Violent Reform

Gendered Experiences of Colonial Developmental Counter-Insurgency in Kenya, 1954-1960

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the relationship between colonial counter-insurgency tactics and international humanitarianism in the context of the Mau Mau insurgency in Kenya, 1952-1960. It uses villagisation, a counter-insurgency measure enforced during the campaign to administer tighter control over the movement of civilians, as a site to interrogate the relationships between humanitarian organisations, the colonial administration and the displaced indigenous women and their children. More specifically, the thesis analyses the supposedly reformative practices deployed by the British colonial government and external actors in response to women and girls suspected of supporting forest fighters. The British Red Cross Society (BRCS) worked in partnership with the colonial administration to publicly endorse ideas of African women's advancement and development. While the colonial government projected a reformative discourse for their approach to women and children, evidence presented in this thesis shows that this process was gendered and inherently violent in practice. Villagisation in this campaign operated as a tool to subdue a specific demographic of the Kenyan population suspected of fuelling anti-colonial action: women and girls.

While Britain's treatment of Kenyan women and girls was violent, resettled women adapted and adopted their own resilient responses to ensure their own survival and that of their biological and social families. Females made active and reactive choices to cope, survive, and at times thrive in these fraught and dangerous spaces. Women's actions were influenced by their position in their society and how they saw themselves based on their age, gender, and social standing. This thesis recognises that counter-insurgency campaigns create opportunity for women to improve their socio-economic status. This is explored through the narratives of Kenyan women who were forcibly resettled in Kenya during the 1950s. These testimonies are used in conjunction with archival evidence from the British colonial records and organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, BRCS, mission societies and the East Africa Women's League. This cross-referencing enables an exploration of European women's roles in colonial counter-insurgency campaigns, humanitarian, and development work. Assessing the interactions between forcibly resettled women, humanitarian field workers and colonial state actors, this thesis contextualises the associations between local contexts, colonial actions and global humanitarian trends during this period. It can then better uncover trends and differences in the relationship between local and international humanitarian action, determining how colonial practices cut across both.

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Declaration

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Bethany Rebisz

Contents

Abbreviations

ACWW	Associated Country Women of the World
BRCS	British Red Cross Society
CCK	Christian Council of Kenya
CDWO	Community Development Women's Officer
CSM	Church of Scotland Mission
DCD	Department of Community Development
EAWL	East African Women's League
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
KAU	Kenya African Union
MW	*Maendeleo ya Wanawake*
PCEA	Presbyterian Church of East Africa
SCF	Save the Children Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

Illustrations

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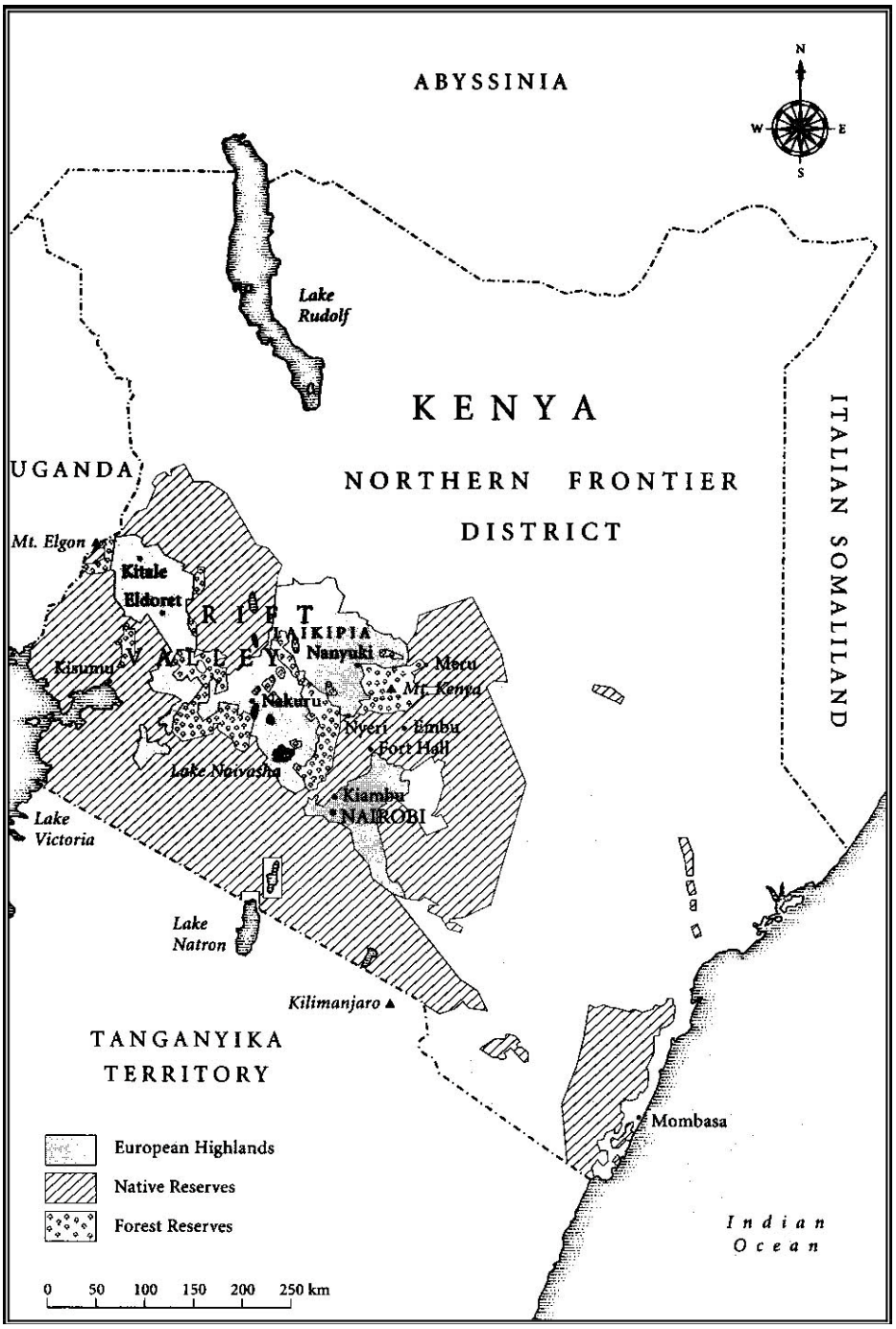
Glossary

Barazas	Compulsory propaganda meetings
Batuni	Mau Mau warrior's oath
Chai	Tea
Cũcũ wa iria	A nickname given to a Red Cross field worker meaning, 'Grandmother of milk'
Gakunia	Informant
Ikũmbĩ	Grain store
Ithaka na wiathi	Freedom through land
Kiboko	A cane
Kipande	Passbook
Maendeleo ya Wanawake	Women's Progress organisation
Maitu	Mother (Gĩkũyũ)
Mama	Mother (Kiswahili)
Mbari	Gĩkũyũ clan-membership
Mũciĩ	Gĩkũyũ homestead
Muthirigu	Protest dance against the Church of Scotland Mission efforts to ban clitoridectomy
Mzee	Male elder
Ndaki	Cell-like structure in the Home Guard post
Ngaitana	Nickname for clitoridectomy, translated to 'I will circumcise myself'
Nyũmba	Hut for a Gĩkũyũ woman
Pombe	Low alcohol contents brew
Punji	Spike, made from wood, sharpened.
Shukas	Fabric, worn and used as a blanket
Thingura	Hut for a Gĩkũyũ man
Ujamaa	Socialist concept designed by Julius Nyerere in 1962 in Tanzania
Umoja na uaminifu	Unity with integrity
Wazee	Male elders

Map of Kenya

Map 1: Administrative areas of the counter-insurgency campaign in Central Kenya

Source: David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain's Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (London, 2005).



Introduction

Reflecting on her move out of Kamandura camp in 1962, Sophia Wambui Kiarie describes how, 'everything had changed, we had the freedom even to sing, to even play. In [Kamandura] you do not play, you do not make a noise. No. You stay in your house. With whispers'.[1] Sophia was one of an estimated 1.2 million Kenyans forcibly resettled during the Mau Mau insurgency.[2] Villagisation was a major element of the British counter-insurgency campaign tackling the Land and Freedom Army, who were later labelled 'Mau Mau', in Kenya during the 1950s. The colonial government developed the policy in 1953 and introduced it widely in 1954 forcing mainly the Gĩkũyũ, and Gĩkũyũ-speaking Embu and Meru districts into 854 enclosed camps. The vast majority of those villagised were women, their children, and elders.[3] Many colonial officials assumed Gĩkũyũ women were fuelling the Mau Mau insurgency, they therefore tightened measures to break this contact. Camps were controlled by colonial guards and African loyalists working as part of the African Home Guard.[4] As Andrew Thompson demonstrates, the forced resettlement of civilians was 'frequently justified on humanitarian grounds' by security forces implementing the policy.[5] Colonial governments claimed that these 'guarded settlements' would provide 'greater protection for civilians' where they would be 'less vulnerable to attack'.[6] As Sophia's testimony reveals, vulnerability was a key aspect of her lived experience inside the camp. Being under the close watch and control of colonial guards, Sophia's memory of villagisation has a clear disconnect to the institutional, humanitarian discourses of the time.

There are few studies which address women's and girls' experiences of forced resettlement in Kenya. Caroline Elkins and Moritz Feichtinger have sought to explore how this counter-insurgency campaign played out in the African reserves where villagisation was introduced. The purpose of these reserves is outlined in the historical context section. Neither Elkins nor

[1] Sophia Wambui Kiarie, interview, Kiambu County, 4th April 2019.
[2] Moritz Feichtinger, '"A Great Reformatory": Social Planning and Strategic Resettlement in Late Colonial Kenya and Algeria, 1952–63', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 52 (2016), 46.
[3] David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain's Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire (London, 2005)*, 294 and Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (New York, 2006), 237. As the empirical data relating to villagisation is scarce, it is difficult to determine the exact percentage of female to male inhabitants, or adult to child. Primary evidence presented in this thesis shows that the vast majority of adults who were forcibly resettled were women, see for example: International Committee of the Red Cross Archive, BAG 225/108-001, Correspondance générale concernant la détention des membres du mouvement Mau Mau; 18.04.1955 - 06.01.1961, 'British Red Cross Work in Kenya – 1954-56'.
[4] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, 234-235.
[5] Andrew Thompson, 'Humanitarian Principles Put to the Test: Challenges to Humanitarian Action during Decolonization', *International Review of the Red Cross*, 97 (2015), 59.
[6] Thompson, 'Humanitarian Principles Put to the Test', 59.

Moritz offer a gender history of this policy. Elkins and Feichtinger mainly focus on the overall destruction caused by the military measure and the social engineering efforts which colonial guards established inside the camps.[7] While Feichtinger has introduced the idea that villagisation served a reformative purpose in Kenya, evidence presented in this thesis shows that this process was gendered and inherently violent in practice. Gender, here, refers to the social construction of feminine, masculine and non-binary identities. Violence is recognised through physical, psychological and symbolic formations. Villagisation in this campaign did not merely serve as a measure to protect civilians from military attacks, it operated as a tool to subdue a specific demographic of the Kenyan population suspected of fuelling anti-colonial action: women and girls. Unlike other counter-insurgency campaigns whereby women have been assumed as inherently non-violent victims of war, the colonial officials in Kenya were highly aware of the instrumental role played by females in this insurgency.[8]

How to deal with women was a central aspect of Britain's response to the Mau Mau.[9] Katherine Bruce-Lockhart and Bethany Rebisz reveal how the colonial state designed spaces, such as female detention camps and so-called villages, 'to control and punish women *en masse*'.[10] They describe the 'gendered geographies of coercion' which were particularly pronounced in Kenya due to the mass forced resettlement of mainly Gĩkũyũ women and girls.[11] While the British had originally assumed that Kenyan women would play a limited role in the Mau Mau insurgency, unsurprising given the enduring assumptions of women in armed conflict, it became clear to colonial state security in 1953 that they were playing significant roles in the Mau Mau. Women were characterised as the 'eyes and ears' of the movement and the part they played in aiding the forest fighters was 'considerable'.[12] Thomas Askwith, Commissioner for the Department of Rehabilitation and Community Development, argued in 1954, that it was 'more important to rehabilitate the women than the men if the next generation is to be saved'.[13] While the introduction of villagisation may have denoted a protective approach taking place to manage

[7] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, chapter 8, Feichtinger, 'A Great Reformatory'.
[8] Katherine Bruce-Lockhart, 'Reconsidering Women's Roles in the Mau Mau Rebellion in Kenya, 1952-1960' in Martin Thomas and Gareth Curless (eds), *Decolonization and Conflict: Colonial Comparisons and Legacies* (London, 2017), 162.
[9] A full explanation of the use of the term 'Mau Mau' can be found on pages 4-6 of the introduction.
[10] Katherine Bruce-Lockhart and Bethany Rebisz, 'Discourses of Development and Practices of Punishment: Britain's Gendered Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Colonial Kenya', in Thomas, Martin and Curless, Gareth (eds), *The Oxford Handbook on Colonial Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies* (Oxford, 2022) (In Press), 5.
[11] Bruce-Lockhart and Rebisz, 'Discourses of Development and Practices of Punishment', 5.
[12] Bruce-Lockhart and Rebisz, 'Discourses of Development and Practices of Punishment', 6.
[13] UK National Archive, Colonial Office 822/794, 'Rehabilitation', 6 January 1954, 1.

women and children in the central region of Kenya, villagisation was to extend the colonial government's eyes and ears over this faction of the Mau Mau movement.

A key component of Britain's villagisation programme was the women's development initiatives introduced to resettled women. While the colonial state's security had recognised the instrumental role women were playing in the insurgency, it resorted to British gender stereotypes in a bid to reform this group. Askwith believed that the anti-colonial action unraveling in central Kenya was due to a breakdown in the Gĩkũyũ society, with young men and women lacking 'tribal discipline' which needed to be re-established.[14] Askwith thought that by building nuclear family units among the Gĩkũyũ, with women being essential actors in this reform, anti-colonial discontent would be minimised. In the context of late-colonial counter-insurgency campaigns, European colonial powers feminised development and humanitarian work to deal with these women. As Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo argues, the welfare and development of colonial subjects was promoted to minimise the 'sources of internal dissent'.[15] Humanitarian organisations such as the British Red Cross Society (BRCS) played an instrumental role in these efforts. Alongside the colonial government's *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* (MW) (the Kiswahili for Women's Progress) clubs, the BRCS sought to boost the idea of 'self-help' among Kenyan women.[16] With women's clubs seeking to advance and modernise the ways that women cared for their children and wider communities, this agenda had a far more coercive identity in the context of counter-insurgency warfare. The administration used women's clubs in the camps to re-establish social control over the population assumed to be fuelling the insurgency.

While colonial officials projected a developmental discourse to describe their villagisation procedure, the practice was highly punitive in nature. Widespread oppressive population control characterised the British counter-insurgency campaign against the Mau Mau movement. Villagisation supported the other military measures deployed against the Mau Mau by creating a battlefield. Adopting Mao Zedong's phrasing, the camps separated the fish from the water so that military strategists could accelerate their measures against insurgent fighters

[14] Kenya National Archive, AB 1/73, Administration; Advancement of African Women; 1954-55, 1.
[15] Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo, 'Repressive Developmentalism: Idioms, Repertoires, and Trajectories in Late Colonialism' in Martin Thomas and Andrew S. Thompson (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of The Ends of Empire* (Oxford, 2018), pp. 1-20, via Oxford Handbooks Online [website] <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198713197.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780198713197-e-40> (accessed 15 July 2021), 4.
[16] KNA, AB 1/73, 1.

now operating in carved out battle zones.[17] The colonial government established a vast network of detention and works camps alongside the villagisation scheme. This network was known as 'the Pipeline' to represent the way suspected Mau Mau detainees moved through a system of rehabilitation before their eventual release back into the African reserves. While the term 'rehabilitation' was used by the British to describe this system, the testimony of survivors, along with the work of historians like Wunyabari O. Maloba, David Anderson and Elkins, shows that this translated into torture and forced labour.[18] Counter-insurgency measures intensified with a combination of air attacks and pseudo-gangs being deployed in the forests to eradicate or incarcerate remaining Mau Mau forest fighters. Britain's abhorrent treatment of Kenyans was not exclusive to the Pipeline; villagisation sites were particularly pronounced spatial formations of fear and terror. Women and girls endured heightened, and new, forms of violence in the camp landscape, and their testimony is included to explore this.

This thesis makes three original contributions in its assessment of villagisation. Firstly, it provides a close examination of the built environments of the camps to deconstruct the disconnect between the humanitarian discourse of villagisation and the punitive practices experienced by those forcibly resettled. Counter-insurgents deploy coercive measures on a spectrum. Developmental and humanitarian efforts which undermined women's agency and attempted to socially steer them away from anti-colonial action were a part of this. Secondly, the thesis deploys a spatial analysis of camps to demonstrate that there was a gendered topography of terror suffered by female inhabitants. Thirdly, it offers new oral history data to reveal the ways women and girls navigate counter-insurgency campaigns. Females were not simply victims of violence, they continued to negotiate their place and role as valuable members of their wider social units.

This study is by no means representative of all those forcibly resettled in this campaign. It cannot claim to be, but it does offer a more nuanced assessment than scholars currently portray in the existing literature. This approach enables a departure from previous androcentric accounts of counter-insurgency and contributes to the growing literature analysing the gendered practices of both counter-insurgency measures and humanitarian actions. As this thesis is being written, multiple crises are emerging in the world. Mass displacement and male perpetrated violence against women, most notably in the Tigray region of Ethiopia and in Afghanistan, continue to shape modern day conflict. It is important to historicise these

[17] Mao Zedong, *On Guerrilla Warfare* (Chicago, 1989 [1937]), 43.
[18] Wunyabari O. Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya* (Indiana, 1993), 137.

processes and explore the ways that humanitarian organisations operate in the so-called Global South. The practices developed by the British in Kenya during the 1950s, continue to shape counter-insurgency measures today. Ultimately, Britain developed a colonial developmental counter-insurgency campaign in Kenya which not only sought to quell anti-colonial action, but also reconfigure gender relations in Gĩkũyũ society.

Definitions and Clarifications

Dismantling and closely interrogating the terminology used during colonial rule in Kenya is vital if historians are to challenge the dominant narratives and enduring power structures formed in this period.[19] This has been a particularly difficult aspect to negotiate for the completion of this thesis as there are no clear answers, and often, few suitable alternatives to the pre-existing terms used in the historiography. The first term to consider is that of the 'Mau Mau'. While the literature on this insurgency continues to apply the title 'Mau Mau' to those involved in this anti-colonial action, there is much ambiguity around the roots of this term. As David Percox summarises, historians have sought to deconstruct the myths related to the so-called Mau Mau movement. Kenyan forest fighters active during the 1950s insurgency had minimal connection to the pre-emergency Mau Mau leadership who were politically challenging the British colonial government. Many in the forest called themselves *ithaka na wiathi* which translates from Gĩkũyũ as 'freedom through land'.[20] As Tabitha Kanogo outlines, 'the demand for land and freedom was central to Mau Mau ideology'.[21] Some historians have therefore adopted the 'Land and Freedom Army' to represent the multiple armies operating in the forest during this insurgency.[22] It is important to note, the now largely accepted argument that 'Mau Mau' was most likely used as a 'catch-all imposed by the authorities upon all forms of anti-colonial resistance', as suggested by Percox.[23] British officials used the 'Mau Mau' label to tar and mythologise those involved in this anti-colonial action and justify their repressive counter-insurgency campaign.[24]

[19] Bethany Rebisz, 'The Pipeline', 28 September 2018, via The Museum of British Colonialism [website] <https://www.museumofbritishcolonialism.org/ourblog/2018/9/28/the-pipeline> (accessed 19 July 2021).
[20] David A. Percox, 'Mau Mau and the Arming of the State', in in E.S. Atieno Odhiambo, and John Lonsdale (eds), *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration* (Oxford, 2003), 146 (note 9). Percox recognises the contributions of those historians in this debate.
[21] Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau, 1905-63* (Cambridge, 1987), 127.
[22] David Anderson, 'The Battle of Dandora Swamp: Reconstructing the Mau Mau Land Freedom Army, October 1954', in Odhiambo and Lonsdale, *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration*, 155.
[23] Percox, 'Mau Mau and the Arming of the State', 146 (n.9).
[24] Percox, 'Mau Mau and the Arming of the State', 146 (n.9).

Rebisz has previously adopted the 'Kenya Land and Freedom Army' to describe those involved in the insurgency in a bid to dismantle and challenge the colonial power structures at play with the term 'Mau Mau'.[25] In doing so, however, she disregards the Kenyan political importance now associated to the label Mau Mau, as well as the views of many survivors. It was not until 2003 that the Kenyan government lifted its ban on the Mau Mau movement. The colonial-era legislation which had outlawed the Mau Mau as an organisation had contributed to a public minimisation of the roles played by Mau Mau fighters in the push for independence.[26] Since this has been lifted, Mau Mau survivors of British sanctioned torture and abhorrent counter-insurgency practice have successfully sued the British government and gained compensation for this wrongdoing.[27] The term 'Mau Mau' now carries an important legacy regarding the reckoning of colonial violence enacted throughout the British Empire. To disregard these more recent developments in a bid to challenge colonial power, is harmful to the legacy of those involved in this ongoing movement for land and freedom from their former colonial oppressors. Interview participants for this project also widely described themselves as Mau Mau. For this reason, this thesis deploys Mau Mau to define those who participated in this specific faction of anti-colonial action, and who the British colonial government then largely detained, executed, exiled or villagised.

A second revision made in this thesis refers to the spelling of the term 'Gĩkũyũ'. During the colonial era, the British authority disregarded the diacritic marks and opted to refer to individuals in this ethnic group as 'Kikuyu', or 'Akikuyu', when describing the people as entities. This thesis will not adopt the English form of the name, though it does appear in some of the archival and written sources shared. Instead, it applies the original name Gĩkũyũ, including the diacritic marks, throughout to denote the name of this ethnic group, individuals within it and the language spoken.[28] The Gĩkũyũ have historically populated the central region of Kenya, occupying the rich highlands.[29] The Gĩkũyũ were one of the most impacted ethnic groups of British colonial rule in Kenya. White settlers predominantly appropriated this central region, along with the area now known as Nairobi, and the districts of Kiambu, Murang'a

[25] Bruce-Lockhart and Rebisz, 'Discourses of Development and Practices of Punishment'.
[26] Reuters, 'Kenya lifts ban on Mau Mau', 1 September 2003, via The Guardian [website] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/sep/01/2> (accessed 19 July 2021).
[27] Ian Cobain, 'Kenya: UK expresses regret over abuse as Mau Mau promised payout', 6 June 2013, via The Guardian [website] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/05/kenyan-mau-mau-payout-uk-regret-abuse> (accessed 19 July 2021).
[28] Mũkũyũ, 'Gĩkũyũ Origins', 13 November 2008, via Gĩkũyũ Centre for Cultural Studies [website] <https://mukuyu.wordpress.com/2008/11/13/origins/> (accessed 18 August 2021).
[29] Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 4.

(which the British renamed as Fort Hall) and Nyeri, which all formed the Gĩkũyũ 'heartlands'.[30] Although further north-east from the colonial economy based in these heartlands, the Gĩkũyũ-speaking regions of Meru and Embu also experienced the brutality of British counter-insurgency warfare during the 1950s. As this introduction makes clear, this study on villagisation does not ignore Kenyans from other ethnic groups who were villagised in this period. Villagisation was, however, designed by the British to predominantly concentrate those suspected of aiding the Mau Mau fighters, who were mainly from the Gĩkũyũ population. It is for this reason that this thesis focuses on Gĩkũyũ experiences of this policy.

Thirdly, in the process of dismantling colonial terminology, this thesis uses the term 'camp' to describe the spaces established in the villagisation process. Chapters I and III explore the reasons why the colonial administration opted to call these sites 'villages'. Not only did this name denote a safe, reformative, and family-centred image of villagisation, it also distanced this policy from the enduring legacies of the concentration camps used by the British during the Second South African War (1899-1902) and the Nazis' use of them during the Holocaust. The villagisation scheme introduced in Kenya is not comparable to these two cases, but military strategists propagated the view that these sites were in no way carceral in nature by calling them 'villages'. While Andreas Stucki demonstrates that these structures come within the discourse of concentration camps, he cautions scholars from closely aligning these cases to the horror of Nazi concentration camps and their extermination sites.[31] Elkins' work has faced criticism for the ways she sensationalises aspects of the campaign in Kenya.[32] While she mainly refers to these sites as 'barbed-wire villages', she chose to include the term 'gulag' in her book title along with several comparisons to the Holocaust and the Nazis' introduction of concentration camps. Instead, Feichtinger uses 'strategic villages' and 'strategic resettlement' to indicate the transference of people from their homesteads to newly created guarded settlements and the tactical role of this strategy.[33] This has been useful to articulate this measure in his comparative analysis of Kenya and Algeria. In contrast, by centring women's narratives and memories of villagisation, the terms they adopted are used to describe the spaces the colonial state forcibly resettled them to. The women interviewed for this project do not refer to them as 'villages', or 'strategic villages'. They describe these spaces as 'camps' and recall

[30] Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 5.
[31] Andreas Stucki. '"Frequent Deaths": The Colonial Development of Concentration Camps Reconsidered, 1868–1974', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 20 (2018), 306 – 307.
[32] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*. See Heike I. Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe: A History of Suffering* (Oxford, 2013), 12.
[33] Feichtinger, 'A Great Reformatory', 46.

memories of being 'encamped… like caged people'.[34] Chapter III elaborates on this assessment when considering the spatial formations of violence experienced by resettled women. This thesis therefore deploys this terminology, and describes those in the camps as 'inhabitants', 'occupants', or 'those forcibly resettled'. The camps introduced as part of the villagisation scheme were separate entities to the sites formed in the Pipeline; these retain their titles as detention camps and works camps. The thesis uses the term villagisation when analysing the policy more broadly. It is important to note that some interviewees did refer to these spaces as 'villages' when responding to questions that I asked using the term and these ramifications are considered in relation to the interview setting.

This thesis adopts Huw Bennett's categorisation of British civilian-military actors in this campaign. Governor Evelyn Baring and his administration upheld civilian control in 1952. Under his leadership, the colonial administration maintained supreme authority in this colony. Upon colonisation, Britain had established a colonial state in Kenya, built on their moralities of capitalism, Christianity, and civilisation.[35] Once colonised, British agents transitioned colonial territories to 'indirect rule' to develop a so-called 'native' authority with African representatives.[36] By 1952, the administration had sub-divided Kenya into districts which were managed by District Commissioners and Officers. Those in the district offices enacted colonial rule through the 'native' authority, where local Chiefs and Sub-Chiefs headed this structure. The administrative formation also included the Kenyan police and the King's African Rifles battalions. Due to the scale of the campaign coordinated against Mau Mau, the British Army played an instrumental role in operations.[37] While the British Army was involved, the administrative structures largely upheld villagisation. This project therefore focuses more closely on the ways colonial administrators and Home Guard units enabled violence and brutality. The administration founded African Home Guard units to protect those in the 'native' authority and were instrumental in patrolling the spaces associated to villagisation.[38]

[34] Agnes Wanjiru Mwangi, interview, Murunga County, 20th April 2019; Esther, interview, Nyeri County, 26th April 2019. Esther requested that only her first name be shared.
[35] On colonial states, see Heather Sharkey, 'African Colonial States', in John Parker and Richard Reid (eds), The Oxford Handbook of Modern African History (Oxford, 2013), pp. 1-22, via Oxford Handbooks Online [website] <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199572472.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199572472-e-001> (accessed 19 July 2021).
[36] Michael Crowder, 'Indirect Rule: French and British Style', *Africa*, 34 (1964), pp. 197-205.
[37] Huw Bennett, *Fighting the Mau Mau: The British Army and Counter-Insurgency in the Kenya Emergency* (Cambridge, 2013), 31-36.
[38] Bennett, *Fighting the Mau Mau*, 16.

A final clarification relates to age and gender. This study uses gender as the approach to explore female experiences of villagisation and British developmental counter-insurgency. It does, however, recognise that age and generation intersect with gender when analysing these lived realities. As Stacey Hynd argues, age and gender are interconnected and cannot be isolated from one another. Her 'gen[d]erational' study on male and female children and youth in the Mau Mau insurgency uses age as the organising principle to demonstrate the significant role played by children and youth in anti-colonial insurgencies.[39] This study, does not explicitly engage in the topic of youth reform like Hynd's but it does explore female life cycles and considers transitions from girlhood to womanhood. This is analysed in relation to Gĩkũyũ age grade life stages like clitoridectomy, marriage and motherhood. This thesis centres a gendered analysis to show the specific ways that Britain targeted the female Gĩkũyũ population through violent and developmental strategies. Gĩkũyũ girls and women cannot be separated in this analysis, but this study recognises that female experiences differed depending on age and generation.[40] The tensions between Gĩkũyũ notions of earned status and British beliefs of individual development and legalised categories are explored in this research.[41]

Histories of the Mau Mau Emergency: Literature Review

David Anderson characterises the emergency period in Kenya as 'the great horror story of Britain's empire in the 1950s'.[42] Kenya was known as the 'white man's country', the emblem of British imperialism in Africa, with British settlers appropriating African land from the early twentieth century.[43] The Mau Mau uprising, however, directly challenged this settler presence and the colonial government, and generated an oppressive and violent response by the British. Colonial depictions of the Mau Mau movement were supported by the early literature on the topic with Bruce Berman highlighting that the movement was initially interpreted as a 'fanatic, atavistic, savage religious cult consciously created and manipulated by a group of unscrupulous, power-hungry leaders'.[44] The impending threat of an anti-White, dangerous

[39] Stacey Hynd, '"Uncircumcised boys" and "girl Spartans": Youth, Gender and Generation in Colonial Insurgencies and Counterinsurgency, c. 1954-59', *Gender & History*, 33 (2021), 537 and 685-686.
[40] Abosede George criticises scholarship in African history which analyses 'girls' as a 'variant of women than as a variant of youth', Abosede A. George, *Making Modern Girls: A History of Girlhood, Labor, and Social Development in Colonial Lagos* (Ohio, 2014), 14. For this reason, this study uses oral testimony to explore self-perceptions of Gĩkũyũ females to demonstrate how age and generation interacts with gender identities.
[41] For an exploration of age-grading in African societies see Corrie Decker, 'A Feminist Methodology of Age-Grading and History in Africa', AHR Roundtable: Chronological Age: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis, *American Historical Review*, 125 (2020), pp. 418-426.
[42] Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 1.
[43] *Ibid*, 1.
[44] Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa* (London, 1992), 227.

movement mainly in Gĩkũyũ populated areas was further exasperated by settlers inflammatory demands to 'hang every Kikuyu from the nearest tree', a sentiment expressed in the memoirs of Eric Griffith-Jones, the acting Attorney-General in Kenya at this time. From the late 1960s, revisionist historians have sought to expose the myths constructed by the British colonial authorities in Kenya, as well as the White settlers, about the Mau Mau.[45] Evaluating the origins of the Mau Mau also dominated early literature in the topic.[46]

One of these myths to deconstruct has been the Mau Mau oathing ceremonies. The British relied heavily on this major characteristic of the Mau Mau movement to stress the idea of African primitivism and to uphold their imperial mission in Kenya.[47] Oathing ceremonies were an integral way for Mau Mau leaders to secure membership and cooperation from the wider rural populations. The oathing campaign called for 'land and freedom' from their colonial oppressors. Several oaths emerged from the early 1950s. As Maia Green reveals, the majority of the Gĩkũyũ population had taken the 'oath of unity' by 1953, with many also having taken the *batuni*, also known as the warrior's oath. Mau Mau leaders systematically administered these oaths in different locations and were a powerful tool to recruit Kenyans into the movement.[48] The unity oath was widely administered to men and women, while evidence shows the warrior oath was mainly taken by men. As the insurgency progressed, it is likely that women took a modified version of the *batuni* oath as they entered the forests to fight.[49] The British sought to depict these oathing ceremonies as demonstrations of depravity and to conflate the Mau Mau with 'magic'.[50] This discourse was widely shared in the metropole, with the far-right magazine *Candour,* reporting in 1960 of the 'vileness and filth and sexual depravity' of Gĩkũyũ society.[51] This propaganda worked to undermine the Mau Mau

[45] Susan L. Carruthers, *Winning Hearts and Minds: British Governments, the Media and Colonial Counter-Insurgency 1944-1960* (London, 1995), 129. I support recent calls in the wake of the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests to capitalise 'White' and 'Black' as identities which signify the weaponisation of Whiteness and racism in modern global history. See Shola Mos-Shogbamimu, *This is Why I Resist: Don't Define my Black Identity* (London, 2021), 3-4.
[46] David W Throup, 'The Origins of Mau Mau', *African Affairs*, 84 (1985), pp. 399–433. Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*.
[47] The following sections have been adapted from the author's MA thesis: Bethany Rebisz, 'A Policy Characterised by Punishment: Villagisation and British Counter-Insurgency, Kenya, 1954 – 1960', MA Dissertation (University of Reading, 2016).
[48] Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya*, 60.
[49] Maia Green, 'Mau Mau Oathing Rituals and Political Ideology in Kenya: A Re-Analysis', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 60 (1990), 76. Wambui Waiyaki Otieno describes the oathing ceremonies she participated in, which shows the corresponding aims of male and female Mau Mau fighters. See Wambui Waikyaki Otieno, *Mau Mau's Daughter: A Life History* (Colorado, 1998), 33-38.
[50] Green, 'Mau Mau Oathing Rituals', 76.
[51] Candour, 'Mau Mau Oaths', July 1960. <http://www.candour.org.uk/#/9-mau-mau-oaths/4550760289> (accessed 10 June 2016).

movement's legitimacy and call for land and freedom from the British colonial power. The oathing ceremonies were a key prerequisite to resistance and appropriated pre-existing indigenous ritual practices in a new context. Furthermore, the rituals were inherently political, and 'demonstrate an awareness of the structures of exploitation in colonial Kenya'.[52]

In challenging British attempts to delegitimise the aims of the Mau Mau, historians have sought to examine the political history of resistance among Kenyans in the colonial era. Carl Rosberg and John Nottingham were instrumental in showing that Gĩkũyũ society politicised and became mobilised due to the British failure to recognise a need for significant social and political reform.[53] Berman expands on this analysis, arguing that Gĩkũyũ political activity was the reaction of a society 'whose material conditions worsened as their aspirations increased and as a rapid economic growth widened the gap between them and Kenya's increasingly prosperous immigrant communities'.[54] In the wake of the Second World War, when vast numbers of colonial subjects were conscripted to fight for European powers, settlers became more prosperous and the position of indigenous Kenyans continued to decline. Anderson shows that land rights were of particular concern to Gĩkũyũ society as the 'boundaries between settler farms and African lands' brought 'land hunger and emerging landlessness', forcing Kenyans into reserves.[55] While Gĩkũyũ families faced a new form of segregation through villagisation in the 1950s, this had already started through the creation of African reserves.

These disputes coincided with the Colonial Office desiring to secure imperial permanence in their colonies. Termed by John Lonsdale and Anthony Low as the 'second colonial occupation', the metropole sought to secure their economic interests in colonial territories. The metropole refers to the parent state of the colonies referenced, in this case Britain. The Colonial Office politicised African social and economic struggles and directed these issues to colonial governments, generating political and administrative crisis.[56] While the metropole was now funding the economic modernisation of industries, agriculture, healthcare and education for African subjects, the colonial state remained hostile and indifferent toward African demands. The Colonial Office may have been preparing for the impending decolonisation of their territories in Africa, yet the colonial administration in Kenya firmly believed their authority

[52] Green, 'Mau Mau Oathing Rituals', 76 and 80.
[53] Carl G. Rosberg, Jr. and John Nottingham, *The Myth of 'Mau Mau': Nationalism in Kenya* (New York, 1966), xxxv.
[54] Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, 229.
[55] Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 10.
[56] Anthony Low and John Lonsdale, 'Towards the New Order 1945-1963', in Anthony Low and Alison Smith (eds), *History of East Africa: Volume Three* (Oxford, 1976), 12-14.

would continue. Regardless of the emergence of the opposition party the Kenya African Union (KAU) in 1944, the colonial state refused to accept African complaints.[57]

A question that is prominent among historians of the Mau Mau is whether the movement was a nationalist group, united in their efforts for Kenyan independence. As Berman concluded in the 1990s, the Mau Mau was a political movement which manifested their frustrations against their colonial rulers but were also a fragmented group conflicted by Gĩkũyũ identities. Members of Gĩkũyũ society were seeking to reconstruct 'the meaning of Kikuyu-ness, the nature of community, the value of tradition, the involvement in new forms of production and exchange, and the degree of acceptance of, and assimilation to, European culture', among the developing social classes.[58] This debate has led some historians to categorise the 1950s period in Kenya as a Gĩkũyũ civil war, with Gĩkũyũ loyalists also acting alongside the colonial state.[59] This framing, however, diminishes the British colonial administration as a fundamental actor in these events. Bethwell A. Ogot further develops this by identifying both the moderate and radical actors in this struggle. He argues both were equally motivated by the 'need for Kikuyu unity, the need to preserve Kikuyu identity and the need for self-help, especially in education and economic development'.[60]

While there was a distinctively Gĩkũyũ identity to the growing Mau Mau movement, Ogot reinforces that this African construction of ethnicity in the colonial period was not exclusive to Gĩkũyũ society. He explores the new generation of Western Kenyans, as early as 1920, with 'perceptions of what could and should be done with their lives', as an example.[61] What is evident from the literature is the Mau Mau Emergency divided Kenyans and this legacy has endured today.[62] The anti-colonial law which banned Mau Mau as an organisation was not removed until 2003. Jomo Kenyatta and his government sought to retain a public silence about Mau Mau. The newly independent government avoided confronting the claims made against Gĩkũyũ loyalists who supported the counter-insurgency campaign that defeated Mau Mau prior to independence in 1963. As Anderson shows, this 'loyalist bargain' shaped the 'position of

[57] Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya,* 1.
[58] Bruce Berman, 'Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Modernity: The Paradox of Mau Mau', *Canadian Journal of African Studies,* 25 (1991), 197
[59] Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged,* Daniel Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau, Creating Kenya: Counterinsurgency, Civil War, and Decolonization* (Cambridge, 2009).
[60] Bethwell A. Ogot, 'Mau Mau and Nationhood: The Untold Story', in Odhiambo and Lonsdale, *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration,* 10.
[61] Ogot, *Mau Mau and Nationhood*, 11.
[62] John Lonsdale, 'Authority, Gender and Violence: The war within Mau Mau's fight for land and freedom', in in Odhiambo and Lonsdale, *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration*, 46-47.

the political elite who governed the country' and has been a source of ongoing ethnic dispute in contemporary Kenya.[63]

Individuals negotiated Gĩkũyũ identities, and this was gendered and generational. Lonsdale's theory of moral ethnicity is instrumental to this analysis and his explorations of Kenyatta's political and social ideologies are an example of this. Kenyatta, the former president of the KAU, began articulating his sense of self and moral ethnicity in the 1930s during his exile from Kenya. Lonsdale shows that 'it was his inherited culture, he believed, that taught a man the "mental and moral values" that encouraged him "to work and fight for liberty"'.[64] Freedom in Gĩkũyũ society was achieved through self-mastery and this upheld the claim of authority to speak in a political arena.[65] Self-mastery was an achievement earned by senior elders, who had, as Daniel Branch explains, harnessed 'the productive power of the household in order to beget wealth'.[66] Owning land, employing labour and marrying a suitable wife demonstrated great virtue and signified the social strata, with elderhood at the top.[67] While the theory of moral ethnicity is inherently a gendered concept, a closer analysis is necessary to consider the ways that this civic virtue was negotiated and articulated by Gĩkũyũ women and girls. Villagisation did not totally disrupt these deeply cultural processes, in many ways, it offered an environment whereby women and girls could reimagine their understandings of moral ethnicity away from their menfolk. While the colonial era brought greater conflict, oppression and hardship to those subjugated by it, colonial rule also brought opportunity.

Bennett effectively outlines the British counter-insurgency response to the Mau Mau as a four-phase operation. Firstly, the colonial state's declaration of emergency was imposed in October 1952 with the early military organisation being criticised for a lack of effective leadership or sufficient forces to achieve an early victory. In the second phase between June 1953 to April 1954, General Sir George Erskine arrived to introduce more efficient strategic direction for the army and security forces under his solid leadership. The colonial government instated a passbook system in February 1954 which effectively outlawed any movement outside of one's home reserve for Gĩkũyũ, Embu or Meru people. With a passbook, more commonly referred to as *kipande*, close to impossible to obtain, as only loyalists received one as a reward for their

[63] David Anderson, 'Making the Loyalist Bargain: Surrender, Amnesty and Impunity in Kenya's Decolonization, 1952–63', *The International History Review*, 39 (2017), 64-65.
[64] Lonsdale, 'Authority, Gender and Violence', 49.
[65] Daniel Branch, 'The Enemy Within: Loyalists and the War Against Mau Mau', *Journal of African History*, 48 (2007), 294.
[66] Branch, 'The Enemy Within', 294.
[67] Branch, 'The Enemy Within', 294.

support to the colonial government, this effectively controlled the movement of these ethnic communities.[68] This was one of several measures characteristic of Britain's attempt to divide Kenyan groups. Operation Anvil which took place mainly during 1954 is characterised as the third phase. Operation Anvil was arguably the most decisive stage in Britain's campaign against the Mau Mau, with operations targeting both urban and rural areas. It was a successful operation whereby the military cleared Nairobi principally of all Gĩkũyũ, Embu and Meru citizens and forced them through screening operations to determine how involved they were in the Mau Mau movement. The military sealed every road and path around Nairobi and no African was allowed to leave or enter the area freely.[69] As combatants and civilians are ideally indistinguishable in guerrilla warfare, the entire Gĩkũyũ-speaking population was branded as an opposition to the colonial government and either directly or passively involved in the Mau Mau.[70]

Operation Anvil as Bennett argues, 'marked a major turning point in the war'.[71] The British successfully disrupted Mau Mau supply chains, command systems and recruitment opportunities. They also detained large numbers of individuals causing Mau Mau activity to rapidly decline in Nairobi.[72] More than 20,000 suspected Mau Mau adherents were detained in this operation and forced all remaining Gĩkũyũ civilians, mainly women and children, into the African reserves.[73] Upon arrest, individuals were screened to determine how involved they were to the Mau Mau movement. As Anderson outlines, 'a crude grading system was put in place', whereby colonial security classified Africans as 'white', 'grey', or 'black'. Britain deemed those in the 'black' category as most dangerous and heavily involved in anti-colonial action, those in the 'grey' group were suspected supporters. The colonial state considered those classed 'white' as no threat. Soldiers who experienced the Second World War in Germany had witnessed this kind of classification process and repurposed it in Kenya. In theory, those classified as 'white' were known to the administration as allies to African Home Guards, tribal police, or other government posts.[74] After screening, colonial administrators sent detainees to a designated works or detention camp within the Pipeline network. To do so, they had to be 'rehabilitated' in a programme based on hard physical labour, practical training and education.

[68] UKNA, Foreign and Commonwealth Offices 141/6740, Kikuyu, Embu and Meru Passbooks and Loyalty Certificates, 1/3.
[69] Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 200-201.
[70] Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 12-13.
[71] Bennett, *Fighting the Mau Mau*, 24.
[72] Bennett, *Fighting the Mau Mau*, 24-25.
[73] Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 200-206.
[74] Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 203.

With the British depicting the Mau Mau as a disease, the Pipeline represented the medicine on offer. The final stage of Britain's counter-insurgency campaign encompassed the surrender negotiations and ultimate defeat of the remaining Mau Mau forest fighters by 1956.[75] The villagisation process and the community development activities that were introduced during this time, however, continued after 1956. It is for this reason that this thesis is located within the third and fourth phases of the counter-insurgency campaign and the immediate years that followed.

Villagisation secured control of the passive-wing element of the Mau Mau by forcing those in the African reserves into camps encased by barbed-wire fences guarded by the Home Guards. Villagisation was, for some, a protective strategy, keeping those loyal to the colonial government safe from Mau Mau attacks. Branch highlights the difference between 'punitive villages' and 'loyalist villages' built to protect the loyal population from attack. He stresses that 'punitive villages' were characterised by a high degree of surveillance to contain Mau Mau adherents and their families. Loyalists instead enjoyed greater protection but without the oppressive restrictions imposed on 'punitive village' populations.[76] The government wielded the full weight of state action on areas known to be assisting forest fighters. They punished any area suspected of this assistance as a whole and forcibly removed into new, fortified camps. Villagisation was an inherently gendered strategy to deal with the women and girls supplying the Mau Mau. The existing literature has failed to recognise the varying coercive practices deployed in camp spaces and it is here where this thesis posits itself.

From the early 2000s, historians of the Mau Mau rebellion have sought to determine the level and nature of brutality inflicted on Kenyans by colonial state actors. Anderson's and Elkins' research has paved the way in addressing the level of violence used in this campaign.[77] Anderson was instrumental in using the existing court records to map out the behaviour and ideologies of British punitive action against Kenyans suspected of fighting in the Mau Mau. Elkins also aimed to address British brutality in their counter-insurgency campaign. In identifying many gaps in the British and Kenyan archives at the time, she adopted an oral history methodology to reveal the testimonies of those victim to the administration's violence, colonial officials, missionaries and European settlers. Her work sparked intense debate, not only among scholars, but also from the public. The public bought into the book's genocidal

[75] Bennett, *Fighting the Mau Mau*, 11-12.
[76] Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau*, 107-108.
[77] See also Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau*, Odhiambo and Lonsdale, *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration*.

themed title; however, scholars criticised her methodology and arguments.[78] Despite the criticism, Elkins' work ignited necessary conversations about how to write histories of colonial violence, reparations and 'missing' governmental files. Due to the work of both Anderson and Elkins, alongside a campaign set out by the Kenya Human Rights Commission, a proportion of the missing governmental files were located and released to the British public in 2011. Britain secretly moved the Foreign and Commonwealth Office reports (FCO), hence their nickname the 'migrated archive', from Kenya to London immediately upon Kenya achieving independence. 2011 was a turning point for the Mau Mau's discourse as the files supported the testimonies of Mau Mau survivors and confirmed the suspicions of many historians; Britain had enacted mass mistreatment and torture on Kenyans detained without trial during the emergency.[79] This release paved the way for historians, especially Bennett, to establish a more nuanced picture of the counter-insurgency campaign by outlining the oppressive measures used by both sides with a cross examination of multiple bodies of sources. This revaluation has brought the human rights discourse to the forefront of discussions of this campaign and the colonial period more widely. This thesis is situated in this debate.

The sheer brutality, and now notoriety, of the emergency period in Kenya has attracted historians of European humanitarianism and international human rights. Thompson, Fabian Klose, Yolana Pringle and Emily Baughan have been instrumental in addressing the international responses to the atrocities in Kenya which has brought in wider discussions of the relationship between humanitarianism and colonial rule.[80] Thompson takes aim at the International Committee of the Red Cross' (ICRC) and the wider Red Crescent Movement's championing ethos of providing 'impartial, neutral, and independent provision of relief to victims of conflict and natural disasters'.[81] He identifies the humanitarian discourses deployed by colonial officials to justify elements of their counter-insurgency campaigns.[82] His work is instrumental in showing the limitations of international humanitarian law in the late-colonial

[78] Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau,* xiv-xv. See also Bethwell Alan Ogot, 'Britain's Gulag.' *Journal of African History,* 46 (2005), 493-505.
[79] David Anderson, 'Guilty Secrets: Deceit, Denial and the Discovery of Kenya's "Migrated Archive"', *History Workshop Journal*, 80 (2015), 144-5.
[80] Emily Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire: Humanitarian Collusion with the Colonial State during the Kenyan Emergency, c.1954-1960', *Journal of British Studies,* 59 (2020), pp. 57-79; Fabian Klose, 'The Colonial Testing Ground: The International Committee of the Red Cross and the Violent End of Empire', *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, 2 (2011), pp.107-126; Yolana Pringle, 'Humanitarianism, Race and Denial: the International Committee of the Red Cross and Kenya's Mau Mau Rebellion, 1952-60', *Academic Journal Academic Journal | History Workshop Journal*, 84 (2017), pp. 89-107; Thompson, *Humanitarian Principles Put to the Test.*
[81] Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (New York, 2011), 10.
[82] Thompson, 'Humanitarian Principles Put to the Test', 59.

era, whereby humanitarian organisations had little choice but to forge relationships with colonial administrations. This level of dependency has been further probed by Baughan who argues that the Save the Children Fund and the British Red Cross Society in Kenya colluded in colonial brutality.[83] By comparing the cases of Kenya and Algeria, Klose demonstrates the ways that the British and French colonial powers contributed directly to an international discourse on human rights, while simultaneously committing unchecked violence in their colonies.[84] Pringle further develops this by exploring the intersection of race in this analysis. She argues that the International Committee of the Red Cross' visits to Kenya in 1957 and 1959 to assess prison and camp conditions, omitted details of this violence and is evidence of how 'human suffering is overlooked'.[85] The British Red Cross branch in Kenya was a settler-led organisation and was therefore not always as impartial in their treatment of civilians, contrary to what the branch claimed.[86]

Humanitarianism plays a dual role in this thesis. Building on Thompson, this research exposes the violent practices of the very counter-insurgency strategies Britain justified on humanitarian grounds. It also offers a close analysis of humanitarian involvement building on Baughan. By moving beyond discussions of humanitarian collusion, local interactions are examined to determine how individual humanitarian workers articulated their efforts in Kenya among Kenyan women and children and alongside European colonial officials. By doing so, this thesis contributes to these analyses of broader trends in humanitarianism, colonial development and colonial state violence at the end of empire. In examining the relationship between colonial state actors, humanitarian workers and the Kenyan women and children encountering these efforts, this thesis seeks to expand on three bodies of existing literature. Firstly, this research engages with the histories of the colonial state in Kenya, exploring the application of coercion and development and how this manifested in late-colonial counter-insurgency practice. Secondly, the findings respond to the glaring absence of women's and girls' personal experiences of gendered colonial counter-insurgency practice in the wider discourse. This directly engages with the literature on Kenyan women's histories, African women's histories more broadly, and the emerging literature on gendered counter-insurgency. Finally, this research is situated in the wider conversations of the history of humanitarianism, especially in

[83] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire', 58.
[84] Fabian Klose, *Human Rights in the Shadow of Colonial Violence: the Wars of Independence in Kenya and* Algeria (Pennsylvania, 2013), 6.
[85] Pringle, 'Humanitarianism, Race and Denial', 89.
[86] Pringle, 'Humanitarianism, Race and Denial', 94.

relation to colonial Africa. It seeks to take a subaltern approach to this field by centring African women in the narrative who have previously been marginalised based on their gender and race.[87] This approach more effectively engages with the voices of those who experienced humanitarian intervention and colonial violence.

