigorous, Berg (2001) throws a caveat, pointing to these few things which we need to consider in order to maintain the status quo: *the kind of participants, the information from the participants, the analysis of the data* and *the reporting of the findings*. Higgs and McAllister (2001) add that researchers simply need to report their methods in sufficient detail; a lack of detailed reporting of the method used can easily detract from a good interpretive research.

By the course of nature, it follows that rigour in social research will ultimately lead to 'trustworthiness', which, in turn, consummates a rigorous research. The quality of 'trustworthiness' has already been described in the previous chapter (in section 5.2.4).

To conclude, I describe this study as encompassing the many paradigms of qualitative research, which, to a great extent, are also overlapping. For instance, while this is a CDA study, it also draws on theories of at least Phenomenology, Ethnomethodology, Discourse Analysis, Symbolic Interactionism and Constructivism. As I have also indicated, this study is, to a great extent, multidisciplinary; though essentially a Linguistic study, it also touches on Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Media and Politics. As I have also mentioned, I am a bricoleur of many kinds: theoretical, interpretive, methodological, narrative, critical and political. Denzin and Lincoln (2005:5) best sum up the kind of qualitative research I strive for: "The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to any inquiry." On this note, I move onto the next important section of this chapter: research design.

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### 6.6 Research design

In this section, I discuss the practicalities of carrying out this research: the collection of the data, the participants used for the study, the selection and analysis of the data collected and the ethics issues.



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### 6.6.1. Collection of data

As the research topic of this study required, the kind of data used are those concerning political discussions about Kenya, and with a particular interest in ethnicity and ethnic mobilisation. As will be explained below, under data selection, most of the discussions centred on the 2013 presidential elections, as pitting President Uhuru Kenyatta and the Leader of Official Opposition, Raila Odinga. Some of it also touched on cultural practices and beliefs, stereotypes and prejudices of certain ethnic communities. I have classified the data into two types: as coming from the closed group chats and as coming from the open group chats.

Trochim (2005) states that studies can be described in two main ways with regard to the collection of data: longitudinal research design and cross-sectional research design. A longitudinal study "takes place over time… you measure your research participants on at least two separate occasions or at least two points in time" (Trochim, 2005:5). On the other hand, a cross-sectional study "takes place at a single point in time… taking a slice or cross-section of whatever it is you are observing or measuring" (Trochim, 2005:5). Therefore, I can describe my study as being a hybrid of both longitudinal and cross-sectional designs. First, I collected data from the closed group, which has a few participants, and most of whom are the same, on several separate occasions. Secondly, I collected data from the open group on many separate occasions, but generally from different interactants every time. As will be discussed below, the open group had a lot more participants than its closed counterpart. The period of my data collection spun from the 28th of February, 2013 to the 13th of May, 2014. This was a space of one year and two and a half months. This period was a continuum which included the run up to, during and after the 2013 general and presidential elections.

### 6.6.2 Participants

In this subsection, I will discuss the sampling process used for this study and the detailed description of the participants, including their size and how I have grouped them. I will also discuss the issue of the names of the participants as well as the language/s which they used in their discussions. I will begin by mentioning the following terms, which are important for this study: *sampling*, *non-probability sampling*, *purposive sampling* and *stratified purposive sampling*. I will also discuss these terms accordingly, as I describe the informants of this study. Trochim (2005:16) defines *sampling* as "The process of selecting units (such as people and organisations) from a population of interest so that, by studying the sample, you can fairly generalize your results to the population from which the units were chosen." Sampling implies



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a process of elimination by which, eventually, the researcher will settle on those who will actually take part in the study. As a corollary of this, the term *sample* is used in the general sense. As Trochim (2005:29) states, this particular "group that actually completes your study is a sub-sample of the sample." It is this sub-sample, therefore, that I refer to as the participants or informants of this study.

In *purposive sampling*, the researcher chooses sample units based on their particular features or characteristics which will in turn enable them to explore – in detail – and understand the central themes and puzzles they wish to study (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003). For this reason, purposive sampling has also been referred to as 'criterion based' sampling or 'judgement' sampling. Since my study is interested in investigating how Kenyan individuals construct and manipulate their ethnic discourses in online political discussions, I focused on Facebook political discussions which had an element of ethnicity or ethnic mobilisation. I also made sure, at least from their names, that the participants were drawn from different ethnic communities in the country. In addition, my participants belonged to different political parties. Lastly, *stratified purposive sampling* requires that the units selected "display variation on a particular phenomenon but each of which is fairly homogenous, so that subgroups can be compared" (Ritchie *et al*., 2003:79). This speaks to the characteristics which both differentiate and make similar members of groups chosen for a study. In this regard, and as I will further explain below, the groups are 'hybrid' in nature. To illustrate, both the closed and open chat groups used for this study have members coming from different ethnic communities. Better still, some tribe-mates even clash with regard to the political parties they support. Below follows a more detailed description of the participants.

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The total number of the informants of the study is 124. These informants fall into two categories: the closed Facebook chat group and the open Facebook chat group. The closed chat group goes by the name of 'Campus Group', with eighteen participants out of a membership of 200. Three chats from the closed chat group were eventually selected, as will be discussed below, under the selection and analysis of data. The open chat group goes by the name of 'Baraza La Wananchi' [The Agora of the Citizens], with 106 participants out of a membership of slightly above 2,200. Unlike in the closed chat group, the participants in the clusters of chats in the open group are different. As will also be discussed below, under the selection of data, five chats from the open chat group were eventually selected for close analysis. The closed group, 'Campus Group', is a college cohort, having been admitted to a tertiary institution in the same year. These participants were also colleagues for the four years of their studies in the



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same tertiary institution. As a corollary, these participants know each other offline, and many of them are close with each other. All the participants in the closed group are in the thirties. Thus, they can be described as being the older youth. Here, it is important to note that I, as a participant researcher, belonged to this particular group of informants. The Campus Group informants are also drawn from the six out of the seven dominant ethnic communities in the country: Kikuyu, Luhya, Kalenjin, Luo, Kisii and Meru. As has also been mentioned above, these participants support different political parties, which generally, but not always, correspond with the 'typical' choices of certain ethnic communities.

On the other hand, the open group, 'Baraza La Wananchi', courtesy of its 'openness', does not necessarily consist of individuals who know everyone else. However, this does not rule out the possibility of a few members knowing each other off-line. With regard to age, this study can only guess that the majority, if not all, of the participants in the open group are youths. First, a considerable number of the participants use shortened forms of words, as usually associated with, but, of course, not limited to, the youth. Second, some participants use Sheng'. As will be explained below, Sheng' is a Kenyan Kiswahili-based creole, which is also generally associated with the youth. Third, as Kushin and Yamamoto (2010), among other scholars, have observed, most Facebook users are the youth. Since it is now obvious that the older people also use Facebook nowadays, this study suggests that the participants of the study are mostly the youth, owing to the time of the interactions (in 2013), not long since the inception of Facebook. By virtue of their size and diversity, the participants in this open group also supported different political parties. With regard to ethnic affiliation, this study infers – from the African or ethnic names – that Baraza La Wananchi is more varied than the Campus Group. On this note, this study considers it prudent to dedicate some space below to a brief discussion of the dynamism of names in Kenya, and especially as used on Facebook.

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*Names*

As has already been mentioned above, this study points out that names can be used to index someone's ethnicity. In Kenya, African names usually give one an idea about the bearer's belongingness to a particular ethnic community. Since the majority of Kenyans subscribe to Christianity, most of their first names are Christian (or European) and their middle and last names are African. In the same way, many a participant may choose to use their full (usually these three) names, but their interlocutors may choose to refer to them by their African or ethnic names. There is such an interesting case in the data, as explained for the theme of *ethnic*



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*membership* in Chapter 9 (in section 9.3, Excerpt 6, from Chat 5, Turn 6, by Victor). Here, Victor accuses Kosgei of being a Kikuyu who is only disguising himself in a Kalenjin name. This points to the participants' expectation of their interlocutors' propositions to correspond with their ethnic affiliation. To be sure, Kosgei has (in the third point in Turn 1 of the same chat [Chat 5]) just proclaimed: "Kikuyus are superior and that's a fact…"

However, it is not always easy to place a name in its 'right ethnic space'. This is because some names are shared by different ethnic communities, as a result of cultural similarities, interethnic marriages, borrowing or even sheer coincidence. That is why, for instance, a name like *Maina* can be traced to many different ethnic communities. This name finds itself in both the Bantu (for example, Kisii) and Nilotic (for example, Kalenjin) ethnic groups. Most Muslims also go by names which only point to their subscription to the Islamic faith as opposed to their ethnicity. Some people also use only Christian, European or Kiswahili names, making it difficult for others to determine their ethnicity. Lastly, as is the case with Facebook, some participants may choose to use pseudonyms instead of their real names. And, these pseudonyms may be European (Christian), Arabic (Muslim), Kiswahili or any other imagined names.

Despite these kinds of indeterminacy about names, the nature of this study necessitated an effort to account for the participants' ethnicities, at least from the names they used. In this endeavour, as the researcher, and being a Kenyan myself, I relied on the fact that certain names are typically or traditionally associated with certain ethnic communities. To be sure, I also relied on the 2013 general Election Data, as published by The IEBC (2013). I made sure to refer to this general Election Data carefully, frequently and constantly. This source has also been given as a reference for this study. To give details, I would type and look up a participant's name to establish its location in terms of counties (formerly districts). As has been mentioned under the chapters on ethnicity and Kenya's political background, Kenyan counties traditionally and typically correspond with the ethnicities of the people inhabiting them. Thus, where I established that a particular name was common and typical to a specific ethnic community, I indicated its ethnic affiliation in brackets. Where such corroboration or co-relation would not be established, I simply labelled the participants' ethnicities as being 'Unknown tribe'. By this token, I can confidently declare that this study has not arbitrarily imposed ethnic affiliations on its participants.

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Below, a further description of the participants of this study is given, in terms of the language or languages used in the data.

*Language:*

Most participants have used English to communicate in the data provided. However, some of them have mixed English with Kiswahili. Quite a few have used plain Kiswahili, through and through. Some participants have also used Sheng', a Kenyan urban creole, which is especially a mixture of English and Kiswahili, and sometimes indigenous languages. Kiswahili is the *matrix* or *parent language* of Sheng'; therefore, most Sheng' words are drawn from Kiswahili. There are two ways of distinguishing Sheng' from a mere mixture of English and Kiswahili. One, most of the Kiswahili words are not 'standard'. Two, even if the Kiswahili words used are 'standard', they are used alongside a blend of English and Kiswahili words, including morphemes. It may also be important to note, here, that Sheng' is usually associated with urbanites, especially the 'youth', the 'trendy', and the 'streetwise'. However, this does not mean that the 'older' or the people from the countryside cannot communicate in Sheng'. It can also be said that most, if not all, participants in the open chat group have reasonable formal education (at least secondary education), to be able to follow and make written arguments in English. To account for this, English is the language of instruction in all Kenyan schools, right from upper primary, throughout secondary, up to college or university.

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While it can be said that all the participants have generally negotiated Kenyanness by virtue of using English, Kiswahili and Sheng', which are common 'tongues' for Kenyans, some few participants have incorporated indigenous languages in their utterances, as can be seen in the open group. This study suggests that by so doing, these participants could either be indexing a belongingness to a certain ethnic community and isolating others or simply expressing alignment with or hatred for a particular community. For instance, as can be seen in the addendum, in Turn 25 of Chat 8, Gesare uses the Dholuo word 'chieth' to insult her dialogic opponent, Kotut. Note that Gesare is a Kisii and Kotut is a Kalenjin. In the context at hand, Kotut is mocking the supporters of Raila Odinga, who generally include Luos and many other Kenyan tribes, but not the Kikuyus and Kalenjins. So, in retaliating with an insult in Dholuo, Gesare, a Raila supporter, could also be indexing her alignment with the Luos. As can also be seen in Chapter 8 (in section 8.2, Turn 3), Kimani uses a Kikuyu phrase 'Kari aka ihee…' [The sitting of the uncircumcised boys]. Here, Kimani comes across as mocking and disparaging Luos, traditional political opponents of the Kikuyus. Beyond that, Kimani may be intending to



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isolate everyone else on this chat who is not Kikuyu. Since this is an open chat, clearly with participants drawn from all or most parts of the country, and in which people normally use either English or Kiswahili to communicate, critics would find it easy to accuse Kimani of Kikuyu chauvinism or even bullishness. For a throwback to the Kenyan politics of 1960s, the Kenyan political anthropologist Atieno-Odhiambo (2002:244) gives an explanatory background:

> Language is therefore a crucial criterion of identity and a readily available symbol of ethnicity with prescriptive power for legitimacy or exclusion in the existing or putative ethnic-state. Its power lies in its facilitation of the articulation of popular forms of consciousness. In the heyday of the Kenyatta regime it was assumed that the people within the corridors of his power would speak Gikuyu. Shadrack Ojudo Kwassa, a Luo former chief of protocol, recalled the surprise of First Lady Mama Ngina Kenyatta at his inability to speak Gikuyu at an official encounter over afternoon tea in Gatundu, President Kenyatta's country fiefdom. He was out of the protocol office the following day, his job being assigned to a more appropriate Mogikoyo (Kikuyu), DANIEL Gachukia (Wod Nam, interview by author, University of Nairobi Senior Common Room, 12 July 1997).

To conclude the description of the participants used for this study, I wish to point out that even if they are substantively ethnically diverse, not all the Kenyan ethnic communities, at least 43, were represented. And, as has also been pointed out already, not all public spheres or different social categories of people were accessed for this study. For instance, only the 'fairly educated' virtual informants were accessed. Actual 'non-virtual' data, as coming from such sources as *road-side* or *bar* discussions were not accessed. However, instead of considering this a weakness, this study suggests that the data reflects a particular segment of the Kenyan population. It can also be ambitiously argued that these participants could still be conceived of as being reasonably 'representative' since the societal discourses they generate are expected to be entangled or to weave through other discourse planes (Jager and Maier, 2009; Van Dijk, 2006).

### 6.6.3 Data selection and analysis

As I have already mentioned, I am a participant on the closed chat group, as started in the year 2010. This group was originally created to help strengthen friendship ties between the former college-mates. Because of its 'free' nature, friends are free to post



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various kinds of stuff, ranging from personal and motivational stories, members' get-togethers, fashion and entertainment stories, health tips, to business deals and even political news and discussions. The open group, started in 2008, was easily accessible because it would pop up as an advertisement on Facebook pages. This group deals extensively with politics: its name, 'Baraza La Wananchi' [The Agora of the Citizens], is telling enough. Be that as it may, the group at times indulges in non-political stuff just like their counterparts in the closed group, as has been detailed above.

*Data selection*

Not surprisingly, the excitement over the 2013 general and presidential elections triggered the members of both groups into *situational political involvement* (Kushin and Yamamoto, 2010). For this reason, political discussions, especially those with campaign messages, evaluations of and reactions to the 2013 general and presidential elections, the winners and losers alike, including attendant political appointments, were awash on the two Facebook groups. This made it easy for me to harvest from these groups what would be data for my study. As necessitated by the research topic of this study, I zeroed in on those chats which focused on political discussions of ethnic identities, categories and mobilisation in the national arena. To this end, I selected 50 separate potential chats: 20 from the closed group and 30 from the open group. On careful and thorough consideration, with regard to saturation of content and constraints of space, I then narrowed down the total number of chats to eight. To be specific, I eventually settled on three chats from the closed group and five chats from the open group. This narrow pick of eight, which made it to my table of analysis, dealt most extensively with the topic for the study. These eight chats fulfilled my curiosity about saturation. Dornyei (2007:79) describes saturation as that point whereby the researcher is "empirically confident" that the data they have gathered suffices to answer their research questions.

*Transcription*

All my data were chats on Facebook, and I have reproduced them as they were given by the participants, word for word. There was no attempt to 'clean' up the data in any way. For instance, the spellings (including those of taboo words), punctuation marks and spaces are as used by the participants. However, as will be mentioned below, under the subsection of ethics consideration, I changed the names of all the participants and places which may point to their identity. For purposes of clarity, I also translated words which were given in Kiswahili or any



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other language into English. I also translated those English words which the participants gave in short forms (such as *textese*). I used square brackets '[]' for this translation.

I then organised the data in each of the 8 chats into tabular form, as shown in the addendum. The length of the chats varied fairly considerably, from the total number of words used, turns taken and pages covered. To be more detailed, Chat 3 was the shortest: with 385 words, 8 turns and 3 pages, while Chat 5 was the longest: with 3,329 words, 67 turns and 15 pages. On average, the three closed group chats had 1,426 words, 14 turns and 6.3 pages, while the open group chats had 2,420 words, 48 turns and 11 pages. By and large, the participants in the closed group chats engaged more intensively than their open group counterparts. As a case in point, in Turn 11 of Chat 2 (at least in the addendum), Mogaka used a whole 660 words.

*Analysis*

At this point, it is also timely to mention that, in readiness for analysis, I categorized the closed group chats separately from the open chat groups. Chats 1 to 3 have been drawn from the closed Campus Group while Chats 4 to 8 have been drawn from the open 'Baraza La Wananchi' group. As will be seen below, with regard to linguistic analysis, I have examined the closed chats separately from the open chats, in Chapters 7 and 8, respectively. I have done this with a view to compare the use of dialogistic resources and performance of face-work in the construction and manipulation of ethnic identities across the two groups: the closed chat group and open chat group.

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The main chats used for the linguistic analysis are Chats 1 and 2 (for Chapter 7) and Chat 4 (for Chapter 8). I have discussed these three chats in their uninterrupted sequence, from the start to the finish. It is prudent to retain the flow or interactivity of a chat when doing an analysis of Engagement or dialogicality. I am confident that Chats 1 and 2 covered all the content which has been highlighted in all the three closed chats. However, since Chat 4 only sufficed for the examination of Martin and White's (2005) Engagement framework, I brought in a few examples from Chats 5, 6 and 8 to be able to shed light on the extra dialogistic resources, which I have described as 'discursive strategies'.

Lastly, Chapter 9 is an analysis of the themes, as brought out by the participants in both the closed group and the open group. Here, all the eight group chats have been used. The pertinent examples of particular themes are drawn indiscriminately from either group,



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and they have been numbered chronologically. All of these eight chats are also accessible as addendum at the end of the thesis.

*Tools of analysis*

As has already been mentioned above, this study has analysed its data according to these three main theoretical frameworks: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Engagement and Face-work. This is in keeping with the main aim of this study, which is to explore how participants construct, manipulate and negotiate ethnic identities in political discussions on Facebook. There are two main data analysis chapters: linguistic and thematic. The linguistic analysis is modelled along the theory of Engagement, as also supplemented and complemented by that of Face-work. This analysis is two-fold: it focuses on both the closed group and the open group, but is carried out separately, in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8, respectively. The thematic analysis, on the other hand, focuses on the mobilisation and politicisation of ethnicity, as carried out in Chapter 9. CDA, being an overarching theory, is anchored in both types of analysis, but brought to bear much more explicitly on the thematic analysis.

As already explained in the previous chapter, the theory of Engagement concerns the sourcing of viewpoints and the alignment of readers by speakers (or writers). Engagement can also be understood as dialogism or dialogicality; hence, the Engagement resources have also been termed as dialogistic resources. These are expansive resources, neutral resources and contractive resources. While expansive resources are open to alternative or opposing viewpoints, contractive resources resist them. Neutral resources, on their part, neither expand nor contract the dialogic space; they do not show alignment with either side.

For a thorough analysis of qualitative data, Attride-Stirling (2001) has advised that researchers use a framework of coding. Coding helps break down or reduce a text into "manageable and meaningful text segments" (Attride-Stirling, 2001:390). And, as Attride-Stirling (2001:390) notes, data is normally coded "on the basis of the theoretical interests guiding the research questions, on the basis of salient issues that arise in the text itself, or on the basis of both." The main research question is how participants construct, manipulate and negotiate ethnic identities in political discussions on Facebook. To illustrate the analysis of data according to Martin and White's (2005) framework of Engagement or dialogicality, I considered words and phrases which constituted or carried the dialogistic locutions. In some cases, these dialogistic resources were spread over clauses or sentences, or even paragraphs. As Martin and White (2005) have pointed out, speakers not only index these resources explicitly; they also invoke them.



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Therefore, in some contexts, I dug deeper into ideational or metaphorical constructions and even used some psychology to make sense of some of the dialogistic resources which the participants used.

Having diligently and severally considered all these meaningful chunks, which came in different sizes and even in metaphorical constructions, I then categorized them as either expanding or contracting the dialogic space, or even being neutral. This was also an automatic process of abstracting themes "from the coded text segments" (Attride-Stirling, 2001:391). However, as I have already explained in the previous chapter, themes are (should) not only (be) borne out of theory; they can also be teased afresh from other salient or recurring issues in the data. In other words, it is prudent for the researcher to allow the data to guide them. Rarely does natural or raw data fit perfectly into 'predetermined' theoretical frameworks, for instance. This explains why I have come up with 'extra ways' which participants use 'to engage' with each other: *discursive strategies for dialogistic purposes*. These I discuss after Martin and White's (2005) Engagement resources, under the subsection 'Critical Reflections'.

In the last chapter of data analysis, referred to as the Thematic Analysis, I have categorized and discussed the actual ways in which participants construct, manipulate and negotiate ethnic identities. This categorization is based on the main features of ethnicity, as explained by (leading) scholars in the field, whether *primordial* or *constructivist*. However, and very crucially so, I have also let the data lead me in this endeavour. This explains why I have also teased new ways in which participants position themselves and others with regard to ethnicity in Kenyan politics.

I have also generally used CDA, an offshoot of the Critical Theory, to analyse the data. CDA can be understood as a much bigger, and even more abstract, framework, subsuming both Engagement and Face-work. CDA is helpful with regard to giving an explanation of how the themes of ethnicity in the data generally speak to the ways in which the society has been structured socially, politically and economically, thus informing the ways participants understand their ecological relationships with each other, in the data and beyond, especially as members of specific ethnic communities. CDA helps shed light on how participants also relate the material conditions (for instance, the hegemony by some ethnic communities and the existence on the periphery of others) to the beliefs, stereotypes, norms and practices, as held and partaken in by certain participants (Snapes and Spencer, 2003; Blommaert, 2005; Chouliaraki and Fairclough,



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1999). To conclude, the linguistic analysis significantly points to the thematic analysis: the specific ways participants use language, as will be illuminated by the application of Engagement and Face-work, and, thus, CDA, only function to support, reproduce or challenge the status quo, the order of the society.

### 6.6.4 Ethical considerations

It is always incumbent on the researcher to ensure that they abide by the ethical considerations of carrying out a research. Here, the researcher ought to see to it that all those involved in the research are treated with care, respect and also assured of confidentiality, protection and their anonymity. As has been mentioned, this study relied on Facebook discussions, as drawn from both a closed group and an open group. Since the closed group is more 'restricted', I made an effort to contact its gatekeepers (the founders and senior members), before approaching the other(s) (active participants). I did so on a one-to-one basis in order to stand a good chance of convincing them to allow me to carry out a research on their discussions. I made sure to explain to them the nature and purpose of my study, and why and how their discussions were of great importance to the study. I also assured those who did not want (some of) their contributions to be focused on that I would not go against their will. I also pledged to keep updating the participants on how much of their contributions I had used, including the time all this would take.

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I did not seek the permission of the gatekeepers or any other member of the open group because their data was already 'out there' in the public gallery, at the time of data collection. Be that as it may, I made sure to keep the identity of all the participants, in both the closed and the open group, a secret. To do so, I used a pseudonym for every participant. To avoid confusion and repetition, I wrote down all the real names of the participants against their pseudonyms on a password-protected file, which only I have access to. I also went through all the contributions of the informants, searching for cases where people's real names had been used, and changing them accordingly. I also changed the names of the two Facebook groups, and altered any other descriptions which could have otherwise identified my informants or their groups.

### 6.6.5 Financial support or obligations

Save for some generous assistance I got from my supervisor, I had no (other) external source of funding. For this reason, I am happy I was not beholden or enthralled to any organisation. Besides, it would not have been any easy to get funding for such a topic as mine: ethnic politics in Kenya can be a very touchy and sensitive issue. However, the good thing was that I did not



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need any budget in order to travel to the participants. I only needed a computer and the Internet to tap into their (online) Facebook discussions. Just to mention, I had travelled to Kenya in the run up to the 2013 elections, at the end of December, 2012. Before travelling back (in January, 2013) to my university in South Africa, I was able to walk around, in some parts of Nairobi, and take photos of campaign posters, watch the television and record some of the televised political rallies and interviews. Back at the university, I was also able to download online newspapers, political rallies and even the two 2013 presidential debates. I had also analysed some of this data, before deciding what to settle on eventually. This was some form of theoretical sampling, as required in grounded theory. However, in the long run, I decided to rely only on the two Facebook chat groups, which I also accessed for free and with ease.

### 6.6.6. Challenges

First of all, it was not easy to identify all those participants who simply 'liked' others' comments. This is because when I read the chats and established that they would constitute part of my data, I simply downloaded and copied them for later use. Afterwards, on trying to go back to the chats, I realized that I would not access them as they had already been cleared off the walls. In some cases, when I tried to go back to the actual chats, it was not easy because they had been 'obliterated' by many other new chats. Fortunately, though, I had already saved enough of the chats, as constituting the 'content' material, which I relied on for the analysis.

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Secondly, and as I have already indicated above, I was not able to access many other public spheres, from which I would gather political discussions, as coming from other 'politically-interested-or-efficient' Kenyans. I take cognizance of the fact that a good number of Kenyans lean more towards 'hard politics', thus depending on the radio, newspapers and television for news, and preferring to partake in face-to-face political discussions. By the same token, I missed out on many other sources of political discussions, examples of which are *bars*, *roadside or other ordinary gatherings of friends, acquaintances or even villagers* and *homes*. Be that as it may, I take comfort in the fact that it cannot be easy to gather all kinds of data on political discussions. I also take comfort in the knowledge that, after all, there is a consistent entanglement of discourses across various discourse planes (Jager and Maier (2009). Nonetheless, as I will also note in the concluding chapter, I would recommend that such other public, and, even private, spheres be accessed in the future for data on the same or similar topic.



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### 6.6.7 Summary

To conclude this chapter, I restate that this study, which investigates the construction and manipulation of Kenyan ethnic identities in political discussions on Facebook, is qualitative in nature. As I have also indicated herein, I, as a *bricoleur* researcher, drew from a variety of research paradigms, but relied more on the Critical Theory, specifically CDA, its offshoot. With regard to the collection of data, I did not have to transcribe it; I simply downloaded and copied it as it was already typed. However, for confidentiality, I had to make sure I used pseudonyms for the participants even if the data may have already existed in the public gallery. In the same manner, I also changed the names of the two Facebook groups. I also had to tweak a few details in the data which might have pointed to particular individuals or even the names of their groups. With regard to the challenges, I was not able to access all the participants who simply 'liked' their interlocutors' posts. As I have already mentioned, when I tried to go back to the original data, most of it had either been deleted or obliterated by more current stuff. My data was also only drawn from a virtual public sphere: Facebook chats. I did not venture into such other public spheres as 'real gatherings of friends and acquaintances' for data on political discussions. Lastly, I used CDA, Engagement and Face-work as the main theoretical frameworks for the analysis of the data.

Below, Chapter 7, which is a linguistic analysis of the closed chats, follows.

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# CHAPTER 7

# DATA ANALYSIS

# LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS: CLOSED GROUP

## 7.1 Introduction

This study has dedicated three chapters to the analysis of data: the first two of which will be linguistic in nature and the third one thematic. The two linguistic analysis chapters have further been divided into two. The first is this one: Chapter 7, and it will be concerned with the chats in the closed group, known as the Campus Group. The second, Chapter 8, concerns the chats in the open group: 'Baraza La Wananchi'. The separation of the linguistic analysis chapters in this study was informed by the interest in the exploration of how the difference between closed and open chats may determine the way in which the participants engage with each other. It is interesting to note or investigate, for instance, how participants agree and disagree, or expand and contract the dialogic space for each other by virtue of being in a closed chat group or in an open chat group. The study is also interested in seeing if, how and to what extent participants applied politeness or face-work, especially in discussions which might have incriminated or shed their opponents in bad light. As will be reported towards the end of the next chapter, this application of face-work or politeness is comparatively considered in the two types of chat groups.

As has already been mentioned, the chats used for this study were collected around an election period. This study considered this the best time to gather data on political talk. Going by the main research aim, it was thought prudent to examine how and if the informers discursively constructed and manipulated ethnic categories in discussions of politics on Facebook sites.

To dwell on this chapter, it concerns two chats in the closed group, Chat 1 and Chat 2, with 18 active participants. These two chats were selected for examination because they were the longest and had the most political content of all the chats by the members on this group. This study investigates how participants who have known each other for four years, since their campus days, use language to engage with each other in political discussions in their ethnically polarised country. Here, Engagement refers to dialogicality: how the participants expand or



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contract their dialogic spaces. This chapter also explores how the participants negotiate their own or their interlocutors' belongingness to specific ethnic tribes or, if not, their Kenyanness. Better still, as already pointed out, the members of the closed 'Campus Group' are generally diverse; they represent different (though not all) ethnic communities in the country. The ethnic communities they represent also generally correspond with the political sides which are in opposition with each other. The period within which the data from this group was collected spanned over just a month and a half: from the end of February, 2013 to mid-April, 2013. This was from the run-up to the disputed March 2013 general elections to immediately after the determination of the Supreme Court case, in which President Uhuru's victory was upheld. The table below includes a summary of the participants, their gender, ethnic affiliation/language, and preferred political candidate:

**Table 7.1: Campus Group participants's Ethnicities and Preferred Candidates**

| Name | Gender | Ethnic affiliation/ language | Preferred candidate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mwenda | F. | Meru | Odinga |
| Kamau | M. | Kikuyu | Odinga |
| Nyakundi | M. | Kisii | Odinga |
| Muthoni | F. | Kikuyu | Uhuru |
| Wafula | M. | Luhya | Odinga |
| Mwangi | M. | Kikuyu | Not indicated |
| Mong'are | M. | Kisii | Uhuru |
| Mogaka | M. | Kisii | Odinga |
| Wanyonyi | M. | Luhya | Odinga |
| Mugambi | M. | Meru | Uhuru |
| Wanyama | M. | Luhya | Uhuru?* |
| Kibet | M. | Kalenjin | Odinga |
| Njoro | M. | Kikuyu | Not indicated |
| Njeru | M. | Kikuyu | Not indicated |
| Njoki | F. | Kikuyu | Uhuru |
| Nyongesa | M. | Luhya | Odinga |
| Atieno | F. | Luo | Odinga |
| Okemwa | M. | Kisii | Odinga |

*Wanyama's support for Uhuru Kenyatta has not been stated explicitly, but his affiliation has been inferred from his comments.



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Before presentation of the linguistic analysis of the closed chat, it is important to note five points. One, the dialogistic resources in the data manifested differently: they were either explicit or merely invoked. Two, and related to the first point, speakers used varying markers of the dialogistic resources. In some cases, speakers used metaphorical or indirect constructions. Because of this, the study has tried to use the context to arrive at the pragmatic meanings the speakers may have intended. Three, also related to the second point, this study points out that some dialogistic resources intercept, run into each other or are even packaged into each other. By this token, the resources conflate vis-à-vis form and function. For purposes of distinction, therefore, this chapter considers the more outstanding features to determine the nature of each Engagement resource, as discussed. Four, this chapter argues that there are other ways the participants use to engage, in addition to using Martin and White's (2005) dialogistic resources. I describe these extra ways as 'discursive strategies'. These discursive strategies are *likes*, *criticism*, *vouching for others*, *expletives*, *warnings*, *shifting the topic* and *silence*. A discussion of these, as coming under critical reflections (section 7.4), will come at the end of the chapter, after the due consideration and discussion of Martin and White's (2005) dialogistic resources. Five, and lastly, I have elected to type certain sections of the data in bold so as to give them prominence as dialogic locutions. Below, the discussion of the chats follow.

### 7.2 Chat 1

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Chat 1 begins in the run-up to the elections: four days to the elections, to be sure. The elections were held on the 4th of March 2013. The chat unfurls up to the period just after the elections, on the 13th of March, 2013. As expected, therefore, participants are in campaign mode at the beginning of the chat. As can be seen, the first speaker, Mwendwa, starts the discussion by rooting for her favourite presidential candidate, Raila Odinga. This invites others to either join her or root for a different candidate: Uhuru Kenyatta. Raila and Uhuru are ahead of the field: with a total of eight presidential candidates. The afore-mentioned two also seem to represent the political acrimony which has plagued the country, including sharp divisions along ethnic lines. As has been mentioned, the 2013 presidential elections were to terminate in a dispute, to be determined at the Supreme Court of Appeal. However, the chat ends before the determination by the Supreme Court. The Court was to dismiss the petition and uphold the victory of President elect Uhuru Kenyatta and the Deputy President elect William Ruto.



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Turn 1: Mwendwa (Meru):
on 21 October 1946, late President Kenyatta made an impassioned plea for Unity. in the Nairobi newspaper edition - "Mwalimu" he **said "** I have nothing, not even a cent to give you. **But with Unity even an atomic bomb cannot defeat us".** Fast forward today **the family owns 500,000 acres of land , multibillion business enterprises, shops in the heart of London where even Lords of the Queen of England do not have**. Today I ask you to reflect on humanity. **As Dida said** a true leader will not eat until the subjects have eaten. There is a problem with our System, we need a leader who can clean it up. Today i make an impassioned request for Raila Amollo odinga he is a true leader who cares for Equity in Kenya! on 4th say RAO Tosha!

[Mwendwa is a Meru woman. She is rooting for Raila Odinga. She complains about the current regime (of which Uhuru is part). She also makes reference to the first Kenyan president, Uhuru's father, and implies how, despite vows of unity, he only became a symbol of imperialism and a possible cause of deprivation and polarisation in the Kenyan political, social and economic life]

Mwendwa begins the chat by making reference to how the first Kenyan president, Jomo Kenyatta, "made an impassioned plea for unity". She then reports what he said with both the attributive verb 'said' and quotation marks. Mwendwa gives Jomo Kenyatta's verbiage thus: "I have nothing, not even a cent to give you. But with unity even an atomic bomb cannot defeat us". While Martin and White (2005) state that, courtesy of **Attribution**, the speaker leaves the dialogic space open to alternative viewpoints, this study suggests that in some contexts, speakers can use it to close the space down. Note that the proposition above: a call for unity, which Mwendwa has **Attributed** to Jomo Kenyatta, is axiomatic. Thus, everyone is expected to align themselves with this axiom, at least intellectually and morally. By making reference to this axiom, therefore, Mwendwa is simply C**oncurring**. By so doing, she is closing the dialogic door for anyone who would object to such a commonsensical statement.

Third, Mwendwa uses this **Attribution** to criticize Jomo Kenyatta's actions, which, as she has indicated afterwards, are contrary to his speech. To give the background, at the time of the speech about unity (in 1946), Jomo Kenyatta had not yet become president. Therefore, the speech might have helped him get elected as president of the party KANU and the country. After quoting Jomo Kenyatta as 'singing' about unity, Mwendwa immediately talks about the obscene wealth the Kenyatta family owns: "Fast forward today the family owns 500,000 acres of land, multibillion business enterprises, shops in the heart of London where even Lords of [or?] the queen of England do not have." As can be seen, here, Mwendwa uses a **Bare assertion** to accuse Jomo Kenyatta and his family (they own obscene and ill-gotten wealth). Thus, Mwendwa presents her proposition – which is inherently an accusation – as a fact, and



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therefore, as not at issue. By so doing, she is closing down the dialogic space for any of Uhuru Kenyatta's supporters or sympathizers. As has been indicated below, Uhuru Kenyatta belongs to Jomo Kenyatta's family. Elsewhere, and seemingly a corroboration of Mwendwa's accusation, Jomo Kenyatta has been described as an imperial president who voraciously and inappropriately amassed wealth (Ogot, 2012).

Thus, Mwendwa exposes Jomo Kenyatta as having only paid lip service to the call for unity, the ideal of unity he would only sabotage on becoming president. As a corollary of this, Mwendwa closes the dialogic space for her (prospective) opponent(s): despite preaching unity, Jomo Kenyatta directly partook in and perpetuated uneven distribution of wealth in the country. His impropriety, thus, stands as a historical injustice and has undermined the country's attempts at peace and unity. Besides, in using Jomo Kenyatta as an example, Mwendwa warns others of politicians' unscrupulousness. By the same token, this study argues, Mwendwa also dissuades people from voting for Uhuru: a scion of Jomo Kenyatta. She has not yet indicated if Uhuru has shared some or any of the ill-gotten wealth. This subtle and indirect attack on Uhuru has been corroborated by Muthoni, who rushes to Uhuru's defence in Turn 3.

Next, Mwendwa attributes a proposition to Dida: "As Dida said a true leader will not eat until the subjects have eaten." While 'said' is an acknowledging attributive verb, Mwendwa also chips in with the conjunction 'as'. Here, 'as' indicates the 'same way'. Therefore, with 'as', Mwendwa lends credence to what Dida has said regarding the qualities of a true leader. Since this proposition (about true leaders) is also axiomatic in nature, Mwendwa does not have trouble sharing responsibility for it. This way, this study argues, Mwendwa conflates **Attribution** with **Endorsement**, in a bid to close down the dialogic space for her prospective opponents. However, the interesting thing is that the Dida she is quoting here is also a competitor of her preferred candidate: Raila. Being a presidential candidate himself, Dida may be considered a highly credible source for Mwendwa to quote. Therefore, Mwendwa's attribution to Dida is testament to the fact that alignment-neutral attributions are in the minority (Martin and White, 2005). Be that as it may, this study argues that by agreeing to what Dida has said, Mwendwa only 'uses' him to root for Raila. In other words, she presents Dida as only describing (or speaking for) Raila. Therefore, though she does not say it directly, she implies that Dida may also not be able to live up to the good things which he himself has said. For now, only Raila, her favourite, can 'walk that walk'. To conclude, Mwendwa characterizes politicians as generally saying good things they themselves undermine or may not be equal to.



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Dida might be one of them even if he has not been elected as president to prove her wrong. Jomo Kenyatta, Uhuru's father, was given the chance and he squandered it, and, in the process, cost Kenyans a great deal. Therefore, while she teaches her interlocutors to be wary and cynical of politicians, she tends to guarantee that Raila is a rare breed and a safe bet.

Before quoting Dida, Mwendwa has also tactically invoked a 'shared value' of humanity. She has said: "Today I ask you to reflect on humanity." For this, Toye (2013:51) would commend her for her persuasive tact: "The speaker and the audience may hold polarised positions, but the attempt to win the listeners over must depend on some notions of ideas held in common. These might include freedom, honour, democracy, national pride, or a shared conception of the audience's needs and desires". Mwendwa purposefully associates her preference (Raila) with 'humanity' after indirectly besmirching Uhuru as belonging to the category of the 'unscrupulous' (his father greedily amassed so much wealth and yet many Kenyans are dying of hunger). Therefore, Mwendwa endeavours to induce those who are still indecisive or even opposed to Raila to support him. She finishes her turn with: "Today I make an impassioned request for Raila Amollo odinga he is a true leader who cares for Equity in kenya! On 4th say RAO (Raila Amollo Odinga) tosha [is enough]!

Turn 2 will not be discussed here as it only has participants 'liking'. To 'like' has been discussed as a discursive strategy in section 7.4.1 below.

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Turn 3, Muthoni (Kikuyu):
Mrembo [Beautiful one], rao [Raila Amollo Odinga] is very corrupt.**have we forgotten the molasses plant,maize scandal,kazi kwa vijana funds tht [that] he misappropriated?** wht [What] has uhuru done?**yes,his dad did it bt [but] nt [not] the son**.rao [Raila Amollo Odinga] is worse than uhuru.

[Muthoni is responding to Mwendwa, who is supporting Raila as shown in Turn 1 above. Muthoni tries to defend Uhuru, saying his father's sins should not be used against him. As she defends Uhuru, Muthoni also points an accusing finger at Raila, citing some of the scandals he has been associated with.]

In Turn 3, Muthoni, a Kikuyu and an Uhuru supporter, after saying that Raila is very corrupt, packages her accusation in a detailed series of **Rhetorical or Leading questions**: "have we forgotten the molasses plant, maize scandal, kazi kwa vijana funds tht he misappropriated?" She then conclusively asks: "wht has uhuru done?" This is a clever way of challenging the Uhuru naysayers. In indicating that Raila is burdened with a few scandals, Muthoni portrays



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him as a tainted politician to her interlocutors, especially her opponents. By dint of 'Have we forgotten all these scandals' questions, Muthoni argues that Raila's involvement in graft is common knowledge. This way, Muthoni uses **Rhetorical or Leading questions** to show **Concurrence** and, in effect, close down the dialogic space for her opponents. As Martin and White (2005:123) explain, by asking such rhetorical or leading questions, a "speaker is presented as assuming that no answer needs to be supplied for a particular question on account of that answer being so obvious". By this, she also accuses Raila's supporters of being disingenuous; in the same way, honest and patriotic Kenyans ought to vote for Uhuru, her candidate of choice.

Interestingly, however, Muthoni's last question: "wht has uhuru done?" could be two dimensional: a **Rhetorical question** and/or an **Expository question**. First, going by her stance – as an Uhuru supporter – she intends the question to be rhetorical, and, thus, contractive. It can also be argued, therefore, that her rhetorical question belongs to the category of *erotesis*. *Eroteses* are those rhetorical questions whose answers are negative. By asking 'what Uhuru has done', Muthoni expects her opponents not to say a thing. She is stressing the fact that Uhuru has not done anything that would detract from his good reputation. She seems to be categorical about Uhuru's virtuousness. On the other hand, the same question could well be read as an expository one. Martin and White (2005:110) describe expository questions as being open-ended, though also "frequently employed in singly-constructed, non-interactive texts". Therefore, here, Muthoni may even come across as being so liberal in this regard that she entertains opposing viewpoints, if there are. For this reason, Muthoni might be expanding the dialogic space for her dialogic opponents. She could be willing to hear Uhuru's scandals being brought forth. She might even be aware of some of these scandals, but she is only waiting to establish if others (especially her opponents) are also in the know. And, if they are, she would go as far as making a comparison between Uhuru's scandals and Raila's scandals in order to determine who is more corrupt.

On the same note, this study adds, Muthoni's last utterance "rao [Raila Amolo Odinga] is worse than Uhuru" is more of a blurt or a Freudian slip. A critic may poke holes in this proposition and argue that Muthoni subconsciously admits that Uhuru is not free of debauchery. As a corollary, Muthoni only seems to regard Raila as being the more debauched of the two. What is more, as has been mentioned in the first three chapters, Uhuru is known to have been indicted



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at the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity, in the post-election violence, in 2007 and 2008.

Based on the reflection of pseudo questions, as used in Turn 3, this study proposes that the difference between a rhetorical question and an expository question may not be easily determined. Or, better still, a pseudo question can be read as being a rhetorical (contractive) or an expository (expansive) question, depending on the circumstances. This is because the speaker may not necessarily have the same background, knowledge or even convictions about certain (constructed and contested) realities as the addressee. By this token, a listener may turn a speaker's rhetorical question on its head and make it an expository question.

After using pseudo questions to attack Raila, Muthoni appears to 'own up' just a bit when she admits that Uhuru's father grabbed a lot as an imperial president. She **Concurs**: "yes his dad did it". By so doing, she 'rhetorically brings her antagonists closer'. She exhibits the willingness to put herself in their shoes and 'blame' Uhuru's father. Perhaps, she also shows that, after all, she is not unnecessarily adamant. However, immediately after singling Uhuru's father for criticism, she categorically defends Uhuru with: "bt [but] nt [not] the son…" To use Martin and White's (2005) words, Muthoni swings between the rhetorical pair of **Concurrence and Countering**. As Sparkman (1979) points out, to manipulate more effectively, it is important for a speaker to cave in a bit so as to accommodate their antagonists in an argument. Thereby, the speaker demonstrates that they are able to sympathize and empathize or look at things from the perspective of their opponents. In effect, these speakers may appeal to the opponents' emotions (and even logic) and invite them to share or subscribe to their viewpoint. In this case, Muthoni's viewpoint just follows her admission: "… rao [Raila Amollo Odinga] is worse than uhuru."

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Turn 4, Wafula (Luhya):
Muthoni, and what has the son and his family done to correct the mess, stop leaving in the past. When you hear willing buyer willing seller dig dipper and understand that a common man would not stand a chance competing with a sitting prezzo over purchase of land by then. RAO just like UK got a chance finally to explain how clean he is. Open your eyes my sister and stop hating vote with ur conscience and thank me later.

Turn 5, Mwangi (Kikuyu):
Guys posting anything now will not make a diff [difference] but nexrt Monday will. Whoeverwins accept and continue hustling. nothing will.**Iwish** we are talking abt what



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whoever we support will do without bringing in the other. U [You] use a lot of effort diselling your candidate. SELL DEM MEN.

[In Turn 4, Wafula takes Muthoni to task, asking what Uhuru has done to correct his father's mess, something Mwendwa already raised in Turn 1. Mwangi, seemingly neutral, then steps in, asking that people avoid character assassination of their favourites' rivals.]

Wafula's proposition has been considered a discursive strategy of criticism, as will be discussed in section 7.4.2 below. Mwangi, on his part, plays the role of a mediator in Turn 5. He laments: "Iwish we are talking abt [about] what whoever we support will do without bringing in the other." The word 'wish', here, basically expresses what Mwangi desires. Though Martin and White (2005) would regard 'wish' as a modulation of inclination (Judgement, tenacity), this study follows Fintel (2006) in considering it a resource of **Bouletic modality** (desire). Mwangi would be happy if his interlocutors kept to their preferred candidates without slinging mud at their candidates' rivals. This study proposes that with **Bouletic modality**, the speakers recognize and acknowledge that their interlocutors may choose not to grant their wish. For this reason, speakers mainly use **Bouletic modality** to expand the space for their dialogic opponents. In addition, this study argues, speakers can use **Bouletic modality** to express an element of modesty; they do not intend to impose on or hector their interlocutors. This way, it can also be said that **Bouletic modality** works towards saving the negative face of the speakers' discussers or even opponents. After showcasing modesty, Mwangi concludes his speech with a plea: "SELL DEM [them] MEN". Notice how he has used the vocative 'men', a variant of the American informal term 'mayne' or 'man', used to refer to, among others, one's confidant, friend and fellow discusser. To this, Wafula responds in kind, in Turn 6: "that's well said my brother. I agree."

Turn 7, Mong'are (Kisii):
**Equity? Continue to lie to Raila's people that when he becomes president, manna will drop from heaven.** Just let people work hard and forget about 'tunaomba serikali' [we are asking the government (for freebies).]

[Mong'are responds to Mwendwa's call for people to support Raila, who, according to her, will bring about equity.]

In Turn 7, Mong'are, an Uhuru supporter, begins by questioning Mwendwa about the fantastical realization of the ideal of 'equity'. Here, Mong'are seems to be dismissively asking a **Rhetorical question** about equity. He then uses a proposal (or imperative): "continue to lie



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to Raila's people that when he becomes president, manna will drop from heaven." Effectively, Mong'are contracts the dialogic space with **Denial**, which he has packaged in the proposal. In other words, he is asking Mwendwa not to lie to Raila's people. He, therefore, rejects Mwendwa's proposition. This is a case of metaphorical use of language (Halliday, 1994), whereby Mong'are's instruction or order to Mwendwa functions as a rejection of her viewpoint. He then concludes by advising that people ought to work hard and forget about 'tunaomba serikali' [asking the government for freebies]. Mong'are could be referring to either Raila's supporters or his Luo tribesmen as 'Raila's people expecting manna from heaven'. However, since Mwendwa is a Meru, Mong'are may surely be singling out the Luos. This is because he seems to distinguish Mwendwa from Raila's people (whom he accuses her of lying to). Therefore, he may be sarcastically alluding to Luos' perceived laziness.

Wrong (2009) and Ogot (2012) have pointed out that Luos have been dismissed as 'lazy' by both the governments of the colonialists and Jomo Kenyatta. The excuse for this has been that they cannot grow much on their land. This is despite the fact that much of their land is semi-arid and fishing has been one of their main economic activities. By this, Mong'are has joined the bandwagon of those clinging onto stereotypes which denigrate Luos. With his use of 'manna dropping from heaven', one gets the feeling that Mong'are is cautioning against Raila's presidency as it will turn Kenya into a 'welfare state' for the sake of the 'lazy Luos'. However, it is also important that Mong'are does not explicitly mention the (lazy) Luos. This indefinite omission probably engenders vagueness and, thus, spares him retaliation from Luos or their friends. As Danler (2005) notes, speakers sometimes like to use this kind of omission as a strategy for both diplomacy and defence: Mong'are may not be accused of arrogance or ethnic prejudice. It also cushions him from having to justify his fallacious (overly generalized) argument.

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Turn 8, Mogaka (Kisii):
@ Muthoni. **RAO [Raila Amollo Odinga] is worse because he contested against a Kikuyu. In 2002, he was your hero because you used him to get votes…**

[Mogaka charges at Muthoni for saying that Raila is corrupt and worse than Uhuru.]

In Turn 8, Mogaka dangles some false **Concurrence** or **Concession** with Muthoni by starting his response with Muthoni's conclusion: 'Raila is worse than Uhuru'. However, as his speech unfurls, there is a realization that he was only mocking Muthoni. Here, Mogaka has incorporated *synchoresis* into his concession. With *synchoresis*, a speaker only concedes with



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the aim of hitting back more emphatically. According to Mogaka, Muthoni is averse to Raila because he contested against her fellow Kikuyu, yet in 2002, Kikuyus celebrated him (Raila) because he supported their fellow Kikuyu. Mogaka, thus, implies that Kikuyus only want other ethnic elites to be their king makers. Note also that the utterances in which Mogaka has couched this false **Concurrence** are in **Bare assertions**. Therefore, Mogaka comes across as giving ethnocentrism and ethnic chauvinism as the only reasons as to why Kikuyus are averse to Raila: because he is now vying against their fellow Kikuyu. To Mogaka, that is the absolute truth: there cannot be any other reason. In the same way, Mogaka attempts to expose Muthoni for her dishonesty, selfishness and blind ethnic loyalty. In effect, Mogaka uses **Bare assertions** and false **Concurrence** or *synchoresis* to contract the dialogic space for Muthoni. Because **Bare assertions** are a preponderance in the chat, nothing more will be said about them other than the fact that they have also been conflated with a variety of dialogistic resources.

Turn 9: Wanyonyi (Luhya):
**Mogaka,you are right**! And give me Muthoni's number I'd like to take her out on a date...wish to turn her into a nationalist!