Securing and Protecting Imperial Permanence

The British relied on force to establish the colonial state in Kenya. The British enforced violence on a scale unprecedented to indigenous Kenyans. 'Kenya' cannot be understood as Lonsdale shows, 'as a social formation' but rather 'a level of power'.[88] The external forces of European colonial powers in the twentieth century transformed the internal authority of the stolen territories. Centuries long established social units founded on cultivation, herding and hunting in a long-drawn negotiated nexus of relations were redefined on the onset of European colonial rule.[89] Running tandem to this brute force were European ideals of the so-called civilising mission, which justified this destruction through a modernisation agenda to advance colonial subjects.[90] Historiography has sought to understand the strategies and nature of colonial governance and authority and its relationship to metropole states.[91] Much of the existing literature explores the pervasiveness of violence in these processes. Scholars decipher physical forms of violence as well as structural and symbolic articulations relating to institutional power.[92] In response to this, historians have worked to determine the role Africans

[87] 'Subaltern', coined by Antonio Gramsci and developed by Ranajit Guha, has grown as a subfield of postcolonial research from the 1980s. By focusing on non-elites as agents of social and political change, South Asian scholars have shifted histories from below to consider specific contexts in Asian and African history. See for example Ranajit Guha (ed.), *A Subaltern Studies Reader, 1986-1995* (Minnesota, 1997).
[88] Lonsdale, 'The Conquest State of Kenya 1895-1905', in *Unhappy Valley*, 13. See also, Bruce Berman, *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination* (London, 1990); Will Jackson, 'White man's country: Kenya colony and the making of a myth', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 5 (2011), pp. 344-68.
[89] Lonsdale, 'The Conquest State of Kenya', 13-14.
[90] Sharkey, 'African Colonial States', 6. See also wider literature on 'invented traditions' in colonial Africa: Terence Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa', in Preben Kaarsholm and Jan Hultin (eds), *Inventions and Boundaries: Historical and Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism*, (Roskilde, 1994), pp. 5-50.
[91] Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, 3.
[92] Much has been written on violence and how this operated in the colonial state, see for example Toyin Falola, *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria* (Indiana, 2009); Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York, 1963 [1952]); Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe*; Martin Thomas, *Violence and Colonial Order: Police, Workers and Protest in the European Empires, 1918-1940* (Cambridge, 2012). For a broader assessment of the everyday practices of violence, see for example Arthur Kleinman, 'The Violences of Everyday Life: The Multiple Forms and Dynamics of Violence', in Veena Das et.al. (eds), *Violence and Subjectivity* (Berkeley, 1997), pp. 226-241. On structural violence, see for example John Galtung, 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research*, 6 (1969), pp. 167-191; Lubna Nazir Chaudhry, 'Reconstituting Selves in the Karachi Conflict: Mahajir Women Survivors and Structural Violence', *Cultural Dynamics*, 16 (2004), pp. 259-290.

played in this establishment.[93] While force was imperative in the colonisation of Africa, scholarship shows that a plethora of people were involved in shaping the colonial states. Establishing a colonial administration was not simply a European military endeavour. It required the cooperation of African chiefs, elders, translators, tax collectors, teachers as well as European missionaries and anthropologists.[94] This has shifted the discourse away from colonial hegemony and instead recognises the fluidity of processes inherent to the establishment and maintenance of colonial rule.[95]

The era of 'late colonialism' has garnered increased interrogation in its relationship to the rapidly changing global dynamics between 1930-1960. The Great Depression and the Second World War, as well as accelerating population growth and urbanisation on the African continent, shifted the purpose of colonial regimes.[96] In this 'second colonial occupation', European powers sought to secure their economic interests in the colonies and control processes of decolonisation. Pre-existing social welfare, which sought to engineer social change in a White settlement colony characterised by racial division, now survived in Kenya as community development.[97] The Colonial Office believed developmental practises promoting a better way of life would entice African subjects to become active participants in the future economic prosperity of the colonies.[98] Colonial powers hoped to further Africanise civil sectors, which exacerbated class and ethnic divides among the African populations.[99] Jerónimo has enhanced this analysis, proposing the 'repressive developmentalism' concept which plots the shift of colonial development into counter-insurgency practice. As the planning of socio-economic development was a political act to secure 'imperial permanence', counter-insurgents entangled methods of development and welfare in processes of social control and repression.[100] In the case of Kenya, enforced villagisation established social control, but

[93] See for example Terence Ranger, 'African Reaction to the Imposition of Colonial Rule in East and Southern Africa', in Lewis Gann and Peter Duignan (eds), *Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960. Volume 1* (Cambridge, 1971); Benjamin N. Lawrance, Emily Lynn Osborn, and Richard L. Roberts (eds), *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa* (Madison, 2015).
[94] Sharkey, 'African Colonial States', 2.
[95] David Anderson, 'Policing the settler state; colonial hegemony in Kenya, 1900-1952', in Dagmar Engels and Shula Marks (eds), *Contesting Colonial Hegemony; State and Society in Africa and India* (London, 1994), pp. 248-264; Berman and Lonsdale, 'Coping with the Contradictions: The Development of the Colonial State 1895-1914', in *Unhappy Valley*, 77-100.
[96] Sharkey, *African Colonial States*, 15.
[97] Joanna Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya 1925-52* (Oxford, 2000), 3 and 359.
[98] Kara Moskowitz, *Seeing Like a Citizen: Decolonization, Development, and the Making of Kenya, 1945-1960* (Ohio, 2019), 171.
[99] See for example Ranger, 'African Reaction to the Imposition of Colonial Rule' and Lawrance, Osborn, and Roberts, *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks*.
[100] Jerónimo, 'Repressive Developmentalism', 538.

intertwined in this process were community development programmes which ostensibly promoted inhabitants' welfare and development. Households were central to this practice. Colonial administrations could reshape hierarchies and ultimately pacify and domesticate insurgent populations through systems such as villagisation.[101]

Determining the nature of coercion in colonial emergencies has become an overarching theme in comparative counter-insurgency studies. While General Templer coined the term 'winning the hearts and minds' during the Malayan Emergency to describe the British approach to securing the support of the wider population, historiography demonstrates this was not the British way in counter-insurgency. By comparing British campaigns, David French argues that the foundation of British counter-insurgency doctrine was not a quest to win the 'hearts and minds' but was instead the application of 'wholesale coercion' with the use of force in a indiscriminative fashion.[102] This line of argument has now received support within counter-insurgency literature with Karl Hack arguing terror and coercion were key aspects of the campaign in Malaya and Andrew Mumford highlighting an indiscriminate level of violence undertaken by counter-insurgency forces in Kenya.[103] This thesis applies a similar approach and aims to further assess the implications this had on individuals and how humanitarian organisations played a role in efforts to mitigate the violence.

Late colonial counter-insurgency campaigns in Africa have more recently sparked debate on the context of the 'second colonial occupation' and counter-insurgency campaigns. As Feichtinger demonstrates, strategic resettlement as a counter-insurgency measure combined repressive and reformist elements which can be interpreted as an 'exemplary phenomenon for the combination of counterinsurgency and social engineering'.[104] This combination is portrayed by the colonial authorities' repressive elements of population control and collective punishment with more reformist efforts to introduce community development and socio-economic transformation.[105] In a departure from the existing literature on European counter-insurgency strategy which tends to focus on singular European powers, Feichtinger compares

[101] Patricia Owens, *Economy of Force: Counterinsurgency and the Historical Rise of the Social* (Cambridge, 2015), 24 and 207.
[102] David French, 'Nasty not Nice: British Counter-Insurgency Doctrine and Practice, 1945–1967', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 23 (2012), 744.
[103] Karl Hack, 'Malaya – Between Two Terrors: "People's History" and the Malayan Emergency', in Hannah Gurman (ed.), *Hearts and Minds: A People's History of Counterinsurgency* (New York, 2013), 25; Andrew Mumford, *The Counter-Insurgency Myth: The British Experience of Irregular Warfare* (London, 2012), 70.
[104] Feichtinger, 'A Great Reformatory', 47-48. For an analysis of the economic motivations of villagisation, especially in a post-colonial context, see for example James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed* (New Haven, 1998).
[105] Feichtinger, 'A Great Reformatory', 47.

Britain's and France's campaigns in Kenya and Algeria. In doing so, he offers a more thorough analysis of both the military and the economic motivations of this counter-insurgency strategy, as opposed to attempting to develop a neat analysis of British practice, or French.[106] Stucki has further gendered this by showing the feminised character of colonial welfarism and development in response to insurgencies in the Iberian colonies. The Spanish and Portuguese colonial powers reinforced the civilisation discourse to mitigate anti-colonial discontent, offering female colonial subjects social advancement to appease their dissatisfaction.[107] White, settler women played an instrumental role in these efforts.[108] Kenya offers a unique example of repressive developmentalism through a gendered lens. Villagisation contained women *en masse* and male colonial guards enacted particularly intimate, prolific and brutal violence against them in these spaces. This contrasted with the Colonial Office's financial push to enhance the welfare and development of women in its colonies. Development in this context cannot be separated from colonial state coercion, violence and oppression.

Kenyan Women, the 'backbone of Mau Mau'

Kenyan women played an instrumental role in insurgent activity against the British during the emergency period. Though the colonial government recognised as early as 1953 that they were the 'backbone of the Mau Mau', the literature which explores Kenyan women's roles and experiences of the counter-insurgency campaign is still in its infancy.[109] This is not

[106] See for example Anthony Clayton, *Counter-Insurgency in Kenya: A Study of Military Operations against Mau Mau* (Nairobi, 1976); D. Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Connecticut, 2006 [1964]); John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago, 2002); Julian Paget, *Counter-Insurgency Campaigning* (Plymouth, 1967).

[107] See for example Andreas Stucki, *Violence and Gender in Africa's Iberian Colonies: Feminizing the Portuguese and Spanish Empire, 1950s-1970s* (London, 2019); Barbara Bush, 'Nationalism, Development, and Welfare Colonialism: Gender and the Dynamics of Decolonization', in Martin Thomas and Andrew S. Thompson (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of The Ends of Empire* (Oxford, 2018), pp. 1-20, via Oxford Handbooks Online [website] <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198713197.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780198713197-e-31> (accessed 15 July 2021).

[108] See for example Karen Tranberg Hansen, 'White Women in a Changing World: Employment, Voluntary Work, and Sex in Post-WWII Northern Rhodesia', in Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (eds), *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington, 1992), pp. 247-268; Clare Midgley, *Feminism and Empire: Women Activists in Imperial Britain, 1790–1865* (London, 2007); Aili Mari Tripp, 'A New Look at Colonial Women: British Teachers and Activists in Uganda, 1898–1962', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 38 (2004) pp. 123–156; Dianne van Tol, 'The Women of Kenya Speak: Imperial Activism and Settler Society, c.1930', *Journal of British Studies*, 54 (2015), pp. 433-456; Hannah West, 'Camp follower or counterinsurgent? Lady Templer and the forgotten wives', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 32 (2021), pp. 1-25.

[109] Margaret Wangui Gachihi, 'The Role of Kikuyu Women in the Mau Mau', MA Thesis, (University of Nairobi, 1986), 23. See for example Bruce-Lockhart, 'Reconsidering Women's Roles'; Bruce-Lockhart and Rebisz, 'Discourses of Development and Practices of Punishment'; Tabitha Kanogo, 'Kikuyu Women and the Politics of Protest: Mau Mau' in Sharon McDonald, Pat Holden, and Shirley Ardener (eds), *Images of Women in Peace and War: Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspectives* (Madison, 1987), pp. 78-99; Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion, and Social Change in Kenya* (Baltimore, 1992).

unsurprising when considering how recently feminist historians have begun redressing the dismissal of women as active participants in historical processes. From the 1960s to the 1980s, scholars shifted from centring the history of elite women to recover ordinary, female voices. Gender became an improved means of assessing historical transformations, with Kathleen Canning, a leading historian of women's studies, arguing that gender allowed for evaluations of the shaping of men's and women's social identities by factors such as sex and class.[110] This expansion of a more intersectional analysis which later integrated studies of race, ethnicity, sexuality, age and class has developed the fields of gender history and women's history further.[111] These studies have challenged androcentric perspectives on African history. Gender has become a popular area of assessment revealing a continent where social constructions of gender itself have been and can be extremely fluid and complex.[112] It has also been an instrumental lens of analysis in considering how European colonial rule sought to reconfigure African societies based on European notions of gender.[113]

[110] Kathleen Canning, *Gender History in Practice: Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class and Citizenship* (New York, 2006), 6. See also Joan Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *The American Historical Review*, 91, (1986), pp. 1053-1075.

[111] The term 'intersectionality' was founded by Kimberle Crenshaw, 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color', *Stanford Law Review*, 43 (1991), pp. 1241–99.

[112] Jean Allman, Susan Geiger, and Nakanyike Musisi (eds), *Women in African Colonial Histories* (Bloomington, 2002); Iris Berger, *Women in Twentieth Century Africa* (Cambridge, 2016); Barbara Cooper, 'Women and Gender', in John Parker and Richard Reid (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern African History* (Oxford, 2013); Andrea Cornwall (ed.), *Readings in Gender in Africa* (Oxford, 2005); Nancy Hafkin and Edna Bay (eds), *Women in Africa: Studies in Social and Economic Change* (Stanford, 1976); Philippa Levine (ed.), *Gender and Empire* (Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series) (Oxford, 2007); Lisa Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher (eds), *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa* (Portsmouth, 2003); Claire Robertson, *Trouble Showed the Way: Women, Men, and Trade in the Nairobi Area, 1890–1990* (Bloomington, 1997); Kathleen Sheldon, *African Women: Early History to the 21st Century* (Bloomington, , 2017); Judith Van Allen, 'Aba Riots or the Igbo Women's War? Ideology, Stratification and the Invisibility of Women', *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, 6 (1975), pp. 11–39. For anthropological studies on the intersection of gender and generation, see for example Audrey Richards, *Chisungu: A Girl's Initiation Ceremony among the Bemba of Zambia* (London, 1956); Monica Wilson, *For Men and Elders: Change in the Relations of Generations and of Men and Women among the Nyakyusa-Ngonde People, 1875–1971* (London, 1977); P. T. W. Baxter and Uri Almagor (eds), *Age, Generation and Time: Some Features of East African Age Organisations* (New York, 1978).

[113] Saheed Aderinto, *When Sex Threatened the State: Illicit Sexuality, Nationalism, and Politics in Colonial Nigeria, 1900–1958* (Urbana, 2015); Ifi Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society* (London, 1987); Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley;* Corrie Decker, *Mobilizing Zanzibari Women: The Struggle for Respectability and Self-Reliance in Colonial East Africa* (New York, 2014); Corrie Decker, 'The Elusive Power of Colonial Prey: Sexualizing the Schoolgirl in the Zanzibar Protectorate', *Africa Today*, 61 (2015), pp. 42–60; D.L. Hodgson and S. McCurdy, *'Wicked' Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa* (Portsmouth, 2001); Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon: Of Birth Ritual, Medicalization, and Mobility in the Congo* (North Carolina, 1999); Philippa Levine (ed.), *Gender and Empire* (Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series) (Oxford, 2007); Kate Law, *Gendering the Settler State: White Women, Race, Liberalism and Empire in Rhodesia, 1950-1980* (New York, 2016); Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses* (Minneapolis, 1997).

Writings on gender and women's history have slowly emerged and grown in the field of Mau Mau studies and Kenyan history more broadly, with notable assessments into Kenyan womanhood, Kenyan women's agency, male control and masculinity studies.[114] Four trends have surfaced in assessing Kenyan women's histories of the Mau Mau. Firstly, Tabitha Kanogo and Cora Anne Presley have sought to determine the nature of Kenyan female activity in connection to the Mau Mau insurgency. Presley was instrumental in determining the primary responsibilities of Mau Mau women in their organisation and maintenance of the supply lines directing food, information and ammunition to the forest fighters.[115] She too introduced Britain's use of MW in influencing mainly Gĩkũyũ women away from anti-colonial action. Though she argues that joining MW was the 'crucial difference between survival and starvation under the villagisation program' this assessment needs nuancing.[116] Women engaged in colonial programmes like MW for a variety of economic and social reasons, not merely to survive. Kanogo complicated this narrative further by historicising Kenyan women's active participation in challenging the colonial state. She explores women's revolts prior to the Mau Mau, such as the Harry Thuka riot in 1922 and the revolts of the late 1940s whereby women challenged the colonial government's enforced soil conservation measures.[117]

Both Kanogo's and Presely's work challenged notions which have endured the wider fields of gender and military studies whereby scholars have depicted women as non-violent, peacemakers in war. Despite the ground-breaking works of Jean Elshtain, Cynthia Enloe and Laura Sjoberg, more research is needed to understand the range of experiences and complexities of the impact war has had on women and the roles played by women in conflict.[118]

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[114] Erin Bell, '"A most horrifying maturity in crime": age, gender and juvenile delinquency in colonial Kenya during the Mau Mau Uprising', *Atlantic Studies*, 11 (2014), pp. 473-490; Penelope Hetherington, 'The Politics of Female Circumcision in the Central Province of Colonial Kenya, 1920-1930', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth Studies*, 26 (1998), pp. 93-126; Tabitha Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya, 1900-50* (Oxford, 2005); Kenda Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart: Widows, Family, and Community in Kenya* (Chicago, 2007); Paul Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age: The Politics of Manhood in Kenya* (Ohio, 2017); Brett Shadle, '*Girls Cases': Marriage and Colonialism in Gusiiland, Kenya, 1890-1970* (Portsmouth, 2006); Lynn Thomas, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley, 2003); Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago, 1990); Luise White, 'Separating the Men from the Boys: Constructions of Gender, Sexuality and Terrorism in Central Kenya, 1989-1959', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 23 (1990), pp. 1-25.

[115] Cora Anne Presley, 'The Mau Mau Rebellion, Kikuyu Women, and Social Change', *Academic Journal Academic Journal | Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, 22 (1998), 507.

[116] *Ibid*, 519-20.

[117] Kanogo, 'Kikuyu Women and the Politics of Protest', 81-84. See also: Audrey Wipper, 'Kikuyu Women and the Harry Thuku Disturbances: Some Uniformities of Female Militancy', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 59 (1989), pp. 300-337.

[118] See Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War* (Chicago and London, 1987); Cynthia Enloe, *Does Khaki become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives* (London, 1988); Laura Sjoberg, 'Agency, Militarized Femininity and

Literature on the involvement and lived realities of girls in conflict is also in its infancy.[119] Caroline Moser and Fiona Clark have worked to debunk the gendered assumptions of actors in war. Moser and Clark criticise the early literature on political violence and armed conflict which saw this as an exclusively male domain, executed by men whether as armed forces, insurgent groups, or peace-keeping services. They highlight that these analyses made a clear distinction of men as perpetrators and women as victims, using gender as a simple means of division. Moser and Clark debunk the notion that women solely relate to peace and passivity, while men align to war and aggression. This misrepresentation and oversimplification of conflict has resulted in insufficient recognition of women's involvement, participation and experiences of violent conflicts. Furthermore, this positioning denies both men and women their agency and associated voice as 'actors' in these events.[120]

Secondly, historians such as Hynd and Bruce-Lockhart have recognised the British gendered assumptions of female colonial subjects and how these influenced measures brought against Kenyan women by the colonial government. The ideology that African women were inherently deviant, easily malleable and underdeveloped both emotionally and mentally permeated the philosophies of colonial officials in the penal system.[121] As the literature shows, these assessments fit within a broader trend of women's experiences in insurgencies and the gendered identity of counter-insurgency practice and containment.[122] In a move away from the more

Enemy Others: Observations from The War In Iraq.' *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 9 (2007), pp. 82–101.

[119] Bell, 'A most horrifying maturity in crime'; Stacey Hynd, 'Small Warriors? Children and Youth in Colonial Insurgencies and Counterinsurgency, ca. 1945–1960', *Comparative Studies in Society and History: an international quarterly*, 62.4 (2020), pp. 684 – 713; Pamela Reynolds, 'Children of Tribulation: The Need to Heal and the Means to Heal War Trauma.' *Africa*, 60 (1990), pp. 1-38. For wider literature on histories of African girlhoods and conceptions of 'childhood', see for example Saheed Aderinto (ed.), *Children and Childhood in Colonial Nigerian Histories* (New York, 2015); Erica Burman, 'Innocents Abroad: Western Fantasies of Childhood and the Iconography of Emergencies', *Disasters*, 18 (1994), pp. 238-253; George, *Making Modern Girls*; Clive Glaser, *Bo-tsotsi: The Youth Gangs of Soweto, 1935–1976* (Portsmouth, 2000); Sacha Hepburn, 'Girlhood, Domestic Service and Perceptions of Child Labour in Zambia, c. 1980-2010', *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, 12 (2019), pp. 434-451; Andrew Ivaska, *Cultured States: Youth, Gender, and Modern Style in 1960s Dar es Salaam* (Durham, 2011).

[120] Caroline O. N. Moser, and Fiona Clark (eds), *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence* (London, 2001), 3-4.

[121] Katherine Bruce-Lockhart, '"Unsound" Minds and Broken Bodies: the Detention of "Hardcore" Mau Mau Women at Kamiti and Gitamayu Detention Camps in Kenya, 1954–1960', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 8 (2014), 592; Stacey Hynd, Deadlier than the Male? Women and the Death Penalty in Colonial Kenya and Nyasaland, *Stichproben: Vienna Journal of African Studies*, 12 (2007), 13. See also the wider discourse of 'beasts of burden': Margaret Kinsman, '"Beasts of Burden": The Subordination of Southern Tswana Women, ca. 1800-1840', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 10 (1983), pp. 39-54.

[122] Emily Bridger, *Young Women Against Apartheid: Gender, Youth and South Africa's Liberation Struggle* (Cambridge, 2021); Eleanor O'Gorman, *The Front Line Runs through Every Woman: Women and Local Resistance in the Zimbabwean Liberation War* (Woodridge, 2011); Mike Kesby, 'Arenas for Control, Terrains of Gender Contestation: Guerrilla Struggle and Counter-Insurgency Warfare in Zimbabwe 1972-80', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 22 (1996), pp. 561-84; Laleh Khalili, 'Gendered Practices of Counterinsurgency',

traditional literature on counter-insurgencies, the last two decades has witnessed a shift in exploring what Hannah Gurman describes as a '"people's history" in relation to "insurgency" and "counter-insurgency"'.[123] Thirdly, in light of the exposed brutality inflicted on Kenyans during the emergency period, historians have sought to explore the ways that Kenyan women encountered violence and mistreatment.[124] Experiences of sexual violence and the prolific nature of this form of violence has been explored too.[125] With new sources made available in the 'migrated archive' which corroborates the testimonies of Kenyan women, recent literature considers the systematic suppression of African women's voices in European archival production.[126]

While this thesis engages closely with the histories of African women in relation to colonial insurgencies, this research is not merely a story of colonial oppression. As Iris Berger argues, 'the narrative of oppression oversimplifies the lives of African women…women's position was complex, depending on their age and marital status, the economic possibilities open to them, and whether they lived in matrilineal communities… or patrilineal societies'.[127] How women navigated violent spaces, negotiated their own civic virtue and understood themselves as mothers and economic agents is vital to any assessment of women's experiences of forced villagisation in Kenya.[128] Considering women's agency has been at the forefront of histories of women. Though as shown by Walter Johnson, agency has been limiting in resistance discourses by obscuring important questions about how individuals theorised their own actions and how these actions provided the basis for new ways of thinking about resistance.[129] Lynn Thomas has replicated this notion in the context of African history, arguing that it is vital that

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Review of International Studies, 37 (2011), pp. 1471-1491; Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For Better or Worse? Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle* (Harare, 2000); Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe*; Natalya Vince, *Our Fighting Sisters: Nation, Memory and Gender in Algeria, 1954-2012* (Manchester, 2015).

[123] Gurman, *Hearts and Minds*, 12.

[124] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning,* Bruce-Lockhart, 'Unsound Minds'.

[125] M. Pettit, 'Who Is Worthy of Redress?: Recognizing Sexual Violence Injustice Against Women of Color as Uniquely Redress Worthy Illuminated by a Case Study on Kenya's Mau Mau Women and Their Unique Harms', *Berkeley Journal Of Gender, Law & Justice*, 30 (2015) pp. 268-322; David Anderson and Julianne Weis, 'The Prosecution of Rape in Wartime: Evidence from Kenya's Mau Mau rebellion, 1952-60', *Law & History Review* 36 (2018), pp. 267-294.

[126] Anna Adima, 'The Sound of Silence: The 1929-30 Gikuyu "Female Circumcision Controversy" and the Discursive Suppression of African Women's Voices.' *Gender a výzkum / Gender and Research,* 21 (2020), pp. 18-37.

[127] Berger, *Women in Twentieth-Century Africa*, 2.

[128] Other examples include but are not limited to Teresa A. Barnes, *"We Women Worked so Hard": Gender, Urbanisation and Social Reproduction in Colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, 1930-1956* (Oxford, 1999); Joanne N. Corbin and J. Camille Hall, 'Resettlement Post Conflict: Risk and Protective Factors and Resilience among Women in Northern Uganda', *International Social Work,* 62 (2019), pp. 918–932; Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939* (Portsmouth, 1992).

[129] Walter Johnson, 'On Agency', *Journal of Social History*, 37 (2003), 113-24.

research of Africa demonstrates 'how all people shape – if in varying and unequal ways – the worlds in which they live'.[130] Thomas identifies the limitations of agency as an analytical category by questioning who should speak for whom. She enforces the privileges many social historians of Africa have enjoyed in living amongst 'ordinary' Africans without forsaking any of their privileges. In this way, arguments of African agency have become a 'safety argument' and in problematic ways has taken away from much dynamic discussion of exploring a wider range of analytical concerns.[131] Instead, this thesis adopts Henrik Vigh's concept of social navigation and Lonsdale's theory of moral ethnicity. Social navigation gives scope to identify the relationship between victimhood and agency and how individuals navigate the complicated path outside and alongside these binary categories.[132] Further than this, women's and girls' actions were influenced by their position in their society and how they saw themselves based on their age, gender and social standing. Incorporating moral ethnicity is therefore vital in this discourse.[133]

Humanitarianism, White Saviourism and Imperial Ideologies

Reflecting on the history of humanitarianism and aid organisations is at the forefront of discussions today regarding calls to decolonise this sector. White, European and American celebrities continue to post images of themselves on their public social media platforms holding African children. Summer trips designed to take Western students to remote areas of Africa to help build orphanages remain popular. These often-performative acts of White saviourism are historically rooted in the history of European empires. As Bronwen Everill and Josiah Kaplan show, 'concepts of humanitarianism uniquely grounded in Western colonial history have shaped today's aid industry, state-building and governance initiatives and military interventions in Africa'.[134] Recent work by Rob Skinner and Alan Lester has highlighted the importance of addressing the intricate framework of relations between humanitarianism, empire, and decolonisation; it is here that this thesis positions itself.[135] Alice Conklin summarises the great contradiction of colonial rule and European ideas of humanitarianism whereby colonial rule 'rested on a set of coercive practices that violated their own democratic values. Colonized

[130] Lynn Thomas, 'Historicising Agency', *Gender and History*, 28 (2016), 335.
[131] *Ibid*, 328-329.
[132] Henrik Vigh, *Navigating Terrains of War: Youth and Soldiering in Guinea-Bissau* (New York, 2007), 11.
[133] John Lonsdale, 'Moral ethnicity & political tribalism' in P Kaarsholm & J Hultin (eds), *Inventions & boundaries: historical & anthropological approaches to ethnicity & nationalism* (Roskilde, 1994), 131; Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley, Vol. 2*, 316.
[134] Bronwen Everill and Josiah Kaplan (eds), *The History and Practice of Humanitarian Intervention and Aid in Africa* (Hampshire, 2013), 1.
[135] Rob Skinner and Alan Lester, 'Humanitarianism and Empire: New Research Agendas', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40 (2012), 729.

persons were designated as subjects, not citizens. They had duties but few rights'.[136] As previously stated, Thompson, Klose, Pringle and Baughan have contributed valuable research to the field of Mau Mau studies, exploring the ICRC's involvement in regard to the detention camps introduced to incarcerate suspected Mau Mau fighters. There remains to be any thorough evaluation of humanitarian involvement in the villagisation process, the gendering of humanitarianism in this process and the work conducted by European welfare workers in the development and well-being of those forcibly resettled.[137]

Historians cannot understand the role played by humanitarian organisations in Kenya during the 1950s separately from the shifting discourse of international human rights and humanitarianism in the post-Second Word War era. Plotting this history, as well as the origins of European ideas of humanitarianism and charity has dominated the literature.[138] As historians Michael Barnett and Thomas Weiss show, nineteenth century humanitarianism sought to 'alleviate suffering and restore society's moral basis'.[139] In the wake of the horrors of the Holocaust, organisations such as the United Nations, Save the Children Fund, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1949 Geneva Conventions emerged.[140] In light of the changing world order and calls for decolonisation in what is now known as the Global South, humanitarian organisations looked to reducing this suffering in these areas. As previously shown in relation to the second colonial occupation, this new wave of humanitarianism became closely linked to development initiatives.[141] Herein lies the great humanitarian paradox which has dominated recent histories of humanitarianism. In what Klose describes as the 'colonial testing ground', he argues 'that the wars of decolonisation became the first serious testing grounds for the revisions to international humanitarian law and had an

[136] Alice L. Conklin, 'Colonialism and Human Rights: a Contradiction in Terms? The Case of France and West Africa, 1895-1914', *American Historical Review*, 103 (1998), 419.
[137] Only recently has scholarship moved to discuss the relationship between gender and humanitarian discourses and practices of the twentieth century. See for example: Esther Möller, Johannes Paulmann and Katharina Stornig (eds), *Gendering Global Humanitarianism in the Twentieth Century: Practice, Politics and the Power of Representation* (London, 2020).
[138] See for example Michael Barnett, and Thomas G. Weiss (eds), *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics* (Ithaca, 2008); Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*; Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism* (Cambridge, 2014); Didier Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of Present Times* (California, 2012); Alexis Heraclides and Ada Dialla, *Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth-Century: Setting the Precedent* (Manchester, 2015); Fabian Klose (ed.), *The Emergence of Humanitarian Intervention: Ideas and Practice from the C19th to the Present* (Cambridge, 2016); Samual Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, 2010); Johannes Paulmann (ed.), *Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid in the Twentieth-Century* (Oxford, 2016); Hugo Slim, *Humanitarian Ethics: A Guide to the Morality of Aid in War and Disaster* (London, 2015).
[139] Barnett and Weiss, *Humanitarianism in Question*, 21.
[140] Barnett and Weiss, *Humanitarianism in Question*, 23.
[141] Barnett and Weiss, *Humanitarianism in Question*, 23. See Barnett's 'Alchemical humanitarianism' concept, *Empire of Humanity*, 122-123.

impact on its future development'.[142] While European powers had joined a coalition against the abuse of human rights in the wake of the Second World Wars, powers such as Britain and France refused to extend these minimum standards in their colonial territories.[143] Humanitarianism in this context, was never apolitical. Counter-insurgents attempted to pacify and domesticate insurgent populations, reshaping hierarchies and controlling humanitarian supplies to those it detained or forcibly resettled.[144]

Literature on the histories of humanitarianism have only recently extended this analysis of the relationship between humanitarianism and empire by providing localised assessment on how humanitarianism functioned in a colonial setting.[145] Holly Ashford demonstrates the benefits of this approach and shows how organisations like the Red Cross became bound to the state through the development of their health and welfare institutions.[146] In doing so, her research shows the intricate network of relations between humanitarian organisations, colonial states, religious missions and African women and their children. The actions of humanitarian organisations operating in colonial territories engaged closely with imperial ideologies of civilisation and African primitivism and this in turn influenced the modernisation of welfare systems and social reproduction in Africa.[147] Social reproduction defines the processes that enable and sustain society, families and individual people. Though this inclusion of localised assessments is a necessary intervention, Ashford herself recognises the limitations of her approach. By conducting this research through archival material from the BRCS and the national and regional archives in Ghana and the UK, Ashford cannot speak to the experiences of mothers and their children in relation to this humanitarian work.[148] While these new histories of humanitarianism seek to analyse the power dynamics of European humanitarianism in the colonial era and process of decolonisation, they fall short in rebalancing the power associated to the narratives shared. Building upon the interventions of scholars like Ashford, as well as

[142] Klose, 'The Colonial Testing Ground', 108.
[143] Klose, 'The Colonial Testing Ground', 108 -110. For a broader assessment of the negotiations of the European Convention on Human Rights and its impact on the British Empire, see for example A. W. Brian Simpson, *Human Rights and the End of Empire: Britain and the Genesis of the European Convention* (Oxford, 2004).
[144] Owens, *Economy of Force*, 24 and 207.
[145] Thompson, 'Humanitarian Principles Put to the Test'.
[146] Holly Ashford, 'The Red Cross and the Establishment of Maternal and Infant Welfare in the 1930s Gold Coast', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 47 (2019), 516.
[147] Ashford, 'The Red Cross and the Establishment of Maternal and Infant Welfare', 515-516. See other regional examples such as Tehila Sasson, 'Milking the Third World? Humanitarianism, Capitalism, and the Moral Economy of the Nestlé Boycott', *The American Historical Review*, 121:4 (2016), pp. 1196 – 1224; Sandra Aguilar-Rodríguez, 'Nutrition and Modernity Milk Consumption in 1940s and 1950s Mexico', *Radical History Review*, 110 (2011), pp. 36-58.
[148] Ashford, 'The Red Cross and the Establishment of Maternal and Infant Welfare', 516.

Baughan and Thompson, this thesis centres subaltern experiences of humanitarianism in this era.

Methodology

In constructing the history of villagisation in Kenya and the experiences of those involved in this process, this thesis applies a range of methodologies. To effectively analyse how Britain implemented villagisation, the coercive practices involved, the role humanitarian organisations negotiated and how this was experienced by female inhabitants, archival documents and oral history interviews are used. The archival sources used in this study are primarily a combination of colonial government records and archival collections from several humanitarian organisations and church missionary papers. It reviews government files housed in both the UK National Archives in Kew, London and the Kenyan National Archives in Nairobi. This material is consulted alongside humanitarian archival records from the BRCS's archives in London, the Save the Children Fund's in Birmingham, and the ICRC in Geneva, Switzerland. In addition to these archival documents, the thesis considers evidence from the East Africa Women's League (EAWL) private archive in Nairobi, as well as papers in the Weston Library, Oxford. Although women are prevalent in the humanitarian archival records and the EAWL, the voices recorded and those which are accessible are only official reflections of European welfare workers and volunteers. To explore the ways in which Kenyan women and girls negotiated their experiences of villagisation, oral history interviews are vital. These interviews are employed to explore the tensions between official written documents and the lived realities of those forcibly resettled. The author conducted all interviews; however, a translator was employed as a research assistant in Kenya to ensure interview participants could interview in their preferred language. The author has Kiswahili language skills; however, it was important to accommodate for regional dialects.

'Writing history merely involves manipulating archives': Archival Documents

As Achille Mbembe indicates, historians and archivists 'occupy a strategic position in the production of an instituting imaginary', based on the ways that they examine and interpret archival material.[149] 'Writing history merely involves manipulating archives', as Mbembe expresses.[150] While part of this thesis' originality comes from the oral testimonies collected for this study, archival material continues to play an important role in revealing the motivations,

[149] Achille Mbembe, 'The Power of the Archive and its Limits', in Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, Jane Taylor, Michele Pickover, Graeme Reid and Razia Saleh (eds), *Refiguring the Archive* (Berlin, 2010), 26.
[150] *Ibid*, 25.

ideas and practices of the colonial state and external European actors in Kenya. Considering Mbembe's argument, this thesis approaches this archival material from the standpoint that the production of colonial archival documentation was an inherently violent practice. This process served an important function for colonial administrators to classify and subjugate colonised peoples, and ultimately negotiate 'rubrics of rule', as Ann Stoler argues.[151] As contended by Verne Harris, 'archives are constructed windows into personal and collective processes'.[152] Archives express and represent prevalent power relations and this is not exclusive to government archives, it also characteristic of humanitarian archives.

As the British government removed and concealed files during the decolonisation of their colonies, they restricted historians' access to this material up until 2011. The 'migrated archive' obtained this name due to the secret move of boxes of papers from British colonies including Kenya back to Britain in the early 1960s with the British government wishing to withhold these files from the newly independent governments. The British government secretly concealed the FCO files for 50 years before the High Court in London forced this release in 2011 following an investigation of allegations made by Kenyans against the British government.[153] This example alone highlights the power of archives and its essential relationship to human rights issues. Archives are not only evidence of oppression but also contain evidence for undoing wrongs from the past.[154] Many files not only expose the mistreatment and torture of many Kenyans within the detention and rehabilitation camps, but they also provide evidence for the development of the villagisation programme and activities introduced to inhabitants, as well disciplinary hearings of guard discretions.

While the release of the 'migrated archive' has encouraged a flurry of scholarship in reviewing these files, many important documents relating to the villagisation process have remained in Kenya. This research draws on a large body of colonial administration records in the Kenya National Archives, predominantly that of the MW material. As this material was filed under general administration, they were not perceived to be as damming at the time to colonial administrators facilitating the destruction and removal of files to the UK. Those working in the community development programmes were thorough in their knowledge production of MW

[151] Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, 2010), 14-16.
[152] Verne Harris, 'The Archival Sliver: Power, Memory, and Archives in South Africa', *Archival Science*, 2 (2002), 63.
[153] Anderson, 'Guilty Secrets', 144-145.
[154] E. Ketelaar, 'Archival temples, archival prisons: Modes of power and protection', *Archival Science*, 2 (2002), 231.

activity, therefore much exists to explore the role of this organisation in social reform efforts in the camps. Used alongside these papers, the EAWL private records have been instrumental to this research. Tucked away in a store cupboard adjacent to the ceremonial stage of Weal House, the EAWL headquarters in Nairobi holds a vast array of material. Though not catalogued, these papers have provided an insight to the ways that White, settler women sought to involve themselves in the supposed advancement of Kenyan women. In addition to these records, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa archive mainly housed in the church spire of St Andrew's Church in Nairobi holds vital correspondence between church missionary groups and the colonial government. Thanks to the British Library-funded Endangered Archives Project, a seven-person team has preserved the records and fully catalogued them before the research for this thesis was conducted.[155]

To determine the nature of the BRCS involvement in the camps, the Red Cross Archive in London has been invaluable. The records contain annual reports on camp conditions and those occupying them, but also the material culture, the specific measurements of huts and evidence for the number of individuals living in each hut. This evidence has remained largely untouched in the basements of the Red Cross building in Moorgate, undetected by numerous historians in this field. The official documents highlight the ICRC's plans to investigate camp standards with evidence of the British administration and government continually rejecting the requests. Comparing this correspondence to the official ICRC papers held in Geneva reveals that when Britain finally granted the ICRC access to visit, what its delegates found was far worse than expected. This evidence sheds light not only on the secretive nature of the policy to the wider public, but also the implications villagisation had on human rights, with the administration wary of who witnessed these conditions. There are, however, drawbacks of such sources, primarily in that many of the colonial government records as well as those from humanitarian organisations are incomplete and hold a power of exclusion. Stoler reminds students of colonialism of this formulation to consult archival records with caution for these reasons.[156]

'They came, they conquered, and they wrote': Confronting Archival Power with Oral History

In a 1969 interview with *EYEGAMBIA* news outlet, Miriam Makeba took aim at the overbearing authority of former European colonial powers writing the histories of Africa. The

[155] British Library, 'Protecting the Archive of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa', via the British Library [website] <https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP847> (accessed 18/01/2022).
[156] Ann Laura Stoler, 'Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance', *Archival Science*, 2 (2002), 96.

famous South African singer-songwriter, United Nations goodwill ambassador and civil rights activist said, 'the conqueror writes history… now you don't expect people who came, to write the truth about us… they have to do that to justify their invasion… They came, they conquered, and they wrote'.[157] As Makeba outlines from an African perspective, 'we don't write our history, it has always been handed down to us, orally by our elders'.[158] In this interview Makeba emphasises an important distinction and an ongoing issue plaguing the histories of Africa; what is written by the White man and held in European archives tells a limited story of colonialism in Africa.[159] Makeba's words continue to ring true in the field of African colonial histories. Today, in 2021, calls from activists and politicians in Africa continue to pressure European powers to repatriate archival documents created during the colonial period. This 'decolonial' discourse directly speaks to the ongoing demands for the return of African artefacts stolen by Europeans as well as African human remains, in this wider reckoning for restitution as well as reparations from the colonial era.[160]

Considering this, historians and scholars of Africa have long emphasised the importance of oral history to contribute African narratives and experiences of European colonialism.[161] Oral history has historically been an approach to include marginalised histories into particularly White and androcentric discourses.[162] It is for this reason that this thesis adopts a subaltern approach by centring the narratives and experiences of women forcibly resettled who generated their own social and cultural changes and adaptations throughout this period. Since the finding of Subaltern Studies in the 1980s, new waves of research have criticised its initial conception with concerns that this approach to history from below constructed a 'singular structural form' to depict 'rebel consciousness'.[163] This thesis pushes back on monolithic depictions of women's actions and experiences. Instead, this research offers nuance in its use of subaltern approaches to demonstrate the differing articulations of women's actions in the camps. A

[157] EYEGAMBIA, 'Miriam Makeba interview', 1969, via Youtube [website] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wONkMpbl7N8&ab_channel=cosmicrat> (accessed 21 July 2021).
[158] EYEGAMBIA, 'Miriam Makeba interview', 1969.
[159] Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 'The danger of a single story', July 2009, via Ted [website] <https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript?language=en> (accessed 21 July 2021).
[160] For an insight into this discourse see Dan Hicks, *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution* (London, 2020).
[161] See Luise White, Stephan Miescher, and David William Cohen (eds), *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History* (Indiana, 2001).
[162] See Joanna Bornat and Hanna Diamond, 'Women's History and Oral History: Developments and Debates.' *Women's History Review*, 16 (2007), pp. 19-39; Joan Sangster, 'Telling our Stories: Feminist Debates and the Use of Oral History,' *Women's History Review*, 3 (1994), pp. 5-28.
[163] Partha Chatterjee, 'After Subaltern Studies', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 47 (2012), 46.

subaltern approach to this research offers greater exploration of how Kenyan women who were categorised in the colonial state as inferior due to their gender, race, and ethnicity, navigated and participated in anti-colonial action.

This methodology responds to the 'glaring absence of African women' in written primary sources by contributing to an ever-growing archive of African women's oral testimonies.[164] In order to explore how women made sense of their own actions and experiences, and how individuals recall their navigation of villagisation within the architecture of their social units, this project applies oral history is an invaluable methodology. Like Heike Schmidt's study of the Honde Valley in Zimbabwe, memory has a dual role in this approach. It not only acts as a methodological tool to access the past; it also becomes part of the study itself.[165] Schmidt adopts Maurice Halbwachs' method whereby, 'memory is crafted by making sense of experience through social frameworks, shaped by the intersection of the individual and society'.[166] It is important to make a distinction here between individual memory and collective memory, whereby individual memory is located within collective memory.[167]

Memories of the events of the 1950s in Kenya have been highly politicised and contested both in Kenya and Britain. This context cannot be separated from the examination of each individual woman's testimony. The way that each woman remembers their time during villagisation is informed by their gender, social age and socioeconomic status, both at the time of villagisation and at the time of the interview. The way women's individual memories are crafted 'is complemented by silences – experiences forgotten, not given meaning in the first place, repressed, or simply not shared'.[168] For most of the women interviewed for this project, this was the first time they had shared these memories to such an extent. By adopting a subjective approach, this thesis uses both the interview transcripts alongside the body language and emotive expressions of interview participants to interrogate the formation of these memories. How has the passage of time evolved these memories, considering these women are sharing these testimonies seventy years later? This thesis interrogates these idiosyncrasies and complexities of memory throughout.

[164] Adima, 'The Sound of Silence', 19. See also Kanogo, *African Womanhood*; Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart.*
[165] Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe,* 8-9.
[166] Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe,* 10. See Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago, 1992 [1941/52]).
[167] Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe,* 10.
[168] Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe,* 19.

I identified four challenges in the pursuit of this research methodology. Firstly, my positionality in relation to my interview participants. Histories of Africa continue to perpetuate the same issue Makeba raised in 1969; White Europeans continue to write these histories of Africa with greater privilege and accessibility than Black scholars. I recognise that I too have played, and continue to play, a role in this systematically inequitable field for Black historians. As a White, cis, able-bodied, middle-class, British woman, I continuously question my place in this process and the implications and potential harm my work could cause interview participants and wider anti-racist work. Questioning and being wholly aware of one's positionality as a researcher is, in my view, a requirement to the process of research. It is only by recognising one's own privilege and using this privilege to be an effective ally that a project which explores African experiences of colonialism can be at all reputable. So why should this historian write this history? The main answer to this question draws back to White privilege. Studying in the UK enables greater access to the colonial records stolen by the British from Kenya. Being a British PhD candidate funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council provides greater financial ability to travel, research abroad and hire research assistants. This gave me unique privilege to interrogate primary source material both on the African and European continents. This approach is imperative to expose tensions in what the British colonial administration said it was doing, and the impact this had on indigenous groups.

Being aware of my own positionality does not wholly mitigate and rebalance pre-existing power dynamics which are prevalent in an interview setting involving a White, British researcher, and a Black, Kenyan survivor. I ensured that I established my cultural archive prior to the interview process to guarantee each encounter was respectful, safe and did not pose harm to the interview participant. I am indebted to Caroline Wanjiru and Joyce Wangari, my research assistants who guided and challenged me and played a central role in nurturing the safety of interview participants. It was necessary to involve Caroline and Joyce to ensure the interview participants could speak in their preferred language. The participants mainly conducted their interviews in Gĩkũyũ, with some inclusions of Kiswahili and English. Caroline and Joyce translated the Gĩkũyũ spoken interviews. Though I studied both Kiswahili and conversational Gĩkũyũ while in Kenya, my skillset could not capture the entirety of the interviews alone. It was important that I hired female Kenyan research assistant, not only to guide me but to also ensure I created the safest possible environment for the female interviewees. As Margaret Strobel and Sarah Mirza remind oral historians, interviews 'are the result of a collaboration' and therefore the narratives that are crafted and then presented 'reflect the world views and

interests' of the interview participants, translators and interviewer.[169] The responses and memories shared by the interview participants are influenced on their view of me and *vice versa*. Due to the potential sensitivity of the topics raised in the interviews, and as the project mainly sought female interview participants, it seemed most appropriate to hire a female research assistant. It was clear from the evidence already available that sexual violence enacted by male guards had played a significant part in women's experiences of villagisation, therefore it did not seem suitable to have a male interpreter. Though I hired Kenyan female research assistants, the way my interview participants experienced the interview process and chose to share was affected by an intersection of identities based on gender, race, age, and socio-economic status. These reflections are considered throughout.

A second challenge I encountered was the impact and legacy the High Court case has left in Kenya. Up until 2003, Mau Mau related activities and discussions of the Mau Mau movement were illegal and banned from national Kenyan discourse. Due to this, there remains limited use of oral history interviews in the existing literature.[170] While the High Court case, where Kenyan claimants successfully sued the UK FCO for the mistreatment they experienced during the 1950s, has opened up this discussion, it has come with new limitations for researchers. In seeking to locate appropriate interview participants several individuals approached me for an interview with the hope they I would compensate them monetarily. In another case, an individual agreed to an interview having declared themselves as an actor in the insurgency, only for them to later explain that they had not been alive during the emergency period. To mitigate this, I had to be very clear on my motivations to interview, presenting my research ethical clearance with obvious stipulations that the interviews were for higher education research with no expectation of monetary gain. Relying on community leaders, such as local priests proved a useful technique as they regularly gave 'at-home' services for elders. This meant that they were particularly knowledgeable of those elders who were survivors of the British counter-insurgency. I also relied on friends in Kenya who were comfortable and willing to introduce me to their older relatives. The increase in global interest after the High Court case could also have impacted the responses and dominant narratives shared by interview participants. Oftentimes, women introduced me to their husbands as the 'real survivors' of the 1950s, as they were in detention. For many women I encountered, having lived through

[169] Sarah Mirza and Margaret Strobel (eds), *Three Swahili Women: life histories from Mombasa, Kenya* (Bloomington, 1989), 3.
[170] The exceptions being Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning* and Feichtinger, 'A Great Reformatory'.

villagisation did not necessarily fit the public, and now global, memory or memorialisation of this historic period.

While I expected the potential age of participants to be a limitation of this study, I conducted eleven formal interviews, nine of which appear in this thesis.[171] The interview participants ranged at the time of the interviews from sixty-nine years old, to one-hundred-and-five years old. This age range has been beneficial to the analysis of this research. While shared experiences of sexual violence are prevalent in the following chapters, chronological and social age brought wider variations in how female inhabitants experienced villagisation. Eight of the interviewees included identified as female, and one as male. Within the remit of this study, I set out to interview women who the colonial state had forcibly resettled; however, the opportunity came to interview Agnes Wanjiru Mwangi's husband John Mwangi Stephen. John's account offers a case for comparison on the gendered articulations of violence and marginalisation in the camps. His gender identity as well as his positionality in a loyalist camp influenced Agnes' experience of villagisation upon their marriage. It is for these reasons that I included John's interview.

I conducted all the interviews for this project between February and May 2019. Prior to this, I spent time in Kenya, mainly in Nairobi and Nyeri to familiarise myself with different organisations, community leaders, local historians and museum workers. From this, I used a snowballing approach to locate appropriate interview participants. I set out to interview Gĩkũyũ women who had lived through villagisation in the central region of Kenya. Caroline and I interviewed everyone individually to encourage interview participants to narrate their own experiences and understanding of the events of the 1950s. I employed a structured life history format to begin with to get a sense of how they situated themselves in the longer and wider narrative of Gĩkũyũ anti-colonial action and Gĩkũyũ society more generally. After, I switched to a semi-structured thematic style of questioning to cover specific topics related to villagisation. The questions in each interview varied depending on what women had shared at the beginning of the interview, but I brought direct attention to questions regarding their visual memories of the camps, their interactions with colonial guards and welfare workers. For the

[171] The two interviews which do not appear in the thesis were donated upon the consent of the interview participants to the Museum of British Colonialism. Neither of these participants were villagised during the emergency, and while their interviews are rich in detail, their experiences did not fit within the remit of this study. The testimonies have been given the prominence they deserve as open access resources which are located in the Museum of British Colonialism's Emergency Exhibition, The Museum of British Colonialism, 'Emergency Exhibition', 2019. <https://www.museumofbritishcolonialism.org/emergencyexhibition> (accessed 13th April 2021).

interviews conducted in Gĩkũyũ, I asked a question, Caroline translated this, and the interview participant then responded. After, Caroline gave her translation before I responded and continued the interview. I conducted all but one interview participant's home, Grace W. Mwathe's interview was held at the church she attends in Tumu Tumu.

Finally, the sensitive nature of the topics shared in these interviews was an important methodological challenge to consider throughout the interview process. By following the Oral History Society and the University of Reading's ethical requirements, this research adheres to a legal and ethical framework of good practice.[172] I offered all interview participants the choice to remain fully anonymous, though none of them chose this option. Most of my interview participants were assertive in their desire to have their names written alongside their experiences. Caroline and I made all interview participants aware of their ongoing choice on what they felt comfortable sharing. If an interview participant seemed distressed, we assured them that they could change the subject, take a break, or end the interview. I did not ask any direct questions relating to personal experiences of violence, this topic was only discussed when the interviewee brought this up. If the discussion was brief in any way, I did not probe further. From a feminist historian's point of view, archival or statistical evidence is not used to corroborate claims made by the women interviewed. Each woman's testimony stands as evidence of her own memory of the experiences she had, though comparisons are made in the coming chapters where appropriate.

It is important to note the limitations of this project. Firstly, the analysis here is restricted to the experiences of those from the Gĩkũyũ ethnic group. This is not to reflect villagisation as an exclusively Gĩkũyũ experience, numerous other ethnic groups were also impacted by the policy but is instead demonstrative of the perimeters of this research project and interviewee selection. Secondly, the women interviewed for this project mainly identified as Christian and their testimonies regarding marriage reflects this. Polygynous households are common among the Gĩkũyũ, however, none of the women interviewed for this project spoke of co-wives. The memories of women who were forced to live with their co-wives in the same space would no doubt enhance a deeper understanding of the gendered experiences of forced resettlement.[173] Finally, while I include the interview with John, there is more scope for future research to consider specifically male experiences of the gendered processes of villagisation. Most male

[172] Oral History Society, 'Is your oral history legal and ethical?'. <https://www.ohs.org.uk/legal-and-ethical-advice/> (accessed 21 July 2021).
[173] Heike Schmidt explores these dynamics in the context of villagisation in Zimbabwe. See Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe*, 193.

inhabitants were elders at the time, therefore, using an oral history methodology would be more challenging since those in that generation have now passed away. Villagisation in Kenya is a complicated, contradictory and uneven story to tell. The oral testimony included is done so to expand understandings of this counter-insurgency measure and to explore how the built environment and camp spatiality impacted the way that villagisation was experienced on an individual level.

Chapter Overview

This thesis investigates the relationship between colonial counter-insurgency tactics and international humanitarianism for the case of the Mau Mau insurgency in Kenya, 1952-1960. More specifically it provides an analysis of supposedly reformative practices deployed by the British colonial government and external actors in response to women and girls suspected of supporting forest fighters. While colonial administrators projected a reformative discourse for their approach to women and children, it was inherently gendered and violent in practice. These practices, which publicly privileged ideas of African women's advancement and development, were tied up with efforts of the BRCS in administering to the African population impacted by the war. The thesis provides an analysis of the roles played by European and African female welfare workers as part of government-run community development programmes and their interactions with African women and children deemed in need of social support. To do so, villagisation, a counter-insurgency measure enforced during the campaign to administer tighter control over the movement of 'civilians', is a site of interrogation into the relationships between humanitarian organisations, the colonial administration and the displaced indigenous women and their children.

To address these interactions, it is imperative that the thesis adopts a range of approaches in dealing with the social and cultural implications of villagisation and the community development programmes. It is therefore thematically multifaceted, incorporating gender and race analysis. For this reason, the structure herein reflects this, with each chapter dealing with separate aspects of the villagisation policy and the reformative strategies introduced to inhabitants. It also dedicates chapters which explore the memories of those formerly villagised to demonstrate the underlying coercive nature of these processes and how they have remembered these spaces and external actors. As this study incorporates the broader concepts of humanitarianism, colonialism and counter-insurgency strategy, each chapter at times tackle these individually. The thesis does, however, provide broader discussion on the developing and changing humanitarian discourse, contextualising the associations between local contexts,

colonial actions, and global humanitarian trends during this period throughout. The periodisation of this study is situated at the critical intersection of the post-Second World War humanitarian debate, the end of empire and the nexus of colonial violence. In the wake of the Nazi atrocities committed during the Holocaust, Britain and other allied European powers engaged in abhorrent practices against their African colonial subjects. This context is an important backdrop to the findings in this research when considering the racist dynamics of imperialism and European humanitarianism.

Chapter I provides an in-depth analysis of villagisation and how it was situated in the broader counter-insurgency campaign. The colonial state introduced the camps to restrict and monitor the movement of those suspected of being involved with the Mau Mau. Male African Home Guards, under the direction of European personnel, guarded the camp population, mainly women and their children. This chapter explores how the design of counter-insurgency warfare is gendered, with villagisation forming a stepping-stone for the colonial government to 'reform' and regain control of women and girls supposedly aiding forest fighters. Examining how villagisation was implemented in relation to the broader counter-insurgency campaign exposes the state's authority and power over females during this campaign. This chapter demonstrates the disconnect of Britain's counter-insurgency discourse and practice. While the term 'village' has connotations of safety and community, those introduced in Kenya were far from this. They were highly punitive and coercive, with oppressive infrastructure in a bid to eradicate anti-colonial action. Using photographic evidence of the camps alongside the War Council directives on this policy, this chapter shows how colonial state actors designed these spaces to control, surveil, punish and socially engineer women *en masse*.

Chapter II assesses the gendered counter-insurgency strategies applied by the British colonial government inside camps to target women in the context of this campaign. It soon became clear to the colonial administration that women played a vital role in the Mau Mau and this needed to be dealt with in a suitable way alongside villagisation. Colonial administrators understood women, in their role as mothers and the perceived custodians of community life, as central actors to securing social stability. Leading officials in the colonial administration believed that strengthening a nuclear family unit was vital in suppressing the insurgency. In addressing this, this chapter explores the supposedly reformative community development measures, particularly the women's progress movement MW, introduced in the camps which focused on women's development. Askwith said that these measures were to encourage the 'advancement

of African women'.[174] Development, welfare and a modernisation agenda were, however, harnessed by the colonial government to control and coerce women. As this chapter shows, this was a strategy used by the administration as part of their counter-insurgency campaign to defeat the Mau Mau by re-establishing social control. Furthermore, this chapter assesses the Community Development Women's Officers and the subsequent 'Africanisation' of MW leadership. It addresses how the campaign created new opportunities for European women to become counterinsurgents and for African women as cultural intermediaries of counter-insurgency efforts.

Having established the context of villagisation and the supposedly 'reformative' aspects of Britain's approach to those villagised, Chapter III offers a deeper analysis of the lived realities of women and girls. This chapter offers an intimate analysis of the suffering experienced and remembered by formerly villagised women. Camps were spaces whereby male colonial actors negotiated for control of bodies, spaces, movement, resources and identities. To do so, this chapter adopts a spatial analysis to determine what meaning women ascribed to certain spaces in the camps in relation to the terror they experienced. To do so, it compares the British colonial government's photography collection alongside the oral testimony of women who the British forcibly resettled. By introducing gendered and generational ethnographic reflections of Gĩkũyũ cultures, this chapter reveals the pervasiveness of colonial violence in both its physical and structural manifestations. This violence was often gendered, with many women being victims of rape and sexual abuse. In other instances, spaces assumed to be safe, such as individual huts, became part of this violent geography as efforts of coercion against the Mau Mau and their supporters intensified.

The BRCS worked closely with the colonial government in the camps to administer knowledge and practical support to women and their children. Chapter IV assesses this relationship to better understand how humanitarian work operated in a colonial counter-insurgency campaign. The colonial government justified villagisation on humanitarian grounds, arguing that it would improve the living conditions for those forcibly resettled. In practice, however, the colonial state rushed this process and heavily under-resourced villagisation, forcing non-governmental organisations to become key players in maintaining the health and general well-being of those resettled. The BRCS had to work closely with the colonial government to coordinate its efforts, with recent scholarship going so far as to argue that the humanitarian organisation actively

[174] KNA, AB 1/73, 1.

colluded with the government in processes which enabled colonial brutality.[175] While this chapter does not disagree with these arguments, it aims to complicate this understanding. Individual BRCS welfare workers carefully negotiated their relationship with the colonial government and its coercive counter-insurgency campaign. This chapter explores this, while also assessing how European female welfare workers interacted with those who were villagised. While the BRCS approach was undoubtedly built on a Western understanding of universal compassion, it was framed by the imperial ideology that was characteristic of the 'civilising mission'. This chapter, therefore, applies this framework to analyse the relationship between European humanitarian workers and Kenyan inhabitants.

The final chapter further humanises the experiences of those forcibly resettled by exploring the social navigation of female occupants. With camps being fraught spaces where violence – in both its physical and structural manifestations – was prevalent, women adopted resilient responses to ensure their own survival and that of their biological and social families. Women were varied in their means of improving their, and their families, life chances and choices. Some cooperated with the colonial state initiatives, such as joining MW. Others volunteered with the BRCS to administer food and care to children. This chapter does not simply ask why women 'collaborated' with the colonial state, it asks how and by what means. This chapter recognises that the strategies adopted by women were part of a limited arsenal due to the circumstances the British forced them into. As this thesis approaches counter-insurgency measures through a gendered lens, this chapter assesses the gendered strategies women deployed in response. Women had to strategise within a set of concrete, patriarchal constraints and this final chapter explores these factors.

[175] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire', Klose, 'The Colonial Testing Ground', Pringle, 'Humanitarianism, Race and Denial'.

Chapter I: The Gendered Dynamics of Villagisation

When the British colonial government of Kenya forcibly resettled 1,077,500 individuals, mainly from the Gĩkũyũ, Embu and Meru ethnic groups, into 854 'villages', it actively sought to conceal the brutality inside these spaces.[176] The term 'village' has faced limited interrogation in counter-insurgency literature.[177] Terminology has been and continues to be a powerful tool for colonial oppressors to conceal the realities and inner workings of colonial violence. Britain had previously tried and tested this strategy in the Second South African War (1899-1902), which faced heavy criticism for the 50,000 civilians who died in the concentration camps. Those who died were mainly women and children.[178] With the term 'concentration camp' gaining an even deadlier association after the Nazis' use of them during the Holocaust, it seems Britain largely discarded this term for a new and less controversial one. While historians have shown the punitive nature of this policy, as well as the reformative aspects associated to colonial modernisation and rural land reform, a gendered reading is necessary to demonstrate Britain's active efforts to subdue Mau Mau women.[179] The term 'village' denotes an image today, just as it did in the 1950s, of a small rural area, populated by houses and community infrastructure such as a church, village shop and recreational space. The colonial administration pitched a similarly hopeful description such as this in justifications for villagisation in colonial Kenya to the British Parliament.[180] This was far from the reality. Britain made deliberate attempts to propagate a feminine view of the camps to conceal the militarised and masculinised spaces erected to punish Kenyan women *en masse*.

Counter-insurgency warfare is highly gendered in practice. As Laleh Khalili shows, counterinsurgents' set of practices and discourses are gendered to 'constitute "men" and "women" *and* masculinities and femininities in particular ways'.[181] With civilians being coded

[176] David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain's Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire (London, 2005)*, 294.
[177] In contrast, the term 'village' has been deconstructed in political literatures on postcolonial villagisation schemes, see James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed* (Yale University, 1998).
[178] Elizabeth van Heyningen, 'The South African War as Humanitarian Crisis', *International Review of the Red Cross*, 97 (2015), 1008.
[179] See Moritz Feichtinger, '"A Great Reformatory": Social Planning and Strategic Resettlement in Late Colonial Kenya and Algeria, 1952–63', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 52 (2016); David French, 'Nasty not Nice: British Counter-Insurgency Doctrine and Practice, 1945–1967', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 23 (2012); Heike I. Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe: A History of Suffering* (Oxford, 2013); Ian Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerrillas and their Opponents since 1750* (London, 2001); James Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.
[180] 'Displaced Kikuyu', April 1955. <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1955/apr/27/displaced-kikuyu >.
[181] Laleh Khalili, 'Gendered Practices of Counterinsurgency', *Review of International Studies*, 37 (2011), 1473.

in mainstream war discourse as feminine and combatants as masculine, 'the very object of population-centric counterinsurgency is the transformation of civilian allegiances and remaking of their social world'.[182] While Britain articulated counter-insurgency efforts against Kenyan women through a developmental, 'hearts and minds' discourse, the practices were far more coercive and violent. The colonial government adopted villagisation as a strategy to largely deal with women, women they suspected of being the 'backbone of the Mau Mau'.[183] Where gender most shaped the counter-insurgency strategy deployed in Kenya was in the physical terrain of this campaign.[184] As Katherine Bruce-Lockhart examines, forced villagisation as well as detention 'brought a large number of Kenyans into contact with counter-insurgency measures'.[185] Using these strategies to break the connection of military and civilian factions of the population, the colonial government disrupted and brought the private sphere into the remit of war.[186] The private sphere here is in relation to 'women, non-combatant men, and the spaces of the "home"'.[187]

This chapter compares the colonial government's photographic evidence of the camps taken during the 1950s, with the War Council directives on villagisation at the time of design and implementation. It explores the gendered dynamics and norms which underpinned the planning and development of these camps. The British colonial administration believed Kenyan women to be the 'eyes and the ears' of the Mau Mau.[188] Villagisation was therefore used to embed the eyes and the ears of the colonial government into the day-to-day lives of women in the reserves. By exploring the numerous photographs taken by the colonial government's Information Department throughout the 1950s, this chapter dissects how it presented these spaces to an international audience, as well as the metropole. The photographs demonstrate Britain's external framing, while the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) files provide insight of the internal security-first planning of villagisation. As the directives illuminate, in comparison to the findings from testimonies of individuals who survived villagisation, there is disconnect

[182] Khalili, 'Gendered Practices of Counterinsurgency', 1473.
[183] Margaret Wangui Gachihi, 'The Role of Kikuyu Women in the Mau Mau', MA Thesis, (University of Nairobi, 1986), 23.
[184] Katherine Bruce-Lockhart, 'Reconsidering Women's Roles in the Mau Mau Rebellion in Kenya, 1952-1960' in: Martin Thomas and Gareth Curless (eds), *Decolonization and Conflict: Colonial Comparisons and Legacies* (London: Bloomsbury: 2017), 161.
[185] Bruce-Lockhart, 'Reconsidering Women's Roles', 161.
[186] Bruce-Lockhart, 'Reconsidering Women's Roles', 161.
[187] Khalili, 'Gendered Practices of Counterinsurgency', 1474.
[188] Katherine Bruce-Lockhart and Bethany Rebisz, 'Discourses of Development and Practices of Punishment: Britain's Gendered Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Colonial Kenya', in Martin Thomas and Gareth Curless (eds), *The Oxford Handbook on Colonial Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies* (Oxford University Press, 2022) (In Press), 6.

between the way that camps were presented and the way that they were experienced. This is explored through three key characteristics of villagisation: population control, surveillance and incentivisation.

Population Control

The War Council believed that collective measures against all members of the Gĩkũyũ, Embu and Meru communities were the most effective ways to bring the 'full weight of Government' to crush the Mau Mau.[189] This 'population-centred counter-insurgency' strategy involved the villagisation policy, a passbook system and a widespread detention network.[190] The colonial government's approach, in cooperation with the military, secured full-scale control over the population suspected of fighting for or aiding the Mau Mau. Mau Mau fighters were by no means the sole threat to the colonial government. Colonial officials perceived that the Gĩkũyũ, Embu and Meru living in the reserves and adjacent settled areas, labelled the 'passive wing', posed a huge risk and they needed to put in place measures to eliminate this. Gĩkũyũ women supporting the movement made up the passive wing and it is this group that are the central focus for this thesis. The colonial War Council sent a directive in September 1954 to establish the closer control and administration of all those suspected of fighting for or aiding the Mau Mau cause. The main aims set by the Council prioritised the prevention of the re-establishment of Mau Mau activity in the reserves and settled areas while strengthening steps to deny food to fighters. By intensifying a policy of villagisation and controlling any unauthorised movement, particularly between Nairobi, Thika and Kiambu, the colonial authorities believed they could eradicate the Mau Mau.[191] They therefore used villagisation to regain control – both physically and ideologically - of Gĩkũyũ women who they understood to be vital players in Mau Mau activity.

The colonial authorities initially established villagisation in the Central Province of Kenya during Operation Anvil. Operation Anvil was a decisive moment in the colonial government's counter-insurgency campaign against the Mau Mau. It had largely cleared Nairobi of Gĩkũyũ, Embu and Meru citizens and forced them into screening camps to determine how deeply they were involved with the insurgents. Anvil had sealed roads in and out of Nairobi so free movement was no longer attainable for Africans unless officials had granted them a passbook.

[189] UKNA Foreign and Commonwealth Office 141/6554, Emergency Committee, 1953-4; Huw Bennett, *Fighting the Mau Mau: The British Army and Counter-Insurgency in the Kenya Emergency* (Cambridge, 2013), 59.
[190] Feichtinger, 'A Great Reformatory', 50.
[191] UKNA, FCO 141/5688 Emergency Organisation; War Council Directives, 1954-6, 6.

Villagisation built upon the initial stages of Anvil by further solidifying the closer administration of people and resources as a form of collective punishment. The 1909 Collective Punishment Ordinance in Kenya had historically given the colonial government authority to punish communities collectively if they were thought to be defying orders.[192] While collective punishment was outlawed as a war crime under the 1949 Geneva Conventions, Britain justified these measures under emergency powers enacted from 1952.[193] After the success of Anvil in identifying and incarcerating a large population of suspected Mau Mau fighters and suspected supporters, those remaining were forced further into the dense forests in the foothills of Mount Kenya and the Aberdare mountains. Due to this, emergency directives placed heavy focus on the surrounding areas, in particular those of the reserves housing the wider Gĩkũyũ, Embu and Meru populations. Attention was turned to the Embu, Meru, Kiambu, Nyeri, Nanyuki, Naivasha and Laikipia districts in the Central and Rift Valley Provinces to make it as difficult as possible for the 'civil population' to assist the forest fighters.[194] For this reason, areas in the Central Province became the initial site for the introduction and development of the villagisation procedure.

The colonial administration sought to categorise neatly the rural population of Kenyans into a 'loyalist' group, and that of the enemy: the Mau Mau. These categories shaped every aspect of Britain's counter-insurgency campaign and the tactics deployed.[195] The War Council's approach was to 'incorporate a judicious mixture of punishment for co-operating with the enemy and rewards for loyal service'.[196] This 'judicious mixture' encompassed villagisation, the passbook system, as well as the rehabilitation process prevalent in the detention and work camps. Passbooks, more commonly referred to as *kipande*, permitted free movement for those who could obtain one. Passbooks were to be always carried and the authorisation of these passes was given mainly to those needing movement to continue attending their place of work. The passbook order however, clearly stipulated that loyalist Africans only received a passbook as a part of the reward system.[197] Put plainly, if an individual's allegiance was clear to the colonial authorities, they were able to continue to move and work in a similar manner prior to the emergency even if they were villagised. It is vital to note that the authorities did not close

[192] Hannah Whittaker, 'Legacies of Empire: State Violence and Collective Punishment in Kenya's North Eastern Province, c. 1963–Present', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 43 (2015), 645.
[193] Whittaker, 'Legacies of Empire', 646.
[194] UKNA, FCO 141/6615, Emergency Organisation, 14.
[195] Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya (New York, 2006)*, 234.
[196] UKNA, FCO 141/6615, 14.
[197] UKNA, FCO 141/6740 K, E and M Passbooks and Loyalty Certificates, 1954-9, 1/3.

the Passbook Organisation until the December of 1959, highlighting that these population control measures outlived the military operations which had all but ceased in 1956.[198]

Villagisation planners used the internal layout of camps to further differentiate between loyalists and Mau Mau sympathisers. The newly formed camps were to be 'divided into sections for the good and the bad'.[199] Loyalists, often voluntarily, were rehoused in the 'good' section where greater advantages were available to reward them for their loyalty. In contrast, colonial guards established tightened control over those suspected of supporting the Mau Mau. This included more restricted access or movement out of the camps as well as ongoing punishments consequently for disloyalty.[200] Resettling both loyalists and Mau Mau sympathisers into adjacent camps was a logistical consequence to the fast process of concentrating vast areas of the population into tight spaces near security posts. An additional, and more advantageous outcome for the colonial government was that it could intensify the punishments experienced by those in the punitive parts of the camps by the proximity and ability to observe the material benefits of those in the loyalist section.

Villagisation was not a wholly new strategy trialled in Kenya by the British.[201] Military authorities and governments across the globe have resettled people into enclosed spaces in various ways. Conflict-related forced resettlement emerged as a common approach from as early as the late 1800s. Ian Beckett explores the British campaign in the Second South African war, the Spanish campaign in Cuba between 1895 and 1898, as well as the US campaign in the Philippines between 1899 and 1902. All three governments adopted a measure that became known as 'reconcentration'; gathering a rural civilian population into guarded areas to prevent resources such as food to reach insurgent fighters.[202] France's deployment of strategic resettlement between 1954-62 has garnered comparative analysis to its use in Kenya; 2.3 million Algerians were forcibly resettled during the Algerian war of independence and Moritz Feichtinger argues it was the most 'deadly counter-insurgency measure' used during the Algerian and Kenyan cases.[203] Policies such as these continued to be employed after the 1950s.

[198] UKNA, FCO 141/6740, 1/3.
[199] UKNA, FCO 141/6237 Kenya: Mau Mau unrest; plans for Central Province arising from War Council Directives, 5/1.
[200] UKNA, FCO 141/6237, 5/1.
[201] The following analysis of the existing literature on villagisation has been adapted from the author's MA dissertation.
[202] Ian. F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerrillas and their Opponents Since 1750* (London, 2001), 36. See also Andreas Stucki, '"Frequent Deaths": The Colonial Development of Concentration Camps Reconsidered, 1868–1974', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 20 (2018), pp. 305-326.
[203] Feichtinger, 'A Great Reformatory', 46.

Beckett highlights that 3,225 ‘strategic hamlets’, were established by the US government in Vietnam in 1962.[204] Similarly, Heike Schmidt assesses the use of villagisation imposed in Zimbabwe, specifically the Honde Valley in 1977. Schmidt utilises the phrasing of Mao Zedong, arguing that the goal to resettle the entire valley population into ‘protected villages’ was a way of separating the fish from the water, like that of Kenya.[205] Separating the mass population from the opposition was an important strategy to carry out military operations on insurgent fighters and to minimise the rate of those joining the insurgents. Villagisation helped consolidate conflict areas which is harder to achieve in guerrilla style warfare.

Most notably, the use of forced resettlement in Kenya was influenced by Britain’s deployment of the measure in their colony Malaya, 1948-1960. The policy was part of the military plan nicknamed the ‘Briggs’ Plan’ after the British General Sir Harold Briggs who acted as Director of Operations during the war. Briggs’ inspiration for the ‘New Villages’ had originated in Burma. The British had suppressed an uprising between 1930 and 1932, with the establishment of permanent security posts in disaffected areas, combined with a series of large-scale sweeps and search operations for insurgents. Briggs found that by denying the enemy food, supplies and intelligence, the task for the security services was easier. They were now starving the fighters of sustenance but also drawing them into clear areas of battle when trying to search for food. David French asserts that Briggs developed the Malayan villagisation policy for this intended outcome.[206] The coercive and controlling nature of the policy in Malaya discredits General Templer’s coined ‘hearts and minds’ phrase, which came to represent the campaign in Malaya. General Templer, was tasked to enact the Briggs Plan, whereby ‘coercion and repression’ was a clearer translation to the supposed ‘hearts and minds’ approach. As Hannah West shows, ‘reinforcing racialised power dynamics between the civilising and civilised while employing the prize of independence’ became a ‘classic’ approach of the British Army’s counter-insurgency theory post-Malaya.[207]

The War Council believed that women supporting the Mau Mau could be easily enticed ‘into a change of heart’ if they were shut off from male fighters.[208] Although women had historically demonstrated their active involvement in challenging colonial policies like bans on

[204] *Ibid*, 199.
[205] Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe,* 178.
[206] David French, *The British Way in Counter-Insurgency, 1945-67* (Oxford, 2011), 117.
[207] Hannah West, ‘Camp follower or counterinsurgent? Lady Templer and the forgotten wives’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 32 (2021), 2.
[208] UKNA, FCO 141/5688, 1/1.

clitoridectomy, Bruce-Lockhart argues that women's participation in the Mau Mau was still characterised by the government as a 'product of male persuasion'.[209] In order to regain the control of women, the administration therefore assumed they could be 'easily persuaded away from the Mau Mau cause'.[210] The view that women were malleable had endured throughout the colonial period.[211] The camps were male-designed and controlled enclosed spaces largely inhabited by women and children. This gendered dimension is important to highlight as it framed the design of the camps but also how gendered violence manifested in these spaces. The literature on villagisation as a counter-insurgency measure is still limited in gendering our understanding of how the policy has been deployed and experienced in these campaigns. For the case of Kenya in particular, only recently have scholars such as Katherine Bruce-Lockhart and Bethany Rebisz explored the gendered dynamics of counter-insurgency warfare and wholescale coercion of Kenyan women.[212]

The initial resources provided to villagisation prioritised the punitive aspects of the camps and establishing overall supervision of those forcibly resettled. Planners made little effort to establish suitable accommodation for those in the punitive sections, space for agricultural cultivation, shopping facilities, places of worship, schools, sufficient water supplies, or recreational and community areas. District Commissioners appointed a headman to each camp who was directly responsible to the local chief; the emergency fund was used to pay for this role.[213] The District Commissioner and Divisional District Officers mainly supervised Headmen. Several Home Guards were also appointed to link the headman and the local police station.[214] While female community development officers and British Red Cross Society workers did begin entering camp spaces once built, this exclusively male security team heavily monitored their visits. It is notable in the colonial records that 'health and welfare staff' could

[209] Bruce-Lockhart, 'Reconsidering Women's Roles', 162.
[210] Katherine Bruce-Lockhart, '"Unsound" Minds and Broken Bodies: the Detention of "Hardcore" Mau Mau Women at Kamiti and Gitamayu Detention Camps in Kenya, 1954–1960', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 8 (2014), 592.
[211] Stacey Hynd argues that a gendered discourse emerged in discussions of African women charged with murder in colonial Kenya. Hynd highlights that women were mainly declared as underdeveloped emotionally and mentally, and therefore could not be responsible for the crime they had committed. As she shows, this was a deliberate legal strategy used to prevent the execution of women in the colony. See: Stacey Hynd, 'Deadlier than the Male? Women and the Death Penalty in Colonial Kenya and Nyasaland', *Stichproben: Vienna Journal of African Studies*, 12 (2007), 13.
[212] Bruce-Lockhart and Rebisz, 'Discourses of Development and Practices of Punishment', 5.
[213] KNA, DC/FH 1/35 Fort Hall Annual Report; 1956. Headmen were required to control camp security, tax collection, camp discipline, public health and the security of stock.
[214] KNA, OP 1/989, Villagisation, 1954-59.

also be appointed to camps. Though in comparison to the headman and the Home Guards, this was optional, and they were only appointed 'as necessary'.[215]

The male gendered authority informing the planning of villagisation in Kenya and the architecture of these spaces prioritised security aspects as opposed to civilian welfare, wellbeing and hygiene related infrastructure. The priority for the colonial government was to secure the security of the camp and form an infrastructure which connected local affairs to the wider policing of the counter-insurgency campaign.[216] The British colonial authorities in Kenya learned that villagisation was strategically an effective counter-insurgency measure from the experience in Malaya and relied on the recommendations of colonial officials there to inform the structures in Kenya. Notes shared to colonial authorities in Kenya in 1953 on the 'Planning and Housing Aspects of Resettlement' in Malaya give an insight into the views of those planning villagisation. The report heavily explores the widths of roads to facilitate military sized vehicles, as well as the most affordable but strongest material recommended for infrastructure. At the end of the document, under the subtitle 'Open Spaces', the colonial liaison officer G.A. Atkinson, recommends space to be designated to accommodate a football field.[217] Football in the colonial territories was a sport played by men and boys.[218] The camps mainly housed women and children. While this demonstrates a motivation to plan for recreational spaces for inhabitants, it did not meet the needs of all occupiers of these spaces. The colonial administration relied on female volunteers and humanitarian organisations to fund and establish welfare necessities for the women that Britain had forcibly resettled.

While colonial officials used euphemistic terms such as 'village' to occlude the violent nature of this process in external-facing discourses, the carceral language found in internal planning documents and correspondence is evident. By comparing this language to the photographs shared by the Information Department, a deeper meaning is evident of the functionality of camp infrastructure. Camp planners used barbed wire fences and ten feet deep by fifteen feet wide trenches lined with thick sharpened sticks to enclose punitive camps. The purpose of this design was to keep inhabitants in and Mau Mau fighters out of access to their supply chain.[219] Ideally, camps were established on hillsides with the village security post situated at the top of the

[215] KNA, MAA 7/82, Legislation KEM Villages, 1955-6, 1.
[216] KNA, MAA 7/82, 1.
[217] UKNA, Colonial Office 822/481, Protection of Villages against Mau Mau Attacks in Kenya, 2/14.
[218] Europeans introduced sports like football into their African colonies to mould African's social experiences. See for example Laura Fair, 'Kickin' It: Leisure, Politics and Football in Colonial Zanzibar, 1900s-1950s', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 67 (1997), pp. 224–251.
[219] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, 241.

ridge, protected by a spike-filled trench called *punji* moats, with the houses built below in rows (figure 1). An aspect of the security-style infrastructure which denotes more attention is the implementation of drawbridges. Drawbridges ensured camp guards had interior control of inhabitants with some camps having drawbridges as the main entrance and exit for the entire site (figure 2). With the gate placed by the Home Guard security post, these guards could thoroughly control the movement of camp occupiers.[220] For the administration, this design facilitated greater checks on 'inmates' and better control of the general population.[221] In the 1955 annual report for Embu District, it goes as far as confirming the 'incarceration' of civilians in camps.[222] In an interview, Grace Kanguniu describes Kamatu camp as having two gates with officers manning them. She depicts the 'entire place' as being 'well-fortified' as the gate 'would be brought down with a rope whenever they wanted to get in or out'.[223]

[Third party copyright protected material redacted]

Figure 1: A camp in the Fort Hall District, 1955. In the top left of the photograph, the main security post for the camp is visible.[224]

[220] Daniel Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau, Creating Kenya: Counterinsurgency, Civil War, and Decolonization (Cambridge, 2009),* 108.
[221] UKNA, FCO 141/5703, Mau Mau Unrest; Action after Operation Anvil; Operations in 1955, 20.
[222] KNA, DC/EBU 1/1/14, Annual Report - Embu District; 1955, 7.
[223] Grace Njoki Kanguniu, interview, Nyeri County, 26th April 2019. Two Grace's were interviewed for this project and are referred to in-text as follows: Grace Njoki is referred to in-text as 'Grace Kanguniu*'*, a name she requested be used and Grace W. Mwathe is referred to in-text as 'Grace'.
[224] UKNA, CO 1066/9, 729/40, Kikuyu Villages and Home Guard Posts, this image has been cropped from the original.

[Third party copyright protected material redacted]

Figure 2: The drawbridge over the moat of one of the fortified Gĩkũyũ Guard posts, no date (n.d.).[225]

It is important to note that the colonial government commissioned and utilised these photographs for public relations purposes. Methodologically this raises issues. Ethical considerations frame the examination of these photographs as the photography team may have manipulated the scenes and this is subjective to the photographer's representation of reality.[226] The Information Department was instrumental in controlling the narrative of events taking place in Kenya. The Information Department shared newsletters, photographs and reports as part of a propaganda strategy against the Mau Mau. Brian Drohan demonstrates Britain's efforts in the 1950s to manipulate public perceptions of the brutal methods deployed in the colonies. Instead of abandoning abhorrent practices, Britain undermined activists' criticisms of these measures and challenged the credibility of these complaints.[227] Staged photographs were an important tool in this process.[228] As Caroline Elkins argues, 'Mau Mau was as much about propaganda as it was about reality'.[229] The Information Department worked closely with the public relations officer based in the London Colonial Office to chronicle unfolding events with a particular effort to present Mau Mau atrocities and heavily control and sanitise details of

[225] UKNA, CO 1066/9, 729/44, this image has been cropped from the original.
[226] Paulo De Medeiros, 'War Pics: Photographic Representations of the Colonial War', *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 39 (2002), 92.
[227] Brian Drohan, *Brutality in an Age of Human Rights: Activism and Counterinsurgency at the End of the British Empire* (Cornell University Press, 2017), 4.
[228] For assessments into the histories and ethics of humanitarian and war photography, see for example Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogno (eds), *Humanitarian Photography: A History* (Cambridge, 2015).
[229] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, 46.

Britain's counter-insurgency strategy.[230] These conditions do not make the photographs redundant sources, much like the FCO papers, they provide insight into the ways Britain framed the narrative of villagisation. The photographs demonstrate Britain's external discourse, while the FCO files provide insight of the internal security-first planning of villagisation. Inevitably the camps photographed were the best planned and laid out sites. It does also show, however, that the colonial administration designed these camps with security and control over civilians as a priority. The purpose of the carceral aspects of villagisation remain ambiguous in the photographs. Having a close shot of the drawbridge gave little information away of the purpose of this area in the camps to those viewing the pictures in the metropole or elsewhere.

Strategists for the villagisation programme had prioritised building the main security infrastructure, forcing inhabitants of these camps to build their own home structures on the bare land provided. Inhabitants, who were mainly women, children and elders, were forced to spend months living outdoors or in makeshift structures while they built their own new, sturdier huts. The space designated for these new huts only allowed for them to be approximately one hundred square feet. They would have one room, and this was where resettled families were to cook and sleep.[231] Colonial records and House of Commons debates highlight that little money was budgeted for this aspect of villagisation.[232] This drove those who were forcibly moved to new settlements to excavate their original homes of materials that could be carried to the new camps and used to build their new homes with.[233] As described by Sophia Wambui Kiarie, a Gĩkũyũ woman who grew up in Kamandura camp, she recalls women being shown their plot of land where they were to rebuild their new huts which were circular in shape with the main structure being built of mud alongside a grass formed roof.[234] This description can be compared with those of images in the colonial records presented on the previous page.[235] As Grace Kanguniu recalls, nothing was provided to families for inside their huts, therefore she and her family slept on banana leaves around the edge of the structure and constructed a fire pit for cooking purposes in the centre.[236] In further corroboration comparing Sophia's memories with the colonial imagery of camps, the houses were all uniform and set out in rows. Sophia recalls

[230] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, 46.
[231] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, 241.
[232] UKNA, FCO 141/6233, Unrest Mau Mau; Concentration of Kikuyu; Nakuru Township, 1/1.
[233] Hansard. 'Moved Villagers', February 1955.
<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1955/feb/23/moved-villagers >.
[234] Sophia Wambui Kiarie, interview, Kiambu County, 4th April 2019.
[235] UKNA, CO 1066/9, 729/40, this image has been cropped from the original.
[236] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.

that after every six or so houses, there were communal latrines placed for all inhabitants in that area to use.[237]

Some officials raised concerns during the first year of villagisation that with the process taking place at such a fast speed with 'no real plan', they needed to set clearer directives if they planned to extend this procedure.[238] There is ambiguity in the literature as to how many people the colonial administration planned to house in the camps, however, there is a reason for this confusion. Huw Bennett argues that each camp typically housed up to 500 people.[239] Although when comparing this figure to government records and those of the Red Cross, large variations are evident. In a 1954 proposal for a camp in the Nakuru District, it is recorded that space needed to be provided to hold '2,500 souls'.[240] Another is recorded as needing to house 200 families, with no estimation of how large or small one family could be.[241] As there was little official legislation in place to determine the maximum capacity of camps, and with the camps varying in size due to the different areas being villagised, this allowed room for interpretation or exploitation. The implications of this ambiguity laid the groundwork for an environment where over-crowded camps were the norm.

Colonial officials also raised fears over the dire living conditions in the camps, but the military benefits of the procedure outweighed these. In addition to this major issue of camp over-crowding, the colonial authorities were facing a dangerous level of illness, malnutrition and starvation in many of the camps. In a report written during the early stages of the implementation of villagisation, T. F. Anderson, the then Director of Medical Services, explored whether camps were desirable on public health grounds. In his report, he voices his concern that by concentrating a large community together in close proximity the spread of infection was far more likely to happen. He, however, counteracts this by explaining that camps offered an ideal opportunity to provide more accessible medical care as the population is better concentrated. Anderson argued that if they created a good layout for the camps with sanitary facilities of a high standard then the benefit of camps far outweighed infection concerns.[242] The reality of villagisation, however, was that these spaces did not meet these requirements and sanitary facilities were rarely of a high standard. Alongside this, food and water were often

[237] Interview with Sophia.
[238] KNA, AB 2/53, Policy: Rehabilitation Policy Villages; 1953-57, 5.
[239] Bennett, *Fighting the Mau Mau*, 223.
[240] UKNA, FCO 141/6233, 1/1.
[241] UKNA, FCO 141/6426, Official Committee on Resettlement; Papers and Agenda 1955-8, 7.
[242] KNA, AB 2/53, 1.

scarcely available to inhabitants. The colonial state later farmed out issues of civilian welfare to external agents including humanitarian organisations. Andrew Thompson argues that at the end of empire, a humanitarian paradox existed. From one perspective, late-colonial states were responsible for the suffering of colonial subjects due to oppressive security measures which humanitarians then brought to light. From a different perspective, 'cash-strapped late-colonial states were compelled to draw more and more on the resources of the voluntary, charitable and humanitarian sectors'.[243] The colonial government did little to mitigate the implications of full-scale villagisation on the civilians forcibly resettled. The administration instead called upon international donors and humanitarian organisations for these matters.

Not only could villagisation achieve greater physical control over those fuelling the anti-imperial insurgency, but the colonial state also sought ideological control through social engineering efforts inside camps. Despite the concerns raised in the initial stages of villagisation and the impacts of security-first planning, the colonial government justified these efforts by emphasising the long-term benefits of the measure. As Elkins demonstrates, the potential to be able to endorse 'liberal reform and British civilising values' through villagisation garnered great support from the settler community.[244] By reviewing strategic resettlement exclusively from a military or economic approach, we are unable to understand the process of the resettlement's implementation or its long-term effects. It is for this reason Feichtinger works to evaluate the case of villagisation in Kenya through both its repressive and reformative processes. Feichtinger critiques two bodies of literature in his assessment. He argues that scholars of counter-insurgency have analysed strategic resettlement solely through its military tactical value whilst some Marxist scholars have focused on this procedure as one element of a wider process of economic change and class formation.[245] This thesis directly develops from Feichtinger's revision and delves deeper into the reformative practices of villagisation through a gendered lens. A key aspect of this was the community development programmes introduced into camp sites. Community development was not a side-effect of resettlement, but instead a core function. He contends that on the eve of decolonisation, the colonial state characteristically worked to shape colonised communities in its own image.[246] It

[243] Andrew Thompson, 'Humanitarian Principles Put to the Test: Challenges to Humanitarian Action during Decolonization', *International Review of the Red Cross*, 97 (2015), 53.
[244] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, 238.
[245] Moritz Feichtinger, 'Strategic Villages: Forced Relocation, Counter-Insurgency and Social Engineering in Kenya and Algeria, 1952-62' in: Martin Thomas and Gareth Curless (eds), *Decolonization and Conflict: Colonial Comparisons and Legacies* (London, 2017), 137-138.
[246] Feichtinger, 'Strategic Villages', 150.

must be noted though that these reformative practices only began gaining any traction in camps once military measures had eased from 1956.

Disrupting Gĩkũyũ ways-of-life in a bid to reorganise rural communities had a place in Britain's villagisation strategy, and the broader counter-insurgency campaign. The rehabilitation process in detention camps sought to disrupt the beliefs of Mau Mau fighters and replace these with Christian and cooperative attitudes to the colonial government. As James Scott demonstrates, these programmes of villagisation also sought to make those populating these spaces 'better objects of political control and to facilitate the new forms of communal farming favoured by state policy'.[247] Villagisation outlived the colonial period, with Scott examining the *ujamaa* villages introduced in Tanzania in the 1970s. *Ujamaa* (literally translated in Kiswahili as 'familyhood') was a concept developed by Julius Nyerere in 1962 as his own version of socialism. Scott reveals the ongoing use of villagisation as a tool of modern state craft which often 'did not represent the actual activity of the society' resettled.[248] By and large, Scott argues that *ujamaa* villages were 'economic and ecological failures' which followed colonial policy of 'modern European rural landscape'.[249] As previously displayed when discussing the building and spatiality of the camps, families were often forced to include other families in their single huts. This meant several wives and their children were in the same building, whether they shared husbands or not. As oral history interviews have confirmed, Grace Mwathe recalls living with four other families, while both Leah Nyaguthia Kariuki and Grace Kanguniu remember living with ten additional families.[250] It is unclear how many people made up the family sizes remembered by Grace, Leah and Grace Kanguniu.

Officials openly discussed this breakdown of Gĩkũyũ social structures in the planning stages of villagisation. In one report, it was argued that by building huts in lines, close together, Gĩkũyũ families would lose their normal way of life and their 'privacy'.[251] Such concerns were discounted, however, as it was a better use of space to construct huts close together and in lines as it aided effective surveillance.[252] The colonial authorities believed that security, surveillance and eliminating Mau Mau activity trumped any need to uphold regular ways of life. On the

[247] Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 224.
[248] Scott, *Seeing like a State*, 3. See also, Jonathan M. Jackson, '"Off to Sugar Valley": the Kilombero Settlement Scheme and "Nyerere's People", 1959-69', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 15 (2021), pp. 505-526.
[249] Scott, *Seeing like a State*, 225 and 238.
[250] Interviews with both Grace Kanguniu, Grace W. Mwathe, interview, Nyeri County, 26th April 2019 and Leah Nyaguthia Kariuki, interview, Nyeri County, 30th April 2019.
[251] KNA, AB 2/53, 1.
[252] KNA, AB 2/53, 1.

other hand, those living in the loyalist camps or in areas less impacted by the conflict maintained some aspects of Gĩkũyũ homestead organisation. One interviewee, John Mwangi Stephen, presented a photograph of the camp he was moved to in the Fort Hall District identifying which hut was his and which hut was his father's and mother's. Although the camp did not permit room for the spacious nature of a regular Gĩkũyũ homestead, his family were provided a large enough plot to maintain an element of this living (figure 3).

Figure 3: A photograph of John's camp, n.d. His home is on the second row from the bottom, on the far right. The home next to his, to the left, was the home of his father and mother's.[253]

The colonial administration deliberately rejected Gĩkũyũ social structures in planning villagisation. In addition to the new housing arrangements impacting the spatiality of homestead layouts, decisions made by officials obstructed the spiritual meaning associated to living. In a report compiled on the 'history and customs' of early Kiambu settlements, it is highlighted that Gĩkũyũ people in this area associated the Ngong Hills with the home of God. Due to this belief, the practice of Gĩkũyũ society here was to build their huts with the entrance facing the Ngong Hills. The author of the report criticises the villagisation process, particularly in the Kiambu area as the camps completely disrupted this.[254]

Colonial administrators were aware of these ethnographic considerations. In 1952, as the colonial government instated the State of Emergency, it commissioned an anthropological

[253] John Mwangi Stephen, interview, Murang'a County, 20th April 2019. Photograph owned by John and used with permission. Cropped from the original.
[254] KNA, MA1/7/14, 7.

survey of Gĩkũyũ society. Conducted by J.M. Fisher, the study provides an in-depth analysis of family and community structures, child-rearing methods, education, agriculture and land tenure structures. In the report, Fisher outlines the specific layouts of living situations for male and female family members, providing drawings and diagrams.[255] Fisher challenges the reputation of Gĩkũyũ society in colonial Kenya where they were disliked for being 'difficult, suspicious, and secretive people'.[256] Fisher outlines the historic reasoning behind tensions between Gĩkũyũ society and the colonial government.[257] While Fisher's anthropologic survey demonstrates rigorous research and, in ways, a progressive outlook to explore the nuances of tensions in central Kenya, the colonial government did little to incorporate the findings of this review.

For the colonial administration intent on defeating the Mau Mau at any cost, surveillance and practicality was instead vital in the planning and implementation of camps. Like Scott's analysis, control was the fundamental theme in this planning. Disrupting Gĩkũyũ spiritual practice and modes of living was a form of control which directly supported wider efforts of social engineering which could enhance the effects of state policies. A total reorganisation of rural society in the most agriculturally valuable area of Kenya came under a repressive developmentalist approach to secure what Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo has described as 'imperial permanence' alongside social control.[258] The disruptions caused to Gĩkũyũ social structures, as part of villagisation, sits within a longer historic discourse whereby the colonial state sought to reconfigure rural society in Kenya. As Feichtinger shows, while villagisation was a counter-insurgency measure, it also 'produced an opportunity to transform the rural population', done so mainly through land distribution.[259] Land was usually distributed in Gĩkũyũ society through *mbari*, clan-membership. Social hierarchies as well as long-established rules on reproduction and marriage played a pivotal role in this. Villagisation wholly disrupted these systems making room for the colonial government's new land consolidation plan.[260]

[255] KNA, XA.1 11/48, Reports on the Kikuyu by J.M. Fisher; education of women and girls; 1950-52.
[256] KNA, XA.1 11/48, 27.
[257] KNA, XA.1 11/48, 27.
[258] Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo, 'Repressive Developmentalism: Idioms, Repertoires, and Trajectories in Late Colonialism', in Martin Thomas and Andrew S. Thompson (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of The Ends of Empire* (2018, Oxford), pp. 1-20, via Oxford Handbooks Online [website] <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198713197.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780198713197-e-40> (accessed 15 July 2021), 1.
[259] Feichtinger, 'A Great Reformatory', 54.
[260] Feichtinger, 'A Great Reformatory', 54.

Surveillance

With colonial state security successfully extending physical control over those they believed were Mau Mau adherents, officials needed to maintain this to 'prevent the re-establishment of Mau Mau activity'.[261] Designing and constructing camps to best equip effective surveillance of the sites was imperative to this success. The colonial administration was aware that by concentrating vast numbers of supposed Mau Mau adherents into tight quarters, anti-government resistance could easily manifest.[262] State surveillance did not only come in the form of guard look-out posts, though these were important components. Monitoring permeated the day-to-day activities enforced on those inside the camps, the rules which inhabitants had to follow, and the informant structures introduced by the guards. This is explored through Michel Foucault's theorisation of Jeremy Betham's panopticon model.[263] If Gĩkũyũ women were the backbone of the Mau Mau, the colonial government was to always have eyes on this group. By securing visibility into huts, by occupying the time of the camp population and by encouraging public confessions and informing, colonial administrators formed an environment to prevent the re-establishment of Mau Mau activity.