As has been explained above, speakers use the resource of **Concurrence** in various ways to contract the dialogic space for their opponents. In the same vein, Wanyonyi **Concurs** with his 'team-mate' Mogaka with 'you are right'. This agreement sets Wanyonyi, another Raila supporter, against Muthoni. However, and perhaps for the sake of their camaraderie, Wanyonyi couches his disagreement with Muthoni with an offer of taking her out for a date. By so saying, Wanyonyi appears to be alert to Muthoni's positive face. Note, however, how Wanyonyi hopes that at the end of their date, he might have turned her into a nationalist. Therefore, Wanyonyi lightly accuses Muthoni of being a tribalist (by sticking to her tribesman, Uhuru) whilst also indicating to her that he does not mean to jeopardize their relationship.

Turn 10: Mugambi (Meru):
DENIAL CAN BE SEEN. OR I [IS?] IT SELF INDUCED STUPOR. BYGONES ARE BYGONES. LET US FOCUS AHEAD AND STOP COMPLAINING…

[Mugambi seems to be objecting to the 'preoccupation' with the past by Mwendwa, among other Raila supporters.]

Turn 11: Mogaka (Kisii):
**You will be living a lie if you decide to ignore the past.** Being cognizant of your past is important for your future. I have always, since my high school days, been a keen student of history.



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Turn 12: Mugambi (Meru):
@Mogaka, The world is full of lies we are all aware… and the only way out is to ignore them…

As shown in Turn 10 above, Mugambi uses the resource of **Pronouncement** by way of CAPITAL LETTERS. As Martin and White (2005) state, in written speech, participants can show emphasis by using CAPITAL LETTERS. Mugambi has chosen to stress everything he is saying in his response to Mwendwa (in Turn 1) and the other supporters of Raila who have accused Uhuru of being a beneficiary of historical injustices. By strongly indicating to his interlocutors that they should not be preoccupied with the past, Mugambi seems to be attempting to close the dialogic space on those wishing to judge Uhuru based on how he has benefitted from his father's imperial presidency. This study, therefore, argues that Mugambi supports Uhuru indirectly. To be sure, the fact that Mugambi does not use CAPITAL LETTERS in his next turn (Turn 12) is testimony that he decided to put more emphasis on the words in Turn 10, in which he insists on forgetting the past: a past that incriminates Uhuru. As seen in Turn 11, Mogaka invokes **Denial** in his response, which also constitutes a conditional statement. He is dissuading against Mugambi's value position, which is akin to ignoring the past, which is not being realistic. With the conditional clause, Mogaka is also **Pronouncing**: he is emphasizing the fact that he is informed by history. Thus, with both denial and pronouncement, Mogaka is contracting the dialogic space for Mugambi.

Turn 13: Mogaka (Kisii):
… Remember when president Moi allowed each oparty to nominate people to work as commissioners at the ECK [Electoral Commission of Kenya]? It was not provided for in the constitution. However, Moi said: "Well, the GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT." **What happened afterwards? Did president Kibaki respect the 'GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT'?** History tells me he trashed it. If you do not know your history, Kibaki appointed his own commissioners, trashing the 'GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT'. You can only tell simpletons to go forward without looking back. I am sorry I am not going to follow your advice

[Here, to rebuff Mugambi's idea of (selective) amnesia, Mogaka goes back to the past and shows how President Kibaki – a Kikuyu – fared worse than his predecessor (Daniel Arap Moi, a Kalenjin) with regard to the Gentleman's Agreement. While his predecessor allowed the Gentleman's Agreement to inform the appointment of commissioners to the electoral body for equitable representativeness, Kibaki, on ascending to power, trashed it. To elaborate, this agreement allowed different parties in parliament to nominate commissioners to the ECK. President Kibaki, on his part, sent the hitherto commissioners home and appointed his own. Be that as it may, while in the opposition, Kibaki had pushed for the same Gentleman's Agreement. It is by dint of this that Mogaka shows how Kibaki used his powers as president to



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entrench himself at the highest seat in the country; though legal (as provided for in the constitution, the president had the powers to appoint commissioners to the electoral body), Kibaki's actions were immorally self-perpetuating since he could not reciprocate. At the same time, Mogaka could also be alluding to the fact that the disputed 2013 elections, just as those of 2007, have always incriminated and unfairly benefitted Kikuyus.]

What stands out in Mogaka's speech in Turn 13 is his use of the **Rhetorical question**. Mogaka uses his **Rhetorical questions** differently from how Muthoni has used them in Turn 3. Mogaka has asked a rhetorical question and then immediately given its answer. By so doing, he adds the ingredient of *hypophora* into his **Rhetorical question**. As Heinrichs (2007:39) explains, a *hypophora* is a figure of speech in which the speaker "asks a rhetorical question and then immediately answers it." As shown above, Mogaka mentions the "GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT" before asking: "What happened afterwards? Did president Kibaki respect the 'GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT'? Then, immediately afterwards, he answers his own questions: "History tells me he trashed it. If you do not know your history, Kibaki appointed his own commissioners, trashing the 'GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT'. By so doing, Mogaka accuses Kibaki of impropriety and leaves no room for his opponents to defend Kibaki. *Hypophora*, thus, helps the speaker nip any objection, doubt or evasiveness in the bud. In terms of closing down the opponents' dialogic space, therefore, a *hypophora* is much more direct, categorical, vigorous and emphatic than a mere (unanswered) **Rhetorical question**. Mogaka also **Pronounces** by making reference to history; he suggets that he is an authority of some sort; he is informed by historical knowledge. To put this in perspective, Mogaka means to associate Kibaki with Uhuru: both are Kikuyus. What is more, Uhuru is running for the presidency with President Kibaki's blessings. Therefore, Mogaka indirectly hints that these two people ought not to be trusted by virtue of their ethnic and political affiliation.

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Turn 14, Mwendwa (Meru):

**Mogaka am very much with you on this point.** we forget too fast and Kibaki took this country to the worst depths of tribalism we have ever witnessed in our day. I was his big supporter, **but** when I analysed what had happened in our country since 2002, i had to make a huge resolve of wht [what] Kind of Kenya I desire. what just happened was a big slap to our democracy, my brother Mugambi is in a hurry with the famous slogan, "accept it and move on"! And yes we have moved on **but** we wont forget!...

[Adding to Mogaka's criticism, Mwendwa accuses Kibaki of being the perpetrator of tribalism, par excellence. She also faults her tribesman, Mugambi, for his "accept and move on" rhetoric.]



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In Turn 14, Mwendwa emphatically **Concurs** with Mogaka to contract the dialogic space for Mugambi, her Meru tribesman, who supports Uhuru. She says: "Mogaka am very much with you on this point." She then accuses Kibaki of having taken Kenya "to the worst depths of tribalism" people have ever witnessed. This study points out that with "we forget too fast", Mwendwa seems to apportion blame, which would otherwise have gone to only Kibaki's supporters (also very likely Uhuru's supporters). As I have argued in my Masters thesis (Ondigi, 2012), speakers can apportion blame to save some face of their opponents. As has also already been discussed, this way of sharing blame may work to bring one's opponents or 'quarries' closer in order to manipulate them (Sparkman, 1979). However, Mwendwa does not stop there. She also talks about how she herself had initially supported President Kibaki in 2002. As she argues, however, on reflecting on the Kenyan situation since then, she eventually "had to make a huge resolve of wht [what] Kind of Kenya" she desires. Mwendwa justifies her support for Kibaki in 2002; she had high expectations of Kibaki. Nevertheless, since she now feels that Kibaki let Kenyans down, she is distancing herself from him. Mwendwa's use of the word 'but', a resource of **Countering**, indicates she has since changed course. This may work to show her critics, probably Merus (such as Mugambi) and Kikuyus (such as Muthoni), that she is putting her country first before her ethnic affiliation. To be sure, Merus have been traditional loyal supporters of Kikuyus, to whom they are ethnically similar (LeVine and Campbell, 1968). Thus, this study argues that the vocative she uses for Mugambi: 'My brother' may be two-fold. It serves to soft-pedal her disagreement with him and also explain why she is going against the political norms of the Merus.

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Turn 15, Mogaka (Kisii):
Thanks Mwendwa. **I agree with you as well.** I also supported Kibaki in 2002, thinking he would make Kenya a better place. I did not vote for that other funny politician called Nyachae, even if we are from the same ethnic community. **Look at what the man we voted for (Kibaki) did! Look at the key ministries… Whom did he appoint there?** Look at the Central Bank? What happened to a Mrs Mwatela?... When people voted for Kibaki in 2002, they said he would bring change. **What did they associate Uhuru with? Now, look what happened this year. He became an angel, didn't he?** It is so hilarious. Kenya will only become a better place if people vote using their brains, not their stupid visceral feelings.

This chat has plenty of **Concurrence**, especially between team-mates. Other than affirming their team spirit, **Concurrence** also helps speakers close down the dialogic space for their opponents. In Turn 15, Mogaka starts by thanking Mwendwa for having shown him support in the previous turn (Turn 14). He then says that he also agrees with Mwendwa, before indicating that he also supported Kibaki in 2002. This is, as he adds, despite the fact that his tribesman in



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Nyachae had also contested the presidency. This way, Mogaka seems to stress that, like Mwendwa, he puts Kenya before his ethnic affiliation. Like Mwendwa again, Mogaka expresses his disappointment with President Kibaki. Without directly saying it, Mogaka accuses Kibaki of perpetuating negative ethnicity and Kikuyu hegemony at the expense of other ethnic communities. With the **Rhetorical questions**: "Look at the key ministries… Whom did he appoint there? Look at the Central Bank? What happened to a Mrs Mwatela?" Mogaka alludes to the fact that President Kibaki, in his endeavour to establish and perpetuate ethnic hegemony of the Kikuyus, preserved influential positions for his tribespeople. Mogaka also implies that all this is common knowledge, thus contracting the space for his opponents by way of **Concurrence**. This is reminiscent of Hetcher's (in Nasong'o, 2015:14) 'cultural division of labour'.

Mogaka has also pointed to the fact that Mrs Mwatela, having acted as the Governor of the Central Bank for a lengthy duration, was finally overlooked when President Kibaki appointed a Njuguna Ndung'u for the position. To be sure, Njuguna Ndung'u is a tribesman of President Kibaki. Mrs Mwatela was to turn down the new position (in a different ministry) to which President Kibaki had transferred her. The new position was more of a demotion, at least in the eyes of many Kenyans. Mogaka asks another **Rhetorical question** about Uhuru, who, as a presidential aspirant, and with President Moi's blessings in 2002, had been regarded as a symbol of the perpetuation of President Moi's legacy: "Now, look what happened this year. He became an angel, didn't he?" This is a sarcastic Rhetorical question which Mogaka asks to shut down his dialogic opponents. To explain, Mogaka mocks Uhuru's supporters, especially Kikuyus, in the 2013 presidential elections. He implies that ethnic affiliation informed their support for Uhuru. It is important to note that in 2002, President Kibaki had teamed up with Raila Odinga, whose support he also largely benefitted from. Then (in 2002), many Kikuyus were averse to Uhuru, whom they largely looked at as a prospective symbol and puppet of President Moi's perpetuation of oppression. Luckily, however, for the same Kikuyus, there was another tribesman of theirs in Mwai Kibaki: a 'more laudable' replacement for President Moi. No wonder Mogaka concludes his turn thus: "Kenya will only become a better place if people vote using their brains, not their stupid visceral feelings."

Turn 16, Mwendwa (Meru):
**to be honest** wat happened to Mwatela was the turning point for me. She had the papers, expereince, technical expertise n all! But she lacked one thing from Kibaki's perspective:



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tribal alienation. She was kicked out of central bank like a dog. N [And] as usual we all kept quiet n [and] moved on. mpaka lini jamaneni? [Oh dear! Until when!]…

Since Mogaka does not answer his own rhetorical questions in Turn 15, Mwendwa offers to do so. She explains that for all her papers (academic credentials), experience and technical expertise, Mrs Mwatela was hounded out of the Central Bank of Kenya. This is because she does not belong to President Kibaki's tribe. And, to provide this answer or explanation, Mwendwa starts off with: "to be honest". This study argues that 'to be honest' serves two important functions in Mwendwa's speech. First, she uses it as a meta-discourse to flag to her interlocutors the key message she is about to give: President Kibaki's loyalty to tribal affiliation. Secondly, and, more importantly, it is a truth marker of 'honesty' she uses to vouch for herself as sincere and, thus, as worthy to be taken seriously. She cannot be lying. As a corollary, 'to be honest' is a resource of **Pronouncement**. Therefore, it can be said that Mwendwa attempts to close the dialogic space for those who could be undecided or holding an alternative view about what Kibaki did to Ms Mwatela (or why he did it).

### 7.3 Chat 2

Chat 2 spans over a period of six days. It starts on the 6th of April, 2013, two days after the general elections. The focal point, however, is the hotly contested presidential elections, which pit Raila Odinga against Uhuru Kenyatta. The participants in this chat also seem to be generally divided along the Raila-Uhuru lines. Wanyama begins the chat by asking people to wait for the results modestly and with decorum. He also advises that people should put the elections behind them, and instead focus on continuing to change their country for the better. Wanyama also hints at the possibility that Uhuru Kenyatta, a Kikuyu, may take the day; his fellow "Kikuyus did register in large numbers and their turn out on 4th was overwhelming." He also indicates that the Kikuyu members (on the group) are being attacked. He asks that others stop this, and instead "pick a point from them (Kikuyus) but avoid statements that border to hatespeech." This then prompts other interlocutors to join in. Of note is Mogaka, an active participant, who also gets into a rather heated argument with Wanyama. Others also occasionally chip in, such as Njoki and Mwendwa. The main line of argument throughout the chat points to whether or how Uhuru won the elections. The other argument, which touches on what Wanyama has mentioned, is about Kikuyus' perceived ethnocentrism. The chat ends with Okemwa making reference to the disputed election results, as terminating into the Supreme Court, whose determination Kenyans are eagerly waiting for.



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Turn 1: Wanyama (Luhya):
**Comrades** transformed into the Kenyan workforce,elections are behind us and the final results on presidential are coming on Friday or Monday.**Lets** wait for the results in decorum and modestly.
Those days at CEES,we never looked at comrades as communities therefore **let** us be instruments of change.It saddens me to see how comrades are attacking members especially "Kikuyus".Kikuyus did register in large numbers and their turn out on 4th was overwhelming.Just pick a point to learn from them but avoid statements that border to hatespeech.

[This is two days after the General elections held on the 4th of March, 2013. The provisional results have already shown Uhuru Kenyatta leading Raila. As Wanyama indicates, Uhuru is poised to win, and will officially be announced winner. However, Raila's supporters are cynical about the IEBC, the independent electoral agency.]

In keeping with the ethos of Chat 1, Wanyama, also the main administrator of the group, begins Chat 2 with a vocative: 'Comrades'. For some background, students in many Kenyan tertiary institutions refer to each other as 'comrades', to signal and affirm their solidarity. By using 'comrades', therefore, Wanyama enhances the positive face of all his interlocutors (Brown and Levinson, 1987). He continues: "Lets wait for the results in decorum and modestly. Those days in college,we never looked at comrades as communities therefore let us be instruments of change." Following Fintel (2006), this study considers the verb 'let' a conflation of **Deontic modality** and **Bouletic modality**. To explain, 'let' carries elements of duty or obligation (deontic) and desire or inclination (bouletic). With regard to Deontic modality, Wanyama feels that both he and all his interlocutors (including his opponents) owe their country a responsibility to wait for the results with dignity and to be instruments of (positive change). The sense could be that without such a collective responsibility, the country may descend into chaos, perhaps close to or worse than what it experienced in the aftermath of the 2007 general elections. Because of this, it can be said that Wanyama feels very strongly about a national duty that is commonsensical. This study, therefore, argues that the sum of Wanyama's utterances also effectively invokes some kind of **Concurrence**. In other words, it is (or ought to be) common knowledge that the country will not descend into chaos again if the citizens, including the participants herein, bear themselves with modesty and decorum. Therefore, it falls on everyone, starting with the chat participants, to "be instruments of change." It would come as a surprise should someone not want to see positive change in the country. This way, this invoked concurrence works to constrain the dialogic space for would-be 'dissenters'.



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On the other hand, however, Wanyama realizes that his word is not law. That is why he has to come across as requesting or appealing to his interlocutors. As a resource of **Bouletic modality**, 'let' can be looked at as indicating Wanyama's strong wish or desire. Effectively, thus, he entertains the possibility that his opponents may see the whole situation differently. For instance, while disagreeing with Wanyama, his opponents may still seek different ways of achieving the country's stability and peace, which everyone desires. That is why Wanyama only makes a request (into which his wishes and desires are packaged) for others to follow his lead. To explain the conflation of deontic modality and bouletic modality further, the construction 'let us…' points to the fact that the speaker feels that others should join them in a given cause: the best and only cause, but from their own perspective.

As has been mentioned, some utterances carry a variety of dialogistic resources. The above chat is a case in point. Wanyama has also 'vouched for other interlocutors'. This 'vouching' or 'flattery', a discursive strategy, will be discussed in section 7.4.3 below. In Turn 2, Kibet, Njoro and Njeru simply 'like' what Wanyama has said. To 'like' is another discursive strategy, as will be discussed in section 7.4.1. Therefore, Turn 3, as partaken by Njoki, follows below.

Turn 3: Njoki (Kikuyu):
Wanyama **well said and thanks for making sense** in the social media. Many a times i have refrained from commenting on issues bordering politics not because i do not have opinion but because i have realized that restraint and common sense should dictate our words and our deeds. none of us applied to be born in a particular tribe or community. I was born and bred in Kisumu, associated with non kikuyus and even 90% of my friends and fb friends are non kikyus why we keep on attacking Kikyus beat me.. Its amazing that tribalism dictates our thinking despite our education.

As many other participants on the Campus Group, Njoki **Concurs** with her previous interlocutor, Wanyama. She says: "well said and thanks for making sense…" What may not be surprising, however, is that Njoki is a Kikuyu. Wanyama, himself a Luhya, has just defended Kikuyus from 'attacks by others' on the group. As has already been explained, **Concurrence** with 'team-mates' helps contract the dialogic space for opponents; it simply supports and even emphasizes the value position of dialogic 'team-mates'. Njoki wonders why Kikuyus are being attacked, and says that people do not 'apply' to be born as members of a certain ethnic community. The fact that she says that 90% of her friends are non-Kikuyus helps show the solidarity she enjoys with non-Kikuyus. She concludes her turn by deploring tribalism, which is dictating people's thinking, despite their education. She says: "Its amazing that tribalism dictates our thinking despite our education." Perhaps to explain the 'education' bit, all the



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participants of this closed group are former colleagues at college. Note how she seems to safeguard her opponents' positive face by apportioning blame (Ondigi, 2012), which she also frames herself as sharing, when she says: "…tribalism dictates our thinking". Nonetheless, Njoki has subtly excluded herself from the bracket of those whose thinking is dictated by tribalism. This is because she has already said that most of her friends are ethnic outsiders (non-Kikuyus). Therefore, even if Njoki is subtle or less direct, it is clear that she is criticizing her opponents: those whose thinking is dictated by tribalism; especially those attacking Kikuyus; those who had better rise above the 'low level of tribalism'.

Turn 4: Nyongesa (Luhya):
Wanyama, **Did someone circulate hate speech here?** I have not read that? On a light note, **I am told** Kioni is did not vite for Mudavadi despite being his pointman in Central? I am told in his constiteuncy, there was no vote for Mudavadi?...

[Nyongesa is responding to Wanyama, who spoke earlier, in Turn 1. Nyongesa asks if anyone has circulated hate speech on the group. He also makes reference to the rumour that Mudavadi was betrayed by his Kikuyu pointman, who did not even vote for him.]

As mentioned above, Wanyama (a Luhya) defends Kikuyus and laments that they are being attacked unfairly. In response, Nyongesa (a fellow Luhya) says: "Did someone circulate hate speech here? I have not read that? On a light note, I am told that Kioni is [sic] did not vite [vote] for Mudavadi despite being his pointman in Central?". With the **Rhetorical question**: "Did someone circulate hate speech here?", Nyongesa refutes Wanyama's allegation that Kikuyus are being attacked by some members. This is **Concurrence**; it ought to be common knowledge that no one has attacked Kikuyus. To further prove that this is only a rhetorical question, as opposed to an expository question, Nyongesa himself provides a response: "I have not read that?". This is *hypophora*, whose main purpose, as has been explained above, is to close down the dialogic space. After this refutation, Nyongesa introduces his next proposition with: "On a light note..."

This study suggests that Nyongesa is only making light of the accusation in his next statement, which itself is an indictment of someone (and, to some extent, those they are affiliated with ethnically). The core of Nyongesa's proposition follows: "I am told Kioni is did not vite [vote] for Mudavadi despite being his pointman in Central?" By starting his proposition with the resource of **Attribution**: 'I am told', Nyongesa indicates that he does not wish to take responsibility. What is more, he cannot guarantee that Kioni did not vote for Mudavadi. Neither



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does he seem keen to divulge the source of his information. Perhaps, only 'a little bird' told him so. For this, Nyongesa is expanding the dialogic space for his opponents. Nyongesa invites his opponents to disagree with him. In any case, as Martin and White (2005) point out, not choosing to give sources of one's information could be informed by certain rhetorical or ideological reasons. This study makes two guesses here: Nyongesa may not be able to substantiate his (wild) allegation (Danler, 2005); he may also be protecting the identity of his 'whistleblower'.

For some background, Mudavadi, a Luhya, was a presidential candidate in the 2013 elections. His running mate, Kioni – the aforementioned – is a Kikuyu. Thus, here, Nyongesa could be protesting and also attempting to hint at Kioni's insincerity. By this, Nyongesa could also be, courtesy of subliminal 'homogenization' (Machin and Mayr, 2012), suggesting that Kikuyus are sneaky, disloyal and ethnocentric. This, inter alia, may explain the cynicism other Kenyans have kept for Kikuyus, or the attacks which Kikuyus suffer from the other Kenyans. In addition to that, since Mudavadi is a fellow Luhya of Nyongesa's, the latter might be identifying with the former, whom, he feels, has been given a raw deal by Kikuyus.

To explain further, Mudavadi, formerly Raila's running mate in the equally disputed 2007 elections, is on record for having had talks with Uhuru Kenyatta regarding 'joining forces' and possibly becoming the presidential candidate, and consequently making Uhuru his running mate. This reportedly angered a few powerful Kikuyu politicians to the point that they threatened to vote for the opposition if Uhuru himself did not vie for the presidency. As reported in the national media, Uhuru himself eventually apologized for all this confusion, citing unforeseen circumstances and even saying that 'the devil misled him'. Uhuru himself was to vie for the presidency, saying that he would not go against the wishes of his people: the Kikuyus. This made Uhuru 'part ways' with Mudavadi, who also vied for the presidency and made Kioni his running mate. By the same token, Kioni, a 'supposed non-ethnocentric' Kikuyu, was to come across to other Kenyans, especially Luhyas, as 'rebelling' against Uhuru and 'ready to work with the opposition'. To many a political commentator, however, all this was only a ploy to divide the Luhya votes. Relatively an opposition turf, the Western Province, as largely comprising of Luhyas, would then vote for Mudavadi, their ethnic elite, in a bid to 'punish' Uhuru. In the larger scheme of things, however, this would effectively compromise Raila's numbers. To explain, despite having Mudavadi as their own ethnic elite, the Luhya



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people have always preferred Raila: the strongest opposition candidate for the government/s (to face) from 2007.

Turn 5, Wanyama (Luhya):
Nyongesa not on this wall but elsewhere.But the people who are making theser statements on other walls are members of this group. How much I wish we desist from that.

[Here, Wanyama responds to Nyongesa, saying even if some group members have not attacked Kikuyus on this wall, they have done so on others. Wanyama also uses a resource of bouletic modality to ask people to desist from hate speech. This particular resource has already been explained above.]

Turn 6, as partaken by Wanyama, constitutes what this study describes as shifting the topic, as will be discussed in section 7.4.6 below.

Turn 7, Mogaka (Kisii):
Mr Wanyama! **How the hell can you say that the results should just be accepted?** They cannot just be accepted like that when some questions have not been answered. **How does the system just fail like that?** I cannot remember if such a thing has happened somewhere before. Tell me, during Moi's time, did we have such cases? Or, was such the norm? How come these things are now becoming the norm when some people are in office? Just reflect. If you are naïve, some people have sinister motives. You can keep wondering so loudly as to why some people are attacking others, but you need to recognize the fact that, to some other people (or, if I can be modest, their leaders or representatives, whom they will always vouch for, come rain or sunshine), it does not matter how you get something, it is getting it that matters. I just want to tell you that, especially in Kenya, everything does not end with voting. No. You need to be vigilant. **You cannot tell people not to raise concerns**. **In all honesty**, Kenya belongs to all of us.

[Mogaka is objecting to Wanyama, who has just explained that Uhuru's victory, which is just about to be announced, is simply as a result of a large turnout from Kikuyu voters.]

Mogaka, a dominant interlocutor, joins the discussion at Turn 7. He starts by charging at Wanyama: "How the hell can you say that the results should just be accepted?" This study argues that Mogaka intends this as a **Rhetorical question**, which he uses to close Wanyama's dialogic space. However, unlike other rhetorical questions, this has been infused with an expletive 'How the hell?' This expletive expresses an emotional outburst Mogaka seems to be experiencing. Perhaps, this can be taken to mean that Mogaka is condemning Wanyama for having taken such a stance. While expletives, as resources of Involvement (like vocatives), indicate the specific ways in which participants relate, they can also work to show the stance the speakers are taking towards a particular proposition. In this case, for instance, Mogaka uses



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the expletive to stress that the results should not be accepted. Therefore, this study proposes that expletives do not necessarily indicate established or permanent negative relationships between participants. Rather, the relationships or feelings they indicate can be as ephemeral and contextual as the viewpoints or stances which dialogic partners subscribe to during interactions with each other. In this case, for instance, Mogaka expresses some irascibility with Wanyama for accepting or supporting Uhuru or even the 'chicanery' the system used to deliver the victory for Uhuru and his party. There will be more discussion of expletives as discursive strategies, especially working as FTAs, in section 7.4.4 below.

There is also an element of *hypophora* in Mogaka's next statement: "They (the results) cannot just be accepted like that when some questions have not been answered." Perhaps, if Wanyama was getting offended by "How the hell…", this answer or explanation (by Mogaka himself) may help mollify him a bit. Mogaka then continues, asking: "How does the system just fail like that?" He, thus, shows that he is very sceptical about the electoral commission, which, according to him, has been captured by the state. The electoral commission interfered with the biometric system so that they could rig Uhuru in. Therefore, Mogaka shows that he is not keen to accept Wanyama's explanation of Uhuru's victory. This is **Denial** at work. As he has also indicated, 'some questions have not been answered yet'. He believes that there was foul play, and he can never buy any lie(s) others will use to justify Uhuru's victory. In the second last sentence of Turn 7, Mogaka says: "You cannot tell people not to raise concerns." Mogaka insists on using resources of **Denial** (disclaim) to contract the dialogic space for Wanyama, who, in Turn 1, has urged people to: "wait for the results in decorum and modestly" and explained that, in any case, Kikuyus registered in large numbers and had a high turnout on the voting day. To protest against perceived hegemony by Kikuyus, Mogaka concludes the turn with: "In all honesty, Kenya belongs to all of us." Here, the truth marker 'In all honesty' only emphasizes an incontestable view: Kenya belongs to all Kenyans, regardless of their ethnic affiliation. Thus, with this truth marker, Mogaka continues to close the dialogic space by way of **Pronouncement**.

Turn 8, Wanyama (Luhya):

**Indeede Kenya belongs to all of us**.Mogaka i am not that naive infact I got a lot of information which I channel through the right channels so that its consumption can rectify a mess.my wonder is you blanketly accuse all the Kikuyus for unfounded issues.Look here central&R/v provinces registered in large numbers then their leaders struck a working formula. What were the other six provinces doing?doing nothing, waiting to complain and accuse others(kikuyus).Come voting day the same. You need to do something tangible.look at the



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demographic composition of our population, 14million registered voters against 40 million Kenyans.did the Kikuyus stop the 6 other provinces from registering while central was registering voters and R/V registering a whooping total of 6 million.Mind you also of the remaining 8 millions the two communities are still represented.Mogaka you failed when you didn't sensitise and mobilse people about the importance of the of the vote.

[Here, Wanyama insists that Uhuru won because Kikuyus and Kalenjins (where his running mate, William Ruto, comes from) struck a deal and convinced their people to vote for them. He also reiterates that their people registered in large numbers and voted overwhelmingly]

As can be seen in Turn 8, Wanyama does not return expletives for expletives. In the previous turn (Turn 7), Mogaka had ranted with: "How the hell can you say that the results should just be accepted?" In lieu of 'fighting fire with fire', Wanyama starts by calmly **Concurring** with Mogaka that: "Indeede [indeed] Kenya belongs to all of us." By so doing, Wanyama might have let Mogaka's expletives 'slide' for the sake of solidarity. This kind of 'moving on' can be understood as a 'redressive action' for the sake of both their positive faces (Migge and Muhleisen, 2005) and a smooth debate. It may also make it easy for Mogaka to consider Wanyama's counter-argument. However, what sticks out in Wanyama's argument is that it is the norm for people to vote along ethnic lines. Note that, so far, nothing has been said about citizens voting according to policy or any other substantial ideology.

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Turn 9, Mogaka (Kisii):
I wonder where you get all that information from. What are you working as? Anyway, congratulations! I do not **think** my accusations are so unfounded as you **claim** though. I have so many questions for you. However, just a few: (1) Look at the plum ministerial positions. Where have they been going recently? Why? (2) When Moi was pushed, do you remember that though it was not in the constitution, he allowed all political parties to nominate people to ECK as commissioners. Just why did the same not happen in 2007, when we were supposed to have known better or do better? Where did the 'gentleman's agreement go to? Or, it should not have worked with a selected few. That does not say anything, does it? Have I blamed Kikuyus for registering in numbers? In fact, **I applaud them for that**. Besides, I did not fail if some people did not know the importance of voting or registering. Congratulations if you sensitized your people on the importance of voting! **However**, you can also not blame people for not voting or registering if, last time, they were not given what they wanted. Now, it is so unfortunate when we do not exactly know what the wish of some Kenyans is with regard to electing people into offices. Can I ask you another sincere question? Did word get to you that some people, whose names begin with some letters, had their names missing from the register last time? What do you call that? There are so many questions I would have wanted to ak you mayne…

In Turn 9, Mogaka gets to respond to Wanyama and also throw some questions at him. With regard to Kikuyus, whom Wanyama accuses him of attacking baselessly, Mogaka says: "I do not think my accusations are so unfounded as you claim though." He uses the mental verb



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'think', a resource of **Epistemic judgement**, to indicate that theirs are differences of perspectives. As Martin and White (2005) state, resources of epistemic judgement work to entertain possible alternative viewpoints. Therefore, however strongly Mogaka feels that his accusations are not unfounded, he still comes across as being so accommodating as not to impose his will on Wanyama. Be that as it may, Mogaka uses the verb 'claim' to describe Wanyama's value position. This study argues that by using the verb 'claim', a resource of **Distance** (**Attribution**), the speaker expresses a rather negative judgement of the other's proposition. In this case, therefore, Mogaka indicates that he leans more towards what he himself has said, and he will give Wanyama's value position less consideration.

To prove that he is not always averse to Kikuyus, Mogaka says: "I applaud them for that." Here, he is commending Kikuyus for registering and voting in high numbers. However, he hits back with: "However, you can also not blame people for not voting or registering if, last time, they were not given what they wanted. Now, it is so unfortunate when we do not exactly know what the wish of some Kenyans is with regard to electing people into offices." Following Martin and White (2005), such connectives as 'however' can indicate that the speaker is **Countering** (**Disclaim**), and, thus, closing the dialogic space. By this token, Mogaka does not wish to be open to any possibility that the electoral system is fair and credible. Here, therefore, Mogaka indicates that he is not singling out Kikuyus for attack. Rather, he points to the culpability of the electoral system, which, as a result of its actions, may perpetuate, among other things, Kikuyu hegemony. On the same note, he concludes: "Did word get to you that some people, whose names begin with some letter, had their names missing from the register last time?" Here, he is making reference to the reports in national media that a few Luo people, typically considered supporters of Raila (their ethnic elite), had their names missing from the registers of their polling stations in the 2007 general elections. The media was to report afterwards that this issue was corrected.

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Turn 10, Wanyama (Luhya):
First Mogaka be optimistic.Stop crying and find a way forward for all this issues.Pacifying a community other than accepting the fact that education and economic emancipation is a sure way of coming out of this limbo will not.**By the way if UK wins he will win based on a technicality** , and that is voter registration period.A tethered cow can only graze as far as the rope stretches.**As an Econometrician I believe facts,when the facts change my position changes for now emotions can run high but this cant change the facts**…

In the fourth sentence of Turn 10, Wanyama says: "By the way, if UK [Uhuru Kenyatta] wins he will win based on a technicality , and that is voter registration period." Here, he appears to



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make a **Concession** while also asserting that Uhuru's victory will be valid. The word 'technicality' has an element of backhanded **Concession** or even **Concurrence** in it. In other words, Raila's supporters are arguing that he beat Uhuru. By saying Uhuru will win on a technicality, Wanyama is implying the fact that Raila is more popular across the country. This argument tends to strike a chord with Raila's supporters. However, as Wanyama has already pointed out in Turns 1 and 8, this technicality translates into sheer registration and turnout, which will hand Uhuru victory over Raila. As much as many more provinces or ethnic groups voted for Raila, Uhuru and Ruto's strongholds (at least Kikuyus and Kalenjins) will deliver victory to Uhuru. Therefore, this study considers the word 'technicality' a resource of **'Double Concurrence'**: while it concedes, it also invokes common knowledge. To be sure, here, the reference to technicality is not hypothetical; the voting patterns were obvious, and the results were contested. To focus on the argument at hand, the same 'technicality' which detracts from Uhuru's national popularity is the same 'technicality' which gives him victory, according to Wanyama. Simply, Uhuru has more votes, even if Raila appeals more to people of different ethnicities. By virtue of this 'technicality', thus, Wanyama effectively hopes to close down the dialogic space for his opponents.

In the sixth sentence of Turn 10, Wanyama goes: "As an econometrician I believe facts,when the facts change my position changes for now emotions can run high but this cant change the facts." Here, this study argues, Wanyama **Pronounces** by dint of invoking his profession. He lets his interlocutors know he is speaking from the position of an econometrician. Econometricians are informed by mathematical or statistical explanations. Quantifiable or empirical explanations do the talking. Objectivity. Thus, as a stickler for figures, Wanyama insists on the warrantability of his statements. Wanyama's use of 'facts', in which he believes, also works to indicate authorial emphasis. Therefore, Wanyama has used two kinds of resources to indicate **Pronouncement**: an invocation of his profession and the depiction of his proposition as facts. By so doing, he contracts the dialogic space for his opponents, whose arguments, he implies, are basically informed by sentiments.

Turn 11 follows below, as partaken by Mogaka.

Turn 11, Mogaka (Kisii):

Sometimes, being optimistic is not being realistic. Kenya went to dogs a long time a go. First of all, you have not answered or responded convincingly to the issues I raised. Why? **Remember, some realities are constructed.** It is good you are an econometrician. You believe in the primacy of numbers, facts... and what have you. **Well, I can tell you, my friend, that**



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**numbers is not everything.** I do not wholesomely buy quantitative analysis. First, as I said, a reality can be constructed. What can we do if the (digital) system just failed? It is a reality that it failed, isn't it? Secondly, **my friend, I am a critical discourse analyst.** When people do not go out and register or vote, that is discourse. Silence is discourse. Those countries are more democratic if their people, I mean almost all the citizens, take part in elections. Those countries are much more democratic not only if almost all their citizens take part in elections, but also if they are better educated (formally, and better still, informally). So, two things there: almost everyone takes part in voting, and people make informed choices. Mark 'informed choices'. Maybe if Obama were Kenyan, he would not have been voted! Maybe Kenyans know better than Americans. When we voted for Kibaki in 2002, what was the main reason? Now, ten years down, what has changed? You have the answers to that. Let me tell you. Education, especially formal education, does not change some people or some things**. In my village, in 2007, I was at loggerheads with people who were blaming me for voting Raila Odinga because he is a "boy". That he comes from a community from which men do not circumcise is a reason for him not to be voted.** That he cannot lead because he is a boy, immature. Is that not sad? **I have a Kikuyu friend. He has a PhD. He says he cannot vote for a man who is not circumcised.** When I say Kikuyus are tribal and everything..., I am saying this in the general sense (to mean I am not accusing all Kikuyus of being tribal). **However, like I always say, I have not come across a Kikuyu who has proved me wrong. I hope to find one**. I am serious. Remember, I am speaking for myself. Either I am unlucky or I see things quite differently. And, if you did not know, in 2002, I did not support Nyachae. Remember, I am a Kisii. I supported Kibaki. Is that because I was stupid? One more question: Why did Kibaki become an elder everywhere he went. Why did the same not happen to Raila in Kikuyu land? Remember, Raila had been made an elder almost everywhere else he had gone. Why the hullabaloo in Kikuyu land? Are you telling me that nothing is wrong here? I thought school should make us a bit cultured. Unfortunately, it does not change many of us…

[Turn 11 is a rigmarole from Mogaka. He raises a lot of issues. Among others, he insists that Kenya is not as democratic as it appears. He also touches on education, arguing that informal education is a better liberator of the people. He also protests at the cultural arrogance or ethnocentrism as portrayed by some of his villagers as well as many Kikuyus, an example of who is a university scholar. Since Mogaka has already raised some issues in Chat 1, only a few will be dwelled on here.]

Mogaka seems to be inspired by Wanyama to make reference to his profession; he says: “my friend, I am a critical discourse analyst.” By so saying, Mogaka also insists on the warrantability of his arguments. This is **Pronouncement** at work. As an authority in critical discourse analysis, Mogaka desires to take his interlocutors on a critiquing trip. It falls on him to unveil the lies and help open people’s eyes so that they can see the world for what it is. By dint of this, he intends to close the dialogic space for his opponents. Thus, as a critical discourse analyst, it may be little surprise that Mogaka comes across as a ‘leftist’. He cannot conceal his suspicion and cynicism about the government (or system) of the day. As a case in point, he has already expressed his doubts about the credibility of the electoral commission and the presidential results. Dismissing Wanyama’s ‘fetish’ for facts or numbers, Mogaka argues that



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"a reality can be constructed." However, despite all this, Mogaka uses the vocative 'my friend' to address Wanyama. They are only disagreeing 'on principle', and their positive faces matter.

Mogaka also goes back in time and space to his village and narrates a case where his fellow Kisiis dismissed Raila on account of his ethnically-perceived cultural practice (Luos not circumcising men). Mogaka could be doing this to apportion blame; in other words, it is not only Kikuyus who have exhibited such cultural arrogance and narcissism. This could well be some attention to face-work. However, while at it, Mogaka mentions that his learned Kikuyu friend (with a PhD) reasons the same way. The Kikuyu friend has not been refined by formal education, to accommodate and celebrate cultural diversity. Here, Mogaka could also be responding to Njoki, who, in Turn 3, wondered why education has not rid people of tribalism. With this, Mogaka is essentially closing the dialogic door for Njoki by way of **Countering**.

Mogaka also assigns blame to all the Kikuyus he has interacted with (obviously, including those on the group) when he goes: "When I say Kikuyus are tribal and everything…, I am saying this in the general sense (to mean I am not accusing all Kikuyus of being tribal). However, like I always say, I have not come across a Kikuyu who has proved me wrong." The continuative 'However' signals a change in tune. After saying that he is not accusing all Kikuyus of being tribal, Mogaka points out that he has not come across a Kikuyu who has proved him wrong. By so saying, Mogaka again **Counters** Njoki and Wanyama's defence of Kikuyus. Njoki has said that 90% of her friends are non-Kikuyus and Wanyama has asked Mogaka to stop accusing the whole Kikuyu community. However, Mogaka tends to argue that when the stakes are high, such as presidential elections, Kikuyus, possibly including Njoki, are wont to be informed by blind ethnic loyalty. Below, four excerpts follow, in which three participants respond to Mogaka.

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Turn 12, Atieno (Luo):
Wanyama .so want to see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil……that is gaging.. people.. let the 49.03% mourn loudly silently but without arms..

Turn 13, Wanyama (Luhya):
To Mogaka and Atieno, win through your actions not your argument.It is much more powerful to get others to agree with you through your actions,without saying a word.Demonstrate do not explicate.

Turn 14, Atieno (Luo):
**So we have to agree to everything other say without question.....by the way how are action expressed without arguments.....**democratic space is about give and



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take.....passive attitude as much as reactive attitude both have limits that causes destruction but can also create .....Peace is eminent but only if you extend kind words or action to others.....not silence and withdrawal.....

Turn 15, Mwendwa (Meru):
**Peace without Justice is a pipe dream**! peace n [and] justice walk hand in hand and they are bedfellows! The moment we agree with this then we shall move forward. All citizens in Kenya should feel they have a place n [and] a voice. Irrespective of whether Kikuyu, Luo, Turkana, Luhya! Structures that exist in Kenya are very oppressive. The moment we address this truthfully then we will experience peace, **as a conflict analyst I can tell U [you] Wanyama what we r [are] experiencing is Negative negative peace** n [and] when it blows up 2007/8 violence will be child play.

In Turn 12, Atieno uses what this study describes as criticism, as will be discussed in section 7.4.2. In Turn 13, Wanyama also tends to infuse criticism in his proposals to shut down both his immediate opponents (Mogaka and Atieno), whom he accuses of being too argumentative. In Turn 14, Atieno uses both criticism and a Rhetorical question to insist that arguments are important. She also reinforces what she has already said in Turn 12.

As can be seen in Turn 15, it is not only Mogaka who has been motivated by Wanyama to invoke his profession. Mwendwa too takes the cue. To assert her value position and also close down the dialogic space for her opposition, she declares: "as a conflict analyst I can tell U [you] Wanyama what we r [are] experiencing is Negative negative peace n [and] when it blows up 2007/8 violence will be child play." Here, Mwendwa is also clearly **Pronouncing** by making reference to her profession to contract the dialogic space for such people as Wanyama. Earlier on, in the same turn, Mwendwa has also warned that "Peace without justice is a pipe dream!" In this case, she uses **Denial** to reject Wanyama's proposition, thus further closing down the dialogic space for him. As an authority in conflict (analysis), Mwendwa predicts a more disastrous situation than that which visited the country in 2007/8. She had rather the 'oppressive' system made attempts to forestall the impending crisis. Mwendwa paints a picture of many people seething with anger and frustrations, and who are likely to explode in a manner that may not even be contained. Though she does not say it directly, she implies that people from other tribes have been alienated and deprived at the hands of the Kikuyus. She says: "All citizens in Kenya should feel they have a place n [and] a voice. Irrespective of whether Kikuyu, Luo, Turkana, Luhya!" This comment harks back to Turn 16 of Chat 1, in which she has described the fact that President Kibaki kicked out Mrs Mwatela from the Central Bank of Kenya as "tribal alienation".



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Turn 16, Mogaka (Kisii):

**I think** your argument is very weak Wanyama. How do you say that we should win through action, not arguments. Wait... Or, you mean, we should really win through action! Yeah. But you see now, we do not know how. We do not know the actions of the ECK in 2007. We do not know which actions were employed for Jubilee to win this year. One of the actions I know is that they failed the system. Then, they won!. If you tell us how to be able to use actions to win, then, may be we will win. However, I am thinking that if all of us want to win through actions, we will always clash. Arguments don't make sense to you because they do not win elections. Actions do. You see, we come from different schools of thought.

[In Turn 16, Mogaka is concluding the lengthy argument he has had with Wanyama, his fierce opponent so far. He has also enjoyed Atieno's support (in Turn 14). Mogaka responds to Wanyama, who (in Turn 13) has just dismissed them (both Mogaka and Atieno) with: "To Mogaka and Atieno,win through your actions not your argument."]

In Turn 16, Mogaka lets Wanyama know how unimpressed he is about his argument. He dismisses Wanyama thus: "I think your argument is very weak Wanyama." To go back to the most likely immediate prompt, Wanyama has just asked both Mogaka and Atieno to put action before argument. The latter, then, seem not to take that lightly. To the benefit of Atieno and Mogaka, Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) have significantly offered that deliberation (argument) informs, terminates or culminates into such political actions as voting. And, even if their country is fresh from the elections, such arguments may still stand them (as well as others who are also politically aware) in good stead. Worse still, Wanyama has not provided answers or counter-arguments to the questions Mogaka had posed to him. What is more, Wanyama has insisted on the primacy of numbers (in Turn 10); the electoral body (IEBC) has declared Uhuru the victor in the elections, and that is what matters. Atieno, in Turn 14, goes: "…how are actions expressed without arguments…" This, then, prompts Mogaka to conclude with a projected clause: "I think your argument is very weak Wanyama." Both these halves of the projected clause will be discussed below, owing to their importance. The resource of **Epistemic judgement** 'think' will be discussed first, before the assessment which it tempers: 'your argument is very weak'.

If Mogaka has innocently used the mental verb 'think', and, purely so as a resource of **Epistemic judgement**, he may have intended that, according to his knowledge, Wanyama's argument is very weak. On the other hand, as much as he may be convinced 'beyond any reasonable doubt' that Wanyama's argument is very weak, Mogaka would have chosen to soft-pedal his assessment with a modest 'I think…' In this case, he has used 'think' for dialogistic



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purposes as well as (or including) politeness. To explain, since the negative judgement ('weak argument') on its own is likely to detract from Wanyama's positive face, 'I think' could be a 'benefit of doubt' for Wanyama to clutch onto. A bare knuckled 'Your argument is very weak', for instance, would have been too brazen or imposing for Wanyama's bearing. It might even chop at the solidarity they enjoy. Dialogically, 'I think' may be read, as lacking absoluteness: the accusation that Wanyama's argument is 'very weak', or even 'weak'. By so speaking, Mogaka expands the dialogic space for Wanyama; he leaves room for Wanyama to think or explain that his argument is still laudable.

Looked at in isolation, the second half of Mogaka's proposition 'your argument is very weak' is important in that he uses it in an attempt to pin down Wanyama. Of note, of course, is the intensification of 'weak' by the adverb of degree: 'very'. 'Very' is a resource of Force (Graduation); here, the speaker employs Graduation to enhance both Appreciation (Attitude) and Contraction (Engagement) as will be explained below. The adverb 'very' intensifies Mogaka's negative Appreciation of Wanyama's argument. To Mogaka, the social significance (Valuation) of Wanyama's argument is very low; it is not penetrating enough. This is such that even if the mental verb 'think' down-plays the criticism, 'very weak' works to close down the dialogic space for Wanyama. This already presupposes that the weakness of Wanyama's argument is not at issue. Rather, it is the degree of it which could be contested. And, as if to fight off such contestation, Mogaka anticipatorily reinforces his Valuation with 'very'. That is why, as already discussed above, his use of 'think' balances the situation and strategically allows his opponent some room for wriggling or wishing off the (harsh) criticism. This way, it can be said that Mogaka uses a double-edged proposition: to both expand and contract the dialogic space.

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Turn 17, Okemwa (Kisii):
HAHAHAH TURNOUT **MA [MY] FOOT**...WAIT FOR THE SUPREME COURT DOSSIER....**NO BEEF**

[Okemwa concludes Chat 2 with anticipation about the determination of the dispute over the presidential result.]

To dismiss Wanyama's explanation of Uhuru's victory as mass registration and high voter turnout among the Kikuyus, Okemwa, another supporter of Raila, rants: TURNOUT MA [MY] FOOT…" Ranting or expletives normally work to close down the dialogic space for the opponents. However, since they have not been considered dialogistic resources by Martin and



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White (2005), they will be discussed as discursive strategies in section 7.4.4 below. However, note that after ranting and indicating that people ought to wait for the determination of the dispute over the results of the presidential elections, Okemwa concludes with "NO BEEF". This study explains that Okemwa has borrowed the word 'beef' from American English slang, to mean 'fight' or 'ill will'. Just like Atieno, who has asked Wanyama to let losers (Raila's supporters) 'mourn' without arms (in Turn 12), Okemwa hopes that people will not set on each other with aggression. Thus, he wishes away threats to the group's solidarity, such as members of the group personalizing issues. This is in keeping with the general spirit of the members of this group chat: throughout, as much as people disagree, they have done so respectfully.

### 7.4 Critical reflections of the closed chats: Discursive Strategies

Closely examining the data in the two closed chats, this study suggests that there could be other ways through which speakers expand and contract the dialogic space. These suggestions have been arrived at through careful and critical examination of the data, which, as this study has noted, does not fit squarely into Martin and White's (2005) framework of Engagement or dialogicality. In other words, the Engagement theory, as it is currently, does not account for all the dynamism, permutations and contextualisation in the data. For this reason, therefore, this study considers it important to mention and explain these discursive strategies which speakers have used for dialogistic purposes. This study also hopes that these new resources will be considered for any possible revision of the Engagement framework. Following Danler (2005), this study describes these extra dialogistic resources as 'discursive strategies'. Danler (2005) generally defines 'discursive strategies' as a variety of possibilities which language provides the speaker to express the messages they aim to convey to their audience. To this study, therefore, speakers have used the following discursive strategies to either expand or contract the dialogic space for their interlocutors: 'soft support', 'criticism', 'vouching for others' ('flattery') 'expletives', 'warnings', 'shifting the topic' and 'silence'.

#### 7.4.1 Likes (soft support)

Some participants seem to find it easier to show reactive support to their team-mates than wage disagreements against their opponents. The best example of this is to simply 'like' a comment or post of a previous participant. This study suggests that such a response as 'liking' is a safer way of showing support to a team-mate and disagreeing with an opponent, and especially so in online communication. While this study proposes that 'liking' is basically a way of



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**Concurring**, it also argues that it is a rather 'soft' or even 'modest' way of concurring. Normally, in face to face or audio interactions, speakers use more emphatic resources to show concurrence than to simply 'like'. They usually indicate an obviousness about a particular value position and they can also go to the extent of supplying further arguments. However, with online verbal exchanges, such as those on Facebook, participants have the latitude to simply indicate a 'like'. And, rarely do such participants explain or build on their 'likes'. Therefore, this study contends that, with 'likes', speakers will have, albeit modestly, added their voices to a colloquy. And, because of such modesty, this study argues that 'likes' are more of expansive resources than contractive resources. 'Likers' only seem to indicate 'admiration' or a 'leaning' towards specific prior speakers, whom, it can be said, may have spoken on their behalf. 'Liking' can also sometimes be used as a measure, especially to infer if particular value positions (or even participants) are more likable than others. However, nothing more will be said in that regard as it is not particularly relevant to this study.

Chat 1, Turn 2, Kamau and Nyakundi (Kikuyu and Kisii):

(Kamau and Nyakundi) **Like** this

As has been explained above, Kamau and Nyakundi seem to show a general admiration for or some kind of approval of Mwendwa's post (in Turn 1 of Chat 1). The post itself is a veiled criticism of Uhuru Kenyatta and an expression of support for Raila Odinga. By 'liking' Mwendwa's post, Kamau and Nyakundi will have also not confronted or disagreed sharply, at least overtly, with Uhuru Kenyatta's supporters, who are likely going to charge back at Mwendwa. A curious thing, however, is that Kamau, one of the 'likers' of the criticism levelled against Uhuru Kenyatta is his own Kikuyu tribesman. He may have strategically 'liked' the criticism to index his impartiality or latent support for Uhuru Kenyatta or even his rival, Raila. As has already been mentioned, Kenyans, especially Kikuyus, generally vote along tribal lines, when their tribesperson contests for the presidency. Therefore, in a way, to 'like' also works to seek some solidarity with one's perceived opponents and affirm or maintain some solidarity with established or budding allies. This is especially important in, but also not limited to, a closed group, whereby all the members know each other and may generally guard against Face Threatening Acts (FTAs).

At this juncture, it may also be important to talk about the opposite of 'like': 'dislike'. A 'dislike' for a post easily shows that the 'disliker' is on the opposite end of the argument. And,



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just like to 'like', to 'dislike' is a modest way of showing one's stance. 'Likes' and 'dislikes' can also be shown by use of 'thumbs up' and 'thumbs down' emoticons. In some cases, however, and as has been mentioned above, people can use 'likes' and 'dislikes' to rate popularity of speakers' propositions. By the same token, (some) speakers may prefer getting 'likes' to getting 'dislikes' or to not getting a 'like' response at all. For this, it can also be said that all these 'likes' and 'dislikes' constitute a multiplicity of voices in a colloquy. However, this study notes that 'likes' or 'dislikes' do not always appear against each comment.

### 7.4.2 Criticism

This study proposes that criticism can be used as a contractive resource of Engagement in a conversation. This is because, when criticizing, one normally disapproves of what someone else has said or done. Therefore, criticism can be said to be related to the resource of **Denial**: whereby the speaker rejects an opposing viewpoint. However, this study also suggests that criticism has an element of negative judgement – as belonging to the sub-system of Attitude – whereby the speaker indicates that a certain level of 'standards' or expectations have not been met. In the same vein, thus, criticism is related to protestation, reprimand, admonition and even accusation. This study also adds that in some cases, criticism is followed by or even intertwined with advice. It is also important to point out the fact that criticism is not necessarily marked by specific terms or key words. As shown in the examples below, criticism can be realized over stretches of clauses or sentences. The context is also important for deciphering if a clause (or clauses) is (or are) couched in criticism. Below follow two excerpts in which speakers attempt to close down the dialogic space by way of criticizing.

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Chat 1, Turn 4, Wafula (Luhya):
Muthoni, and **what has the son and his family done to correct the mess**, **stop leaving in the past**. When you hear willing buyer willing seller dig dipper and understand that a common man would not stand a chance competing with a sitting prezzo over purchase of land by then. RAO just like UK got a chance finally to explain how clean he is. **Open your eyes my sister** and **stop hating** vote with ur conscience and **thank me later.**

[Here, Wafula is taking Muthoni to task. Muthoni has just responded to Mwendwa's post (in Turn 1 of Chat 1), arguing that Uhuru should not be punished for his father's crimes (corruption and land grabbing).]

To object to Muthoni's defense of Uhuru Kenyatta, Wafula asks: "What has the son and his family done to correct the mess…?" Here, Wafula disapproves of Uhuru's actions: being a



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beneficiary of ill-gotten wealth and not attempting to share some or any of it. Wafula then advises Muthoni 'not to live in the past'. Though he does not elucidate, he could be referring to the fact that, historically, Kikuyus have generally not supported a Luo for the presidency. The first Kenyan president, Jomo Kenyatta, along with his fellow Kikuyu elites, is also on record to have mocked and disparaged the Luos for being 'uncircumcised', calling them 'boys' and consequently arguing that they do not deserve to be leaders of the country' (Atieno-Odhiambo, 2002; Ajulu, 2002; Ogot, 2012). Thus, Wafula may be advising that Muthoni breaks free from this prejudicial and harmful past which thrives on and feeds ethnocentrism. By so doing, Wafula is closing the dialogic space for Muthoni

In the same breath, Wafula says (in the last sentence): "Open your eyes my sister and stop hating vote with ur [your] conscience and thank me later." Wafula continues to give Muthoni counsel; she should open her eyes and see the world for what it is. 'Open your eyes' is an ideational proposal (imperative) which Wafula employs to criticize Muthoni for (decidedly) not being 'in touch with reality'. He also seemingly accuses her of being averse to Raila on account of his ethnicity when he advises her to "stop hating". It can also be inferred that he is asking her to rely on logic rather than on visceral feelings of (blind) ethnic loyalty, which are not healthy for the (politics of the) country. However, as Wafula tears into Muthoni, contracting the dialogic space for her, he soothes her with the vocative 'my sister'. He invokes solidarity. He then concludes his speech with 'thank me later'. It could be the case that Wafula is guaranteeing Muthoni that Raila will ameliorate the dire situation Kenya finds itself in if he is voted president. In the long run, therefore, Muthoni will not have regretted her choice. With 'thank me later', Wafula could also be assuring Muthoni of the good rapport which they will still be enjoying after the elections, whatever the results. The disagreement they are having here will not have severed their good relationship. They can even meet, chat and discuss how the elections went.

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Chat 2, Turn 12, Atieno (Luo):
Wanyama .**so want to see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.....that is gagging..**people.. let the 49.03% mourn loudly silently but without arms..

[It is five days after the disputed elections. Atieno, a Raila supporter, is protesting at Wanyama for appearing to silence the critics of Uhuru, whose win he is defending. She especially protests so after reading Mogaka's post in Turn 11, in which Kikuyus have been accused of dishonesty and ethnocentricity.]



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The ‘see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil’ proverb that Atieno makes reference to, in Turn 12, as shown above, is said to have origins in both the Buddhist tradition and the Western World. And, while referring to ‘the three wise monkeys’, the essence of the proverb is to satirize a people’s lack of moral responsibility. Here, a person’s abstinence from evil sights, evil noises and evil utterances is indeed tantamount to their refusal to acknowledge unseemliness. Therefore, with this proverb, Atieno accuses (and criticizes) Wanyama of (for) abetting improprieties by choosing to go silent on them. Perhaps, this is because Wanyama does not address a single allegation made by Mogaka against Kikuyus (for example, in Turn 11). Instead, Wanyama only defends Kikuyus by saying such general things as ‘all Kikuyus cannot be blamed’. Thus, even if Atieno asks Wanyama to let Raila’s supporters mourn the loss of the elections, she may be asserting that Wanyama is condoning evil deeds and schemes. Note that Atieno has also said: “that is gagging..people..” This can be read as a protestation over the fact that Wanyama is only keen to safeguard the status quo and try to gag those who, like Mogaka, are condemning Kikuyus’ narcissism and eccentricities. This way, she is contracting the dialogic space for Wanyama. Since the results have also been disputed, she may also be sarcastically congratulating the ‘winners’ of a bungled election. What also sticks out is that Atieno is a Luo. She, therefore, belongs to the same ethnic community as Raila Odinga. The stance she has taken should be of little or no surprise, in a country where the electorate normally vote along ethnic lines.

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### 7.4.3 Vouching for other interlocutors (flattery)

This study also proposes that speakers can vouch for others or use flattery to close down the dialogic space for their interlocutors. Here, the speaker, by saying good things about their interlocutors or would-be opponents in a colloquy, sets a standard which the interlocutors should step up to. In other words, the one vouching or flattering indicates that they have certain expectations of their interlocutors. By so doing, the interlocutors are constrained accordingly: if they do not live up to the set standards, they will have disappointed the one flattering them and nullified the good things said about them.

Chat 2, Turn 1: Wanyama (Luhya):

Comrades transformed into the Kenyan workforce,elections are behind us and the final results on presidential are coming on Friday or Monday.Lets wait for the results in decorum and modestly.
Those days at campus,**we never looked at comrades as communities** therefore let us be instruments of change.It saddens me to see how comrades are attacking members especially



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"Kikuyus".Kikuyus did register in large numbers and their turn out on 4th was overwhelming.Just pick a point to learn from them but avoid statements that border to hatespeech.

[It is two days after the disputed General Elections, held on the 4th of April 2013. Wanyama posts to remind everyone of their university days, when they held together and were not divided along ethnic lines. He also advises them to be instruments of good change in the country. He does so against the backdrop of ethnic polarisation resulting from the disputed elections, in which Kikuyus seem to be alienated.]

In Turn I of Chat 2, Wanyama vouches for his former college mates. He cherishes and pines for those college days, when people were not divided along ethnic communities. He wishes that the same spirit plays out in the discussion at hand: the one about the just concluded presidential elections. In the third sentence, he goes: "Those days at campus,we never looked at comrades as communities…" He also uses the vocative for solidarity, 'comrades', to address his former college mates. For emphasis, he uses the vocative three times. He, however, slips into 'warning mode' when he protests that it saddens him "to see how comrades are attacking members especially "Kikuyus". Cohen (2004:28) would describe Wanyama's tendencies as demagogic: "… persuasion based upon the character of the speaker becomes a technique to be manipulated…" Already, by praising his former colleagues so, he puts some social pressure on them (Sparkman, 1979). They now ought to live up to his expectations lest they be guilty of ethnic polarisation. This is emotional blackmail of sorts. Put in another way, Wanyama's flattery is tantamount to attacking the character of those opponents who will insist on finding fault in Kikuyus, against which he is discouraging. By virtue of this, he has already proactively closed the dialogic space for would-be dissenters.

### 7.4.4 Expletives (emotional outbursts)

As has already been mentioned above, expletives, just like vocatives, belong to the Interpersonal system of Involvement. However, while vocatives signal solidarity or group affiliation, this study argues that expletives indicate an element of irritation or annoyance or even anger on the part of the speaker. Therefore, even if Martin and White (2005) have stated that expletives may be hard to categorize in terms of Attitude, this study proposes that they (expletives) can signpost feelings of Displeasure (Attitude; Affect; Dis/satisfaction; Displeasure). They can also be referred to as swear words, and Martin and White (2005) have also described them as emotional outbursts. This study proposes that since expletives express the arousal of Displeasure of a speaker by an interlocutor or someone they are talking about,



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they are dismissive in nature, and, therefore, serve a contractive function. In addition, this study regards these expletives or emotional outbursts as potential Face Threatening Acts (FTA). Since one example of expletives has been discussed as being conflated with a rhetorical question (in Turn 7 of Chat 2), only one other example will be discussed below.

Chat 2, Turn 17, Okemwa (Kisii):
HAHAHAH TURNOUT **MA [MY] FOOT**...WAIT FOR THE SUPREME COURT DOSSIER....**NO BEEF [FIGHT/ILL WILL]**

[Just like Mogaka, Okemwa is not interested in Wanyama' explanation (or justification) of Uhuru's questionable victory: large turnout among the Kikuyus. He, thus, retorts with the expletive: "MA [MY] FOOT". This is before he makes reference to the Supreme Court, to which Raila (Uhuru's rival) and his losing team have taken a petition. The country is awaiting the determination of the highest court in the land.]

As can be seen in Turn 17 of Chat 2 above, Okemwa, another of Raila's supporters, dismissively says: "TURNOUT MY FOOT…" This way, Okemwa vehemently shoots down Wanyama's justification for Uhuru victory at the ballot: a large turnout from Uhuru's strongholds. Therefore, Okemwa closes down the dialogic space for Wanyama. In the same way, Okemwa also joins Mogaka in expressing suspicion of the state's involvement in the rigging of the presidential elections. However, this study argues, the response 'MY FOOT' may not always come out as a neutral way of dismissing an opponent's proposition. In some situations, it may carry some bitterness and disdain. Thus, 'MY FOOT' may also constitute a Face Threatening Act (FTA); it may come across as disrespectful to the interlocutor. It could also be instructive that Okemwa quickly goes for the words 'NO BEEF', meaning that there is no fight/ing, after all. These words function as a redressive action (Migge and Muhleisen, 2005) for Okemwa's earlier FTA. It may also not be lost on Okemwa that Mogaka has just used strong language in Turn 7 of the same chat: "How the hell can you say that the results should just be accepted?" Okemwa seems to quickly realize that even if the political climate is hot and touchy, the group members still need to respect one another and not quarrel or 'fight'. No wonder he has also made reference to the Supreme Court, which he considers the only amicable recourse, when he says: "WAIT FOR THE SUPREME COURT DOSSIER". Nevertheless, this study points out that, generally, the expletives which the participants use to express their annoyance on the closed group chats are not particularly personalized or very offensive. As will be seen



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in the next chapter, speakers in the open group tend to be more generous and intense in their emotional outbursts.

### 7.4.5 Warnings

This study also regards warnings as resources which speakers can use to close down the dialogic space for their interlocutors or opponents. The study also argues that warnings can be proactive or reactive. They are proactive if their issuer indicates that if their listener or someone else does not carry out a particular action, some unpleasant eventuality will follow. They are reactive if the listener or someone else has already done something and the speaker only tells them what unpleasant eventuality they should expect. The eventuality whicch the speaker warns about (or insists on) can be conceived of as a presupposition. Because of this, this study argues that the workings of warnings are related to those of **Concurrence**. The speaker confirms the only logical consequence in the wake of a specific occurrence. Therefore, it can be concluded that warnings are contractive in nature.

Chat 2, Turn 15, Mwendwa (Meru):
All citizens in Kenya should feel they have a place n a voice. Irrespective of whether Kikuyu, luo, Turkana, Luhya! Structures that exist in Kenya are very oppressive. The moment we address this truthfully then we will experience peace, **as a conflict analyst** I can tell U Wanyama **what we r experiencing is Negative negative peace n when it blows up 2007/8 violence will be child play.**

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In Turn 15 of Chat 2, Mwendwa gives a warning of what may happen should things continue the way they are now. She categorically says that "what we r [are] experiencing is Negative negative peace n [and] when it blows up 2007/8 violence will be child play." She seems to accuse Wanyama of supporting an oppressive regime, which also thrives on and exacerbates ethnic factionalism and polarisation. To issue her warning, she uses the scare of the 2007/8 post-election violence that almost drove Kenya into a pit of destruction. Note that more than a thousand people died and more than a hundred thousand were displaced from their homes during this period. This way, Mwendwa positions herself as being totally opposed to Wanyama's actions or inclinations. She is contracting the dialogic space for Wanyama. To intensify her warning, Mwendwa says that the next calamity will be far worse than that of 2007/8, if things continue to work as they do now. Therefore, she implies that Wanyama should know better than support the present regime.



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### 7.4.6 Shifting the topic:

This study proposes that speakers can contract the dialogic space by shifting from one topic of discussion to another. This 'shifting of topics' could also either be intentional or not. If intentional, the speaker either dismisses what the previous interlocutor (especially an opponent) has said or avoids the topic at hand because it is too challenging (perhaps due to its potential to expose them). A speaker may also move from the current dialogic topic in an endeavour to save the face of a team-mate or even an opponent. Thus, while used to close down the dialogic space (temporarily), shifting the topic can also be used to enhance or maintain solidarity between 'warring' interlocutors. This study also proposes that shifting the topic is close enough to (or is interwoven with) silence, which will also be discussed below. Naturally, shifting the topic, as a resource of Engagement, can be captured in its essence when two or more consecutive turns are given. For this reason, therefore, a thread of consecutive turns have been given below.

Chat 2, Turn 4: Nyongesa (Luhya):
(Lines 2-7) **Did someone circulate hate speech here?** I have not read that? **On a light note, I am told Kioni is did not vite for Mudavadi despite being his pointman in Central?** I am told in his constiteuncy, there was no vote for Mudavadi? I am modelling the results and my pasimonous estimates I can see Mudavadi passing.....

Turn 5, Wanyama (Luhya):
Nyongesa not on this wall but elsewhere.But the people who are making theser statements on other walls are members of this group. How much I wish we desist from that.

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Chat 2, Turn 6: Wanyama (Luhya):
By the way Nyongesa you talk of Modellling.**I am developing Kenyas import demand function using time series between 1980-2012(Cointegration and error correction).Any literature?**I must impress Prof Bakari.

[It is just after the disputed 2013 elections. As shown in Turn 4 of Chat 2, Nyongesa raises the issue of Mudavadi's running mate not voting for him. This running mate happens to be a Kikuyu. In Turn 1, among others, Wanyama protests at the fact that Kikuyus are being attacked by others. Therefore, Nyongesa's anecdote seems to challenge Wanyama's defence of Kikuyus.]

As shown in Turn 1 of Chat 2, Wanyama's main agenda is to protest against the attack of Kikuyus by others. In response to that, Nyongesa, as shown in Turn 4, says he has not witnessed any hate speech directed at Kikuyus so far. He then introduces the issue of Mudavadi, a



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presidential candidate from their ethnic community, who was allegedly duped by his Kikuyu running mate (as will also be discussed under the theme of reciprocity in the next chapter). Nyongesa also talks of modelling with regard to Mudavadi's results in the elections. In response, as can be seen in Turn 5 of Chat 2, Wanyama says that Kikuyus have been attacked in previous posts (which he does not specify). Curiously though, Wanyama does not address the issue of Mudavadi's running mate, a Kikuyu, who allegedly did not vote for Mudavadi, as has been reported by Nyongesa. Instead, as can be seen in Turn 6 of Chat 2, Wanyama chooses to drift into talk about modelling in terms of Kenya's imports. Therefore, Wanyama appears to let go of the talk about Mudavadi's running mate, something which incriminates Kikuyus, whom he is defending. By so doing, Wanyama shifts the topic from Mudavadi and Kikuyus into the topic of modelling with regard to imports. Note that Nyongesa has only talked about modelling on terms of Mudavadi's election results.

Thus, Wanyama uses the talk of modelling as his 'escape route', running away from discussing how Mudavadi was duped by a Kikuyu posing as a running mate. By so doing, Wanyama appears to come short of justifying his protestation about Kikuyus being attacked unfairly in the face of the damning evidence which Nyongesa gives about a Kikuyu individual. It can be said that the damning evidence which Nyongesa has given about a Kikuyu individual somehow justifies why others may be attacking Kikuyus or treating them with suspicion. It could also be the case that by shifting the topic (to Kenya's imports), Wanyama is adamantly clinging onto his proposition (Kikuyus are being attacked unfairly by others). Alternatively, it could also be read that Wanyama has conceded reluctantly, but quietly so. Nevertheless, and luckily for him, Nyongesa plays along; he does not insist that Wanyama comments about a Kikuyu betraying Mudavadi. Nyongesa does not feature again for the rest of the chat. This can also be read as (reactive) silence, which will be discussed next.

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**7.4.7 Silence:**

To start with, it is important to note that Van Dijk (2009) conceives of silence as constituting discourse. Silence is discourse. However, drawing on the provided data, this study argues that this kind of discourse (silence) is characterized by indeterminacy and uncertainty. It is not easy to establish whether (or if) a listener has simply nothing to say or they have merely decided to be silent. If the latter is the case, we may still not be privy to the reason(s). However, or because of that, this study proposes that speakers can use silence for either expansive purposes or



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contractive purposes in an ongoing colloquy. Additionally, silence can also come handy in saving face or sustaining solidarity. For instance, by observing silence, a listener may be giving their opponent the floor (or more time) to disagree. This is expansive in function, whether intentionally or not. On the other hand, silence can be helpful towards achieving contractive goals on the part of the listener. Here, the listener, on suspecting that they may eventually expose themselves should they respond to (or walk into the trap set by) the speaker, could seek refuge in silence. By so doing, this listener may be indicating that what they said earlier still holds and that what their opponents are saying is inconsequential.

Below follow four excerpts, which give the context for the employment of silence in the colloquy.

Chat 1, Turn 3: Muthoni (Kikuyu):
Mrembo [Beautiful one],rao is very corrupt.have we forgotten the molasses plant,maize scandal,kazi kwa vijana funds tht he misappropriated?wht has uhuru done?yes,his dad did it bt nt the son.rao is worse than uhuru.

Chat 1, Turn 4: Wafula (Luhya):
(Lines 1-2) Muthoni, and what has the son and his family done to correct the mess, stop leaving in the past.
(Lines 6-7) Open your eyes my sister and stop hating vote with ur conscience and thank me later.

Chat 1, Turn 8: Mogaka (Kisii):
**(Lines 1-3) @ Muthoni. RAO is worse because he contested against a Kikuyu. In 2002, he was your hero because you used him to get votes.**

Chat 1, Turn 9: Wanyonyi (Luhya):
Mogaka,you are right! And give me Muthoni's number I'd like to take her out on a date...wish to turn her into a nationalist!

As shown above, soon after Muthoni accuses Raila of engaging in graft, in Turn 3 of Chat 1, she is besieged by Wafula, Mogaka and Wanyonyi (all of whom are Raila supporters) in the subsequent excerpts. They accuse her of being a Kikuyu ethnocentrist. However, Muthoni does not respond, even to clear her name. Her attendant silence is indeterminate; therefore, this study indulges in conjuring up reasonable possibilities. First, from the onset, it is proposed that Muthoni's silence can either be perceived as expansive or contractive. If her silence is expansive in nature, it is because she is generously allowing her opponents to deconstruct her supposed patriotism for Kenya (and convince her that she is putting her tribe before the country). She may have also opted to leave it to everyone on the group to decide if her loyalty



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is jeopardizing national unity or progress. On the other hand, if her silence is contractive, it is because she does not want to call her opponents' bluff. By calling their bluff, she may end up giving herself off as someone bent on sabotaging the ideals of (true) nationalism for the sake of giving her tribesman selfish and unconditional support. Lastly, she may still be contracting the dialogic space for her opponents (or 'detractors'), but with crass dismissiveness.

Chat 2, Turn 1: Wanyama (Luhya):
(Lines 7-8) It saddens me to see how comrades are attacking members especially "Kikuyus".
(Lines 10-11) Just pick a point to learn from them but avoid statements that border to hatespeech.

Chat 2, Turn 3: Njoki (Kikuyu):
(Lines 7-11) I was born and bred in Kisumu, associated with non kikuyus and even 90% of my friends and fb friends are non kikyus why we keep on attacking Kikyus beat me.. Its amazing that tribalism dictates our thinking despite our education.

Chat 2, Turn 11: Mogaka (Kisii):
(Lines 32-38) I have a Kikuyu friend. He has a PhD. He says he cannot vote for a man who is not circumcised. When I say Kikuyus are tribal and everything..., I am saying this in the general sense (to mean I am not accusing all Kikuyus of being tribal). However, like I always say, I have not come across a Kikuyu who has proved me wrong. I hope to find one.

It should be noteworthy that, as can be seen in Turn 1 of Chat 2, Wanyama, a Luhya, has largely taken it upon himself to defend the less enthusiastic Kikuyus on the group. So far, the only Kikuyu who openly shares Wanyama's sentiments is Njoki, in Turn 3 of Chat 2. She insinuates that despite the luxury of (formal) education, her former college colleagues are informed by such base tendencies as ethnic prejudice and hatred against Kikuyus. However, going forward, she leaves Wanyama, a 'Samaritan' for the Kikuyus, 'in the lurch'. For the remaining part of the chat, Wanyama has to lift the Kikuyus' rhetorical and ideological weight as he contends with opposition from Nyongesa (Luhya), Mogaka (Kisii), Atieno (Luo), Mwendwa (Meru) and Okemwa (Kisii). Also worth noting here is the fact that Mogaka, in Turn 11, trashes Njoki's notion of (formal) education as a 'buffer' against ethnic prejudice and hatred. In stressing the importance of informal (every-day and social) education, Mogaka gives an example of a Kikuyu PhD holder suffering from a narcissism of such small cultural differences as circumcision (Atieno-Odhiambo, 2002). The subsequent silence on the part of Kikuyus can significantly be conceived of in three different ways. One possibility is that at the back of their minds, there resides guilt, which they cannot bring themselves to accept publicly. This way, they could be closing the dialogic space on their detractors silently; they may even hope that Wanyama keeps defending them. The other possibility is that they know their being 'non-



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committal' gives others the latitude to say what they think about them. This way, they have expanded the dialogic space for their opponents by way of silence. As will be shown below, this study proposes that silence can also be used by an interlocutor to spare their opponent. In this case, if the speaker has already put their interlocutor on the spot and the latter does not respond at all or convincingly, the former may choose not to follow up. Thus, this study regards this kind of silence as 'reactive' and as a 'redressive action'.

Below, two excerpts are discussed for silence as a dialogistic resource. However, these same excerpts have already been discussed for shifting the topic above. This is because, as has been explained, 'shifting the topic' and 'silence' often overlap each other.

Chat 2, Turn 4, Nyongesa (Luhya):
Did someone circulate hate speech here? I have not read that? On a light note, I am told Kioni is did not vite for Mudavadi despite being his pointman in Central? I am told in his constiteuncy, there was no vote for Mudavadi? I am modelling the results and my pasimonous estimates I can see Mudavadi passing ……

Chat 2, Turn 5: Wanyama (Luhya):
Nyongesa not on this wall but elsewhere.But the people who are making theser statements on other walls are members of this group.How much I wish we desist from that.

As has already been discussed, Wanyama, is complaining about Kikuyus being attacked by others. As has also already been discussed, Nyongesa, in Turn 4, says he has not witnessed any hate speech yet. In Turn 5, Wanyama responds, saying that he is referring to earlier and different chats. However, Nyongesa (in Turn 4) has already commented about one Kioni: a Kikuyu of whose sneakiness he disapproves. Suspiciously, Wanyama does not comment about Kioni's sneakiness. Maybe if he does so, he will 'trip on his protestation' that Kikuyus are unfairly being singled out for attacks. Therefore, by not responding, he indicates his wish that his opinion stands. This serves a contractive function. Once again, to show that both 'silence' and 'shifting the topic' are interwoven, Wanyama keeps silent about Kioni by focusing on 'modelling and Kenya's imports'. This is in Turn 5, as shown above. However, Nyongesa does not insist that Wanyama speaks about Kioni. By this token, while Wanyama uses silence for defence, Nyongesa employs it to spare (or save the face of) Wanyama. As a side note, Wanyama and Nyongesa are close friends outside of the group chat.



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### 7.5. Summary

To conclude, this study points out that the participants in the two chats in the closed group generally use a variety of the dialogistic resources, which they have also appropriated eclectically. The following are the more notable dialogistic resources, as stated by Martin and White (2005): Bare assertions, Attribution, Endorsement, Rhetorical questions, Concurrence, Bouletic and deontic modals, Pronouncement and Epistemic judgement. The other important observation this study makes is that, as Halliday (1994) states, the use of language is inevitably metaphorical. In addition to using singular metaphors here and there, the participants at times use constructions that are rather multifarious or versatile. This includes situations in which participants have packaged some dialogistic resources in non-corresponding or untypical propositions. As has also been mentioned and discussed, this study has teased out extra dialogistic resources, which it has described as 'discursive strategies'. They are: *likes*, *criticism*, *vouching for others*, *expletives*, *warnings*, *shifting the topic* and *silence*. To explain, the study argues that, as much as Martin and White's (2005) Engagement framework is very resourceful, it does not exhaustively cater for all the utterances which speakers can use to either expand or contract the dialogistic space for their opponents.

As can be seen, the participants in the closed chats use both contractive and expansive resources almost in equal measure. [However, as will be indicated in the next chapter, their counterparts in the open group chats tend more towards contractive resources.] As Martin and White (2005) have pointed out, Bare assertions normally presuppose an 'absoluteness' of value positions or even the reality on the ground, yet our world is full of uncertainties and a multi-faceted reality, as it were. However, among other things, attendant arguments belie this supposed absoluteness (Martin and White, 2005). Therefore, this study lends credence to the argument of the aforementioned scholars that speakers use Bare assertions to strategically close down the dialogic space for their dialogic opponents. The participants in the closed group chats use quite a number of Rhetorical questions to contract the dialogic space for their opponents. They have also used these Rhetorical questions in a variety of ways. While, for instance, some have asked plain Rhetorical questions, others have asked those which are classified as *hypophora*, whose effect, this study argues, is to clarify and assert their value positions. However, as has also been explained, some participants have decided to respond to Rhetorical questions, to problematize the presupposition or Concurrence which their dialogic opponents have indexed. This way, this



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study argues, Rhetorical questions assume the status of Expository questions, which are essentially expansive resources.

The participants in the closed group chats have also generously used resources of Attribution, which mainly expand the dialogic space. This shows that these participants acknowledge and are more open and accommodating towards alternative viewpoints (something that does not play out a lot in the open group chats, as will also be discussed in the next chapter). An example is when Wanyonyi starts his accusation with "*I am told…*" in Chat 2 (section 7.3). However, for the dynamism which language provides, not all resources of Attribution necessarily imply the expansion of the dialogic space. As can be seen in Chat 1 (section 7.2), for instance, Mwendwa has conflated a resource of Attribution with a resource of Endorsement in order to effectively contract the dialogic space for her opponents. Some participants have also used Bouletic and Deontic modals, which, even if expressing strong feelings, dialogistically function as expansive resources. Of note is how Wanyama, in Chat 2, has used 'let' to imply both a collective responsibility and his strong desire, when persuading his interlocutors (especially dialogic opponents) to 'stick together' and transform Kenya. Nevertheless, Wanyama seems to be aware of the fact that some of his opponents may belong to different 'schools of thought', and that, by dint of this, they might as well be diametrically opposed to him.

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The resource of Concurrence has also been used in different ways by the participants to contract the dialogic space. An example is how, in Chat 1, Muthoni Concurs with Mwendwa, only to Counter afterwards. As has been explained, speakers can Concur to show some 'sympathy' to their opponents. However, courtesy of eventually giving contrasting viewpoints, these same speakers effectively indicate an expectation of reciprocation from their opponents: to accept standpoints they would normally be at adds with. Another example is how, in the same chat, Mogaka dangles false Concurrence with Muthoni, but only to hit back more strongly and, thus, close the dialogic space for her. This is by way of *synchoresis*. Lastly, speakers also often Concur with their dialogic 'team-mates' in order to reinforce certain value positions and, in turn, close the space for those on the opposite side of their arguments. The resource of Pronouncement, which also works to contract the dialogic space, has also been used in different ways. The most noticeable example is when Mugambi uses CAPITAL LETTERS in Chat 1. However, more interesting is the way three other participants, who are also the most dominant speakers, Pronounce by way of making reference to their professions, to strengthen their value positions. As can be seen in Chat 2, Wanyama says that he is an econometrician to stress the



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primacy of numbers, more of which President Uhuru had than Raila Odinga. Mogaka, on the other hand, objects to this, saying he is a critical discourse analyst and that the reality (numbers) Wanyama is relying on can be socially constructed, especially since the biometric system reportedly failed. Lastly, Mwendwa too says she is a conflict analyst as she asserts that all Kenya is experiencing is superficial peace, which is a recipe for future trouble.

One participant, Mwangi, is also neutrally aligned. As can be seen in Turn 5 of Chat 2, he indirectly criticizes those 'warring' from both sides, asking them to support their candidates without mudslinging. Lastly, as has already been indicated, this study has teased out discursive strategies which participants have employed to engage with each other, and which, it is hoped, will be considered in the future as working dialogistically. These are *Likes, Silence, Criticism, Vouching for interlocutors, Expletives, Warnings* and *Shifting the dialogic topic*. Likes, also referred to as 'soft support', have been construed to work rather expansively. This is because they do not necessarily or obviously indicate that the *liker* is at odds with opposing viewpoints. Likers might still be open to other convincing urgings. The participants have used *Criticism, Vouching for interlocutors, Expletives* and *Warnings* to contract the dialogic space for their opponents. *Silence* and *Shifting the dialogic space* have been used as 'versatile' discursive dialogic strategies: they can either expand or contract the dialogic space. This study also points out that these two (*silence* and *shifting the dialogic space*) can also be used as face-saving practices, depending on the context. Lastly, participants in the closed chat groups have used vocatives to persuade, express solidarity and as redressive actions in response to possible Face Threatening Acts. Among the most notable examples of vocatives are the terms *Mrembo* [*Beautiful one*], *my sister, comrades* and *my friend*. On this note, Chapter 8, which presents the analysis of the open group chats, follows.

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# CHAPTER 8

# DATA ANALYSIS

# LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS: OPEN GROUP

## 8.1 Introduction

As has already been indicated, this chapter concerns the linguistic analysis of data from the open group: 'Baraza La Wananchi'. This open group has five different chats: Chat 4, Chat 5, Chat 6, Chat 7 and Chat 8. There were a total of 106 active participants, also generally representing Kenya's ethnic and political diversity. The open chats take place for a period of two years: from May 2013 (two months after the 2013 elections) to May 2014. This was one of the optimal periods to capture talk about Kenyan politics, also especially with regard to the ethnic positioning and positionality.

To be specific, this study has used Chat 4 – satisfactorily representative of all the other open group chats – to discuss the use of Martin and White's (2005) dialogistic resources. However, as has already been explained, the study has also teased out extra dialogistic resources, called 'discursive strategies'. As in the previous chapter, the discussion of these discursive strategies has been presented towards the end of this chapter, as Critical Reflections, and as following this order: *likes* and *laughter (soft support*), *criticism*, *mockery*, *shifting the topic*, *silence*, *insults*, *warnings* and *threats*. However, and for thoroughness, this discussion of discursive strategies transcends Chat 4: it incorporates a few extracts from Chats 5, 6 and 8. Just like in the previous chapter, I have also, here, emboldened particular sections of the excerpts in order to spotlight their dialogistic workings. However, here, a summary of the preferred candidates of the participants in Chat 4 or any other open group chat will not be given in table form. This is because the chats took place some time after the elections, and they also dwell on such other things as others' perceived ethnic cultural beliefs and practices. An introduction of Chat 4 follows below.

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## 8.2 Chat 4

Chat 4, an open group chat, takes place two months after the March 2013 general and presidential elections. It spans a period of three days, from the 17th of May, 2013 to the 19th of



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May, 2013. Mureithi starts the chat with narrating some of the eerie cultural beliefs and practices associated with a particular community, which he does not name. First, it is important to note (as has already been pointed out in the Research Methodology chapter) that since this is an open group, and the participants are not known to the researcher, the ethnic membership of the speakers was inferred from their names. However, as has also been explained, not all names index affiliation to specific ethnic groups. In a case whereby a participant's name does not index their affiliation to a particular ethnic group, the phrase 'Unknown Tribe' comes after the participant's name.

Chat 4 sets off with a comment from Mureithi: a comment around which most other comments revolve. It is important to already state, here, that Mureithi's post is an overture to discussions which are rife with ethnic prejudice, stereotyping and polarisation. It has also been mentioned elsewhere in this study that Kenya is a hotbed of ethnic polarisation. Mureithi, a Kikuyu speaker, describes a certain group of people as habouring weird beliefs and also engaging in weird practices. It can be stated that Mureithi's statements crassly smack of ethnic stereotyping and even hatred. Unsurprisingly, it is Kikuyu participants, at least going by their names, who respond enthusiastically and approvingly to Mureithi's post. More and more Kikuyu speakers chip in, adding to Mureithi's narration of the weird cultural beliefs and practices of the ethnic group in question. Interestingly, speakers with Luo names hit back, with some of them also accusing Kikuyus of engaging in nasty cultural practices. While speakers do not mention any specific tribe or ethnic community by name, it becomes clearer and clearer that the posts are taking an ethnic dimension, and that, generally, it is the Kikuyus who are pitted against the Luos. Given the rife ethnic polarisation in the country, this does not come as a surprise.

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Turn 1: Mureithi (Kikuyu):
**There is a region in Kenya when one dies, they wash the corpse and keep the dirty water. Each time they cook for guests, they add a small amount of the water into the food or drinks like tea or porridge as they cook.**
**This is meant to kill whoever bewitched the dead person because they believe there is no death without a witch.**

Turn 2: Mbugua (Kikuyu):
Mbugua likes this

Turn 3, Kimani (Kikuyu):
I **think** is people of… Kari aka ihee.. [the sitting of the uncircumcised (boys)]

Turn 4, Tom (Unknown Tribe):
Where particularly is that?



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Turn 5, Njuguna (Kikuyu):
**Who** has missing front teeth like a combra ,**who** adores a paython [python], **who** fucks tha [the] dead, style up **yu [you] are a disgrace on this land** !

Turn 6, Kathoki (Kamba):
Hehehe….

Turn 7, Aluoch (Luo):
**U [You] again??**

Two of the most outstanding features about Turn 1 (of Chat 4) is that it has been packaged in **Bare assertions**, and also presented as a *third person narrative*. With the use of bare assertions, the narrator, Mureithi, can be said to want to come across as 'oblivious' of alternative realities or viewpoints. If, for instance, Mureithi were to give the narrative as a thought or suspicion about the group of people he is talking of, he would appear cognizant of existing alternative value positions. However, by dint of the categorical assertions he has used in this chat, Mureithi intends his propositions to be read as absolute truths. As a corollary of this, therefore, Mureithi is proactively closing down the dialogic space for those who could be on the opposite side of his argument. In the same way, he is leading those who could be dithering.

The following are the presuppositions about the group of people which Mureithi is describing: First, this specific group of people are wicked and ungodly; they are witches and wizards. This is because they are capable of killing others (or each other). Secondly, this specific group of people is so superstitious and gross that they believe death is always caused by another person or other people. Thirdly, they are so malicious and cruel that they treat everyone to a taste of dirt from a corpse, in their endeavour to find the supposed killer. Lastly, they are so vengeful and murderous that they seek to put to death the supposed killer. Mureithi, for so categorically describing this specific group of people, has not given them – or their defenders or sympathisers – any wriggling space to defend them(selves). He has, by so doing, slammed the 'dialogic door' on their faces.

Effectively, also, Mureithi seems to present the group in question as people who are undesirable. It will be easy for those agreeing with, or convinced by, Mureithi to be filled with resentment for this 'undesirable' group of people.

To unveil the identity of the people Mureithi has described in Turn 1, this study suggests that it cannot have been Kikuyus. First, even if the narrator has impersonalized himself, the post



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already has his name as Mureithi. The name Mureithi is Kikuyu, and, in the narrative, he has presented his characters as 'they', as opposed to 'we'. According to Tajfel's (1981;1984) Social Identity Theory (SIT), individuals or groups generally categorize themselves as ingroups and others as outgroups (Billig, 2003). Secondly, and according to this SIT, rarely do speakers talk so negatively about themselves. Normally, participants will favour their own group as they discriminate "against members of the outgroup" (Billig, 2003:237). Therefore, Mureithi is definitely othering those he is incriminating in his post. However, and cleverly so, Mureithi appears to package his narrative as a riddle. In other words, he does not give the actual identity of the weird group of people he has incriminatingly described. He has only said "There is a region in Kenya…" to refer to this group of people. According to Danler (2005), this omission is strategically safe; Mureithi will not have to justify his claims or defend himself for he has not named the people he is describing or accusing so. Neither does he give the source of his information. Therefore, even if he has presented his accusations as absolute truths, he does nothing else to ground the accusations, commit himself or show any responsibility over them.

However, to give support to Mureithi and, in the process, help us figure out who this group of people are, other Kikuyu participants on the chat speak out. First, as can be seen in Turn 2, Mbugua clicks the 'like' button. 'Liking' has been described as a type of discursive strategy, and it will be discussed in the next section. Secondly, in Turn 3, Kimani makes reference to the 'uncircumcised boys'. As has been discussed here already, Luos have been taunted because they have not traditionally circumcised their men. And, more often than not, Kikuyus are known to capitalize on this situation. Lastly, as shown in Turn 5, Njuguna has made reference to 'having sex with corpses'. As can also be seen in the addendum, Kosgei, a Kalenjin, has also accused Luos of "having sex with corpses" in the seventh point in Turn 1 of Chat 5. Therefore, it can be deduced that Mureithi has only targeted Luos in his riddle.

In Turn 3, Kimani, a fellow Kikuyu (of Mureithi) responds with "I think is people of…. Karia ka ihee.." 'Karia ka ihee' is a Kikuyu phrase meaning 'the sitting of the uncircumcised boys'. The verb 'think' is expansive in nature. With "I think", Kimani seems to **Entertain** the fact that his answer may be wrong. However, this study argues that even in situations where there is no possibility of doubt or other alternatives, a speaker could still give their proposition as only a possibility among others. In this case, for instance, Kimani uses 'I think' just for rhetorical effect. To explain, he does so to play along; Mureithi has just presented his narration as a riddle; normally, riddles seek answers, which are given unassertively, waiting for the



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determination by the one asking the riddle. Interestingly, Kimani only gives the identity of the people Mureithi is asking about in the Kikuyu language. He has said: "I think is people of… 'Kari aka ihee'.. 'Karia aka ihee' is a phrase in Kikuyu meaning 'the sitting of the uncircumcised (boys) or the uncircumcised ones'. This is telling enough; Kimani must have deduced that Mureithi is his fellow Kikuyu.

In addition, Kimani's answer also confirms a history of Kikuyus disparaging Luos as being inferior on the basis of not circumcising. As has also been explained under the Ethnicity chapter, circumcision is looked at and practised by many Kenyan ethnic communities as a marker of transition from childhood to adulthood. It is this ethnic belief and practice, thus, which Kimani uses unilaterally to judge and mock Luo men as 'inferior' or 'boys'. So far, to make comparisons, the participants in the open chats are more offensive, and have little regard for their opponents' face. For instance, here, in addition to Mureithi describing the 'other' group disparagingly and Mbugua liking the post, Kimani builds on that and describes the same group as being 'uncircumcised boys' as opposed to simply 'men or people'. Thus, as opposed to the closed group chats, where participants often use vocatives, the participants in the open group chats tend towards Face Threatening Acts (FTAs). This study suggests that, in addition to showing spite, contempt and hatred, the FTAs also work towards shutting down the dialogic space for ethnic and political opponents. These FTAs are similar to insults, which, as will be discussed in the next section (under discursive strategies), are also appropriated to contract the dialogic space for the opponents.

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The next speaker, Tom, seemingly asks an innocent question in Turn 4: "Where particularly is that?" Therefore, it can be said that Tom does not appear to be privy to the information which the previous participants are sharing. Note also that his name does not indicate affiliation to any particular ethnic community in Kenya. He is to appear again in Turn 8, which will be discussed below.

In Turn 5, Njuguna, another Kikuyu, joins in, laying siege to the Luos, who seem to be the target of an attack by Kikuyus, so far. Njuguna models his statements along Mureithi's, to indicate a continuation of the long 'riddle'. His first four statements are descriptions of the group of people whom his earlier interlocutors are talking about (presumably Luos). However, he starts each of the statements with 'Who…'. For instance, in his first statement, he goes: "Who has missing front teeth like a combra [cobra]". By replacing the identity of this group of



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people he is attacking with the indefinite relative pronoun 'who', Njuguna is obviously playing safe. Now, the other interlocutors are supposed to infer who the topic of discussion is. Better still, their identity should be common knowledge. To be sure, in his descriptions, Njuguna is accusing this same group (presumably Luos) of bizarre cultural practices.

One such accusation is that the 'Luos have sex with corpses'. As can be seen in his first two statements, Njuguna also associates Luos with snakes. First, he makes reference to their perceived cultural practice of removing their (front) teeth, perhaps to mark adulthood. To show his disapproval of this, Njuguna says this removal of teeth makes them look like the cobra (the snake). This is another FTA, which is in form of negative assessment (Snow, 2005). This shows Njuguna's dis-alignment with his Luo targets. Njuguna also makes reference to 'Omweri': a mythical snake, which Luos supposedly regard as having divine powers. This is the second way in which he associates Luos with snakes. This helps to depict Luos as being weird, retrogressive and even evil. In his last statement, Njuguna concludes that Luos "are a disgrace on this land." Note that Njuguna also presents his views in bare assertions. By so doing, he is contracting the dialogic space for his opponents (Luos and/or those sympathising with Luos). Bare assertions, as has been already been stated, present the speaker as capturing the true reflection of the reality on the ground. As a corollary, Njuguna intends that people take what he is saying for the absolute truth. Anything else which opposes the value positions in his bare assertions ought not to be accepted or taken seriously.

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In Turn 6, Kathoki, a Kamba speaker simply laughs: "Hehehe". Laughter has not been covered by Martin and White (2005) as a dialogistic resource. However, it has been covered in the previous chapter, under discursive strategies, and as constituting soft support. Next, in Turn 7, Aluoch, a Luo, asks what seems to be a rhetorical question: "U [You] again??" The fact that Aluoch is Luo persuades this study to suggest that, with her question, she is expressing aversion to the mockery (her fellow) Luos are being subjected to. This study also infers that, by not being specific with her question, Aluoch is softly reprimanding one of the Kikuyu speakers who have expressed their hatred for Luos in the previous turns. There are two ways in which Aluoch has not been specific with her question. One, she does not name the person she is referring to or addressing. Two, she does not indicate why she is admonishing or asking the question. By so doing, Aluoch seems to tacitly warn the person. Chances are that Aluoch may have interacted with this person on another group chat; in the same way, now, this person will



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quietly know that it is them Aluoch is addressing. That is why this study suggests that Aluoch could possibly be softly reprimanding this person.

To explain the dialogistic function of her **Rhetorical question**, Aluoch shows that she has been following this person, and now, both her and this person are aware that the latter is only spewing ethnic hatred. Thus, there seems to be some tacit **Concurrence**. Now, Aluoch's addressee ought to realize that she disapproves of this ethnic hatred, especially as aimed at Luos. It can also be said that Aluoch's rhetorical question is conflated with **Disclaim** or a **Rejection**; Aluoch is in no mood to entertain this hatred of the Luos; this person had better 'knock it off'. Be that as it may, Aluoch may also be trying to save the face of the same person she is reprimanding. As has been mentioned above, Aluoch neither mentions the person's name nor specify what she is asking. So far, therefore, Aluoch seems to be the first person to employ face-work in a discussion that is highly likely to descend into chaos. However, this study notes, by not disclosing the identity of the person she is addressing or even specifying her question, Aluoch may not necessarily 'reach' or 'get to' her target. In other words, the indeterminacy her rhetorical question is couched in may well mean that none of her interlocutors will take responsibility, even if quietly.

In the turns which follow below, four other speakers (Tom, Akoth, Osem and Owino) challenge Kikuyu speakers more assertively.

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Turn 8, Tom (Unknown Tribe):
You people, stop stereotype thinking with the lakeside people. It is not true that they perform this things.

Turn 9, Akoth (Luo):
Talking of traditions, **who leave out their dead in the forest and go to bed with their animals?** And teeth the colour of mud.....

Turn 10, Tom (Unknown Tribe):
**This tribal hatred is bad**

Turn 11. Osem (Luo):
**how do they get used water frm [from] mortuaries?**
Turn 12, Owino (Luo):
ur madness in [is] back??stop exposng ur igorance & emptyness of ur head by postng wot u dont knw

As can be seen in Turn 8 above, Tom, whose role seems to be that of a mediator, steps in and asks the Kikuyu speakers "stop stereotype thinking with the lakeside people." He then vouches



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for the Luos: “It is not true that they perform this things.” Tom’s contribution is important as he clarifies that it is Luos who are the target of the Kikuyus’ attack. The phrase ‘the lakeside people’ is a reference to Luos. The Luo people are socially described as the ‘River-Lake Nilotes’. This is mainly because fishing has been traditionally regarded as their typical economic activity, since they inhabit Lake Victoria, among other waterbodies. Therefore, even if the phrase ‘the Lakeside people’ could be an indirect way of saying Luos, Tom has solved the riddle for those who might not have been in the know.

In “You people, stop stereotype thinking with the Lakeside people.”, Tom has infused a proposal with the system of disclaim: **Denial**, to be specific. While pointing out that proposals (imperatives) are less resourceful in language (than propositions), Halliday (1994) admits that metaphorical use of language is commonplace. In this case, for instance, Tom demands that these Kikuyu speakers “stop stereotype thinking…”. While making this demand, Tom also indicates that he has refused to acknowledge the existence of the things these Kikuyu speakers are accusing Luos of. He then concludes his turn with a negative assertion (**Denial**): “It is not true that they perform this things.” Tom is clearly implicating two voices: his and that of the Kikuyu speakers whose propositions he is opposed to. Therefore, he is contracting the dialogic space for them. What they are saying is not worthy of consideration. However, like Aluoch (in Turn 7) and, generally, the interlocutors in the closed group chats, Tom seems to guard against threatening the faces of his opponents.

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Tellingly also is the fact that it is Luo participants who react to or counter this ethnic stereotype with the most vigour. First, as seen in Turn 9, Akoth goes: “Talking of traditions, who leave out their dead in the forest and go to bed with their animals? And teeth the colour of mud……” Here, Akoth, a luo woman, is making reference to common banter against Kikuyus on social media with regard to some individuals from their community who have been reported to have had intercourse with animals. Now, this discursive event has been planted on (all) the Kikuyus. Because of this, Akoth can be understood as posing a **Rhetorical question** to indicate **Concurrence**: Kikuyus and everyone else should know that she is referring to Kikuyus, the easy culprits, as far as the accusation goes. Therefore, she has closed the dialogic space; no Kikuyu person is expected to deny the allegation or feign innocence. By the same token, Akoth is indicating that the proposition that Kikuyus are inhuman, irresponsible and even engage in bestiality is not at issue here. Verbatim, she has said that they (Kikuyus) “leave out their dead in the forest and go to bed with their animals”. She even describes them as having “teeth the



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colour of mud…" Note how, like her Kikuyu opponents, Akoth does not openly give their identity. This is tacit retaliation. Note also how, like her Kikuyu opponents, Akoth also 'essentializes' and homogenizes a whole ethnic community.

This exchange of ethnic diatribe prompts Tom to step in again in Turn 10, this time quelling the acrimony from both sides. He says: "This tribal hatred is bad." According to this study, this proposition falls under discursive strategies, which also function dialogistically. Of note, so far, however, is the fact that Tom appears **Neutral**. So far, Tom does not show alignment to any side of the argument. However, he shows his neutrality by condemning the animosity coming from both sides. His neutrality also seems to correspond with his name, which, as has been mentioned above, does not indicate a belongingness to any Kenyan ethnic community. Next in line is Osem, a Luo, who, in Turn 11, poses the **Rhetorical question**: "how do they get used water frm [from] mortuaries?" With this rhetorical question, Osem somehow turns Mureithi's ethnic stereotype on its head. Earlier on, in Turn 1, Mureithi had accused Luos of 'cooking with the same water which they have used to wash corpses in a bid to look for and punish the supposed killer'. By asking "how do they get used water frm [from] mortuaries?", Osem is clarifying that Luos, just like other Kenyans, take their sick to hospitals, in which, on dying, the corpses are supposed to be taken to the mortuaries. He also indicates that Luos take their dead to the mortuaries, wherein they are washed, before being taken away by their people for burial. Therefore, Osem's rhetorical question invokes a **Concurrence** or presupposition of a common-sensical practice, which, in turn, renders Mureithi's accusation in Turn 1 baseless. Osem, thus, closes the dialogic space for Mureithi. People had better know that Mureithi's are only concocted stories.