Turning once again to the material culture of the camp sites, visibility to monitor those inside the camps and the surrounding areas was at the forefront of planning. As previously stated, camps were ideally built on a hillside with the security post at the top of the ridge. This allowed the security post to serve multiple camp sections from various angles. Commonly, the security posts had tall watch towers built for effective surveilling. Public relations photographs taken by the colonial government's Information Department showcase these structures (figures 4 and 5). As these visual sources show, watch towers loomed over those housed below. Home Guards stationed themselves in these to monitor movement between huts, as well as movement from potential forest fighters attempting to access the site. Figure 5 most obviously demonstrates the promotional benefits these images had in displaying British colonial control. This staged photograph reveals one guard in a wool hat, holding a spear, while the other guard holds a gun and wears a colonial-style brimmer hat. This composition was important to the messages the colonial government hoped to send to the Western world. It gives a message that the colonial state had successfully nurtured collaborators in the African population, willing to present themselves in a Western style, but also had the support of the 'native', a true African carrying

[261] UKNA, FCO 141/5688, 1/1.
[262] Feichtinger, 'A Great Reformatory', 52-53.
[263] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London, 2020 [1975]), 199-201.

a spear. While a White colonial official formally governed camps, Home Guards played an imperative role in monitoring and punishing those who challenged the state's authority. This was a powerful image to exhibit the penetrating eye of the colonial state. The weapons of these guards also juxtapose strikingly against the huts visible in the background. Visually, this photograph reinforces Khalili's gendered counter-insurgency framework, whereby insurgents and counter-insurgents force the feminine private sphere into the territory of war.[264]

[Third party copyright protected material redacted]

Figure 4: The Home Guard post in Kianjogu camp, Nyeri District, n.d.[265]

[264] Khalili, 'Gendered Practices of Counterinsurgency', 1474.
[265] UKNA, CO 1066/9, 963/4 this image has been cropped from the original.

[Third party copyright protected material redacted]

Figure 5: The Home Guard look out post of a camp in the Fort Hall District.[266]

Camp organisers designed individual huts to improve guard visibility of those inside the camps. To enable tighter monitoring, Sophia describes an integral part of this design by depicting her village hut:

> The windows were two and they are facing the post. So, in the morning, you are supposed to open the windows, you open the windows, sweep and put ashes on the ground and sweep and make the bed… So, you will cover that and there was an inspection planned by the health officers and the guards would make sure and so they would use the binoculars to see which house window is not open they would know and send the guards there to check.[267]

By forcing women to build their huts with windows facing the security post, the colonial state was able to occupy its gaze on the living quarters of all inhabitants. Using binoculars and the watch tower to look out for illegitimate activity and combining this with a physical presence of guards near the huts themselves, camp security could effectively uphold its surveillance strategies. This method drew from carceral traditions of the panopticon, whereby institutional buildings are erected to enable guards to observe the prisoners.[268] Sophia's testimony also alludes to the medical coercion she and others experienced, with health officers monitoring living spaces. Local administrators set curfews to keep inhabitants in their huts during the night.

[266] UKNA, CO 1066/9, 729/42, this image has been cropped from the original.
[267] Interview with Sophia.
[268] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 199-201.

Between the hours of nine pm and five am, guards prohibited everyone from going outside their huts.[269] How people experienced these curfews and the effect this violation had on them is explored in Chapter III.

The monitoring of Gĩkũyũ women in camps followed suit with historic notions held by the British that African women were deviant in nature. It was not only the infrastructure of the camps themselves that permitted pervasive monitoring of inhabitants, but officials also designed rules which they enforced inside the camps to maintain this. Security personnel imposed forced labour, like that in the official Pipeline, to support the military operations and to occupy those they feared could strategise against them. The main projects remembered by interviewees included building more trenches, roads and dams, as well as harvesting and cultivating land for them to have food.[270] Sophia recalls a whistle being blown at six o'clock in the morning, every weekday and Saturday, by a camp Home Guard which signified the beginning of the workday. All those old and able enough were to walk in a single file line to an area outside of the Home Guard post to await their orders and be allocated work for that day. The colonial administration prevented inhabitants from walking alongside one another with the fear that communication and anti-colonial plotting could happen during this time. Home Guards accompanied those ordered to work, before escorting them back to the camp in the evening where they were to return to their huts and remain until the next day's whistle.[271] As Bruce-Lockhart shows, the 'migrated archive' reveals the problematic ways that officials identified female Mau Mau detainees. Women were often classed as 'deviant' or described as 'witches'.[272]

Compulsory, hard labour was an effective means to occupy the time of able-bodied adults, under the control and guard of camp security. This followed a longer colonial legacy, whereby the establishment and development of colonial states was reliant on African labour. This subsequently shaped practices of penal coercive labour. Hynd situates this in the wider context of the abolishment of slavery in the colonies, with penal labour now often filling this void. Hynd emphasises this practice as a 'key component of the coercive networks of the colonial state'.[273] The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Oliver Lyttelton, warmed the colonial

[269] UKNA, FCO 141 6233, 1/1.
[270] Interviews with John, Grace and Leah. Also Esther, interview, Nyeri County, 26th April 2019.
[271] Interview with Sophia.
[272] Bruce-Lockhart, 'Unsound minds', 594.
[273] Stacey Hynd, '"...a Weapon of Immense Value?" Convict Labour in British Colonial Africa, c. 1850-1950s', in Christian G. de Vito and Alex Lichtenstein (eds), *Global Convict Labour* (Leiden, 2015), 249-250.

government as early as 1953 that forced labour could cause much international criticism. The United Nations had forced labour high on its agenda with the United States of America proposing to attack the Soviet Union on this subject.[274] Governor Baring went to great lengths to determine the legal loopholes exploitable in emergency conditions with this element of collective punishment being a priority in occupying the time of those who could organise themselves against the colonial government.[275] As Bennett shows, 'a permissive legal environment' which allowed the British government to 'sideline law in counter-insurgencies' meant that forced labour in Kenya was justified under emergency regulations.[276]

Church missionaries criticised the intense forced labour schedule as it prevented inhabitants from being able to practice religion. With the forced labour regime often spanning the full seven-day week, those conscripted into it were unable to attend church on Sundays. A report compiled for the Church of Scotland Mission in Kenya in June 1955 reveals that some ministers tried to approach headmen to hold services in camps but were denied entry.[277] In the interviews conducted for this project, all interviewees who were forcibly resettled into camps during the emergency period associated their inability to attend church to forced labour.[278] It is unclear from the evidence why religious practice was not accounted for in the planning of villagisation. With Christian teaching being a fundamental aspect of the rehabilitation process in the detention camps, it highlights that officials had not designed resettlement camps to function as rehabilitative sites. In addition to this, when considering the history of anti-Christian action in Gĩkũyũ anticolonial protest movements and Mau Mau attacks, there could have been a fear that permitting the establishment of churches near Mau Mau adherents could entice a violent backlash.[279] Loyalist families were able to continue attending churches on Sunday.

Infiltrating the camps with informants was also a tried and tested method widely adopted by the colonial government in the counter-insurgency campaign. As the existing literature has assessed, Ian Henderson, colonial police officer, introduced the use of pseudo-gangs in Kenya. Mau Mau combatants were captured and psychologically indoctrinated to pose as insurgents to gather intelligence or stage violent attacks which could be blamed on the enemy.[280] Pseudo-gangs used in the forest were not only 'turned' former insurgents; White soldiers also donned

[274] UKNA, CO 822/505, Employment of Displaced Kikuyu in Kenya as a Result of the Emergency; 1953, 2/39.
[275] UKNA, CO 822/505, 5.
[276] Bennett, *Fighting the Mau Mau*, 81-82.
[277] Presbyterian Church of East Africa Archive, II/GB/1, Emergency - general; 1953-56.
[278] For example, Susan Wanjiru Giteru, interview, Nyeri County, 30th April 2019.
[279] Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 13-22.
[280] Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe*, 175.

Black face to masquerade as Black men to extend this work.[281] As Daniel Branch shows, the colonial administration relied on informants to dictate the 'narrative of war by determining the targets, timing, and nature of violence'.[282] A particularly prevalent memory among inhabitants was the likelihood of being identified by a *Gakunia* as a suspected Mau Mau fighter or supporter. A *Gakunia* was a Mau Mau supporter turned informant for the administration who wore a sack over their head with lookout holes cut out so they could identify suspected Mau Mau fighters and supporters without being identified themselves.[283] As Elkins illuminates, these methods eroded 'social contracts at their very foundations', with people seeking to resolve their own personal disputes through these avenues.[284] The colonial government relied on these constructed, racist stereotypes of Gĩkũyũ society to emphasise the need in these sorts of measures. In an ethnographic report compiled by the Colonial Office, Gĩkũyũ people are described with a temperamentality which makes them 'suspicious, secretive and difficult to win into confidence'.[285]

Compulsory propaganda meetings, known as *barazas,* were useful in gaining information from the forcibly resettled population.[286] The colonial administration historically appropriated the Kiswahili term *baraza* to describe a type of meeting, in particular a public meeting chaired by administrative officers.[287] The British then adopted this as a key component of counter-insurgency strategy targeting the Mau Mau. This strategy, like villagisation was brought from the Malayan campaign and offered a space for confession and indoctrination, encouraging inhabitants to open up about their involvement in the Mau Mau or share any intelligence they had on Mau Mau activities.[288] The *barazas* in some districts were held daily and led by the headmen of the camps with an ad hoc *baraza* team of elders. Women returned from forced labour and were led to the main square where 'anti-Mau Mau propaganda' was used to encourage them to step forward with any information they had.[289] This was effective in locating food and supplies which were collected for the purpose of aiding forest fighters.[290] These public confessions sometimes led to convictions and the subsequent hanging of individuals convicted

[281] Luise White, 'Precarious Conditions: A Note on Counter-Insurgency in Africa after 1945', *Gender & History*, 16 (2004), 608.
[282] Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau*, 52-53.
[283] Interview with Esther.
[284] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, 182.
[285] KNA/XA.1/11/48, 6.
[286] Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau*, 109.
[287] Angelique Haugerud, *The Culture of Politics in Modern Kenya* (Cambridge, 1993), 61.
[288] Susan L. Carruthers, *Winning Hearts and Minds: British Governments, the Media and Colonial Counter-Insurgency 1944-1960* (London, 1995), 91.
[289] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, 248.
[290] UKNA, FCO 141/5701, Mau Mau Unrest; Action after Operation Anvil: Operations in 1955, 1.

of murdering loyalists.[291] These *barazas* were often used in conjunction with extended curfews which restricted the population of the camp from accessing or looking for food and other resources which they could usually do under guard escort. This combined approach yielded great results for the colonial administration as inhabitants surrendered information and Mau Mau associated paraphernalia in hope of guards lifting the curfews.[292]

The *barazas* were attended by the camp Home Guards as well as the local district officers and were purposely scheduled at the end of the day after women had endured exhausting, physical labour.[293] Women's clubs, such as *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* (MW) (KiSwahili: Women's Progress), were also used by the colonial administration to establish 'direct contacts with resettled women'.[294] The clubs were used by the colonial state to gather evidence from women about others in their camp.[295] Individual screenings were also common in the camps.[296] Screening was a vital component in the 'rehabilitation' process and this practice sits at the centre of the human rights abuses that the British government finally acknowledged following the High Court case. Scholars have scarcely explored the screening exercises which took place in the villagisation network, maybe due to a lack of archival evidence specific to it. Oral history does, however, add to this analysis with Grace Kanguniu describing the ongoing screening she experienced in her camp. Chapter III considers her testimony in great depth through assessments of violence and violation.

The colonial administration and security forces saw women as particularly vulnerable and easier to pressure and break when gathering intelligence. This is unsurprising when considering Western depictions of men and women in conflict.[297] The colonial government in Kenya exploited the assumption that women have an affinity to peace, whereas men have a connection to war and violence, to progress in defeating the Mau Mau. In his telegram to the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Alan Lennox-Boyd in August 1955, Governor Baring wrote:

> But now villagers are co-operating as never before with the government. They are making confessions and producing Mau Mau money, weapons, pieces of home-made guns, ammunition and corpses of Mau Mau victims; they also give a great deal of information; and they – particularly the women – turn out to chase terrorists. Thus, they were

[291] Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 296.
[292] KNA, CS 2/8/238, Relations with other Information Services; Kikuyu reserves; 1954-55, 53.
[293] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, 248.
[294] Feichtinger, 'A Great Reformatory', 64-65.
[295] Feichtinger, 'A Great Reformatory', 64-65.
[296] Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 295.
[297] Jean B. Elshtain, *Women and War* (Brighton, 1987), 4.

effectively used in the Lari forest for a sweep which led to the killing of the man who has been the leading terrorist in the Kiambu District for a long time.

In outlining the success that camp *barazas* were having on the war effort, Baring emphasised that women, in particular, were giving up a great deal of information leading to the capture of Mau Mau fighters. By channelling such concerted efforts toward women, by watching their every move, and by controlling their time, the colonial government gained traction in breaking this support for the enemy. Although a whole range of efforts were made by the colonial administration to prevent the re-establishment of Mau Mau activity inside the camps, this was not fool-proof. In the same telegram update Baring sent in August 1955, he states, 'passive-wing committees still re-form… after we had eliminated the Passive Wing in Nyeri Township, following information gained at the Surrender Talks, a committee sprang up next door in the township name Kiganjo'.[298] Oathing was a vital component among the Mau Mau to unite the Gĩkũyũ ethnic group in a shared goal of violent struggle to fight for land and freedom.[299] Colonial administrators worried that if these 'passive wing committees' continued to reform during villagisation, so too could Mau Mau oathing ceremonies. It would, however, have been challenging for Mau Mau adherents to hold these ceremonies covertly in the camps as it involved several actors and elements such as animal organs for symbolic purposes.[300]

Incentivises and Punishments

While the control and ongoing monitoring of those who were forcibly resettled was vital in breaking the contact between the Mau Mau and their supporters, colonial officials placed paramount importance on destroying the ideological support to this cause. Villagisation as a counter-insurgency measure was a form of collective punishment for all those who did not move voluntarily. Punishing those inside the camps continued through the form of forced labour, extended curfews, torture, imprisonment and food denial. Punitive and loyalist sites which made up the villagisation scheme, were often situated close by to one another. This meant that the inhabitants of punitive camps experienced punishments which were greatly exacerbated by their ability to see the material benefits being granted to those in the neighbouring loyalist section. The colonial government made sure to advertise these privileges which came with supporting the administration, as well as the freedoms that inhabitants could

[298] UKNA, FCO 141/6615, 18.
[299] Maia Green, 'Mau Mau Oathing Rituals and Political Ideology in Kenya: A Re-Analysis', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 60 (1990), 80. Green provides a full examination of the different oaths introduced during the evolution of the Mau Mau.
[300] Green, 'Mau Mau Oathing Rituals', 77.

gain. By demonstrating a better way-of-life, colonial administrators embarked on a supposed 'hearts and minds' campaign to win the support of the wider population. As the existing literature shows, this was not a particularly well-executed or successful 'hearts and minds' campaign.[301] Instead, punitive action and an oppressive counter-insurgency strategy was deemed the more popular route. While officials made efforts to implement community development programmes inside the punitive camps, these were under-staffed, under-funded and mainly farmed out to external volunteer networks and international humanitarian organisations. The colonial government's attempt to win the 'hearts and minds' of those in the punitive sections was to swing the heavy fist of state oppression and withhold basic necessities which only loyalists could access. This was also gendered. By supporting the colonial administration, loyalists could access greater protections and resources for their children. It also brought greater access to women's clubs where women could improve their socioeconomic status.

The emergency directives introduced from 1954 set out the colonial government's plan to defeat the Mau Mau: break all contact between Mau Mau fighters and their supporters and entice cooperation for the administration through an extension of rewards.[302] From the outset of Operation Anvil, the War Council enforced guidance to, 'build up the strength and efficiency of the loyalist elements in the reserves'.[303] This was not only implemented by granting loyalists extended protection from ongoing attacks of the Mau Mau. Officials also rewarded those who cooperated. This was an approach maintained through to 1956 as stated in this directive: 'the present policy of rewards for cooperation and loyal service, coupled with sanctions against misconduct, will continue, but there will be no general relaxation of control measures'.[304] While the directives suggest that Mau Mau supporters were to either be forced or enticed into a change of heart, the War Council was aware that 'there is little prospect of succeeding by enticement'.[305] This preconceived notion that enticement was far more challenging to achieve is evident from the findings in this chapter where punitive camps served as a form of punishment. Files from the colonial record do, however, show the efforts put into building and

[301] See Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*; Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau*; French, *The British Way in Counter-Insurgency*; David Percox, *Britain, Kenya and the Cold War* (London, 2004).
[302] UKNA, FCO 141/5688, 15/1.
[303] UKNA, FCO 141/5688, 1/1.
[304] UKNA, FCO 141/5688, 15/1.
[305] UKNA, FCO 141/5688, 1/1.

creating accommodating sites for loyalist supporters with far greater material benefits to the adjacent punitive camps.

Officials reflected a better way of life in the designs and material culture of loyalist camps. These sections often housed the family of camp Home Guards and those of other colonial employees. Unlike the punitive camps, where the Resettlement Committee offered little money to construct suitable housing for inhabitants, it afforded much more support to the pre-construction of loyalist camps before it moved anyone in. Minutes of a Resettlement Committee meeting held in June 1955 highlight that £25,805 was put aside to build and develop three loyalist camps, estimating 2,000 acres worth of land given to each area to provide suitable space for the construction of huts.[306] With few resources, oppressive surveillance measures and little prior infrastructure characterising the punitive camps, the loyalist sections were very much laid out in 'model fashion'. The Emergency Committee planned for loyalist camps to be well-built and designed with social aspects in mind to 'induce the population to remain in them after the emergency and also as an inducement for them to cooperate'.[307] Loyalist camps had a direct connection to a wider reward scheme associated to future land consolidation. These sites were to be built and placed in an area of agricultural viability.[308] M.P.K. Sorrenson supports this argument suggesting that if the camps were to be seen as compulsory, this needed to be done in association with land reform and a land consolidation process. If the land consolidation process provided an opportunity for rewarding loyalists with better land holdings, the policy could be portrayed as part of a wider policy for reform and reward as opposed to punishment.[309] It was not accidental that in November 1955, just after villagisation was completed, the administration embarked on a programme of mass land consolidation for loyalists.[310] Those representing the colonial administration of Kenya back in the British Parliament were sure to enforce this message also, stating that the vast majority of those resettled in the villagisation scheme moved voluntarily with hopeful signs to the future with regards to the returning of land.[311]

During the early stages of villagisation, the Chief Health Inspector of resettlement development set out to build 'model villages' which acted as a blueprint for all other loyalist settlements to

[306] UKNA, FCO 141/6426, 7.
[307] UKNA, FCO 141/5703, 20.
[308] UKNA, FCO 141/6490, Reconstruction Committee 1953-4.
[309] M.P.K. Sorrenson, *Land Reform in the Kikuyu Country* (Oxford, 1967), 107.
[310] *Ibid*, 112.
[311] 'Displaced Kikuyu', April 1955. <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1955/apr/27/displaced-kikuyu >.

adapt to. In contrast to the 100 square foot plots provided to families in punitive camps, the model village was to allow for an 8,000 square foot plot per family, permitting space for four separate huts to be built. As opposed to all activities taking place in one single building, there was to be one allocated as a kitchen and a rear latrine for each family. These plans enabled a more authentic way of living for Gĩkũyũ families, in the confines of an un-authentic camp settlement. Whereas the huts in punitive camps followed a security-first style plan aimed at tightening surveillance benefits, plans for the loyalist sections followed a household-first approach. The design shows attempts made by officials to keep as much normalcy and space to those who cooperated with the state. In contrast to the small, round huts described by Sophia and pictured in punitive camps, loyalist huts were rectangular, with three windows on different walls. The roof was sturdier, mainly made from iron sheets (figure 6).[312] Beatrice Muthoni Mukubu confirms that the infrastructure was pre-existing and available for new occupants to buy if they could afford to do so.[313] John's home is also displayed earlier in the chapter. He identified his home as well as that of his mother and father. It is unclear who the photographer was, whether it was John himself, or how he acquired the photograph. Although the concentrated camps did not accommodate for the spacious nature of a Gĩkũyũ homestead, administrators provided his family with a large enough plot to maintain an element of this with multiple buildings.[314]

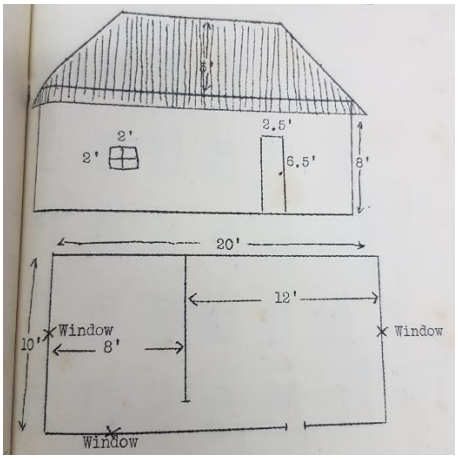

Figure 6: A proposed design of a loyalist house structure, 1954.[315]

[312] Interview with Sophia.
[313] Beatrice Muthoni Mukubu, interview, Nyeri County, 30th April 2019.
[314] Interview with John. Photograph owned by John and used with permission. Cropped from the original.
[315] KNA, DC/MRU 2/1/4, Native Affairs Villages and Villagisation; 1954-60, 7.

The colonial government's plans for loyalist camps put amenities as a priority in comparison to the punitive zones. As outlined in a British government press office handout released on 20th October 1954:

> the government are firmly resolved to prosecute the Emergency until terrorism has been finally defeated…their plans have included… a programme of villagisation for Africans… based on a planned layout, offers great scope for the closer administration of these tribes, and for the provision in loyal areas of social amenities on a community basis.[316]

Loyalists received the benefit of social amenities. Regarding community infrastructure, a communal central grain store as well as a cattle shed was to be built along with six permanent shop plots.[317] This made production more accessible for families and ensured basic necessities were available. These services brought employment opportunities also for women in this part of the camp. This was an aspect advertised among the government propaganda material (figure 7). Figure 7 shows the Kianjogu camp headman George Muigwa buying sweets for two children from a woman operating as shop clerk. The shop displayed is well stocked and organised, revealing the material benefits obtainable to those who could access them. Beatrice, a woman resettled in a loyalist camp, recalls inhabitants constructing a community hall available for different purposes. She particularly remembers it as a place for people to get together and hear of any news or updates on the emergency.[318] Loyalist sites often had a recreational area for children, evidence displays the construction of children's play slides, and a playing field for sports activities.[319] Colonial guards used the mere opportunity for children to play as a tool to control and reward. The British were concerned with avoiding any public scandal around the conditions of villagisation; therefore, these photographs were valuable resources to demonstrate comfortable living.[320] As argued, the colonial administration framed the construction and material culture of camps to incentivise and punish the wider population in attempts to defeat the Mau Mau movement.

Once the security benefits of villagisation became more apparent in the post-1956 stage of the counter-insurgency campaign, developmental efforts in the programme began to gain traction. Ultimately the colonial administration was aware of the issues that the highly disruptive and

[316] UKNA, War Office 276/346, Press Office Handout 'The Kenyan Emergency'.
[317] KNA, DC/MRU 2/1/4, 7.
[318] Interview with Beatrice.
[319] UKNA, INF 10/156, British Empire Collection of Photographs; Kenya; 1942-63, 134.
[320] Drohan, *Brutality in the Age of Empire*, 4.

violating counter-insurgency measure of villagisation caused. Officials recognised that the attitudes of those in detention camps were improving as time went by, whereas those in the resettlement camps were deteriorating.[321] The loyalist sections demonstrated that it was possible to introduce community welfare initiatives. Colonial administrators now needed a long-term solution to fix the problems caused by punitive villagisation and this solution coincided nicely with Britain's post-Second World War financing of development and welfare in the colonies. The metropole was now financing schemes in the colonial states that could support a new government through the decolonisation era.[322] Community development was a key aspect in this approach.

[Third party copyright protected material redacted]

Figure 7: The well-stocked shop in the Kianjogu camp in the Nyeri district, n.d.[323]

The Department of Rehabilitation and Community Development, headed by Thomas Askwith, made community development a core aspect of the villagisation scheme and is therefore a significant pillar of discussions in this thesis. Community development was on the villagisation agenda from the beginning of the policy's implementation. The developmental practices, however, only began making real progress in the camps after military measures had eased in 1956. Community development worked as a guise for Britain's wider attempts to socially engineer Africans into more governable citizens and officials deployed it as a solution to the

[321] UKNA, FCO 141/6426, 44/1.
[322] Charlotte Riley, '"Tropical Allsorts": The Transnational Flavor of British Development Policies in Africa', *Journal of World History*, 26 (2015), 862.
[323] UKNA, CO 1066/9, 17.

problems the colonial state had caused, through a disruptive resettlement counter-insurgency campaign.

In October 1955, the Sociological Committee held a meeting, of which Askwith was the Chair. In the meeting, Askwith reported that after three years of security measures in the Malayan Emergency, the breakdown of conflict had given way to reconstructive plans among society. He argued that now Kenya was at this stage, it was time to start 'building up a satisfactory community life' in camps. Askwith's vision of a satisfactory community life included the remodelling of house structures and the forming of local governments to extend funds which fixed and developed community life and sanitary facilities.[324] In order to deal with the deteriorating mood of women in the bleak camp conditions, the administration developed a programme with a particular focus on aiming to improve women's lives. As Feichtinger argues, MW clubs became 'a powerful instrument for promoting social change'.[325] While MW were around since the 1940s, the colonial administration formally organised the movement in the emergency period in the interest of their wider plans.[326] MW had the proclaimed aim of encouraging the 'advancement of African women' and boosting 'self-help' among communities. The main purpose of the movement was to improve the standard of living of Kenyans through health, agriculture, child-care and homecrafts.[327] What is vital to note is Emily Baughan's argument that MW, being largely led by White female settlers, was presented 'as an expression of sisterhood and solidarity between African and settler women, but in reality it was a paternalistic attempt to educate women in Western norms of motherhood and domesticity'.[328] It is this interplay of race and gender which informs the analysis of this thesis.

The community development programmes deployed by the colonial authorities worked in cooperation with humanitarian organisations and church missionaries who provided staff and funding. The programmes designed were, however, very much controlled and steered by the colonial administration. The British Red Cross Society (BRCS) was a particularly important partner in MW's community development work. The BRCS worked to establish women's clubs which involved productive activities to give guidance on ways that African women could

[324] National Museums of Kenya, Gladys Sybil Bazette Beecher Collection, GSSB/24, Re: sociological Committee, Sunday Papers, Committee Reports and Minutes, Re: Emergency.
[325] Feichtinger, 'A Great Reformatory', 63-64.
[326] Feichtinger, 'A Great Reformatory', 63-64.
[327] KNA, AB 1/73, Administration; Advancement of African Women; 1954-55, 3.
[328] Emily Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire: Humanitarian Collusion with the Colonial State during the Kenyan Emergency, c.1954-1960', *Journal of British Studies*, (In Press) (2019), 17.

improve their own living conditions.[329] Women were to be taught how to clean their homes, how to wash and iron their clothes, as well as learning how to sew in an effort to prevent disease and improve hygiene and wellbeing.[330] The BRCS was affiliated with the International Committee of the Red Cross, meaning it could draw from an international network of donors to fund its work. This funding went towards recruiting twenty-five home craft officers from Britain to support MW work. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund also provided funding toward these operations which was vital in the Red Cross being able to afford land rovers for officers to move from camp to camp.[331] In addition to the support provided to the colonial administration from humanitarian organisations, church missionaries readily stepped forward for the opportunity to help in the camps. After their eye-opening visit to operational sites in the Fort Hall and Embu Districts in June 1955, leaders of the Christian Council of Kenya (CCK) saw it of paramount importance that they aid any social work taking place in camps. In their report they state, 'we've been looking for years for a way of getting out of our mission stations. Now is the hour'.[332] The CCK went on to have a close relationship with those involved in villagisation community development work.

Conclusion

The colonial government called these punitive spaces constructed as part of the counter-insurgency campaign, 'villages'. While the term 'village' conjures up an image of a quaint rural setting populated with homes and community spaces, the Kenyan 'villages' were simply not like this. The camps implemented as part of villagisation were controlling, carceral-styled sites whereby the material culture and blueprints of the policy upheld this purpose. Drawbridges, spike-filled moats, government surveillance look-outs and forced labour regimes juxtapose starkly from the few loyalist sections where children's parks and well-stocked shops could be found. Pitching these spaces as villages enabled the colonial government's real policy to go largely undetected and ensured it avoided accountability regarding the oppressive enactment of its population-centric counter-insurgency campaign. While the camps largely mirrored a style expected of a detention camp, the British colonial government could attempt to avoid any international outcry that it was re-establishing concentration camps that had caused thousands of deaths in the Second South African War, by instead calling these villages.

[329] BRCA, RCC/1/31/5, The British Red Cross Society Overseas Branches: Report for the Year 1954.
[330] BRCA, 1594/27, Vice-Chairman's (Lady Limerick) Visit to East Africa Jan/Feb 1957.
[331] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire', 18.
[332] PCEA, II/AA/1, Correspondence Government and Church - especially C.C.K; 1953-56.

The camps in Kenya, similar in ways to the camps established in South Africa, were male-controlled, militarised spaces; spaces that women and their children largely inhabited. The colonial government was aware at the outset of the campaign against the Mau Mau that Gĩkũyũ women in particular were playing a powerful and effective role in sustaining Mau Mau activity. Merely resettling women to separate the fish from the water was not enough in the eyes of military strategists. If the colonial state was to fully achieve control and the Kenyans associated with anti-colonial action were to become more governable, officials deemed coercion on multiple levels as necessary. Monitoring the day-to-day lives of women, forcing confessions through screening, food denial, public *barazas* and making the rewards of those who collaborated with the colonial authorities visible, the colonial government sought to punish Gĩkũyũ women's involvement in a focused setting.

Chapter II: Colonial Developmental Counter-Insurgency

In 1956, in the Laikipia District of Kenya, the British colonial government's Information Department in partnership with the women's progress group *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* (MW) (Kiswahili: Women's Progress) hosted a film screening for Kenyan women. In the film, an English man stands in a beautiful, Western-styled kitchen detailing how English housewives could use jars to help preserve their family's food for longer. A woman demonstrates washing her hands under a running tap before cooking and preparing food. In the Information Department's report, it relays that by this point in the screening, every woman had walked out.[333] The film did little to portray the lives of those in the camps. Nevertheless, colonial officials in Kenya believed that they needed to do more to encourage the 'advancement of African women', if rural society was to be re-established and for the Mau Mau to be defeated. Thomas Askwith, the lead architect of the Department of Community Development and Rehabilitation, said that Kenya, and Africa more broadly, was 'backward largely because its women are backward'.[334] The existing historiography has worked to address women's contributions to the insurgency and their experiences of detention and villagisation.[335] The literature, however, is yet to comprehensively demonstrate that colonial administrators believed women, in their role as mothers and the perceived custodians to wider social networks, were important actors in shaping the future of Britain's vision for Kenya. As is evident from the film screening in Laikipia, the colonial administration's efforts to socially engineer Kenyan women were based on the racist and gendered assumptions that shaped European imperialism, development and humanitarianism in this era. While torture and wide-spread incarceration were instrumental to Britain's efforts against the Mau Mau, so too was the colonial developmental counter-insurgency strategy governing women's lives in the camps.

This chapter offers a gendered reading of colonial officials' concerns in the post-1945 era regarding detribalisation and restoring colonial legitimacy. As argued by D. A. Low and John Lonsdale, Britain, like other colonial empires at this time, was actively securing British

[333] Kenya National Archives, AB 1/55, Administration; Maendeleo ya Wanawake club and membership; 1956, 48.
[334] KNA, MSS 4/66, The Story of Kenya's Progress by Thomas Askwith; 1953, 110.
[335] See Katherine Bruce-Lockhart, 'Reconsidering Women's Roles in the Mau Mau Rebellion in Kenya, 1952-1960', in Martin Thomas and Gareth Curless (eds), *Decolonization and Conflict: Colonial Comparisons and Legacies* (London: Bloomsbury: 2017); Tabitha Kanogo, 'Kikuyu Women and the Politics of Protest: Mau Mau', in Sharon McDonald et al (eds). *Images of Women in Peace and War: Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspectives* (Madison, 1987); Cora Anne Presley, 'The Mau Mau Rebellion, Kikuyu Women, and Social Change', *Academic Journal Academic Journal | Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, 22 (1988), pp. 502-527.

interests in the colonial territories as part of a 'second colonial occupation' in the face of anticolonial unrest.[336] In what Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo conceptualises as 'repressive developmentalism', processes of social control and repression were entangled in methods of development and welfare.[337] In the case of Kenya, enforced villagisation established social control, but intertwined in this process were community development programmes that ostensibly promoted inhabitants' welfare and development. Welfare and social development were coded as feminine and largely targeted women in their roles as mothers. Concerns regarding the detribalisation of African subjects also re-emerged in this period. Askwith believed that the rise of anti-colonial discontent in central Kenya was due to 'social breakdown' and the disintegration of an entire generation. Young men and women lacked 'tribal discipline' and an alternative to reinstate this needed to be introduced.[338] Early colonial officials and missionaries in Africa were concerned by detribalisation and stressed the importance of building up tribal authority to avoid what Frederick Lugard calls 'social chaos'.[339] These anxieties resurfaced in the era of decolonisation, in the context of the rapid urbanisation taking place in colonial territories during the Second World War and the economic and social impacts this had on families.[340] Unmarried women and new mothers were particularly valuable in reinstating this gendered and generational discipline so they could pass on their learning to future generations. This chapter reveals how this developmental work operated in relation to the counter-insurgency campaign.

It is clear from studying the colonial records on MW and the broader community development efforts in the Kenya National Archives, that the administration was comprehensive in its knowledge production of these processes. There is vast evidence of MW activity. It is important to note that the records are filed as administrative rather than military or political. This means they were not destroyed or secretly removed as part of the 'migrated archive'. This suggests

[336] D. A. Low and John Lonsdale, 'Towards the New Order 1945-1963', in D. A. Low & Alison Smith (eds) *History of East Africa Vol III* (Oxford, 1976), 12 -13.
[337] Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo, 'Repressive Developmentalism: Idioms, Repertoires, and Trajectories in Late Colonialism' in Martin Thomas and Andrew S. Thompson (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of The Ends of Empire* (Oxford, 2018), pp. 1-20, via Oxford Handbooks Online [website] <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198713197.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780198713197-e-40> (accessed 15 July 2021), 1.
[338] KNA, AB 1/73, Administration; Advancement of African Women; 1954-55, 1.
[339] Frederick Lugard, *The dual mandate in British tropical Africa* (Edinburgh, 1922).
[340] For assessments and overviews of urbanisation in Africa in the 20th Century see for example: Frederick Cooper, *Struggles for the City: Migrant Labour, Capital and the State in Urban Africa* (Beverley Hills, 1983); Allen Howard, 'Cities in Africa, Past and Present: Contestation, Transformation, Discourse', *Canadian Journal of* African Studies, 37 (2003), pp. 197-235; Kefa M. Otiso, 'Colonial Urbanization and Urban Management in Kenya', in Steven J. Salm and Toyin Falola, *African Urban Spaces in Historical Perspective* (Rochester, 2005), pp. 73-97.

that the colonial government did not interpret these efforts to reform and reconfigure society to be as damning as the 'rehabilitation' process in the screening and detention camps. While MW's work may not have been perceived as violent at the time, it was enacted in a violent way.[341] MW sought to control and regulate women's roles, duties, identities and appearance in a re-estabilised society under colonial control. As Ann Stoler demonstrates, it is vital that attention is directed to the 'intimate domains in which colonial states intervened' to understand 'the foundations of European authority'.[342] Historians are yet to sufficiently assess the modes of violence and state coercion which appear in these papers. This chapter explores and constructs these claims through three main sections. Firstly, it establishes the aims of MW in the camps and how these were shaped by imperial conceptions of African women. It then examines the ways that MW planned to disrupt and reconfigure women's and girls' so-called 'tribal identities'. Finally, it reveals the fragility of these development processes, exploring MW in practice and female inhabitants' responses to the club activities.

Maendeleo ya Wanawake's Purpose

The central means for colonial administrators to engage women in development work was through the MW movement. The colonial government formally established MW in 1952 as a way of boosting the idea of 'self-help' among African women during this period of intense warfare.[343] The organisation reported to the Department of Community Development (DCD) and offered classes to African women centred on 'home governance'. European and African women employed as Homecraft Officers facilitated MW work, as well as receiving support from women in the British Red Cross Society (BRCS), the East Africa Women's League (EAWL) and members of the Christian Council of Kenya. MW served numerous functions in the context of the 1950s. At face value, it was a vital organ of the administration's overall rural development and modernisation agenda. Leaders of the DCD recognised the negative impacts

[341] Violence here is recognised as structural and symbolic, not just as physical. Some of the arguments in this chapter have also been explored in Katherine Bruce-Lockhart and Bethany Rebisz, 'Discourses of Development and Practices of Punishment: Britain's Gendered Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Colonial Kenya', in Martin Thomas and Gareth Curless (eds), *The Oxford Handbook on Colonial Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies* (Oxford University Press, 2022) (In Press). I contributed to 50% of the content of this book chapter, both through the research and writing. For a broader assessment of the everyday practices of violence, see for example Arthur Kleinman, 'The Violences of Everyday Life: The Multiple Forms and Dynamics of Violence', in Veena Das et.al. (eds), *Violence and Subjectivity* (Berkeley, 1997), pp. 226-241. On structural violence, see for example John Galtung, 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research,* 6 (1969), pp. 167-191; Lubna Nazir Chaudhry, 'Reconstituting Selves in the Karachi Conflict: Mahajir Women Survivors and Structural Violence', *Cultural Dynamics,* 16 (2004), pp. 259-290.
[342] Ann Laura Stoler, 'Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance', *Archival Science,* 2 (2002), 89.
[343] KNA, AB 1/73, 1.

migrant labour and urbanisation had wreaked on African family life.[344] In addition, however, it served as a key component of Britain's counter-insurgency strategy against the Mau Mau as part of the so-called 'reformative' processes to quell the violent insurgency. MW may have been just one part of community development work in rural Kenya at this time, but its significance in understanding the ways Britain sought to coerce Kenyan women in this campaign requires further interrogation. This section contextualises MW and its function in the community development agenda and wider counter-insurgency campaign, before revealing the gendered, racist and imperial perceptions of African women that influenced MW's overall mission.

Community development translated to African rural development. It was described by the administration as a means of providing adult education in 'agriculture, animal husbandry, health, Local Government and homecrafts'; skills required for 'everyday life'.[345] 'Community development' was a term first adopted in 1948 at the Colonial Office's Ashridge Conference on Social Development. It came from the earlier definition of 'mass education' and acted as the successor to 'social welfare'.[346] In the 1930s and 1940s, the colonial government in Kenya had begun focusing on African welfare, a shift influenced by the launch of the British welfare state.[347] Kara Moskowitz recognises that by the 1950s, 'there was a growing consensus… that self-help could provide new social services that states with inadequate tax revenues could not'.[348] The Colonial Office believed community development promoted better living for Africans, only through their active participation and on their own initiative.[349] It acknowledged that if the initiative was not forthcoming, colonial officials needed to deploy 'techniques for arousing and stimulating it in order to secure its active and enthusiastic response to the movement'.[350]

Social welfare now reflected aims of economic prosperity which was to be achieved from the bottom up.[351] By encouraging people, associations and clubs to 'do this for themselves in their own way', Joanna Lewis identifies this watershed moment. Official thought now shifted in

[344] Thomas Askwith (Edited by Joanna Lewis), *From Mau Mau to Harambee: Memoirs and Memoranda of Colonial Kenya* (Cambridge, 1995), 42.
[345] KNA, XH 11/7, Reports: Annual Report for the Ministry of Community Development; 1956, 1.
[346] UK National Archives, Colonial Office 822/1141, Community Development in Kenya, 1953-4, 2.
[347] Kara Moskowitz, *Seeing Like a Citizen: Decolonization, Development, and the Making of Kenya, 1945-1960* (Ohio, 2019), 171.
[348] Moskowitz, *Seeing Like a Citizen*, 171.
[349] UKNA, CO 822/1141, 2.
[350] UKNA, CO 822/1141, 2.
[351] Joanna Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya 1925-52* (Oxford, 200), 313.

favour of community development and away from social welfare.[352] What remained unchanged, as Lewis shows, was that welfare and development initiatives in the colonial state were a means of 'white do-gooding' to counteract misfortune 'that was perceived to be intrinsic to having a black skin'.[353] The onus was placed on the African population to make rural development successful. An aspect of rural development that became intrinsically linked to counter-insurgency measures in the early stages of the emergency period was the Swynnerton Plan. The colonial administration did not just use villagisation in central Kenya as a military measure; it was a stepping-stone to the demarcation of land. From 1953, Roger Swynnerton the Assistant Director of Agriculture, began developing a long-term strategy for agricultural modernisation. This hoped to intensify development in African agriculture and transform the 'subsistence-based agriculture in most of the native reserves in Kenya, into a modern, surplus-generating system'.[354] Costing £5 million for the initial five years, this radical reform - involving proposed land tenure and individual land titles as opposed to 'clan-based landownership' - became official policy in 1954, the same year villagisation was widely imposed. This plan centred the revolutionary planning of permanent towns and villages that reabsorbed the landless class, further developing community spirit and opportunities.[355] British colonial officials feared the increasing unrest that was exacerbated by the deteriorating economic and labour opportunities for Africans. Officials attempted to solve this issue through large-scale development planning to stabilise labour.[356] They identified that opportunities for women needed to be considered and this could support the overall effectiveness of rural development. These opportunities for women were, however, weaponised as forced resettlement was established as a means of quelling anti-colonial disruption and rectifying state-made messes.

European colonial development policies were promoting 'the modernisation of gender roles' since the 1920s, with the women's branch becoming increasingly central to community development efforts. MW had originally been founded in the 1940s for women involved in the Jeanes School, an adult education institution.[357] When it was formally established by the colonial government in 1952, MW's objective was to 'encourage the local people themselves

[352] Lewis, *Empire State-Building*, 313.
[353] Lewis, *Empire State-Building*, 14.
[354] Moritz Feichtinger, '"A Great Reformatory": Social Planning and Strategic Resettlement in Late Colonial Kenya and Algeria, 1952–63', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 52 (2016), 54.
[355] Feichtinger, 'A Great Reformatory', 54-55.
[356] Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African society: the labor question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge, 1996), 261-263.
[357] Feichtinger, 'A Great Reformatory', 64.

to do things for themselves'.[358] This encouragement of 'self-help' clearly situated women's work in the broader community development agenda. The Jeanes School, established in Kenya in 1924 with funding from the American Carnegie Corporation, had played an important role in Kenya as the central training facility for teachers. It emerged from educational programmes for African-American communities in rural areas in the United States of America.[359] At the core of this work was the idea of 'rural uplift', with the hope that teachers would be trained and then return to their villages to pass on their teachings to their wider community.[360] The Jeanes School was situated in Kabete and was the first institution in Africa established specifically to train African male teachers for rural schools, and women - mainly their wives - in lessons of home governance.[361] In cultivating homemaking skills among girls and women, this gendered approach to development expanded on missionary education which prepared them as suitable wives for Christian men.[362] MW upheld this objective.

The Kiswahili word '*maendeleo'* translates literally to 'moving forward toward a goal, and is derived from the verbs *kuenda*, "to go", and *kuendelea*, "to go on or continue"'.[363] In its infancy, DCD was challenged on the use of a Kiswahili name for the women's movement. In one example, the Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza Province argued that the name should be changed to 'Women's Institutes'. He argued that the Kiswahili name had no significance outside East Africa, and by using 'Women's Institutes' it connected MW work to the worldwide organisation.[364] In a memorandum released in 1953, however, it was made clear that all women's groups in Kenya should be referred to as MW and to avoid the use of 'WI, or Women's Institutes or Clubs'.[365] This distanced women's work among Kenyan women from pre-existing British institutions, especially those associated with White women's organisations. It also upheld the efforts being made by Askwith and his community development officers to signify MW as a movement - a movement that saw African women learning the essence of 'self-help' and sharing these practices with her fellow womenfolk.[366] This was further

[358] KNA, AB 1/55, 1956, 46.
[359] Jeanes School also served as the East Africa Army Education Corps headquarters in the 1940s, see for example: Timothy Parsons, 'Dangerous education? The army as school in colonial East Africa', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 28 (2000), 122-123.
[360] Lewis, *Empire State-Building*, 54.
[361] Mary Cimabaka Mwiandi, 'The Jeanes School in Kenya: The role of the Jeanes teachers and their wives in "social transformation" of rural colonial Kenya, 1925–1961', PhD Thesis (Michigan State University, 2006), 1.
[362] Tabitha Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya, 1900-50* (Oxford, 2005), 203.
[363] Moskowitz, *Seeing Like a Citizen*, 222.
[364] KNA, AB 8/46, Minutes and Meetings; Maendeleo ya Wanawake; 1953-55, 1.
[365] KNA, AB 2/1A, Policy; Maendeleo ya Wanawake policy, 5.
[366] KNA, AB 1/73, 1.

demonstrated in the MW motto, '*umoja na uaminifu*' which translates to 'unity with integrity'.[367]

Although MW was designed for expansion across Kenya, it had a specific importance in the central region in relation to counter-insurgency efforts. In her capacity as chair for the Kenya Girl Guides Association, E.D. Hughes addressed the importance of work among girls and women in response to the conflict. She stressed that she 'was quite convinced that the women were behind much of the present trouble and it was therefore the natural corollary that it must be through the women that we must work for a better way of life'.[368] Hughes shared the opinion of others in the colonial administration, that women were playing a far more important role in the Mau Mau than had first been perceived.[369] Two women's detention camps were established during the 1950s – Kamiti and Gitamayu – to address this, alongside widespread villagisation. Specific spaces were designated to contain Mau Mau women.[370] Once there, efforts were then made to 'rehabilitate' or develop those inside - a central aspect of Britain's counter-insurgency strategy.

In 1955, the then District Commissioner for Nyeri, G.J.W. Pedraza, emphasised the essential need to 'encourage a good community spirit [among inhabitants]… to prepare them to resist the temptation to follow the advice of the agitators'.[371] Members of the colonial administration believed that the attitudes of those in detention camps were improving; however, little improvement was being seen among those in the camps.[372] Prior to its application in counter-insurgency efforts, MW activity was largely exclusive to the North Nyanza and Machakos districts, where there was more interest from Kenyan women. By 1954, however, sufficient emergency funding was allocated to appoint two District Homecraft Officers for the Kikuyu district.[373] Askwith, a Cambridge educated English man who joined colonial service in Kenya from the 1930s, was appointed as Commissioner of the expanding DCD in 1949. Upon Britain's launch of measures against the Mau Mau, Askwith's department was given responsibility to develop rehabilitative measures designed, as Lewis shows, 'to win back the

[367] National Museums of Kenya, Gladys Sybil Bazette Beecher Collection 85, National Council of Women of Kenya (Maendeleo ya Wanawake).
[368] KNA, AB 15/10, Training Centre and Home Craft; Kenya Girl Guide Association; 1953-55, 34.
[369] Bruce-Lockhart and Rebisz, 'Discourses of Development and Practices of Punishment', 6.
[370] Katherine Bruce-Lockhart, '"Unsound" Minds and Broken Bodies: the Detention of "Hardcore" Mau Mau Women at Kamiti and Gitamayu Detention Camps in Kenya, 1954–1960', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 8 (2014), 590-591.
[371] Presbyterian Church of East Africa, II/AC/5, African District Council Minutes; 1955-62.
[372] UKNA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office 141/6426, Official Committee on Resettlement; Papers and Agenda 1955-8, 44/1.
[373] KNA, AB 2/1A, 3.

"hearts and minds"' of those supporting the insurgency'.[374] Askwith recognised that MW was making a 'contribution to building up responsible public opinion in disaffected areas' and it was therefore vital that the movement play a key role in counter-insurgency strategy.[375]

Welfare and socioeconomic advancement of women became a means of stabilising discontent in European colonies during the late-colonial era.[376] In comparison to Kenya, Natalya Vince explores French strategies used to attract Algerian women during France's counter-insurgency campaign against the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale (1954-1962). She argues that in a 'burst of last-ditch welfare colonialism', the French state directed its 'hearts and minds' operation toward Muslim women in a hope this secured the support of the Muslim family. The French attempted to prove that only they could free women from the 'oppression of tradition' and transform them into '"modern" mothers and housewives'.[377] Community development programmes targeting women in their role as domestic custodians was also introduced in Zimbabwe during the liberation war in the 1970s.[378] Maia Chenaux-Repond published her memoir based on her time as a Community Development Officer in Mashonaland South. She describes how they used community development in the villagisation scheme introduced in Zimbabwe, with a focus on modernising households and improving families' standards of living.[379] Zimbabwe offers an illuminating comparison to Kenya. It not only demonstrates the transfer of blueprints and personnel to facilitate villagisation as a counter-insurgency strategy, but also the need to accompany this with community development initiatives aimed at women who were forcibly resettled.

Colonial administrators generally perceived Gĩkũyũ women as both easily manipulated by male Mau Mau members and inherently deviant in attitude. This highly gendered characterisation of the women actively fighting for or supporting the Mau Mau heavily influenced the construction of Britain's broader community development programme and most specifically the work of MW. Community development was created for application across the broader population of

[374] Lewis, 'Introduction', in Askwith, *From Mau Mau to Harambee*, 3.
[375] KNA, AB 2/1A, 3.
[376] Barbara Bush, 'Nationalism, Development, and Welfare Colonialism: Gender and the Dynamics of Decolonization', in Martin Thomas and Andrew S. Thompson (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of The Ends of Empire* (Oxford, 2018), pp. 1-20, via Oxford Handbooks Online [website] <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198713197.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780198713197-e-31> (accessed 15 July 2021), 2.
[377] Natalya Vince, *Our Fighting Sisters: Nation, Memory and Gender in Algeria, 1954-2012* (Manchester, 2015), 74.
[378] See Maia Chenaux-Repond, *Leading from Behind: Women in Community Development in Rhodesia, 1973-79* (Harare, 2017).
[379] Chenaux-Repond, *Leading from Behind*, 28.

Kenya; however, in the context of the war, this coercive development programme was designed in a way to target 'supposedly atavistic Kenyans'.[380] Colonial state security now had a more vested interest in the activities of the welfarist arm of the state. MW adopted a particularly gendered and racialised identity of how the organisation viewed and therefore hoped to change women. Colonial depictions of the Mau Mau represented the movement as a 'fanatic… savage religious cult'.[381] This depiction worked to characterise those involved in the movement as suffering from a 'mental disorder'.[382] Rehabilitation in the detention camps and development in the villagisation policy was designed to look and seem to be the medicine to cure this disorder. MW was a treatment very much related to the Pipeline system developed for detainees.

The colonial government in Kenya historically sought to control and regulate girls and women. Officials mainly did so by focusing on their bodies and reproductive rights to construct moral and political order, as well as reworking 'gender and generational relations'.[383] Prior to their involvement in the Mau Mau, Gĩkũyũ girls and women had demonstrated a relentless energy protesting against the infringement of their rights. Two examples of this were in response to the bans on clitoridectomy and to protest the arrest of Harry Thuku, a politician opposing the removal of young girls for employment on settler plantations.[384] Regardless of this activism, colonial administrators historically viewed African women as malleable. Tabitha Kanogo shows this through the colonial government's debates of Kenyan women's legal status and the ongoing 'efforts to portray women as… adjuncts to men'.[385] This discourse framed Britain's response to Mau Mau women, and the DCD agreed that women in the camps simply needed to be given 'something to think about as an alternative to subversion and/or politics, which are often indistinguishable'.[386] A perceived solution to alleged subversion involved the re-education and restoration of moral – preferably Christian – values.[387]

[380] Moskowitz, *Seeing Like a Citizen*, 172.
[381] Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa* (London, 1992), 227.
[382] KNA, AB 2/1A, 51.
[383] Lynn Thomas, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2003), 16.
[384] Thomas, *Politics of the Womb*, Kanogo, 'Kikuyu Women and the Politics of Protest'; Audrey Wipper, 'Kikuyu Women and the Harry Thuku Disturbances: Some Uniformities of Female Militancy', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 59 (1989), pp. 300-337.
[385] Kanogo, *African Womanhood*, 29.
[386] KNA, AB 1/55, 46.
[387] Weston Library, Mss. Afr.s.2100, Thomas Askwith, Correspondence, 35-36.

British notions of 'respectable and deviant femininity' shaped these values, and this is identifiable in the colonial records.[388] In May 1954, P. H. Harris, the District Commissioner of Nyeri, compiled an extensive report titled 'Kikuyu Women and Mau Mau'. Harris had consulted several church leaders as well as a local chief and other colonial officials to outline the changes that had taken place in Gĩkũyũ society over the previous fifty years to provide context on the current situation. This report is invaluable in gaining insight into the discourse used to describe women during this time and how administrators understood their position in the Mau Mau. The key issues raised in the report that were noted as causes for the instability in central Kenya, are listed in this order: the increase in women being unmarried, the morals of young women having loosened, the lack of equal rights of women compared to men, the introduction of a money economy advancing men which had weakened women's influence in their homes, and finally, women's lack of education making them easily influenced by their menfolk.[389] It is important to highlight the ambiguity of the third point; the report elaborates on this and explains that Christian teaching provided to girls introduced the belief that they are equal to men in society. The report goes on to say, however, that the administration has failed to 'make this belief effective'.[390] Yet what rights exactly the report is referring to is unclear. Comparing it to the fourth point suggests women's unequal opportunity to advance economically. It is difficult to ignore that Harris depicts women in this report only in relation to men and their expected position as mothers and wives of a household. Women's deviance is viewed because of being unmarried and having 'loose' morals. Harris' findings reveal the gendered expectations forced on Kenyan women, which relatively traced official attitudes of British women at this time.

As the report continues, Harris argues that marriage 'offers the only hope of security and social position' to women and therefore the unmarried women aiding the Mau Mau as spies were prostitutes looking for a position of prestige in the movement.[391] Some women joined the forest fighters voluntarily to take up domestic roles for the army. Others fled to escape harassment by the colonial forces. Some male Mau Mau leaders did expect women to meet their supposed sexual needs.[392] Women entering the forests and joining the Mau Mau challenged Western

[388] Bruce-Lockhart and Rebisz, 'Discourses of Development and Practices of Punishment', 4.
[389] PCEA, II/CP/4, Women's Work Tumutumu Community Development, Notices and Correspondence; 1954-55.
[390] PCEA, II/CP/4.
[391] PCEA, II/CP/4.
[392] Kanogo, 'Kikuyu Women and the Politics of Protest', 87-88.

notions of 'the affinity between women and peace'.[393] It was therefore not uncommon for women associated with armed struggles to be depicted as sex workers due to their proximity to subversive men. Although villagisation sought to separate women from forest fighters, there was still a concern that this process could induce a rise in sex work. A reverend in Kiambu argued that in the same way urbanisation in Kenya had caused a rise of prostitution among Gĩkũyũ women, so too would this happen through the concentration into camps.[394] Gĩkũyũ men were particularly mobilised in inventing or tightening customary legal codes, including anti-prostitution to re-root conservative patriotisms.[395] Women, however, mainly populated these camps. This enabled the colonial administration to better target and impose its notions of respectable femininity on to women through the MW movement. This approach could be most effective for the British, as they had now separated women from the men assumed to be corrupting them.

MW hoped to re-instil women's morals by reaffirming them as the anchors of family life. As argued by Stoler, 'mothers were the makers of moral citizens', both White settler mothers and African mothers.[396] In a press release dated December 1956, the women's clubs in the Nyeri District were celebrated as the projects were proving 'vigorous, helpful and stimulating'.[397] Most importantly, however, the clubs were intended to instil a sense of social responsibility among the women in the community.[398] Establishing this sense among women was vital not only in counteracting the depleting conditions of camp life, but to reinstate women to their historicised position as 'custodians of the domestic welfare of the community'.[399] MW's projects mainly involved homemaking duties and crafts. More specifically, Kenyan women attended training on how to keep their homes clean and how to wash their babies effectively, as well as cooking classes focused on preparing nutritious meals for their families. Recreationally, women had opportunities to sing and dance with their clubs.[400] Training women to be better homemakers did not stop in the camp's clubs: this was also a core aspect of the rehabilitation process taking place in Kamiti, one of the two women's detention camps. The design of rehabilitation rested on gender assumptions, with men in detention receiving training

[393] Jean B. Elshtain, *Women and War* (Brighton, 1987), 4.
[394] PCEA, II/AB/6, Correspondence with DC (outgoing); 1941-57.
[395] Derek Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival: A History of Dissent, 1935-1972* (Cambridge, 2012), 4.
[396] Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (California, 2010), 139.
[397] KNA, CS 2/8/255, Relations with other Information; 1956-7, 120.
[398] KNA, CS 2/8/255, 120.
[399] Kanogo, 'Kikuyu Women and the Politics of Protest', 81.
[400] KNA, AB 2/1A.

in industry-based areas such as farming, carpentry, cobbling, animal husbandry and tailoring.[401] It is important to note that although MW required women to pay a membership fee and make a commitment of loyalty to become an official member, the DCD still opened many women's clubs to non-loyal women. This was in the hope that lessons on hygiene and social responsibility could filter as far and wide among the camp's inhabitants as possible.[402] It was a strong belief in the DCD as early as 1955 that MW clubs had 'been an effective instrument against subversive elements'.[403]

This gendered approach to development and 'rehabilitation' demonstrated an extension of the 'civilising mission' ideology. As Andreas Stucki identifies, the Portuguese and Spanish introduced similar practices among women in the Iberian colonies during the 1960s based on the findings of the French and British.[404] Stucki found the British Colonial Office's 'African Women' pamphlet among the colonial records in Lisbon's Overseas Archive. He argues that this movement of ideas and practices not only presents a common approach in efforts to stabilise societies, but a unified approach to African women's development.[405] Kenya, Algeria and the Iberian colonies demonstrate a general trend in coding development as domestic and female during the 1950s and 1960s. Development policies up until the 1970s framed women in 'the context of their roles as wives and mothers', assuming they would 'benefit as the economic position of their husbands improved'.[406] It was not until the mid-1970s, as demonstrated by the 1975 UN International Year for Women and the International Women's Decade (1976-85), that women's development integrated them into economic development strategies with a heavier focus on income projects for women.[407] Race and gender frame this common Western approach to targeting African women through a lens of advancement and progression in the late colonial era. It exposes the assumptions of African women as 'less civilised' than their European counterparts. Kenya is a particularly distinctive example for assessing Britain's use of feminised development in relation to counter-insurgency. While MW adopted similar practices to other European powers, they deployed these practices more coercively as a medicine to cure a 'disease' that the British believed had plagued and then

[401] Bruce-Lockhart and Rebisz, 'Discourses of Development and Practices of Punishment', 17 and KNA, AH 4/26/11/A, 'Rehabilitation of Detained Persons', 1953.
[402] UKNA, FCO 141/6244, Mau Mau Unrest; Measures against Female Terrorists and Sympathisers, 1954-6, 9.
[403] PCEA, II/CP/4.
[404] Andreas Stucki, *Violence and Gender in Africa's Iberian Colonies: Feminizing the Portuguese and Spanish Empire, 1950s-1970s* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 10.
[405] Stucki, *Violence and Gender in Africa's Iberian Colonies*, 10.
[406] Janet Momsen, *Gender and Development* (Routledge, 2009), 12-13.
[407] Momsen, *Gender and Development*, 13. See also Corrie Decker and Elisabeth McMahon, *The Idea of Development in Africa: A History* (Cambridge, 2021).

disintegration the social networks of the Gĩkũyũ ethnic group.[408] MW imagined that this remedy re-established a family unit, in the hope of restoring stability in Kenya and secure colonial control.

White female settlers believed it was their duty to liberate and educate African women on all matters of womanhood and motherhood. The British colony of Kenya is a unique site to explore White women's activism and the politics of colonial voluntary work in the settler community. Deanne von Tol explores the lesser known story of White women in the colony's pursuit of their own political representation and action involving welfare of the women and children of all races in East Africa.[409] The establishment of the EAWL in 1917 by Isabel Ross – settler, Quaker, and suffragist – sought to address these issues in a formal association which still to this day has a prominent place in White-Kenyan society.[410] The EAWL's archive has received little attention in the literature on Kenya, with von Tol leading the way in exploring the League's evolution through the 1920s to the late 1940s. The archive has been invaluable to this thesis in exploring how the settler community of women involved themselves in counter-insurgency efforts in the 1950s and provides an insight into White middle-class feminist ideologies in Kenya during this time. Although the EAWL as an organisation was not the leading force in efforts to develop African women in the camps, the internal correspondence and publications from the time provide insight into the views of female settlers, with the introduction of community development also opening up roles in the colonial administration dedicated to this work.

Some female settlers believed that European women shared a duty to support the wellbeing of colonised women. While in ways progressive in ideology, this work contributed to counter-insurgency efforts which sought to control African women. As Barbara Bush argues, the late colonial era coincided with the rise of international feminism and the emancipation of Western women. This had in turn 'stimulated concern for the welfare of colonised women'.[411] In an EAWL address in 1959, members celebrated the progress of the League and how they were involved in efforts among Kenyan women alongside the BRCS, MW and the DCD. In the address, the volunteers are described as an essential body responsible for 'the awakening of the

[408] Yolana Pringle, 'Humanitarianism, Race and Denial: the International Committee of the Red Cross and Kenya's Mau Mau Rebellion, 1952–60', *History Workshop Journal*, 84 (2017), 99.
[409] Van Tol, 'The Women of Kenya Speak', 433-434.
[410] Van Tol, 'The Women of Kenya Speak', 433.
[411] Bush, 'Nationalism, Development, and Welfare Colonialism', 2.

Kikuyu women to a sense of their place in the life of the community'.[412] The language here reflects that of missionary evangelism prevalent in the colonies. Women's roles in missionary work adopted 'distinctly feminine characteristics' through their focus on social welfare mainly directed at their African counterparts.[413] As von Tol emphasises, 'a philanthropic role was central to the identity of imperial white womanhood'.[414] This demonstrates the intersectionality of gender, race and the supposed civilising mission in the context of imperialism. White-settler women's duty did not, however, stop there. An EAWL newsletter article dated March 1956 states:

> The elementary principles of hygiene and housewifery **can** [sic] be taught to the African woman without any help from us. But there is one thing that I feel only her European neighbours can teach her, by example and precept and friendliness – that life needn't consist only of the hewing of wood and the drawing of water, the tilling of the soil and the bearing of children; the lesson that in more fortunate communities our girls learn very early – the realisation that life can be fun for a woman.[415]

The EAWL was successful in rallying to achieve the vote for White women in the colony of Kenya which was prior to their sisters achieving the same in the metropole. White imperial feminism was therefore seen as the leading force for the 'awakening' of African women and their pursuit of joy. Europeans regarded African women as 'beasts of burden', regularly depicted working arduously on their land with their babies strapped to their back.[416] Female settler volunteers assumed it was their duty to reconfigure this imbalance of physical labour to their day-to-day lives.

European women sought out roles in the colonial administration that channelled this sense of duty to work with African women and their children. With community development initiatives turning more attention to the development and welfare of women and children, the DCD established formal roles that were ideal for European women. Women's employment in welfare roles was not new to the emergency period; however, the 1950s gave it a new sense of purpose. While Askwith remains one of the key figures when examining community development in

[412] East Africa Women's League Private Collection, WEAL House, Bishop's Road, Nairobi, Kenya.
[413] Rhonda A. Semple, 'Professionalising their Faith: Women, Religion and Cultures of Mission and Empire', in Sue Morgan and Jacqueline DeVries (eds), *Women, Gender and Religious Cultures in Britain, 1800-1940* (Routledge, 2010), 118.
[414] Van Tol, 'The Women of Kenya Speak', 436.
[415] EAWL Private Collection.
[416] Margaret Kinsman, '"Beasts of Burden": The Subordination of Southern Tswana Women, ca. 1800-1840', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 10 (1983), 46.

Kenya, Nancy Shepherd played a vital role in organising the women's branch of this work. Shepherd was born in Mombasa, and after spending most of her young life at boarding school in England, she returned to Kenya in 1947 to take up a post in colonial service.[417] She was to teach domestic science at the Jeanes School and provide training to African women in homecrafts.[418] Shepherd soon became the principal of The Jeanes School, and this put her in good stead to take up a senior role as Assistant Commissioner for Community Development and Rehabilitation. Her experience with African women's homecraft training made her the ideal candidate to head this aspect of women's work during the emergency.[419] In this role, Shepherd directed MW and opened the Jeanes School up as the main training centre for all its leaders. Although MW was for African women, no African woman gained a leadership role in the organisation until the 1960s. For the duration of the emergency period, MW had an exclusively European committee.[420]

Mirroring the views of the EAWL, the DCD believed it was the duty of European women to 'change the villagers' attitude towards their problems'.[421] Under the leadership of Shepherd, a role for Community Development Women's Officers (CDWO) was established, with the agenda of introducing techniques to 'overcome apathy and conservatism' among the women.[422] The CDWOs worked largely through the MW movement, but were able to operate separately if the camps had shown little appetite for a club. They also operated under the title of Homecraft Officers and had salaries for their roles.[423] The colonial administration assigned the CDWOs as assistants to the departmental staff and district teams. The government hoped that the CDWOs functioned through indirect approaches that in turn alleviated bigger issues in the camps, which the district teams then no longer had to deal with. For example, if the CDWO of a camp taught women the values of home cleaning, the rate of fly-borne disease cases decreased. If the CDWO taught mothers child-care, this relieved the burden on clinics responding to children with minor ailments.[424] Most importantly, the CDWO had to gain the confidence of those in the camps and persuade them to wilfully cooperate with camp operations.[425] The gender dynamic was key in this approach. White women deployed more

[417] Lewis, *Empire State-Building*, 282.
[418] Lewis, *Empire State-Building*, 283 and 345.
[419] Lisa Aubrey, *The Politics of Development Co-operation: NGOs, Gender and Partnership in Kenya* (Routledge,1997), 46.
[420] Aubrey, *The Politics of Development Co-operation*, 46-47.
[421] KNA, DC/KSM 1/31/20, Community Development Officers; Women work; 1945-59, 181.
[422] KNA, DC/KSM 1/31/20, 181.
[423] A role already established in the pre-Emergency period. PCEA, II/CP/4; KNA, AB 2/1A, 41.
[424] KNA, DC/KSM 1/31/20, 181.
[425] KNA, AB 2/26, Community Development Policy Villages Policy; 1956-7, 55.

covert forms of coercion. While White men populated the government and military, exercising the less ambiguous violence against Africans in the conflict, White women navigated the 'softer' practices which contributed to the overall oppression and coercion of Britain's counter-insurgency campaign.

Building a 'Finished Product'

In her reflections on the success MW had at transforming Mau Mau women, Katherine Warren-Gash, an officer of Kamiti detention camp, noted that she was very pleased with the 'finished products' the movement had generated.[426] Through this description, Warren-Gash depicts MW as a production process, reinforcing the social engineering efforts to mould individuals. This language use mirrored that of the 'Pipeline', with the idea being that suspected Mau Mau fighters progressed through a system that converted them from dangerous 'terrorists' to governable citizens. The language deployed by colonial officials to describe those associated with the Mau Mau is illuminating. Largely dehumanising, the words and phrasing reflect British views of Africans in their colonies and how they hoped to socially engineer them. MW sought to bring unity among women in a joint effort to work toward social improvement. As has been shown, this was framed by British ideals of African women in their position as wives, mothers, and household managers. As the first verse of the MW song, which was sung in Kiswahili at the beginning and end of each club meeting, reads:

sisi wanawake na tuendelee mbele	'we women let us move forward
kuwasaidia wenzi wetu	help them our partners
jua likingaa san ani alama yetu	the sun shining brightly is our sign
basi mwanga nao pia ungae nyumbani kwetu[427]	so the light too should shine in our home'

Enforcing social responsibility onto Kenyan women was justified by community development officers, with one arguing that 'if you educate a man you educate one person only, whereas if you educate a woman you are educating the whole family'.[428] With women ascribed home and childcare, officials believed they were best positioned to disseminate their education down the generations.

[426] KNA, DC 1/13; Bruce-Lockhart and Rebisz, 'Discourses of Development and Practices of Punishment', 17.
[427] NMK, GSBB/85.
[428] KNA, DC/KMG 1/1/178, Community Development, Homecraft and Women Institutes; 1956-59, 158.

To restore family stability in the context of the rural unrest, the DCD recognised that unmarried women and young wives, who demonstrated an economic and intellectual ability to engage with the movement, were the ideal members. While the DCD may have pitched MW as an inclusive movement to 'advance' women, closer examination of MW records shows there was a recruitment criterion in place for the type of woman colonial administrators wanted to join. In conjunction with missionary education among girls, MW recognised the importance of preparing young African women to be well-equipped mothers who could support their families, and particularly their husbands. In Askwith's view, the training MW provided helped educate these women to ensure they were not as 'primitive as their mothers had been'.[429] This category of women were 'primarily perceived as the custodians of the domestic welfare of the community', and therefore the DCD honed in on them to focus and evolve development strategies.[430] As Kanogo argues in her exploration of missionary education for girls, 'the process of remaking African women therefore required malleable minds that were not too set in the ways of their communities'.[431] In her context, however, Kanogo recognises that girls over the age of fourteen were viewed as too old for this transformation to suceed.[432] As this section goes on to demonstrate, MW selected females over the age of fourteen.

The colonial administration and missionaries were engaging with a community where age was an important signifier in explaining one's place in society. As Paul Ocobock argues, 'prior to colonial rule, age was a powerful force in the lives of Kenyan communities – perhaps more so than ethnicity'.[433] Age stratified Kenyan communities. Rights and obligations were ascribed to different age groups and ritual ceremonies were established that groups moved up, progressing them to positions of greater authority. This progression was gendered. Male elders, especially in the Gĩkũyũ community, held a high stature having created new generations and by 'honing their warrior skills'.[434] Women's stages of maturity were linked to their reproductive abilities and were associated with female initiation, pregnancy, and child-birth.[435] The introduction of

[429] Emily Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire: Humanitarian Collusion with the Colonial State during the Kenyan Emergency, c.1954-1960', *Journal of British Studies*, 59 (2020), 16.
[430] Kanogo, 'Kikuyu Women and the Politics of Protest', 81
[431] Kanogo, *African Womanhood*, 205.
[432] Kanogo, *African Womanhood*, 205.
[433] Paul Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age: The Politics of Manhood in Kenya* (Ohio, 2017), 7. See also Stacey Hynd, '"Uncircumcised boys" and "girl Spartans": Youth, Gender and Generation in Colonial Insurgencies and Counterinsurgency, c. 1954-59', *Gender & History*, 33 (2021), pp. 536-556; Corrie Decker, 'A Feminist Methodology of Age-Grading and History in Africa', AHR Roundtable: Chronological Age: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis, *American Historical Review*, 125 (2020), pp. 418-426.
[434] Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age*, 7.
[435] Thomas, *Politics of the Womb*, 7.

villagisation, separating females from their regular ways of life and with most then being separated from the male members of their community, enabled MW to bridge the gap in attempting to transform females older than those targeted by missionary education.

It is difficult to determine the exact age range the DCD identified these women to be. In an interview with Agnes Wanjiru Mwangi, she highlights that the MW club in her camp chose 'those who had gone to school for some time and those who were not old' to join their club.[436] When comparing this to the constitution of the MW organisation as it stood in 1954, membership was 'confined to women and girls over 16'.[437] The records do not explicitly provide an upper age bracket though, and this aspect was left somewhat open. It is important to note, however, that the term 'young' is used regularly in discussions of MW among colonial officials. In October 1955, the Sociological Committee considered the issue of young African women's needs and determined that MW was providing 'sufficient opportunities for the women who became mothers'.[438] The focus was therefore on targeting girls from the age of sixteen to prepare them for motherhood and marriage.[439] Agnes' interview also emphasises that the age barriers were intrinsically linked to one's access to education. By stating that girls had to have gone to school 'for some time' to be a part of the MW movement, suggests that the leaders sought out those who had already demonstrated potential for learning and cultural adaptation.

Age, especially in relation to the Gĩkũyũ community, was a site of contention in the context of the Mau Mau.[440] As the introduction outlines, Askwith believed that a key source of anti-colonial discontent derived from a lack of discipline among young men and women.[441] In Askwith's view, the colonial government had 'weakened parental and chiefly influence' and failed to offer 'alternative ways for the young to express themselves or augment elder authority'.[442] Joining the Mau Mau therefore offered young men the opportunity to fill these voids and Britain's response to young men was to 're-establish discipline and respect for

[436] Agnes Wanjiru Mwangi, interview, Murang'a County, 20th April 2019.
[437] KNA, AB 2/1A, 46.
[438] UKNA, FCO 141/5887, Corfield Report, 102.
[439] Note that there was an active Kenya Girl Guides Association in this time period which recruited girls through their schools. Brownies and Girl Guide companies supposedly 'spread rapidly in both town and country areas' throughout the 1950s. See: KNA, AB 15/10, Training Centre and Home Craft; Kenya Girl Guide Association; 1953-55, 44/1.
[440] On age and gendered colonial education see: Corrie Decker, 'Schoolgirls and women teachers: Colonial education and the shifting boundaries between girls and women in Zanzibar', in Erin Stiles and Katrina Daly Thompson (eds), *Gendered Lives in the Western Indian Ocean: Islam, Marriage, and Sexuality on the Swahili Coast* (Ohio, 2015); Kanogo, *African Womanhood*.
[441] KNA, AB 1/73, 1.
[442] Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age*, 178.

colonial authority' in the 'rehabilitation' process.[443] This process then sought to 'reconstruct Gĩkũyũ manhood by resocialising those in detention with ideas about proper, civilised male behaviour'.[444] While the colonial government attempted to reform young men as more governable, young women were being tasked with a greater responsibility to teach the next generation. The best age category of women to do so were those on the cusp or in the process of building their own families. MW clubs did not prevent older Gĩkũyũ women from joining. Due to this, age was sometimes a barrier that disrupted the effectiveness of MW teaching. The DCD faced challenges in engaging with older women in camps who felt patronised by the more youthful leaders. With social age being closely linked to Gĩkũyũ community hierarchy, and an older woman having borne children being of a higher status than unwed women, it is no surprise that age continued to be a site of contention for MW.

The colonial administration burdened Kenyan women with the responsibility to mitigate the impact the counter-insurgency campaign, and colonial rule more generally, had had in the rural areas thus far. The club activities hosted by MW offer some insight into the efforts encouraged among members to improve living conditions and standards in the camps. Rewards were granted to those making outstanding homemaking and communal effort. Competitions were used by the movement's organisers to encourage increased activity and pride. 'Points' were given for a whole array of work. Home cleanliness was the prime aspect here; however, other competitions included awards for best 'improvisation of household furniture from bits and pieces', 'number and size of windows', 'latrine building and care of', as well as best garden competitions.[445] A prize given out weekly in some camps was to those with the 'cleanest child and hut'.[446] Competitions such as these worked to incentivise women to put effort into the upkeep of their camp. Those forcibly resettled, however, faced dire living conditions with little support given from funding or planning. While these competitions were framed as a force of encouragement, the colonial administration pushed the financial and physical burden of camp upkeep onto those who had no say on their forced resettlement in the first place. The 1956 annual report for the Fort Hall district states that inhabitants were being encouraged to build social centres in their camps for use of MW club activity and other social events. The report goes on to state that progress of this in the district was slow because the cost fell on those

[443] Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age*, 178.
[444] Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age*, 178.
[445] KNA, AB 2/1A, 47.
[446] British Red Cross Archive, RCC/1/31/4, The British Red Cross Society Overseas Branches: Report for the Year 1954.

forcibly resettled.[447] This also hints toward hopes among the colonial government that the camps would become permanent fixtures as opposed to temporary counter-insurgency infrastructure.

Women were tasked with dealing with a devastating impact of villagisation - the decline in infant and child well-being. Forced resettlement and the conflict more generally had resulted in children dying from starvation, suffering illness, and in many cases, being orphaned.[448] MW was envisaged as a key tool in combating these problems. The issues were framed by the DCD as evidence of failed African child-rearing methods, as opposed to the inevitable impact of poor colonial planning and forced displacement from each household's fields. In Askwith's view, Kenya 'was being held back as much by the ignorance of the women as of the men'.[449] It was not just Kenya, however, which had this perceived problem. Askwith's 1952 publication *The Story of Kenya's Progress*, illuminates a collective view, held among Europeans, on the main challenge disrupting Africa's progress to the realm of modernity. Askwith affirmed the belief that social issues in Africa stemmed from the 'backwardness' of women.[450] In order to secure women's allegiance during this period of unrest, Askwith believed women's development had to focus on motherhood. He argued it was only through a mother's 'natural concern for the child and its welfare' that women understood the changes taking place to be in their interest.[451] This was in ways a one-size-fits-all approach deployed by British colonial governments in other territories at the time. It was a successor of missionary-style education. Increasing the educational delivery of domestic science was also taking place in Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zanzibar, as detailed in 'African Women', a 1955 pamphlet produced by the Department of Education in Tropical Areas. It is also important to note that MW was registered as a constituent member of the Associated Country Women of the World organisation (ACWW).

Women's clubs also used handicraft activities to support the care of children. Lessons in sewing and crocheting were widely practiced across women's clubs. The BRCS had recognised that there was a real shortage of suitable clothing for children in the camps.[452] Oftentimes using

[447] KNA, DC/FH 1/35, Fort Hall Annual Report; 1956, 7.
[448] For an assessment of the difficulties in determining mortality rates during the Emergency see for example: John Blacker, 'The Demography of Mau Mau: Fertility and Mortality in Kenya in the 1950s: A Demographer's Viewpoint', *African Affairs*, 106 (2007), pp. 205-227.
[449] KNA, MSS 4/66, 110.
[450] KNA, MSS 4/66, 110.
[451] Askwith, *From Mau Mau to Harambee*, 145.
[452] BRCA, RCC/1/12/1/8, British Red Cross Society in Kenya.

scraps of material, women were taught needlework and sewing to make new clothing for children. In the annual report from the BRCS in 1954, it was stated that this was important to improve the 'health, outlook and appearance' of the camp's inhabitants.[453] The sewing lessons hosted by MW and BRCS clubs were regularly used for promotional materials of camp activities.[454] It is also important to note that Askwith recognised the benefit of using children's welfare as a way of obtaining more funding for community development efforts and women's work. In a briefing prepared for an application to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), Askwith stressed, 'almost everything which is tackled by community development contributes to the improvement in the health and well-being of mothers and children'.[455] He urged that the development of children was dependent on family life and home structure, arguing that any funding provided to the development of women directly impacted child welfare.[456] While MW was receiving some emergency funding for this work, this aspect of community development was also vying for outside support to maintain presence in camps.

To participate in these activities, which were promised to be in the interest of women's families, women had to be able to afford the membership fee. To become a fully-fledged member of the organisation, one had to pay an annual membership fee to reap any benefits from their group. The annual membership cost two Kenyan Shillings per person and this fee was deposited in a Post Office Savings Account. The savings account of each club was the responsibility of the officer in charge of the supervision of the club and its direction. The accumulated subscription fees were primarily used to purchase equipment for the general use of members, such as sewing machines, sewing provisions and cooking supplies. From each member's subscription fee, ten cents were provided as an affiliation fee to the MW organisation, ten cents to the ACWW funds and ten cents to obtain a membership card.[457] Many women gained from this financial commitment to their club.[458] Beatrice Muthoni Mukubu recalled fondly in interview the financial support women could receive through the money each member paid into the movement. Subscription fees were offered to finance improvements to home structures when

[453] BRCA, RCC/1/31/4.
[454] Bristol Archive, British Empire and Commonwealth Collection (Huxley Collection), 1994-076-1-1-15; BRCA, RCC/1/31/4; UKNA, Information Department 10/158, British Empire Collection of Photographs; Kenya; 1944-62.
[455] KNA, AB 2/90, Policy; UNICEF Policy; 1954-58, 190.
[456] KNA, AB 2/90, 47.
[457] KNA, AB 17/11, Social Welfare; Rehab Red Cross - teams; 1954-55, 127A.
[458] There is a wider discourse exploring the economic activities of African women, especially in relation to cash crops. See for example: Ester Boserup, *Woman's role in economic development* (London, 1970).

club members could not source or afford necessary material. Beatrice's MW club even contributed money towards her church wedding, which took place in the camp she resided in.[459] The DCD believed that one of the greatest needs of an African woman was to handle the family money. This was so she could purchase the food and necessities for her family, before 'the husband fritters away' money needed for the family.[460] MW emphasised the importance of women having more economic control in preparation for broader economic restructuring in the rural areas. For other women, however, the membership fee was the key obstacle in being able to join and participate in the movement. Villagisation caused greater poverty for resettled Kenyans, especially those in the punitive side of the camp. This increase in poverty meant that many were now relying on the services of the BRCS to feed their families.[461] Furthermore, as Agnes' earlier testimony attests, only those who had gained school education were considered as ideal members.

While it is difficult to ascertain whether the DCD implemented this membership fee to purposefully keep MW as an exclusive club for those engaged in the colonial economy, it did work to create an allure of what women could be if they joined a club. Declaring oneself loyal to the colonial government was vital to join MW, and the movement worked actively to portray a better life for those in the organisation. By showing other women that members were receiving 'preferential treatment' and were 'living happier', the hope was this induced further support with more women paying up to join. It is important to note that MW 'came under the patronage of upper-class colonial women' including Lady Mary Baring, the Governor's wife, as well as members of the EAWL.[462] While these women had little intention for their African members becoming 'upper-class colonial women', the movement aimed to encourage women to better themselves and to project images of propriety. There was a view held in the administration, as well as in Britain, that an African middle class needed to be established to uphold future stability in reaction to the Mau Mau.[463] Being a loyalist in colonial Kenya often facilitated a higher economic and social standing through employment and opportunity.[464] For women who had watched their homesteads burn to the ground before being forced to move

[459] Beatrice Muthoni Mukubu, interview, Nyeri County, 30th April 2019.
[460] KNA, AB 8/10, Minutes and Meetings; Maendelea ya Wanawake; 1956-58, 79.
[461] Sophia Wambui Kiarie, interview, Kiambu County, 4th April 2019; BRCA, 1594/27, Vice-Chairman's Visit to East Africa Jan/Feb 1957.
[462] Audrey Wipper, 'The Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization: The Co-Optation of Leadership', *African Studies Review*, 18 (1975), 99-100.
[463] Wunyabari O. Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya* (Indiana, 1993), 144.
[464] Daniel Branch, 'The Enemy Within: Loyalists and the War against Mau Mau in Kenya', *The Journal of African History*, 2 (2007), 295.

into a camp, or for those who now lived in over-populated huts, the image of respectable femininity projected in MW presented a form of social mobility simply unattainable for them in their existing circumstances.

An excellent visual example of how respectable femininity was imagined can be attained from colonial photography. One image, which is particularly striking, presents four MW members (figure 8). According to the back of the photograph, the women are from the Kabete club in the central region of Kenya, and they are learning to make tea. It is difficult to confirm when exactly this photograph was taken. The stamp on the back confirms the photograph's use by the Colonial Office from July 1962. Other photographs present camps fully populated. One can infer therefore that this photograph was taken in the latter part of the 1950s, prior to the 1959-1960 movement out of the camps. In the photograph, each woman is presented in a dress which encapsulates Western ideas of respectable femininity at this time. The dresses cover the women's knees, and they have high necklines. Three women are wearing a single-row pearl necklace. Pearls in Anglophone culture symbolise middle-class status and a form of currency. It is unlikely that the necklaces presented in this photograph are real pearls given the sheer expense of them at the time. Each woman's hair is neatly kept back from their faces, controlled – twisted back, threaded, or held in place with a comb.

This was a stark comparison to the more common presentation of women in Kenya wearing a headscarf, as can be seen in several other photographs from the same collection (figure 9).[465] It is important to note that all four women are presented in a socially uniformed way. As Jennifer Craik has extensively explored, uniforms represent control 'not only of the social self but also of the inner self and its formation'.[466] It is also typical of a carceral setting to enforce uniforms on inmates. Although this example is not characteristic of the type of uniform worn by detainees, here there is further evidence of the colonial administration harnessing efforts towards modernity as a form of control and coercion. In line with their necklaces and the branded tea shown in the photograph, Western commercial fashion is also projected. In Algeria, the French also extended its control of Muslim women's supposed transformation in a very visible way by introducing public ceremonies of unveiling. Like Kenya, this demonstrates the highly coercive approach of development on women's identities, in France's case impacting women's religious independence. Vince argues that women were 'not only being ruled by

[465] See for example UKNA, INF 10/158, 8, 9 & 12.
[466] Jennifer Craik, 'The Cultural Politics of the Uniform', *Fashion Theory*, 7 (2003), 128.

France but becoming Frenchwomen' also.[467] For the case of MW, the Colonial Office was quite literally offering a visual representation of the MW 'finished products' through these photographs.

[Third party copyright protected material redacted]

Figure 8: 'Members of a *Maendeleo* Club at Kabete learn to make tea'.[468]

[Third party copyright protected material redacted]

Figure 9: Members of a *Maendeleo* club inspecting sisal hats at a Machakos exhibition, n.d.[469]

[467] Vince, *Our Fighting Sisters*, 74.
[468] UKNA, INF 10/158, 11, this image has been cropped from the original.
[469] UKNA, INF 10/158, 8, this image has been cropped from the original. Also see: UKNA, INF 10/158, 9 & 12.

Moreover, the representation of cultural hybridity in figure 8 situates the efforts of MW in harnessing modernity as a form of control in counter-insurgency efforts.[470] In this constructed set-up, the women are drinking out of expensive-looking chinaware. In the centre of the photograph there is a packet of Brooke Bond tea. Brooke Bond was a British tea company that had established a tea plantation in Limuru, Kenya in 1924.[471] Both the chinaware and the packaged tea symbolise Britain's imperial global network, Britain exerted power over land and labour, and British economic interests. Erika Rappaport recognises the historic notion that tea 'is an agent of civilisation'.[472] This idea first appeared in China over a thousand years ago, but Europeans repurposed it in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to adopt tea as a 'core part of European culture'.[473] Tea in the twentieth century was feminised, with tea drinking becoming associated with the delights of home and the love a woman provided to her husband.[474] This representation of British modernity and imperial strength is juxtaposed purposefully with the resources the woman to the left of the photograph has to wash the crockery. She would use the charcoal oven to heat the tea that the other women are drinking, a reminder that there is no electricity where this photograph was taken. The same heat which warmed the tea is also being repurposed to heat up the water in the metal bowl which she then used for cleaning purposes. Like the positioning of tea in this photograph, the emphasis on washing and cleanliness perpetuated imperial notions of civility and the cult of domesticity.[475] While the photograph seeks to represent a more modern version of an African woman through a European gaze, key reminders of the 'less civilised' and 'less equipped' African household are prevalent. Applying Craik again in this instance, uniformity in 'developing countries seeking modernity… are often highly elaborate as a demonstration of their actual or desired power'.[476] Here, the colonial government were propagating an image of modernity it envisaged for Kenya and Kenyans.

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[470] 'Hybridity' in colonial and postcolonial studies refers to the mixing of western colonisers' and the colonised cultural attributes. For an assessment of this and 'hybridity as the sign of the productivity of colonial power', see: Homi K. Bhabha, 'Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree outside Delhi, May 1817', *Critical Inquiry*, 12 (1985), 153-155. For an assessment of this in relation to the Mau Mau field, arguing that the administration's perceived agrarian revolution and the establishment of an African middle class was to secure future stability and eliminate the threat of the Mau Mau, see: Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya*, 144 - 145.

[471] Unilever Company Profile. 'Kenya': <https://www.ide.go.jp/English/Data/Africa_file/Company/kenya06.html> (accessed 25 June 2020).

[472] Erika Rappaport, *Thirst for Empire: How Tea Shaped the Modern World* (Princeton Uni Press, 2017), 4.

[473] Rappaport, *Thirst for Empire*, 4.

[474] Rappaport, *Thirst for Empire*, 5.

[475] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York, 1995), 208.

[476] Craik, 'The Cultural Politics of the Uniform', 129.

Developmental Counter-Insurgency, a Fragile Practice

Determining how effective Britain's developmental counter-insurgency practices were with the camp's female inhabitants is difficult to quantify and challenging to fit in the remit of this thesis. What can be ascertained from the material consulted, is that Askwith's and Shepherd's vision and agenda for MW was fragile in practice. The success of this developmental approach relied on numerous factors coinciding against the backdrop of a highly violent campaign being fought against Kenyans. Women in the camps experienced particularly heightened forms of violence from officials, yet MW preached reformative progress. The success of MW was determined by the day-to-day interactions and interventions of women working as CDWOs and Homecraft Officers in club activity. Evidence, however, shows that implementing new practices of modernity upon women was difficult, unrealistic and culturally ignorant. When Kenyan women did not respond positively in MW classes, officials resorted to the racist tropes by blaming it on African 'primitivism'. The aims of the DCD were often contradictory and underdeveloped.

CDWOs had to gain Kenyan women's trust and allegiance if women's development was to be well received by them in the camps. As the CDWOs were visibly associated with the colonial government through the skin colour of its employees, this was a challenge. Gĩkũyũ women noted CDWOs' ignorance of local forms of culture, knowledge and language. They also had issues with the age of women in positions of influence. In an EAWL newsletter, dated February/March 1955, a member working as a Homecraft Officer during the emergency period details some of these encounters. In one example, she describes sitting in on a training session focused on child-care. During the session, she and the Homecraft Assistant of this specific group gave a demonstration on how to bath a baby to an audience ranging from young children to grandmothers. In her description of the women, the Homecraft Officer over-emphasises the difference between her and those she and the assistant are teaching. She describes the audience as 'all illiterate and nearly all in *shukas* [blankets], with shaven heads and bunches of bangles hanging from distended earlobes'.[477] The Homecraft Officer details that 'shrieks of laughter greeted every step in the process' of cleaning the baby doll in the demonstration. It was the 'cleaning of [the] baby's nostrils with twists of cotton wool' which 'brought the house down'.[478]

[477] WL, Micr.Afr.589, EAWL newsletter No. 9 Series II July/August 1955.
[478] WL, Micro.Afr.589.

The Homecraft Officer notes that it was the grandmothers laughing most loudly throughout the demonstration referencing the fact that these women had already reared several children. Later in the description she writes, 'you can see from this example that it is not an easy thing to persuade the primitive African woman that Western ideas on hygiene are necessarily the best'.[479] British women in this instance enforced cultural imperialism to demonstrate Western ideas of hygiene as more effective and dominant than whatever approaches Gĩkũyũ women were taking to child-rearing in their communities. This ignorance was not unique to British women's experiences in Kenya, Charlotte Kelsted also explores British women's contempt of Palestinian Arab mothers and their approaches to childrearing.[480] While this Homecraft Officer argued it was African 'primitivism' that prevented their engagement from being successful, it demonstrated a total disregard of the experiences of mothering already established among the female audience members. It also shows the difficulty young and mainly unmarried British trainers, had in convincing older African women that their way was best. It was not going to be easy for young British women, who had not had children of their own, to influence grandmothers in practices of child-care.

The EAWL did, however, try to support British women who were struggling to influence Kenyan female inhabitants. In the same newsletter, the Homecraft Officer highlights that the EAWL was preparing a phrase-book which included vocabulary and phrases in the vernaculars of six of the 'major Kenyan tribes'.[481] It is not stated which exact ethnic groups this included. The learning resource also included 'a chapter on native customs and taboos to show the European woman how often she may unwittingly offend'.[482] While this example demonstrates an effort of British women adapting to the challenges, the EAWL published this newsletter in 1955, two years after the first camps opened. Homecraft work among Africans had already begun in the pre-emergency era. British women had therefore been attempting to engage and train Kenyan women from numerous ethnic groups with very little understanding of the different languages, social structures, or 'taboos'. This is not necessarily surprising when compared to the nature of colonialism in Africa and the dominant, paternalistic approach of cultural imperialism. The EAWL phrase-book was a superficial answer to a far more complex

[479] WL, Micro.Afr.589.
[480] Charlotte Kelsted, 'Multiple Intimate Colonialisms: British Women and the Population of Mandate Palestine, 1920-1948', PhD Thesis (University of Exeter, 2021), 65.
[481] WL, Micro.Afr.589.
[482] WL, Micro.Afr.589.

issue which further exacerbated the power dynamic between colonial counter-insurgents and those experiencing counter-insurgency measures.

Consistency in staff posting was vital if women's work was to be effective. The British women assigned as CDWOs and Homecraft Officers worked to establish close connections with Kenyan women, but their own personal life choices sometimes impacted their ability to maintain these relationships. A letter sent from Patricia Whiteside in July 1958 to her District Commissioner in Central Nyanza, provides an insight into the restraints British women still faced in this time period if they were to pursue marriage while in paid work. In her letter, Whiteside states, 'I have the honour to inform you that I have recently become engaged to be married… In the light of this you will wish to terminate my agreement'.[483] Women not only had to declare this development in their personal lives to their employer, but they also had to depart their professional career for the new role they were adopting, as a wife. Whiteside's letter, however, emphasises her assertion in maintaining her paid employment, showcasing her abilities and merits as justification for her case. She writes, 'I am anxious to continue as C.D.O (W) in this District, firstly to maintain some degree of continuity and secondly because of my own interest in the work'.[484] Whiteside recognised the effort it took for CDWO to establish and maintain personal connections with the African women they worked with. This, as has been shown, was the main directive given by the colonial administration to the CDWO. If the work was to be successful, women had to gain the cooperation of those in their clubs. Whiteside effectively used this knowledge to actively challenge gender norms of the time, also displaying her passion for her craft as well as her fiancé. Whiteside was successful in her case. It was strongly recommended by the District Commissioner that for continuity and as the man Whiteside was to marry was a District Officer in Kenya with a remaining 18 months on his contract, that she continue in her role for the foreseeable future.[485]

The longevity of Britain's development aims among women was reliant on Kenyan women working as MW leaders. As argued by Richard Reid, 'war and material advancement were indelibly intertwined… war itself often involved the creation of new economic centers [sic]'.[486] Britain's counter-insurgency campaign in Kenya opened opportunities for both British and

[483] KNA, DC/KSM 1/31/20, 183.
[484] KNA, DC/KSM 1/31/20, 183.
[485] KNA, DC/KSM 1/31/20, 183.
[486] Richard Reid, 'The Fragile Revolution: Rethinking War and Development in Africa's Violent Nineteenth Century', in E. Akyeampong, R. Bates, N. Nunn, & J. Robinson (eds), *Africa's Development in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, 2014), 411-412.

Kenyan women to access paid employment and social mobility. The educational approach of MW was adapted from church missionary education for girls, pre-emergency. As Kanogo argues, girls' education 'was closely linked to official and missionary notions of social eugenics, not just the cultivation of domesticity' as the standard of community living was believed to be 'dictated largely by the standard adopted by the women'.[487] For ideas and practices to filter out most effectively to other women and girls, African women were needed as club leaders of MW and Homecrafts. This approach followed suit with the process of formal indirect rule in Britain's colonies whereby colonial officials identified Africans to rule through and implement colonial policies.

African women became part of the governing structure of MW as leaders of district club activity. Mainly referred to as Homecraft Leaders, MW Leaders, or Homecraft Assistants, women worked closely with African District Councils to coordinate their work. The district heads were paid a salary from the African District Council funds and were required to meet with Homecraft Officers once a month to discuss the progress their clubs were making and any problems they were encountering.[488] All African employees worked at a local level but under the supervision of the CDWO for that area; this meant that if the CDWO was unavailable or struck with illness, the Homecraft Assistants and Leaders had a duty to the DCD to continue this work.[489] As a part-time Homecraft Assistant, women had the opportunity of earning thirty Kenyan Shillings per month.[490] For those who then trained to become Homecraft teachers in training centres, they could earn a salary of two hundred and seven Kenyan Shillings per month.[491] African women used the supposedly reformative aspects of Britain's counter-insurgency campaign for their own social and economic mobility. Women gained more opportunities for paid work as MW expanded. As early as 1954, with villagisation rapidly intensifying, so too were efforts to broaden MW's presence, with eight new Homecraft Assistant positions established by the community development department.[492]

Although African women gained employment through MW, the DCD held them to a much higher standard than their British counterparts. Outlined in the policy documents for MW, a memo from March 1955 summaries its requirements to hire African women. The basic

[487] Kanogo, *African Womanhood*, 205.
[488] KNA, AB 2/1A, 41.
[489] KNA, AB 2/26, 38.
[490] KNA, DC/NKU 2/31/54, Reports; community development of women in Nakuru; 1957-58.
[491] KNA, DC/NKU 2/31/54.
[492] KNA, DC/KSM 1/31/20, 42.

requirements emphasised the need for staff members to have 'character… and a fearless and enthusiastic approach to the problem'.[493] This description is reflective of the expectations of any teacher or trainer. The memo, however, goes on to explain that while British staff should also meet this fundamental criterion, 'much more attention must be paid to the quality and calibre of the persons appointed' as African staff.[494] This re-emphasises the ongoing anxiety the colonial government had in hiring and collaborating with the African population, something that was further exacerbated during the conflict. Community development officials were also aware that the age of African staff could hinder their progress with older women in their communities. In a letter dated January 1957, the CDWO for Thompson's Falls District responded to an application received concerning Grace Gathoni for a Homecraft Assistant role. The CDWO rejected Gathoni on the basis that she was 'far too young' and that 'it is essential to have an older woman as a leader' otherwise they appeared disrespectful toward the older club members. The CDWO outlined that only women over the age of twenty-five were considered if they met all other requirements.[495] The British staff exercised their added power attached to their white skin. While age was still a concern, their presumed experience and authority outranked those they were teaching. For African staff, age hierarchy in their communities prevented their ability to obtain paid employment in MW to a greater extent.