Turn 12 constitutes vituperations from another 'wounded' Luo speaker, Owino. Vituperations or insults, also serving dialogistic functions, have been described as discursive strategies. Below follow turns from nine speakers, as coming from all sides of this exchange, which is surely becoming more and more toxic.

Turn 13, Njuguna (Kikuyu):
**Kkuks ni research fulani tunafanya na animals**, na ikitokea tutawauzia kwa olyx. [**We Kikuyus are doing a particular research with animals**, and if there are prospects, we will sell you the olyx] **But even satan herself cannot fuck the dead**. **Let the dead rest in peace**

Turn 14, Korir (Kalenjin):
Wacha ufala
[Stop being stupid]



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Turn 15, Odhiambo (Luo):
nonsense...tell us why .uhuru paid anglo,uhuru blamed AG,uhuru ,uhuru cannot offer proper security and why must he continue

Turn 16, Tom (Unknown Tribe):
Do not respond to non issues raised. Where does uhuru come in here? Just say in simple terms that the OP is not true. When you react with bitterness it makes pple think that the post is true.

Turn 17, Njuguna (Kikuyu):
**What are natural condoms ?**

Turn 18, Wasike (Luhya):
Xperience unayo ama [You have the experience, don't you]?

Turn 19, Odhiambo (Luo):
**irrelevant baseless posts. with no facts is waste of time**

Turn 20, Olang' (Luo):
that's what your mom does

Turn 21, Muthuku (Kamba):
Sijawahi ona jinga kama hii [I have never seen such stupidity]

Turn 22, Akoth (Luo):
You would know @Njuguna, you use them to brew your liquor!

Turn 23, Auma (Luo):
**guys this is 21st century and all those cultural fetes have been washed by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus (may all the praise and glory be His forever and ever amen!)**

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As can be seen in Turns 14, 20, 21 and 22, some participants have resorted to vituperations and insults, just like Owino, in Turn 12, as shown above. Martin and White (2005) have not included these (vituperations and insults) in their Engagement framework. Therefore, as the proposition in Turn 12, these can only be discussed under critical reflections, as discursive strategies, towards the end of this chapter. The same applies to Turns 15 and 16, in which participants are shifting the dialogic space. For this reason, only Turns 13, 17, 18, 19 and 23 will be discussed below.

In Turn 13, Njuguna plays along with Osem, who has accused Kikuyus of bestiality (in Turn 11). Njuguna, indeed, **Concurs** with Osem: that Kikuyus engage in bestiality. However, he hits back with a vengeance, explaining that the Kikuyus will eventually sell the offspring between man and the animals (olyx) to the Luos. This is *synchoresis*, whereby, in an argument, the



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speaker **Concedes** in order to retaliate more emphatically against the opponent. Njuguna brings to mind Mogaka, in Turn 8 of Chat 1 in the closed group. Therein, Mogaka has agreed with Muthoni, only to use what Muthoni had said to hit back against her. In the same way, here, Njuguna 'owns' up for bestiality, only to retaliate by saying that Kikuyus will in turn sell their mixed offsprings to Luos. Obviously, Njuguna's **Concession** was not meant to 'bring his quarries (opponents) any closer'. The concession is fake; it is only meant to herald a fightback, probably stronger than the initial attack by the Luos. Njuguna uses Osem's weapon against him. By so doing, Njuguna uses the system of **Disclaim**: **Countering**, to be specific, in order to contract the dialogic space for Osem. By use of snychoresis, a speaker usually counters in a way that was unexpected, and possibly disarms or (momentarily) scores big against an opponent.

In the next sentence, Njuguna says: "But even satan herself cannot fuck the dead." Note the use of 'But' to emphasize the fact that, as he has already categorically asserted in Turn 5, Luos have sex with dead bodies. For this, he continues to contract the dialogic space for Luos. The negative form of 'can' (cannot) indicates absoluteness. Here, Njuguna is stressing how Luos are worse than Satan; they do what Satan does not. Njuguna then concludes his turn with: "Let the dead rest in peace". This study suggests that there is a **Deontic (obligation)** element inhering in the verb 'let'. In other words, Njuguna is desperately pleading with Luos to do the right thing; they had better leave the dead as they are; they should not mess with the bodies of the dead. Therefore, here, Njuguna can be said to expand the dialogic space for the Luos, but only with regard to them having sex with the dead. To put this differently, Njuguna categorically states that Luos have sex with them. He is only not sure if they will now stop doing it, even after he has exposed and warned them. The two subsequent turns (Turn 15 and 16) will not be discussed here as they belong to 'shifting the topic'; they will be discussed afterwards as discursive strategies.

Njuguna is not done with Luos yet. As can be seen in Turn 17, he asks: "What are natural condoms?" As much as this question appears innocent, weird or even out of context, this study argues that it is a **Rhetorical question** meant to mock the Luo men for not circumcising. Njuguna has used the metaphor 'natural condom' to refer to the uncut foreskin. Here, therefore, Njuguna is simply mockingly alluding to a 'common knowledge' situation (**Concurrence**); he disparagingly describes how (the penises of) Luo men would look; by so doing, Njuguna also shames Luo men on account of their cultural 'inadequacy'. He does not expect the Luo men to



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say that they have been 'cut' (circumcised). He is closing the dialogic space on them in that regard. Njuguna also seems to argue that the Luo men's uncut foreskins ('natural condoms') detract from their (proper) manhood. As a corollary of this, the implication could also be that Luo men cannot measure up to men from other ethnic communities. This might also play a role in silencing the Luo opponents on the chat.

Wasike, a Luhya, seemingly rushing to the defence of Luos, then asks if Njuguna has that experience. Probably, this study guesses, Wasike is taking Njuguna to task about his comment about natural condoms. Because Wasike's question appears to be rather ambiguous, nothing more will be said about it here other than the possibility that it serves as a disapproving retort. Retorts normally (not always) work towards closing the dialogic space for opponents since they indicate that the current speaker is not convinced by or aligned with the previous speaker. Odhiambo, in Turn 19, seems to follow Wasike's lead. He says: "irrelevant baseless posts. with no facts is waste of time". Here, Odhiambo **Disclaims** what Njuguna has said by way of **Denial**. He indicates that what Njuguna is saying does not exist; it is not factual. Effectively, Odhiambo has dismissed Njuguna's claims as not holding any water; therefore, Odhiambo contracts the dialogic space for Njuguna.

Interestingly, Auma, a Luo, says in Turn 23: "guys this is 21st century and all those cultural fetes have been washed by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus (may all the praise and glory be His forever and ever amen!)". Here, Auma makes reference to acculturation. She speaks of the fact that cultural beliefs and practices have changed with the times. Note how she invokes Christianity, which has had "all those cultural fetes" washed. Some Africanists may accuse Auma of being so brainwashed as to suggest that (all) African cultural beliefs and practices are dirty or harmful. In effect, however, Akoth's proposition functions to contract the dialogic space for those talking about at least the traditional cultural beliefs and practices of Luos by way of **Denial**. However, Auma's utterance is an instantiation of omission of an obvious marker for denial. No specific locution in Auma's utterance carries denial. A reader can only make out that Auma has negated this talk of the existence of at least Luos' traditional cultural beliefs and practices by dint of the ideational meaning in the utterance. That is, for instance, "all those cultural fetes have been washed by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus…" Here, therefore, the resource for denial is the entire utterance. A fierce critic of the Luos may also point out that Auma has made an admission that the cultural beliefs and practices associated with Luos may have existed or even continue to do so. However, this study suggests that it may



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also be the case that she is mediating and speaking on behalf of both Luos and Kikuyus. This is because, in Turn 9, Akoth, a Luo, has already accused Kikuyus of indulging in weird ways as bestiality and leaving their dead in the forest.

Turn 24, Wandeti (Kamba):
Talk abt Uhuru's failures, this is the issue we have not stories on fossilization !

Turn 25, K'opiyo (Luo):
central Kenya

Turn 26, Otiende (Luo):
This is what kikuyus do? tch. tch. tch. Stop it!

Turn 27, Anyango (Luo):
**Must** be an area around mt.kenya

In Turn 24, Wandeti, a Kamba, steps in, asking that Uhuru's failures be discussed, not traditional cultural beliefs and practices (which he terms as 'fossilization'). Wandeti is a refreshing addition to the chat. He is also a Kamba – a different tribe from Luos and Kikuyus. For this reason, Wandeti's ethnic background can be said to be 'neutral'. Be that as it may, he seems to take sides with Luo speakers: he is leading the discussion towards the direction of Uhuru's failures. This study has identified this as a discursive strategy of shifting the topic, as not catered for by Martin and White's (2005) Engagement framework. For this reason, there will not be any dialogistic analysis done here until the critical reflections section. However, descriptively, for identifying ethnically with Kalonzo (Raila's running mate in the 2013 elections), Kikuyus may accuse Wandeti of being another sore loser.

In Turns 25, 26 and 27, it is Luo speakers who partake, basically getting back at Kikuyus. This is not surprising. This dialogic exchange, largely acrimonious, pits Kikuyus against Luos, in the main. In Turn 26, Otiende asks a backhanded question to mean that he has now learnt that it is Kikuyus who are doing such weird things. Otiende is possibly making reference to both Mureithi's accusation in Turn 1 and Njuguna's *synchoresis* in Turn 13.

The 'central Kenya' response K'opiyo gives in Turn 25 is a reference to 'Central Kenya': the traditional province of the Kikuyus. In the same vein, Anyango, in Turn 27, mentions 'Mount Kenya': the geographical region which the Kikuyus inhabit (along with Merus). Anyango answers Mureithi's riddle thus: "Must be an area around mt.kenya." According to Halliday (1994), such high value modals as 'must' are less determinate than polar forms. However, this



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study, following Ondigi (2012), argues that, in actual use of speech, these high value modal values can work to assert a speaker's proposition. In other words, speakers would intend to use them as **Categorical assertions**, in order to remove any doubt which could be lingering in the mind of their audience. For this reason, therefore, Anyango could be using 'must' to show she is 'certain' of what she means, thereby closing down the dialogic space for Mureithi and other Kikuyu speakers or doubters. However, in this case, it can be said that she is doing all this to be vengefully malicious to Mureithi and his like-minded Kikuyus for attacking Luos. This is all for the sake of taunting: both sides know that these accusations do not apply to either ethnic community.

Below, eight turns follow. There is one Kikuyu speaker who takes three turns, and three Luo speakers, who challenge him, of whom one, Anyango takes two turns. As can be seen in this cluster of turns, the discussion takes another course, this time revolving around politics. And, unsurprisingly, the contentious 2013 elections are mentioned. However, the last Luo speaker appears neutral, negotiating a rare spirit of nationalism or Kenyanness.

Turn 28, Muhoho (Kikuyu):
**that water is wat [what] makes them remain 2 [to] be fools** n and] unable 2 [to] reason to an extent of thinking that they can impeach uk [Uhuru Kenyatta] with their mynute no.s [minute numbers] in both houses

Turn 29, Anyango (Luo):
**The fools they r [are] cant even rule a country**,cry babies always look for where to throw the blame,and makin wrong choices!!!

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Turn 30, Muhoho (Kikuyu):
**wrong choixes were made by thoz [those] who failed 2 [to] choose pple [people] who had the numbers** n [and] thus being defeated,thoz [those] r [are] the only wrong choices am aware of!

Turn 31, Anyango (Luo):
They won,why the cries? Why cant they deliver? Always looking for who to blame for all their mistakes,particularly the wrong choices they made!!!

Turn 32, Muhoho (Kikuyu):
the only wrong choice one can make is 2 choose jamaa wa katikati bw kalonzo who has about 800 000 votes 2 b a coalition partner!

Turn 33, Owino (Luo):
u [You] wl [will] dlver [deliver] nthng [nothing],**if he won the election let hm [him] tour KAKAMEGA** [an opposition county, generally]? 2002 wl [will] rpeat [repeat] tself [itself]



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Turn 34, Otiende (Luo):
Muhoho, **CORD is not an alliance of two tribes like jubilee**, but a nationalist coalition of all ethnicities--the true face of kenya. **Don't think you will ever rig again like you did in 2007** ad [and] 2013. Never!

Turn 35, Owiti (Luo):
**This country is so backward**. If other nations knew what people are discussing here they'd be in stitches, backward country this

As can be seen in Turn 28, Muhoho, a Kikuyu, builds on Mureithi's banter against Luos. Muhoho lends credence to Mureithi that Luos actually use the water which has washed corpses to cook food. He says here: "that water is wat [what] makes them (Luos) remain 2 [to] be fools…" Just like Mureithi, Muhoho employs bare assertions to contract the dialogic space for Luos (and perhaps their supporters or sympathisers). As Martin and White (2005) point out, **Bare assertions** are 'oblivious' to alternative viewpoints or realities. To revisit the example given above, verbatim: "that water is wat [what] makes them (Luos) remain 2 [to] be fools…", Muhoho is very categorical. Consider the predicator 'makes'. Muhoho does not use any intermediate modal, such as 'may'. Neither does he temper his statement with 'I think', to show his own judgement, perspective or guess. In Fairclough's (1989:129) words, this use of categorical assertions presents "the world as transparent".

Muhoho does not stop at calling the whole Luo community fools. He links their foolishness to their expectation to remove Uhuru, a Kikuyu, from power by way of impeachment, even with their small numbers in both the senate and parliament. The importance of this utterance is that it resurrects a political debate into the chat. Earlier on, when Odhiambo, a Luo (in Turn 15), brought up the issue of politics and blamed Uhuru for failing, Tom, the supposed mediator intervened (in Turn 16), admonishing him, saying Uhuru should not be dragged into the debate at hand. However, now, when Muhoho, a Kikuyu, talks politics, tearing into the Luos, Tom does not admonish. As can be seen, Tom only resurfaces at Turn 38, taking on Owiti, another Luo speaker. For this reason, therefore, this study suggests that Tom could only be a 'superficial mediator; his contributions are not as balanced as he might want to appear. As Martin and White (2005) point out, analysts can still read between the lines and decipher some speakers' subtle or subliminal alignment.

So far, it can also be noted that Kikuyu speakers are sharply pitted against Luo speakers. They are the most dominant of all the speakers, and they mostly trade insults and ethnic banter. This is very much unlike in the closed group chats, wherein Luo speakers and Kikuyu speakers do



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not come out prominently in the arguments. They, instead, tend to leave most or much of the arguments to speakers from other ethnic communities, notably Mogaka (a Kisii), Mwendwa (a Meru) and Wanyama (a Luhya). Perhaps, the Luo speakers and Kikuyu speakers are guarding against giving themselves off to their fellow participants as tribalists. It may also be worthy reporting that even if such touchy topics as ethnicity and ethnic prejudices are discussed in the closed group chats, interlocutors generally go about them diplomatically, often tempering their propositions with modalities, mental verbs (like think) and even vocatives.

Back to the discussion of the turns at hand, Anyango, a Luo, gets back at Muhoho in Turn 29, swinging back the word 'fool' to the Kikuyus. She says: "The fools they r cant even rule a country, cry babies always look for where to throw the blame,and makin wrong choices!!!" Just like Muhoho, Anyango has also used **Bare assertions** to close the dialogic space for him and his fellow Kikuyus and even supporters or sympathisers. Muhoho responds in Turn 30, using more **Bare assertions** to keep closing the dialogic door on Anyango and her fellow Luos (and even Luos' supporters). However, Muhoho, repeating what he has said in Turn 28, makes reference to the larger numbers which supporters of Uhuru have. He boasts about how 'his side' made the right choice with their numbers. Unfortunately, as Kanyinga (2013) and other scholars have observed, Kenyan elections are premised on numbers as opposed to policies or substantial ideologies. The two subsequent turns (Turn 31 and Turn 32) are basically a repetition of the two main current speakers who are at loggerheads: Anyango and Muhoho. For this reason, the discussion moves onto the next turn: Turn 33, below.

In Turn 33, Owino, a Luo, poses: "if he won the election let hm [him] tour KAKAMEGA…" This study suggests that with the conditional sentence, which is introduced by 'if', Owino invokes an earlier voice, against which he is positioned. By this token, Owino's proposition is a **Denia**l or **Rejection** of Muhoho's: that Uhuru won the 2013 presidential elections. Accordingly, thus, Owino is closing down the dialogic space for those whose argument is that President Uhuru won the 2013 elections (fair and square). These dialogic opponents of Owino include such President Uhuru's supporters as Muhoho. In Owino's proposition, therefore, there seems to be the presupposition to the effect that Uhuru did not (fairly) win the elections. This presupposition particularly inheres in Owino's conditional clause ('if President Uhuru won the elections'). Owino seems to remind his interlocutors of 'the reality on the ground': the fact that Uhuru did not win the suspicious and disputed 2013 presidential elections. It can also be said that Owino appears to dare both President Uhuru and his current dialogical opponents. In other



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words, President Uhuru needs to visit Kakamega in order to prove Owino wrong. Owino seems to suggest, therefore, that President Uhuru cannot visit Kakamega. To be sure, Kakamega is largely an opposition zone. However, Kakamega, one of the counties of the Luhya people, is not the most notorious opposition zone in the country. For this reason, this study suggests that there may have been extra information about Kakamega which the researcher is not privy to and which Owino has not disclosed on the chat.

As can be seen in Turn 34, Otiende, another Luo, builds on Owino's accusations, saying that their party (CORD) is the true face of Kenya while Uhuru's (Jubilee) only has two tribes: Kikuyus and Kalenjins. Note Otiende's use of **Bare assertions**, which he uses to indicate that his proposition is incontestable. For this reason, he joins Owino and at least other Luo speakers in contracting the dialogic space for people like Muhoho, who are President Uhuru' supporters. Otiende then concludes with a proposal: "Don't think you will ever rig again like you did in 2007 ad [and] 2013. Never!" Note, also, how Otiende packages **Denial** in the proposal, signalling his contraction of the dialogic space for those who are saying that President Uhuru won the 2013 presidential elections. It is also worthy indicating here that Otiende's propositions speak to the country's situation of ethnic polarisation, whereby, generally, Kikuyus and Kalenjins are pitted against other ethnic communities in the country. This will be discussed at length in the next chapter: Thematic Analysis.

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Though also a Luo, Owiti's contribution, in Turn 35, is refreshingly 'against the grain'. He does not take the side of his fellow Luos (to support Raila at the expense of Uhuru or to taunt Kikuyus). Rather, he laments that his "country is so backward." He adds: "If other nations knew what people are discussing here they'd be in stitches, backward country this". Dialogistically, Owiti has also used **Bare assertions**, thereby indicating that he would not accommodate opposing viewpoints. However, this study also suggests that Owiti has laced his bare assertions with criticism: another discursive strategy which has been teased out, and which also works to contract the dialogic space for opponents. For this reason, more will be said about the dialogistic function of Owiti's utterance under criticism in the next section. For now, though, it ought to be pointed out that Owiti comes across as one of those rare **Neutral** and patriotic speakers. With his admonishing remarks, Owiti indirectly expresses his wish 'that his fellow country-people knock off their 'petty wrangles'. Owiti warns that if the ethnic diatribe which abounds here leaks out, Kenya will be a laughing stock of other nations. The importance of Owiti, here, is that he is testament to the fact that even if Kenya is immensely polarised



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along ethnic lines, ethnic communities are not necessarily homogenized. Simply put, not every citizen's thoughts or actions are ethnically informed.

As shown below, in the next eight turns (from Turn 36 to Turn 43), four speakers, including Tom, engage. In these turns, the main subject seems to be ethnic mobilisation and the defence of ethnic elites vis-à-vis the masses or the ordinary citizens. Some utterances have been repeated in some turns, as has also been shown below.

Turns 36 and 37, Osem (Luo):
@Owiti:Jaramogi Odinga **wanted** to put this state into socialism whereby kenyans cud [could] be reffering to each other as COMRADES but Jomo **cud [could] not** hear of it Now under Uhuru pple are reffering to each other as KIHII [uncircumcised boy],DONKEY EATER:INGOKO [HEN]:JIGA [JIGGER] BITE;SHOGA [HOMOSEXUAL];OKUYU:MONEY WORSHIPER ,etc unlike Tanzania where socialism was embrased [embraced] tribes are not suspicious of each other

Turn 38, Tom (Unknown Tribe):
**Stop lying that its under uhuru that pple ve [have] resorted to name calling**. **Neither uhuru nor raila have asked their supporters to abuse one another**. These two leaders ve [have] always met and greeted one another. They only differ on matters policy and political differences. Its only the desperate poor man who throws insults and rages with anger to fight under the guise of supporting either uhuru or ruto oblivious of the fact that the effects of war ll touch him and not the big person.

Turn 39, 40 and 41, Osem (Luo):
@ Tom:**dont tell me** we dont have poor or rich pple [people] in Tanzania.yet the poor and the rich still call each NDUGU [brother/sibling].

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Turn 42, Achieng' (Luo):
**Ur [You are] so petty**

Turn 43, Tom (Unknown Tribe):
Yes they do elsewhere. **Carry out a study on political wars**. **Ve you ever seen war in rich neighbourhoods?** You ll only get it in kibera, kangemi, mukuru kwa njenga and poor reserves. Ve [Have] you ever seen casualties in rich neighbourhoods? **Only the poor meet the wrath of the bullet while running on the streets in the guise of fighting for either raila or uhuru** while their children and kinsmen are comfortable home. They ll never join you. My point is, its only the poor who ll [will] kill one another.

In both Turns 36 and 37 (which have been repeated), Ondimu tries to explain to Owiti (who, in Turn 35, has complained about the petty ethnic wrangles participants are engaging in) the cause of Kenya's ethnic problems. Ondimu goes back in time to when Kenya had just got its independence. He indirectly blames Jomo Kenyatta (Kenya's first president and Uhuru's father) for planting seeds of tribalism when he says: "Jaramogi Odinga wanted to put this state



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into socialism whereby kenyans cud [could] be reffering to each other as COMRADES but Jomo cud [could] not hear of it". Ondimu has also praised Jaramogi Oginga Odinga for having wanted to socialize Kenyans into socialism. Ondimu then implicates President Uhuru thus: "Now under Uhuru pple [people] are referring to each oother as KIHII [uncircumcised boy]… OKUYU [Kikuyu]: MONEY WORSHIPPER…" Ondimu significantly touches on ethnic prejudice and stereotypes which are plaguing the country. Note the use of 'KIHII', a Kikuyu word which means 'an uncircumcised boy': a reference to Luo men. Note also 'OKUYU', a nickname for Kikuyus, who are being mocked as people who worship money. To be sure, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga was father to Raila Odinga, Kenya's opposition leader. It is significant to note how, even if not directly, Ondimu makes reference to both President Uhuru and Raila Odinga, the main political rivals, whose ethnic communities are also mainly characterized by and represent ethnic polarisation in the country. It is also important to note that Ondimu, a Kisii, opposes Uhuru and his fellow Kikuyus. This speaks to the general situation on both the closed and open chats, whereby Kikuyus and Kalenjins are pitted against Luos and many other Kenyan tribes.

Dialogistically speaking, Ondimu has mainly used **Bare assertions** to close down the dialogic space for Kikuyus and their supporters. However, it is important to consider Ondimu's first statement: "@Owiti:Jaramogi Odinga wanted to put this state into socialism whereby kenyans cud [could] be reffering to each other as COMRADES but Jomo cud [could] not hear of it". As can be seen, Ondimu is simply reporting on both Jaramogi Oginga Odinga and President Jomo Kenyatta. Normally, the verb 'want' is a **Bouletic modal**; it indicates a person's desires or wishes; therefore, it is, in isolation, an expansive resource. Be that as it may, this study argues, when a speaker reports someone else as 'wanting to do something', they are categorically vouching for them. In other words, here, Ondimu presents Jaramogi Oginga Odinga as only meaning well for Kenya. Therefore, in so reporting about Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Osem is 'using a **Bare assertion**'. To explain it differently, if Ondimu were to temper his proposition, he would have said something like: 'I think Jaramogi Oginga Odinga wanted…' or 'Jaramogi Oginga Odinga may have wanted…'. In the clause: "whereby kenyans could be referring to each other as COMRADES", Ondimu simply leaves it for Kenyans. It would be up to Kenyans to decide on how to refer to other or relate, after being set on the path to socialism. Here, 'could' indicates Kenyans' choice, after Jaramogi would have empowered them. Note the categorical indictment of President Jomo Kenyatta by Ondimu in the clause: "but (President) Jomo (Kenyatta) could not hear of it". Normally, when 'could' and 'can' are used in the negative,



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they lose their modalization and assume **Categorical roles**. By this token, Ondimu disagrees with anyone who believes or will say that Kenyatta meant well for Kenya.

However, as shown in Turn 38, Tom rejects Ondimu's value position. He goes: "Stop lying that its under uhuru that pple [people] ve [have] resorted to name calling. Neither uhuru nor raila have asked their supporters to abuse one another." Here, Tom has used two resources of **Denial**. The first resource is 'stop lying', which, though a proposal (imperative), invokes an earlier voice which is now being dismissed or rejected. The second resource is the negative polarity set of 'Neither…nor' in the proposition: "Neither uhuru nor raila have asked their supporters to abuse one another". By so using these resources of denial, Tom indicates he is closing down the dialogic space for Ondimu, who he feels is misleading the others by trying to blame ethnic fragmentation and polarisation on ethnic elites, especially Jomo Kenyatta and his scion, Uhuru Kenyatta. Rather, as Tom argues, the blame squarely lies on the ordinary citizens (the electorate), who go overboard in the name of fighting for their ethnic elites.

To disagree further with Tom, Ondimu goes in Turn 39 (as also recurring in Turns 40 and 41): "don't tell me we don't have poor or rich people in Tanzania. yet the poor and the rich call each other NDUGU [Kiswahili word for BROTHER/SIBLING]." This is *prolepsis* at work. In other words, Ondimu proactively **Rejects** a proposition which he anticipates Tom to make: 'that the rich in Kenya (effectively, ethnic elites) do not necessarily incite ethnic hatred.' To show this anticipation, Ondimu uses the negative polarity 'don't tell me', another resource of **Denial**. Therefore, Ondimu is contracting the dialogic space for Tom by already 'nipping his opposing viewpoint in the bud'. To put this in context, Ondimu acknowledges that class differences exist in both Kenya and Tanzania, but he vigorously insists that ethnic polarisation is endemic in Kenya. He also argues that Kenya's ethnic elites are to blame for perpetrating and perpetuating ethnic polarisation.

In Turn 42, Achieng' charges: "Ur [You are] so petty." Like many other participants here, Achieng' uses a **Bare assertion**, which is also a criticism. Therefore, she is closing someone's dialogic space. She does not directly indicate who the target of her utterance is. However, this study infers that she could be hitting back at Tom and Kikuyu speakers. This is because she is Luo, and going by the trend on the chat, Luo speakers are generally opposed to Kikuyu speakers or those supporting Kikuyus.



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As can be seen in Turn 43, Tom mixes up his utterances, in response to Ondimu, his current dialogic opponent. Of note is Tom's second sentence, in which he asks Ondimu to "Carry out a study on political wars." This study suggests that this imperative, that 'Ondimu carries out a study on political wars', has an element of **Pronouncement**. Therefore, he says this to contract the dialogic space for Ondimu. To explain, the implication here is that Tom has already read books or other materials on political wars. As a corollary of that, Tom indicates that he is speaking from a position of authority. He depicts Ondimu as needing to be equipped with the same information so that they (Tom and Ondimu) can be on the same page. In his next sentence, Tom asks a **Rhetorical question**: "Ve [Have] you ever seen war in rich neighbourhoods?" He then immediately supplies the answer to the question: "You ll only get it in Kibera, Kangemi, mukuru kwa njenga and poor reserves." Here, Tom implies **Concurrence**. Refreshingly, Tom's rhetorical question can be classified into two ways. First, it is *erotesis*. Its answer is in the negative. In other words, Ondimu, his dialogic opponent, should already know that there is no war in rich neighbourhoods. Secondly, the rhetorical question is *hypophora*; after asking the question, Tom quickly gives its answer; war is only witnessed in poor neighbourhoods. By so asking (and answering) his rhetorical question, Tom emphatically closes the dialogic space and 'educates' his opponent. This is reminiscent of the first chat of the closed group, wherein Muthoni uses *erotesis* (in Turn 3) and Mogaka uses *hypophora* (in Turn 13).

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Tom continues to push his point: "Only the poor meet the wrath of the bullet while running on the streets in the guise of fighting for either raila or uhuru while their children and kinsmen are comfortable home." Here, Tom uses a **Bare assertion** to indicate that it is normal or expected for the protestors to be attacked or even killed by way of bullets. Therefore, he is contracting the dialogic space for the opposition (in the chat and in the country) by not problematizing the brutal force meted on street protestors. To contextualise this statement, this study suggests that Tom seems to be averse to picketing or demonstrations as a way of politically expressing discontent. Interestingly, however, peaceful demonstrations are recognized as a constitutional right of the Kenyan citizens. Note also how Tom makes reference to the poor suffering from "the wrath of the bullet while running on the streets…" As this study has already argued, though Tom gives the impression of **Neutrality** or impartiality, he subliminally expresses his support for the status quo. To explain further, the Kenyan state has normally used brute force to frustrate, harm and even kill protesters who are viewed as representing the opposition.



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In the next four turns (Turns 44-47), there seems to be no bitter exchange or disagreement. However, Turn 45 stands out for its rather unexpected content.

Turn 44, Ochola (Luo):
**Kisii**

Turn 45, Uezo Kenya (unknown tribe):
MAKE KSH10,000-KSH15,000 WEEKLY ON FACEBOOK.
WE WILL TRAIN AND PAY YOU AT THE SAME TIME. NOTE: NAIROBI RESIDENTS ONLY.
SEND YOUR CONTACT DETAILS (ID/PASSPORT NO. EMAIL ADRESS, FULL NAME, EDUCATION LEVEL) TO 0223344555, OR 0223344555@gmail.com TO BOOK AN APOINTMENT FOR A FREE TRAINING HENCE START EARNING IMMEDIATELY.

Turn 46, Wekesa (Luhya):
this is barbaric…no..it is witchraft

Turn 47, Omollo (Luo):
**well ii can see you are well informed so can you tell us the region..**

In Turn 44, Ochola, a Luo gives a rather unexpected answer. This is because, so far, the arguments in the chat pit the Luos against the Kikuyus. It would be expected, therefore, for Ochola to attack Kikuyus. In saying 'Kisii', Ochola seems to be giving an answer to Mureithi's riddle (in Turn 1). This is unlike K'opiyo and Anyango, who, in Turns 25 and 27 respectively, have hit back at Mureithi by giving 'Central Kenya' and 'Mt. Kenya' as the answers to his riddle. To clarify, 'Central Kenya' and 'Mount Kenya' are geographical references which are associated with Kikuyus, of whom Mureithi is part. Instead, Ochola only 'innocently' says 'Kisii'. To analyse this answer dialogistically, even if 'Kisii' is given as a **Bare assertion** (there is no modality), it is serving expansive purposes. Normally, when a riddle is asked, the answers from the audience can either be given as bare assertions, tempered statements, questions or even modals. However, 'they will all be awaiting determination by the one who asked the riddle'. Therefore, regardless of how they give their answers, the audience acknowledges that there is a possibility that they did not get it right. It is on this basis that Ochola's answer (Kisii) is expansive. To contextualise Ochola's answer, Kisii County has been on record to having cases where suspected witches and wizards are lynched, especially in public.

Turn 45 is a very interesting one. The speaker, Uezo Kenya, whose ethnic affiliation would not be established, seems to break away from the seriousness of the exchanges in the chat. This is



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a refreshing 'commercial break' Uezo Kenya affords everyone on the group chat. However, This 'commercial break' has been described as shifting the topic, another discursive strategy which speakers can use for dialogistic purposes. For this reason, nothing more will be said here about this turn. Wekesa, a Luhya, makes an appearance at Turn 46. Given in **Bare assertions**, Wekesa's utterances may be construed in two ways. First, they could be dialogistically **Neutral**. If so, this is a first in this chat. Wekesa could not be agreeing or disagreeing with Mureithi or anyone else on the chat. His comment is simply a description of Mureithi's comment. Second, others may see Wekesa's comments as urging Mureithi on and even reinforcing the fact that some people do what Mureithi has described. By so doing, Wekesa could subtly be closing the dialogic space for Mureithi's opponents. For those with ethnic sensitivity and curiosity, the assumption could also be that Wekesa represents those few Luhya speakers who are in support of Kikuyus, just like Wanyama in the second closed group chat.

In Turn 47, Omollo says: "well ii can see you are well informed so can you tell us the region.." This utterance may also be seen as being dialogistically **Neutral**. Omollo does not explicitly indicate whether he is agreeing or disagreeing with Mureithi. However, Omollo's utterance may be considered rather sarcastic. If the latter is the case, then Omollo is contracting the dialogic for Mureithi. To be sure, he could be daring Mureithi to go ahead and name this group, knowing that he (Mureithi) will not easily bring himself to doing that. This is a way of indicating that Mureithi is only concocting stories to spite Luos. Since most of his fellow Luos have taken offence with Mureithi's and other Kikuyus' remarks, Omollo may be looked at as following in their footsteps and, thus, dutifully opposing Mureithi and other Kikuyus.

Below follow the last two turns in the chat. The speakers are Ondimu, who speaks in Turn 48 (the same utterance is repeated in Turns 49 and 50) and Tom, who speaks in Turn 51. Ondimu and Tom are disagreeing. However, unlike most other exchanges on this chat, these two dialogic opponents seem to disagree respectfully; they do not trade insults.

Turn 48 (as repeated in Turns 49 and 50), Ondimu (Kisii):
@Tom **When Amin overthrew Obote the common pple celebratated** the same applied when Teferi Bante and Aman Andom overthrew Haile se lasie. The guys who were over throwned were not **PAUPERS** nor were they over throwned by **PAUPERS**

Turn 51, Tom (unknown tribe):
Times ve changed and any regime change **should** be through legal means, **anything similar to what happened lately in Sudan is unacceptable by all means**. If the 5 million that



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supported cord says yes to revolution, the 6 m that supported jubelee will say no. Then you ll see how far it goes.

Ondimu's propositions in Turn 48 are only in **Bare assertions**. This is an indication that he is remaining firm in his argument, insisting that the rich also engage in war. Therefore, Ondimu closes the dialogic space for Tom. To strengthen his argument, Ondimu gives the examples of Uganda (where Amin overthrew Obote) and Ethiopia (where Teferi Bante and Aman Andom overthrew Haile se lassie). However, as has been the case with many other speakers, Ondimu infuses his bare assertions with another Engagement resource. Note the use of capital letters in the word 'PAUPERS'. This is an employment of **Pronouncement**. Here, Ondimu is stressing the fact that the examples he has given of those engaged in wars (coups) were not paupers. This use of pronouncement – to emphasize a point – is for the sake of contracting the dialogic space for Tom. It will be interesting to see how Tom responds; he has been saying that the rich do not engage in wars with each other.

In Turn 51, the last turn of the chat, Tom starts: "Times ve [have] changed and any regime change should be through legal means,". As can be seen, Tom does not refute the examples Ondimu has given him. Rather, he finds refuge in "Times ve [have] changed". He then adds: "and any regime change should be through legal means". Note how he shifts from 'rich people do not fight each other' to "any regime change should be through legal means". This part of his statement corroborates the argument the researcher has made here that Tom subtly supports the current regime in Kenya. Dialogistically speaking, Tom uses the modal auxiliary 'should' in his second clause. The modal auxiliary 'should' is **Deontic**. It expresses **obligation**. Therefore, with 'should', Tom argues that anyone seeking to remove the current regime has a responsibility to do it legally. Tom is invoking the constitution to give support to the current regime; he also implies that the regime is there legally. Be that as it may, Tom seems to not rule out the possibility of other means of removing the current regime. Therefore, he can also be said to only wish that everything is done legally, not otherwise. By this token, Tom is expanding the dialogic space, albeit reluctantly.

As much as Tom does not rule out other ways (than legal) to change the regime, he is steadfast in his condemnation of such things as coups or wars. To indicate that he is not open to coups or wars, especially in his home country, Kenya, Tom goes in his third clause: "anything similar to what happened lately in Sudan is unacceptable by all means." His use of a **Bare assertion** above makes clear the fact that he is categorically opposed to a coup or a war. Therefore, he is



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telling Ondimu that he will not entertain such talks as those of war. He is, by so doing, closing the dialogic space for Ondimu. Tom's last two sentences further corroborate the argument that he is a supporter of the current regime. He says: "If the 5 million that supported cord says yes to revolution, the 6 m that supported jubelee will say no. Then you ll see how far it goes." While a lot of ethnic hatred is woven into this chat, there is also contestation over the winner of the 2013 presidential elections. For instance, as shown in Turn 34, Otiende, a Luo, has accused Kikuyus and Kalenjins of rigging the elections. Therefore, here, Tom has candidly shown the side he identifies with: that led by a Kikuyu president and supported largely by Kikuyus and Kalenjins.

However, as has also been indicated, Tom's ethnic affiliation is not known, going by his name. His critic could easily give two arguments. One, Tom may have undercommunicated his Kikuyu ethnicity so that he can support them 'quietly' while giving an impression of a mediator. This way, he may not be accused of being ethnically informed. Two, he could be belonging to another tribe, which is largely associated with the opposition. This way, he may not be accused of being a traitor by virtue of showing support to the current regime.

Having completed the discussion of Chat 4, which represents all the chats in the open group, this study moves onto the section of Critical Reflections, where the extra dialogistic strategies in the open chats will be discussed. In this section, relevant examples will be drawn across the board of open chats.

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### 8.3 Critical Reflections of the Closed Chats: Discursive Strategies

As has already been explained in the previous chapter, this study teased out discursive strategies which speakers used for dialogistic purposes. The following discursive strategies were used in the open chat groups: *likes* and *laughs*, *criticism*, *insults*, *shifting the topic*, *silence*, *mockery* and *taunts*, *warnings* and *threats*. As can be seen, *likes*, *criticisms*, *warnings*, *shifting the topic* and *silence* have already been discussed for the closed group chats. However, along with the extra ones, these particular resources will also be discussed here in order to account for different dimensions and dynamisms.

#### 8.3.1 Likes and laughter

In addition to like – as teased out in the previous chapter – this study proposes that speakers can use laughter to indicate 'soft support' in a verbal interaction. With 'likes' and laughter,



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speakers can signal which side they belong to and whom they are opposing (whose dialogic space they are attempting to close down). This study has described these 'likes' and laughter as resources of 'soft support' because they are less obvious ways of closing the dialogic space for the opponents which the prior speaker has targeted. This study proposes that by liking or laughing over a comment, the current participant already positions themselves as proactively being at odds with the target of the prior speaker whose comment they have liked or laughed over.

Chat 5, Turn 1, Kosgei (Kalenjin):
A person with a Luo father and a Kikuyu mother asked why Kikuyus and Luos fight and when this problem will end. I told them in order to reach a solution, a typical luo must accept and move on. Accept (1). His/her underclass status (2) Accept the fate has it Raila will never be president (3) Kikuyus are superior and that's a fact…

Chat 5, Turn 2: 5 (unidentified) people:
**[5 People (unidentified) like this]**

[As can be seen above, in Turn 1, Kosgei has expressed his contempt for the Luos. He has, among other things (as shown in the addendum), described Luos as being an underclass. On the other hand, he praises Kikuyus, saying they are superior to Luos.]

Turn 2 of Chat 5 has five likes. This is a confirmation of a celebration of the disparaging of the Luos and a glorification of the Kikuyus by some unidentified participants. Prior to this celebration, Kosgei has just torn into Luos, saying that a typical Luo should "accept their underclass status". In the same vein, he has said: "Kikuyus are superior and that's a fact". As will further be explained below, 'liking' has a psychological ingredient; it has a function of limiting the space for the opponents psychologically. In the same vein, the more 'likes' a speaker gets, the less likely it may be for some weak-willed or less confrontational opponents to hit back, even if only to reiterate their value position.

This way of closing down the dialogic space is considered 'soft' or 'safe' because the 'liker' does not necessarily say a word that may quickly and clearly incense the opponents. In addition, the likers' indication of opposition is reactive by virtue of being dependent on what will have already been said. That is why this study looks at 'likers' as 'living off' or hiding behind their teammates, who will have explicitly been at odds with opponents on their (likers') behalf.

Chat 6, Turn 11, Odoyo (Luo):
I HATE KIKUYU TO BE HONEST. I WISH I HAD AIDS NIWASREDIA [I SPREAD IT TO THEM] NKT [ONOMATOPOEIC WORD FOR CLICKING, TO SHOW ANGER].



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Chat 6, Turn 12, Boaz (unknown tribe):
**Hahahahahahaha** Odoyo my ribs!!! Ah jamani [an interjection of exhilaration]

[Boaz is in stitches because the previous interlocutor, Odoyo, has just said that he hates Kikuyus so much that he wishes he had Aids to spread to them.]

Chat 6, Turn 22, Boaz (Unknown tribe):
stop threatening ... no one is afraid of ur threats... pelekeni ma feelings Gatundu... Hakuna Hatred hapo he is just calling a spade a spade

With his hearty laugh in Turn 12 of Chat 6, Boaz seems to indicate some kind of support for Odoyo. While laughing in itself may not be indicative of any form of support, this study argues that written laughter (as opposed to actual laughter) is clearly voluntary. Thus, by making an effort to transcribe his own 'laughter' (as in Hahahahahahaha!), Boaz may be publicly showing where his allegiance lies. In this case, his publicized laughter may be understood to be a form of support for Odoyo, who has just said that he wishes to contract Aids so that he can spread it to Kikuyus. As a corollary, therefore, Boaz seems to show his opposition to Kikuyus: Odoyo's object of hatred. Here, just like 'liking', laughing emotionally or psychologically closes down the dialogic space for the opponents by indicating that they (or what they are saying or doing) are (is) not popular to (an)other participant(s). To further corroborate this, as shown in Turn 22 of the same chat, Boaz ends up standing up to those threatening Odoyo when he says: "stop threatening … no one is afraid of ur [your] threats… pelekeni ma feelings Gatundu [take your feelings of anger to Gatundu]… Hakuna hatred hapo [there is no hatred there] he is just calling a spade a spade." To put this in context, Gatundu, is in Kikuyu land, and it is Uhuru's ancestral home. Therefore, Boaz, just like Odoyo is showing that he disapproves of the Kikuyus.

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### 8.3.2 Criticism

Criticism basically refers to showing one's disapproval of someone's actions (as including utterances). Therefore, judgement inheres criticism. Along with criticizing, the speaker can also be said to reprimand, rebuke, protest, admonish, castigate, accuse or even blame. Sometimes, as one does any of these, they may also advise. While the actual resource of criticism is in Turn 35 of Chat 4 below, two earlier turns (Turns 1 and 9) are given for purposes of contextualisation.

Chat 4, Turn 1, Mureithi (Kikuyu):
There is a region in Kenya when one dies, they wash the corpse and keep the dirty water…

Chat 4, Turn 9, Akoth (Luo):



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Talking of traditions, who leave out their dead in the forest and go to bed with their animals? And teeth the colour of mud.....

[As has already been shown above, in Turn 1 of Chat 4, Mureithi, a Kikuyu, has accused a certain ethnic community of believing in witchcraft and doing weird things like using the water that has cleaned a corpse to put to death the responsible witch or wizard. Other Kikuyus have joined in the attack. Eventually, Akoth, a Luo hits back in Turn 9, blaming the Kikuyus of leaving their dead in the forest and engaging in bestiality.]

Chat 4, Turn 35: Owiti (Luo):
**This country is so backward**. If other nations knew what people are discussing here they'd be in stitches, backward country this.

In Turn 35 of Chat 4, Owiti shows his disapproval of what speakers are generally preoccupied with in this chat. For instance, Mureithi (in Turn 1) has given (cooked) stories about a certain community (perceived to be Luos) believing and engaging in witchcraft and vengeance. In retaliation, Akoth, in Turn 9, has accused another community (perceived to be Kikuyus) of leaving their dead in the forest as well as engaging in bestiality. Such harmful talk is sure to exacerbate ethnic polarisation and resentment and even put the country on the path of destruction. Therefore, Owiti, in trying to negotiate his patriotism, laments that all this talk is retrogressive and that it can only make their country a laughing stock for other countries. By so doing, he seeks to close down the dialogic space for those engaging in such self-destructive vitriol. The fact that he infuses his criticism with bare assertions also indicates that does not look at his compatriots' talk in any other way: it is harmful. By extension, it can also be inferred, Owiti advises that people had better discuss such constructive issues as development and respect for diversity.

### 8.3.3 Mockery

This study also observed that speakers can use mockery to contract the dialogic space for their opponents. Though related to criticism (by virtue of judging others negatively), mockery comes with some teasing, taunting or provocation. The speaker downplays the worth of an opponent or trivializes what they (opponent) say. Mockery can also be conceived of as a way of capitalizing on an opponent's perceived weakness, anomaly or shortcoming. By this token, mockery can also be construed as an FTA to an opponent's positive face and as conflated with criticism. Since it dwells on an opponent's perceived weakness, mockery can also be said to intersect with 'shifting the topic'; by mocking an opponent, a speaker may show an inclination to move away from the topic at hand.



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As shown in Turn 64 of Chat 5 below, Joshua mocks Kalenjins. Joshua could be retaliating against at least Kosgey (a Kalenjin), who, in Turn 1 of the same chat, as has been shown above, insults Luos and glorifies Kikuyus.

Chat 5, Turn 64: Joshua (unknown tribe):
**Kalenjins should just concentrate on athletics and farming waachane na siasa [… and stop doing politics]**

Going by Turn 64 of Chat 5, Joshua's judgement of Kalenjins (*Capacity: Political sensibility*) can be said to be negative. Here, Joshua should be hitting back at Kosgei and other (like minded) Kalenjins. As has already been mentioned, Kosgei has denigrated Luos in Turn 1 of Chat 5. Now, according to Joshua, since Kalenjin's comprehension of (national) politics is wanting, they ought to dwell only on such elementary (and, thus, easier and favourable) activities as athletics and farming. Note also how Joshua uses Kalenjins' talent against them; most Kenyan runners of international repute come from the Kalenjin community. By advising Kalenjins to leave politics and instead concentrate on athletics and farming, Joshua suggests that all the political talk given by Kosgei and other like-minded Kalenjins ought to be considered sceptically or cynically. By so suggesting, Joshua may also come across as criticizing the Kalenjins. For dialogistic purposes, even if Joshua is harsh towards Kalenjins, he appears to acknowledge that Kalenjins may still choose not to heed his advice and 'insist' on doing politics. This acknowledgement inheres in the deontic 'should'. For this reason, Joshua expands the dialogic space for his opponents: Kalenjins, albeit rather reluctantly. As much as Joshua feels that Kalenjins are 'not made' for politics, he understands that they inevitably have to partake in it. For instance, they have to choose their own representatives on their land, and they can also run for national offices. To add, there is no human being who is not political (Hay, 2007).

### 8.3.4 Insults

This study proposes that speakers can also use insults to close down the dialogic space. While they are (closely) related to expletives, criticism and mockery, insults are at an increased 'voltage'. While expletives, which are used in the closed group chats, for instance, could be slight, insults are more extreme, offensive and even far-fetched in nature; they are also usually directed at particular dialogic opponents. By their very nature, therefore, insults also have a proclivity to further shift the topic and even sever (any whiff of) solidarity (that could have been left) between the current speaker and their opponent. If they sever relationships, insults should also be construed of as serious FTAs to people's positive faces (Snow, 2005).



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Chat 5, Turn 1, Kosgei (Kalenjin):
A person with a Luo father and a Kikuyu mother asked why Kikuyus and Luos fight and when this problem will end. I told them in order to reach a solution, **a typical luo** must accept and move on. Accept (1). **His/her underclass status** (2) Accept the fate has it Raila will never be president (3) Kikuyus are superior and that's a fact… WHAT DID I FORGET?

Chat 5, Turn 3: Bruce (unknown tribe):
**You forgot to use your BRAIN**

Chat 5, Turn 7: Bruce (unknown tribe):
**You are the type that have to whistle in the toilet just to know which end to wipe. Moroon [moron]!**

[Bruce is reacting to Kosgei's message in Turn 1 of Chat 5, an excerpt of which has been shown above. Kosgei has just denigrated Luos, calling them 'underclass', among other things; however, he has glorified Kikuyus, saying they are superior. To conclude, Kosgei has asked: "WHAT DID I FORGET?"]

Chat 5, Turn 21: Obiero (Luo):
**Can i call this man stupid?**
[Here, Obiero is also reacting to Kosgei's message, full of hatred for Luos.]

Kosgei (a Kalenjin) has started Chat 5 by disparaging Luos. For instance, he says they are 'underclass'. This, in itself, is an insult. It is sure to elicit insults from Luos, or even those supporting or associating with Luos. When he is done disparaging Luos and glorifying Kikuyus, Kosgey asks: "WHAT DID I FORGET?" That is when, as shown in Turn 3, Bruce counters with the insult: "You forgot to use your BRAIN". The chat looks to be shaping up to be an insult-for-insult kind of colloquy. Bruce has not used any express marker for an insult; rather, he has used an ideational construction to insult Kosgei (Martin and White, 2005). If Kosgei is 'unable (or has forgotten) to use his brains', it means he is stupid or mentally challenged in some way. As a corollary, Bruce is not expected to take Kosgei seriously or even give him audience. Therefore, Bruce indicates that he has not only contracted the dialogic space for Kosgei, but that he has also shut it down.

Bruce is not yet done launching his broadside. In Turn 7, he continues: "You are the type that have to whistle in the toilet just to know which end to wipe. Moroon [Moron]!" Bruce has again used an ideational meaning here, only that he has incorporated a metaphor. Now, Bruce is saying that Kosgei releases excrement (shit) from both the anus and the mouth. Here, Bruce means that Kosgei ejects nonsense (verbal shit); nothing meaningful leaves his mouth. That is why, to distinguish the mouth from the anus, he has to whistle. By whistling, he will have been



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able to tell the mouth from the anus. Perhaps, it is only the mouth which can whistle (comfortably). Kosgei will then wipe the opening with solid excrement (anus). Bruce then caps it all by referring to Kosgei as a 'moron'.

Obiero also joins in with insults in Turn 21 of the same chat, expressly referring to Kosgei as "stupid". The importance of Obiero's turn is that he does not address his antagonist (Kosgey) directly. This study regards this (not addressing one's opponent directly) as an attitudinal stance, by which speakers can reveal that their relationship with the opponent in question have been severed. To explain how speakers use insults (in an attempt) to close down the dialogic space for their opponents, no audience would want to be treated to contemptible verbiage. While insults indicate that the speaker is getting irritated and annoyed, they can also work as hopeful scare tactics meant to shut down the 'estranged' opponents. Some participants may not wish to partake in discussions which involve insults. They may feel that the discussion will have already degenerated or they may simply not want to be insulted further. On this note, warnings and threats, also organically scare tactics, will be discussed below.