The employment opportunity to become a club leader was the carrot dangled at the end of the loyalism stick. Women who joined MW had to have denounced any oaths they may have taken to join the Mau Mau.[496] Women's clubs were a means of luring women away from the insurgent cause and rewarding them with opportunities that only members benefitted from. One of the most attractive rewards was the alleviation of most, if not all, involvement in camp 'communal' labour.[497] Those forcibly resettled spent their days in forced labour for the colonial administration. MW members instead became 'in charge of the day nurseries, nursery schools and responsible for the health and cleanliness of the children, cooking their food if necessary and seeing to the correct distribution of milk'.[498] Many women declared their loyalty to the colonial government and joined a MW club to escape forced labour.[499] Kenyans were pragmatic in their approach to loyalty in improving one's own circumstances. Declarations of

[493] KNA, AB 2/1A, 51.
[494] KNA, AB 2/1A, 51.
[495] KNA, AB 1/55, 107.
[496] KNA, AB 2/1A, 47.
[497] KNA, AB 2/1A, 47.
[498] KNA, AB 2/1A, 47.
[499] Feichtinger, 'A Great Reformatory', 65.

loyalty did not necessarily denote outright support of the colonial government and their aims.[500] As David Anderson stresses, loyalism was 'not an ideology, but a predicament'; it was the outcome of difficult choices.[501]

Pragmatic choices of loyalty were therefore greatly tested if a Kenyan woman wanted to work her way into the MW paid leadership structure. CDWOs went to the effort to communicate with screening teams to obtain information about an applicant's background if they were applying to be a Homecraft Assistant in the central region of Kenya. It was stressed that 'it is very necessary to have girls who we are absolutely satisfied as to their being loyalists'.[502] An additional layer that helped monitor a woman's dedication to loyalist work was the implementation of an apprenticeship period for women working toward leadership roles. For Beatrice Aduda in the Thompson's Falls District, after demonstrating two years of dedicated work at club level, she enrolled onto a two-year training course at the Jeanes School. It was believed that this not only refined her 'exceptional ability', but the four-year test would 'also show if a girl is really in earnest concerning community development work'.[503] With the sheer longevity of these apprenticeships, it was difficult for Kenyan women to enter this part of the colonial economy. As military measures against the Mau Mau dissipated, however, more opportunities were available to women to work for MW. In the year 1957, approximately 70 African women were receiving training on one-year courses at the Jeanes School to become women's club leaders. The capacity of places on this training course was to annually increase in 1958 to 110 women.[504]

Communicating MW lessons to a Kenyan audience dominated the challenges of community development workers. Revisiting the example used in this chapter's introduction, educational films were an encouraged means of teaching women. As stated, the film shown in Laikipia District was meant to teach women the basics of nutrition and hygiene in the kitchen. This was done by demonstrating these skills in a Western-style kitchen with foods unavailable to rural Kenyans. While it is evident that those in the Information Department who chose this film thought it would be effective, B.S. Davis, a CDWO for the Thompson's Falls region, identified the issues here. Davis argued that:

[500] Branch, 'The Enemy Within', 311.
[501] David Anderson and Daniel Branch, 'Allies at the End of Empire - Loyalists, Nationalists and the Cold War, 1945–76', *International History Review*, 39 (2017), 3.
[502] KNA, AB 1/55, 107.
[503] KNA, AB 1/55, 107.
[504] KNA, AB 2/26, 43.

> Although basic hygiene and the principals of good housekeeping may be the same the world over, domestic science as taught and practiced in the UK and as we field officers have to plod, preach and push it over in our work are two very different things. I doubt very much how many African women buy currants and use them as part of their family diet. If a film of this type is to be of any value, then the African woman must see a mud hut… they must see an African woman washing her hands in a bowl on a stand by the door for they have not running water in their homes.[505]

Davis here recognises the sheer ignorance demonstrated in the selection of this film. Her experience working in the camps, among Kenyan women, showed how unhelpful this style of education was. Davis emphasises the need to tailor the education the department was trying to deliver in such a way that was relatable to the Kenyan audience. This example highlights the negotiation between an on-the-ground officer who understood their work in practice, and the top-down approach that officials in the Information Department were taking. It emphasises these internal struggles and demonstrates the agency of an individual worker pushing back on the guidance they received; however, it also alludes to a deeper issue plaguing the community development department. How to implement community development measures most effectively among Kenyans was the cause of ongoing discussions and negotiations throughout the 1950s.

MW leaders also had to establish a framework that brought British ideas of development to Kenyan women of different ethnicities. In the minutes of a 'work amongst African women' meeting, hosted at the Jeanes School in January 1954, a leader raised that there was concern for women 'losing their tribal identity' in clubs that were representative of different ethnic groups. In response, MW encouraged clubs to host discussions between women to better understand one another's cultural identities, and this could also be implemented by encouraging them to showcase their different indigenous dances. It was stated in the meeting, however, that only 'good tribal customs' should be encouraged between women. This is not elaborated much further other than stating that 'tribal dances' and singing were suitable.[506] Historically, colonial administrations in Africa engaged in a racist discourse on traditionalism. Officials largely selected which so-called 'traditions' were accepted, and which were outlawed.[507] The DCD

[505] KNA, AB 1/55, 48.
[506] KNA, AB 14/53, Education; Maendeleo ya Wanawake; 1953-54.
[507] Terence Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa', in Preben Kaarsholm and Jan Hultin (eds), *Inventions and Boundaries: Historical and Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism (*Roskilde, 1994), 63.

was therefore selective of the cultural practices to be celebrated. Church missionaries were particularly critical of this response. The report makes clear, however, that encouraging dancing and singing was important as it brought amusement and laughter to resettled women, something they 'greatly needed… under the present emergency'.[508] Colonial officials were gendered in their approach to the expression of ethnic identities for women. The administration encouraged women to sign and dance, two particularly feminised activities, to uplift community morale but retained control and surveillance on these pastimes.

Overall, the top-down instructions and design of MW undermined women's ability to express individuality or celebration of their cultural identity. In many ways, MW demonstrated an intended effort to stamp out cultural practices completely. A 1957 press office handout describes a MW drama competition. One of the pieces performed dramatised the story of a 'Jeanes School-trained girl' coming home to get ready for her wedding. Her mother refused to attend as it was a Christian wedding as opposed to a Gĩkũyũ one. This short play, which Wilfred Moore, a community development officer for Nanyuki, directed and scripted, situates Jeanes School-educated women as individuals moving away from their solely African articulation of ethnicity and closer to a Christian identity. It also recognises the generational tensions, with colonial practices moulding the young women much to the disdain of their older mothers.[509] MW strived toward a vision of what a member was to look and act like. Though some community development officers were willing to encourage ethnic cultural practices among their members, this was highly controlled, and the movement sought to reconfigure social order.

The DCD had varying success of MW engagement across ethnic groups. The increasing membership figures which grew considerably during the latter part of the 1950s have been denoted as the sign of success of MW as an organisation and encouragement of loyalty in the central region.[510] The colonial records highlight the sheer growth of membership by 1956, with the number of members increasing to 43,000 compared to the 10,300 members of 1954.[511] It is difficult to confirm the accuracy of these figures because many women recorded as members never paid their fees or participated in activities. As MW offered a one-size-fits-all selection of activities to women, some groups of women took to activities better than others. In Mildred

[508] KNA, AB 14/53.
[509] KNA, CS 2/8/255, 220.
[510] See Wipper, 'The Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization', 101-102; Presley, 'The Mau Mau Rebellion, Kikuyu Women', 519-520.
[511] KNA, XH 11/7; Presley, 'The Mau Mau Rebellion, Kikuyu Women', 519.

Ndeda's research on community development in the western region of Kenya, she found North Nyanza to be the most 'flourishing district' for MW activity.[512] Ndeda argues that women in the western region had a clear sense of their active life contributing to the community and demonstrated willingness to learn more than 'mere sewing'.[513] MW faced far more of a challenge engaging ethnic groups in the central region of Kenya. Women who were forcibly resettled were wary of the movement and its relationship to the colonial government. MW and women's development was part of the counter-insurgency strategy in the central region, the conflict area of the Mau Mau. Its application was not necessarily as successful there as the DCD hoped. Ndeda also argues that by 1957, membership in Central Nyanza had dwindled with many women becoming too educated and finding the activities of MW too basic.[514] These examples emphasise the need for MW as a movement to readily adapt to member and non-member needs and desires.

With the success of the DCD's aims reliant on Kenyan women engaging well with activities, officers depended on European notions of African 'primitivism' as a justification when their measures were simply not working effectively. In August 1957, the Rift Valley District held a Handiwork Competition. The competition encouraged women to make tablecloths and a judging panel then rated women's craftwork. Miss Grieve, the MW leader for the Kitale region, reported to the MW committee that they had sadly disqualified several good entries 'owing to the inability of the maker to read a tape-measure'.[515] Women in the camps did not have tables to use the tablecloths MW were encouraging them to make. This could be a reason as to why there was a lack of quality in the tablecloth making competition. Grieve failed to note that members may not have been motivated to make something they could not use. In the same committee meeting, the colony's singing and drama festival ignited discussion. The report identified that 'after weeks of trying to teach' English language songs to members, 'few understood' and they were never sung again after the competition.[516] In this latter example the committee argued that members simply did not like singing in English. Most Kenyan women who were villagised, did not speak English. In these examples, community development

[512] Mildred Ndeda, 'Women and Development Since Colonial Times', in William Robert Ochieng (ed.), *Historical Studies and Social Change in Western Kenya: Essays in Memory of Professor Gideon S. Were* (Nairobi, 2002), 243.
[513] Ndeda, 'Women and Development Since Colonial Times', 246.
[514] Ndeda, 'Women and Development Since Colonial Times', 247.
[515] KNA, AB 1/54, Administration; Maendeleo ya Wanawake club and membership Rift Valley; 1956-58, 104.
[516] KNA, AB 1/54, 104.

officers and leaders of MW clubs blamed African 'backwardness' and their refusal to cooperate when describing women's lack of engagement'.

This racist discourse is prevalent in discussions of failing activities. During the March DCD meeting of the Rift Valley District, a claim was made that members were not 'sufficiently advanced' to be able to produce their own plays for the drama festival.[517] In another example, it was explained that 'it is not an easy thing to persuade the primitive African woman that Western ideas' are necessarily the best.[518] While there are signs that community development officers were willing to evolve their teaching methods to account for cultural differences, the onus was often placed on the members themselves if the training was not successful. This again demonstrated the MW movement's inability to adapt to its members. Furthermore, women were characterised as incapable of acting on their own merit. During a MW progress meeting, Mrs Moore, CDWO for Kiambu, argued that 'unless the clubs were constantly supervised, the members achieved nothing at all.[519] It was in the colonial government's interest to blame any shortcomings on Kenyans, as opposed to the failings of administrative staff. It was also characteristic of the colonial era to depict African subjects as in need of constant guidance and supervision.

Conclusion

Establishing women's clubs in the camps was of key significance to colonial developmental counterinsurgency for several reasons. The clubs, which centred the need for improved homecraft and childcare practices among Kenyan women, formed the colonial government's response to those deemed as supporting the Mau Mau. The DCD believed MW to be an answer to quelling disruption in the colony, both social and economic. The rise of the Mau Mau and their ongoing activity was viewed by members of the colonial administration as a result of social breakdown with a need to re-establish community stability in the central region of Kenya. As perceived custodians of their wider community, the colonial government placed the responsibility on Gĩkũyũ women to restore the balance and de-escalate ongoing tension. MW also represented the closely entwined relationship between development and late colonial counter-insurgency strategy. On the one hand, the colonial administration enforced collective punishment measures such as forced resettlement to retain control of those assumed to be aiding the Mau Mau. On the other hand, it introduced reformative community development

[517] KNA, AB 1/54, 84.
[518] WL, Micr.Afr.589.
[519] KNA, AB 17/11, 137.

initiatives that supposedly ‘advanced’ Kenyan women and improved their circumstances. Women’s development then served as a central pillar in Britain’s counter-insurgency campaign while also supporting the Colonial Office’s broader development and modernising agenda.

Development at this time was coded as feminine, and women were trained in homemaking. The education provided by MW followed a longstanding trajectory of girls and women’s education, first established in missionary education. The administration understood women in their context as mothers and wives, therefore MW worked to prepare young women to become moral – preferably Christian – wives. This training relied on British notions of respectable femininity in the hope of restoring this in women assumed to be deviant in nature for supporting anti-colonial action. Officials designed MW to reaffirm women as the anchors of family life so that generationally, they could pass on their learnings to future generations to uphold women’s expected respectability and help retain social stability. When MW’s efforts were unsuccessful, it directed the blame at African ‘primitivism’, which enabled CDWOs to reinforce their European superiority. Evidently, the failings in MW’s approach were mainly due to a lack of engagement with the social and cultural norms of the ethnic groups the British were attempting to control.

Both British and Kenyan women could improve their own social and economic standing through the expansion of community development work in the 1950s. European women saw it as their duty to lead African women to the realm of ‘awakening’ and ‘advancement’. The counter-insurgency campaign opened greater avenues for European women to pursue this agenda. Their view of the African women they sought to educate was firmly entrenched in the racist ideology that framed the ‘civilising mission’. While European men exercised the more visible acts of violence and coercion in the counter-insurgency efforts, European women enacted more covert methods of oppression. Kenyan women also became part of the MW leadership structure, albeit in the lower strata, and for the colonial government, they were necessary cultural intermediaries for the work to be most effective. While the DCD needed Kenyan women to establish trust among the wider camp populations, this came with anxiety for the administration. Kenyan women had to be of a higher calibre than European women and their suitability for employment was firmly based on their demonstration of practiced loyalty to the colonial government. Kenyan women navigated this colonial structure in order to avoid forced labour, gain paid employment and negotiate improvements to their and their family’s livelihoods.

Chapter III: Spatial Formations of Violence

The camps introduced during villagisation were spatial formations of fear and terror for those forced into them. As Francis Kanyua, an inhabitant of a camp in the Kabete region of Kenya, reveals, 'there was no mercy' in these spaces.[520] In attempting to demonstrate the levels of violence that characterised the British campaign in Kenya, scholars have worked to expose the methods of brutality deployed and the ways that the colonial government sought to bury this evidence.[521] While this work is vital in understanding the wider nexus of colonial violence, only an intimate exploration of the suffering experienced and remembered by those forcibly resettled exposes how pervasive and gendered this coercion and force was. Camps were environments designed and governed by men – British colonial officers and Gĩkũyũ loyalists - who worked for the colonial government. Women and their children largely inhabited these spaces. The administrative discourse may have been that these were reformative sites to protect these civilians, but the experiences of female occupants tell a far more violent story. The punitive nature of these sites is most pronounced when the memories of those relocated, in relation to the space they occupied, are compared to the spatiality of the camps. These spaces were sites where colonial actors negotiated for control of places, bodies, movement, resources and identities. This gendered topography of terror can be geographically mapped in the camps through the memories of the women who suffered inside them.

Villagisation cut to the core of women's and girls' day-to-day lives. In contrast to conventional war with more defined battlefields, counter-insurgency campaigns intrude into spaces often inscribed as 'safe'. Sites coded as feminine – homes, hospitals and schools, for example – are disrupted and invaded by counter-insurgents. The everyday landscapes inhabited by civilians are co-opted, further entrenching conflict into the lives and spaces occupied by non-combatants.[522] While the existing literature on the emergency period in Kenya has geographically mapped these battlegrounds, a spatial historical analysis of the camps reveals

[520] Presbyterian Church of East Africa Archive, II/GB/1, Emergency - general; 1953-56.
[521] See for example Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (New York, 2006); Katherine Bruce-Lockhart, '"Unsound" Minds and Broken Bodies: the Detention of "Hardcore" Mau Mau Women at Kamiti and Gitamayu Detention Camps in Kenya, 1954–1960', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 8 (2014), pp. 590-608; David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain's Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (London, 2005); David Anderson, 'Guilty Secrets: Deceit, Denial and the Discovery of Kenya's "Migrated Archive"', *History Workshop Journal*, 80 (2015), pp. 142-160; Huw Bennett, *Fighting the Mau Mau: The British Army and Counter-Insurgency in the Kenya Emergency* (Cambridge, 2013).
[522] Laleh Khalili, 'Gendered Practices of Counterinsurgency', *Review of International Studies*, 37 (2011), 1479.

an intimate map of suffering through the memories of women and girls.[523] This chapter therefore adopts an inter-disciplinary approach, engaging closely with the field of human geography and specifically humanist and materialist accounts of the camps. From the 1970s, geographic enquiries have emerged through these two different strands. While humanist accounts suggest that varying senses of place come in different settings, materialist accounts present the power dynamics across spaces.[524] To sufficiently examine the perpetrators of violence in these camps, a materialist approach uncovers how they expressed this power in these punitive environments. As Phil Hubbard argues, 'place emerges as a particular form of space, one that is created through acts of naming as well as through the distinctive activities and imaginings associated with particular social spaces'.[525] This chapter deploys this materialist framing in order to identify key sites of violence remembered by women and girls. It also engages with the humanist approach by taking a 'more human-centred and empathetic understanding of "the lived experience of place"', as outlined by Courtney Campbell in her assessment of Edward Relph's work.[526] Inhabitants invested meaning in places in the camps in competing and contesting articulations. Through their memories, women and girls reveal their deep-rooted bond to certain places through the suffering and terror they experienced. This contributes to an improved understanding of women's relationship to this violence and the impact this had on their futures. In contrast, male guards used camp spaces to manifest and enact their own personal power over female inhabitants, the materiality of the enclosed, militarised infrastructure facilitated their behaviours.[527]

Women's personal narratives and recollections form the basis of evaluation in this chapter. By comparing their accounts, descriptions and drawings to the surviving colonial photographs and records from the UK and Kenya National Archives collections, this chapter disputes the colonial government's reformative discourse of villagisation. It offers ethnographic reflections on Gĩkũyũ cultures, both gendered and generational, as this approach reveals the pervasiveness

[523] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*; Moritz Feichtinger, '"A Great Reformatory": Social Planning and Strategic Resettlement in Late Colonial Kenya and Algeria, 1952–63', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 52 (2016), pp. 45 – 72.
[524] Courtney J Campbell, 'Space, Place and Scale: Human Geography and Spatial History', *Past and Present*, 239 (2018), pp. 23-45.
[525] Phil Hubbard, 'Space/Place', in David Atkinson, Peter Jackson, David Sibley et. al. (eds), *Cultural Geography: A Critical Dictionary of Key Concepts* (London, 2005), via Credo Reference [website] <https://search.credoreference.com/content/title/ibtcg?tab=entry_view&entry_id=10254479> (accessed 12 May 2021).
[526] Campbell, 'Space, Place and Scale', 26.
[527] For an assessment of the masculinity/militarism nexus see for example: Jacklyn Cock, 'Women and the Military: Implications for Demilitarization in the 1990s in South Africa', *Gender and Society*, 8 (1994), 167-168.

of colonial violence in both its physical and symbolic manifestations. As Simon Springer and Philippe Le Billon argue, 'we can find the ignominious expression of violence in virtually every facet of our everyday existence'.[528] While violence comes with an overt appearance where the horrifying effects can be easily recognised, in other cases, violence is not even recognisable.[529] Violence in these scenarios can be hidden within 'ideology, mundanity and the suspension of critical thought'.[530] Heike Schmidt suggests that violence is a 'social process, the meaning of which is made and unmade in personal and social memory'.[531] The act of violence and the experience of violation are therefore not mutually exclusive. While physical, psychological, sexual and structural violence are not always intentional, they can still cause a person to experience violation, and *vice versa*.[532] Following a thematic structure, this chapter first addresses the ways Gĩkũyũ women's day-to-day lives were ruptured in the process of forced resettlement. Secondly, it looks more intimately at the colonial gaze and how this penetrated women's and girls' lives in the camps. Finally, it maps on a micro-level the forms of suffering, terror and physical violence women experienced. Ultimately, assessments of counter-insurgency campaigns that geographically map the battlefield terrain fall short of demonstrating the pervasiveness of suffering inflicted on people. By using a spatial analysis alongside oral history, an intimate map of suffering can be established which reveals the gendered ways that violence was articulated in this campaign.

Rupturing Gĩkũyũ Social Reproductive Structures

Villagisation highly disrupted the main places of social reproduction for Gĩkũyũ families. At a micro-level, sites of social reproduction – an individual's or family's hut and wider homestead – are an important location to explore this turmoil and demonstrates how counter-insurgency more broadly disrupts, reconfigures and forces individuals to renegotiate their position in society, in relation to the places they operate in. When assessing how the colonial forces extended and negotiated their control over the families and individuals assumed to be supporting the Mau Mau, huts are vital sites of inquiry. The ubiquity of this enacted force of control is stark when analysing how these places were destroyed and reimagined on new land under the jurisdiction of colonial forces. Individuals and families mainly arrived at a plot of land – inside the newly fenced off camp sites - where guards expected them to build and re-

[528] Simon Springer & Philippe Le Billon, 'Violence and Space: An Introduction to the Geographies of Violence', *Political Geography*, 52 (2016), 1.
[529] Springer & Le Billon; 'Violence and Space', 1.
[530] Springer & Le Billon, 'Violence and Space', 1.
[531] Heike I. Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe: A History of Suffering* (Oxford, 2013), 2.
[532] Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe,* 7.

establish huts and other necessary social amenities. Enforced villagisation is framed by the violation it caused to women and their families and the humiliation that came with this. Following a chronological structure, this section addresses the initial forced removal and rebuilding of huts in the camp spaces. It then examines the descriptions provided by oral history participants of the camps themselves, and how these challenge those given by the colonial state. Finally, focusing specifically on food management and resources, it investigates the day-to-day impact villagisation had on women and their modes of social reproduction.

The forced removal of Gĩkũyũ women, children and elders into camps was highly disruptive and distressing. Witnessing one's homestead burn down and seeing the remnants of this destruction rise up to the sky was one of the first memories relayed by both Grace Njoki Kanguniu and Esther when interviewed about their experiences of forced resettlement.[533] This stands in stark contrast to the colonial government's official line which was that the vast majority of those resettled in camps had done so willingly and voluntarily.[534] Under Regulation 2 of the Emergency Regulations of 1953, the colonial government issued 'Emergency Movement Orders' throughout 1954 and 1955. The general template for this order is shown in this example distributed in the South Nyanza District:

> All members of the Kikuyu tribe residing in that part of the Highlands lying within the South Nyanza District shall, before 12 o'clock midnight on the … 1954 [sic], move from the said area to the area reserved by law for the use and enjoyment of the Kikuyu tribe.[535]

By outlining that the camps were reserved solely for Gĩkũyũ 'use and enjoyment', the colonial government continued to conceal the real purpose of villagisation. The colonial state cared little about the general welfare and happiness of those they were forcibly resettling, this was a military strategy which served as part of the oppressive campaign against the Mau Mau. What this order fails to mention is how the colonial forces were to facilitate this removal. For those unwilling to move from their home, the colonial administration deployed force and coercion as a systematic response.

The guards who forced Gĩkũyũ women and children to leave their homesteads for the camps sought to control, humiliate and dehumanise them in this process. The imagery in the

[533] Esther, interview, Nyeri County, 26th April 2019; Grace Njoki Kanguniu, interview, Nyeri County, 26th April 2019.
[534] Hansard. 'Displaced Kikuyu', April 1955. <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1955/apr/27/displaced-kikuyu>
[535] The National Archives, Foreign and Commonwealth Office 141/6230, Removal of Kikuyu from the Less Affected Areas; 1954, 26/1.

descriptions given by women who were villagised illuminate the power dynamics at play. As Grace Kanguniu describes, 'we were rounded up and taken' to the camps.[536] She goes on to recount that vehicles did not move them to the new sites, but they 'trekked… in procession whilst being beaten around like sheep'.[537] The connotations drawn from Grace Kanguniu's testimony emphasise the sense of ownership and dominance enacted by colonial personnel over those they were moving. By referring to herself and those she moved with through such animalistic phrasing, Grace Kanguniu demonstrates the total lack of control and influence they had over this decision. It also reveals the process of dehumanisation Grace Kanguniu underwent at the hands of those inflicting the beatings. The banality of this violence, the sheer casualness expressed in Grace Kanguniu's comment of 'being beaten around like sheep', exposes the humiliating experiences women and girls had to endure. It is illuminating that Grace Kanguniu uses the example of sheep, suggesting that officials did not even value them like cattle. This example also has Christian connotations whereby sheep are understood as docile.[538] The powerlessness Grace Kanguniu experienced in this process is evident. John Mwangi Stephen provides a similar account to Grace Kanguniu's by describing the physical violence inflicted on individuals while guards forced them from their homes. John recalls people 'being beaten' before officials told them 'they'll be shown where they will live'.[539] In contrast to Grace Kanguniu's testimony, John describes this violence in third person suggesting he himself did not get beaten. It may have been that women and girls were more vulnerable to brutality in this process.

Esther, in her interview, was quick to indicate that she did move to a camp willingly. As she describes, 'it was not our choice. No. Because even houses were burned'.[540] Elaborating on this destruction, Grace Kanguniu recalls climbing the hill to Kamatu – the camp she was moved to – to 'see the smoke come from below'.[541] Grace Kanguniu confirms that burning their homesteads down was not a decision made by the owners of these places, but by the 'Johnnies, officers and a chief' who 'would come by and burn everything on their path'.[542] The term 'Johnnies' was used by several interviewees and also appears in Caroline Elkins' research findings. While the African guards were mainly referred to as Home Guards, 'Johnnies' was

[536] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.
[537] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.
[538] Kathleen Weber, 'The Image of Sheep and Goats in Matthew 25:31-46', *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 59 (1997), 668.
[539] John Mwangi Stephen, interview, Murang'a County, 20th April 2019.
[540] Interview with Esther.
[541] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.
[542] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.

used to describe British soldiers. These were White men who made up the military and paramilitary units, as well as the White men in the Kenya Police Reserve, the King's African Rifles, and the Kenya Regiment.[543] By destroying huts and homesteads as part of this process of villagisation, the colonial administration ensured that people could not return to this property or be inhabited by insurgent fighters. The traditional 'scorched-earth' military tactic has been employed regularly in warfare, notably by the British in the Second South African War.[544] This form of arson was also a deliberately frightening tactic to deploy as it generates a spectacle which enhances the aim to intimidate.[545]

The forced removal and destruction of property directly targeted Gĩkũyũ women by obliterating their domains of social reproduction. The colonial government was keen to praise the villagisation scheme as a means of protecting the civilian population. Officials argued that they were destroying huts in the process simply from a military point of view to prevent insurgent fighters from occupying them.[546] It was not simply the structures of homesteads that were destroyed in this process, so too were the foodstuffs left inside, as well as the fields and crops cultivated by families. This was a form of terrorisation, it showed people that they could not return. Colonial administrators were acutely aware that Gĩkũyũ families were economically independent units with their own livestock, grain stores and land for cultivation.[547] While those being forcibly resettled could carry as much material from their homes to take to the camps, those being removed were mainly women and their children, along with family elders. For the women and elderly to be able to deconstruct their entire homestead in order to transport this material with them to the camps whilst carrying children was impossible.[548] When asked what she was able to carry with her after being evicted from her hut, Grace Kanguniu's response was revealing: nothing 'save for the clothes we had on our bodies... even the cows and goats were left behind'.[549] As well as their homes being destroyed and the expectation forced on them to rebuild a new life in a camp, their material belongings were discarded by the colonial authorities as 'junk'.[550] This so-called junk was made up of property like pots, pans, and

[543] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, 246.
[544] J. R. Jewell, 'Using Barbaric Methods in South Africa: The British Concentration Camp Policy during the Anglo-Boer War', *Scientia Militaria - South African Journal of Military Studies*, 31 (2012), 1.
[545] Gemma Clark, 'Arson in Modern Ireland: Fire and Protest before the Famine', in Donald MacRaild and Kyle Hughes (eds), *Crime, Violence and the Irish in the Nineteenth Century* (Liverpool, 2017), 215.
[546] Hansard. 'Displaced Kikuyu', April 1955.
[547] Kenya National Archives, XA.1 11/48, Reports on the Kikuyu by J.M. Fisher; education of women and girls; 1950-52, 8.
[548] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, 215.
[549] Interview with Grace Kanguniu, 5.
[550] TNA, FCO 141/6573, Operation Anvil, 43.

garments.[551] Gĩkũyũ men were most concerned by land rights, as land in Gĩkũyũ society is allocated to sons and unmarried daughters through the father's will.[552] Household management and social reproduction, on the other hand, is controlled and shaped by women. A measure that particularly undermined this was the confiscation and destruction of these personal belongings upon removal.

Correspondence between key organisers of Operation Anvil and the villagisation process presents evidence for the mishandling and lack of organisation in logging and preserving belongings that officials confiscated. Personal belongings taken by the administration were to be registered, labelled and kept in government custody until the emergency had ended and the items could be returned. Officials gave little care to this actual process. As the emergency was progressing, the administration simply could not keep up with the high volume of personal belongings in its care and therefore either disposed or destroyed them. By claiming it was unable to identify whom the property belonged to, and under the authority of emergency regulation, this was an accepted measure. Strategists put no system in place to attempt to reimburse people for the belongings destroyed by the administration to those forcibly resettled into camps, further emphasising the penal characteristic of the villagisation policy.[553] In a House of Commons debate in April 1955, Labour MP Archibald Manuel questioned the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Alan Lennox-Boyd, on this matter. Manuel raised the fact that the huts and possessions destroyed and discarded in this process often 'represent the total wealth of the native occupier'.[554] Regardless, no effort was put into compensating those affected by the disruptive nature of this policy. Destroying homesteads and confiscating the interior belongings was a direct attack on these social units. While land – masculine – was being invaded and co-opted by colonial state security, the interior property and functionality of the land – feminine – were disregarded as 'junk' or totally destroyed.[555] Forced removal violated the meanings, identities and social gendered practices ascribed to the places from which people were removed.

While the destruction of homesteads is an established aspect of this kind of warfare, the disparity in treatment for those assumed loyal to the colonial government demonstrates that

[551] TNA, FCO 141/6573, 43.
[552] Yoko Ishii, 'Birth Control and Reproduction in the Kikuyu Society: The Case from Murang'a District in Kenya', *African Study Monographs*, 18 (1997), 192.
[553] TNA, FCO 141/6573, 43.
[554] Hansard. 'Displaced Kikuyu', April 1955.
[555] TNA, FCO 141/6573, 43.

colonial forces did not always choose to practice these forms of destruction. Beatrice Muthoni Mukubu's husband worked for the colonial government's agriculture department. Local administrators decided that they needed to move her for protective reasons to ensure Mau Mau insurgents did not attack her. Instead of guards forcing her to trek on foot to her new location, they drove Beatrice by car and gave her strong assurances that they would not destroy her home. Their reasoning for this was that the home was secure enough, with strong windows and a padlock to keep it locked from insurgent infiltration.[556] Beatrice participated in this interview in the home which is described here. In comparison to the rondavel styled mud and wattle huts that were more typical structures for those in the African reserves, Beatrice's home exemplified a colonial home, a rectangular brick structure in a gated compound. It is evident by the fact that this interview was conducted in this same home that Beatrice's property was not destroyed in the 1950s.

Beatrice disagreed with the colonial government's claims that they destroyed property just so insurgent fighters lost access to them. She states: 'mine was not burned. But there are those that were burned. Those that belonged to people whose children were in the forest. Many houses were burned. This was done to torture the owners'.[557] Beatrice's interpretation of this practice is that the colonial government was destroying property as a direct form of punishment against those who had inhabited them. She emphasises that the experience of watching one's home burn to the ground was a deliberate action to enforce the authority and jurisdiction of colonial forces extending its control of those deemed to be supporting the insurgency. Instead of being treated like an animal and made to watch her homestead and livelihood burn to the ground, Beatrice's status was recognised and protected. This further extended the administration's efforts to divide and rule the African population in the central region of Kenya. As John Lonsdale shows, 'the politics of collaboration were narrow. It offered much, but to few. It exacerbated existing social difference and created new political power'.[558] Combining physical forms of violence with the violation of destroying the property and material livelihoods of those being resettled reveals the multiple layers of coercion and force enacted in this process, and the societal divides established.

Destroying homesteads was more than just demolishing the physical infrastructure, it ruptured the symbols linked to social units which were ascribed to these spaces. The general layout

[556] Beatrice Muthoni Mukubu, interview, Nyeri County, 30th April 2019.
[557] Interview with Beatrice.
[558] John Lonsdale, 'Authority, Gender and Violence', in: E.S. Atieno Odhiambo, and John Lonsdale (eds), *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration* (Oxford, 2003), 52.

proposed in the camps knowingly undermined Gĩkũyũ household structures. The British approach to defeating the Mau Mau was more about undermining those associated to the enemy, than promoting the freedoms of collaborators.[559] While Chapter I explores the decision making behind the proposed layouts of the camps, this section examines how this impacted the social units of those forcibly resettled. Spatial undermining impeded gender and generational relations which ultimately demonstrates how the colonial government sought to negotiate control of those forcibly resettled through camp spatiality. The design of a Gĩkũyũ homestead, known in Gĩkũyũ as *mũciĩ*, prior to villagisation is an important point of comparison when analysing how individuals were forced to rebuild in their new settlement sites. Charles Trotter, a professional photographer in Nairobi during the 1950s, captured an aerial view of some Gĩkũyũ homesteads in the Kikuyu Reserve as they were in 1952 (figure 10). As the photograph displays, each homestead has several separate buildings. Each separate homestead is marked out by boundaries, done so through the placement of trees, hedges and bushes.

Figure 10: Aerial view of Gĩkũyũ homesteads in the Kikuyu Reserve.[560]

During her interview, Sophia Wambui Kiarie provided a particularly in-depth description of the spatiality and functionality of her family's settlement, prior to villagisation. Her depiction has been developed here alongside J.M. Fisher's anthropological report. Fisher was

[559] Lonsdale, 'Authority, Gender and Violence', 52.
[560] Bristol Archives, British Empire and Commonwealth Collection (Trotter Collection), 2001/090/1/1/3153.

commissioned by the colonial administration to research Gĩkũyũ society in 1952, considering the growing intensity of violence. Generally, in Gĩkũyũ society, a wife occupied her own *nyũmba*, which was a circular structure designated as her hut. It is in this structure where she conducted all the cooking, and where she and her children slept. The husband lived in their *thingura*, a structure designated to him with interstices for older boys of the family to sleep and eat. In the wider homestead, there was also one or more grain stores, known as an *ikũmbĩ*.[561] Sophia describes these separate structures, as well as a cow shed and some separate observation huts for those tending to the family's livestock. As Sophia's testimony denotes, her family's compound was particularly big and demonstrates the functionality of this entire plot to the family's production and consumption needs. Separate to the functioning spaces in her family's compound, Sophia highlights the socio-cultural meanings behind this design, mainly framed through Gĩkũyũ gender and generational relations. Sophia emphasises the importance of separate huts based on Gĩkũyũ gender norms. In Gĩkũyũ society, once a son reached adulthood, he no longer shared a home with his mother and therefore needed his own. In a polygynous household especially, separate huts for the husband and for his wives was essential to uphold modesty and respectability. Generational symbolisers were also key to a Gĩkũyũ social unit. Sophia describes the area of her family's compound which was a designated site for socialising. She reminisces about the outside fire area where the children sat with the *wazee* (male elders) and listened to stories. This fire area was also an important area for the men in the family to share their *pombe* (alcohol) at the end of the day before dispersing to their huts to eat the food cooked by their wives.[562]

When considering the rupture and disruption Gĩkũyũ women especially experienced in forced resettlement, Felicia I. Ekejiuba's hearth-hold concept is most useful. Ekejiuba redefines the idea of households in the context of West Africa and replaces this with the term hearth-holds. Hearth-holds represent the social unit which is an extension of the mother-child bond with the unit centred around the hearth, or stove. Ekejiuba's framework demonstrates the gendered identity of these spaces and is applied to outline the functionality of multiple hearth-holds in a polygynous household. Hearth-hold units are made up of a woman and 'all of her dependents

[561] KNA, XA.1 11/48, 9.
[562] Sophia Wambui Kiarie, interview, Kiambu County, 4th April 2019. Sophia adopts the Kiswahili phrases in these instances, rather than Gĩkũyũ. *Pombe* in the colonial period was used as a general term for low alcohol contents brews, see Maia Green, 'Trading on inequality: Gender and the drinks trade in southern Tanzania', *Africa*, 69 (1999), pp. 403-425. See also Justin Willis, *Potent Brews: A Social History of Alcohol in East Africa, 1850-1999* (Oxford, 2002).

whose food security she is either fully or partially responsible for'. [563] As Ekejiuba argues, the hearth-hold is primary 'a unit of consumption and also a unit of production', these spaces represented the reproduction of the family unit and its ongoing social reproduction.[564] In polygynous Gĩkũyũ families, each wife had her own *nyũmba* and therefore her own cooking space to cater to her dependents.[565] This separation was wholly undermined in the planning and building of camps. As the photographs from the colonial government's collection display, the layout of the camps did not account for or encourage the rebuilding of regular Gĩkũyũ homesteads. Instead, for security purposes, huts were rebuilt in a new designed layout whereby multiple hearth-holds resided in singular huts (figure 1).[566] Constructing homes in lines on a hillside was a preferred tactic for surveillance purpose with the security post visible in the top-left of the photograph. This layout was also a useful means of maximising the space allotted for the camps. Sophia's account attests to the spatiality of Gĩkũyũ homesteads reflecting the gendered and generational norms of Gĩkũyũ social units. Military strategists undermined these norms in this process.

The colonial government could not rely on cultural ignorance to excuse its disregard for upholding necessary requirements for Gĩkũyũ hearth-holds. Evidence shows that advisors raised these concerns in the planning process. In the early stages of planning villagisation, officials noted anxieties regarding the 'great deal of disruption of family life and loss of privacy'.[567] It is important to highlight here, the main concerns regarding the loss of family privacy were about separate family households. They disregarded the need for privacy within family groups. Louis Leakey, a key adviser to the colonial government for matters relating to the Gĩkũyũ, openly recognised the spatial issues impacting Gĩkũyũ families in the camps. In a talk given by Leakey in 1956 and then published in the East Africa Women's League news bulletin in June of that year, he outlines the main problems Gĩkũyũ families were dealing with in the camps. He begins this speech by noting the loss of family privacy caused by villagisation. The government made no official reference to polygyny in the summarised concerns, whereas Leakey did. Leakey identified that forcing several wives from one household into the same *nyũmba* went against the social practices of polygynous households, emphasising that a man

[563] Felicia I. Ekejiuba, 'Down to Fundamentals: Women-Centred Hearth-holds in Rural West Africa' in: Andrea Cornwall, *Readings in Gender in Africa* (Indiana University Press, 2005), 43. See also Megan Vaughan, 'Household Units and Historical Process in Southern Malawi', *Review of African Political Economy*, 34 (1985), pp. 35–45.
[564] Ekejiuba, *Down to Fundamentals*, 43.
[565] KNA, XA.1 11/48, 10-11.
[566] UKNA, CO 1066/9, Kikuyu Villages and Home Guard Posts, 40.
[567] KNA, AB 2/53, Policy: Rehabilitation Policy Villages; 1953-57, 1.

could no longer enter the home of one of his wives for relations as they were all sharing space.[568] Leakey also recognised the loss of generational exchange, noting that children could no longer 'sit around the huts, in the courtyard, listening to the conversations of their elders'.[569]

One effort made by colonial officials to ensure families maintained some level of modesty was to encourage the formation of boundaries, such as hedges, between individual huts.[570] This suggestion, however, again ignored the fact that this did not solve the issues inside the huts. Camps were largely overpopulated with multiple hearth-holds expected to reside in a singular hut. Grace Kanguniu's testimony is evident of how women worked to overcome this spatial undermining and renegotiate their own space within the now shared *nyũmba*. As she explains:

> You ten shall be living in this house. The kitchen would be here where the table is (*demonstrating*). I'd plant my cooker here with three stones… we'd place three stones, then once I do so you'd come here with your two stones and place your cooker adjacent to mine. Then the other would come place theirs in the same way... Once you've done that then another does the same and once the sequence continues, we have ten simultaneous kitchens…But it's not one family. Let me say that the way it was is ... My father's family is there, then his younger brother's family and another family, that's what we were composed of then we'd build the cookers that way. Once finished we'd sleep just beside the embers by the remaining small space. Now you'd sleep here with your children, a place you'd spread out for them.[571]

In this description, Grace Kanguniu reveals how women had to work together to carve out their own boundaries inside the *nyũmba*. This did not resolve the issue of Gĩkũyũ conceptions of modesty for polygynous households, though evidence is limited to determine how Gĩkũyũ men who had not been detained negotiated this with their wives in the resettlement camps.

The logistics imposed on those forcibly resettled made it difficult for individuals to uphold Gĩkũyũ living practices, although individuals did make a concerted effort to sustain gendered and generational norms. Sophia explains that in her camp, while huts were over-populated, 'men and women did not live together'.[572] Sophia made no specific mention in her interview

[568] East Africa Women's League, Private Papers, June 1956: 'Problems of the Kikuyu' Article.
[569] EAWL, June 1956: 'Problems of the Kikuyu' Article.
[570] KNA, D.A.O/KBU 1/265, Villagisation – Kiambu District.
[571] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.
[572] Interview with Sophia.

of her father, however, she did explain that her grandfather was detained during the emergency period. While not all her male family members were with her in the camp, some were, and she references her uncles. Sophia argues that for her family it was 'biblical' for men and women to live separately, and her extended family had to uphold this in the camp. This meant that the female members of the family grouped themselves together and the men did the same.[573] Considering the exceptional circumstances the state had forced families into, efforts were made by those forcibly resettled to uphold and honour their personal and communal beliefs and practices.

In exploring the rupture Gĩkũyũ women experienced from forced resettlement it is illuminating to assess the terminology women used to describe these spaces. The colonial state sought to overpower Gĩkũyũ women by securing full control of them in camps. This control was achieved structurally by the designs and infrastructure of the sites; all of which challenged the propagated view associated to the term 'village'. This chapter has so far demonstrated that this sense of state control was most immediately experienced by women through the destruction of their homesteads and places of social reproduction. While the colonial government publicly framed these spaces as reformative and community-centred, the women interviewed for this project referred mainly to the prison-like association they had with these sites. The questions asked during the interviews conducted for this project had to be adapted to consider this. As a British researcher who was more familiar with the colonial records and terminology used by the British during the 1950s prior to fieldwork in Kenya, a conscious effort was made to unlearn terminology that did not speak to the experiences of those forcibly resettled. This was a process which involved a re-education by listening closely to interview participants for descriptors which were more suitable and relatable. This was possible through ongoing conversations with Caroline Wanjiru who acted as a research assistant and translator in this process. With the patience and generosity of interview participants, terminology that better reflects their experiences and views of the sites they were resettled to was determined and have been applied throughout this thesis. These conversations are explored in more depth here.

One of the first interviews conducted for this project was with Agnes Wanjiru Mwangi. When asked about her time in the 'villages', eventually Agnes firmly corrected this and explained, '*yetetwo kambĩ*' translated from Gĩkũyũ: 'it was called camp'.[574] For Agnes, *kambi* more appropriately describes the site she was forced to move to in 1954. As the fieldwork for this

[573] Interview with Sophia.
[574] Agnes Wanjiru Mwangi, interview, Murang'a County, 20th April 2019.

project progressed, the author limited the use of the term ‘village’ or ‘villagisation’ in conversations with interview participants. The term ‘camp’, as used by Agnes, could have reflected Agnes’ unfamiliarity of the living situations formed through villagisation. Having lived previously in a more isolated homestead and, at the time of this project, residing in her own home which more resembled her pre-1954 living situation, the descriptor ‘camp’ could more appropriately portray the close proximity of huts which characterised villagisation. One must also consider the legacy of this conflict in Kenya, which more recently has been re-centred in public discourse through the High Court hearing and subsequent compensation given to Kenyan survivors in 2013. The reporting of this court case heavily focused on the experiences of those in ‘detention and works camps’.[575] Interviews with survivors are inevitably shaped by this increased media attention. The term ‘camp’ has gained currency in describing these so-called villages and is prevalent in the memories of women who experienced this forced resettlement.

While these reflections need to be considered, Agnes’ interruption with this correction demonstrates how she memorialises the site she was forced into. Regardless of how she may have come to choose this term, her body language in that moment of the interview and her choice to intervene with this change in terminology asserts that Agnes associates her time in the ‘village’ as more like being in a ‘camp’. While some may argue this close analysis of the terminology used during Agnes’ interview is unnecessary, this chapter shows why this is important. While the colonial government may have been trying to propagate the most positive image of village life, this was not how survivors experienced it. It must be reinstated that this is a qualitative evaluation of experiences. There is no single story. The account of villagisation in Kenya is complicated, at times contradictory and uneven in nature. The administration implemented villagisation across the central region of Kenya with varying quality. It remains necessary to closely interrogate Agnes’ correction of the term ‘village’ with ‘camp’ when comparing it to the findings in Chapter I.

Military strategists used the material culture and the security-led design of the camps to effectively create an environment whereby those villagised experienced a sense of

[575] BBC, ‘Mau Mau uprising: Kenyans win UK torture ruling’, 5 October 2012, via The Standard [website] <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/adblock?u=https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/kenya/article/2000083119/mau-mau-survivors-talk-of-torture-in-detention-camps> (accessed 13 May 2021) and Marc Perry, ‘Uncovering the brutal truth about the British empire’, 18 August 2016, via The Guardian [website] < https://www.theguardian.com/news/2016/aug/18/uncovering-truth-british-empire-caroline-elkins-mau-mau> (accessed 12 May 2021).

imprisonment. Like Agnes' account, Esther elaborates on this term. She explains how she and those forcibly resettled into the same location as her, 'were encamped'.[576] Later in the interview she expands this and stresses: 'I told you we were encamped. Although we were told that we were being protected, we felt like people in detention camps because there was nothing you could do'.[577] Esther's testimony reveals that while the colonial guards may have justified forced removal into camps in one way, the memories and experiences ascribed to the sites tell a much different story. Esther describes how she felt like she was detained as she had lost full control of what she could do. Esther associates the space that she was in to be far more punitive in nature than that which is associated to the term 'village'. At another stage of her interview, Esther explains that 'we looked like caged people. Like people in prison because you could not go out'.[578] This quote encapsulates how this experience was embodied and internalised by many inside these spaces. The impact of forcibly controlling the movement, the activities and the lives of those inside these camps created a detention-like environment. The term 'camp' now holds various connotations in the light of the Second South Africa War, the Holocaust, and several other cases. Esther's testimony emphasises, however, that the so-called villages were made in such a way that those forcibly resettled to them 'felt like people in detention camps' but could appear to the outside world as community, safe spaces. For Esther, this felt strictly punitive.

A sense of confinement, exacerbated by the material culture of the camps, is evident in the testimonies of women who experienced villagisation. Two key aspects, the entrance drawbridges and the surrounding barbed-wire fences, were described by interviewees. It is the descriptions of these areas of the camps that has garnered the nick-name 'barbed-wire villages'.[579] The main drawbridge gate that was often used as an entrance to the camp sites was deliberately placed near the Home Guard security post.[580] Grace Kanguniu describes this placement as a means of the guards controlling who could 'get in or out'.[581] Whereas Grace Kanguniu's camp had tighter restrictions preventing people from leaving the site, Susan Wanjiru Giteru and her fellow inhabitants were permitted use of the drawbridge exit. Susan describes her camp as having 'one central gate that we would all leave and enter from that was

[576] Interview with Esther.
[577] Interview with Esther.
[578] Interview with Esther.
[579] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, 234.
[580] Daniel Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau, Creating Kenya: Counterinsurgency, Civil War, and Decolonization* (Cambridge, 2009), 108.
[581] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.

heavily guarded'.[582] In her camp, those inside were permitted to leave during the day after being 'frisked' by the guards, to 'search for something to eat' before returning.[583] While this demonstrates variation across camp sites, it is evident that the colonial state extended its power over the movement and total restriction of camps. As Brian Ngwenya explores in relation to Zimbabwe police camps, authorities extended 'a near-exclusive presence' once they confined communities.[584]

All interview participants of this study gave thorough descriptions of the camp territories. These descriptions enable a visualisation of the camps to compare alongside the surviving colonial photography. Furthermore, these personal descriptions offer great insight into the ways these built environments perpetuated experiences of confinement, encampment and violation. Grace W. Mwathe was forthcoming in describing this during her interview. Having explained how her camp was surrounded by trenches filled with spikes, the question: 'was that there do you think to keep you safe, or do you think it was there to keep you in?' was then posed. Grace affirmatively responded, expressing: 'to keep you in! To keep you in and to help them to contain you there'.[585] This is a stark comparison to the public proclamations made by the colonial government analysed in Chapter I. As Agnes' testimony attests to, 'you can't compare the "village-life" and that which we lived before'.[586] Gĩkũyũ families could no longer uphold their regular ways of life and were terrorised into camps in this process. The sense of imprisonment is evident in these testimonies and the loss of control of their own lives which they experienced.

Interview participants further articulated feelings of captivity in camps through one key topic: food. Gĩkũyũ women controlled their family's food supply, yet this power was heavily interfered with by colonial state security in the process of villagisation. Villagisation inflicted total disruption and violation to the social reproduction of Gĩkũyũ families, and this was a gendered experience. Forced resettlement cut to the core of women's lives, with their properties and resources necessary to uphold social reproduction being destroyed and discarded by the colonial state. While food can be a source of empowerment, it can also be an instrument of power. Food is a site whereby control of bodies, spaces and institutions is negotiated and this

[582] Susan Wanjiru Giteru, interview, Nyeri County, 30th April 2019.
[583] Interview with Susan.
[584] Ngwenya, Brian. 'Chapter 2: African Police and the BSAP Camps since 1960: Surveillance, Discipline and Order', in 'Order, Politics and Memory: African Police and State-Making in Zimbabwe, c1960-90', PhD Thesis (University of Basel, forthcoming), 13
[585] Grace W. Mwathe, Nyeri County, 26th April 2019.
[586] Interview with Agnes.

exposes the complex relationship between who wields this control and who suffers under it. Government restrictions on foodstuffs, food denial punishments and stock monitoring were all too common in the camps. The colonial forces argued that measures put in place to restrict access to growing crops, livestock and granaries were to prevent Mau Mau fighters from gaining access. Security personnel secured this control through several measures, including the fencing off of cattle bomas and camp food stores, organising communal grazing for inhabitants under guard escort, curfews on stock access, curtailment of markets and the establishment of government-run shops.[587] These shops stocked local produce such as sugar cane, beans and maize.[588] As Agnes recalls, she had to walk to the guard post where:

> At the gate you would say that you have come for food. You would then go to your granary open up your padlock and remove food. Keep in mind that you could not remove a lot of food since they would suspect you want to take some to the forest. For a large family like mine that was a challenge.[589]

Agnes had responded to a question which asked whether she experienced any specific cultural shifts in the process of villagisation. It is revealing that her response, and other interviewees, centred on food and her restricted access to it in the camps.[590] This new system undermined Gĩkũyũ social structures and perpetuated additional challenges for large families who now had such limited access to necessary resources.

These measures reveal the punitive power exerted over women in the camps. Gĩkũyũ women were responsible for controlling the food supplies and making the most economical use of them, they now had to rely on the colonial government's goodwill and organisation of this supply.[591] Women no longer had the freedom to simply choose what foodstuffs they either grew or purchased. Negotiating control over food, food security and scarcity has a long history.[592] There are similarities to the experiences of women in the camps to that of enslaved Africans travelling the Middle Passage. As Stephanie Smallwood shows, enslaved people were

[587] UKNA FCO 141/6237 Kenya: Mau Mau unrest; plans for Central Province arising from War Council Directives.
[588] International Committee of the Red Cross Archive, BAG 200/108/001, Problème Mau-Mau; 30.10.1952 - 20.08.1959, 'African World' article Sept/Oct 1955.
[589] Interview with Agnes.
[590] Interviews with Agnes, Beatrice, Esther, Grace Kanguniu and Susan.
[591] KNA, XA.1 11/48, 8.
[592] For assessments of food as a form of political control, see for example Alex de Waal, *Famine Crimes: Politics & the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa* (London, 1997); Jenny Edkins, *Whose Hunger? Concepts of Famine, Practices of Aid* (London, 2000); James Vernon, *Hunger: A Modern History* (London, 2007). For an assessment of the gendered dimensions of food scarcity and control see for example: Paula Schwartz, 'The Politics of Food and Gender in Occupied Paris', *Modern & Contemporary France,* 7 (1991), pp. 35-45.

forced from the abundance of the various plant and animal foods of the Gold Coast and were no longer allowed 'to oversee their own nourishment'.[593] Instead, Smallwood argues that captives were given rations where their 'size reflected a calculation balancing the cost of the slaves' maintenance against their purchase price'.[594] While this rationing was far more insidious and calculating on the Middle Passage, food was a powerful weapon in both cases. In the camps, guards used food to reward those who were loyal and cooperative. As Esther raises:

> There was so much suffering in that place because people went for days without food, because they were not given food, it was upon you to find it. If you had money you would go—there was a small shop which was there—if you did not have money, then you would sleep hungry.[595]

As Esther explains, while there was a small shop in her camp, one had to have enough money to be able to purchase anything. With Gĩkũyũ women largely making up the government's operational labour force, where was this money to come from? With the administration granting Gĩkũyũ loyalists greater freedoms and opportunities for paid employment, they had more access to afford and acquire resources from the camp stores. Furthermore, Lady Limerick, the then Vice-Chair of the British Red Cross Society (BRCS), publicly celebrated humanitarian workers of the BRCS for successfully combating infant and child malnutrition in the camps.[596] Power was then handed from the colonial government to external humanitarian actors to supply food to children, again undermining Gĩkũyũ mothers whose ability to sustain their dependents was obstructed.

One of the reasons the state control of food for camps was indirectly violent to those forcibly resettled, was the power guards could wield in withholding these vital resources. As the guards of each camp had extended control over the movement of people and their resources, this control could at any moment be further weaponised and abused. In one incident, W. L. Hancock, the District Officer in charge of Thumaita camp in the Central Province, raised concerns that food was still reaching forest fighters from occupants of the camp. As punishment to those in this camp, Hancock ordered the removal of all livestock serving this site, preventing any access to the cattle between the 17th October 1955 to 21st October 1955. He stated that

[593] Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Massachusetts, 2008), 43.
[594] Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, 43-44.
[595] Interview with Esther.
[596] British Red Cross Archive, RCC/1/12/1/37: BRCS Assistance in Kenya.

they would only return the livestock if the camp's inhabitants provided intelligence regarding the perpetrators. Hancock further accelerated this punishment by continuing the forced labour regime and making all, including a pregnant woman, to sleep on the Wednesday night in the ditch around the Home Guard post. By the 22nd October, seventeen people collapsed at work; it is unclear how many people in total were made to participate. [597] The sheer number of individuals that food deprivation had severely weakened is striking. This highlights the oppressive lengths taken by members of the administration to punish entire camps for the actions of individuals. While this is a particularly extreme example and Hancock was later reprimanded (how exactly it is not stated), this demonstrates the way collective punishments like food denial could be deployed on one guard's orders where he had the full authority over those inside the camp. The autonomy guards and administrators wielded to enact these punishments is notable. During the disciplinary inquiry of the incident, the actions of Hancock and those working alongside him were justified as repressive measures needed to be intensified as the counter-insurgency progressed.[598] Creating a culture whereby guards could justify their abuse of power with the supposedly necessary need for repressive measures has gained increased scholarly attention since the forced release of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office records.[599]

Experiencing the Penetrating Eye of the State

Ann Stoler argues, 'the colonial "gaze" was to be at once broad, reflexive, and intimate'.[600] Her analysis exposes the extensive nature of colonial dominance and its inherently gendered identity. In the making of structures which asserted European supremacy, 'manhood and racial virility was not only an expression of imperial domination, but a defining feature of it'.[601] Huts in camps are unique sites to investigate the intimacy of the colonial gaze and the ways African manhood was negotiated in this setting. The huts were built with windows facing the direction of the main security post of the camp. This enabled the penetrating eye of the colonial state into spaces more regularly ascribed as 'private'. For those in the punitive parts of the camp, these huts were not at all private. Instead, they served as de facto cells where those inside remained under constant watch by male colonial guards. Michel Foucault's metaphor of the

[597] UKNA, FCO 141/6511, Disciplinary Inquiry for Thumaita Incident, 1956.
[598] UKNA, FCO 141/6511.
[599] See for example Bennett, *Fighting the Mau Mau;* Anderson, 'Guilty Secrets'; Anderson, 'Mau Mau in the High Court and the 'Lost' British Empire Archives: Colonial Conspiracy or Bureaucratic Bungle?', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 39 (2011), 699-716.
[600] Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (California, 2010), 1.
[601] Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, 17.

panopticon – an institutional building designed as a system of control so security guards can observe all prisoners– demonstrates this as a key mechanism of power.[602] This design feature of villagisation, alongside other forms of coercive surveillance systems, was essential to the colonial government's extension of power and control over women they perceived to be fuelling anti-colonial action. Furthermore, this architectural manifestation of control enabled African male guards to negotiate and enact their own personal power over female inhabitants.

Women and girls were acutely aware of the monitoring they were under in the camps. For her interview, Sophia prepared a drawn bird's eye view of Kamandura camp where she was villagised. Sophia used the drawing to explain the spatiality of the camp, the functionality of certain places, but also to highlight how she and others experienced the built environment. While presenting her drawing she drew attention to the Home Guard post, situated at the top of the hill, looking down on the huts. She identified multiple watchtowers at this post. In describing these, she explains the watchtowers were in, 'all corners. People would say, "We see the Home Guards up there." And it was like in a hilly area… the watch tower officers could see the entire village'.[603] Not only did the location of the Home Guard watchtowers enable better surveillance for the colonial government, but it also reinforced its authority and presence on inhabitants. The panoptic schema reduces the number of those needed to exercise power while at the same time increasing the number of those being monitored. Though there were far fewer guards in the camps than those villagised, women and girls were highly aware of the camp hierarchies.[604] Eleanor O'Gorman has presented similar findings in her work on Zimbabwean women experiencing Protected Villages during the liberation war. Zimbabwean women were subjected 'to the gaze of the state' through the geography of the villages. The central fortress which housed village security personnel was surrounded by the accommodation structures for villagers. This surveillance was an integral theme in the testimonies O'Gorman compiled.[605]

With huts in the camps designed so those at the security post could keep watch over inhabitants, the physical presence of guards near the huts further cemented this authority. Sophia recalls having to open the two windows of her hut in the mornings so that the Home Guards could see them rise for the day's work regime through their binoculars. If one's windows were not open,

[602] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London, 2020 [1975]), 199-203.
[603] Interview with Sophia.
[604] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London, [1975] 2020), 204.
[605] Eleanor O'Gorman, *The Front Line Runs Through Every Woman: Women and Local Resistance in the Zimbabwean Liberation War* (Woodridge, 2011), 96.

a Home Guard attended the hut to check why inhabitants were not obeying the order. Agnes corroborates as to why huts in her camp were built the way they were.[606] Agnes remembers a White officer being stationed at the security post serving her camp. As the District Commissioners and Divisional District Officers supervised the guards, it is likely that this man held one of these positions. Agnes describes him patrolling from his Land Rover at the top of the hill where he could 'thus be able to survey and easily identify a light in the midst of the houses'.[607] Inhabitants were ordered to remain in their own huts during the night, once they had returned from their day's activities. There was a consistent concern among those in the colonial forces of certain pitfalls of villagisation. While it was an excellent means of separating civilian supporters from forest fighters, the concentration of vast populations could result in further fostering a space where Kenyans could plot against the colonial government. The administration enforced activities during the day, such as forced labour, to keep people busy and under control. Guards, therefore, closely monitored huts in the camps during the evening and night to ensure inhabitants were not holding illicit meetings. John confirms that in his camp, everyone was expected to be in their homes by six o'clock in the evening and were not permitted to leave the home until the next day.[608] Agnes elaborates that punishment came to those who had a light on at night. She explains that if the White officer saw a light, 'he would go there with plenty of hostility'.[609] Examining the spatiality of the camp settlements is vital as this builds an in depth understanding of the pervasive level of control and monitoring of those forcibly resettled. This not only demonstrates the coercive and punitive nature of the colonial government's approach to civilians in this conflict, but also highlights the administration's ongoing anxiety to retain the influence of those they forcibly resettled. Surveillance was a key aspect to this tactic and the built environment of space in the camps supported this.

Colonial guards attempted to garner intelligence by pitting resettled women against one another. The colonial state relied on informants to provide information on insurgent activity and suspected supporters. Women's clubs were an apparatus in this ubiquitous system. Scrutiny in the camps did not fall equally on men and women; there was an imbalance and focus on women's involvement in supporting Mau Mau fighters. It was challenging to determine in the interviews conducted for this project, how women related to one another considering the

[606] Interview with Sophia.
[607] Interview with Agnes.
[608] Interview with John.
[609] Interview with Agnes.

informant culture. When asking Agnes about divides in her camp she explained that those in loyalist households were not 'friends and were treated as foes of the other'.[610] There was a clear ideological divide between these two demographics for Agnes. Evidence of inter-personal interactions between Mau Mau women and informant women is less available. O'Gorman's findings for the case of Protected Villages in Zimbabwe demonstrate the daily fear women had of being sold out or the consequence of selling someone out. She argues that 'fractured dynamics of secrecy, uncertainty and distrust… underpinned the rise of social conflicts'.[611]

The design behind camp spatiality ensured those who were forcibly resettled regulated their own behaviour. Sophia explains that in Kamandura camp, 'we would not assemble. Not more than two people. Not even three people… the women would not go to the neighbour; you stay in your house'.[612] The colonial state had created an environment whereby inhabitants were inescapably aware of the watching eye of guards and potential informants. To mitigate this in exceptional circumstances, Sophia explains: 'if you don't have salt the kids would be the messengers to either take your food to your neighbour, ask for salt'.[613] Women knew that children possessed a more fluid use of this dangerous space, with them being much smaller and agile and could move at nightfall more easily undetected. With children having been such instrumental actors in transporting messages to and between forest fighters, these skills were reapplied in the camps.[614] The risks this carried with being caught, as is explored in the final stages of this chapter, exposes the extent families had to go to for basic resources and necessities.

Guards and loyalists garnered greater control and authority of the overall camp space, and they achieved this through the radical othering of those in punitive camps. Architectural hierarchy was a key characteristic of the camps. By establishing camps on hillsides, military strategists geographically mapped groups based on strategic interest. Colonial guards were situated at the top of the hill with the loyalist camp close by them and just below to ensure their protection. Mau Mau adherent families occupied the remainder of the hill side. As Sophia's diagram reveals, the loyalist camp and her punitive camp were separated by a 'sixty-foot road' where she notes 'Home Guards would patrol up and down the road. No trespass from the village'.[615]

[610] Interview with Agnes.
[611] O'Gorman, *The Front Line Runs Through Every Woman*, 101 – 102.
[612] Interview with Sophia.
[613] Interview with Sophia.
[614] Stacey Hynd, 'Small Warriors? Children and Youth in Colonial Insurgencies and Counterinsurgency, ca. 1945–1960', *Comparative Studies in Society and History: an international quarterly*, 62 (2020), 698-699.
[615] Sophia, drawing.

Sophia's testimony demonstrates the restrictions forced on those in the punitive camp. They were prohibited from entering the loyalist section next to them, but they were able to see the privileges loyalists obtained. Sophia's recollection of the 'spectacle' of Sunday mornings most powerfully described this. On Sunday's, Sophia remembers her and the other children on her side of the camp standing along the roadside. They stood and watched the loyalist families go to church. Sophia recalls 'the women had hats and gloves and beautiful clothes. And the Mau Mau side, women had tatters, the clothes were torn. No shoes, a shoe was a foreign thing.'[616] For Sophia, watching those from the other side of the road wear clean clothes and shoes, freely leaving the camp to attend church, was not only a 'spectacle' but a reminder of their difference. Sophia and her family were no longer allowed to attend church. Her child perception of the materiality of the loyalist women dressed up for church was something she could not comprehend or fathom having at the time.

While boundaries were established to keep those in the punitive camps away from the loyalist families, these same barriers did not secure families in the punitive camp from intrusion. Home Guards and other camp security navigated a particularly autonomous movement of space in the camps. Dominance over resettled women and the independence to act on their own accord was obtainable for African men should they align themselves with the colonial state. While Leah Nyaguthia Kariuki shows that the Home Guards had no business inside her hut in expressing, 'they would not enter the house, but would look from the outside', not everyone fared the same.[617] Militarised intrusion of huts became normalised as part of the villagisation scheme and further supports the argument that these served as de facto cells in the wider punitive mechanisms of the camps. Esther for example recounts guards entering her hut to search it after suspicions were raised that Mau Mau fighters had entered the camp.[618] This demonstrates the insecurity experienced inside camps.

Camp guards routinely terrorised women and girls, and they enacted this extremely close to home. In comparison to Leah's testimony, Sophia details the 'frightening experience' of witnessing Home Guards torch the roofs of huts when inhabitants were suspected of aiding Mau Mau forest fighters from their camp. Sophia explains 'it was part of persecution and to make people submissive'.[619] She reveals that this took place consistently at eight o'clock in the evening, when families were in their homes having dinner. Due to the direction of wind, this

[616] Interview with Sophia.
[617] Interview with Leah.
[618] Interview with Esther.
[619] Interview with Sophia.

act could have a detrimental impact on surrounding huts as they were so close to one another, and other roofs could also catch alight. Sophia recounts how every adult moved fast to remove the grass from their roofs to prevent it catching on fire and waiting until the early hours of the morning to rebuild.[620] The predictability of this intrusion is evident in Sophia's testimony. She describes this punishment as a routine where women became prepared and well-practiced to avoid further destruction. Infrastructure dedicated to family and social reproduction was not safe in the camps. So long as these spaces were inside that of a militarily controlled site, intrusion and terror tactics permeating the home was a reality.

This manifestation of male dominance and violence is most evidently contrasted by the limitations forced on female welfare workers in interacting with the camp's population. Development Women's Officers (CDWO) and British Red Cross workers were key actors who entered camps to run women's clubs and activities. While CDWOs and the Red Cross workers enacted roles designed to have close relation with women and their children, evidence suggests this rarely permeated huts. It is important to note that women's activities and humanitarian duties were kept strictly to central zones of the camps, often near to the Home Guard post. Camp planning records corroborated with the accounts of resettled women validate that social halls were always erected close to the main security post.[621] Those whose role it was to help women and their children, and redefine household activities, had to do so in public, close to the security post whereby this support could be monitored and controlled by the colonial state. While this centralised viewing point ensures the disciplinary mechanism is democratised as it enables outsiders to observe the panoptic machine, villagisation differed here.[622] Red Cross workers were provided a specific space to administer their work, under the watch of the colonial guards themselves. The colonial administration ensured humanitarian workers were kept at an arm's length to the punitive aspects of villagisation. Home Guards did not contain their interactions with female inhabitants to the public sphere. They infiltrated and pervaded any space in the camp, largely with the utmost autonomy and complicity of the colonial government. When CDWOs and Red Cross field workers did cross the borders to individual huts this was done so under the close control of Home Guards. Evidence suggests that the reason for these visits were to inspect household management.[623]

[620] Interview with Sophia.
[621] KNA, DC/MRU 2/1/4, Native Affairs Villages and Villagisation; 1954-60, 2; interview with Sophia.
[622] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 207.
[623] KNA, AB 2/1A, Policy; Maendeleo ya Wanawake Policy, 47.

Menace in action

Fear and terror characterised women's experiences of forced resettlement. They experienced these camp sites as a relatively coherent unit with its own distinct sense of danger and punishment. Adopting Tõnu Viik's 'human spatiality' framework, this section explores how this 'meaningful spatial formation' was brought into existence in the camps.[624] The colonial state used the built environment of camps to extend power and scrutiny over the wider population. It was not, however, the singular result of the built environment of villagisation that gave these spaces a specific meaning to those inside. As cultural geographers show, landscapes are culturally coded and can be subjectively experienced.[625] While the physical objects of the camps endorsed a 'prison-like' environment, how these territories were physically experienced by those inside is a key area of exploration. The spaces formed by the villagisation scheme enabled the colonial government to enact menace against the African population in a much more centralised and targeted way.[626] Violence could be unexpected, with no safe havens to escape it. While surveillance strategies were to control inhabitants in the punitive camps, physical forms of punishment were widespread. Guards did not always enact punishments in private, but purposely did it in the open. This violence permeated huts and the knowledge of the violence which took place behind gates in the Home Guard post was shared between those forcibly resettled. Guards could always accelerate control in these carefully constructed environments without even a moment's notice.

The atrocities which took place against women and girls in the Home Guard posts became part of a shared consciousness and association of terror among the camps' populations. While Agnes conducted her interview in Gĩkũyũ, she used the English term 'private' to explain this post in her camp. As she recalls, Home Guards, 'had a house that they would call private that they used to monitor the entire camp'.[627] This supposedly private post become far too familiar to women and girls in the camp. Descriptions of the *ndaki*, translating to a cell-like structure in the Home Guard post, emerge in Grace Kanguniu's and Agnes' testimonies as key places associated with physical violence and torture at the hands of security personnel.[628] Screening was a vital component in the 'rehabilitation' process and this practice sits at the centre of the

[624] Tõnu Viik, 'Human Spatiality: A Cultural Phenomenology of Landscapes and Places', *Problemos,* 79 (2011), 104.
[625] Viik, 'Human Spatiality', 105.
[626] This thesis adopts Homi Bhadha's 'the menace of mimicry' in this analysis of colonial violence. See Homi Bhadha, 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse', *Discipleship: A Special Issue on Psychoanalysis,* 28 (1984), pp. 125-133.
[627] Interview with Agnes.
[628] Interviews with Grace Kanguniu and Agnes. Also Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning,* 76.

human rights abuses that the British government acknowledged following the High Court case. Exploration of the screening processes permeating villagisation is still in its infancy.[629] Expanding the oral history evidence among those who were villagised demonstrates some of the similarities in experiences of those villagised and those detained. Grace Kanguniu's testimony is particularly important when considering how areas in the Home Guard post operated as prisons and torture chambers. Grace Kanguniu was actively involved in the Mau Mau, working as a messenger for forest fighters in the Tumu Tumu region. She was highly revered among this branch of the Mau Mau, with insurgents giving her the Mau Mau name Kanguniu after leading a group to safety to a place called Nguniu. Grace Kanguniu helped them avoid capture from the encroaching colonial forces. In 1954, Grace Kanguniu was villagised; she was fourteen years old. During her time in Kamatu camp, guards took Grace Kanguniu to the security post under suspicion of her involvement to the Mau Mau. It was here where she faced screening.

Guards interrogated Grace Kanguniu and she sustained severe bodily harm in this process. It is now known that this was a widespread reality for those screened. Grace Kanguniu recalls guards beating her, forcing her to live in a cell with no roof where the rains engulfed her and torturing her in an attempt for her to denounce the Mau Mau oath. She recounted being beaten while naked, describing how 'you'd have a wet cloth placed here so that when you're beaten, you'd feel the shock'.[630] Reacting to Caroline's disturbed facial expression in response to hearing this, Grace Kanguniu asked, 'you're feeling pity?', following this with, 'that's why we tell you that this independence was earned by blood. You see like today you dress and eat as you please'.[631] Grace Kanguniu's defiance was reflected through her nostalgia, pride and loyalty to the Mau Mau. As the administration used these forms of torture to extract information from insurgents and force them to denounce the oath, Grace Kanguniu was firm in explaining that 'no way could you tell them that you have taken the oath'.[632] Upon Caroline translating this, Grace Kanguniu chuckled, raised her hands in the air and re-enacted her response to those torturing her: 'I haven't taken oath [sic]'.[633]

Grace Kanguniu's testimony not only reveals that screening took place in camps, but it also locates where this specific torture took place in the overall camp geography and how visible

[629] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning;* Anderson, 'Guilty Secrets'.
[630] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.
[631] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.
[632] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.
[633] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.

this was to others who were villagised. This expands our understanding that the camp security posts were not only structures built for surveillance purposes, but also integral areas to imprison, torture and extend the colonial state's terror on suspected Mau Mau participants. The security posts were situated at the most visible and highest point of the camp. While the Home Guards may have described this place as 'private' to Agnes, there was nothing private about guards forcibly handling a woman or girl taking them to the security post to face interrogation or imprisonment. Other inhabitants could watch and hear this happen from their huts.[634] Making this site of extreme punishment as obvious as possible to the camp population was a common theme in the colonial state's architecture of torture in this conflict. Mweru works camp is a particularly illuminating case of comparison here. Mweru works camp in the Nyeri region was repurposed in independent Kenya and is now known as Mweru High School. Detention and works camps were commonly appropriated to serve a new function. Unlike the villagisation infrastructure, they were often well-planned, well-funded and adequately structured sites. In the Mweru High School grounds, school governors have paid homage to the brutal history of the emergency period by leaving the torture chamber untouched. It now stands as a reminder of the bloodshed in this struggle.[635] What is noticeable for visitors of the school, is that the torture chamber stands in the centre of the grounds, adjacent to the main road which leads transport in (figure 11). For those being transported into this works camp in the 1950s, this was one of the first buildings seen; no doubt the sounds of pain and torment were also heard.

[634] For a listening analysis of memories of colonial violence, see for example Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Nervous State: Violence, Remedies, and Reverie in Colonial Congo* (North Carolina, 2016), 31.
[635] The Museum of British Colonialism has been documenting key sites of detention across central Kenya and have created digital reconstructions of this camp and the torture chamber. See The Museum of British Colonialism, 'Emergency Exhibition', 2019.
<https://www.museumofbritishcolonialism.org/emergencyexhibition> (accessed 13th April 2021).

Figure 11: The torture chamber in what was Mweru Works Camp, 2019.[636]

The *ndaki* did not just serve as a torture chamber, it served as a prison. Grace Kanguniu was held there; she explains that she was imprisoned at the security post for 'almost a year', further elaborating that 'we must have stayed there for six to seven months'.[637] Probing her use of 'we', Grace Kanguniu outlines that she had not been detained alone, there were other girls who faced the same fate as her. She recalls they were 'girls who were accused of being in cahoots with the Mau Mau' and that it was just females in this space where she was incarcerated.[638] This testimony shows that screening and imprisonment was enacted and given a designated location to serve the colonial state's operations against the Mau Mau. These posts specifically served to punish those from the punitive camps. The *ndaki* operated as a policed space which held girls and women outside of the colonial justice system. Prior to 1953, Home Guard posts were already established in the reserves, though they became easy targets to Mau Mau attacks in the early stages of military operations. As Elkins shows, Baring's government responded to this by heavily fortressing the sites to 'become the physical symbols of loyalist power'.[639] With

[636] Photograph taken by Bethany Rebisz during a visit of Mweru High School in April 2019.
[637] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.
[638] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.
[639] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, 76.

these posts now given this increased fortification and authority by the colonial government, the nature of violence in these spaces manifested further. Britain's counter-insurgency campaign in Kenya made colonial violence far more visible to its enemies than ever before.

Scholars have cited the Home Guard posts as places where colonial guards sexually assaulted and raped women.[640] Male guards dominated these fortified posts and acted with full autonomy. David Anderson and Julianne Weis' examination of rape in this period demonstrates that investigations of complaints made by women who were villagised were 'frequently conducted by colleagues of the accused'.[641] More often than not, the view among colonial officials was that these prosecutions did more harm 'to the morale of the security services and undermined the counterinsurgency campaign'.[642] A perfect cocktail for abuse was formed. Home Guard's operated with such autonomy. The colonial government actively disregarded abuses and established specific environments where guards enacted this violence against female inhabitants.

Evidence suggests that male guards particularly preyed on vulnerable younger girls to sexually assault and rape. Anderson and Weis' article does mention two cases of child rape; one case was Jane Mara who suffered sexual abuse at the age of fifteen, the second case related to accusation of several Home Guards in the Machakos District who had raped young girls in a labour camp.[643] Apart from these cases, Anderson and Weis largely use the phrases 'women' or 'females' in their study. Eyewitness testimonies offer more nuance in better understanding the breadth of the age range of female victims of sexual violence in the camps. Using the term 'girls' in this analysis is of paramount importance to reveal the heightened risks they were exposed to. As Sophia's testimony attests, girls in the camps were particularly vulnerable because their mothers were away from the camp each day for forced labour. She describes this as a 'daily-threat' that meant 'girls were raped and they were terrorised'.[644] In addition to this, during the 2016 witness hearings held at the Royal Courts of Justice in London, it was alleged by Ms M that during her time in Kibichoi camp she was raped by the headman.[645] She was twelve years old at the time and recalls being taken from her hut in the camp to the Home

[640] Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau*, 109-110.
[641] David Anderson and Julianne Weis, 'The Prosecution of Rape in Wartime: Evidence from Kenya's Mau Mau rebellion, 1952-60', *Law & History Review* 36 (2018), 282.
[642] Anderson and Weis, 'The Prosecution of Rape in Wartime', 282.
[643] Anderson and Weis, 'The Prosecution of Rape in Wartime', 267 and 272.
[644] Interview with Sophia.
[645] Individual remained anonymous during the hearing process.

Guard post where she was forced to the ground and raped.[646] Grace Kanguniu explains that girls were sexually assaulted and then subsequently beaten for having 'done immoral things'.[647] It is not clear from Grace Kanguniu's testimony whether this beating came from family members or the guards themselves. Either way, this illuminates the double-burden girls were enduring. Not only were they extremely vulnerable to sexual violence, but members of their communities also blamed them for this 'immorality' and the shame this brought culturally.

Home Guards took advantage of these places of punishment as well as official channels of the colonial state's judicial system to reassert their authority over girls and women in the camps. In one example, Susan spoke of her experience with a Home Guard who wanted to have sex with her. She describes, 'one evening I was arrested by those Home Guards because they wanted relations with me, but I didn't. When they arrested me, detained me, then arraigned me in court'.[648] It is unclear from Susan's testimony what she defines as 'relations' in this context. The mere fact that her decline resulted in the Home Guards arresting her and detaining her demonstrates the level of force and coercion in the actions of the Home Guard. Women and girls experienced heightened levels of sexual violence at the hands of the guards. It is not unreasonable to suggest that Susan had defied a man's efforts to sexually assault or rape her. Susan did not go into any more detail of her experiences of this detention. Here, a 'culture of dissemblance' could explain why Susan did not elaborate further. As Darlene Clark Hine shows, victims of sexual violence often perform a degree of openness when describing their experiences while retaining invisibility and secrecy to 'protect a sanctity of inner aspects of their lives'.[649] It is for these reasons, alongside ethical considerations that Susan was not probed further on this topic. Home Guards exercised control over women in the camps specifically through their sexual advances. For Susan's case, she denotes her survival of this situation to the role her father played in the aftermath. As she explains: 'My father, my father was one of the smartest around actually called Daudi. He did this, he made a friendship with the white people hand in hand with building a friendship with his people'.[650] Susan believes that she did not face physical punishment for her refusal of the Home Guard due to her father building a collaborative relationship with members of the colonial government. In this instance, his association to the colonial administration may have protected her.

[646] Fieldnotes, Royal Courts of Justice, London, 20th July 2016.
[647] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.
[648] Interview with Susan.
[649] Darlene Clark Hine, 'Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West', *Signs*, 14 (1989), 915.
[650] Interview with Susan.

Most women did not have this sort of protection, and many remained in sexual relationships with their rapists as an act of survival. During her interview, Susan expresses that it was common and very likely for girls and women to form relationships with Home Guards.[651] Determining the nature of consent in these relationships Susan describes is near impossible, especially when considering the power dynamics and the violent environments these relationships took place in. Sexual coercion played a key role in these relationships. Sophia offers a revealing insight into the power dynamics of these supposed relations. Sophia explains that her aunt was 'first raped, and then forced' to marry the man who raped her since he had impregnated her. The man who had raped her was a sub-chief serving that camp. Sophia describes him as a '*mzee*', meaning male elder, who she believes forced her aunt into this as 'she was young and very beautiful'.[652] Sophia's aunt later went on to have a second child with him as his fourth wife.[653] Sophia made clear that there was no form of negotiation in this situation: the *mzee* had violated Sophia's aunt and forced her into this arrangement. As Deniz Kandiyoti's 'bargaining with patriarchy' theoretical framework shows, it was often in girls' and women's best interest to remain in these marriages to ensure men took 'responsibility for the reproductive consequences of sexual activity'.[654] Discussing this horrific act that her aunt was made to endure was understandably a difficult process throughout the interview. When the topic of sexual violence first came up, Sophia quickly changed the subject. She later felt comfortable enough to explain what happened specifically to her aunt. While succumbing to these sorts of relationships may have brought material benefits from being with a colonial guard, this came at a heavy price and was rarely a fair choice for a woman to make of her own freewill.

It is evident that Home Guards and colonial officers did not always rely on their closed off *ndaki* to violate women and girls; women and girls also experienced this violence and humiliation far closer to home. While those who were too young to participate in forced labour outside of the camp were a particularly vulnerable group, the presence of family members was not necessarily a protection. As Elkins' research has shown, guards raped women of all ages, sometimes repeatedly, and often in front of those they shared their hut with. In one example given by Elkins, a guard raped a woman in front of her father-in-law. Elkins also claims that guards raped mothers and daughters in the same hut, at the same time by guards. It is important

[651] Interview with Susan.
[652] Interview with Sophia.
[653] Interview with Sophia.
[654] Deniz Kandiyoti, 'Bargaining with Patriarchy', *Gender and Society*, 2 (1988), 284.

to note that in Elkins' findings, it was not just the Home Guards who were rapists. It was often the British colonial officers known as 'Johnnies' who raped women and girls first and then left the victims for Home Guards.[655] Male guards sought to violate women in a plethora of ways. Sophia offers an ethnic analysis to the rape and sexual violence she was aware of in her camp. She explains:

> At that time, no babies were born except from rape. And even now, now I remember when it came out about the kids born with small heads, Zika, Zika virus yeah. In the village, there were babies born with zika virus, they had small heads. The women who were raped by the Home Guards… Some were Gĩkũyũ, some were Kamba some were Kalenjin. Others were Luo, they'd not recruit many locals aside from the sub-chief and a few of his guards, maybe three four. Others were from other tribes.[656]

One can suggest that Sophia is attempting to make sense of these violent acts, by ethnically othering the male perpetrators. Sophia denotes that babies who were born out of rape had zika virus as the rapists had often come from different ethnic groups than the women who were raped. This challenges Anderson's findings who argues that Home Guard units 'were confined within their own locations'.[657] Sophia reveals her cultural upbringing in this moment, suggesting that, to her, it is forbidden to diverge from one's ethnic group in sexual relations. Further work is necessary to determine the role ethnicity played in the sexual violence in Kenya, and how this intensified the trauma of rape.

The threat of sexual violence was one which predominantly impacted women and girls; it is important to note that even loyalist women faced this threat. There is a rather distinctive claim made in a report sent to Reverend Robert Macpherson of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) in April 1955. It is unclear who sent the letter, though the report suggests it was a member of the PCEA who was collecting information on the camps. As the report shows, a Red Cross officer posted a loyalist woman to a camp after she underwent a short welfare course

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[655] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, 247 and 254. While Elkins' findings are significant to understanding the nature of sexual violence in Kenya during the emergency, I wish to note the ongoing complaints lodged against Harvard University, its handling of sexual misconduct allegations, and concerns raised of academic staff in failing to support the victims. I recognise Elkins' contribution to the literature on conflict-related sexual violence, though I wish to raise this context when assessing this work. See Susan Svrluga, 'At Harvard, sexual misconduct allegations prompt questions, retractions and vows to do better', 10 February 2022, via The Washington Post [website] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2022/02/10/harvard-sexual-misconduct-comaroff/> (accessed 21 February 2022).
[656] Interview with Sophia.
[657] Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 243.

to care for children there. The male British Red Cross officer had requested that she lived in the Home Guard post and guards arranged this. The report then states:

> The headman has a weakness for women and because she would not oblige him, he told her that she would have to be on guard for two hours each night… because of his ill-will towards her she felt that her work could not go on.[658]

The woman subsequently asked for a transfer from this camp to perform her duties in a different location. The headman abused his position by punishing a woman who refused to 'oblige him'. This example, along with the others explored in this chapter demonstrate that the Home Guard posts were a dangerous place for any woman or girl. While girls were particularly vulnerable of these abuses, guards also posed a risk to women who worked for the colonial state.

Home Guard violence was largely indiscriminatory among the inhabitants of the camps, and wholly visible. While women were at greater threat of sexual violence as well as other forms of violence, evidence of public beatings in camps is available. The colonial guards further entrenched a de facto carceral status to those forcibly resettled through the visibility and frequency of punitive public beatings within this disciplinary space. The concentration of vast numbers of people in a close confined area ensured little happened behind closed doors. Guards used public beatings as a form of punishment for those who did not follow orders or those they suspected of aiding forest fighters. Sophia recalls her time living in Kamandura camp and in a somewhat nonchalant manner, which could portray the normative nature of the claim she makes, states that if someone did not follow orders, Home Guards beat them with the 'big sticks' which were 'very, very strong, that would not break'.[659] Sophia went so far as to describe people being beaten to death for not following rules. She remembers people saying 'enough!' to the gruelling work regime or Home Guard threats and then, 'they'd be beaten to a point of death and some even died. Those who refuse to be raped would be beaten to death'.[660] Sophia goes on to state: 'if you argued with the Home Guards you'd be seen as though you want to start a riot, you'd be beaten to death'.[661] Her testimony not only suggests that this was a reality well remembered and widely witnessed during her time in the camp, it also shows that Home Guards escalated situations through their acts of violence. As Sophia's testimony validates, a mere verbal disagreement could result in the public murder of an inhabitant. Further

[658] PCEA, II/CP/4, Women's Work Tumutumu Community Development, Notices and Correspondence; 1954-55.
[659] Interview with Sophia.
[660] Interview with Sophia.
[661] Interview with Sophia.

than this, women were under increased threat of death if they attempted to escape sexual violence. Guards shot or hanged women in a central location of the camps if they suspected them of aiding forest fighters.[662] Manufacturing a topography of terror in the camps was a key component to the punitive nature of this counter-insurgency measure.[663]

Esther detailed a particularly brutal experience. Home Guards beat her so badly that she could not remember how it ended, she just remembers waking up in hospital, outside of her camp. At this stage of the interview Esther became emotional as she described the attack, her body language closed off and she made herself small and enveloped by her chair. Esther then showed the scarring on her neck from this attack; after, Esther, Caroline and I sat in silence for a moment.[664] A *gakunia* (informant) had identified her as she stood in a queue, waiting to attend school. The suffering women and girls experienced can be mapped outside of the camp territory. This attack therefore happened in front of the other children queuing.[665] As Esther's testimony indicates, children were not immune from public beatings. Esther was fourteen years old when she was attacked. A letter kept in the PCEA archive sheds further light on the frequent nature of beatings. The letter is written by Francis Kanyua, a learned man in the Kabete region. It is undated and is a typewritten copy of the original, most likely from a handwritten note. He writes of his observations of the disciplinary measures that guards deployed in his camp. Francis states:

> It is not a wonder to see some of the younger folk beaten unconscious. These beatings are conducted quite cold-bloodedly. There is no mercy left. The sad thing is that these beatings are not only directed to those who have taken the oath – but to even the clean ones. One Christian convert whose grave had been dug by Mau Mau was given a thorough beating with a *kiboko* [cane] just the other day until his left eye nearly burst.[666]

Francis' letter demonstrates the indiscriminatory violence he had witnessed in his camp. To emphasise this, he refers to 'the clean ones', loyalists who were also at threat of these beatings. From Francis' language choices which reflect official Pipeline terminology to describe those who were cured of the supposed Mau Mau disease through rehabilitation, one can infer that

[662] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, 246.
[663] Public hangings have historically been used as a mechanism for combating threats to law and order, this was prevalent in colonial Kenya but explicitly disallowed publicly during the emergency period. See for example Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*; Stacey Hynd, 'Murder and Mercy: Capital Punishment in Colonial Kenya, 1909-1956', *International Journal of African Historical Research*, 45 (2012), pp. 81-101.
[664] Interview with Esther.
[665] Interview with Esther.
[666] PCEA, II/GB/1, Emergency - general; 1953-56.

Francis occupied the loyalist sphere of villagisation. Villagised Mau Mau adherents did not have access to the loyalist camps and would therefore not have necessarily been able to witness the beating of loyalists by Home Guards.

In addition to these forms of punishments, Home Guards sought to humiliate and expose their victims. In another example provided by Esther, she explains that beatings were common punishment for those who failed to turn up to forced labour on time. In contrast to the other cases explored, Esther elaborates and describes how 'some would have their clothes taken off and they would be caned naked'.[667] Home Guards who stripped inhabitants naked before beating them publicly sought to terrorise and shame these individuals in an even more perverse way. It demonstrated an ownership guards had over the bodies they controlled in camps. Today, international criminal law considers forced nudity as a war crime and recognises it as a form of sexual violence.[668] Scholarship dedicated to the human rights abuses in the detention and works camps in Kenya has determined forced nudity and the violation of bodies as common practice among torture methods. Here, in the camps, this violation was endured on a far more public stage, with all inhabitants able to see. In seeking to understand how these levels of violence persisted with such autonomy, Agnes explains: 'you know the Home Guards did as they pleased, and we were constantly controlled'.[669] Villagisation concentrated the population into one closed off space, operating practically autonomously. Public humiliation and punishment were not only more obvious to those populating these spaces, the unpredictability and frequency of it intensified the impact.

Finally, humiliation came in many forms and was part of a widely used collective punishment: extended curfew hours. These curfews punished the entire populace after guards discovered evidence of individuals aiding insurgent fighters. The camps already had curfew hours in place as part of the standard policy, mainly to keep the camps locked during the night. Guards could, however, extend these curfews officially for up to twenty-three hours at a time. Not only did this effectively prevent anything or anyone from leaving the camp but also resulted in the confiscation of large quantities of money, arms, ammunition and documents.[670] It is unclear how women could have smuggled all of this into the camps and the statement is not corroborated elsewhere. Military strategists could have seen the propaganda appeal to make

[667] Interview with Esther.
[668] Maria Sjöholm, *Gender-Sensitive Norm Interpretation by Regional Human Rights Law Systems* (Brill, 2017), 345.
[669] Interview with Agnes.
[670] UKNA, FCO 141/5701, Mau Mau Unrest; Action after Operation Anvil: Operations in 1955, 1.

statements like this. These periods of extended curfew hours could last for periods of a week to ten days, proving an effective means in breaking the passive wing support. This meant inhabitants had extremely limited access to water and food whilst the curfew was in place.

As this measure became so hated, it forced many to comply with camp rules to avoid curfew hours extending further.[671] In Beatrice's case, administrators forced her camp into a three-month lockdown during which they could not leave the camp to cultivate food outside.[672] Curfew orders did not solely prevent inhabitants from leaving the camp under guard during their day for food-gathering, it also imprisoned families to their homes. Esther describes, 'you see, a curfew was issued. A curfew of seven days. In the house, you could not open the door or window… if you opened you would be shot'.[673] It is unclear whether Esther had witnessed people being shot for leaving their huts or whether this was a threat relayed to them. Either way, this demonstrates the level of fear generated among those restricted under curfew orders. Her testimony further illuminates the prison-like feeling enforced on her from being trapped inside her home for this time. She describes, 'we lived in darkness inside there. You would go to the toilet right there, you would not have anything to eat, nothing to drink. We lived like that. We spent seven days locked inside. Yes, because of the curfew'.[674] Preventing people from using the shared latrines outside of the huts was a cruel way to coerce people into submission. Esther's testimony shows that families were forced to relieve themselves in front of one another and then remain in that squalor for the duration of the curfew.

While the colonial state's scapegoat for the human rights abuses inflicted on Kenyans during this conflict has been the African Home Guards, historians have challenged this. The scholarship has determined that those at all levels of the colonial administration inflicted or condoned abuse and ill-treatment.[675] Humiliation tactics were used in various contexts. Women and children were humiliated in the initial destruction of homesteads which facilitated villagisation. They then faced further humiliation in camps when being punished or sexually abused in public. Sophia provides another example whereby British soldiers passed by her camp on the road which separated the punitive side, from the loyalist. She recalls the children

[671] UKNA, FCO 141/6127, Curfew Orders 1952-8, 12/1.
[672] Interview with Beatrice.
[673] Interview with Esther.
[674] Interview with Esther.
[675] See for example Anderson and Weiss, 'The Prosecution of Rape in Wartime'; Anderson, 'Guilty Secrets'; Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*; Bethany Rebisz, '"Guilty Until Proven Innocent": British Misconduct and Rehabilitation During the Counter- Insurgency Campaign in Kenya, 1952- 1960', BA Dissertation (University of Reading, 2015); Bethany Rebisz, 'A Policy Characterised by Punishment: Villagisation and British Counter-Insurgency, Kenya, 1954 – 1960', MA Dissertation (University of Reading, 2016).

lining the side of the road, innocently shouting 'Hi!' to get the attention of the soldiers convoying down the road toward Nairobi. In a bid to humiliate these children and reassert their own authority, the soldiers threw things at the children as they passed by. Sophia describes seeing soldiers throw human waste as well as rats and biscuits at them. She explains, 'they were humiliating the people'.[676]

Conclusion

Camps were not only vital components of Britain's counter-insurgency campaign against the Mau Mau, but they were also instruments of colonial power. They were sites where the colonial administration negotiated for control of the bodies, the resources, the identities and the socio-cultural structures of those inside. While the individual actions of guards enacting forms of coercion and violence played a key role in this, the built environment and the spatiality of these camp territories played an equally important part in this. The modalities of power in the camps were mutually embedded through the formation of the space and through the actions of those governing it. The spatiality of the camps were effective tools in curating a geography of terror where the lives and bodies of those inside were violated daily by the watchful eye and the physical abuse of colonial state actors.

Villagisation ruptured the social fabric of Gĩkũyũ society. Using the places of social reproduction – an individual's or family's hut and wider homestead – this chapter demonstrates the upheaval and damage inflicted on Gĩkũyũ gendered and generational social structures. In this process, British soldiers and African Home Guards sought to terrorise and humiliate women and children. Upon arrival at the camps, this treatment not only continued, but guards accelerated it. Those who experienced villagisation describe themselves as having been 'caged people', who were 'encamped' in these supposedly reformative spaces. The memories of former inhabitants ascribe deep-rooted meaning to the places presented in the British colonial photography collections. Their memories of violence embody the buildings constructed in the villagisation scheme. Drawbridges restricted their freedom. The *ndaki* cells imprisoned women and girls. Individual huts were set on fire and destroyed. As the evidence in this chapter demonstrates, violence and suffering pervaded the camps.

[676] Interview with Sophia.

Chapter IV: Performing Humanitarianism

At the 1952 Toronto International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) conference, the Red Cross movement was at a crossroads. On the back of the horrors of the Holocaust and the violence witnessed during the 1940s, the Red Cross redefined and reaffirmed its humanitarian principles. Lady Limerick, the then Vice-Chair of the British Red Cross Society (BRCS), spoke at the conference, just two months before the State of Emergency was declared in Kenya. She professed that all National Red Cross Societies should focus work solely on the humanitarian principles 'for the promotion of health, the prevention of disease, and the mitigation of suffering throughout the world', and challenged claims that the Red Cross movement was violating the key principle of political neutrality as 'its ideals are too firmly enshrined in the minds and the hearts' of those operating in the organisation.[677] Just as the British colonial government in Kenya was concerned about the public image of the counter-insurgency campaign in Kenya, so too was the BRCS regarding its involvement in colonial territories. Recent work by Rob Skinner and Alan Lester has highlighted the importance of addressing the intricate framework of relations between humanitarianism, empire and decolonisation.[678] This thesis responds to this call by contextualising the associations between local contexts, colonial actions and global humanitarian trends during this period. Gĩkũyũ women and girls suffered greatly during villagisation, mainly from physical and structural violence. The BRCS' public accounts of its findings in the camps show little concern or acknowledgment of this violence. Instead, the BRCS performed a White-saviour informed intervention, as Limerick argues, to restore the well-being of so-called 'sullen and uncooperative' Kenyan women, unable to care for their children appropriately.[679] While the BRCS' work in the 1950s was undoubtedly built on ideas of international compassion, it was framed by imperial ideologies of African women which undermined the effectiveness of humanitarian action, and implicated the organisation's neutrality in this colonial environment.

The colonial administration planned villagisation as a security measure first and foremost, with inhabitants' health and well-being of lower priority. Non-governmental organisations, like the BRCS, became key players in offering this support. Fabian Klose, Andrew Thompson and Yolana Pringle have highlighted the constraints of international humanitarian organisations in

[677] International Committee of the Red Cross Conference, 1952, Published Proceedings, 136 – 137.
[678] Rob Skinner and Alan Lester, 'Humanitarianism and Empire: New Research Agendas', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40 (2012), 729.
[679] British Red Cross Society Archive, 1594/27, Vice-Chairman's (Lady Limerick) Visit to East Africa Jan/Feb 1957.

the context of colonial counter-insurgency.[680] The so-called fundamental principles of providing 'impartial, neutral and independent' assistance, which the ICRC and wider Red Crescent Movement were meant to operate under, came under intense scrutiny due to the close relationship national Red Cross societies had with colonial governments. Emily Baughan has since furthered this debate by investigating the Save the Children Fund (SCF) and the BRCS who saw an 'opportunity' in the Kenya Emergency to continue its humanitarian internationalism which in turn enabled colonial brutality.[681] While these arguments are vital to understanding the ways that humanitarianism operated in the late-colonial era, this chapter shifts away from the limiting analytical question of whether the BRCS resisted or colluded with the colonial state. Michael Barnett recognises humanitarianism 'as a morally complicated creature, a flawed hero defined by the passions, politics, and power of its times'.[682] This chapter, therefore, explores the continuum that individual field workers and organisations constantly moved along and how their actions were influenced by changing ideas of humanitarianism. Much of the BRCS public relation material propagates a united picture that the Red Cross was integral to the future of African mother and child well-being, independent of the colonial government's violent actions. Individual fieldworkers, however, constantly negotiated their own views of the work they were conducting and the different forms of humanitarianism they believed to be most appropriate in this context. These tensions are explored as well as the limitations of humanitarian organisations in the context of European imperialism and the decolonisation of European-controlled territories across Africa.

Institutional records of the BRCS and the ICRC lay the foundation of analysis for this chapter. By comparing the internal correspondence, with the external public relations messaging alongside some oral testimony of those forcibly resettled who encountered Red Cross workers, this chapter complicates the narrative of humanitarian involvement in Kenya. It explores the institutional beliefs that framed humanitarian action in this period to show how BRCS spokespeople depicted BRCS work to public audiences and donators. It offers reflections on the ways individual female welfare workers challenged, colluded and negotiated with colonial

[680] Fabian Klose, 'The Colonial Testing Ground: The International Committee of the Red Cross and the Violent End of Empire', *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, 2 (2011), pp. 107-126; Yolana Pringle, 'Humanitarianism, Race and Denial: the International Committee of the Red Cross and Kenya's Mau Mau Rebellion, 1952-60', *Academic Journal Academic Journal | History Workshop Journal*, 84 (2017), pp. 89-107; Andrew Thompson, 'Humanitarian Principles Put to the Test: Challenges to Humanitarian Action during Decolonization', *International Review of the Red Cross*, 97 (2015), pp. 45-76.
[681] Emily Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire: Humanitarian Collusion with the Colonial State during the Kenyan Emergency, c.1954-1960', *Journal of British Studies*, 59 (2020), 58.
[682] Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (New York, 2011), 7.

officials in their care for Kenyan women and children. To examine this, this chapter follows a thematic structure. First, it addresses global humanitarian trends in this era, contextualising the BRCS as an institution and exploring its relationship to British imperialism. Secondly, it assesses how the BRCS functioned in a colonial setting and late-colonial counter-insurgency campaign. It demonstrates that BRCS intervention was limited and controlled by the colonial government. Finally, this chapter explores the day-to-day interactions between BRCS field workers, colonial administrators, and Gĩkũyũ inhabitants. Ultimately, these findings challenge the public discourse of the BRCS and offers nuance in addressing its involvement. While the BRCS' efforts may have been based on twentieth century ideas of compassion, these actions did little to alleviate the true suffering women and girls were experiencing in the camps.