### 8.3.5 Warnings

This study also identified warnings as resources which speakers can use for the contraction of the dialogic space. Unlike criticism or insults, warnings are direr. While insults, for instance, are only verbally offensive and ephemeral, warnings are (could be) about real or possible eventualities that can affect people negatively. Below, the first two turns (Turns 1 and 6) provide the background for the third one (Turn 20), in which a warning is issued.

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Chat 6, Turn 1, Odoyo (Luo):
UHURU IS A CONMAN IN THE PRAYER MEETING.
1. How dare can this illegitimate president tell people to shun ethnicity; while he is busy appointing his people alone. If ur not a kikuyu, ur not a kenyan…

Chat 6, Turn 13, Odoyo (Luo):
I WISH I HAVE EBOLA VIRUS TO SPREAD IT ALL OVER CENTRAL [KIKUYU PROVINCE] WAKENYA WAKUWE NA AMANI [SO THAT KENYANS CAN HAVE PEACE]

Chat 6, Turn 20: Joseph (unknown tribe):
#Odoyo Be careful of what u say and what u post.....**ur comments amount to hate speech** direct. U dont have to post all this ...**plz keep it in ur heart if u need life**...my free advice dude.

[Odoyo has spewed a lot of hatred for Kikuyus. In Turn 1, he has referred to President Uhuru, a Kikuyu, as an illegitimate president, among other things. In Turn 13, he also says that he wishes he had Ebola so that he would spread it to Kikuyus. As has already been shown above,



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under the discussion of 'likes and laughter', Odoyo has also said he wishes he had Aids so that he would spread it to Kikuyus for he hates them. That is why Joseph is warning him.]

According to Odoyo, a Luo speaker, Uhuru rigged the 2013 elections, among other things. Odoyo also confesses to hating the Kikuyus so much that he wishes he had Ebola and Aids so that he would spread it to them (in Turns 11 and 13 of Chat 6). This is so that Kenyans can know peace. Odoyo stresses how Kikuyus are a problem for Kenya. This prompts Joseph (in Turn 20) to warn Odoyo over his hate speech. This type of warning is reactive: it is only based on what Odoyo has said. Joseph also indicates that Odoyo may be opening himself up for serious trouble: perhaps, even implying a possible jail term. However, Joseph seems to be more solemn when he says: "keep it (the hatred) in ur [your] heart if u [you] need life…" On this strength, therefore, Joseph can be said to be concerned about (or pointing to) Odoyo's welfare and safety. Joseph then concludes with: "my free advice dude." The vocative 'dude' (meaning 'fellow guy') may also add to the possible feelings of solidarity or concern that Joseph has for Odoyo. Because of this, it can be argued that Joseph is warning Odoyo over his hatred, which he has expressed so openly and in an unrestrained manner. Note the use of bare assertions in Joseph's warning. Note also the invocation of concurrence in the conditional clause "if u [you] need life…". The presupposition is that such hate speech would invite legal trouble or even life threatening danger for Odoyo. By so warning, therefore, Joseph appears to close the dialogic space for Odoyo. The Kenyan constitution clearly stipulates that hate speech is a punishable offence. In addition, Kenya is no stranger to politically motivated killings.

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However, a critic of Joseph may choose to accuse him of intending to threaten Odoyo, especially for incorporating 'if you need life' in his warning. For this, the suggestion this study makes is that, in some contexts, warnings intersect with threats. On this note, the next section is a discussion of threats.

### 8.3.6 Threats

While warnings present the speaker as advising the opponent to guard against or brace for an unfortunate or unpleasant eventuality, a threat makes reference to some punishment, vengeance or vindictiveness. However, like warnings, threats also work towards shutting down the dialogic space for opponents. Normally, as a result of threats, scared opponents might even withdraw or retract their statements or change their propositions or value positions. For comparison purposes, the participants in the closed group chats only went as far as using



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warnings to contract the space for their dialogic opponents. To further corroborate their politeness and avoidance of FTAs, participants in the closed group chats did not employ threats to contract the dialogic space for their opponents. Below, two excerpts have been discussed for threats. The first threat is proactive while the second one is reactive.

Chat 5, Turn 40: Ayot (Luo):
Kosgei is stupid n [and] will 4rever [forever] remain more stupid than anybody else in this world. On the matter of Kikuyus dorminating, **it's a matter of time b4 [before] we emulate the Nyaranda**. Just **continue with your pride b4 [before] u [you] fall**

In response to Kosgei (who has glorified Kikuyus and denigrated Luos, for example, in Turn 1 of Chat 5), Ayot, a Luo, in the second and third sentences of Turn 40, says: "On the matter of Kikuyus dorminating, it's a matter of time b4 [before] we emulate the Nyaranda. Just continue with your pride b4 [before] u [you] fall". This study suggests that, by writing 'Nyaranda', Ayot may have intentionally corrupted the spelling of 'Rwanda'. To refer to the people of Rwanda, he may have also strategically omitted the prefix 'Ba' in 'Banyarwanda'. The prefix 'Ba' is a plural marker, meaning 'the people of'. With this strategic omission and evasion, resulting into an imaginary 'Nyaranda', Ayot might have found safety. As already mentioned, ambiguity or vagueness brings about indeterminacy and saves a speaker from having to justify his incendiary remarks (Danler, 2005). Not many Kenyans, more so Kikuyus, would wish their country to go the Rwandan way: the 1994 genocide. For a little context, the Tutsis, the hitherto hegemonic ethnic community (just like the Kikuyus of Kenya), bore the most brunt of the Rwandan genocide.

Therefore, Ayot could be avoiding 'treason', if reported and charged in a court of law. Be that as it may, his intent is clear. He is warning and threatening Kikuyus at the same time. In the second sentence, he goes: "On the matter of Kikuyus dorminating [dominating], it's a matter of time b4 [before] we emulate the Nyaranda [Rwanda]." Here, he guarantees Kikuyus of ethnic cleansing that lies in wait because of their 'oppression' or 'colonization' of other Kenyan tribes (maybe with the exception of Kalenjins, their current collaborators). In the third sentence, he says: "Just continue with your pride b4 [before] u [you] fall". This softens his threat a bit. He gives a condition: if they choose to continue with their arrogance and maltreatment of other ethnic communities, the threat will materialize. Ayot's talk can, therefore, be said to discourage particular discourses (and actions) which may be in support of Kikuyu dominance over other ethnic communities. He gives a proactive threat; if the misdeeds of the Kikuyus do not stop,



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other communities will be forced to fight back and the consequences may be worse than what met the Tutsis of Rwanda. And, since it is human nature to keep away from pain, Ayot's statement is meant to make Kikuyus restrain themselves, in talk and action. As a corollary of this, Ayot is attempting to close down the dialogic space for such people as Kosgei, who are waxing lyrical of Kikuyu supremacy. The excerpt below discusses a reactive threat which has been issued to close the dialogic space for an opponent.

Chat 6, Turn 18: Tom (unknown tribe):
Where can l get this man so that **l can prosecute him with hate speech and incitement and under sec 132 of the penal code**...for undermining the authority of the president.

[Here, Tom is responding to Odoyo, who, in Turn 1 (of Chat 6, as shown above), has accused Uhuru of rigging the elections and killing Luos. Odoyo has also publicly expressed his hate for Kikuyus and his wish to clear them off the face of the Earth, in Turn 13, also as shown above.]

Uhuru's supporters, of whom Tom could be one, may not take to Odoyo's remarks kindly. Significantly, as has been argued above, in the discussion of Chat 4, and in the disguise of a 'mediator', Tom subliminally supports President Uhuru's regime. Making an appearance in another chat (Chat 6), in Turn 18 (as shown above), Tom threatens to prosecute Odoyo for 'hate speech'. As shown in the excerpt, Tom threatens: "Where can I get this man so that I can prosecute him with hate speech and incitement… for undermining the authority of the president." Tom may intend to be perceived of as a prosecutor, whether public or private. Since not all individuals know each other on such an open chat group, Odoyo could be up against a (real) prosecutor in Tom. Therefore, by threatening to prosecute, Tom is attempting to shut down the dialogic space for Odoyo. The fact that Odoyo goes quiet may be testament to the effectiveness of Tom's threats. However, the fact that Boaz springs to Odoyo's defence (in Turn 22, as shown in the addendum) is testament to the possibility that threats are not always effective in closing the dialogic space. As Sparkman (1979) offers, aggressive speech may instead tune up resentment in the opponents. Below follows the discussion of shifting the topic.

### 8.3.7 Shifting the topic

As has been explained in the discussion of the closed group chats, speakers mainly shift the topic for contractive purposes. However, as has also been explained, shifting the topic can be intertwined with silence. And, just like silence, speakers can shift the topic for purposes of solidarity or even saving face. As discussed below, this study proposes that some speakers have



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shifted the topic in order to contract the dialogic space while others have done so to only usher light moments into otherwise tense moments (or chats).

Chat 4, Turn 15, Odhiambo (Luo):
nonsense…**tell us why .uhuru paid anglo,uhuru blamed AG, uhuru,uhuru cannot offer proper security** and why must he continue

[Here, Odhiambo seems to be expressing his disappointment and disgust at the course the chat is taking. Many speakers, taking the cue from the first speaker (Mureithi), have chosen to engage in spewing ethnic hatred, stereotypes and prejudice. Now, Odhiambo decides that they had better discuss official national politics.]

As has already been explained above, Turn 1 of Chat 4 is about how a certain community believes that death is always caused by witchcraft and how the deceased's folks vindictively seek to punish the witches or wizards. Authored by a Kikuyu (by the name of Mureithi), this speech is supposedly aimed at Luos. And, as expected, other Kikuyus show support to Mureithi. In turn, Luos become defensive and even hit back, also accusing Kikuyus of engaging in some weird cultural practices. However, Odhiambo (another Luo) brings up or introduces a different topic. He says: "nonsense...tell us why .uhuru paid anglo,uhuru blamed AG,uhuru ,uhuru cannot offer proper security and why must he continue". Note the categorical use of 'nonsense' to dismiss all the talk of ethnic prejudice and stereotypes. Note also Odhiambo's use of the proposal "tell us why .uhuru paid anglo…" to push the chat to traction. Lastly, note how, in his conclusion of the turn, Odhiambo asks the rhetorical question about President Uhuru: "why must he continue". This rhetorical question presupposes the fact that President Uhuru is a failure who Kenya does not need. As can be seen, Odhiambo uses a mix of bare assertions, proposals and rhetorical questions to contract the space for his opponents.

With 'nonsense', a marker of utter dismissal and the imperative which starts with 'tell us why', Odhiambo strongly categorically directs people to move away from the silly issue at hand and focus on a topic he feels is useful: a discussion about how President Uhuru has (under)performed. This is not surprising as Uhuru is a Kikuyu and Odhiambo is a Luo. While Odhiambo is attempting to close the dialogic space around such issues as witchcraft (which has supposedly been brought up to spite Luos), he gives Uhuru as a better topic of discussion. This is especially so because he feels that Uhuru has not fared well as the Chief Accounting Officer of the Kenyan state. By so doing, Odhiambo can be said to close the argumentative space for



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the Kikuyus (as well as other Jubilee supporters). By extension, Odhiambo also encourages his fellow Luos and other supporters to start capitalizing on President Uhuru's failures as president.

Chat 6, Turn 28: Gitau (Kikuyu):
**Nani ako na charger ya Nokia pin ndogo [Who has got the small charger for Nokia?]**

As seen in Turn 28 of Chat 6, Gitau makes an unexpected contribution. All of a sudden, he asks about a Nokia charger. Whether Gitau really means what he is saying cannot be established. However, he gets attention. In subsequent turns (Turns 29 and 30), two people respond to Gitau: with one promising to help him out and the other wondering if such phones (as his) are still being used today. In any case, if Gitau's contribution has to have any dialogistic function, it could be for comic relief (itself a possible attempt at solidarity, by wishing away acrimony) or simply to close down the dialogic space, by trying to suggest that the current topic of discussion is not so worthwhile.

### 8.3.8 Silence

As has already been explained in the discussion of the closed group chats, a lot of indeterminacy inheres in silence. Silence, as discourse, also usually prevails throughout exchanges. By the same token, therefore, this study proposes that silence cannot be fully accounted for. Again, as has already been explained, silence can work towards closing or opening the dialogic space, depending on, among other reasons, the intention of the speaker and the communicative situation at hand. In the two excerpts which follow, it is shown how an interlocutor employs silence when taken to task about an issue he has suggested or alluded to. In this case, he uses silence as a contractive resource.

Chat 8, Turn 9: Kipkemoi (Kalenjin):
@ Kosgei Give us one example where the Kikuyus have voted for somebody else. Take one example in Kikuyu const. [constituency] when Muite and jaramogi were vying together in ford kenya. Kikuyus voted for Muite for mp [Member of Parliament] and for president they voted for Matiba

Chat 8, Turn 28: Kosgei (Kalenjin):
Thanks so much Mr Lameck, I saw that fool #Simiyu long ago but I chose to ignore him But am grateful you blusted him off!

As shown in Turn 9 of Chat 8, Kipkemoi directs his rhetorical question to Kosgei, asking him if Kikuyus are on record to have voted for someone outside their ethnic community. Note also how Kipkemoi has metaphorically served his rhetorical question in an imperative: "Give us



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one example where the Kikuyus have voted for somebody else." To emphasize his value position, Kipkemoi gives an answer to his own rhetorical question; he gives an example of Kikuyu constituency wherein Kikuyus demonstrated that they can only vote for their own. Here, Kipkemoi employs *hypophora* to close down the dialogic space for Kosgey. No wonder, therefore, that Kosgei does not respond to Kipkemoi's question. He 'takes a short break' from the chat, only to re-appear in Turn 28 (as has been shown above). And, when he re-appears, he only pays attention to Simiyu (who has spoken at Turn 7) and Lameck (who has spoken at Turn 26). He only joins Lameck in laying siege to Simiyu. It is also significant to note, as shown in the addendum, that those who immediately follow Kipkemoi are his 'team-mates'. They show support to Kipkemoi by ridiculing Kalenjins and Kikuyus (and the Jubilee party, by extension). This means that Kosgey must have followed these proceedings, which he does not address when he makes his re-appearance.

Therefore, this study suggests that Kosgey employs silence to wriggle out of the little dialogic space which Kipkemoi has shrunk for him. For purposes of contextualisation, Kipkemoi asks the rhetorical question to stress that Kosgei had better forget the Kikuyu votes he is banking on and boasting about. The implication, therefore, could be that, in the larger scheme of things, Kikuyus are only using Kalenjins to dominate Kenya (and even obviate any potential rebellion by other ethnic tribes), and that they (Kikuyus) should not be counted on to reciprocate the favour. Interestingly, Kipkemoi seems to be the first Kalenjin here to 'go against the grain'. So far, all other Kalenjins are steadfast in their support of Kikuyus. In turn, however, Kosgei uses silence to contract the dialogic space for Kipkemoi. By not responding, Kosgei may be understood to imply that he has dismissed the question, and that he holds onto his proposition. This is especially because, on his re-appearance, in Turn 28, as shown above, Kosgey insults Simiyu, one of those on the opposite side of his argument. However, as earlier mentioned, this study is only inferring; silence is some open-ended discourse.

To reiterate, accounting for silence can be a daunting task. It is especially so in a 'free-for-all' kind of exchange, like the chat at hand. To explain, for instance, we can more easily pick out an instance where a speaker treats a question or prompt with silence in more structured exchanges like a 'one-to-one' interview. However, in 'free-for-all' kind of exchanges, those cornered can easily seek 'refuge' in silence. In any case, it may not be easy to tell if and why participants have decidedly avoided a question by being silent or by not responding to it. Since there are many interlocutors speaking at will, the next speaker(s) easily provide(s) an 'escape



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route' by either responding to the prompt or even bringing up (an)other issue(s) and, thus, shifting the topic. For this reason, silence and shifting the topic can be construed of as working together.

### 8.4 Summary

The conclusion of this chapter is solely based on the discussion of Chat 4, as analysed according to Martin and White's (2005) dialogistic resources. Therefore, Chat 4 was taken as a representative of all the other chats in the open chat groups. This study observes that while the participants in the open group use both contractive and expansive resources in their dialogic exchanges, they rely more on the contractive resources. Notably, they have used the following Martin and White's (2005) dialogistic resources: *Bare assertions*, *Rhetorical questions*, *Denial*, *Epistemic modals*, *Deontic modals* and *Pronouncement*. However, this study has also teased out extra dialogistic resources ('discursive strategies') from the open group chat. These discursive dialogic strategies are *Likes*, *Laughter*, *Silence*, *Criticism*, *Mockery*, *Warnings*, *Shifting the topic*, *Insults* and *Threats*. For an exhaustive analysis of these 'discursive strategies', illustrations and examples have been drawn from all the five chats in the open group.

Of Martin and White's (2005) Dialogistic resources, Bare assertions are the most commonly used in the open group, as is also the case in the open group. While Bare assertions indicate a presupposed 'obliviousness' to the existence of alternative or opposing viewpoints, participants normally employ them to simply contract the dialogic space for their opponents (Martin and White, 2005). However, and for purposes of comparison, the participants in the open group have also gone to the extent of packaging far-fetched and bizarre accusations against their opponents in Bare assertions. A case in point is Mureithi, who, in Turn 1 of Chat 4 (section 8.2) uses these categorical assertions to claim an existence of a group with macabre cultural beliefs and practices. The observation this study makes is that the motivation to shut down dialogic opponents at any cost is far greater in the open chat. As also seen in the discussion of the closed chats, the participants in the open chat use or conflate Bare assertions with other dialogistic resources. This will be discussed below.

Rhetorical questions, as contracting the dialogic space, are the second-most used resources. Participants have generally used these to imply concurrence or common-sensical knowledge. And, just like in the closed group chats, participants in the open group have added ingredients



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of *erotesis* and *hypophora* to both insist on their value positions and nip anticipated opposition in the bud. The participants have also conflated Rhetorical questions with other dialogistic resources. An example is when Njuguna, in Turn 17 (section 8.2), mockingly asks: "*What are natural condoms?*" This is a conflation of a Rhetorical question and mockery. However, this study also observes that, just like in the closed group chats, some participants have turned or opened Rhetorical questions into expository questions, thereby expanding hitherto contracted dialogic spaces.

Participants also employ the resource of Denial to contract the dialogic space for their opponents. They have also especially infused or couched Denial in proposals. Though Halliday (1994) has indicated that propositions (statements and offers) are more useful for language, this study points out that proposals (imperatives, commands or instructions) too can be used a great deal, as participants in both groups have done. However, the study agrees with Halliday (1994) that metaphorical use of language is commonplace. This explains many instances of infusion of the different dialogistic resources.

Martin and White (2005) point out that dialogistic resources are not always either contractive or expansive. Sometimes, speakers employ neutral dialogistic resources. As seen in Chat 4, speakers have used a few neutral resources. A case in point is in Turn 10, wherein Tom says: "*This tribal hatred is bad*". While he effectively contracts the dialogic space for those who are exchanging remarks which are likely to rouse ethnic hatred and polarisation, as coming from both sides, Tom does not yet indicate (overtly) any alignment to either side. However, as has been argued above, he eventually shows which side he leans towards, albeit subliminally. Owiti, in Turn 35, also comes across as being neutral. Though indirectly, he criticizes the ethnic polarisation which is unfurling in the chat when he goes: "If other nations knew what people are discussing here they'd be in stitches, backward country this". As has also been mentioned above, Owiti is a good example of those (rare) Kenyans who are gravitating towards Kenyan unity amid ethnic division, prejudice, chauvinism and hate. Better still, he identifies with Luos by name. To explain, and as can be seen throughout the data, Luos and Kikuyus are the main tribes which seem to be at war with each other. The other tribes only seem to be playing the role of appendages: they are generally framed as aligning with either Kikuyus or Luos. That is why it is refreshing to have a Luo participant who is not going with this flow of antagonism.

With regard to the use of Martin and White's (2005) expansive dialogistic resources, which is much rarer here than it is in the closed group chats, the participants tend towards Deontic



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modals, especially *should* and *let*. First, however, this summary shifts focus to the use the Epistemic modals in this chat. As Martin and White (2005) state, such Epistemic modals as *think* normally show the 'tempering of propositions' by speakers. By so doing, speakers mainly acknowledge the existence of alternative or opposing views. In the closed group chats, speakers have used Epistemic modals to expand the dialogic space thus. For instance, in Turn 16 of Chat 2 (section 7.3), Mogaka has said: "*I think* your argument is very weak Wanyama." Note how Mogaka indexes or personalizes his subjectivity. This is quintessential of the exchanges in the closed group chats. However, the use of Epistemic modals is different in the open group chat. For instance, as can be seen in Turn 3 of Chat 4, Kimani says: "*I think* is people of…. Kari aka ihee." [*I think* it is the sitting of… the circumcised boys.]. Note that Kimani does not use 'think' to expand the dialogic space for any of his opponents. Rather, he only uses 'think' to answer his fellow Kikuyu's (team-mate) riddle. Here, thus, 'think' has been used as a conventional way of responding to riddles. Note also how, in the same utterance, Kimani has already used a bare assertion to describe Luos as 'boys'.

In Turn 34 of Chat 4, Otiende uses the epistemic modal 'think' thus: "*Don't think* you will ever rig again like you did in 2007 ad [and] 2013. Never!" Here, Otiende has only externalized the mental 'think' to his dialogic opponents. In the same way, therefore, Otiende has infused both the proposal and the resource of Denial to reactively and proactively reject the position of his opponents and also slam the dialogic door on them. Put simply, his argument here is that Kikuyus did not win both the 2007 and 2013 presidential elections; the Kikuyus rigged both the elections. It can also be said that participants in the open group expand the dialogic space for their dialogic opponents only reluctantly with the use of the Deontic modals *should* and *let*. First, in Turn 13 of Chat 4, Njuguna says to the Luos: "*Let the dead rest in peace*". (This is after accusing Luos of 'having sex with corpses' in Turn 5 of the same chat.) Here, the modal 'let' only implies an expectation, with regard to (good) norms. Njuguna wants to be seen as 'desperately asking the Luos to stop messing with the bodies of dead people. In other words, it is only up to the Luos to decide if they will stop this macabre practice. It can be said, thus, that using 'let' does not in any way lessen the incrimination in Turn 5 (where Njuguna has categorically stated that Luos 'have sex with the dead').

Secondly, in Turn 51, Tom, a covert supporter or sympathiser of the Kikuyu regime says: "any regime change should be through legal means". Note also how, in the same turn, Tom has categorically stated that the Kikuyu regime won the elections (with their 6 million votes against



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the opposition's 5 million votes). By so using 'should', therefore, Tom categorically indicates that the other possibility of removing the current regime will only be illegal and, in his own words, "unacceptable by all means". For comparison purposes, in the closed group chat, Wanyama uses the deontic modal 'let' very differently. For instance, in Turn 1 of Chat 2, he says: "let us be instruments of change." Note how, he includes every interlocutor in his use of 'let'. He also indicates that he too will be part of all this. Here, Wanyama is not only showing his polite persuasiveness, but he is also addressing both his dialogic team-mates and his dialogic opponents. On this note, a synopsis of the use of discursive strategies will be given below.

As has been indicated already, this study has teased out extra dialogistic resources, which it has described as discursive strategies. Those also found in the closed group chats are *likes*, *criticism*, *shifting the topic*, *silence* and *warnings*. Those only found in the open chats are *laughter*, *mockery*, *insults* and *threats*. While most of these are contractive in nature, some can also be understood as working to expand the dialogic space. For instance, by indexing support for a previous speaker who may have contracted the dialogic space for dialogic opponents, 'likes' may come across as contracting the same dialogic space. However, as has been explained, 'likes' do not necessarily insist on a specific value position: they could be open to taking a different stance, depending on how the next opposing speaker argue their point. For this, 'likes' can be described as 'soft support'. The resources of criticism specifically work to constrain the dialogic space. This is especially because they are fairly inherently judgemental. Though criticisms mainly constitute bare assertions, they at times include Modals and even Rhetorical questions. Once again, this speaks to the metaphorical use of language in the data. The resource of mockery, too, is specifically used to contract or shut the dialogic space for dialogic opponents. As has been mentioned already, some participants intend to win the arguments by any means necessary. As a corollary of this, it is not surprising that some participants resort to mocking their dialogic opponents.

While participants in both closed and open groups use warnings to try and close down the dialogic space for their opponents, those in the open chat have gone a notch higher and employed threats, which are direr or more solemn. Threats can be said to constitute condign measures for some wrongs done. A notable example is when, in Turn 40 of Chat 5 (section 8.3.6), Ayot tells Kosgey (and his rejoicing team-mates) that Kenya may go the way of Rwanda, lest they stop doing what they are currently doing. Threats, therefore, can be said to



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be naturally contractive: they already assert that the opponents have committed certain offences, for which they may be made to pay. However, just like many participants in both the closed and open group chats, Ayot is not very direct. This study notes that, at times, participants sought refuge in 'vagueness' or 'omission' especially when contracting the dialogic space for their opponents and when giving some incriminatory and sensitive information about them. This omission or indirectness, as Danler (2005) points out, helps safeguard speakers from having to justify what they have said.

Participants in the closed group chat have used expletives and swear words to express emotional outbursts, which this study considers contractive resources. However, this is to a small extent. On the other hand, participants in the open group chat use insults, which express more irritation or even anger, and which are also more personalized. By virtue of this, insults tend towards closing the dialogic space for opponents. For instance, insults may turn out, as intended or not, as scare techniques, which could function to shut down the dialogic space for opponents. If insults do not imply some non-alignment of sorts, they work to jeopardize relationships. For this, insults should also be construed as serious Face Threatening Acts. On this note, it is important to point out that in the closed group chats, participants generally guard against threatening their opponents' faces. In cases where they tend to realize that they may have done so, they try to employ redressive actions. Such redressive actions include vocatives and even assurances that they did not intend to 'fight' with their opponents.

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Vocatives have also been generously used in the closed group chats, even when there are no Face Threatening Acts. In addition, and as has been mentioned already, participants in the closed group chats generally pay much more attention to face-work than their counterparts in the open chat. For instance, they have tempered their propositions with resources of Attribution and Entertain. The suggestion this study makes in this regard is that participants in the closed group already know each other in person. As has been explained, they have been colleagues at a tertiary institution for four years. And, as can be seen on the group, they are still keeping their 'friendship'. Therefore, it is expected that they dutifully work at maintaining and sustaining the rapport which they have enjoyed over the years. Perhaps, because of this camaraderie and familiarity, they are bound to be more careful in the way they relate to each other, even in discussions of such sensitive topics as ethnic mobilisation or ethnic politicisation in a country which is so polarised along ethnic lines. A case in point is how, even if the discussions are mostly centred on Kikuyus and Luos, who are, in the main, pitted against each other,



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participants from these groups are generally modest in their contributions. On the contrary, Kikuyu and Luo speakers are the most dominant in the open group, and they mostly 'go for each others' jugulars'.

To conclude, Goffman (1967:13) states that "members of every social circle may be expected to have some knowledge of face-work and some experience in its use." However, Goffman (1967) also admits that face-work is a tact, which also depends a lot on a speaker's perceptiveness. As Goffman (1967:67) explains, a speaker "must first become aware of the interpretations that others may have placed upon his acts and the interpretations that he ought perhaps to place upon theirs." That is why, as Goffman (1967) further explains, a person keen on face-work constantly modifies their acts or lines, prescriptively and proscriptively. However, or for this reason, this study argues that the paucity of face-saving practices in the open chat groups does not necessarily correspond to the participants' ignorance or lack of this capacity or skill. No wonder Goffman (1967) concludes that it is one thing to possess these capacities (perceptiveness and social skill) and another to be willing to use them. As has already been mentioned above, most (if not, possibly, all) of the participants in the open group may not share reasonable social capital with their interlocutors. If this is the case, they will, worse still, be less inclined to make an effort of guarding against Face Threatening Acts, especially as directed towards opposing ethnic or political groups.

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Lastly, as can also be observed, the open group is generally a rancorous exchange. The importance of this is that it points towards the hotbed of ethnic prejudice and polarisation Kenya is. This, once again, harks back to the main research topic for this study: 'the discursive construction of Kenya's ethnic categories in online political talk'. On this note, therefore, the next chapter, which is a thematic analysis, follows. To be sure, in Attride-Stirling's (2001) words, the *global theme* of this study is the discursive construction and manipulation of ethnic identities and categories in discussions of Kenyan politics on two Facebook sites. Chapters 7 and 8 have dwelt on the linguistic choices made by the speakers, as based on Martin and White's (2005) dialogistic framework, in the construction and manipulation of these ethnic identities. Thus, Chapter 9, which follows below, dwells on the *organising themes* and *basic themes*: those which reinterpret, illustrate and constitute the *global theme* (Attride-Stirling, 2001).



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# CHAPTER 9

# DATA ANALYSIS

# THEMATIC ANALYSIS

## 9.1 Introduction

This chapter is a thematic analysis of ethnicity in Kenyan political talk. Here, I explore how, in discussions about Kenyan politics on the two Facebook groups, participants use language to negotiate both their ethnic identities and national (Kenyan) identity. I also look at how particular speakers have discursively positioned both themselves and their interlocutors or other Kenyans in relation to ethnicity. In the same vein, I have also paid attention to the ethnicising discourses, ethnic stereotypes and even prejudices which the speakers draw on. As has already been mentioned, Kenya has a reputation of being an ethnically charged society. And, the period leading up to the elections, during the elections and soon after the elections, is one of the most prudent with regard to capturing the manifestation of all this ethnic talk in the country.

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The thematic analysis concerns both the two Facebook data sets used for this study: the closed chat group and the open chat group. As has been mentioned under the Research Methodology chapter, there were 124 active participants on both the chat groups. The closed group chats, with 18 participants, have been numbered as Chats 1, 2 and 3 while the open chats, with 106 participants, have been numbered as Chats 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. Since the themes are common to both data sets, I did not see any need to separate this analysis as was the case with the linguistic analysis chapters.

This study teased the following themes from the data: *nationalism*, *ethnic membership*, *dominance/hegemony*, *culture*, *hierarchy*, *ethnic elites*, *reciprocity*, *territory/geographical region* and *ethnic polarisation*. These themes will also be discussed in that same order. It will also be pointed out in the discussion to what extent these themes have been linked to the literature on ethnicity (as its characteristics). However, it is worth noting, here, that each of these themes relates to and intersects with the others. What is more, these themes depend on and validate each other in many ways. That is why, in the discussion, certain themes may appear as if they overlap others. With regard to the actual presentation, each theme will be



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identified, and then followed by a brief explanation. This will be followed by data, which will be presented in terms of numbered excerpts, as occurring in the chats and turns. This is unlike in the linguistic analysis chapters, in which the data has been presented and discussed from turn to turn, for the discussion of Martin and White's (2005) framework of Engagement. This was the case in the two previous chapters because the discussion of dialogicality necessitated uninterrupted interactivity in the chats. In the thematic analysis, however, the excerpts have been drawn from all the eight chats, and according to the particular themes discussed. It is also important to mention here, that, since the themes intersect with and overlap each other, some excerpts have been used more than once. Thus, to avoid confusion, these recurring excerpts keep their original (first) numbers. Where necessary, the context for each excerpt will also be given before the actual analysis of the (piece of) data.

### 9.2 Nationalism

Nationalism generally refers to the spirit of belonging and being entitled to a particular country. This situation has not been considered a direct feature of ethnicity, especially in a country like Kenya, where there are many ethnic communities co-existing. Kenya, like many African countries, is inhabited by many different ethnic communities, brought together by dint of such phenomena as "conquests, decolonization and immigration…" (Ghai and Ghai, 2013:1). This study, lending credence to such scholars as Atieno-Odhiambo (2002), Ajulu (2002), Ogot (2012) and Kanyinga (2010 and 2013), argues that Kenyan nationalism hangs precariously in the wake of loyalty which citizens have to their ethnic communities. In the same vein, four ways in which participants negotiate Kenyan nationalism or patriotism have been identified in the provided data: checking (or criticizing) the state in terms of governance; calling for tolerance and unity among individuals who belong to different ethnic groups; guarding Kenyan sovereignty; and asking others to let go or forget past injustices (as pitting Kenyans against each other). In the first excerpt below, Mwendwa criticizes both a past government and the current one.

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Excerpt 1: Chat 1, Turn 1, Mwendwa (Meru): 28th February, 2013 at 0900 Hours

on 21 October 1946, late President Kenyatta made an impassioned plea for Unity. in the Nairobi newspaper edition - "Mwalimu" he said " I have nothing, not even a cent to give you. But with Unity even an atomic bomb cannot defeat us". **Fast forward today the family owns 500,000 acres of land , multibillion business enterprises, shops in the heart of London where even Lords of the Queen of England do not have**. Today I ask you to reflect on humanity. As Dida said a true leader will not eat until the subjects have eaten. **There is a problem with our System**, **we need a leader who can clean it up**. Today i make an impassioned request for Raila Amollo odinga he is a true leader who cares for Equity in Kenya! on 4th say RAO Tosha!



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This is a few days to the 2013, March 4th General and presidential elections. Mwendwa criticizes the first Kenyan president (who ruled from 1963 to 1978), whose son is now running for presidency. She is canvassing for her preferred candidate, Raila Odinga. This has also been discussed at length in Chapter 7 (section 7.2).

What is interesting in all this is that Mwendwa comes from the Meru community, which, as LeVine and Campbell (1968) point out, is culturally very close to the Kikuyus. It is worth pointing out, here, that Merus have traditionally (or largely) supported a Kikuyu presidency. Merus are also in an association (supertribe) called GEMA (Gikuyu-Embu-Meru-Association) with the Kikuyus (Gikuyus is their native way of self-reference). Thus, Mwendwa, in soliciting votes for Raila Odinga and publicly finding fault in the Kikuyu presidency (firstly, that of Jomo Kenyatta and, currently, that of Mwai Kibaki), appears to 'sever' her local ethnic ties for the 'benefit of the whole country'.

Below, the second excerpt follows, as pointing to calls for tolerance and unity among Kenyans of different ethnic groups.

Excerpt 2: Chat 2, Turn 1: Wanyama (Luhya): 6th March, 2013 at 1800 Hours
Comrades transformed into the Kenyan workforce,elections are behind us and the final results on presidential are coming on Friday or Monday.**Lets wait for the results in decorum and modestly**.
Those days at Campus,we never looked at comrades as communities therefore **let us be instruments of change**.**It saddens me to see how comrades are attacking members especially "Kikuyus"**.Kikuyus did register in large numbers and their turn out on 4th was overwhelming.Just pick a point to learn from them but avoid statements that border to hatespeech.

This post appears two days after the General elections, held on the 4th of March, 2013. The results have already shown Uhuru Kenyatta leading Raila. Uhuru is poised to be officially announced winner. However, Raila's supporters are cynical about the IEBC, the independent electoral agency.

Wanyama (a Luhya) depicts himself as a neutral speaker. This is despite the fact that he seems to endorse President Uhuru Kenyatta's disputed victory. First, it is significant to note that there are two presidential candidates from his Luhya community: Cyrus Jirongo and Musalia Mudavadi. Nonetheless, these two do not command as much support as Raila and Uhuru. Second, in the fourth and fifth lines, Wanyama takes his fellow participants down memory lane into when they were at the same college: "Those days at Campus,we never looked at comrades as communities…" Here, he presupposes that, back then, there was no ethnic inclination of any



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sort. Thus, by already vouching for everyone, he sets the standard so high. By the same token, Wanyama warns his former college-mates against negative tribalism; he does not want anyone to 'reverse on the gains the group has already made': staying clear of negative ethnicity. That is why, in lines five and six, he is saddened "to see how comrades are attacking members especially Kikuyus." He concludes the turn by beseeching the others to "pick a point to learn from them (Kikuyus)" instead of resorting to hate speech." Wanyama argues (from the third-last line): 'Kikuyus did register in large numbers and their turnout on (the) 4th (voting day) was overwhelming." Kikuyus did not only turn out in large numbers, but they also overwhelmingly voted for Uhuru, their fellow Kikuyu.

Of note, however, is the fact that Wanyama seems to imply that it is not problematic for individuals to vote for someone on the basis of ethnic affiliation. This, as will be discussed under the other sections, perpetuates negative ethnicity and ethnic factionalism. It can, thus, be argued that while trying to whip up feelings of nationalism or togetherness, Wanyama is reproducing discourses of ethnic politicisation.

In excerpt 3 below, a speaker accuses a certain politician of colluding with western governments in an attempt to jeopardize Kenya's sovereignty.

Excerpt 3: Chat 5, Turn 1, Kosgei (Kalenjin): 19th May, 2013 at 1000 Hours
A person with a Luo father and a Kikuyu mother asked why Kikuyus and Luos fight and when this problem will end. I told them in order to reach a solution, atypical luo must accept and move on. Accept (1). His/her underclass status (2) Accept the fate has it Raila will never be president (3) Kikuyus are superior and that's a fact… (5) There has to be superiors and subordinates… (9) **Raila lost election and is teaming with western govts to cause trouble** (10) We have Uhuru…

It is two months after the March 4th 2013 disputed elections, and Kosgei, in addition to disparaging Luos and glorifying Kikuyus, accuses Raila, a Luo ethnic elite, of being in cahoots with western governments to cause trouble. By so accusing Raila, Kosgei comes across as defending the sovereignity of Kenya. However, in the process of expressing this 'patriotism', Kosgei is not shy of inciting and aggravating ethnic chauvinism, prejudice and polarisation. He, for instance, reinforces the harmful notion of intrinsic lopsided relationships between ethnic communities, by depicting Luos as being Kikuyus' underlings.

Below, in excerpt 4, another speaker urges the others not to dwell on the past and instead forge ahead.

Excerpt 4: Chat 1, Turn 10: Mugambi (Meru): 12th April, 2013 at 0910 Hours:
DENIAL CAN BE SEEN. OR I IT SELF INDUCED STUPOR. **BYGONES ARE BYGONES**. **LETS FOCUS AHEAD AND STOP COMPLAINING**. OUR CONTINUED



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COMPLAINTS WILL MAKE US LOOSE MORE IN FUTURE. **FORWARD EVER, BACKWARD NEVER**. WHOEVER HAS A QUERY ON CAN VISIT A MENTAL PSYCHOLOGIST FOR ADVICE

Here, it is a month after the March 4th 2013 disputed presidential elections. Mugambi is asking his opponents not to use the past to criticize President Uhuru Kenyatta. He asks that people 'let bygones be bygones'. Intructively, and as already mentioned in Chapter 7, by virtue of being a Meru, Mugambi's support for Uhuru cannot be considered 'strange'. Here, the word 'bygones' is redolent of what Abubakar (2013) describes as 'selective amnesia', of which the state (constituting the Kikuyu and Kalenjin presidencies) has been largely accused. As Abubakar (2013:27) argues:

> The state institution's refusal to acknowledge this history distorts the past and perpetuates false memory in order to suppress an inconvenient past. Indeed, this selective approach to national memory and history is often justified by the state as necessary to retaining social cohesion and harmony.

**9.3 Ethnic membership:**

'Ethnic membership', like 'nationalism', has not been considered a main theme of ethnicity. However, this study argues that 'ethnic membership' naturally constitutes or consummates the notion of ethnicity. This study also observes that, despite the fact that they are Kenyans, its informants generally look at themselves and others as belonging to particular ethnic communities. This brings to mind the importance of emic ascription in the categorization of ethnic identity (Eriksen, 2010). Ghai and Ghai (2013:9) explain:

> Ethnic purity and exclusive identity are new ideas, arising from politics and unequal access to power and resources. There are not so many differences between the Kikuyu and the Maasai, for example; in earlier times they would not have been seen as so distinct from each other as they are now.

This study notes that this perceived 'exclusiveness' of Kenyan ethnic communities seems to reign supreme. In the same way, 'ethnic belongingness' plays a big role in what the participants say as well as how they conceive of what has been said. As can be seen in the data, there are those participants who have openly made reference to the fact that they or others belong to certain ethnic communities, especially with regard to the political discussions at hand. However, as shown in Excerpt 8 below, the tribute most communities get is a mere mention (in the list). Worse still, by virtue of and to reinforce invisibilization (Ghai and Ghai, 2013), some ethnic communities have not made it to the 'Honours List' of Kenyan ethnic



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communities. As has also been shown below, Excerpt 5, Excerpt 6 and Excerpt 7 concern some of those ethnic communities that are lucky enough to be discussed as being the main players, and as positioned differently in Kenyan politics (and, by extension, even other crucial spheres of life). The next excerpt is posted a week after the elections. Uhuru has been declared the duly elected president. However, the disputed presidential election results have been followed by a petition at the Supreme Court.

Excerpt 5: Chat 1, Turn 8, Mogaka (Kisii): 11th March, 2013 at 1440 Hours
@ Muthoni. **RAO is worse because he contested against a Kikuyu**. In 2002, he was your hero because **you used him to get votes.** That is the mentality…

For an ethnically charged environment like Kenya, it has taken long if it is the eighth speaker (in this case, Mogaka) who has to mention a particular ethnic community. Mogaka comes across as a Kenyan who is cynical about Kikuyus. He goes 'for the jugular' of Muthoni (a Kikuyu speaker) when he accuses her of demonizing Raila Odinga merely because he is contesting against Uhuru Kenyatta, her fellow Kikuyu. Mogaka may be bringing out a grievance (as shared by others) whereby Kikuyus are seen as staking an 'entitled' claim to the Kenya's presidency while condemning others to such collaborative or subordinate statuses as being 'kingmakers'. This accusation also concerns such themes as 'reciprocity' and 'ethnic polarisation', which have also been discussed in this chapter.

Excerpts 6 and 7 are posted two months after the elections. In Excerpt 6, Victor is hitting back at Kosgei, who has already spoken in Turn 1 (Excerpt 3), glorifying Kikuyus and denigrating Luos. Kosgei then responds in Excerpt 7, now adding that Kalenjins too are superior to Luos.

Excerpt 6: Chat 5, Turn 6, Victor (Unnamed Tribe): 19th May, 2013: at 1055 Hours:
kindly **stop defiling the kalenjin name and revert to your kikuyu name**, why are you not proud of your tribe to the point of using fake kalenjin names to pass a point, what a coward.

Excerpt 7: Chat 5, Turn 8, Kosgei (Kalenjin): 19th May, 2013: at 1058 Hours:
(Lines 1 and 2) Victor, **kalenjins are superior to jaluo**, we ruled Kenya and you never will. We are coming back

As can be seen in Excerpt 6, Victor accuses Kosgei of being a Kikuyu who has disguised himself in a Kalenjin name. This is because Kosgei, who has already talked in Turn 1 of the same chat, praises the Kikuyus, saying in his fifth point that "Kikuyus are superior" and declaring in the tenth that "We have Uhuru". To respond to this accusation, Kosgei, in Excerpt 7, now asserts himself as a Kalenjin supremacist, saying that Kalenjins too are superior to Luos. Kosgei also thumps his chest over the fact that Kalenjins have already produced a president for



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Kenya (Retired President Moi). He then taunts Victor, making reference to 'his' Luo tribe and declaring that Luos can never produce a president. By concluding with "We are coming back", Kosgei seems to guarantee that, soon, Kenya will have another Kalenjin president. Here, Kosgei is presumably referring to William Ruto, who is Uhuru's running mate in the elections and current Vice President.

Kosgei is likely to have labelled Victor (whose European name does not point to affiliation with any Kenyan ethnic community) 'Luo' because the latter has expressed his opposition to him in the previous excerpt. For a little background, in Kenyan politics, Luos (whose current ethnic elite is Raila) have come to be synonymous with the opposition; what is more, they have also variously been associated with radical politics in the country (Kanyinga, 2013). That could be why Kosgei takes it for granted that any fierce opponent or critic of Kikuyus is a Luo. Here, and currently, Kikuyus are generally associated with 'ruling the country'. In Excerpt 8 below, a speaker has decided to give a breakdown of Kenyan's main ethnic communities.

Excerpt 8: Chat 7, Turn 40 Nyadera (Luo): 13th May, 2013 at 1740 Hours:

Kenya Population by Ethnic Affiliation – Main Tribes

Kikuyu tribe – 6,622,576; Luhya tribe - 5,338,666; Kalenjin tribe – 4,967,328; Luo tribe – 4,044,440; Kamba tribe – 3,893,157; Somali tribe – 2,385,572; Kisii tribe – 2,205,669; Mijikenda tribe – 1,960,574; Meru tribe -1,658,108; Turkana tribe – 988,592; Maasai tribe - 841,622; Teso tribe – 338,833; Embu tribe – 324,092; Taita tribe – 273,519; Kuria tribe – 260,401; Samburu tribe – 237,179; Tharaka tribe – 175,905; Mbeere – 168,155; Borana – 161,399; Basuba – 139,271; Swahili – 110,614; Gabra – 89,515; Orma – 66,275; Orma – 66,275; Rendile – 60,437…

As shown above, in Excerpt 8, Nyadera, in an endeavour to discount his Kikuyu opponents' (Wambui [as in Turn 31 of Chat 5] and Mwaura [as in Turn 33 of Chat 5]) claims that Kikuyus are a big majority in the country, gives a breakdown of the main tribes. His main argument here is that Kikuyus and Kalenjins – current 'political bedfellows' – are a minority as compared to the rest of the Kenyan communities. However, in terms of representation, all the other tribes (save for Kikuyus, Kalenjins and Luos) appear to be passive on this chat. This is going by the African names of the participants or the sheer mention of their tribes. As has also been mentioned above and in the ethnicity chapter, some invinsibilized ethnic communities have not made it to Nyadera's list of 'main tribes'.



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**9.4 Dominance/hegemony:**

The theme of 'dominance' or 'hegemony' has also not been dealt with particularly as a main theme of ethnicity. However, many a scholar (such as Eriksen, 2010; Nasong'o, 2015; and Ogot, 2012) basically make reference to this situation, whereby certain ethnic communities dominate others in countries. It has also generally been reflected in the data that ethnic communities with large numbers tend to live off or exploit those with smaller numbers. In other words, larger numbers normally translate into political, economic and even other forms of dominance over smaller groups. In the same way, state resources and apparatus are used to maintain the status quo. As a result, tension builds between the two groups; arrogance and paranoia normally characterize the hegemonic groups while victimhood, resentment and rebellion characterize the dominated groups (Downing and Husband, 2005). Below, in Excerpts 9, 10 and 11, the relationship between the dominant ethnic communities vis-à-vis the dominated communities is discussed. The hegemonic enterprise is also discussed in Excerpt 12: in relation to appropriating state machineries.

Excerpt 9: Chat 7, Turn 15, Wambui (Kikuyu): 13th of May, 2013 at 1612 Hours:
(Line 1) Nyadera hehehee I disagree with you that Raila won.
('Point 1') 1.raila come from minority community I think 6th largest in Kenya.
('Point 3') 3.**Gikuyu and Kalenjin are among the majority.they decide who rule the country kenya. Without them you go nowhere**.

TOTAL LIES THAT RAILA WON.NI FANTASY. RAILA WILL AND SHALL NEVER BE PRESIDENT OF KENYA.HE SHOULD STOP DREAMING.**WITHOUT GIKUYU COMMUNITY HE GO NOWHERE**

In Excerpt 9 above, Wambui is disagreeing with Nyadera, who has just said that Raila won the elections but was rigged out in favour of Uhuru. To buttress his point, Nyadera has also said that even if they united, the GEMA (as including the Kikuyus) and Kalenjin groups, would not be enough to secure a victory for Uhuru. However, Wambui waxes lyrical of the numerical and political might of the Kikuyu and Kalenjin communities, saying that they 'call the shots' in the country. Be that as it may, Wambui eventually depicts Kikuyus as the mightier of the two, saying that without them, one cannot get anywhere.

In Excerpts 10 and 11 below, Luo partcipants argue that as much as Kikuyus and Kalenjins have become victors in the just concluded 2013 elections and formed government, they are not sharing the 'pork barrel' equally or even equitably. To be specific, their argument is that the Kikuyus are riding roughshod over the Kalenjins.



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Excerpt 10: Chat 5, Turn 45, Ayot (Luo): 19th May, 2013 at 1300 Hours:
Kikuyus are hellbent to continue hoodwinking Kalenjins that they are one but a really [the reality] is, the **ever egocentric Kikuyus will devour up to the bones minus their Kales counterparts**

Excerpt 11: Chat 5, Turn 46, Ochieng' (Luo): 19th May 2013 at 1302 Hours:
(Sentence 2) In Rift valley,Kalenjin teritory,u [you] will find places called kiambaa by these **kiuks raping kalenjin land**.now u [you] see the **appointments favouring mt.Kenya**…

In Excerpt 10, Ayot warns Kalenjins not to be duped into thinking that they are equals with "the ever egocentric" Kikuyus in terms of sharing the Kenyan spoils. In Excerpt 11, Ochieng' has said that government (and other) appointments are favouring Mt. Kenya. This, obviously, points to the fact that Kalenjins are getting a raw deal from their alliance with the Kikuyus. Therefore, according to both Ayot and Ochieng', though Kikuyus and Kalenjins are better off than all the other Kenyans (in terms of enjoying state or public resources), Kikuyus still have an undue advantage over Kalenjins; indeed, an ecological relationship between interethnic groups is asymmetrical (Eriksen, 2010). Going by the arguments of these participants, Kenya's system is reminiscent of Hetcher's (in Nasong'o, 2015:14) *cultural division of labour*, whereby "(t)he dominant group regulates the allocation of social roles in such a way that those roles commonly considered to be of high prestige go to members of the subordinate group." In Excerpt 12 below, a participant talks of how a ruling ethnic coalition appropriates state machineries.

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Excerpt 12: Chat 7, Turn 3, Kotut (Kalenjin): 13th May, 2013 at 1517 Hours:
**This coalition control the security apparatus and money supply in the country, nothing can beat that, you can only watch as they lead, you're job is just to rant on Facebook without the power to change anything.**

As Kotut boasts in Excerpt 12, the coalition he identifies with (as constituting Kikuyus and Kalenjins) controls the state machinery. Therefore, as he adds, they can use the machinery to sustain their hold onto power. As many scholars (such as Atieno-Odhiambo, 2002; Ajulu, 2002; Ogot, 2012; Nasong'o, 2015) have argued, the individual, ethnic community or ethnic communities in power have the proclivity to unduly use state machinery, mechanisms or apparatus to ensure they do not lose ground to their rivals. Ajulu (2002), for instance, mentions how President Jomo Kenyatta used KANU's youth wing, the police and Provincial Administration to break up the few meetings Jaramogi Oginga Odinga's KPU were allowed. The afore-mentioned scholar also mentions how President Jomo Kenyatta used the state to rig out Kaggia, a Kikuyu KPU member, in the Kandara by-elections in 1966.



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**9.5 Culture:**

The theme of 'culture' seems to be one of the most important in discussions of ethnicity. However, in lending credence to many scholars (for instance Ogot, 2012), this study points out that there is no culture which is pure. Consequently, there is no ethnic group that is culturally exclusive. This is despite the fact that some cultural beliefs and practices are generally perceived to be peculiar to certain ethnic groups. And, all this is in the abstract sense. In other words, individuals within an ethnic group cannot be 'culturally identical'. The argument this study makes is that in an ethnically polarised country like Kenya, a few cultural beliefs and practices are given currency, exaggerated and constantly drawn on to make a particular group more unique or even outlandish than it actually is. The end result, then, is that these perceptions grow into a 'reality' and ethnic groups become 'more different' than they are in real life. Again, this study proposes that a few discursive events, as associated with certain (groups of) individuals, may end up being 'fossilized' or 'stuck' onto a certain ethnic group. In other words, cultural practices and beliefs are imposed onto a mistakenly 'homogenized' and 'monolithic' ethnic group. Lastly, there is the danger of ethnocentrism, whereby individuals judge others from the perspective of their 'exclusive cultural ways'. In addition, some groups may consider their ways 'high culture' and others' 'low culture' (Harris and Rampton, 2003). This can have far reaching effects, including ethnic prejudice and polarisation. While Stull and Von Still (1994) argue that there is no (ethnic) group that is immune to ethnocentric tendencies, this study counters that we should not be prisoners of this self-defeating prophesy.

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In the excerpts below, a few speakers have used some (ethnic or cultural) beliefs and practices to index, stereotype or judge members of certain ethnic communities.

Excerpt 13: Chat 2, Turn 11, Mogaka (Kisii): 9th March 2013 at 1324 Hours:
(Lines 22-28) In my village, in 2007, I was **at loggerheads with people who were blaming me for voting Raila Odinga because he is a "boy"**. That he comes from **a community from which men do not circumcise** is a reason for him not to be voted. That he cannot lead because he is a boy, immature. Is that not sad? I have a Kikuyu friend. He has a PhD. He says he cannot vote for a man who is not circumcised.
(Lines 36-40) Why did **Kibaki become an elder everywhere** he went. **Why did the same not happen to Raila in Kikuyu land?** Remember, Raila had been made an elder almost everywhere else he had gone. **Why the hullabaloo in Kikuyu land**? Are you telling me that nothing is wrong here?

In Ecerpt 13, Mogaka is having an argument with Wanyama over the disputed elections; while Wanyama says he believes facts: that Uhuru won, Mogaka feels the system was manipulated



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in order for Uhuru to win. Wanyama also faults Mogaka for accusing all the Kikuyus of unfounded issues. Mogaka, in refuting claims that he has attacked all Kikuyus, gives a few examples to back up his argument that, generally speaking, Kikuyus discriminate against Luos based on the fact that Luos are known not to circumcise their men. As a corollary, Mogaka argues that it is because of Raila's perceived lack of circumcision that Kikuyus cannot vote for him or make him a ceremonial elder on their land.

The following excerpt is closely related to Excerpt 13: it is about a character trait which is considered typically Luo by some. To give the background to this post, earlier on, in Turn 1 of Chat 7 (as shown in the addendum), Nyadera has already said that Kotut inboxed him to admit that the election was rigged. Now, to back up his accusation, Nyadera has copied Kotut's verbiage for everyone else on the group chat to read.

Excerpt 14: Chat 7, Turn 14, Nyadera (Luo): 13th May, 2014 at 1610 Hours
[INBOX FROM Kotut TO ME 7HRS AGO]: **"A Luo president is something that will never happen**. Trust me on that. Its not about me, **those people who control kenya fear your emotional hysterical, hero worship behaviour"**.

In Excerpt 14 above, Nyadera tries to give evidence to the effect that Kotut confessed to him that Raila was rigged out in favour of Uhuru. Nyadera also reports Kotut as saying that there is a powerful clique (or oligarchy) which can determine who becomes president in the country. He also presents Kotut as having said that, in some quarters (or at least to the same oligarchy), Luos are known for being 'emotionally hysterical' and 'hero worshippers' (they make a cult of their ethnic elite/s). This is what supposedly made Raila undesirable among the oligarchy. Here, the negative trait of being 'emotionally hysterical' has been described as 'inhering in the Luos'. Going by what Nyadera is saying, Kotut also appears to suggest that this powerful clique has within its powers to subvert the will of the people. For instance, as much as the majority of Kenyans voted for Raila in the 2013 elections, those 'few people who control Kenya' rigged in President Uhuru Kenyatta. This understanding is remindful of the fact that those in power can use state machinery to hold onto power, as already discussed under dominance and hegemony.

Below follow excerpts (from Chat 4) that only indirectly denigrate the Luos for their cultural ways.

Excerpt 15: Chat 4, Turn 1, Mureithi (Kikuyu): 17th May, 2013 at 1827 Hours:



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**There is a region in Kenya when one dies, they wash the corpse and keep the dirty water**. Each time they cook for guests, they add a small amount of water into the food or drinks like tea or porridge as they cook.
**This meant to kill whoever bewitched the dead person because they believe there is no death without a witch**.

Excerpt 16: Chat 4, Turn 3, Kimani (Kikuyu): 18th May, 2013 at 1817 Hours:
**I think is people of…. Kari aka ihee.. […the sitting of the uncircumcised (boys)]**

Excerpt 17: Chat 4, Turn 8, Tom (unknown tribe): 18th May 2013 at 1830 Hours:
You people, **stop stereotype thinking with the lakeside people. It is not true that they perform this things**.

In Excerpt 15, Mureithi, a Kikuyu, accuses an ethnic community (which he does not name) of holding weird beliefs and engaging in shockingly outlandish practices. In a few words, Mureithi alleges that this particular group believes that 'all death is caused by witchcraft' and that 'by making the offender consume food made out of the water used to wash the dead victim's body, the folks will also have been able to kill them (the offender/s)'. Mureithi's narration is a riddle of sorts; hence, as seen in Excerpt 16, Kimani partakes in 'answering'. However, Kimani's response is almost cryptic, at least to those who cannot understand the Kikuyu words used or even to those (Kikuyu speakers) without Kimani's ideological schooling. Loosely translated from Kikuyu into English, 'Karia ka ihee' means 'the sitting (place) of the uncircumcised (boys)'.

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Helpfully for those participants not privy to this discourse of circumcision (in Chat 4), Tom's response, in Turn 17, reveals that Luos are the intended targets of the attacks from Mureithi and Kimani. Tom also defends the Luos when he goes: "You people, stop stereotype thinking with the lakeside people. It is not true that they perform this things." To explain, the Nilotic language group in Kenya subsumes three smaller groups: Highland Nilotes, Plain Nilotes and River-Lake Nilotes. Luos are known as the River-Lake Nilotes because of their 'affinity' for water bodies (lakes and rivers). This also explains why Luos are known for fishing, their traditional (or typical) economic activity. In the following two excerpts, Njuguna, a Kikuyu, sends more salvo in the way of the Luos.

Excerpt 18: Chat 4, Turn 5, Njuguna (Kikuyu): 18th May, 2013 at 1825 Hours:
Who has **missing front teeth like combra** , who **adores a paython [python]**, who **fucks tha dead [who has sex with the dead]**, style up **yu [you] are a disgrace on this land** !



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Excerpt 19: Chat 4, Turn 17, Njuguna (Kikuyu): 18th May, 2013 at 1911 Hours:
**What are natural condoms?**

As can be seen in Excerpt 18, Njuguna likens Luos to a "combra" [cobra] because of their (Luos') missing front teeth. Luos are said to remove their front teeth as a sign of transitioning to adulthood. Now, Njuguna capitalizes on that and mocks them for how they look. By extension, therefore, Njuguna also discounts Luos' cultural belief and practice (of removing the front tooth) which is extended to or responsible for their 'grotesque physical appearance'. Njuguna also accuses and condemns Luos for having sexual intercourse with the dead. He also disapproves of their fetish for and fascination with a python. To explain, myth has it that a particularly large python (known as 'Omieri') was sighted in Luo land, and that it was a sign of 'good luck' to them. Njuguna is not done with Luos yet. As can be seen in Excerpt 19, he poses: "What are natural condoms?" Here, 'natural condoms' is a metaphor for the foreskins that Luo men are 'laden with' for not circumcising. Once again, Njuguna shows his scorn for Luos on account of their lack of circumcision.

Just like his fellow Kikuyus (Mureithi and Kimani), Njuguna insults Luo individuals and even the whole Luo community on the basis of their perceived ways of life. Below, Akoth, a Luo, hits back at the Kikuyus, prompting Njuguna to respond in jest.

Excerpt 20: Chat 4, Turn 9, Akoth (Luo): 18th May 2013 at 1831 Hours:
**Talking of traditions, who leave out their dead in the forest** and **go to bed with their animals?** And teeth the colour of mud……

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Excerpt 21: Chat 4, Turn 13, Njuguna (Kikuyu): 18th May, 2013 at 1900 Hours:
Kkuks ni research Fulani tunafanya na animals, na ikitokea tutawauzia kwa olyx. [We Kikuyus are carrying out a particular study (research) on animals, and if the study is a success, we shall sell to you the olyx (product of the research)]. But evebn [even] satan herself cannot fuck [have sex with] the dead. Let the dead rest in peace.

Akoth, in Excerpt 20, accuses certain people (without categorically saying who they are) of having a tradition of 'abandoning their dead in the forest' and also 'going to bed with their animals'. She also homogenizes the same group as having brown teeth ('the colour of mud'). Akoth seems to be aiming her tirades at Kikuyus. Tellingly, a Kikuyu who has attacked Luos before (Njuguna, in Excerpts 18 and 19 above) responds to Akoth's accusation in jest. In seemingly 'admitting' that Kikuyus engage in bestiality, Njuguna, in Excerpt 21, explains that they (Kikuyus) are only doing a specific research on animals, and that if the research is a success, the resulting animal will be sold to the Luos. As a mule is begotten by a donkey and a



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horse, an olyx will be begotten by a Kikuyu person and an (unspecified) animal. In these examples, then, we see how ethnically-charged stereotypes have come to epitomize whole communities.

### 9.6 Hierarchy

As related to the notion of 'dominance', that of 'hierarchy' has not been considered a main theme of ethnicity in the literature. However, the notion of 'hierarchy' also pops up as an important dimension of relations between ethnic communities in a national setting. The data also reveals how some participants seem to be keen to propagate ideas of ethnic hierarchy. This study has teased out three main factors in the data which appear to determine the position of an ethnic community in the rung of the hierarchical ladder: leadership, for instance, superior communities have produced presidents for Kenya; intelligence, some communities seem to produce cleverer individuals; and 'class' (refinement of character or manner), by dint of coming from a certain ethnic community, individuals can be 'classy' or crude. As can be seen in Excerpts 3 and 7 below, participants tend to use the position of the presidency to determine the placing of ethnic communities in the hierarchical order.

Excerpt 3: Chat 5, Turn 1, Kosgei (Kalenjin): 19th May, 2013 at 1000 Hours:
A person with a Luo father and a Kikuyu mother asked why Kikuyus and Luos fight and when this problem will end. I told them in order to reach a solution, atypical luo must accept and move on. Accept (1). His/her underclass status (2) Accept the fate has it Raila will never be president (3) **Kikuyus are superior and that's a fact** (4) Fighting for recognition will make you lose more (5) **There has to be superiors and subordinates**… (10) We have Uhuru…

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As shown in Excerpt 3, Kosgei, a Kalenjin, begins Chat 5 with a juxtaposition of the main antagonistic tribes in Kenya: Kikuyus and Luos. Naturally, he also makes mention of the tribes' ethnic messiahs: Uhuru and Raila. Kosgei then justifies why Uhuru is president: he is a Kikuyu, and "Kikuyus are superior and that's a fact" (in his third point). In his first and second points, he asserts that Luos are an 'underclass', and that, as fate has it (or as a direct consequence), Raila (a Luo) will never be president. He, thus, advises (or cautions) the Luos (in point 4) that "Fighting for recognition will make you lose more". In the second sentence of his speech, before giving his numbered points, Kosgei has said: "I told them (the Luos and Kikuyus) in order to reach a solution, atypical luo must accept and move on." With the locution for *focus* (*Graduation, Focus, Prototype*) 'typical', Kosgei seems to be targeting those 'obstinate' or 'adamant' Luos. Those Luos who still believe they are Kikuyus' equals or trying to challenge the Kikuyus had better know they will never measure up. Here, Kosgei also seems to point to



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Luos' natural stubbornness. However, Kosgei also insinuates that the 'responsive', 'progressive' or 'realistic' Luos already know their place (as inferiors). These few Luos have accepted or acquiesced to Kikuyus' superiority over them: which is what Kenya needs to move forward. To summarize Excerpt 3, Kosgei can be said to be performing the role of an 'oracle'. He reads to us what fate has in store for Kenya and the ethnic communities therein, of course as organised along a particular hierarchical order. As can be seen in Excerpt 7 below, Kosgei seems to clarify the relationship between the Kalenjins and Luos with regard to the same hierarchical order of ethnic communities in Kenya.

Excerpt 7: Chat 5, Turn 8, Kosgei (Kalenjin): 19th May, 2013 at 1058 Hours:
Victor, **kalenjins are superior to jaluo**, we ruled Kenya and you never will. We are coming back

When prodded by an accusation of being a Kikuyu who has disguised himself in a Kalenjin name (by Victor, as already shown in Excerpt 6 above), Kosgei responds, in Excerpt 7: "kalenjins are superior to jaluo [Luos], we ruled Kenya and you never will. We are coming back". Obviously, Kosgei is attributing Kalenjins' higher status (than that of Luos) to the fact that Moi, a Kalenjin, ruled Kenya. Therefore, the implication here, according to at least Kosgei, is that being president goes a long way in determining the position of a tribe in the country's hierarchical order. And, by virtue of one of their own (tribesperson) ruling, Kalenjins also ruled. That is why Kosgei proudly says of Kalenjins: "we ruled" and contemptuously says of Luos: "and you never will". Also probably alluding to the fact that another Kalenjin, William Ruto, is President Uhuru's Deputy, Kosgei concludes: "We are coming back (to rule again)".

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At this juncture, it is worth mentioning that both Excerpts 3 and 7 have already been discussed above, under the themes 'nationalism' (section 9.2) and 'ethnic membership' (section 9.3) respectively.

In Excerpts 22 and 23 below, participants tend to grade ethnic communities in terms of being 'classy' or sophisticated.

Excerpt 22: Chat 5, Turn 57, Oloo (Luo): 19th May, 2013 at 1539 Hours:
So this **"Kales" can lecture us about class?** Those who r still wearing Akala shoes with red socks.

Excerpt 23: Chat 5, Turn 67, Nyaberi (Kisii): 19th May, 2013 at 1705 Hours:
**A kale is a kale tu hakuna tofauti will never be civilized like Kosgei**
[A Kalenjin is just a Kalenjin. There is no difference. They will never be civilized, like Kosgei]



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In Excerpts 22 and 23 above, Oloo and Nyaberi, respectively, lay siege on the Kalenjins, accusing them of being 'backward'. In Excerpt 22, Oloo wonders if Kalenjins can lecture them (at least Luos) about 'class'. This amazement gives the sense that Kalenjins are trailing Oloo's kind (at least Luos) with regard to 'classiness', trendiness or sophistication. To stress his point, Oloo paints Kalenjins as homogeneously "still wearing 'Akala' shoes with red socks." 'Akala' is a Kenyan word (with Luo origins) for tough (and rugged) open rubber shoes which are made out of tyres. To some, 'Akala' shoes are indigenous, old-fashioned, simple and cheap open shoes. Therefore, Kalenjins are being described as old-fashioned as the 'Akala' shoes they are still wearing. To make things worse, as Oloo accuses, Kalenjins go ahead and sport such open shoes ('Akala') with red socks. Socks are normally supposed to go with closed shoes. The colour 'red' also 'shouts for attention', and can only highlight Kalenjins' 'graceless ways of dressing'. For all this, Oloo depicts and dismisses Kalenjins as 'bumpkins'. In Excerpt 23, Nyaberi seems to conclude what Oloo has just said; he indicates how he has already given up hope on the Kalenjins. Nyaberi implies that, whatever efforts are made, Kalenjins will be what they have always been: uncivilized.

Below, two excerpts (Excerpts 24 and Excerpt 25) illustrate how participants look at other ethnic communities as being inferior intellectually.

Excerpt 24: Chat 5, Turn 63, Ayot (Luo): 19th May, 2013 at 1647 Hours:
**There is no single day that the silly Kalenjins will match the interlectual capacity in Luos.,..this is God given** in that even the bhang smoker or land grabber can't take it away. The yet to be civilised kalejingas don't even know that only eyes should be widely opened while mouths shuttered. Idiots indeed

Excerpt 25: Chat 5, Turn 64, Joshua (unknown tribe): 19th May, 2013 at 1653 Hours:
Kalenjins should just concentrate on athletics and farming waachane na siasa [and they should leave politics]

As can be seen in Excerpts 24 and 25 above, Ayot and Joshua lay siege on Kalenjins, dismissing them as 'coming short' in terms of intelligence. In Excerpt 24, Ayot even invokes the name of God to pronounce that "the silly Kalenjins" cannot match Luos intellectually. He adds that Luos' intelligence is God-given and 'unparagoned'. To emphasize the gap, Ayot describes Kalenjins as 'silly' and 'idiots'. He even creatively blends the word 'Kalejingas' to refer to and describe Kalenjins. The blended 'Kalejingas' constitutes 'Kale' (from or for 'Kalenjin'), 'jinga' (a Kiswahili word for 'stupid') and the plural morpheme 's'. On his part, Joshua, in Excerpt 25, argues that Kalenjins had better stick to only athletics and farming. To explain, Kalenjins are synonymous with Kenyan long distance runners of global repute. The common explanation



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given for Kalenjins' prowess in long distance running is that they normally inhabit hilly and mountainous places, where oxygen is relatively less. Thus, on a level ground, they outcompete those used to more oxygen. Much of the land the Kalenjins have traditionally inhabited is also known to be fertile. Therefore, as Joshua seems to confirm, athletics and farming are easily their forte. However, Joshua is not of the opinion that Kalenjins have an aptitude for politics. Perhaps, his sense is that Kalenjins will fare better in athletics and farming since they are much more elementary activities and require less intelligence than (national) politics.

**9.7 Ethnic elites:**

Like most of the other themes, that of 'ethnic elites' does not feature as a main theme of ethnicity in the literature. However, drawing on such scholars as Ajulu (2002) and Kanyinga (2013), this study proposes that 'ethnic elites' are very important with regard to firming up feelings and actions of ethnic affiliation, solidarity and even pride. In the same way, they are also important catalysts of othering 'ethnic outsiders'. This study has observed that, in the data provided, (some) participants' talk tends to revolve around ethnic elites. The study also proposes that ethnic elites are those individuals who wield so much power and influence in their ethnic communities that they easily or largely determine the political course which their tribespeople take. It is no surprise, therefore, that in an immensely ethnically polarised Kenya, ethnic elites are largely responsible for mobilising the electorate along ethnic lines (Atieno-Odhiambo, 2002; Ajulu, 2002; and Kanyinga, 2013). Be that as it may, this study argues that these ethnic elites are engaged in a symbiotic kind of relationship with their tribespeople, whom they mobilise ethnically. To get their (national) mandate, the ethnic elites have got to get votes (among other kinds of support) from their tribespeople. Once mandated, the ethnic elites are obliged to pay (or plough back to) their tribespeople. This, then, becomes a vicious cycle of sorts; this 'pork barrel' or patronage (of resources) is, in turn, supposed to be the bait used by the ethnic elites to sustain their support among (and tighten their grip on) their tribespeople. That is why this study suggests that the whole situation is tantamount to both the ethnic elites and the electorate holding each other hostage in the country's 'gravy train'. Lastly, whether and how much the ethnic elites give back to 'their own' becomes the basis upon which they are judged by their tribespeople as well as by individuals from other ethnic communities. Below are four excerpts to that end.

Excerpt 26: Chat 1, Turn 15, Mogaka (Kisii): 13th April, 2013 at 0250 Hours:(Lines 4-7) … **Look at what the man we voted for (Kibaki) did! Look at the key ministries…** Whom did he appoint there? Look at the Central Bank? **What happened to a Mrs Mwatela?**



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Excerpt 27: Chat 1, Turn 16, Mwendwa (Meru): 13th April 2013 at 1020 Hours
to be honest wat happened to Mwatela was the turning point for me. She had the papers, expereince, technical expertise n all! But she lacked one thing from Kibaki's perspective: tribal alienation. She was kicked out of central bank like a dog.

In Excerpt 26 above, Mogaka, a Kisii, appears to express his disappointment about the man he (and others) voted into the presidency in 2002: former President Kibaki. Without directly saying it, Mogaka accuses Kibaki of perpetuating negative ethnicity and Kikuyu hegemony at the expense of other ethnic communities. With the rhetorical question: "What happened to a Mrs Mwatela?", Mogaka points to the fact that Mrs Mwatela, having acted as the Central Bank Governor for a lengthy duration, was finally relieved of the duty in favour of Kibaki's fellow Kikuyu: Njuguna Ndung'u. To answer or confirm Mogaka's rhetorical question, Mwendwa, in Excerpt 27, says: "to be honest wat happened to Mwatela was the turning point for me. She had the papers, expereince, technical expertise n [and] all! But she lacked one thing from Kibaki's perspective: tribal alienation. She was kicked out of central bank like a dog."

In Excerpts 28 and 11 below, the speakers judge (or compare) different ethnic elites.

Excerpt 28: Chat 5, Turn 20, Amollo (Luo): 19th May, 2013 at 1122 Hours:
Kosgei yaani [you mean], you are Government and government is you, even when **you people are being shortchanged left right and centre**? oh come on my friend and face reality, you should also accept the fact that **you sold your birthright the day your Godfather accepted cash from Uhuru on behalf of yourself, your mother and your father, it's better a half loaf of bread than 3 slices….**

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Excerpt 11: Chat 5, Turn 46, Ochieng' (Luo): 19th May, 2013 at 1302 Hours:
(Sentence 3) now u [you] see the appointments favouring mt.Kenya, atleast n [and] i mean **atleast Raila alikuwa anatetea lakini huyu wenu [Raila defended or took care (of his people or supporters), but this one of yours (William Ruto).** Kosgei style up.

In Excerpt 28, Amollo refers to William Ruto, the Deputy President, as the Kalenjins' Godfather. Here 'Godfather' is a synonym for 'ethnic elite'. Amollo, however, depicts the Kalenjins' 'Godfather' as very debauched; he has, instead of being their messiah, traded his Kalenjin tribespeople for cash. Using the 'half loaf of bread' metaphor for the share Raila had in the Government of National Unity with Mwai Kibaki (from 2008 to 2013), Amollo ridicules the much smaller bread which William Ruto is able to eke out for his fellow Kalenjins in his coalition government with Uhuru (from 2013). The sense here is also that since the Kikuyus have entrenched themselves in the system (and, consequently, in the patronage orientation), it is up to the ethnic elites from other communities to work hard and salvage something for their own. In this regard, Amollo rates Raila more favourably than he does Ruto. In the same vein,



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Ochieng' mentions and commends Raila in Excerpt 11, as also shown above. In his response to Kalenjin interlocutors, Ochieng' simply refers to Ruto as "this one of yours". Just like Amollo (in Excerpt 28), Ochieng' disapproves of Ruto's efforts to fight for Kalenjins in the wake of Kikuyu dominance and hegemony. That is why he says, for instance, that "the appointments (are only) favouring mt.kenya [Mt. Kenya]. As has been explained, Mt. Kenya is a geographical landscape which is synonymous with Kikuyus (together with Merus and Embus). Excerpt 11 has also been discussed for the theme of dominance above (in section 9.4).

**9.8 Reciprocity:**

The theme of 'reciprocity', as teased out from the data, has also not been considered a main theme of ethnicity in the literature. However, like most of the other themes, 'reciprocity' constitutes relations between different ethnic communities. Reciprocity generally refers to the practice of exchanging things with others for mutual benefit. In the Kenyan political context, where affiliation to an ethnic community is very important, it becomes crucial for (some or many of) the citizens to assess their (and others') ethnic communities in terms of reciprocity. Such issues as voting for individuals from certain ethnic communities as president, attendant political appointments and distribution of resources seem to take centre stage whenever there are discussions of national politics. In the provided data, some participants generally tend to accuse Kikuyus of lacking the spirit of reciprocity. Perhaps, tellingly, the main reason is that of the four presidents Kenya has had, three are Kikuyus (and the other one is a Kalenjin). As the excerpts below indicate, some participants are accusing Kikuyus of not embracing the spirit of reciprocity in national politics. Excerpts 29 and 30 below show how Kikuyu voters are accused of not voting for individuals outside of their community.

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Excerpt 29: Chat 5, Turn 34: Momanyi (Kisii): 19th May, 2013 at 1203 Hours:
Anytime you say Raila won't b a president,don't forget to say Ruto will not b one.lt is just time factor ,**wait n see .kikuyu won't return da favor**.

Excerpt 30: Chat 8, Turn 9, Kipkemoi (Kalenjin): 14th May, 2014 at 0555 Hours:
@Kosgei **Give us one example where the Kikuyus have voted for somebody else**. Take one example in kikuyu const. when Muite and jaramogi were vying together in ford Kenya.Kikuyus voted in Muite for mp and for president they voted for Matiba.

As shown in Excerpts 29 and 30 above, participants from other ethnic communities are accusing Kikuyu voters of 'unhealthy Kikuyu nationalism', which might jeopardize national unity. In Excerpt 29, Momanyi, a Kisii, has warned Kalenjins that Ruto will never be president since "kikuyu won't return da [the] favor." In the same vein, in Excerpt 30, Kipkemoi wants



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"one example where the Kikuyus have voted for somebody else." To be sure, Kipkemoi intends to ask a rhetorical question: *erotesis*, to be specific. In other words, the answer he expects can only be in the negative: *Kikuyus have never voted for someone outside their tribe*. Kipkemoi then gives an example of *Kikuyu Constituency* (in the 1992 general elections), in which the electorate voted for Muite (a fellow Kikuyu) as a parliamentarian, but did not vote for Muite's party's presidential candidate. Jaramogi Oginga Odinga – a Luo – was the presidential candidate for Muite's party in the 1992 general elections. In a show of utter ethnic loyalty, the electorate in Kikuyu Constituency chose to vote for Matiba – a fellow Kikuyu – as their preferred presidential candidate.

What both Momanyi and Kipkemoi are saying here (in Excerpts 29 and 30, respectively) is a throwback to Mogaka's accusation against Muthoni, as discussed in Chapter 7 (section 7.2). This is a reference to the discussion of Chat 1, in which Mogaka, in Turn 8, says that Muthoni is now averse to Raila Odinga because he is vying against a fellow Kikuyu in Uhuru Kenyatta. However, as Mogaka continues, Raila Odinga was a hero to the Kikuyus in the 2002 general elections because he supported Mwai Kibaki, a Kikuyu who eventually won the presidential elections. In short, here, Mogaka is arguing that Kikuyus can only be happy to reduce charismatic politicians from other ethnic communities to the position of their king makers.

The excerpt below speaks to the fact that the Kikuyu elites who are in senior positions in government (including the presidency) skew the distribution of the national cake (resources) in favour of Kikuyus and at the expense of people from other ethnic communities.

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Excerpt 10: Chat 5, Turn 45, Ayot (Luo): 19th May, 2013 at 1300 Hours:
**Kikuyus are hellbent to continue hoodwinking kalenjins that they are one but a really is, the ever egocentric Kikuyus will devour up to the bones minus their Kales counterparts**

As seen above in Excerpt 10, Ayot accuses Kikuyus of "hoodwinking kalenjins", being "ever egocentric" and "hellbent to… devour up to the bones minus their Kales counterparts". However, even if Ayot has used the word 'Kikuyus' in the general sense, he must be referring, here, to those who are able to influence the distribution of national resources. By this token, he is singling out President Uhuru and his inner circle of powerful Kikuyus, as giving Kalenjins a raw deal with regard to the sharing of the national cake. Ayot also seems to point out that as much as the 'national cake' should be shared equally or equitably among all Kenyans (or ethnic communities), it is largely being enjoyed by two ethnic communities: Kikuyus and Kalenjins. However, Ayot clarifies that, even in their 'immoral partnership', Kikuyus are still having the



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better of Kalenjins. Note "Kikuyus will devour up to the bones minus their Kales [Kalenjin] counterparts". Excerpt 10 has also been discussed for the theme of dominance (in section 9.4).

### 9.9 Territory (geographical regions)

The theme of 'territory' or 'geographical regions' has already been dealt with in the literature on ethnicity (Beidelman, 1997). As already discussed in the Literature Review, the colonial boundaries which separated different tribes have gone a long way: in addition to firming up ethnic differences, regions have now come to belong 'unconditionally' to specific ethnic communities. Until recently, the eight provinces (and districts therein) have been synonymous with particular tribes. Under the current system, regions go by the name of counties (47 in number); however, these counties still correspond to what were previously districts. Some Kenyans have also not moved on from the eight provinces. By this token, this data shows that participants still use names of the former provinces when referring to certain ethnic communities. Some participants also use the counties as well as smaller regions like towns and even villages to index the tribes that have traditionally inhabited them. What is more, some participants even associate prominent politicians with their 'ethnic regions'. The following excerpts are testament to that, only that not all the eight provinces (as well as the districts or counties therein) have been mentioned.

Excerpt 17: Chat 4, Turn 8, Tom (unknown): 18th May, 2013 at 1830 Hours:
You people stop stereotype thinking with **the lakeside people**. It is not true that they perform this things.

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As already explained under the theme of 'culture', Luos are also referred to as 'River-Lake Nilotes', and they are especially known for fishing. As a corollary of this, therefore, Tom is talking about Luos when he says "the lakeside people", as shown above, in Excerpt 17. To give the setting, here, Tom is asking Kikuyu interlocutors, who have just spoken before him, to stop accusing Luos of weird cultural beliefs and practices. Tom is playing the role of a 'neutral' speaker here, and it seems that he wants to forestall the chat at hand from spiralling into an exchange of ethnic vitriol and diatribe. This excerpt has also been used for the discussion of the theme of culture (in section 9.5).

Excerpt 11: Chat 5, Turn 46, Ochieng' (Luo): 19th May, 2013 at 1302 Hours:
(Sentence 2) **In Rift Valley, Kalenjin territory**, u [you] will find places called Kiambaa by **these kiuks [Kikuyus] raping Kalenjin land**.now u [you] see the **appointments favouring mt.Kenya**…



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Ochieng', in Excerpt 11, as given above, describes the Rift Valley (Province) as "Kalenjin territory". And, by saying that "these kiuks [Kikuyus] are raping kalenjin land", Ochieng' complains about the fact that Kikuyus are 'annexing' or 'encrouching' on this land of the Kalenjins. To give a justification for his disapproval of the Kikuyus, whom he has described as "raping Kalenjin land", Ochieng' goes ahead and gives an example of Kiambaa: one of the places within the Kalenjin territory (Rift Valley Province) which the Kikuyus have now made theirs. For purposes of clarification, 'Kiambaa' is a Kikuyu name, and, there is a place with the same name within Central Province (Kikuyus' traditional home). To further protest against Kikuyu dominance and exploitation, Ochieng' says that (despite, or in addition to, all this) appointments are favouring Mt. Kenya. As has also already been mentioned (in sections 8.2, 9.4 and 9.7), 'Mt. Kenya' or 'Mount Kenya' is associated with the Kikuyus. Excerpt 11 has also been discussed for the themes of dominance (section 9.4) and ethnic elites (section 9.7).

Excerpt 31: Chat 7, Turn 11, Wambui (Kikuyu): 13th May, 2014 at 1549 Hours:
**Raila** he is bloody loser.4times he has lost. **He better pack his bag and go back to Pondo**.he should give a chance somebody else but not odingas.

Excerpt 32: Chat 7, Turn 12, Kotut (Kalenjin): 13th May, 2014 at 1600 Hours:
**Bondo sio [not] pondo**, but then it can be anything

In Excerpt 31, Wambui (a Kikuyu) dismisses Raila as a "bloody looser [loser]". She then fires another salvo: "He better pack his bag and go back to Pondo [Bondo]…" Kotut (a Kalenjin) then corrects Wambui, in Excerpt 32, saying that it is actually 'Bondo', not 'Pondo'. To be sure, Bondo is Raila's ancestral home, in Siaya County. However, for the most part of his political and even social life, Raila has been a resident of the city of Nairobi. To give more details, Raila has also been a member of parliament of the erstwhile Kibera constituency, within the city. Despite all this, Wambui still associates Raila with Bondo, to which she says he should go. In Kenya, the expression 'it is time a politician went back to their homes' is a metaphor for someone either getting 'finished politically' or even retiring from elective politics. Therefore, here, Wambui clearly shows her opposition to Raila, at least politically. For having 'vied for the presidency and lost three times', Wambui wishes that Raila retires or even goes into obscurity. That is why she makes reference to Bondo, Raila's ancestral home and not Nairobi, his residential home. By so doing, Wambui does two things: one, she implies the importance of Nairobi to national politics, but from which she has written Raila off; two, in associating Raila with Bondo, she betrays her conception of him as a Luo ethnic member, more than anything else.



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### 9.10 Ethnic polarisation:

The theme of 'ethnic mobilisation', like most of the other themes which have been teased from the data, has not been covered in the literature as a main theme of ethnicity. However, as this study argues, also going by the main research aim, 'ethnic mobilisation' is important to studies on ethnicity. To be sure, this study, in lending credence to Ghai and Ghai (2013), argues that (the awareness of) belonging(ness) to an ethnic community does no harm by itself. Thus, being a multi-ethnic and multicultural country is not inherently pathological for Kenya (Ajulu, 2002). Ghai and Ghai (2013) even give Tanzania and Canada as examples of countries with many more ethnic communities, but which are not as polarised as Kenya. For this reason, we can easily conclude that it is how the people appropriate their ethnic belonging which can be harmful to the existence of their country. In other words, it is ethnic-based arrogance, fear, suspicion, divisions, factionalism or polarisation which do not augur well for a/the country. The argument is that excessive or unconditional ethnic loyalty, which comes in many forms, can jeopardize the spirit and practice of nationalism among the citizens.

In the data provided, participants generally exhibit a polarisation based on ethnic affiliation. What is more, to a large extent, this ethnic polarisation corresponds with political bifurcation. This tells a story of ethnic mobilisation and politicisation (Atieno-Odhiambo, 2002; Kanyinga, 2013). In the general sense, the political discussion in the data pits two main antagonists: Kikuyus and Kalenjins versus Luos and other Kenyans. While the former are representative of the governing Jubilee party, the latter represent CORD, the main opposition party.

It is also important to note that all the other themes, as already discussed, tend to unanimously terminate into ethnic polarisation. For instance, in a national ecosystem (nationalism) that is constituted of different tribes (ethnic membership), with perceived cultural differences (which others will exaggerate and capitalize on), and with each tribe staking a claim in the ecology (hierarchy, dominance vs minority), there is bound to be a spirit of rivalry (as especially instigated by ethnic elites), which will be worsened when some feel deprived by others, whom they accuse of lack of reciprocity, among other improprieties. This is a sure recipe for ethnic polarisation, and, eventually, a troubled country. Even though many of the excerpts discussed have already touched on ethnic polarisation, as has been explained above, the space below is dedicated to a discussion of three excerpts, as direct instantiations. The first excerpt comes before the highly anticipated 2013 presidential elections, and the interlocutors are trying to drum up support for their candidates of choice.



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Excerpt 33: Chat 3, Turn 7, Mong'are (Kisii): 26th February, 2013 at 1225 Hours:
Let me be very honest, i don't see and i have never seen any substance from your man. **Idon't have to hate Uhuru bz ((because) he is Kikuyu** and happens to be Jomo's son!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Excerpt 34: Chat 7, Turn 38, Nyadera (Luo): 13th May 2014 at 1734 Hours:
**YOU CAN DEFECATE AND URINATE ON KALENJINS—NOT THE REST OF KENYANS**.

In Excerpt 33 above, Mong'are, a Kisii speaker, implies that he does not just have to get onto the anti-Uhuru Kenyatta bandwagon for the sake of it. He is responding to Wanyonyi, who is canvassing for Raila Odinga in the earlier turns (Turns 1 and 5, as shown in the addendum). Here, Mong'are seems to be pointing to the general expectation that everyone else (bar the Kalenjins) should 'gang up' against the Kikuyus. As a side note, and as could have come out in the discussion of earlier chapters, Kikuyus seem to be at the centre of ethnic polarisation in Kenya, at least politically. As has also already been pointed out, Kikuyus, looked at as the hegemonic community or the 'internal colonizers' (Nasong'o, 2015), generally seem to be 'estranged' from other Kenyan communities, except for Kalenjins, one of whom (William Ruto) is Uhuru Kenyatta's running mate. Despite this expectation, Mong'are appears to show his alignment with Kikuyus, at least by implying his support for Uhuru Kenyatta. Mong'are's stance is also testament to the fact that it is not all individuals who are automatons of their ethnic communities' general positionings, as it were.

Lastly, as can be seen in Excerpt 34 above, Nyadera does not only separate the Kalenjin-Kikuyu alliance from the rest of the Kenyans. He also goes ahead and portrays the Kikuyus as the worse enemy. In other words, in addition to being isolated from the rest of the Kenyans, the Kikuyus are 'defecating' on the same Kalenjins whom they have used to obviate rebellion from the other ethnic communities. Here, Nyadera's argument is reminiscent of Nasong'o's (2015) observation that the dominant group(s) will normally co-opt some of the dominated groups for the sake of safeguarding their illegitimate rule. In this case, as Nyadera argues, the Kikuyus have managed to find a collaborative community in the Kalenjins. However, as Nyadera adds, even if the Kalenjins have sustained Kikuyus' hold onto power (and even saved their face), the Kikuyus are so unscrupulous and treacherous that they can still 'defecate' on the former. It can also be said that, by so speaking, Nyadera attempts to seek comradeship with all other Kenyans, even including Kalenjins, in a bid to deal condignly with Kikuyus.



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## 9.11 Summary

To conclude, this chapter speaks directly to the main research aim: 'to explore how a few selected Kenyans construct and manipulate ethnic identities in political discussions on Facebook'. Therefore, the main focus of this chapter includes an investigation of how participants look at themselves and others as belonging to certain ethnic communities or as sharing 'Kenyanness'. Of course, there is also an interest in political mobilisation, especially as corresponding to ethnic affiliation. The following are the nine main themes which this study has teased from the data: *nationalism*, *ethnic membership*, *dominance* or *hegemony*, *culture*, *hierarchy*, *ethnic elites*, *reciprocity*, *territory or geographical regions* and *ethnic polarisation.* Of these, the themes of culture and territory correspond directly with the literature on ethnicity: as features of ethnicity. However, while the seven others do not necessarily pop up as main features of ethnicity in the literature, scholars have constantly referred to them as constituting or describing the relations between different ethnic communities. Lastly, even though the literature refers to *language* as another feature of ethnicity, it has been discussed as a description of the participants, along with *names*, in the research methodology chapter.

The data also seems to indicate that the participants understand ethnicity rather differently. While most of them look at ethnicity as *primordial*, some perceive of it as basically socially constructed. For instance, as discussed in section 9.6, Ayot, a Luo speaker, declares, in Excerpt 24 (Turn 63 of Chat 5): "There is no single day that the silly Kalenjins will match the interlectual capacity in Luos…" On the other hand, to question such primordiality, Mogaka seems to foreground and denounce a harmful kind of ethnic mobilisation, which pits different ethnic communities, when, in Excerpt 13, as discussed in section 9.5, he draws attention to the fact that Kikuyus refused to make Raila, a Luo, their ceremonial elder on the basis of perceived cultural differences. This study also observes that the different themes identified in the data relate with and overlap each other a great deal. And, all the themes seem to terminate in *ethnic polarisation*, in which, generally, there are Kikuyus and Kalenjins on one side and Luos and other ethnic communities on the other. What is more, these ethnic coalitions seem to correspond with political coalitions. In the wake of this kind of polarisation, most participants also come across as speaking on behalf of their communities or ethno-political coalitions and treating their own or other ethno-political coalitions as 'homogenous' or 'monolithic' entities. However, some participants, as belonging to certain ethnic communities, have also gone against their 'designated' ethno-political charts. On this note, the concluding chapter follows.



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# CHAPTER 10

# CONCLUSION

## 10.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, a summary of at least the key findings of the analysis of data is given, with regard to the main research aim of this study: *to explore how the participants discursively construct Kenyan ethnicities in online political talk*, as well as the six specific research questions, which will be restated below. A few recommendations for future studies, as stemming from critical observations of this study, will also be given at the end of the chapter. Below, I restate the specific research questions of this study:

(1) How do the study's informants use language to position themselves and others in relation to ethnicity?
(2) Which ethnicising discourses do the informants use?
(3) Which stereotypes do they draw on or challenge?
(4) Which discursive strategies do they use to negotiate their ethnic and national identities?
(5) To what extent is the dialogic space expanded or contracted through the interactions on the different Facebook sites?
(6) How do the participants perform face-work while engaging in these interactions?

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It is important to note, here, that this summary will not necessarily follow the chronological order of the main research aim and the specific research questions. Instead, it will follow that of the discussion of the chapters, meaning that the discussion of participants' use of dialogistic resources, for instance, will come before that of how they position themselves and others with regard to ethnicity in Kenya. To finish off, other crucial issues which this study has observed will also be highlighted in the recommendations section.

## 10.2 Summary of the key findings of the analysis of the data

In short, Engagement concerns how speakers expand or contract the dialogic space, or even how they stay neutral. To embark on the data from the closed group, the participants use both the main types of Martin and White's (2005) dialogistic resources: expansive and contractive. They also use these resources in almost equal measure. This study also observes that the participants use a variety of these dialogistic resources, the most notable of which are *Bare*



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*assertions*, *Attribution*, *Endorsement*, *Rhetorical questions*, *Concurrence*, *Bouletic* and *Deontic modals*, *Pronouncement* and *Epistemic judgement*. The participants are also quite versatile in the way they index this dialogicality. For instance, there is use of certain obvious markers of Engagement as well as that of ideational constructions. Some dialogistic resources are also given as overlapping each other. In some situations, the participants package dialogic resources in non-corresponding or untypical propositions or even in proposals.

As many other argumentative texts, the data used for this study has an unsurprising preponderance of Bare assertions. However, these Bare assertions are also often accompanied by arguments, which should give off their dialogistic workings (Martin and White, 2005). The data also has quite a number of Rhetorical questions, used variously and stimulatingly by the participants. While some speakers use plain *Rhetorical questions* to contract the dialogic space for their opponents, others use *erotesis* and *hypophora* to do so. For instance, by way of *erotesis*, in Turn 3 of Chat 1 (section 7.2), Muthoni seeks to emphasize her supposedly 'obvious' value position. On his part, and in Turn 13 of the same chat, Mogaka, who is Muthoni's dialogic opponent, uses *hypophora* to nip any doubt or objection in the bud. However, though working contractively in the abstract, *Rhetorical questions* can also be turned on their heads by their putative addressee, who can thus render them 'Expository questions', which work expansively by virtue of being open-ended. This is when the hitherto addressee decides to provide their answer to the '*Rhetorical question*', thereby creating their own dialogic space in which they can wriggle. Thus, this dynamism can be said to give *Rhetorical questions* an element of indeterminacy.

The participants in the closed group have also used quite a variety of Attributive resources to expand the dialogic space for their opponents. However, as has also been seen, a speaker can conflate resources of *Attribution* with those of *Endorsement* to strategically close down the dialogic space. Mwendwa does so in Turn 1 of Chat 1, when she quotes Dida, a rival of both her favourite: Raila Odinga, and Uhuru Kenyatta in the race for the presidential position. Interestingly, she endorses statements of Dida, as a person of high social repute, but only for the sake of drumming support for Raila Odinga. She appears to imply that what Dida is saying is true, but only as describing Raila Odinga. Participants also use *Bouletic* and *Deontic modals* to indicate that, as much as they feel strongly about certain things and wish to persuade their dialogic opponents accordingly, they acknowledge the fact that the latter may belong or hold onto different schools of thought.



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*Concurrence*, another more commonly used contractive dialogistic resource, has been used in three main ways by the participants in the closed group. First, as can be seen in Chat 1, Muthoni appropriates *Conceding Concurrence*, whereby she agrees with Mwendwa, only to *Counter* afterwards. Second, soon afterwards, in Turn 8, Mogaka employs *synchoresis*, whereby he dangles false *Concurrence* with Muthoni, only to hit back with stronger objection. Lastly, some speakers only *Concur* with their dialogic 'team-mates', with an aim of reinforcing certain viewpoints, and, thus, closing down the dialogic space for opponents. Interestingly also, some participants have made reference to their professions to strengthen their arguments in an endeavour to close down the dialogic space for their opponents. A case in point is Wanyama, who, in Turn 10 of Chat 2 (section 7.3), *Pronounces* that he is an econometrician and that he can only be informed by numbers, not emotions.

As has also been noted above, though Martin and White (2005) mention neutrality, they have not given it much attention as a dialogistic resource. In Chat 1 of the closed group, Mwangi stands out as that rare neutrally aligned speaker. He does this by not openly supporting any presidential candidate, and by indirectly criticizing those 'warring' from both sides, urging them to support their candidates without having to throw mud at their rivals.

This study also argues that as much as Martin and White's (2005) framework of Engagement is very resourceful, it does not necessarily cater for all the dynamisms of dialogicality. Working from the data up, therefore, this study has teased out a few new dialogistic resources, which it has described as 'discursive strategies', and discussed under 'Critical Reflections'. As found in the closed group, these discursive strategies are *likes*, *silence*, *criticism*, *vouching for interlocutors*, *expletives*, *warnings* and *shifting the topic*. *Likes*, though suggestively contractive, can be said to function expansively, at least in isolation. *Criticism*, *vouching for interlocutors*, *expletives* and *warnings* basically contract the dialogic space. Worth suggesting here is the fact that the subsystem of Engagement seems to overlap with other subsystems, thus possibly making the lines of distinction blurry. For instance, while *criticism* has been regarded as a contractive resource of Engagement in this study, it could also be understood as being synonymous with Judgement, which Martin and White (2005) categorise as belonging to the subsystem of Attitude. While Martin and White (2005) could also place expletives within the branch of Involvement, this study suggests that they can straddle both Attitude (Affect: as expressing feelings of Displeasure) and Engagement. By virtue of being expressive of Displeasure in an interlocutor, expletives can be conceived of as being dismissive in nature, thus functioning contractively. On their part, however, both *silence* and *shifting the topic* are



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adaptable, and can work either expansively or contractively or even neutrally, depending on the context. It is in this regard, therefore, that this study proposes that these new discursive strategies be considered as possible additions to the framework of Engagement or dialogicality.

Lastly, to bring out the way the theory of Face-work complements that of Engagement, the participants who employ politeness or pay attention to their opponents' faces easily allow for oiled and more pleasant interactions. This situation is clear in the closed group, as opposed to the open group. There are also various ways which the participants in the closed group perform face-work. One such way is employing *silence*, especially where a dialogic opponent is at pains to explain or justify their argument. Here, interlocutors simply 'let it slide' in order to save another's face. Again, unlike in the open group, expletives are not traded. So far, only Mogaka uses an expletive, when addressing Wanyama, his dialogic opponent. In Turn 7 of Chat 2, Mogaka vents: "*Mr Wanyama! How the hell can you say that the results should just be accepted?*" However, Wanyama does not vent back. Instead, he starts his response (in Turn 8) by agreeing with Mogaka thus: "*Indeede Kenya belong to all of us."* Here, Wanyama employs politeness to forestall an impending conflict. Though there is no direct attack in '*how the hell'*, most people would not like to be addressed that way.

The participants also perform face-work by dint of E*pistemic modals*, so as not to threaten their opponents' positive faces. For instance, as can be seen in Turn 16 of Chat 2, Mogaka says to Wanyama: "*I think your argument is very weak Wanyama*." Here, even if Mogaka has used the resource of *Graduation* (*very* weak) to amplify his opposition to Wanyama's argument, he has qualified it with *I think*. In addition, the participants in the closed group also use quite a few vocatives to persuade, express solidarity and as redressive actions in response to potential Face Threatening Acts. An example is the use of 'my sister', as explained in section 7.2, Turn 4 of Chat 1, wherein Wafula differs with Muthoni thus: "Open your eyes my sister and stop hating vote with ur conscience and thank me later." This is effective use of face-work, which implies that the disagreements are only on principle, and that these interlocutors still need to sustain their comradeship or camaraderie, especially as people who have always known each other, long before they became friends on the Facebook group.

The findings of the analysis of data in the open group are summarised especially in comparison with those of the closed group, which have been given above. First, the participants here generally use the same dialogistic resources as their closed group counterparts, according to Martin and White's (2005) framework of Engagement: *Bare assertions*, *Rhetorical questions*,



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*Denial*, *Deontic* and *Epistemic modals* and *Pronouncement*. (All these Martin and White's [2005] Engagement resources are discussed as they have occurred in Chat 4.) However, unlike their counterparts in the closed group, these participants tend more towards contractive resources. As will be illustrated below, this study observes that these participants are mainly motivated to win arguments or shut their dialogic opponents down. This is as opposed to their closed group counterparts, who come across as more interested in respectfully persuading their dialogic opponents, as shown in their rather penetrating and intensive arguments. Here, for instance, Mureithi (in Turn 1 of Chat 4, as shown and discussed in section 8.2) dresses his rather far-fetched accusations of a certain ethnic community in *Bare assertions*. He categorically presents this ethnic community as having ghoulish beliefs and practices. However, he does not explain, even when prodded to do so by dialogic opponents. Most of the utterances in the open group are also in *Bare asertions*, but very spiteful to dialogic opponents.

*Rhetorical questions* are also the second-most used dialogistic resources in the open group. However, just like *Bare assertions*, a considerable number of *Rhetorical questions* which have been asked are curt and laced with a mockery of opponents. For instance, in Turn 9 of Chat 4, Akoth asks about 'who leave their dead in the forest', 'engage in bestiality' and have 'teeth the colour of mud.' In response, Njuguna asks in Turn 17: "*What are natural condoms*?" Here, both are merely drawing on ethnic stereotypes and prejudices to shut each other down. Not surprisingly either, these two antagonists are Luo and Kikuyu, respectively, as representing the main ethno-political sides who are at loggerheads in the country. *Denial* is another commonly used contractive dialogistic resource in the open group. One such interesting case is when, in Turn 38, Tom rejects Ondimu's value position. Tom says: "*Stop lying that its under uhuru that pple [people] ve [have] resorted to name calling. Neither uhuru nor raila have asked their supporters to abuse one another*." As can be seen, Tom uses the resource of *Denial* in two main ways. First, he packages his rejection of Ondimu's argument in a proposal by use of '*Stop lying…*" Second, he employs the negative polarity of "*Neither…nor…*" On his part, in Turn 39, to already reject the proposition he is anticipating Tom to make, Ondimu appropriates *prolepsis* thus: "*don't tell me we don't have poor or rich people in Tanzania. yet the poor and the rich call each other NDUGU [Kiswahili word for BROTHER/SIBLING*]."

The other observation is that these participants use expansive resources sparingly and rather reluctantly, and as also laced with ethnic hatred. For example, in Turn 13 of Chat 4, Njuguna, a Kikuyu, says to the Luos: "*Let the dead rest in peace*" after accusing them of 'having sex with corpses' in Turn 5. On his part, in Turn 34, Otiende says to Kikuyus: "*Don't think you*



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*will ever rig again like you did in 2007*…" Note how the negation of the *Epistemic modal* 'think' implies absoluteness: that the Kikuyus rigged in the 2007 elections. Interestingly also, one participant, in Kimani, only uses '*I think*' to expand the dialogic space for a team-mate and not for the opponents. Here, Kimani, in Turn 3, is only playing along with Mureithi's 'riddle', giving an 'answer', which the latter may 'refuse'. He says: "*I think is people of…. Karia ka ihee*.. [*I think it is the sitting of the uncircumcised boys*]. In other words, Kimani opens the dialogic space for Mureithi since it is only the latter who can determine the former's answer as right or wrong. Nonetheless, note how, in the process, both (as Kikuyus) are hurling ethnic stereotypes and insults at their ethno-political opponents, presumably Luos.

The discursive strategies which have been teased from both the open and closed groups are *likes*, *silence*, *criticism*, *shifting the topic* and *warnings*. Those only peculiar to the open group are *laughter*, *mockery*, *insults* and *threats*. (It is important to point out, here, that the discussion of these discursive strategies cuts across all the five open chats.) Most of these work to contract the dialogic space, save for *silence* and *shifting the topic*, which have mainly been employed defensively by the targeted opponents, contrary to the closed group, whereby potential 'offenders' themselves tone down for the sake of face-work. However, there is a refreshing case whereby a participant, who should be neutral, either by design or by chance, *shifts the topic* amid an argument centring on negative ethnicity and ethnic politicisation. This is Gitau, as seen in Turn 28 of Chat 6 (section 8.3.7). Gitau seems to inject a rare light moment into the discussion with: "Nani ako na charger ya Nokia pin ndogo [Who has got the small-pin charger for Nokia?]". If Gitau intended it, then, his contrbution works: the next interlocutor openly laughs. Thus, Gitau's *shifting of the topic* can be said to contract the dialogic space for mongers of ethnic hatred the same way it expands it for those who wish to talk about Kenyan politics and ethnicity with decorum.

However, the most striking feature of the discussions in the open group is the abundance of insults, which have been delivered in various speech functions. To take a rather 'printable' example, Obiero, in Turn 21 of Chat 5 (section 8.3.4), goes: "*Can i call this man stupid?*" Here, Obiero, a Luo, is reacting to Kosgei, a Kalenjin, who has spoken of Luos with condescending contempt (while glorifying Kikuyus) in the first turn of the same chat. Worthy of mentioning is also the way Obiero does not address the adversary in Kosgei directly. It is almost as if he only wants Kosgei to 'overhear' him; therefore, Obiero is effectively showing his disalignment from Kosgei. This signals polarisation along ethnic lines, which is rife in the open chats. On this note, this study concludes that the performance of face-work is generally a rarity in the



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open group chats. In its lieu, there is a preponderance of Face Threatening Acts. To add, some speakers have used *threats*, which are scare tactics, also aimed at contracting the dialogic space (section 8.3.6). As Goffman (1967) offers, the knowledge and experience of face-work is rarely a myth in any society; rather, it is only the willingness to apply them in particular contexts which makes the difference. By this token, this study suggests that the participants in the open group easily indulge in all these: hatred, bitterness and aggression owing to both their strangeness to each other and the anonymity which Facebook offers.

With regard to the particular ways of discursively constructing and negotiating ethnic identities by the participants, this study has teased the following themes: *nationalism*, *ethnic membership*, *dominance* or *hegemony*, *culture*, *hierarchy*, *ethnic elite*, *reciprocity*, *territory* or *geographical regions* and *ethnic mobilization*. All the (other) themes tend to terminate in *ethnic polarisation*, and mainly as pitting two ethno-political sides: Kikuyus and Luos, with other ethnic communities as appendages to either. Of all the nine themes, only *culture* and *territory* (or *geographical regions*) are considered to be the main themes in the literature on ethnicity. The seven others have only been made reference to as constituting particular relations between ethnic communities. Most participants can be seen to be referring to themselves and others as members of certain ethnic communities. Names (discussed as descriptions of the participants in section 6.6.2) also tend to be used here to mark membership to particular ethnic groups. Language, given as a characteristic of ethnicity in the literature, has also been discussed in section 6.6.2, as indexing ethnic affiliation and isolation by one participant, and preference for an ethno-political coalition by another.

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First, the fact that participants gather on the virtual public sphere that is Facebook to deliberate about Kenyan politics gives a sense of nationalism or Kenyanness, whether they are dialogic partners or opponents. However, they negotiate their Kenyanness in different ways since they are situated on different social axes, especially those of ethnic and political affiliations. This even explains why some of them seem to be tearing at the fabric of Kenya, itself an imagined, yet real, phenomenon. A case in point is Kosgei, who, as has been shown below, expresses hatred and contempt for Luos while glorifying Kikuyus. However, there are still rays of hope for unity for Kenyans. Wanyama, as shown above, in section 9.2, Excerpt 2, encourages: "Comrades transformed into the Kenyan workforce… Those days at Campus,we never looked at comrades as communities therefore let us be instruments of change."



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Participants also mostly make reference to their own and their interlocutors' belongingness to particular ethnic communities in Kenya. It also seems that participants' ethnic situatedness generally determines what they say and even how it is conceived by others. That is why, for instance, as discussed in section 9.3, Excerpt 6, Victor refers to Kosgei as a Kikuyu who is disguising himself in a Kalenjin name. This is because Kosgei has just denigrated Luos but extolled Kikuyus. In the same vein, ethnic groups have also been construed as traditionally belonging to, and, thus, even entitled to particular regions, as occupying a certain rung in the ethnic hierarchical order, and as enthralled to certain ethnic elites, around whom tribe-mates mobilise, as pitted against the 'others'. Excerpt 17, in section 9.9, is a good example of how participants look at particular ethnic communities as belonging and entitled to particular geographical regions. Here, Ochieng refers to Rift Valley as "Kalenjin territory", which, unfortunately, "these kiuks [Kikuyus]" are "raping". In the same excerpt, Ochieng protests at government "appointments favouring mt.Kenya". Mt. Kenya is synonymous with Kikuyus (together with Merus and Embus), to whom Kenya's current president, Uhuru Kenyatta, belongs.

The data also points to both *primordiality* and *social constructivism* as ways of understanding ethnicity. However, many participants, and in many instances, appear to be informed by the former approach to ethnicity. They consider ethnicity a natural and unchanging characteristic, which even determines individuals' behaviours and even destiny (Montagu, 1945). These participants also generally appear to be speaking on behalf their ethnic groups, which they also treat as 'homogeneous' or 'monolithic'. To illustrate from the previous paragraph, Ayot, in section 9.6, Excerpt 24, boasts about Luos being more intelligent than Kalenjins: "*There is no single day that the silly Kalenjins will match the interlectual capacity in Luos…*" However, as the data also shows, participants do not only generally pledge loyalty to their tribes. They also do so to their ethnic elites, ethno-political coalitions as well as the elites of these coalitions. This explains why most Kikuyu participants support Uhuru Kenyatta and why most Luos support Raila Odinga. In the same line of thought, since Kalenjins have a political pact with Kikuyus, most Kalenjin participants also express their support for Kikuyus.

In relation to the previous point, some (mis)conceptions about ethnic communities can be said to be informed by such notions as *The Great Chain of Being* (Kottak, 2011), which suggests that human beings, as all other things of this universe, including plants, non-living things, angels and God, are ordered or categorized according to levels of importance or seniority. In section 9.6, Excerpt 3, for example, Kosgei says that Luos should accept their "*underclass*



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*status*", before declaring that "*Kikuyus are superior and that's a fact*". All these ways of construing ethnic communities and their relationships can be attributed to such historical factors as colonialism, which have come to bequeath certain ethnic stereotypes to sections of Kenyans (Wrong, 2009), as discussed in section 3.4.2.2. Such attendant conjunctures as the hitherto exotic capitalism (and its uneven development), zero-sum 'democracy' and presidential system have also only helped to aggravate the state of affairs. That is why, so far, as many a scholar have observed, the relationships between Kenyan communities are, in the main, asymmetrical, especially as pitting the *hegemonic* vis-à-vis *dominated* communities.

Immoral appropriation of state machineries also help to sustain and reproduce unduly unequal power relations between ethnic communities. For instance, in explaining how President Kibaki and his faction sabotaged a draft constitution by the CKRC because it sought "a non-ethnic political order, Ghai (2013:86) makes reference to specific major proposals in the CKRC draft which "were seen by the Kikuyu faction around Kibaki as undermining Kikuyu hegemony: the abolition of the imperial presidency and the devolution of some state powers to provinces." There seems to be a corroboration of this in section 9.4, Excerpt 12, when Kotut waxes lyrical about President Uhuru Kenyatta's Jubilee ethno-political coalition, while dismissing his dialogic opponents: "This coalition control the security apparatus and money supply in the country, nothing can beat that, you can only watch as they lead, you're job is just to rant on Facebook without the power to change anything."

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In section 9.4, Excerpt 9, Wambui, a Kikuyu, thumps her chest when she says that Raila Odinga comes from a "minority community" and that he cannot be president since he does not enjoy the support of Kikuyus and Kalenjins, who "are among the majority" and who decide who becomes president. To be sure, Kenya has had four presidents, with three from the Kikuyu community and one from the Kalenjin community, out of a pool of more than 42 ethnic communities. The above-mentioned participant, Wambui, brings to mind such material benefits (pork barrel) as appointments and other resources which individuals get by virtue of coming from the same ethnic community as the president (Posner, 2005; Kanyinga *et al.*, 2010; Eriksen, 2010). While taking cognizance of the fact that material benefits do not go to all, this study points to the fact that such non-material benefits as 'esteem goods' or 'feel good factor' can induce a great deal of loyalty in the tribespeople of the presidents (Kanyinga *et al.* 2010).

The above point may also be helpful in explaining how the theme of *reciprocity* has been teased from the data, with some participants indicating feelings of deprivation, as hard done and



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ridden roughshod over by especially the Kikuyus. In section 9.8, Excerpt 29, Momanyi, a Kisii, retorts to a Kalenjin interlocutor, assuring him that Ruto will not be president as "kikuyu won't return da favour." In the next excerpt, Kipkemoi asks for "one example where the Kikuyus have voted for somebody else."

By the course of nature, such a context is bound to breed feelings of ethnic chauvinism, stereotypes, prejudices, hatred and suspicion, which also explain why some participants even go to the extent of making up ghastly cultural practices for certain ethnic communities, in order to spite them. An example of these is when, as shown in section 9.5, Excerpt 15, Mureithi a Kikuyu, describes Luos as believing that "there is no death without a witch", which prompts them to go to such lengths as keeping and using the water which has washed dead bodies for cooking food, which will be served to people, with a vengeful view to put the killer to death. Another example is a retaliation by Akoth, in section 9.5, Excerpt 20. She hits back at Kikuyus thus: "Talking of traditions, who leave out their dead in the forest and go to bed with their animals? And teeth the colour of mud……" By so doing, participants revisit certain cultural and social stereotypes, as attached to certain ethnic communities. In relation to these, some participants, as also representing their own and others' ethnic ideologues, give prominence and capitalize on some perceived cultural beliefs and practices of certain ethnic communities. To expound, these participants use their cultural beliefs and practices as yardsticks to judge outsiders negatively. For instance, in section 9.5, Excerpt 16, Kimani, a Kikuyu, mocks Luos as boys because their men are known not to circumcise. Put simply, here, Kimani and his dialogic friends consider their own ways to be 'culturally higher' than those of Luos, who, therefore, should not be expected to produce a president for Kenya. As explained in section 3.4.2.2, such political stereotypes are a form of control" (Ogot, 2012:67).

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**10.3 Recommendations**

In addition to the extra dialogistic discursive strategies and themes of ethnicity which I have has teased out in this study, I wish to state five other observations which I have made from the data: the *non-verbal lines of face-work*; the *gender of the participants*; *political discussions from other public spheres; the contributions of the journalists and those of the professional politicians*. First, as Goffman (1967) states, face-work is not only performed, realized, experienced or captured in verbal actions. Such *non-verbal actions* as *glances*, *facial expressions* and *other gestures* also constitute face-work. The same goes for the *tone changes in the speakers' voices*. Therefore, this study suggests that, perhaps, all these 'lines' would



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have enriched an analysis of Face-work. Be that as it may, the catch is that it may not be easy to capture all these 'lines', unless maybe in video or pictorial forms. Still, due to differences in cognition, experiences, situations and contextualisations, analyses of these could be substantively contestable. Nevertheless, it would be interesting and enlightening if (more) research were to delve into this area.

Second, a consideration of the gender of the interlocutors would enrich studies which investigate how a selection of citizens construct and manipulate ethnic identities in political discussions. As can be seen, there were far less female interlocutors than male interlouctors. The contributions of the former were also generally more modest. As has been mentioned in the chapter on ethnicity, many African societies are also generally patriarchal and patrilocal. Perhaps it should be of little surprise that there has not been a strong female contender among the main presidential aspirants in the country, at least since the 2002 general elections. A look at the gender dimension in political interactions may also be interesting, as well as an investigation into why, how and to which extent the females partake in these political discussions.

Third, in lending credence to McNair (2011), this study admits that Facebook – as any form or type of media – does not suffice for the access of the political processes by the researcher or analyst. *Road-side meetings, public bars, classroom discussions, lunch breaks, dinner parties* and *other kinds of gatherings* are only cases in point of 'untapped' sources of political discussions which the researcher ought to access. Therefore, this study recommends that further research investigate discourse emanating from such contexts. More interesting data would be gained, thus, further enriching such studies which pertain to the examination of language as employed in political discussions.

Fourth and fifth, as much as ordinary citizens are at the core of a country's politics, it may be more illuminating to explore talk by journalists and professional politicians alike. Even if both of these overlap with the others as citizens, their powerful roles, at least as opinion shapers and trendsetters, cannot be emphasized enough.

In conclusion, there is still much to be explored in the discursive construction of ethnicities (and even other intersecting identities) in everyday public and private interactions, and the ways in which mutual understanding and respect (if there are any) can be negotiated and achieved in contexts shaped by ethnic division and polarisation in the ever changing political ecology, at least in Kenya or elsewhere in Africa.



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# ADDENDUM

## CHAT 1 (CLOSED GROUP)

### CAMPUS GROUP

| Turn | Date & Time | Participant & Ethnicity | Text [Translation] | Likes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Feb. 28 2013 0900 Hours | Mwendwa [Meru] | on 21 October 1946, late President Kenyatta made an impassioned plea for Unity. in the Nairobi newspaper edition - "Mwalimu" he said " I have nothing, not even a cent to give you. But with Unity even an atomic bomb cannot defeat us". Fast forward today the family owns 500,000 acres of land , multibillion business enterprises, shops in the heart of London where even Lords of the Queen of England do not have. Today I ask you to reflect on humanity. As Dida said a true leader will not eat until the subjects have eaten. There is a problem with our System, we need a leader who can clean it up. Today i make an impassioned request for Raila Amollo odinga he is a true leader who cares for Equity in Kenya! on 4th say RAO Tosha! | |
| 2 | Feb. 28 2013 | Kamau [Kikuyu] & Nyakundi [Kisii] | Like this | 2 |
| 3 | Feb. 28 2013 0930 Hours | Muthoni [Kikuyu] | Mrembo [Beautiful one],rao is very corrupt.have we forgotten the molasses plant,maize scandal,kazi kwa vijana funds tht he misappropriated?wht has uhuru done?yes,his dad did it bt nt the son.rao is worse than uhuru. | 1 |
| 4 | Feb. 28 2013 0954 Hours | Wafula [Luhya] | Muthoni, and what has the son and his family done to correct the mess, stop leaving in the past. When you hear willing buyer willing seller dig dipper and understand that a common man would not stand a chance competing with a sitting prezzo over purchase of land by then. RAO just like UK got a chance finally to explain how clean he is. Open your eyes my sister and stop hating vote with ur conscience and thank me later. | 1 |
| 5 | Feb. 28 2013 1212 Hours | Mwangi [Kikuyu] | Guys posting anything now will not make diff but next monday will. Whoeverwins accept and continue hustling. nothing will.Iwish we are talking abt what whoever we support will do without bringing in the other. U use alot of effort diselling your candidate. SELL DEM MEN. | 3 |
| 6 | Feb. 28 2013 1217 Hours | Wafula [Luhya] | Mwangi, that's well said my brother. I agree. | |



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| 7 | Mar, 1 2013<br>1111 Hours | Mong'are<br>[Kisii] | Equity? continue to lie to Raila's people that when he becomes president, manna will drop from heaven. Just let people work hard and forget about tunaomba serikali. | |
| 8 | Mar. 11<br>2013<br>1440 Hours | Mogaka<br>[Kisii] | @ Muthoni. RAO is worse because he contested against a Kikuyu. In 2002, he was your hero because you used him to get votes. That is the mentality. Have you ever heard that ODM or CORD used money to buy people from other parties? | 1 |
| 9 | Apr. 11<br>2013<br>1700 Hours | Wanyonyi<br>[Luhya] | Mogaka,you are right! And give me Muthoni's number I'd like to take her out on a date...wish to turn her into a nationalist! | |
| 10 | Apr. 12<br>2013<br>0910 Hours | Mugambi<br>[Meru] | DENIAL CAN BE SEEN. OR I IT SELF INDUCED STUPOR. BYGONES ARE BYGONES. LETS FOCUS AHEAD AND STOP COMPLAINING. OUR CONTINUED COMPLAINTS WILL MAKE US LOOSE MORE IN FUTURE. FORWARD EVER, BACKWARD NEVER. WHOEVER HAS A QUERY ON CAN VISIT A MENTAL PSYCHOLOGIST FOR ADVICE | |
| 11 | Apr. 12<br>2013<br>1117 Hours | Mogaka<br>[Kisii] | You will be living a lie if you decide to ignore the past. Being cognizant of your past is important for your future. I have always, since my high school days, been a keen student of history. | 1 |
| 12 | Apr. 12<br>2013<br>1506 Hours | Mugambi<br>[Meru] | @Mogaka, The world is full of lies we are all aware... and the only way out is to ignore them. Your Histology is a confirmation it will ever repeat itself. | |
| 13 | Apr. 12<br>2013<br>1700 Hours | Mogaka<br>[Kisii] | @ Mugambi, No one has said that the world is not full of lies. We learn that in history, don't we? When people say they will rule for one term but, they, in effect, rule for more than one, isn't that history about how politicians lie?. Had it not been for history, how else would we have known they lied, for instance? Remember when president Moi allowed each party to nominate people to work as commissioners at the ECK? It was not provided for in the constitution. However, Moi said:"Well, the GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT." What happened afterwards? Did president Kibaki respect the 'GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT'? History tells me he trashed it. If you do not know your history, Kibaki appointed his own commissioners, trashing the 'GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT'. You can only tell simpletons to go forward without looking back. I am sorry I am not going to follow your advice. However, fortunately for you, there will be many people who will gladly do what you tell them. However, history, as much as it likes to repeat itself, changes. | 1 |



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| 14 | Apr. 12 2013 1849 Hours | Mwendwa [Meru] | Mogaka am very much with you on this point. we forget too fast and Kibaki took this country to the worst depths of tribalism we have ever witnessed in our day. I was his big supporter, but when I analysed what had happened in our country since 2002 , i had to make a huge resolve of wht Kind of Kenya I desire. what just happened was a big slap to our democracy, my brother Mugambi is in a hurry with the famous slogan, "accept it and move on" ! And yes we have moved on but we wont forget! We will participate in the building of this Nation, because its all ours, but we wont forget and we will remind many many generations to come! | |
| 15 | Apr. 13 2013 0250 Hours | Mogaka [Kisii] | Thanks Mwendwa. I agree with you as well. I also supported Kibaki in 2002, thinking he would make Kenya a better place. I did not vote for that other funny politician called Nyachae, even if we are from the same ethnic community. Look what the man we voted for (Kibaki) did! Look at the key ministries... Whom did he appoint there? Look at the Central Bank? What happened to a Mrs Mwatela? What almost happened, or what had started happening at the KPA? The list is long. When I compare Kibaki with Moi, the latter was way much better. This is despite the fact that we thought he was so bad and we wanted change. Kibaki just proved to me that his predecessor was an angel! When people voted for Kibaki in 2002, they said he would bring change. What did they associate Uhuru with? Now, look what happened this year. He became an angel, didn't he? It is so hilarious. Kenya will only become a better place if people vote using their brains, not their stupid visceral feelings. | |
| 16 | Apr. 13 2013 1020 Hours | Mwendwa [Meru] | to be honest wat happened to Mwatela was the turning point for me. She had the papers, expereince, technical expertise n all! But she lacked one thing from Kibakis perspective: tribal alienation. She was kicked out of central bank like a dog. N as usual we all kept quiet n moved on. mpaka lini jamaneni? [oh dear! Until when! I like what U say, we must document these happenings to guide how we move in the future! We must cut our ethnic links for the sake of our children. We r watching closely this gova but they started messing with the speakers of senate n national assembly. | |

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## CHAT 2 (CLOSED GROUP)

### CAMPUS GROUP

| Turn | Date & Time | Participant & Ethnicity | Text [Translation] | Likes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mar. 6 2013 1800 Hours | Wanyama [Luhya] | Comrades transformed into the Kenyan workforce,elections are behind us and the final results on presidential are coming on Friday or Monday.Lets wait for the results in decorum and modestly.<br>Those days at college,we never looked at comrades as communities therefore let us be instruments of change.It saddens me to see how comrades are attacking members especially "Kikuyus".Kikuyus did register in large numbers and their turn out on 4th was overwhelming.Just pick a point to learn from them but avoid statements that border to hatespeech. | 4 |
| 2 | Mar. 6 2013 1830 Hours | Kibet [Kalenjin], Njoro & Njeru [Kikuyu] | Like this | 4 |
| 3 | Mar. 6 2013 1924 Hours | Njoki [Kikuyu] | Wanyama well said and thanks for making sense in the social media. Many a times i have refrained from commenting on issues bordering politics not because i do not have opinion but because i have realized that restraint and common sense should dictate our words and our deeds. None of us applied to be born in a particular tribe or community. I was born and bred in Kisumu, associated with non kikuyus and even 90% of my friends and fb friends are non kikyus why we keep on attacking Kikyus beat me.. Its amazing that tribalism dictates our thinking despite our education. | 1 |
| 4 | Mar. 6 2013 2003 Hours | Nyongesa [Luhya] | Wanyama,<br><br>Did someone circulate hate speech here? I have not read that? On a light note, I am told Kioni is did not vite for Mudavadi despite being his pointman in Central? I am told in his constiteuncy, there was no vote for Mudavadi? I am modelling the results and my pasimonous estimates I can see Mudavadi passing..... | 1 |
| 5 | Mar. 7 2013 1941 Hours | Wanyama [Luhya] | Nyongesa not on this wall but elsewhere.But the people who are making theser statements on other walls are members of this group.How much I wish we desist from that. | |
| 6 | Mar. 7 2013 | Wanyama [Luhya] | By the way Nyongesa you talk of Modellling.I am developing Kenyas import demand function using time series between 1980-2012(Cointegration and error correction).Any literature?I must impress Prof Bakari. | |



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| | 1947 Hours | | | |
| 7 | Mar, 7 2013 1300 Hours | Mogaka [Kisii] | Mr Wanyama! How the hell can you say that the results should just be accepted? They cannot just be accepted like that when some questions have not been answered. How does the system just fail like that? I cannot remember if such a thing has happened somewhere before. Tell me, during Moi's time, did we have such cases? Or, was such the norm? How come these things are now becoming the norm when some people are in office? Just reflect. If you are naive, some people have sinister motives. You can keep wondering so loudly as to why some people are attacking others, but you need to recognize the fact that, to some other people (or, if I can be modest, their leaders or representatives, whom they will always vouch for, come rain or sunshine), it does not matter how you get something, it is getting it that matters.<br>I just want to tell you that, especially in Kenya, everything does not end with voting. No. You need to be vigilant. You cannot tell people not to raise concerns. In all honesty, Kenya belongs to all of us. | |
| 8 | Mar. 7 2013 1820 Hours | Wanyama [Luhya] | Indeede Kenya belong to all of us.Mogaka i am not that naive infact I got alot of information which I chanell through the right channels so that its consumption can rectify a mess.my wonder is you blanketly accuse all the kikuyus for unfounded issues.Look here central&R/v provinces registered in large numbers then their leaders struck a working formula.What were the other six provinces doing?doing nothing,waiting to complain and accuse others(kikuyus).Come voting day the same.You need to do something tangible.look at the demographic composition of our population,14million registered voters against 40 million Kenyans.did the Kikuyus stop the 6 other provinces from registering while central was registering voters and R/V [Rift Valley] registering a whooping total of 6 million.Mind you also of the remaining 8 millions the two communities are still represented.Mogaka you failed when you didnt sensitise and mobilse people about the importance of the of the vote. | 1 |
| 9 | Mar. 7 2013 1916 Hours | Mogaka [Kisii] | I wonder where you get all that information from. What are you working as? Anyway, congratulations! I do not think my accusations are so unfounded as you claim though. I have so many questions for you. However, just a few: (1) Look at the 'plum' ministerial positions. Where have they been going recently? Why? (2) When Moi was pushed, do you remember that though it was not in the constitution, he allowed all political parties to nominate people to ECK as commissioners. Just why did the same not happen in 2007, when we were supposed to have known better or do better? Where did the 'gentleman's agreement go to? Or, it should not have worked with a selected few. That does not say anything, does it? Have I blamed Kikuyus for registering in numbers? In fact, I applaud them for that. Besides, I did not fail if some people did not know the importance of voting or registering. Congratulations if you sensitized your people on the importance of voting! However, you can also not blame people for not voting or registering if, last time, they were not given what they wanted. Now, it is so unfortunate when we do not exactly know what the wish of some Kenyans is with regard to electing people into offices. Can I ask you | |



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| | | | another sincere question? Did word get to you that some people, whose names begin with some letters, had their names missing from the register last time? What would you call that? There are many questions I would have wanted to ask you mayne... | |
| 10 | Mar. 7 2013 1937 Hours | Wanyama [Luhya] | First Mogaka be optimistic.Stop crying and find a way forward for all this issues.Pacifying a community other than accepting the fact that education and economic emancipation is a sure way of coming out of this limbo will not.By the way if UK (Uhuru Kenyatta) wins he will win based on a techinicality ,and that is voter registration period.A tethered cow can only graze as far as the rope stretches.As an Econometrician I believe facts,when the facts change my position changes for now emotions can run high but this cant change the facts.Supposing there was a rerun these other communities wont vote as they did,then at tallying they will start wishing and complaining-remember the vicious cycle of poverty.For your information I just planted 250 trees on my newly acquired piece of land and repaired my junk-this improves the quality of my life.when a rerun comes I will go and vote. | 2 |
| 11 | Mar. 9 2013 1324 Hours | Mogaka [Kisii] | Sometimes, being optimistic is not being realistic. Kenya went to dogs a long time a go. First of all, you have not answered or responded convincingly to the issues I raised. Why? Remember, some realities are constructed. It is good you are an econometrician. You believe in the primacy of numbers, facts... and what have you. Well, I can tell you, my friend, that numbers is not everything. I do not wholesomely buy quantitative analysis. First, as I said, a reality can be constructed. What can we do if the (digital) system just failed? It is a reality that it failed, isn't it? Secondly, my friend, I am a critical discourse analyst. When people do not go out and register or vote, that is discourse. Silence is discourse. Those countries are more democratic if their people, I mean almost all the citizens, take part in elections. Those countries are much more democratic not only if almost all their citizens take part in elections, but also if they are better educated (formally, and better still, informally). So, two things there: almost everyone takes part in voting, and people make informed choices. Mark 'informed choices'. Maybe if Obama were Kenyan, he would not have been voted! Maybe Kenyans know better than Americans. When we voted for Kibaki in 2002, what was the main reason? Now, ten years down, what has changed? You have the answers to that. Let me tell you. Education, especially formal education, does not change some people or some things. In my village, in 2007, I was at loggerheads with people who were blaming me for voting Raila Odinga because he is a "boy". That he comes from a community from which men do not circumcise is a reason for him not to be voted. That he cannot lead because he is a boy, immature. Is that not sad? I have a Kikuyu friend. He has a PhD (Philosophy of Doctorate [degree]). He says he cannot vote for a man who is not circumcised. When I say Kikuyus are tribal and everything..., I am saying this in the general sense (to mean I am not accusing all Kikuyus of being tribal). However, like I always say, I have not come across a Kikuyu who has proved me wrong. I hope to find | 1 |



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| | | | one. I am serious. Remember, I am speaking for myself. Either I am unlucky or I see things quite differently. And, if you did not know, in 2002, I did not support Nyachae. Remember, I am a Kisii. I supported Kibaki. Is that because I was stupid? One more question: Why did Kibaki become an elder everywhere he went. Why did the same not happen to Raila in Kikuyu land? Remember, Raila had been made an elder almost everywhere else he had gone. Why the hullabaloo in Kikuyu land? Are you telling me that nothing is wrong here? I thought school should make us a bit cultured. Unfortunately, it does not change many of us. I can promise you that we have a long way to go. I am not saying that some people should not rule. No. Let them rule. They can even rule forever, for all I care. Look at Museveni, Gaddafi, Kagame, Mobutu, Mugabe, Dos Santos, Mubarak. Let them rule. I do not know whether it is true, but someone told me that both Raila and someone else were to chase away, officially, people from the Mau Forest. Raila was asked to be going as he would be joined later. He was very happy to do that. No one joined him. Raila was the only bad guy. No money was released to settle those people. Again, Raila was the bad one. Let us talk about Mudavadi, your tribesman. Apparently, at the polling station where his running mate voted, the poor Mudavadi got zero votes. How is that not hilarious? You know, politics can be a dirty game but, dishonest teammates or opponents make it much dirtier and disgusting. | |
| | | | | |
| 12 | Mar. 9 2013 1619 Hours | Atieno [Luo] | Wanyama .so want to see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.....that is gagging..people.. let the 49.03% mourn loudly silently but without arms.. | |
| 13 | Mar. 9 2013 1639 Hours | Wanyama [Luhya] | To Mogaka and Atieno,win through your actions not your arguement.It is much more powerful to get others to agree with you through your actions,without saying a word.Demostrate do not explicate. | 1 |
| 14 | Mar. 9 2013 1748 Hours | Atieno [Luo] | So we have to agree to everything other say without question.....by the way how are action expressed without arguments.....democratic space is about give and take.....passive attitude as much as reactive attitude both have limits that causes destruction but can also create .....Peace is eminent but only if you extend kind words or action to others.....not silence and withdrawal..... | |
| 15 | Mar. 9 2013 1826 Hours | Mwendwa [Meru] | Peace without Justice is a pipe dream! peace n justice walk hand in hand and they are bedfellows! The moment we agree with this then we shall move forward. All citizens in Kenya should feel they have a place n a voice. Irrespective of whether Kikuyu, Luo, Turkana, Luhya! Structures that exist in Kenya are very oppressive. The moment we address this truthfully then we will experience peace, as a conflict analysist I can tell U | |

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| | | | Wanyama what we r experiencing is Negative negative peace n when it blows up 2007/8 violence will be child play. | |
| 16 | Mar. 11 2013 1300 Hours | Mogaka [Kisii] | I think your argument is very weak Wanyama. How do you say that we should win through action, not arguments. Wait... Or, you mean, we should really win through action! Yeah. But you see now, we do not know how. We do not know the actions of the ECK in 2007. We do not know which actions were employed for Jubilee to win this year. One of the actions I know is that they failed the system. Then, they won!. If you tell us how to be able to use actions to win, then, may be we will win. However, I am thinking that if all of us want to win through actions, we will always clash. Arguments don't make sense to you because they do not win elections. Actions do. You see, we come from different schools of thought. | |
| 17 | Mar.11 2013 1304 Hours | Okemwa [Kisii] | HAHAHAH TURNOUT MA FOOT...WAIT FOR THE SUPREME COURT DOSSIER....NO BEEF | |

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## CHAT 3 (CLOSED GROUP)

### CAMPUS GROUP

| Turn | Date & Time | Participant & Ethnicity | Text [Translation] | Likes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Feb. 25 2013 0600 Hours | Wanyonyi [Luhya] | As usual the most pragmatic candidate was Mwalimu Dida. He even showed up with his 3 wives. How sincere! He is,however, a candidate for the future. FOR NOW IT'S RAILA AMOLO ODINGA! THE PEOPLE'S CANDIDATE... | 2 |
| 2 | Feb. 25 2013 | Shimoli [Luhya], Mogusu [Kisii] & Mwendwa [Meru] | Like this | 3 |
| 3 | Feb. 25 2013 0600 Hours | Mwendwa [Meru] | well put, i liked Him too, his approach to issues was very very sincere and honest, something i miss with these big boys. But as u say lets Crown Agwambo first. | 1 |
| 4 | Feb. 25 2013 0705 Hours | Mwangi [Kikuyu] | Wanyonyi, thank God next monday is almost so that the people of fb will have less to be fanatical about.Oh Uhuru,oh Rao,oh JUBILEE,oh CORD n so on n so forth. "HOLD ON TO U MA BRO THE DAY OF RECKON IS NEAR" kuna watu watalilia kwa [Some people will be crying for] ..... | 1 |
| 5 | Feb. 26 2013 0717 Hours | Mong'are [Kisii] | The people's president!!!!!!!!!!!!!!1982 coup, molasses plant, maize scam, kazi kwa vijana [Jobs for the youth] etc | 1 |
| 6 | Feb. 26 2013 1157 Hours | Wanyonyi [Luhya] | MONG'ARE,I will listen to Mogaka. For supporting Uhuru you are letting down your intellect. As a historian,you should know better... | |
| 7 | Feb. 26 2013 1225 Hours | Mong'are [Kisii] | Let me be very honest, i don't see and i have never seen any substance from your man. Idon't have to hate Uhuru bz he is Kikuyu and happens to be Jomo's son!!!!!!!!!!!!!! | |
| 8 | Feb. 27 2013 0712 Hours | Wanyonyi [Luhya] | MONG'ARE,Uhuru has never stood up for anything. WHERE IS THE SUBSTANCE IN UHURU? A spoilt brat...he is arrogant,a dipsomaniac,pesky. You'll regret the day he becomes president. Moi plutocracy will be back. Look at his runningmate-grabbed land from an IDP (Internally Displaced Persons)... | |



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## CHAT 4 (OPEN GROUP)

### 'BARAZA LA WANANCHI' [THE AGORA OF THE CITIZENS]

| Turn | Date & Time | Participant & Ethnicity | Text [Translation] | Likes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | May. 17 2013 1827 Hours | Mureithi [Kikuyu] | There is a region in Kenya when one dies, they wash the corpse and keep the dirty water. Each time they cook for guests, they add a small amount of the water into the food or drinks like tea or porridge as they cook. This is meant to kill whoever bewitched the dead person because they believe there is no death without a witch. | |
| 2 | | Mbugua [Kikuyu] | Like this | 1 |
| 3 | May. 18 2013 1817 Hours | Kimani [Kikuyu] | I think is people of.... Karia ka ihee [The sitting of the uncircumcised boys].. | |
| 4 | May. 18 2013 1819 Hours | Tom [Unknown] | Where particularly is that? | |
| 5 | May. 18 2013 1825 Hours | Njuguna [Kikuyu] | Who has missing front teeth like a combra ,who adores a paython, who fucks tha dead, style up yu are a disgrace on this land ! | 1 |
| 6 | May. 18 2013 1826 Hours | Kathoki [Kamba] | Hehehe.... | |
| 7 | May, 18 2013 1829 Hours | Aluoch [Luo] | U again?? | |
| 8 | May. 18 2013 1830 Hours | Tom [Unknown] | You people, stop stereotype thinking with the lakeside people. It is not true that they perform this things. | 1 |
| 9 | May. 18 2013 1831 Hours | Akoth [Luo] | Talking of traditions, who leave out their dead in the forest and go to bed with their animals? And teeth the colour of mud..... | 2 |
| 10 | May. 18 2013 1835 Hours | Tom [Unknown] | This tribal hatred is bad | |
| 11 | May. 18 2013 | Osem [Luo] | how do they get used water frm mortuaries? | 2 |

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| | 1842Hours | | | |
| 12 | May. 18 2013 1849 Hours | Owino [Luo] | ur madness in back??stop exposng ur igorance & emptyness of ur head by postng wot u dont knw | |
| 13 | May. 18 2013 1900 Hours | Njuguna [Kikuyu] | Kkuks (Kikuyus) ni research fulani tunafanya na animals, na ikitokea tutawauzia kwa olyx. But even satan herself cannot fuck the dead. Let the dead rest in peace<br><br>[We Kikuyus are doing a particular research with animals, and if there are prospects, we will sell you the olyx] | 1 |
| 14 | May. 18 2013 1900 Hours | Korir [Kalenjin] | Wacha ufala<br><br>[Stop being stupid] | |
| 15 | May 18 2013 1902 Hours | Odhiambo [Luo] | nonsense...tell us why .uhuru paid anglo,uhuru blamed AG,uhuru ,uhuru cannot offer proper security and why must he continue | |
| 16 | May. 18 2013 1909 Hours | Tom [Unknown] | Do not respond to non issues raised. Where does uhuru come in here? Just say in simple terms that the OP is not true. When you react with bitterness it makes pple think that the post is true. | |
| 17 | May.18 2013 1911 Hours | Njuguna [Kikuyu] | What are natural condoms ? | 1 |
| 18 | May 18 2013 1912 Hours | Wasike [Luhya] | Xperience unayo ama?<br><br>[Do you have the experience or what?] | |
| 19 | May 18 2013 1916 Hours | Odhiambo [Luo] | irrelevant baseless posts. with no facts is waste of time | |
| 20 | May 18 2013 1944 Hours | Olang' [Luo] | that's what your mom does | |
| 21 | May 18 2013 1947 Hours | Muthuku [Kamba] | Sijawahi ona jinga kama hii<br><br>[I have never seen such stupidity] | |

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| 22 | May 18 2013 2006 Hours | Akoth [Luo] | You would know @Njuguna, you use them to brew your liquor! | |
| 23 | May 18 2013 2007 Hours | Auma [Luo] | guys this is 21st century and all those cultural fetes have been washed by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus (may all the praise and glory be His forever and ever amen!) | 3 |
| 24 | May 18 2013 2020 Hours | Wandeti [Kamba] | Talk abt Uhuru's failures, this is the issue we have not stories on fossilization ! | |
| 25 | May 18 2013 2026 Hours | K'opiyo [Luo] | central Kenya | |
| 26 | May 18 2013 2241 Hours | Otiende [Luo] | This is what kikuyus do? tch. tch. tch. Stop it! | |
| 27 | May 18 2013 2242 Hours | Anyango [Luo] | Must be an area around mt.kenya | 1 |
| 28 | May 18 2013 2053 Hours | Muhoho [Kikuyu] | that water is wat makes them remain 2 be fools n unable 2 reason to an extent of thinking that they can impeach uk [Uhuru Kenyatta] with their mynute no.s in both houses na kung'oa reli inayowafaidi wao wenyewe!<br><br>[…and vandalizing the railway that is of benefit to them (Luos)] | |
| 29 | May 18 2013 2056 Hours | Anyango [Luo] | The fools they r cant even rule a country,cry babies always look for where to throw the blame,and makin wrong choices!!! | |
| 30 | May 18 2013 2302 Hours | Muhoho [Kikuyu] | wrong choixes were made by thoz who failed 2 choose pple who had the numbers n thus being defeated,thoz r the only wrong choices am aware of! | |
| 31 | May 18 2013 2307 Hours | Anyango [Luo] | They won,why the cries? Why cant they deliver? Always looking for who to blame for all their mistakes,particularly the wrong choices they made!!! | 1 |
| 32 | May 18 2013 | Muhoho [Kikuyu] | the only wrong choice one can make is 2 choose jamaa wa katikati bw kalonzo who has about 800 000 votes 2 b a coalition partner! | |



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| | 2312 Hours | | | |
| 33 | May 18 2013 2344 Hours | Owino [Luo] | u wl dlver nthng,if he won the election let hm tour KAKAMEGA? 2002 wl rpeat tself | |
| 34 | May 19 2013 0110 Hours | Otiende [Luo] | Muhoho, CORD is not an alliance of two tribes like jubilee, but a nationalist coalition of all ethnicities--the true face of kenya. Don't think you will ever rig again like you did in 2007 ad 2013. Never! | |
| 35 | May 19 2013 0238 Hours | Owiti [Luo] | This country is so backward. If other nations knew what people are discussing here they'd be in stitches, backward country this | 1 |
| 36 | May 19 2013 0623 Hours | Osem [Luo] | @Owiti:Jaramogi Odinga wanted to put this state into socialism whereby kenyans cud be reffering to each other as COMRADES but Jomo cud not hear of it Now under Uhuru pple are reffering to each other as KIHII [uncircumcised boys],DONKEY EATER:INGOKO [HEN]:JIGA [JIGGER] BITE;SHOGA [HOMOSEXUAL];OKUYU [KIKUYU]:MONEY WORSHIPER ,etc unlike Tanzania where socialism was embrased tribes are not suspicious of each other | |
| 37 | May 19 2013 0623 Hours | Osem [Luo] | @Owiti:Jaramogi Odinga wanted to put this state into socialism whereby kenyans cud be reffering to each other as COMRADES but Jomo cud not hear of it Now under Uhuru pple are reffering to each other as KIHII [uncircumcised boys],DONKEY EATER:INGOKO [HEN]:JIGA [JIGGER] BITE;SHOGA [HOMOSEXUAL];OKUYU [KIKUYU]:MONEY WORSHIPER ,etc unlike Tanzania where socialism was embrased tribes are not suspicious of each other | |
| 38 | May 19 2013 0655 Hours | Tom [Unknown] | Stop lying that its under uhuru that pple ve resorted to name calling. Neither uhuru nor raila have asked their supporters to abuse one another. These two leaders ve always met and greeted one another. They only differ on matters policy and political differences. Its only the desperate poor man who throws insults and rages with anger to fight under the guise of supporting either uhuru or ruto oblivious of the fact that the effects of war ll touch him and not the big person. | 1 |
| 39 | May 19 2013 0709 Hours | Osem [Luo] | @ Tom:dont tell me we dont have poor or rich pple in Tanzania.yet the poor and the rich still call each NDUGU [BROTHER/SISTER]. | |
| 40 | May 19 2013 | Osem [Luo] | @ Tom:dont tell me we dont have poor or rich pple in Tanzania.yet the poor and the rich still call each NDUGU [BROTHER/SISTER]. | |



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| | 0709 Hours | | | |
| 41 | May 19 2013 0709 Hours | Osem [Luo] | @ Tom:dont tell me we dont have poor or rich pple in Tanzania.yet the poor and the rich still call each NDUGU [BROTHER/SISTER]. | |
| 42 | May 19 2013 0715 Hours | Achieng' [Luo] | Ur so petty. | |
| 43 | May 19 2013 0716 Hours | Tom [Unknown] | Yes they do elsewhere. Carry out a study on political wars. Ve you ever seen war in rich neighbourhoods? You ll only get it in kibera, kangemi, mukuru kwa njenga and poor reserves. Ve you ever seen casualties in rich neighbourhoods? Only the poor meet the wrath of the bullet while running on the streets in the guise of fighting for either raila or uhuru while their children and kinsmen are comfortable home. They ll never join you.<br>My point is, its only the poor who ll kill one another. | |
| 44 | May 19 2013 0736 Hours | Ochola [Luo] | Kisii | |
| 45 | May 19 2013 0803 Hours | Uezo Kenya<br>#####<br>Internet Jobs####<br>[Unknown] | MAKE KSH10,000-KSH15,000 WEEKLY ON FACEBOOK.<br>WE WILL TRAIN AND PAY YOU AT THE SAME TIME. NOTE: NAIROBI RESIDENTS ONLY.<br>SEND YOUR CONTACT DETAILS (ID/PASSPORT NO. EMAIL ADRESS, FULL NAME, EDUCATION LEVEL) TO 0223344555, OR 0223344555@gmail.com TO BOOK AN APOINTMENT FOR A FREE TRAINING HENCE START EARNING IMMEDIATELY. | 1 |
| 46 | May 19 2013 0844 Hours | Wekesa [Luhya] | this is barbaric...no..it is witchcraft | |
| 47 | May 19 2013 1042 Hours | Omollo [Luo] | well i can see you are well informed so can you tell us the region.. | |
| 48 | May 19 2013 [Time not stated] | Osem [Luo] | @Tom When Amin overthrew Obote the common pple celebratated the same applied when Teferi Bante and Aman Andom overthrew Haile se lasie. The guys who were over throwned were not PAUPERS nor were they over throwned by PAUPERS | |
| 49 | May 19 2013 | Osem [Luo] | @Tom When Amin overthrew Obote the common pple celebratated the same applied when Teferi Bante and Aman Andom overthrew Haile se | |



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| | [Time not stated] | | lasie. The guys who were over thrown were not PAUPERS nor were they over thrown by PAUPERS | |
| 50 | May 19 2013 [Time not stated] | Osem [Luo] | @Tom When Amin overthrew Obote the common pple celebratated the same applied when Teferi Bante and Aman Andom overthrew Haile se lasie. The guys who were over thrown were not PAUPERS nor were they over thrown by PAUPERS | |
| 51 | May 19 2013 [Time not stated] | Tom [Unknown] | Times ve changed and any regime change should be through legal means, anything similar to what happened lately in Sudan is unacceptable by all means. If the 5 million that supported cord says yes to revolution, the 6 m that supported jubelee will say no. Then you ll see how far it goes. | |

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## CHAT 5 (OPEN GROUP)

### 'BARAZA LA WANANCHI' [THE AGORA OF THE CITIZENS]

| Turn | Date & Time | Participant & Ethnicity | Text [Translation] | Likes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | May. 19 2013 1000 Hours | Kosgei [Kalenjin] | A person with a Luo father and a Kikuyu mother asked why Kikuyus and Luos fight and when this problem will end. I told them in order to reach a solution, a typical luo must accept and move on. Accept (1). His/her underclass status (2) Accept the fate has it Raila will never be president (3) Kikuyus are superior and that's a fact (4) Fighting for recognition will make you lose more (5) There has to be superiors and subordinates (6) the woes of luos were caused by Odingas political machinery which impoverished and made them slaves (7) Witchcraft, wife inheritance, teroburu, having sex with corpses, tying a white rope on a baby's stomach are not the way to progress. (8) Uprooting railway, uprooting chairs at stadiums, stone throwing and other forms of heckling is primitive, (9) Raila lost election and is teaming with western govts to cause trouble (10) We have Uhuru ....WHAT DID I FORGET?? | 5 |
| 2 | | 5 people [Unknown] | Like this | |
| 3 | May. 19 2013 1047 Hours | Bruce [Unknown] | You forgot to use your BRAIN | |
| 4 | May. 19 2013 1049 Hours | Kosgei [Kalenjin] | #Bruce, sio matusi [it is not about insults], I am concerned about you | |
| 5 | May. 19 2013 1053 Hours | Aluoch [Luo] | To chase wind! | 1 |
| 6 | May. 19 2013 1055 Hours | Victor [unknown] | kindly stop defiling the kalenjin name and revert to your kikuyu name, why are you not proud of your tribe to the point of using fake kalenjin names to pass a point, what a coward. | |
| 7 | May, 19 2013 1056 Hours | Bruce [unknown] | You are the type that have to whistle in the toilet just to know which end to wipe. Moroon! | |
| 8 | May. 19 2013 1058 Hours | Kosgei [Kalenjin] | Victor, kalenjins are superior to jaluo, we ruled Kenya and you never will. We are coming back | 1 |

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| 9 | May. 19 2013 1059 Hours | Kosgei [Kalenjin] | Walter (this addressee is not visible on the chat) unasema [What are you saying]? | |
| 10 | May. 19 2013 1059 Hours | Kipngetich [Kalenjin] | You forgot to exclude no.3.Its not factual. | |
| 11 | May. 19 2013 1101 Hours | Kosgei [Kalenjin] | Kipngetich, at top of food chain kikuyu is top and we kales 2nd | |
| 12 | May. 19 2013 1103 Hours | Uezo Kenya ##### Internet Jobs #### [unknown] | MAKE KSH10,000-KSH15,000 WEEKLY ON FACEBOOK.<br>WE WILL TRAIN AND PAY YOU AT THE SAME TIME. NOTE: NAIROBI RESIDENTS ONLY.<br>SEND YOUR CONTACT DETAILS (ID/PASSPORT NO. EMAIL ADRESS, FULL NAME, EDUCATION LEVEL) TO 0223344555, OR 0223344555@gmail.com TO BOOK AN APOINTMENT FOR A FREE TRAINING HENCE START EARNING IMMEDIATELY. | |
| 13 | May. 19 2013 1108 Hours | Okumu [Luo] | i wonder if u cant call somebody stupid | 1 |
| 14 | May. 19 2013 1109 Hours | Mutethia [Meru] | You have said these same things 1001 times bring something new and try to bring uniting arguements | 1 |
| 15 | May 19 2013 1112 Hours | Okello [Luo] | To mention that you're a feeble minded stupor who is ready to kill using a machete just to be allowed to lick Uhurus anus...are u on heat coz umeona ngombe [… because you have seen a cow]? | 1 |
| 16 | May. 19 2013 1117 Hours | Casper [Unknown] | plz stop exposing ur childish mind,it is nt ur problem we undastand,its sch.... | |
| 17 | May.19 2013 1119 Hours | Olunga [Luo] | To clean your ass | 1 |
| 18 | May 19 2013 1119 Hours | Dennis [Unknown] | Ur very stupid my friend. | 1 |
| 19 | May 19 2013 | Kosgei [Kalenjin] | Yes, tell them bla | |

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| | 1119 Hours | | | |
| 20 | May 19 2013 1122 Hours | Omollo [Luo] | Kosgei yaani [you mean], you still believe that you are Government and government is you, even when you people are being shortchanged left right and centre? oh comeon my friend and face reality, you should also accept the fact that you sold your birthright the day your Godfather accepted cash from Uhuru on behalf of yourself, your mother and your father, it's better a half loaf of bread than 3 slices.... | 3 |
| 21 | May 19 2013 1123 Hours | Obiero [Luo] | Can i call this man stupid ? | |
| 22 | May 19 2013 1124 Hours | Aluoch [Luo] | Time will tell. | |
| 23 | May 19 2013 1125 Hours | Omollo [Luo] | you forgot the fact that you were bought..... | 3 |
| 24 | May 19 2013 1131 Hours | Moseti [Kisii] | hata kama wanajua wakumbushe [even if they know, remind them] | |
| 25 | May 19 2013 1133 Hours | Kosgei [Kalenjin] | Omollo, hizo ni ndoto zako<br><br>[Omollo, those are your dreams] | |
| 26 | May 19 2013 1135 Hours | Oloo [Luo] | Mediocre arguement frm a Kiuk (Kikuyu) with a pin head brain. | |
| 27 | May 19 2013 1137 Hours | Kosgei [Kalenjin] | Oloo wewe kigeugeu kama babako Raila [You are a chameleon (by constantly changing your stance) like your father Raila]. Another day you called me a kalenjin politician, now you say I am kiukuyu, where do you draw line? | |
| 28 | May 19 2013 1142 Hours | Kinuthia [Kikuyu] | When will all these end ? We are all Kenyans. | 2 |
| 29 | May 19 2013 1144 Hours | Oloo [Luo] | #Kosgei..I wish you knew the signs of a failing gov... | |



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| 30 | May 19 2013 1146 Hours | Khaemba [Luhya] | @Kosgei, ningelikua karibu na ww ningeli-kutomba matako halafu nikunyonyeshe "shahawa" zangu ndio pengine ufunguke akili..... Kumamsenge ww (Kiswahili)<br>[@ Kosgei, if I were next to you, I would fuck your ass and then make you suck my cock (penis) so that maybe you would think properly] | 1 |
| 31 | May 19 2013 1147 Hours | Ochieng' [Luo] | N we never knew america could have ablack president,and more of it akunyan | 1 |
| 32 | May 19 2013 1147 Hours | Leboo [Maasai] | i thouhgt It was an idea kumbe ni ujinga […but little did I know it is stupidity] 2kg! | |
| 33 | May 19 2013 1156 Hours | Ng'ang'a [Kikuyu] | #Kosgei tel thm evn a milion tyms, kwanza hyo part ya part ya raiya wil nvr rule kenya is very importnt waache kuishi in denial<br><br>[tell them even a million times, firstly that part of Raila of never ruling Kenya is very important. They should stop living in denial] | 1 |
| 34 | May 19 2013 1203 Hours | Momanyi [Kisii] | Anytime you say Raila won't b a president,don't forget to say Ruto will not b one.lt is just time factor ,wait n see .kikuyu won't return da favor. | 2 |
| 35 | May 19 2013 1207 Hours | Kosgei [Kalenjin] | Ng'ang'a, hawasomi dalili [they cannot read the signs]. Momanyi, Rutto is deputy president, you don't know? | 1 |
| 36 | May 19 2013 1208 Hours | Gacheri [Meru] | and that is why Rugut was sacked by an sms style up or you be styled | |
| 37 | May 19 2013 1211 Hours | Obiero [Luo] | Hey Kosgei what about a person who burns innocent children and women sheltering in a church ? | |
| 38 | May 19 2013 1212 Hours | Ng'ang'a [Kikuyu] | tel tht fellow th deputy presdnt is jst a breath away frm presidency, sayn kyuks wil nt return th favor is a lie, we dnt return favors in electn leadrs, we luk 4 leadrshp in a persn,odinga doesnt hav any developmnt record bt ruto hs, odinga ni vitendawili tu bt ruto ni kutenda, infct i voted uhuruto bcz of ruto<br><br>[tell that fellow that fellow that the deputy president is just a breath away from presidency, saying that Kikuyus will not return favour is a lie, we don't return favours in electing leaders, we look for leadership in a person, Odinga doesn't have any development record but Ruto has, Odinga is only | 1 |

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| | | | just about (telling) riddles but Ruto is about action, in fact I voted for Uhuruto because of Ruto] | |
| 39 | May 19 2013 1215 Hours | Kosgei [Kalenjin] | #Obiero, Raila did that and is looking forward to another one to overthrow gavaa [government] | |
| 40 | May 19 2013 1216 Hours | Ayot [Luo] | Kosgei is stupid n will 4rever remain more stupid than anybody else in this world. On the matter of Kikuyus dorminating, it's a matter of time b4 we emulate the Nyaranda (Rwanda?). Just continue with your pride b4 u fall | |
| 41 | May 19 2013 1221 Hours | Obiero [Luo] | did Raila burn women and children ? | 1 |
| 42 | May 19 2013 1237 Hours | Momanyi [Kisii] | @Kosgei,da position held by ruto currently is junior to raila's .Raila could revoke kibaki's appointment n they were known as coalition principals but ruto is now kijana wa [a young man of] quarter loaf n quite smaller than what raila had,look at da recent appointment of high commissioners n kiplimo rugut's drama.U r treated as junior partner as everything is going to mt Kenya. | |
| 43 | May 19 2013 1240 Hours | Oliech [Luo] | Makamazi ya Duale ndiyo naona kwako.<br><br>[Duale's (Uhuru Kenyatta's ardent supporter within the Jubilee government) mucus is what I see in you]. | |
| 44 | May 19 2013 1254 Hours | Ng'ang'a [Kikuyu] | #Momanyi u r very wrong, raila couldnt hold brief for th presdnt in hs absnc th dp does,incas th presdnt died raila couldnt take ovr, th constitution then n nw recognises th vice n nw deputy presdnt, raila oposed kibakis apointmnts bcz he wasnt consultd, ruto cnt bcz mak decisions 2gthr wth uhuru, thos clos to them cal them unseparable twin brothrs, kibaki n raos mariage ws a forcd mariag n kibaki n hs pple nevr acknwledgd raila, raila alisimamisha ruto na ongeri job kibaki akabatilisha tht move imidiately [Raila sacked Ruto and Ongeri from their ministerial positions, but Kibaki rescinded that decision immediately] | 1 |
| 45 | May 19 2013 1300 Hours | Ayot [Luo] | Kikuyus are hellbent to continue hoodwinking kalenjins that they are one but a really is, the ever egocentric Kikuyus will devour up to the bones minus their Kales counterparts | 1 |
| 46 | May 19 2013 1302 Hours | Ochieng' [Luo] | In ICC (International Criminal Court),only two Kalenjins are going there,In Rift valley,Kalenjin teritory,u will find places called kiambaa by these kiuks raping kalenjin land.now u see the appointments favouring mt.Kenya,atleast n i mean atleast Raila alikuwa anatetea lakini huyu wenu.Kosgei style up. | |



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| 47 | May 19 2013 1302 Hours | Asiyo [Luo] | #Kosgei, Niliambiwa watu wanashindana kwa ujinga lakini ubaradhuli wako umezidi we! Ulichukua muda wako wote kusambaza ujinga huu wote kwenye tuvuti? Ufala wako unanuka shonde jamani, hebu tingiza kichwa ujioji kama uko timamu.<br><br>[I was told people compete in stupidity, but your foolishness is too much you! Did you take all the time you had to spread all this stupidity on the Internet? Your stupidity is smelling of shit oh dear, why can you not shake your head and ask yourself if you are normal] | |
| 48 | May 19 2013 1341 Hours | Makokha [Luhya] | Kosgei is still a fool like his kalenjin brothers | |
| 49 | May 19 2013 1341 Hours | Oduor [Luo] | Haaahaaa...a kale talking abt CLASS...Am speechless...a class of "shrubbing jigolos" indeed<br><br>[‘shrubbing’ is Kenyan English slang referring to mispronouncing words] | 1 |
| 50 | May 19 2013 1357 Hours | King’ori [Kikuyu] | W.Ruto aaaaa | |
| 51 | May 19 2013 1409 Hours | Kipngetich [Kalenjin] | It was Jomo,then Moi,Kibaki,then Uhuru..Next wil be WSR (William Samoei Ruto),Peter Kenneth,then Moi jnr.It is a vicious cycle..Jaluos? | 2 |
| 52 | May 19 2013 1423 Hours | King’ori [Kikuyu] | Jaluos opposition.<br><br>[‘Jaluos’ is a rather negative way of referring to Luos] | |
| 53 | May 19 2013 1427 Hours | Kiragu [Kikuyu] | Kosgei.....u r simply stupid...hop u n ur gal friend uses condoms coz we dont want another offspring of ur kind in this society,,,,,wah...si wewe ni mjinga [wah… You are indeed stupid] | |
| 54 | May 19 2013 1453 Hours | Njiru [Kikuyu] | KOSGEI, uko sawa ka ndizi imekomaa.<br>majalous hav no option bt jst to relinquish n give in to KIKS N KALES.<br><br>Kosgei, you are a person of note, as solid as a mature banana. Luos have no option but to relinquish and give in to Kikuyus and Kalenjins]<br><br>[‘Majaluos’ means the same as ‘Jaluos’, as explained in Turn 52 above] | 1 |

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| 55 | May 19 2013 1532 Hours | Okeyo [Luo] | Kimunya Ngugi wacha kutumia jina ya mkalenjin<br><br>[Kimunya Ngugi stop using a Kalenjin name]<br><br>[Kimunya Ngugi are Kikuyu names by which Okeyo addresses Kosgei to imply that he (Kosgei) is a Kikuyu (and, therefore, Kosgei is only a fake name he is using to disguise his Kikuyu identity)] | |
| 56 | May 19 2013 1535 Hours | Ojwang' [Luo] | You call luo subordinate fine.. 1. The American president is a luo.....<br>2. The first African woman to win Oscar award is a luo...<br>3. The first professional footballer in east Africa was a luo.<br>4. The greatest football club in east Africa is dominated with luo players.<br>4. The highest paid sportsman in Kenya is a luo. Adongo playing American football.<br>5. A luo will feature in world cup and playing along Hazard, Lukaku, Kompany, strong team... Origi<br>6. A luo prophet comes to Eldoret and you people wash the road with omo and prepare him the way! Something you cannot do for your criminal son samoei...<br>7. The first actor to go international was a luo and he acted the rise and fall of Idi Amin. Luos knew along time that president could rise and fall and we saw moi falling these criminal doesn't scare us..<br>8. Luos have been in opposition for 40years and you've never heard relief food going in nyanza or that they have been reduced to chasing rats like the way we saw in baringo or drinking themselves to death....<br>9. A luo will never take advantage of their people and grab their land or take other people land or burn people inside a church.<br>10. The first governor of Nairobi is a luo and he doesn't take nonsense from women and he shown the the world that luo men cannot be beaten with women. So don call luos subordinate, I respect every tribe and no one can choose his tribe the way you can't choose your family! Get that you thickness skull | 6 |
| 57 | May 19 2013 1539 Hours | Oloo [Luo] | So this "Kales" can lecture us about class? Those who r still wearing Akala [traditional open rubber] shoes with red socks. | |
| 58 | May 19 2013 1548 Hours | Asiyo [Luo] | Kuangalia watu na meno badala ya macho imeambukiza huyu kale na virusi ya ujinga kwenye ubongo.<br><br>[Looking at people with teeth instead of eyes has made this Kalenjin contract stupidity viruses to his brain] | |
| 59 | May 19 2013 1603 Hours | Zawadi [Unknown] | I swear, this Kosgei thing is thick! did you hear him admit that he is inferior to kiuks? that he is a second rate citizen? no wonder his tribes man is the second in command! | |



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| 60 | May 19 2013 1610 Hours | Ng'ang'a [Kikuyu] | its bettr 2b 2nd in comand thn 2b miles away frm comand lyk rao n kalonzo | 2 |
| 61 | May 19 2013 1627 Hours | King'ori [Kikuyu] | Time will come the 2nd comand will be the 1st comand. Angwenyi utasikia aje hahahahaaaa.<br><br>[… Angwenyi how will you feel hahahahaaaa.]<br><br>[However, Angwenyi is not visible on the chat]<br><br>Comment: unless the speakers know each other by other names | 1 |
| 62 | May 19 2013 1630 Hours | Kipngetich [Kalenjin] | #Zawadi,better admit facts instead of living in denial like you do..better said,Kales are superior than Luos. | |
| 63 | May 19 2013 1647 Hours | Ayot [Luo] | There is no single day that the silly Kalenjins will match the interlectual capacity in Luos.,..this is God given in that even the bhang smoker or land grabber can't take it away. The yet to be civilised Kalejingas don't even know that only eyes should be widely opened while mouths shuttered. Idiots indeed | 2 |
| 64 | May 19 2013 1653 Hours | Joshua [unknown] | kalenjins should just concentrate on athletics and farming waachane na siasa [they should stop doing politics], | 1 |
| 65 | May 19 2013 1655 Hours | Ayot [Luo] | Joshua u've omitted sth...these guys r great nightrunners | |
| 66 | May 19 2013 1700 Hours | Okoyo [Luo] | Pls stop arguing with these kales, arguing with them is like trying to make ariver flow in reverse, u either submit or argue 4ever, moi ruled 4 24yrs n still left them bathing in sufurias [cooking pots] | 1 |
| 67 | May 19 2013 1705 Hours | Nyaberi [Kisii] | A kale is a kale tu hakuna tofauti will never be civilised like Kosgei<br><br>[A Kalenjin is a Kalenjin, merely. There is no difference…] | |

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## CHAT 6 (OPEN GROUP)

### 'BARAZA LA WANANCHI' [THE AGORA OF THE CITIZENS]

| Turn | Date & Time | Participant & Ethnicity | Text [Translation] | Likes |
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| 1 | May. 11 2014 0244 Hours | Odoyo [Luo] | UHURU IS A CON-MAN IN THE PRAYER MEETING.<br>1. How dare can this illegitimate president tell people to shun ethnicity; while he is busy appointing his people alone. If ur not a kikuyu, ur not a kenyan.<br>2. Uhuru father was the one to introduce corruptions and massive land grabbing that still haunts the people of Kenya today.<br>3. Uhuru killed Luos in Naivasha using his Mungiki thugs. And he is pretending that he is a man of peace.<br>4. Kenyans never elected Uhuru and he rigged election to be there. Today kenyans are jobless; he dont care, poverty at high rate; you dont care.<br>4. Several hotels has been closed down in Coasts. You dont care.<br><br>Good people- get smart. There is nothing good in this man. Now money for NYS [National Youth Service] has come from China Rugut is being thrown out and replaced with Githinji.<br>NYS are being trained to rigged and beat people in the street come 2017.<br>He knows very well he wont win- people are fed up with him.<br>Good people we will suffer as long as we have this reckless man in office.<br>Maandamano [demonstrations and picketing]. poverty is painful. | 16 |
| 2 | | 16 people [Unknown] | Like this | |
| 3 | May. 12 2014 0250 Hours | Reegan [Unknown] | Hahahahahaha. I didnt know! | 1 |
| 4 | May. 12 2014 0251 Hours | Lemaiyan [Maasai] | pwahahahahaha !!! OMG (Oh My God) !!! | 1 |
| 5 | May. 12 2014 0254 Hours | Mochumbe [Kisii] | And yet those who sleep hungry and bila job ndio [without a job are the ones who] support him the most! | 1 |
| 6 | May. 12 2014 0259 Hours | Odoyo [Luo] | KIKUYUS CONTROLLING THE MEDIA AND BANKING SYSTEM. IF ANYONE IS CONTROLLING YOUR MONEY IT MEANS HE IS CONTROLLING YOU. THERE AIM IS THAT RAILA TO DIE AND THEY TURNED KENYA INTO A MONARCHY. EVIL PEOPLE ON THE EARTH. | 2 |

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| 7 | May, 12 2014 0310 Hours | Wairimu [Kikuyu] | Hahahaa wivu itawauwa !!!<br><br>[…envy will kill you] | 2 |
| 8 | May. 12 2014 0339 Hours | Odoyo [Luo] | Wairimu you may laugh today but remember the day you will cry. anyway sina time na wezi pliz [I do not have time for thieves please]. | 1 |
| 9 | May. 12 2014 0341 Hours | Wairimu [Kikuyu] | Hahahaa matusi [insults] wil take nowhere!! | |
| 10 | May. 12 2014 0345 Hours | Boaz [Unknown] | very true... well put | |
| 11 | May. 12 2014 0407 Hours | Odoyo [Luo] | I HATE KIKUYU TO BE HONEST. I WISH I HAD AIDS (Acquired Immuno-deficiency Syndrome) NIWASREDIA [to spread it to them] NKT [Expression of annoyance, as in to click]. | |
| 12 | May. 12 2014 0409 Hours | Boaz [unknown] | Hahahahahahaha Odoyo my ribs!!! ah jamani [Dear!] | 1 |
| 13 | May. 12 2014 0411 Hours | Odoyo [Luo] | I WISH I HAVE EBOLA VIRUS TO SPREAD IT ALL OVER CENTRAL WAKENYA WAKUWE NA AMANI [SO THAT KENYANS WILL HAVE PEACE]. | 1 |
| 14 | May. 12 2014 0417 Hours | Abdalla [Unknown] | Pls write in English…… | 1 |
| 15 | May 12 2014 0435 Hours | Okundi [Luo] | u wonder...sijui ni kumi kumi mingi [I do not know if it is a lot of cheap traditional alcohol]? | 2 |
| 16 | May 12 2014 0448 Hours | Hesbon [Unknown] | It is us Kenyans that should blame ourselves.Politicians struggle to be tribal political kings and force us to vote on tribal lines and not merit.We always believe our own is the best even if he doesn't have any development record but we fight to pursue his or her personal interest in the name of fighting for democracy.President has no option but to work with persons who are comfortable with him coz if he choses anyone from our community,we now turn against the one working with him and calling him or her a "community betrayor so instead of the President putting someones life in danger by appointing him or her,then he opts to avoid the community.Mudavada was | 5 |



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| | | | rumoured to be going for an appointment in Uhurus govt,other luhya leaders came out guns blazing warning Mudavadi not to work with govt.The govt has no option but must work for u but not a must to work with u. | |
| 17 | May 12 2014 0450 Hours | Wanjiku [Kikuyu?] | Odoyo that hatred will eat you up inside ad leave you a very bitter ad hateful person.hw do u hate a tribe????? who is stopping you from venturing into the banking or media business???? are these businesses owned by kikuyus as a tribe or by a few individuals???i pity you.yu better concentrate on improving ur own life ad do away with negative energy cz no gvt will do that for you,the much they can do is provide opportunities which is upto yu to take or let them go.handouts hakuna [there is none],ask kikuyus. | |
| 18 | May 12 2014 0457 Hours | Tom [Unknown] | Where can l get this man so that l can prosecute him with hate speech and incitement and under sec 132 of the penal code...for undermining the authority of the president. | |
| 19 | May 12 2014 0500 Hours | Were [Luo] In other chats? | Our problm is our politicians they tel us to draw tribal lines ,we do jst that....they draw tribal lines we kep quiet n luk them we even help them out....at the end of the dei all wil xay, that is kenyan politics,which we nd no explanation that if it continues this wei kenya will be divided upon itself....house divided can neva stand my fello kenyans y dont we stand xei know coz trust me i myself would not love n support a raila who preaches tribalism or a uhuru who does that....y dnt we xei no by kiking out any leader who tels us who 2 associate with n who not 2 associate when indeed we r all kenyans....think abt that...come 2017 right God knows why jubilie gvnt is on rein gve them time....n to any1 non is perfect alitle help frm odas can alweiz help jst knock.....i.e includin the gvt... | |
| 20 | May 12 2014 0525 Hours | Joseph [Unknown] | #Odoyo Be careful of what u say and what u post.....ur comments amount to hate speech direct. U dont have to post all this ...plz keep it in ur heart if u need life...my free advice dude. | 1 |
| 21 | May 12 2014 0527 Hours | Were [Luo] | @ Odoyo what is that hatred all for,your enemy becomes your friend once u realize youve similar interest ...kikuyus,kalenjins,luos n the other tribes that makes kenya complete,i blv all we want is kenya that wil accomodate all of us,our childrn n grndchildrn in peace n hermony...n if thea is a kenyan who doesnt want that please let me know why?plz Odoyo substitute ua hatrade with luv,coz trust me it wil leave u an empty man.... | |



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| 22 | May 12 2014 0545 Hours | Boaz [Unknown] | stop threatening ... no one is afraid of ur threats... pelekeni ma feelings Gatundu [take your tantrums and anger to Gatundu (Uhuru Kenyatta's ancestral home)]... Hakuna Hatred hapo he is just calling a spade a spade | 2 |
| 23 | May 12 2014 0600 Hours | Mjomba [Unknown] | @Were, you have said it the right way but will add and say we are also to blame for all this because why do we have all this hype and you know nobody will bring food at your house by the end of the day?? why do we accept them, politicians to divide us where as they remain united??? Poverty doesn't know tribes, colour, race or religions as it cuts across. Those leaders be it Jubilee or Cord were not born today as they have been there all these 50 years of independence and in all corners of this country poverty is allover so lets understand that peace, cohesion uniting and working together to compel our leaders to serve as better is what matters and what will make us be in a better Kenya. | 3 |
| 24 | May 12 2014 0620 Hours | Hesbon [Unknown] | Tunaeza Tusi [We can insult] whoever we want but all blames come back to us.Most of us on social media are in the youthful age bracket,the hope of Kenyan future,but as it is now,i don't see that bright future coz infact we are more of tribalists even worse than our politicians.Everyday social media is filled with negative ethnicity from us not even politicians.Unfortunately no one wants to face the reality but we all want to continue with the blame games. | |
| 25 | May 12 2014 0625 Hours | Hesbon [Unknown] | Were,very soon you will be called a fake Luo,or I will be called a kikuyu coz no one believes as long as u are from a certain you can reason against the wave/wind | 2 |
| 26 | May 12 2014 0630 Hours | Were [Luo] | @Mjomba i agree with you totaly unless all of us realise that us kenyans, are the ones who hv olweiz suffered n wil continiue...2, unles we xei no...to such leaders.... | |
| 27 | May 12 2014 0634 Hours | Were [Luo] | @Hesbon sam1 as to talk to us kenyans, n am not going 2 gv up until they get it the right wei even if it wil be the last ting am doin, i nd not 2 loose hope,you nd not to lose hope,we nd not 2 lose hop hesbon n any other person who sees it the wei we do.., | |
| 28 | May 12 2014 0640 Hours | Gitau [Kikuyu] | Nani ako na charger ya Nokia pin ndogo<br><br>[Who has the small-pin charger for Nokia?] | |
| 29 | May 12 2014 | Were [Luo] | Hahahaha....Gitau nko nayo […Gitau, I have it].... | |



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| | 0642 Hours | | | |
| 30 | May 12 2014 0647 Hours | Okundi [Luo] | Gitau u stl use such phones? | |
| 31 | May 12 2014 0650 Hours | Cheza [Unknown] | Let me chip in say this.i have no problem at all with the appoimtments of uhurus tribe.They voted 4 him to aman.they must be rewarded.infact he should sack omamo n Nakhungu n replace them.the two voted CORD.Hata kama CORD ingeshinda ingefanya hivyo [If CORD had won the elections, they would have done the same]. | 1 |
| 32 | May 12 2014 0653 Hours | Mutinda [Kamba] | @Odoyo Ok what you say may look true to you.... lakini will street demonstrations solve the problem. remember our katiba does not alow for replacing the president apart from the means provided for in katiba and demostrations are allowed but are not a means for replasing the president. (2) if as you say kaleo MPs are fed up with Uhuru way not compine the numbers with those of cord to impeache Uhuru and have Ruto as president . You do not have have maandamano [demonstrations and picketing] to do this Do you? | |
| 33 | May 12 2014 0655 Hours | Ogeto [Kisii] | U are saying uhuru killed luos in naivasha, who killed atleast 100 kisiis and several from others from tribes is uhuru, u are so stupid chew before u swallow, u are pretending to be good bt u caused more harm than wat uhuru did. | 1 |
| 34 | May 12 2014 0658 Hours | Mutinda [Kamba] | Ogeto I agree with you 101% | |
| 35 | May 12 2014 0705 Hours | Khaemba [Luhya] | 2ko naye hapa kwa hapa [I am with him, toe to toe] | 1 |
| 36 | May 12 2014 0705 Hours | Khaemba [Luhya] | 2ko naye hapa kwa hapa [I am with him, toe to toe] | |

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## CHAT 7 (OPEN GROUP)

### 'BARAZA LA WANANCHI' [THE AGORA OF THE CITIZENS]

| Turn | Date & Time | Participant & Ethnicity | Text [Translation] | Likes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | May. 13 2014 1514 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | Kotut has inboxed me admitting that election was rigged. And here he is saying something else. Uhuru is a fraud. Try rigging again in 2017. | |
| 2 | May. 13 2014 1514 Hours | Kotut [Kalenjin] | I tell this my friend, as long as Rift valley and Gema people remain united no coalition can defeat them, denying this is just self denial | 1 |
| 3 | May. 2014 1517 Hours | Kotut [Kalenjin] | This coalition control the security apparatus and money supply in the country, nothing can beat that, you can only watch as they lead, you're job is just to rant on Facebook without the power to change anything. | 1 |
| 4 | May. 13 2014 1519 Hours | Ateka [Kisii] | Kotut r u sure Jubilee will remain united until 2017? | 1 |
| 5 | May. 13 2014 1520 Hours | Mwaura [Kikuyu] | guys unajua wa2 wakishindwa xana huwa wana tupa mbao,i plead with sobber minded pple from jubilee not 2 take seriously everyth said by cordians coz they've already gone insane,c mliona wakibadilisha kasarani kuwa kisirani!<br><br>[You saw how they turned the stadium of Kasarani chaotic] | 1 |
| 6 | May. 13 2014 1527 Hours | Ng'ang'a [Kikuyu] | Kwani Kotut works 4 iebc? Odinga alishndwa hands down n 2017 ruto alimuambia atashndwa na over 3milion votes, ngojeni mtaona<br><br>[Does Kotut work for the IEBC? Odinga was trounced hands down in the elections and in 2017, Ruto told him that he will be trounced by over 3 million votes. Wait and you will see.] | |
| 7 | May, 13 2014 1533 Hours | Omuto [Luo] | Pride comes before the fall....a feeling of invincibility, that nothing can shake us. History is full of examples | |



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| 8 | May. 13 2014 1534 Hours | Kotut [Kalenjin] | It will be a landslide like the ANC [African National Union] win in South Africa, 2017 will be 65 %not 51%like 2013 | 1 |
| 9 | May. 13 2014 1541 Hours | Kotut [Kalenjin] | It will be a landslide like the ANC win in South Africa, 2017 will be 65 %not 51%like 2013 | 2 |
| 10 | May. 13 2014 1542 Hours | Kotut [Kalenjin] | Remember the story Raila used to tell during the campaigns the Rats discussing how to and who to hang a bell on cats neck to warn them when it's coming, he was so confident calling himself the cat and others the Rat, well, he became the Rat, God had other ideas | |
| 11 | May. 13 2014 1549 Hours | Wambui [Kikuyu] | Raila he is bloody looser.4 times he has lost. He better pack his bag and go back to pondo.he should give a chance somebody else but not odingas. | |
| 12 | May 13 2014 1600 Hours | Kotut [Kalenjin] | Bondo sio pondo, but then it can be anything | |
| 13 | May 13 2014 1605 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | Kotut, first, your inbox to me implied that raila won, but was rigged out because they fear Luos. So if the GEMA-Kalenjin vote is enough to win, why would there be a need to rig? Why not just win without fraud? Secondly, if the GEMA-Kalenjin vote was not enough to win 2013 at a time when registration was so slow in CORD strongholds, how does JUBILEE expect to win 2017? Lastly, stop the double speak of saying GEMA-Kalenjin (34% of totalo voters) is "unbeatable" as a block, while at the same time boasting that GEMA-Kalenjin controls the security apparatus, which is used to rig elections.UHURU KENYATTA CANNOT BE IN OFFICE BOTH LEGALLY AND ILLEGALLY. It has to be either one or the other. Once you come out straight on that then we can talk. | 1 |
| 14 | May. 13 2014 1610 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | [INBOX FROM Kotut TO ME 7HRS AGO]: "A Luo president is something that will never happen. Trust me on that. Its not about me, those people who control kenya fear your emotional hysterical, hero worship behaviour". | |
| 15 | May 13 2014 1612 Hours | Wambui [Kikuyu] | Nyadera hehehee I disagree with you that raila won.<br>1.raila come from minority community I think 6th largest in kenya.<br>2.raila realised that his own people luo didn't vote him.he got more vote from other tribes.<br>3.Gikuyu and kalenjin are among the majority.they decide who rule the country kenya.without them you go nowhere. | |



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| | | | TOTAL LIES THAT RAILA WON.NI FANTASY. RAILA WILL AND SHALL NEVER BE PRESIDENT OF KENYA.HE SHOULD STOP DREAMING.WITHOUT GIKUYU COMMUNITY HE GO NOWHERE | |
| 16 | May 13 2014 1614 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | Wambui, you are off topic. | |
| 17 | May 13 2014 1617 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | Population by Tribes of Kenya-- Kikuyus --17%, Luhias 14%, Kalenjins 13%, Luos 10%, Kambas -10% Kisiis--6%, Maasai 4%, Meru 3%, Embu --1%. So tell me how Kikuyus are a majority. | 1 |
| 18 | May 13 2014 1620 Hours | Mwaura [Kikuyu] | the number of voters from ukambani r the same as thoz from kiambu,so wen u talk about 10% aii u must b out of ur senses.bw Nyadera. | |
| 19 | May 13 2014 1622 Hours | Wambui [Kikuyu] | Nyadera hahahaaa Gikuyu 8millions in total mt.kenya region 13 million. Luhya 7 million, kalenjins 5 million, kamba 4 million, luo 3 million, kisii 2 million, maasai 2 million, somali 2 million.<br>Please check luo+kisii=5 million votes, mt.kenya region 13 million votes bado kalenjins and others.you have to remember some kisii, kamba, luhya are on favour of Gikuyu community | 1 |
| 20 | May 13 2014 1625 Hours | Wambui [Kikuyu] | Nyadera remember you can't separate people who speak bantu language.remember 2007/8 kisii community was attacked by luo community coz they voted for Gikuyu president.please bear with me Gikuyu community decide who the president will be. | |
| 21 | May 13 2014 1630 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | Hahahaha. Wambui, you kikuyus make me laugh so much. Which census are you using? I am using the 2009 census. The next one is in 2019. So accordinbg to the official census of Kenya, kikuyu total population is 6.8million, merus 900,000, Embus 250,000 Total Gema population including children =7.92 million. Luhias 5.8 million, Kalenjins 5.2 million, Luos 4 million, Kambas 3.8 million kisiis 2 million ettc. So add GEMA to kalenjins you get 13 million people out of 41 million. IS THAT A MAJORITY? Did you skip primary school or what? | |
| 22 | May 13 2014 1633 Hours | Mwaura [Kikuyu] | ofcoz unless the defination of the term majority has changed. | |
| 23 | May 13 2014 | Nyadera [Luo] | Politically, Kenya is now divided into two neat camps-- Kalenjins and Kikuyus (TOTALLING 34%) vs. THE REST OF KENYA. (66%). The rest | |



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| | 1635 Hours | | of Kenya will win in 2017. CORD is the face of Kenya. Jubilee is the face of two tribes. | |
| 24 | May 13 2014 1640 Hours | Mwaura [Kikuyu] | am yet 2 understand the so called others coz meru embu mbeere maasai somali will be in jubilee but since u r driven by 2013 hungovers n u r mad lyk ur father who is undergoing head surgery in usa,i have 2 bear with ur defeated thinking. | |
| 25 | May 13 2014 1643 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | Mwaura, go ahead and add Maasai and Somali sir. You are still a minority witrh only 38% of the total at best. As for merus and embus and mbeeres they are already in the 7.92 million GEMA vote. We encourage to you unite very firmly together wit the kalenjins. You will go down. | |
| 26 | May 13 2014 1647 Hours | Wambui [Kikuyu] | Nyadera thats how you see things.mt.kenya region remain together 13 million. Remember baba raila was thrown stone in embu? It is sign he was in wrong place.embu people and others are Gikuyu 2.they speak Gikuyu so say 13 million votes. Nakuru, nyandarwa, nyeri, nanyuki, gilgil, lamu all Gikuyu. | |
| 27 | May 13 2014 1650 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | Wambui, can you quote any official document that puts Mt. Kenya vote at 13 million? For you to have 13 million votes, your total population would be in the realm of 25 million. How can you have 13 million votes if the total is 7.9 million? As for actual projected votes, they usually estimate 50% as the votes, the rest are under 18. So actual vote is about 4 million for Gema. | |
| 28 | May 13 2014 1700 Hours | Wambui [Kikuyu] | Nyadera the rest are minority like maasai, kisii, luo, kamba they don't have votes.remembet all neighbours of Gikuyu some are on favour of Gikuyu community e.g kamba, maasai look like mike sonko.you can try to finish Gikuyu community but is not easy | |
| 29 | May 13 2014 1705 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | Wambui, every tribe in Kenya is a minority. Even kikuyus are a minority. | |
| 30 | May 13 2014 1708 Hours | Wambui [Kikuyu] | Nyadera you are 2 much interested in Gikuyu community.how many votes does luo community have? | |
| 31 | May 13 2014 1710 Hours | Wambui [Kikuyu] | Nyadera Gikuyu we are majority 8 million followed by luhya 7, million. Aaaaiii luo 3 million, kisii 2 million. | 1 |

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| 32 | May 13 2014 1712 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | What does it matter how many votes Luo have. Cord IS A Coalition of kenyans uniting the rest of Kenya against GEMA +Kalenjin selfishness and theft. The rest of Kenya will win. | |
| 33 | May 13 2014 1718 Hours | Mwaura [Kikuyu] | Nyadera u have a problem,u r talking about the whole population as if childrens will vote,speak about voterx n from a research pple from nyanza r known to attend railas campaign rallies in huge numbers where most r youth of 18 n below but during the ballot the oppoxite is witnessed on the size of Qs (queues).so begin crusading in nyanza n tell ur pple 2 register as voters as from 2moro if possible. | |
| 34 | May 13 2014 1722 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | There is no majority tribe in Kenya. The 8 million Gema numbers refers to total poulation --not votes (your votes are approximately 3.8 million). It is 8 million out of 41 million. For you to be a majority (the defintion of majority is 50%+1). No tribe in kenya is over 50%. For any tribve to be 50% they would have to have a population of 20 million--not 8 million. | |
| 35 | May 13 2014 1725 Hours | Wambui [Kikuyu] | Nyadera they hold large grounds but is empty northeastern 2 million, kamba 4 million don't hold on 2 much on those areas. | 1 |
| 36 | May 13 2014 1730 Hours | Wambui [Kikuyu] | Nyadera stop guess work. Soma vitabu baba […read books boss] | |
| 37 | May 13 2014 1732 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | I use facts. You use your wishes and hopes that you are 13 million so you can defecate and urinate on the rest of kenyans forever. IT WON'T HAPPEN!. | |
| 38 | May 13 2014 1734 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | YOU CAN DEFECATE AND URINATE ON KALENJINS--NOT THE REST OF KENYANS. | 1 |
| 39 | May 13 2014 1737 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | The 2009 census released on August 31, 2010 put Kenya's population at 38.6 million- | |
| 40 | May 13 2014 1740 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | Kenya Population by Ethnic Affiliation - Main Tribes<br><br>Kikuyu tribe – 6,622,576<br>Luhya tribe - 5,338,666<br>Kalenjin tribe – 4,967,328<br>Luo tribe – 4,044,440<br>Kamba tribe – 3,893,157<br>Somali tribe – 2,385,572 | |



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| | | | Kisii tribe – 2,205,669<br>Mijikenda tribe – 1,960,574<br>Meru tribe -1,658,108<br>Turkana tribe – 988,592<br>Maasai tribe - 841,622<br>Teso tribe – 338,833<br>Embu tribe – 324,092<br>Taita tribe – 273,519<br>Kuria tribe – 260,401<br>Samburu tribe – 237,179<br>Tharaka tribe – 175,905<br>Mbeere – 168,155<br>Borana – 161,399<br>Basuba – 139,271<br>Swahili – 110,614<br>Gabra – 89,515<br>Orma – 66,275<br>Rendile – 60,437 http://softkenya.com/kenya/kenya-population/<br><br>Kenya Population<br><br>softkenya.com<br><br>The 2009 census released on August 31, 2010 put Kenya's population at 38.6 million- 19.41 million women and 19.19 million men. The count of the population was done on the night of August 24 and 25 in 2009. The people were counted according to where they spent the reference night. The method used for… | |
| 41 | May 13 2014 1750 Hours | Wambui [Kikuyu] | Nyadera very simple go to all these towns ni Gikuyu are majority naivasha, gilgil, nakuru, nyahururu, nanyuki, nyandarwa, eldoret name it but a few.how many towns luo community are majority? Only in kisumu beyond that ni luhya community. Gikuyu the majority. We remain conquerer | 1 |
| 42 | May 13 2014 1753 Hours | Mwaura [Kikuyu] | Wambui dont argue with loosers,these pple r always idle kazi yao ni kwenda lake kutafuta kitoweo peke yake n thats why u will always c them in rallies of kitendawili,n akuna wa2 wanakuaga wamebeba %age kubwa ya ujinga kaa kina Nyadera,c uliwaona waking'oa reli na niyakwenda kwa kisumu hakuna wa2 wengine utumia isipokua wao,u see?<br><br>Wambui do not argue with losers. These people are always idle. Their job is only to go to the lake to look for a delicacy (fish), and that is why you will always see them in rallies of the riddle man (Raila Odinga), and there are no people with such a high percentage of stupidity like Nyadera (a participant here). Did you not see them uproot the railway line, and yet it goes to Kisumu (their home city): there are no other people who who use that railway line except them, you see?] | |



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| 43 | May 13 2014 1755 Hours | Wambui [Kikuyu] | Nyadera hapo wamekosa kamba community are more than luo community. | 1 |
| 44 | May 13 2014 1800 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | Kikuyu tribe – 6,622,576 + Meru tribe -1,658,108 + Embu 324,092 + Mbeere +168,155 + Tharaka 175,905 TOTAL GEMA = 8.9 Million. That is the official GEMA population. Where does 13 million come from? If you add Kalenjin 8.9+4.96 =13.86 million out of 38.6 million as per 2009 census. | |
| 45 | May 13 2014 1804 Hours | Wambui [Kikuyu] | Nyadera umeona kamba+luo=Gikuyu population. The best way all parties to be for all tribes but not regions because you will keep on loosing all the munasema munaibiwa.tuwache parties za ukabila. | 1 |
| 46 | May 13 2014 1807 Hours | Wambui [Kikuyu] | Nyadera don't forget nakuru and others places in Gikuyu stronghold na kamba pia remember mike mbuvi sonko.weee Gikuyu ni unbeatable. You have to come slowly | |
| 47 | May 13 2014 1812 Hours | Wambui [Kikuyu] | Nyadera good night nimechoka jameni.kesho ni siku | |
| 48 | May 13 2014 1817 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | Kikiuyus in RV are already included in the 6.6 million.Politically, CORD is not organized along tribal lines. The rest of Kenyans have no stake in the two-tribe govt. of jubilee. Plus the hate you people are spewing on the internet daily, Kenyan people's commitment to establish a non-triblistic nationalist govt in 2017 is solidifying daily. CORD has the numbers. Jubilee has kikuyu and kalenjin, whom they are pampering, while the rest of kenyans stand aside like second-class citizens in their own country. So continue BOASTING and imagining a non-existent majority. | |
| 49 | May 13 2014 1820 Hours | Wambui [Kikuyu] | Nyadera God made it that way.accept the God will Gikuyu as majority. Gikuyu command others follow the command. | 1 |
| 50 | May 13 2014 1821 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | You wish. | |
| 51 | May 13 2014 1824 Hours | Ng'ang'a [Kikuyu] | #Nyadera the challenge is in th 40 tribes votin 2gthr, luhyas, kambas hav clearly said they wil vote their own, is tht nt tribalism? th ppl of coast hav clearly said if uhuruto solve their land issuez wch odinga as pm n orengo in land ddnt do they will vote them 2017, 2017 jubilee win will be a landslide, | 1 |



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| | | | n if u believ uhuruto rigged wakiwa mere mps against pm n vp, wht abt nw wako prezo n deputy? | |
| 52 | May 13 2014 1830 Hours | Kotut [Kalenjin] | The bottom line i keep on hammering is this, Raila was the PM, kalonzo the vise president, uhuruto were just their juniors, if they were trounced by their juniors what about now that they hold all the levers of power? | 1 |
| 53 | May 13 2014 1833 Hours | Wengi [Unknown] | If Cord does something its patritism.men in black are also patriotic.but when uhuru or ruto do something its tribal.If you abuse me when am looking for success do you expect me to invite you in my kitchen. | 1 |

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## CHAT 8 (OPEN GROUP)

### 'BARAZA LA WANANCHI' [THE AGORA OF THE CITIZENS]

| Turn | Date & Time | Participant & Ethnicity | Text [Translation] | Likes |
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| 1 | May. 14 2013 0341 Hours | Kosgei [Kalenjin] | I don't understand why ODM [folks who oppose for the sake of opposing] are so preoccupied with this succession arithmetic nonsense between son of Ngina and son of Sarah. Does this mean #men #in #black have finally given up on Jakom becoming president and now want Ruto as president? They pray and hope for separation between UK (Uhuru Kenyatta) and WSR (William Samoei Ruto), spread rumor and gossip that Kikuyus can't vote for anybody else etc. You are liars liars pants on fire & you are dead wrong! Everybody who voted UK for president on March 4th 2013 also voted for WSR as Deputy commander in chief as well. It's barely more than a few months since we elected the president and his deputy! Why do you think the post son of Sarah holds as deputy is not a good post and that they must trade posts with son of Ngina in 2018? If it's not a good post, why do you think Kalonzo was so happy mpaka akatulia kama mtoto amepata matiti wakati alipewa hicho kiti? CORD [Coalition Of Retirees & Desperados], you are so idle! Please talk stuff that can help you. Look, here is the list of the fortunate few Kenyans to become vice/deputy president since independence; Jaramogi Odinga, Joseph Murumbi, Boiyot Daniel arap Moi, Mwai Kibaki, Dr Josephat Karanja, prof. George Saitoti, Moses Mudavadi, Kijana Wamalwa, Moody Awori, Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, and now William Samoei Kipchirchir arap Ruto. Just 11 of them which shows being a Vice/Deputy president is a prestigious and distinguished position. For the pompous ODM, when you are VP/DP (Vice President/Deputy President), you have somebody opening the car door for you, hold coat for you, people stand when you enter room etc! Out of the 11 vice/deputy presidents in 50 years since independence, only TWO had the chance to become president. Did Ruto tell you he must become a president also? Stop dragging yourself into hogwash imaginations and forget the distinguished job Ruto already has. Kenyans of goodwill voted for the duo for a digital Kenya and we are happy for this remarkable achievement. We overcame Odingaism, we defeated KPU, we conquered Raila's 1982 coup detat, we vanquished NDP (National Democratic Party), we have decimated ODM, and CORDead is slowly but surely being consigned to dustbins of history. CORDeads, wachaneni na vitimbi! Raila was there before WSR, worry about him becoming president 1st, leave Ruto alone idiots! | |
| 2 | | | 2 [Unknown] People like this | 2 |
| 3 | May. 14 2013 0347 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | There will be no two terms. Dream on. | |



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| 4 | May. 14 2013 0354 Hours | Wandera [Unknown] | Do not foam at the mouth buddy, keep cool. Lets wait for Uhuru's two terms and see what unravels for Ruto! That is their pact just like Britain's recent Tory PMs (Prime Ministers) Tony Blair and John Brown!! Tutajua mbivu na mbichi ikifika, sasa ni siasa tu mnapiga!! | |
| 5 | May. 14 2013 0355 Hours | Kosgei [Kalenjin] | Nyadera, tumesikia mengi kama haya so tumewazoea. Wandera, sasa siasa za wazungu unaleta hapa za?<br><br>[Nyadera, we have heard a lot of those stories, so we are used to you. Wandera, now why are you bringing the politics of white people here?] | 1 |
| 6 | May. 14 2013 0403 Hours | Kosgei [Kalenjin] | wandera, maybe you are using British like example because of fielding perennial loser Raila. | |
| 7 | May, 14 2013 0405 Hours | Simiyu [Luhya] | Whom are you trying to lie to. There's no such thing as deputy commander in chief. Read your constitution boss. The commander in chief is an executive function of exclusive to the president and his deputy has no say unless the president is dead or incapacitated i.e even when the president is out of the country Ruto cannot order the army to do A,B,C,D... Power shifted to statehouse and the office of the deputy president is now harambee house Annexe. Ruto can't even buy tissue without statehouse approval. Useless. Ni Hague tu imemshikilia hapo [It is only Hague (ICC) which is making him stick there]. | |
| 8 | May. 14 2013 0515 Hours | Salim [Mijikenda] | Hahahahaha....1 man 4rom a cave is dreaming here during the day. | 1 |
| 9 | May. 14 2013 0555 Hours | Kipkemoi [Kalenjin] | @Kosgei Give us one example where the kikuyus have voted for somebody else.Take one example in kikuyu const.when Muite and jaramogi were vying together in ford kenya.Kikuyus voted in Muite for mp and for president they voted for Matiba | |
| 10 | May. 18 2013 0559 Hours | Mutuku [Kamba] | Ati [As in…] deputy commander? We can get you. He commanded kikuyus 2 be killed during 2007/8 post election violence | 2 |
| 11 | May. 14 2013 0613 Hours | Mose [Kisii] | Waaah! Kalenjins wameanza kuingia fb juzi […have started getting into Facebook recently] so they are excited and just typing anything for the sake of it. | 2 |

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| 12 | May. 14 2013 0622 Hours | Salim [Mijikenda] | Mr machozi aka [Mr 'Tears', also known as] land graber is powerless, useless infact those who used him r saying that they r done with him. May he is cic of kalejinga youths who murdered pple during pev (Post Election Violence). | 1 |
| 13 | May. 14 2013 0624 Hours | Gesare [Kisii] | Lol (Laughing Out Loudly)!! U mean hii story reefu ni kuhusu [… this long story is about] one Mr. Machozi (Mr Tears') who doesnt know u exist in this planet.. You are entitled to your diaper reasoning but remember only time will tell. One year down the line, the honeymoon is over en the spannerboy is slowly loosing grip.. Damu ya mliowauwa [The blood of those you killed] 07/08 will haunt the kalenjin community for decades gt it right. | |
| 14 | May. 14 2013 0634 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | There will be no two terms. Dream on. 50 years of rigging and stealing is ENOUGH! | 1 |
| 15 | May 14 2013 0644 Hours | Nyaribo [Kisii] | F**********ck u. | |
| 16 | May. 14 2013 0645 Hours | Ng'ang'a [Kikuyu] | tel them sir, ruto is a co president n am sure he wil rule kenya, infct i voted uhuruto bcz of ruto, am glad rao n kalonzo n wetangula wil nvr rule kenya | |
| 17 | May.14 2013 0658 Hours | Nyadera [Luo] | Ruling kenya or looting kenya? We don't need rulers and looters--we need nationalistic leaders who can move kenya forward. 2018 is the watershed. The people will take over their country from pin-headed noncompoops. | 1 |
| 18 | May 14 2013 0701 Hours | Salim [Mijikenda] | Tel'em Nyadera. | 1 |
| 19 | May 14 2013 0728 Hours | Kotut [Kalenjin] | What happened to the call'government will fall within a year "we are now well into second year, what happened to the call" it's time for revolution ", the truth is cordead are a bunch of lose talking without any action. We will continue f... ng for the next 50 years just the way we have been f.....ng them for the last 50 years | |
| 20 | May 14 2013 0920 Hours | Stanley [Unknown] | words of wisdom..big up Kosgei | 1 |
| 21 | May 14 2013 0925 Hours | Gesare [Kisii] | @ Kotut, u and who will continie f...ng for 50yrs. And who the hell will u b fucking. U mean ua bisness here is fucking a,a hujui maanake [...do you not know its meaning]?? #diaperthinkinglol (Laughing Out Loudly) | 2 |



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| 22 | May 14 2013 0937 Hours | Kotut [Kalenjin] | We have been f... ng them doggy style for the last 50 years, now will have mercy on them and f.. k them the missionary position for the next 50 years | |
| 23 | May 14 2013 0942 Hours | Gesare [Kisii] | Kotut umeingia facebuk juzi inaonekana [… It seems you got onto Facebook recently]. U too excited to comment nothing. Stop using your head like a sunray protector. Sio lazma uwe umri wa chini ndo uwe mtoto, matamshi yako qualifies u to a childhood class [You do not have to be tender in age to be a child, your utterances qualify you to fit into the category of childhood] | 3 |
| 24 | May 14 2013 0947 Hours | Kotut [Kalenjin] | Gesare, my problem with you is, you lose elections and over a year on you are still moaning, you said they were rigged, Raila went to supreme Court saying he has the confidence with the supreme Court judges to overturn our win, he even challenged uhuruto to accept the court ruling, when he lost he Said he does not agree with the ruling, it was no surprise to us, yeye ni kigeugeu cha binadamu […he is a chameleon of a person] | |
| 25 | May 14 2013 1011 Hours | Gesare [Kisii] | acha ujinga Kotut chieth [Stop being stupid, Kotut. Shit]. Have u seen my names on political materials? Ushamba toa hapa peleka mau forest (Remove your primitivity from here. Take it to Mau Forest]. You are damn ignorant | 1 |
| 26 | May 14 2013 1023 Hours | Lameck [Unknown] | I have a lot to say but I will only debunk the long narrative of a person calling himself Simiyu up there. #Simiyu you are just majoring on the minor and exposing yourself incapable to distinguish between literal speech and figurative speech. Yes, William Ruto is deputy commander in chief and deputy to commander in chief as well. Ruto has filled that role from time to time. So, think of better ways to contribute to discussion than pick an insignificant issue to try to nail a scholar like this one! | |
| 27 | May 14 2013 1025 Hours | Ng'ang'a [Kikuyu] | Kanu will rule 100 years, uhuruto 4evr | |
| 28 | May 14 2013 1131 Hours | Kosgei [Kalenjin] | Thanks so much Mr Lameck, I saw that fool #Simiyu long ago but I chose to ignore him But am grateful you blusted him off! | 1 |
| 29 | May 14 2013 1142 Hours | Kosgei [Kalenjin] | Thanks Stanley, you are a wise man too, what you can see sitting on a stool this nudists swimming in pool hawawezi ona hata wakipanda mlima […they cannot see even if they are climbing up a mountain] | 1 |



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| 30 | May 14 2013 2128 Hours | Stanley [Unknown] | Lol (Laughing Out Loudly)...wazee waoga na watoto [Old people washing their bodies together with children]..anyway ,one can never notice the difference,coz hakuna [there is not any] | |
| 31 | May 14 2013 2307 Hours | Kotut [Kalenjin] | This Nyanza people should know they are minority, during independence they were number two after the kikuyus, they are now number 5 after being overtaken by Luhya, kalenjins and Kambas, the reason of this depreciation is because of Hiv (Human Immuno-deficiency Virus], bad cultural habits like widow and wife inheriting | 2 |
| 32 | May 14 2013 2330 Hours | Kotut [Kalenjin] | Their coalitions was of. Tribe number 4 and 5 a sure losing combination | 1 |

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