Humanitarianism in the Late Colonial-Era

Humanitarianism in the context of nineteenth and twentieth century Africa was framed and shaped by the attitudes of colonialism and the 'civilising mission'. As Holly Ashford argues, European imperial powers viewed Africans as a '"special type" of human… with child-like characteristics'. [683] During the interwar period, Ashford highlights that humanitarian discourse in organisations such as the BRCS reflected a belief that 'these child-like humans' needed to be brought 'closer to fully-fledged, adult, humanity'.[684] This highly paternalistic characterisation of humanitarian organisations during this time period connected humanitarian work across European colonies with the imperial mission and broader visions of human evolution, both socially and economically.[685] Barnett's concept of 'alchemical' humanitarianism, also described as, 'developmental' humanitarianism, informs Ashford's analysis as she explores the case of the BRCS establishing maternal and infant welfare in the 1930s Gold Coast. 'Alchemical' characterises BRCS efforts to tackle social economic causes of poor health in the interwar and post-1945 period.[686] This framework is particularly helpful in this chapter's examination of the BRCS support provided in the camps, as similarities can are evident in the developmental aspects of the BRCS's operations. In comparison to Ashford, however, this chapter assesses humanitarianism in relation to counter-insurgency warfare and in the context of the decolonising era. Humanitarianism, in this instance, was an urgent response to a conflict situation while also incorporating a developmental agenda framed by

[683] Holly Ashford, 'The Red Cross and the Establishment of Maternal and Infant Welfare in the 1930s Gold Coast', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 47 (2019), 515.
[684] Ashford, 'The Red Cross and the Establishment of Maternal and Infant Welfare', 515.
[685] Ashford, 'The Red Cross and the Establishment of Maternal and Infant Welfare', 515.
[686] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 122-123.

imperial notions of 'civilisation'. The BRCS, and in particular its leaders, projected a vision that their field workers were responsible for bringing Gĩkũyũ women and children closer to this 'fully-fledged, adult, humanity'.

From the 1930s, the BRCS was actively expanding its links to the British Empire with a particular interest in children's welfare. In 1930, the organisation hosted the British Empire Red Cross Conference with a clear agenda to discuss the necessity of BRCS expansion of the civilisation agenda. This conference accelerated the creation of BRCS branches in the colonies.[687] The BRCS established its Kenya branch during the First World War to raise funds in support of British troops. The Kenyan branches patronage was initially exclusive to White settlers who influenced the vision of the society and its operations in Kenya.[688] It was in the context of Britain's counter-insurgency campaign against Mau Mau that the BRCS extended its work outside of the 'brotherhood of whites' and instead turned attention to the colony's 'less civilised subjects'.[689] This 'civilising' discourse continued to influence humanitarian efforts in the latter years of the colonial period in Africa, with the BRCS engaging closely with this rhetoric in Kenya during the timeframe of villagisation. In her fieldnotes during a visit in 1957 to the Kenya branch of the BRCS to view its operations, Limerick details her thoughts on those villagised. She describes the 'sullen and uncooperative' African women the BRCS field officers must encounter, highlighting how difficult the humanitarian mission will be to make these women happy and helpful.[690] Lady Angela Limerick had been involved in the Red Cross movement since 1915, first serving in France during the First World War. After heading the London Branch of the Red Cross during the Second World War, she was elected Vice-President of the League of Red Cross Societies which she occupied until 1973.[691]

Limerick's fieldnotes do little to engage with the traumatic and damaging nature of forced resettlement which had a detrimental impact on the socio-economic conditions and wellbeing of Kenyan women in these camps. Instead, she adopts the terminology of leading imperial-poet Rudyard Kipling and his 'The White Man's Burden', where he calls upon westerners to colonise and 'civilise' their 'new-caught, sullen peoples, half-devil and half-child'.[692] 'The White Man's

[687] Ashford, 'The Red Cross and the Establishment of Maternal and Infant Welfare', 522.
[688] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire', 68.
[689] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire', 68.
[690] BRCA, 1594/27.
[691] International Committee of the Red Cross, 'Death of Lady Limerick', undated. <https://international-review.icrc.org/sites/default/files/S0020860400067516a.pdf> (accessed 18 July 2021).
[692] Rudyard Kipling, 'The White Man's Burden', 1899. <http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/poems_burden.htm> (accessed 15 July 2021).

Burden' served as a justification of the imperial mission and this discourse influenced imperial powers and colonial administrations. Limerick's disregard to mention the poor treatment experienced by those in the villagisation scheme is unsurprising when compared to Thompson's findings. Lady Limerick had very likely witnessed or known about the violent screening processes implemented in the all-female Kamiti detention camp. Limerick was aware that guards were inflicting these brutal punishments upon girls under the age of seventeen. As Thompson shows, she chose not to challenge this. This contrasted with Joan Whittington, the head of the overseas branches of the BRCS, who was at least openly critical of the dismal and harmful living conditions in the detention camps.[693]

Furthermore, Limerick described Kenyan women through the 'beasts of burden' rhetoric – 'dehumanising their condition' as Ashford explores.[694] Humanitarianism in the twentieth century became conditioned by this rhetoric and, as Barnett puts it, a 'new condition of humanity was deemed possible through responsibility and obligation, rather than charity'.[695] The BRCS provided instrumental services to those forcibly resettled in order to counteract prevailing issues such as malnutrition and disease-spreading. Imperial notions of African 'primitivism' motivated BRCS work, and the organisation publicly justified its operations in the Kenyan camps through this rhetoric. Limerick aligned her views on the situation in Kenya with the discourse perpetuated by the colonial administration. Limerick describes it as a 'civil war' of 'savage nature' due to 'tribal outbreak'.[696] Not only was the BRCS working to restore inhabitants' health, the organisation saw it as its responsibility to train African women and 'develop' their way-of-life so they were no longer 'content to live in their former primitive fashion'.[697] In relating this back to the existing literature questioning the BRCS' ability to operate in a 'neutral' fashion in Kenya, humanitarianism in the context of a European colony was shaped by the imperial and racist views of the time.

Much like colonial governments, humanitarian organisations were firmly imbricated in efforts to socially engineer Africans. The SCF has come under investigation for this from historians. In 1955, the Chairman of the Fund, Brigadier Tony Boyce, publicly declared that the welfare

[693] Thompson, 'Humanitarian Principles Put to the Test', 65-66.
[694] Ashford, 'The Red Cross and the Establishment of Maternal and Infant Welfare', 521.
[695] Ashford, 'The Red Cross and the Establishment of Maternal and Infant Welfare', 515 & Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 52.
[696] Pringle, 'Humanitarianism, Race and Denial', 95-96.
[697] BRCA, RCC/1/31/6, The British Red Cross Society Overseas Branches: Report for the Year 1956.

of children and women needed to be seen 'as a separate and new emergency'.[698] Engaging closely with the rhetoric of Thomas Askwith and his community development team, Kenyan women were key actors to stabilising Kenya in the future. Though Boyce and the Fund were mainly enticed by the opportunity the conflict presented for them to establish more active partnerships between their voluntary workers and governments in colonial territories.[699] Baughan's work contextualises the trends and concerns of the SCF during the post-war era which heavily influenced its agenda for Kenya. Having seen how adolescents were weaponised by totalitarian states during the Second World War, SCF became interested in the 'political potency of "youth"'.[700] Baughan defines 'youth' as ages twelve to eighteen and posits that the SCF 'sought to provide moral and material interventions that would steer an emotionally-damaged generation towards an adulthood of democratic citizenship'.[701] Humanitarian organisations were taking interest in the future development of colonial territories, securing involvement with those most likely to be disenfranchised by the failings of the colonial state and therefore influenced by the perceived threat of communism in this era.[702] It was from here that the SCF began work with Askwith and his 'rehabilitation' department to pursue programmes focused on 'juvenile delinquents' who may have been 'contaminated by Mau Mau ideas'.[703] This resulted in SCF providing funding and staff for the Wamumu prison school for the youths convicted during emergency operations as well as Ujana Park which housed younger boys from the age of eight.[704] Boyce may have publicly declared an interest in the welfare of women and children but his Fund's attention was actually focused on 'rehabilitation' work with the male youth in partnership with the colonial government. The SCF concerns for 'children' did little to trickle into the camps, leaving the BRCS as the primary humanitarian organisation involved in this work.

Colonial welfarism and its progression to development, therefore, provides a backdrop to the nature of humanitarianism in Kenya during this period. Joanna Lewis offers a vital starting point for the case of welfare in Kenya where she identifies the methods applied by Europeans

[698] Save the Children Collection, A467, Publicity and Fundraising: Kenya, 37, 'Children of Kenya' by Brigadier T.W. Boyce publication from Corona, May 1955.
[699] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire', 58.
[700] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire', 62.
[701] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire', 62.
[702] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire', 62. See also Julia F. Irwin, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening* (Oxford, 2013), 192-193.
[703] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire', 61.
[704] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire', 64-65. See also Stacey Hynd, 'Small Warriors? Children and Youth in Colonial Insurgencies and Counterinsurgency, ca. 1945–1960', *Comparative Studies in Society and History: an international quarterly*, 62 (2020), pp. 684-713.

to engineer social change in a White settler colony characterised by racial division.[705] In the post-First World War era, colonial welfare work faced a lot of opposition with a particular view spreading that the health and agricultural needs of women remained neglected. Community development was enforced in the context of the counter-insurgency campaign to mitigate this, and social welfare was co-opted as part of the war effort and now survived as community development. As community development applied British notions of community as well as the older ideas of 'self-help', it engaged with international development practice and for this reason brought wider interest from supporting international organisations.[706] In the era of rapid decolonisation, humanitarian aid organisations first attempted to attend to the basic needs of populations before then moving to practices of 'self-help'.[707] The BRCS played a central role in coordinating women's clubs to advance Kenyan women, as well as engaging in a more traditional medical response to those in need. This interplay of humanitarianism and development, influenced by the imperial ideology of African citizens and their supposed need for improved 'humanity', provides the framework for assessing the operations of the BRCS in the camps.

Like the Community Development Women's Officer's (CDWO) focused on community development in the camps, the BRCS fieldworkers were predominantly White, British women. BRCS records contain limited information of anything other than the names of the female welfare officers and where they were posted. As of December 1955, eighteen BRCS fieldworkers were listed to work across the Central Province in the Nyeri, Fort Hall, Embu, Meru, Kiambu districts. Two workers were also posted outside of this Province to tend to the Nairobi and Kapsabet areas. All but one of the women listed held the title 'Miss', with the exception being Mrs. P. Davies.[708] It is likely that the female fieldworkers hired by the BRCS were young and not yet married or did not have child commitments at home in England. One photograph in the BRCS collections shows 'Miss' Enid Hopkins who operated in Kenya throughout this period. As the photograph displays, Hopkins was an older woman, and must have been unmarried based on her title (figure 12). While all postings made in April 1954 were contracted for a year, notes written on these documents show that by and large women's contracts were extended at least for an additional year.[709] Findings in this chapter show BRCS

[705] Joanna Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya 1925-52* (Oxford, 2000), 3.
[706] Lewis, *Empire State-Building*, 359.
[707] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 122.
[708] BRCA, RCC/1/12/1/8, British Red Cross Society in Kenya.
[709] BRCA, RCC/1/12/1/37, BRCS Assistance in Kenya.

activity remained active in the camps to at least 1957. It is likely that some of these women's contracts were extended further, demonstrating the longevity of BRCS operations in Kenyan camps.

Figure 12: 'Enid Hopkins leaving for Kenya on 13 June 1957 to resume work in the Mau Mau re-settlement camps'.[710]

While the women posted to Kenya had prior experience as welfare officers, BRCS leaders barely consider the training needed to navigate the new geographical region and cultural makeup of the terrain. It is evident that new welfare officers sent and posted to Kenya during 1955 received a week's work shadowing a welfare officer already in post. After, branch

[710] BRCA, IN6031, B&W Photograph of nurse Enid Hopkins leaving to work in, this image has been cropped from the original.

organisers allocated her own posting to go off to manage.[711] BRCS fieldworkers covered vast terrain adding to the challenge of adapting to these new environments. Most of the BRCS relief workers had worked in Central Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War to tend to displaced peoples. Some women had also operated during the Malaya Emergency (1948-1960) where they first encountered Britain's villagisation scheme.[712] For example, Margaret Robinson and J. Priest had both been deployed in Malaya before moving to Kenya to work in the Nyeri district.[713] While this experience was undoubtedly helpful, Kenya posed new challenges in terms of the scale and nature of the counter-insurgency campaign. Nyeri was situated in the heart of insurgent action; Robinson and Priest were immediately confronted with the devastating conditions in this location with little time to familiarise themselves.

ICRC delegates raised concerns early on in relation to those operating in Kenya as BRCS welfare officers.[714] In June 1955, G.C. Senn, the then ICRC delegate for British Central Africa, wrote to Pierre Gaillard, the head of the ICRC's executive body, detailing his thoughts:

> The Europeans dominate and the Red Cross is no exception… A change advocated or demanded from anywhere outside causes at once a sharp and hostile reaction: A "colonial" will never admit that anybody else is able and capable to "understand and handle" the indigenous population, or to "solve the problems". To put it into more ordinary language, one could say: "to exploit" the indigenous population, and "to maintain the present state of affairs".[715]

Senn aligns the BRCS fieldworkers with colonial administrators rather provocatively. His impression of this interaction suggests that the BRCS in Nairobi were keen to avoid outside support or guidance, especially from the ICRC. His letter goes on to remind Gaillard that, the BRCS slogan to operate 'above race, colour, creed and class' could not be upheld if it was to cooperate and be accepted by the 'colonials'.[716] ICRC delegates were already questioning the BRCS's neutrality in Kenya. This is unsurprising considering that it was members from the settler community who initially established the BRCS headquarters in Nairobi.

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[711] BRCA, RCC/1/12/1/37.
[712] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire', 69.
[713] Kenya National Archives, AB 17/11, Social Welfare; Rehab Red Cross - teams; 1954-55, 46.
[714] For an analysis of the ICRC attempts to inspect conditions in Kenya and a wider discussion of the ICRC's relationship to the BRCS in Kenya, see for example Fabian Klose, *Human Rights in the Shadow of Colonial Violence: The Wars of Independence in Kenya and Algeria* (Pennsylvania, 2013), 130-132.
[715] International Committee of the Red Cross Archive, BAG 200/108/001, Problème Mau-Mau; 30.10.1952 - 20.08.1959.
[716] ACICR, BAG 200/108-001.

Senn also challenged the BRCS leadership and their lack of experience in Kenya. He argued that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the BRCS are 'not of the social strata which has practical experience and knowledge of the position of the colonies' indigenous people'.[717] He developed this point to suggest that because of this, the BRCS did not understand the seriousness of the situation in Kenya and how the indigenous communities were being treated by the colonial authorities.[718] The BRCS did, however, have direct experience in building services for resettlement camps introduced during Britain's counter-insurgency in colonial Malaya. There it introduced a mobile dispensary to visit camps, provided first aid instruction, taught health and hygiene and undertook a variety of welfare services.[719] Though there was a clear sign of a transfer of knowledge and expertise, Thompson reminds us 'that no two counter-insurgencies are ever quite the same'.[720] In contrast to the BRCS experience in Malaya, humanitarian action in Kenya was subject to far greater political pressures. The settler community in Kenya largely refused to support welfare work for the African population and Askwith struggled to gain an effective budget or manpower to tackle the dire issues facings those forcibly resettled.[721] The BRCS were facing a challenging task in Kenya and therefore had to work hard to maintain a positive public image of its operations.

On the face of these criticisms, leaders of the BRCS attempted to shore up the public image of the organisation to legitimise its efforts among those forcibly resettled.[722] Although the BRCS were operating in the camps from the establishment of this policy in 1954, it was not until 1957 that Limerick welcomed press coverage to applaud the work of her fieldworkers. Lady Limerick publicly applauded the work of the 'Red Cross *Mamas*' in their efforts to restore the health of Kenyans, mainly through their milk distribution service to children and orphans. In a 1957 article published by the London newspaper *The Daily Telegraph*, Limerick reflects on the 'resentment' of Kenyan women toward the British fieldworkers when they first arrived in camps in 1954. By 1957, however, Limerick details the transformation of camp morale due to BRCS intervention. She recalls the camp's population lining the roads singing to their Red Cross '*Mamas*' and filling their Land Rovers with valuable gifts of thanks. The bangles

[717] ACICR, BAG 200/108-001.
[718] ACICR, BAG 200/108-001.
[719] ICRC Conference 1952, A28/ 'Report of the British Red Cross Society 1948-1952'.
[720] Thompson, 'Humanitarian Principles Put to the Test', 58.
[721] Thompson, 'Humanitarian Principles Put to the Test', 59.
[722] Some of these arguments and evidence of the 'Red Cross *Mamas*' have been developed for publication, see: Bethany Rebisz, 'Nyeri, 1957: "Mamas", Milk and Modernisation: The British Red Cross Society and the Kenyan Emergency', *Online Atlas on the History of Humanitarianism and Human Rights*, (2021), urn:nbn:de:0159-2021033114.

Hopkins is wearing may also have been given to her by Kenyans she interacted with, as shown in figure 11. Limerick used this article to showcase the growing maturity of BRCS experience across the globe. At the beginning of her article, Limerick initially describes the BRCS fieldworkers as 'the Red Cross girls' arriving in 1954 and struggling to engage with hostile Gĩkũyũ women. By the end of the article, Limerick switches her terminology to distinguish them in 1957 as the 'Red Cross *mamas*', opting for this as the headline.[723] It is evident that Limerick was seeking to publicly celebrate the journeys and growth of these British women to showcase their personal success as fieldworkers now actively a part of the African communities they were operating in.

Limerick grants the transformation of camp inhabitants' mood to the sole accomplishment of the BRCS workers and ignores the shifting climate of Britain's campaign against the Mau Mau from 1954-1957. She speaks of the touching sentiment that inhabitants had, in fact, assigned the 'Red Cross *mamas*' name to the BRCS welfare officers as a gesture of appreciation for 'raising their spirits' and 'ministering to their ills'.[724] Chapter III indicates why Kenyan women may have been disengaged by the initial presence of BRCS workers. Their interactions with those operating as part of the colonial administration were violent and often terrorising. The periodisation is important when considering Limerick's reflections in 1957. The military efforts against the Mau Mau had practically ceased, therefore the punitive levels of Britain's campaign had begun to shift. There is little surprise then that Kenyan women's spirits were raised. As argued by Barnett, humanitarianism 'contains elements of emancipation and domination' and for those who have acted as saviour, they tend to believe that they can speak on behalf of the victims as their wisdom and insight has put the 'victims on the road of progress'.[725] Limerick's use of this privilege is demonstrated in this example.

Limerick's positioning of the BRCS workers as '*mamas*' of the camps further perpetuated the image that Kenyan women were 'child-like' and in need of the guidance and humanity from more 'civilised' Europeans. '*Mama*', which can be translated from Kiswahili to English as 'mother', positioned British women working in humanitarian missions at the centre of care-giving duties. This drew upon British notions of women at this time, with British society perceiving women as nurturers in their role as mothers in a nuclear family. By adopting the term '*mama*' instead of 'mother' it presented an engagement with the Kenyan communities the

[723] BRCA, RCC/1/12/1/37.
[724] BRCA, RCC/1/12/1/37.
[725] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 14.

BRCS were working with, claiming that this was a term provided to them by the Kenyans it was administering support to, while also being a translation English readers more readily grasped. The BRCS fieldworkers mainly operating in central Kenya were interacting with Gĩkũyũ women who largely did not speak Kiswahili or English. In Gĩkũyũ, the term 'mother' translates to '*maitu*'. It is revealing that this was not the term adopted by Limerick in her press coverage. Instead of provincializing these interactions to the area of Kenya where the BRCS was most active, Limerick makes the 'Red Cross *mamas*' more accessible and adaptable to other colonial territories. Humanitarian femininity in the twentieth century was constructed through ideas of motherhood and care which had evolved alongside missionary discourse.[726] This is prevalent in Limerick's positioning of BRCS workers as '*mamas*'.

Consulting the oral testimony of Gĩkũyũ inhabitants of the camps offers differing perspectives of the work conducted by the BRCS. What is evident from the interviews conducted for this project is a sense of ambivalence among those who encountered Red Cross workers. Each interviewee was asked if they could describe their interactions with humanitarian workers such as the Red Cross. Heike Schmidt stresses the importance of oral historians to consider the silences noted among those interviewed.[727] It may be that the majority of those interviewed for this project had no need to interact with Red Cross personnel, or they simply forgot that they were present in the camps. Only two interview participants could recall the presence of the BRCS. Sophia Wambui Kiarie describes the interventions made by Red Cross workers in her camp. As she explains:

> The Red Cross would come to give food, they were giving food to the aged who could not walk in the colonial assignments because in Limuru there are steep areas. So, the women who are supposed to dig the trenches or make roads and so the aged who could not do anything. They are given milk and the small kids were given milk once a week by the Red Cross… it was the dry milk, that powder milk.[728]

Sophia did not need the supplies provided by the Red Cross in her camp, but she was able to share context on their activities.

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[726] Esther Möller, Johannes Paulmann and Katharina Stornig, 'Gendering Twentieth-Century Humanitarianism: An Introduction', in Esther Möller, Johannes Paulmann and Katharina Stornig (eds), *Gendering Global Humanitarianism in the Twentieth Century: Practice, Politics and the Power of Representation* (London, 2020), 17-78.
[727] Heike I. Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe: A History of Suffering* (Oxford, 2013), 10-11. On silence, see Heidrun Friese, 'Silence – Voice – Representation', in Robert Fine and Charles Turner (eds), *Social Theory after the Holocaust* (Liverpool, 2000), pp. 159-178.
[728] Interview with Sophia.

Sophia also reflects on the BRCS fieldworker who Home Guard's stationed at the camp's social hall close to them. She provides insight into the impressions other inhabitants in her camp had of the Red Cross worker. One nickname given to the fieldworker in Sophia's camp was '*cũcũ wa iria*', the Gĩkũyũ translation for 'grandmother of milk'.[729] C*ũcũ wa iria* offers a quite literal translation of the work Gĩkũyũ occupants saw the BRCS undertaking. For many of the Gĩkũyũ forcibly resettled, the BRCS, as an organisation, represented an individual White woman who entered the camp space to distribute milk. The nickname for this worker also represents her age. Sophia goes on to describe her as White, and 'old'.[730] Sophia viewed the BRCS worker as a c*ũcũ* (grandmother). Gĩkũyũ society was based on age grade and therefore there was a notion of chronological and social age. To Sophia and others in her camp using this nickname, the Red Cross employee seemed old enough to have her own grandchildren. The Gĩkũyũ do not exclusively use the title c*ũcũ* as an identifier for one's biological grandmother. It is often a sign of respect when greeting or referring to a woman of an older social age to oneself. It is illuminating that John Mwangi Stephen also raised the term c*ũcũ wa iria*.[731] While Sophia was forcibly resettled in a camp close to Nairobi, John was villagised in the Fort Hall District. It is difficult to ascertain from the Red Cross records whether this was the same fieldworker operating in both camps. Hopkins, shown earlier in a photograph in her Red Cross uniform, operated in the Fort Hall District where John's camp was situated (figure 11). As the photograph and description show, she was unmarried and may not have had her own children, but she was clearly of an age where it was likely that she could have had her own grandchildren.

By juxtaposing the 'sullenness' of the Kenyan women first encountered in the camps to their raised spirits after receiving BRCS care, Lady Limerick effectively positioned the BRCS fieldworkers as restorers of health to dying children and helpful mentors to ill-equipped African mothers. Western constructions of childhood and its association to nurturing environments with nuclear families, plays a powerful role in how aid recipient children in the Global South are depicted in the humanitarian press.[732] The power dynamics are further entrenched by othering 'them' in need – while 'we', the West, adopt responsibility to donate and save.[733] From the interwar period, international humanitarian networks began posing concerns for mothers and

[729] Interview with Sophia.
[730] Interview with Sophia.
[731] Interview with John.
[732] Erica Burman, 'Innocents Abroad: Western Fantasies of Childhood and the Iconography of Emergencies', *Disasters*, 18 (1994), 239-240.
[733] Burman, 'Innocents Abroad', 241.

children as a priority.[734] This agenda largely influenced the BRCS actions in Kenya and framed its public discourse. On the one hand, this was an impactful public relations move for the BRCS to respond to the growing international concern that it had not initiated an effective intervention in Kenya. On the other, it directly undercut the agency of African women who, in their role as mothers, oversaw and maintained family life and health.

The British Red Cross Society in Kenya

Wide-spread villagisation caused major issues for the colonial government in Kenya due to the vastly disruptive nature of this counter-insurgency measure. With the process being pursued in such a short time frame, and with limited financial backing, the BRCS played a leading role tending to the health and general well-being of those forcibly resettled. As Ashford shows in her assessment of the BRCS in Accra during the 1930s, the organisation became bound to the colonial state through the development of its health and welfare institutions. Ashford effectively demonstrates how 'humanitarianism functioned in a colonial setting'.[735] Similarly in Kenya, the BRCS was instrumental to the development of improved hygiene in the camps and child health and nutrition. While this involvement was in many ways designed in the interest of those it sought to help, BRCS presence in the camps was heavily controlled. Guards monitored every move of those forcibly resettled, and limited BRCS access throughout the camp sites to ensure its workers stayed at a central location. The BRCS also faced a mammoth task to tend to all the camps. The BRCS made concerted efforts to aid the camps' populations, but its effectivity was limited by this restricted access, while being closely connected to the colonial administration.

One of the BRCS' priorities was to alleviate severe malnutrition in the camps. It was recognised by the BRCS, as early as March 1954, that a severe lack of food was causing widespread undernourishment in the villagisation scheme, particularly among children.[736] Reports were made to the administration by a number of camps, with inhabitants appealing for help with 'starvation' problems.[737] It was later confirmed by Limerick that malnutrition and severe sickness through lack of food and medical services were still apparent in 1957.[738] This need for the BRCS is further evidenced by the fact the BRCS was still operating in the camps up until

[734] Ashford, 'The Red Cross and the Establishment of Maternal and Infant Welfare', 520.
[735] Ashford, 'The Red Cross and the Establishment of Maternal and Infant Welfare', 516.
[736] BRCA, RCC/1/12/1/8.
[737] Huw Bennett, *Fighting the Mau Mau: The British Army and Counter-Insurgency in the Kenya Emergency (Cambridge, 2013)*, 224.
[738] BRCA, 1594/27.

1959, three years after the counter-insurgency campaign had ceased.[739] The introduction of 'clubs and clinics' aimed to resolve the growing levels of malnutrition among children, as well as tackle the spread of diseases such as trachoma and scabies, and to improve the general well-being of all inhabitants.[740] The BRCS believed that by introducing training clubs on homecraft and child care to African women, standards of cleanliness and therefore the health of children was vastly improved.

Humanitarian organisations sought to create and nurture nuclear family units to build stability in displaced communities and strengthen core values. These beliefs complimented efforts made by the Department of Community Development (DCD). Kenyan women were therefore trained in home cleaning, personal hygiene and nutritional education in the hope of providing better meals and environments for their families. Welfare workers taught women how to clean their homes, how to wash and iron their clothes as well as learning how to sew. All of this was to prevent disease and improve hygiene and wellbeing.[741] These efforts to build nuclear family units undermined the pre-existing systems established by Gĩkũyũ women in relation to their hearth-holds. Gĩkũyũ women were already functioning in such a way to uphold the needs of their dependents. Regardless of this, the BRCS united notions of humanitarianism and development, working closely and in cooperation with the colonial government's *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* (MW) clubs to rewrite these practices. As with MW, Gĩkũyũ women who joined a club in their camp had to pay an annual membership fee of two Kenyan Shillings which contributed to club supplies. Those who could afford the fee and joined, benefitted from resources, training and support from BRCS personnel and club members.[742] The BRCS women's clubs offered a solution in the colonial administration's eyes to women unwilling to pledge loyalty to the government's MW movement. Instead, the BRCS clubs offered similar activities to that of MW without necessarily seemingly like an apparatus of the colonial government.[743]

This aspect of BRCS operations in the camps upholds Barnett's 'new condition of humanity' framework. Humanitarian organisations in the twentieth century were now operating under a perceived obligation to evolve and 'civilise' Africans, emphasising this intersection during this

[739] BRCA, RCC/1/31/8, The British Red Cross Society Overseas Branches: Report for the Year 1958-9.
[740] ACICR, BAG 225/108/001, Correspondance générale concernant la détention des membres du mouvement Mau Mau; 18.04.1955 - 06.01.1961.
[741] BRCA, 1594/27.
[742] BRCA, 1594/27.
[743] KNA, BB 48/1, Red Cross Reports Meru; 1957-61.

time of notions of humanitarianism and development.[744] Although not all those forcibly resettled could afford the membership fee to join these clubs, the BRCS pursued the club aspect of its work as a priority for improving conditions in camps. A particular concern of the field officers was the large population of orphaned children whose parents were either detained, accused of being insurgent fighters, or had been killed during the war. To have these children appropriately cared for, the BRCS worked alongside the DCD to foster a sense of communal responsibility among inhabitants.[745] Chapter V builds on this approach offering testimonial evidence which disputes the assumption that Kenyan women needed British women to teach them to care for other children. Gĩkũyũ women practiced social motherhood, further demonstrating the BRCS's cultural ignorance and disregard to the social units of those it sought to help.

The BRCS relied on accounts and insights of club activity to promote its efforts in Kenya. In her fieldnotes, Limerick applauds the remarkable results of club training which saw women of Kangosho camp contributing to the upkeep of orphaned children and those from poor families unable to access and afford daily food.[746] This example served as an excellent propaganda source for the BRCS to expand its fundraising attempts by promoting the success of BRCS women's club training in improving children's wellbeing in the camps. In the 1956 'Half Yearly Report' published by the BRCS, details are provided to offer insight into these activities:

> 12 voluntary workers (women) collect the children each morning and take them to their creche. The washing of the children is supervised by some of the women. As the children are washed, they are passed over to some of the remaining women who have a daily jigger inspection of hands and feet. This inspection parade has proved an excellent idea, many children have been treated in time, thus saving deformities of feet and hands, as was the case of uncared for children months ago.[747]

The account shared demonstrates a concerted effort by the BRCS to emphasise a highly organised and effective approach to child health in the camps. Including phrases such as 'inspection parade' gave an impression of military discipline and precision. It legitimised the strategies put in place by the BRCS and gave a quantifiable example of its success.

[744] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 52.
[745] BRCA, RCC/1/12/1/37.
[746] BRCA, 1594/27.
[747] BRCA, RCC/1/12/1/37.

The BRCS also developed medical services to treat the management of disease in camps. The medical clinics established by the BRCS varied between static dispensaries as well as mobile clinics travelling to camps directly.[748] Documents submitted to the ICRC from the BRCS in November 1955, detail protein deficiencies, scabies, trachoma and whooping coughs as the main concern for inhabitants, especially in children.[749] Lady Limerick also identified the high number of people suffering from diseases such as leprosy and tuberculosis during this period.[750] With clinic queues being described as 'enormous', to tackle this 'superhuman task' as Limerick portrays it, BRCS field officers were responsible for vast sub-sections of Kenya's Central Province. Driving their signature Land Rovers emblazoned with the Red Cross, the all-female team of humanitarian workers travelled far and wide to administer relief and support. Elspeth Rarkin, operating in the Embu region, covered thirty-six camps on a regular basis, while Margaret Malloy posted in the Kiambu district attended to ninety-four separate camps.[751] The BRCS was affiliated with the ICRC, and could draw on international donors to supplement the work of their Home Craft Officers. In addition to this, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) provided money toward BRCS operations to buy the Land Rovers for field transportation and to open six health training facilities by 1958, filled with necessary health related equipment.[752]

The BRCS actively worked to establish an improved healthcare infrastructure in colonial Kenya. This was like BRCS efforts elsewhere, for example in the Gold Coast. In the 1930s, the BRCS established maternal and infant welfare services.[753] In addition to health clinics, milk distribution programmes and women's clubs in Kenya, the BRCS opened a training centre in Nyeri. This demonstrated their commitment to improving the longevity of health-related services in Kenya. In the latter years of villagisation, selected Kenyan women received Red Cross training there to supplement the work of the BRCS by becoming 'Locational Leaders and Home Visitors'.[754] The BRCS were not operating alone in humanitarian efforts. The Salvation Army established community centres to host health services and wellbeing activities.[755]

[748] BRCA, 1594/27.
[749] ACICR, BAG 225/108/001.
[750] BRCA, 1594/27.
[751] BRCA, 1594/27 and KNA, AB 4/127, Reports and Propaganda; UNICEF reports; 1958.
[752] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire', 18.
[753] Ashford, 'The Red Cross and the Establishment of Maternal and Infant Welfare', 516.
[754] BRCA, RCC/1/31/9, The British Red Cross Society Overseas Branches: Report for the Year 1959-60.
[755] KNA, AB 24/2 Christian Council Salvation Army Correspondence; 1950-57.

While the BRCS' public discourse of its involvement in the Kenyan camps appeared personable and life-changing for Kenyan women and children, evidence disputes this projected impact. It is illuminating that during Limerick's visit in 1957, she continues to observe dire living conditions. She highlights the severe lack of water and food, and continued sickness this was causing in people.[756] The infrastructure of the highly populated camps did not always prioritise water wells. These necessities were not always accessible inside or near camp sites. Instead, guards escorted women to neighbouring areas or streams to collect water. This exacerbated the gendered division of labour expected of Kenyan women during this period. In some cases, Limerick describes women having to walk four to five miles to access water which they had to carry in petrol tins. Many, however, had to walk as far as fifteen miles, making it hard to obtain as much water as needed for all inhabitants.[757] The resulting malnutrition and sickness, as well as the accompanying severe lack of food, presented an ongoing challenge for the administration and BRCS to tackle. It is evident that these aspects of the 'superhuman task' Limerick describes appear in her private fieldnotes, but not in her public writing. Instead, in her article for the *Telegraph*, Limerick chooses to focus on the improved health and happiness of Kenyans who were forcibly resettled.

Operating in the context of a counter-insurgency campaign proved even more restricting for fieldworkers as their safety was a priority to the colonial administration. It was impossible for humanitarian organisations to work without forging relationships with colonial governments.[758] Thompson argues that due to the concern for the safety of the BRCS teams stationed in Kenya, 'every reasonable safety precaution was taken'.[759] This meant Red Cross workers had to travel and operate with an armed escort, and they could not travel after dark. Thompson suggests that for this reason, the BRCS officers in Kenya 'were under far greater official control'.[760] When interviewing John, who was resettled in a camp in the Fort Hall district, he recalls only ever seeing Red Cross workers with Home Guards in his camp. He highlights that the BRCS used the Home Guards for protection when enacting their work.[761] Thompson emphasises that this was a 'major obstacle' for the Red Cross in Kenya.[762] What the BRCS fieldworkers saw in the camps, was only part of the story. Colonial guards could ensure

[756] BRCA, 1594/27.
[757] BRCA, 1594/27.
[758] Thompson, 'Humanitarian Principles Put to the Test', 54.
[759] Thompson, 'Humanitarian Principles Put to the Test', 58.
[760] Thompson, 'Humanitarian Principles Put to the Test', 58.
[761] John Mwangi Stephen, interview, Murang'a County, 20th April 2019.
[762] Thompson, 'Humanitarian Principles Put to the Test', 58.

to a certain extent that the brutality they inflicted on those forcibly resettled was not necessarily visible or obvious to the Red Cross workers whose access in the camps was restricted to central locations under their watch.

In addition to safety, the colonial authorities justified its close influence over humanitarian actors due to the administration's better knowledge of the rural areas where the BRCS operated. In a report written in June 1954, C. Johnston, Provincial Commissioner for the Central Province, argues that the Red Cross fieldworkers must follow the orders of colonial authorities, due to their lack of experience and ignorance of local conditions. Johnston states that it would be 'unsuitable and sometimes dangerous' for the BRCS to just follow its own orders.[763] Gendered hierarchies were and continue to be prevalent in humanitarian organisations. Medical professionalism was largely regarded as a male task, while nursing and caregiving was presented as a feminised practice.[764] These tensions were not exclusive to internal organisational environments; male colonial officials no doubt assumed greater authority of knowledge over female welfare workers. This discourse is also prevalent in internal communications from the ICRC. The ICRC delegate Senn believed that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the BRCS lacked practical experience and knowledge of the position of the colonies' indigenous communities to pursue Red Cross operations effectively.[765] In many ways this concern was valid. Red Cross fieldworkers often moved from one location to another depending on where crises in the world occurred. The argument that colonial administrators were experts on the rural areas of Kenya and the people that populated them is ironic considering the ineffectiveness of their community development operations in the camps. The administration was often ignorant or actively disregarded the social and cultural foundations of Gĩkũyũ lives and instead prioritised efforts to control and punish those suspected of being involved in anti-colonial action.

Operating in a colonial setting such as villagisation also meant that the BRCS upheld and further perpetuated the aims and actions of the colonial state. This is most evident in analysing the milk distribution service established by BRCS fieldworkers in the camps. Providing powdered milk dissolved in water was a popular practice of Western organisations to tackle nutritional problems and therefore became a vital tool adopted by humanitarian organisations in conflict related relief work. As previously highlighted, villagisation had resulted in high

[763] KNA, AB 17/11, 47.
[764] Möller, Paulmann and Stornig, 'Gender Histories of Humanitarianism: Concepts and Perspectives', in Möller, Paulmann and Stornig, *Gendering Global Humanitarianism in the Twentieth Century*, 287.
[765] ACICR, BAG 200/108/001.

levels of malnutrition and starvation among those forcibly resettled. The BRCS milk distribution scheme, sometimes supplemented by soup kitchens, became a necessary resource for orphaned children, the elderly and those from poorer families. Each child in need, and some of the most elderly occupants, were given two ounces of dried milk in liquid form, administered by BRCS field officers and trained personnel. UNICEF purchased the milk powder for the BRCS to distribute as it saw fit.[766] It is unclear from the evidence available which company or producer of powdered milk UNICEF purchased this from. Historically, milk formulas have mainly been composed of cow's milk.[767]

Milk did not reach those in need on a regular basis. A report written by leaders of the Christian Council of Kenya after a three-day visit to camps in the Fort Hall and Embu Districts, sheds some light on the varied frequency of this distribution. It states that the Red Cross worker operating across 36 camps in this area was providing a cup of milk to children once a week. This was a concern to the church leaders as in other camps in the Embu District, BRCS workers were giving children milk daily, in some cases twice a day. It is not clear from the report why there was such inconsistency in milk distribution frequency in camps, but it does go on to discuss the varying dimensions of problems each camp was facing, such as over population and the quality of care.[768] Examining the BRCS papers more closely, reveals the increasing number of individuals being added to milk distribution lists throughout villagisation. In 1957, Thelma Brigstock, for example, was operating across 36 camps in her area of the Kikuyu district and had 1,700 children on her feeding list in need of sustenance. An unnamed fieldworker in the Embu district was administering to 110 camps.[769] During the same year, Elizabeth Wells was administering milk in the Runguti camp, also situated in the Kikuyu district. While Wells initially had 220 children on her milk distribution list, she observed 'at least 500 must have turned up'.[770] Sadly these files shed little light on whether the BRCS was able to adapt to these pressures, but the report from the church leaders provides some helpful insight here.

[766] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire', 30.
[767] Emily Stevens, Thelma Patrick and Rita Pickler, 'A History of Infant Feeding', *The Journal of Perinatal Education*, 18 (2009), 36.
[768] Presbyterian Church of East Africa Archive, II/AA/1, Correspondence Government and Church - especially C.C.K; 1953-56.
[769] ACICR, BAG 200/108/001, Article from 'African World' dated Sept/Oct 1955 written by Church of Scotland Missionary, 8.
[770] BRCA, 1594/27.

These findings again challenge Limerick's depictions of the relationship between BRCS fieldworkers and those forcibly resettled. In a report compiled by Whittington, she outlines that 'on a rough estimate it would appear that about 500,000 children in the Central Province are receiving some supplemental feeding'.[771] There were in total sixteen BRCS welfare officers operating this area. An article written in 1955 by the Church of Scotland Mission for *African World* describes:

> The work being done by Red Cross personnel deserves high praise. Most of them have too big an area and too many villages to be responsible for… One of their main responsibilities is the distribution of evaporated milk for children suffering from malnutrition… One worker was described as 'shooting around like a comet, leaving behind her a trail of dried milk!'[772]

It is evident that although individual Red Cross fieldworkers were relentlessly trying to cover the vast ground to reach all those in need of supplementary feeding, operating within a counter-insurgency campaign was overwhelming. This is further reflected in the testimonies of former resettled Kenyans. Only two interviewees for this project recalled any presence of Red Cross workers in their camp.[773] Red Cross welfare officers had too many children on their feeding lists to develop close connections to those they were supplying to.

The milk given to Kenyan children by BRCS welfare officers symbolised British control, power and colonial violence.[774] Milk and breastfeeding have a specific context in relation to colonialism in Africa. Nancy Rose Hunt's 'colonial lexicon' demonstrates this intersection between colonial violence, scientific knowledge, motherhood and the female body.[775] In the Belgian colony of the Congo for example, Catholic missionaries paid particular attention to adapting Congolese birthing practices. One of these was to encourage breast-feeding schedules followed by earlier weaning to shorten birth interval and boost the birth-rates among mining families. This was a concerted effort to socially reproduce a strong labour force.[776] It is not known whether milk substitutes in Kenya lead to a rise in birth rates but providing breast milk substitutes to children contributed to the colonial administration's widespread implementation

[771] BRCA, RCC/1/12/1/8.
[772] ACICR, BAG 200/108/001, *'African World',* 8.
[773] Interviews with John and Sophia.
[774] Some of these arguments and evidence on milk have been developed for publication: Rebisz, '"Mamas", Milk and Modernisation'.
[775] Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon: Of Birth Ritual, Medicalization, and Mobility in the Congo* (North Carolina, 1999), 2.
[776] Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon,* 244.

of forced labour. The administration expected all able-bodied people to participate in forced labour which supported emergency operations. As Kenyan women made up the main bulk of this labour, it was in Britain's interests to implement practices in the camps which alleviated women's additional responsibilities. The colonial administration was aware that Gĩkũyũ women breastfed their children 'up to a late age', although the exact age is not made clear by them.[777] Babies and small children therefore needed round-the-clock care and breastmilk. The milk distribution service provided by the BRCS worked to keep these children nourished, which in turn allowed the colonial government to continue pursuing its forced labour practices with a strong labour force. As Julia Irwin shows, aid and relief support the 'commitment to productive labour'.[778] This is evident in the case of Kenya.

Humanitarian organisations have historically been interested in child development. Providing supplementary feeding, often through milk distribution and soup kitchens, has been a core pillar of nineteenth and twentieth century humanitarianism.[779] It became a popular practice of colonial states to confront nutritional problems, prevent diseases and provide a convenient solution to feeding children.[780]African women became the target of state designed development programmes with an emphasis on their position as mothers: maintaining family life and developing healthy children. Introducing a milk distribution service not only established a practice which attended to the most basic needs of those forcibly resettled, it also contributed in a similar way to the women's clubs by imposing modern practices designed to develop and 'progress' communities. Milk distribution services also facilitated an aspect of dependency, both economically and socially, and it introduced private corporations producing milk formula into the aid industry and into colonies, a practice which continued through the post-colonial era.[781] Powdered milk also undermined long term child development. Scientific research presented by the SCF shows that, 'no industrially processed substitute comes close to providing the benefits of breast milk'.[782] When assessing the milk distribution in this context, one can determine that its provision was tied up with notions of power and modernity framed by race and gender. The work of the BRCS was in no doubt built on ideas of compassion, but it was a

[777] KNA, XA.1 11/48, Reports on the Kikuyu by J.M. Fisher; education of women and girls; 1950-52, 44b.
[778] Irwin, *Making the World Safe*, 125.
[779] Irwin, *Making the World Safe*, 192-193 and 166-170.
[780] Tehila Sasson, 'Milking the Third World? Humanitarianism, Capitalism, and the Moral Economy of the Nestlé Boycott', *The American Historical Review*, 121 (2016), 1200.
[781] Sasson, 'Milking the Third World?', 1199.
[782] The Save the Children Fund, 'Don't Push It: Why the formula milk industry must clean up its act', 2018. < https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/gb/reports/health/dont-push-it.pdf> (accessed 18 Jul 2021), v.

compassion heavily influenced by imperial ideology and ideas of Western modernity. It also inadvertently upheld aspects of Britain's highly coercive counter-insurgency practices.

Limerick used the BRCS milk distribution efforts in Kenya to further legitimise White women's role in aiding African women. The constructed BRCS '*mama*' persona ascribed to welfare officers further perpetuated Limerick's White-saviour inspired humanitarian agenda. Villagisation and the Pipeline had a deleterious impact on effected communities' health. In addition to this, many children were left as orphans in this conflict with BRCS officers adopting a surrogate parental position, feeding and providing care to babies and children.[783] This disregard the fact that social motherhood was common among Gĩkũyũ women. It is evident from a colonial administration commissioned anthropological report on the Gĩkũyũ ethnic group that it perceived Gĩkũyũ women's approach to breastfeeding to be unsatisfactory. A full page of the report brandishes mothers as distracted and disorganised in feeding their babies. The report suggests that Gĩkũyũ women breastfed their children merely as 'a pacifier and a hunger satisfier'.[784] In the camps, White, British women working for the BRCS provided the supplementary milk. As Sandra Aguilar-Rodríguez highlights in mid-twentieth-century rural and urban Mexico, race, class and gender are important categories of analysis when viewing milk distribution as an aspect of Western modernisation attempts.[785] In Kenya, those administering milk in the camps viewed Africans as less-civilised and 'backward' in their abilities to live hygienically and support their families in the most nutritious way. British women then adopted the role to educate and guide African women in this process. Viewed in this way, milk distribution, for those under-nourished in the camps, was not simply an act of international kindness; it was firmly imbricated in the colonial government's repressive developmentalism approach.

How Kenyan women responded to the BRCS milk intervention is cause for debate. Baughan explores incidents where women challenged or protested Red Cross workers. She details one incident where bricks were thrown at a Red Cross jeep and another case where women poured the milk they were provided for their children onto the ground in front of the BRCS worker. Baughan compares this second case to the death rate of children suffering from malnutrition in the camps. As she shows, 16.4 per cent of camp children were dying. Baughan determines that

[783] BRCA, 1594/27.
[784] KNA, XA.1 11/48, 45.
[785] Sandra Aguilar-Rodríguez, 'Nutrition and Modernity Milk Consumption in 1940s and 1950s Mexico', *Radical History Review*, 110 (2011), 36-37.

'refusing milk was a powerful gesture of defiance'.[786] She develops this further and argues that mothers did not view the supply of this milk as a sign of international compassion. Instead, having been forcibly resettled or incarcerated by the colonial government against their will, many women viewed this milk as an apparatus of colonial control. By pouring this milk on the ground, they actively defied the state who had 'moved them to barren land and imprisoned their communities'.[787] It is important to highlight, however, that Baughan is reflecting on incidents described by Limerick. As this chapter has extensively shown, it was common for Limerick to depict African women as uncooperative. While Limerick sought to propagate a White-saviour narrative of her Red Cross '*mamas*' who were saving children and 'uncivilised' Kenyan mothers, Gĩkũyũ women were largely indifferent to or unaware of Red Cross intervention. The findings in this thesis reveals that those who did rely on the milk provided by the Red Cross were relatively receptive and respectful in these encounters.

Negotiating Local Contexts

Having explored how the BRCS functioned in Kenya during the years of villagisation, this section contextualises the day-to-day interactions and negotiations taken by individuals in their work. In doing so it demonstrates the tensions between public discourses of BRCS operations, institutional level ideologies and the actions of female fieldworkers interacting with Gĩkũyũ women and children. The BRCS had to operate closely with colonial administrators to facilitate its work. BRCS personnel were not passive in this relationship, and often challenged the expectations forced upon them by the administration. Historiography sufficiently demonstrates that the BRCS did not adequately uphold its commitment to remain neutral, independent and impartial in Kenya.[788] That is not to say, however, that individual fieldworkers and leaders in the BRCS did not attempt to endorse these values or negotiate their own interpretations of these expectations.

Colonial administrators expected the BRCS fieldworkers to help cement loyalty and cooperation among Gĩkũyũ inhabitants; however, members of the BRCS disagreed. In a specific case in Nyeri, during March 1954, Margaret Robinson, a BRCS field worker in this area, made her concerns known to colonial officials that their services were not to be used in any way as a reward for loyalty.[789] There was a rise in instances throughout March of access

[786] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire', 71.
[787] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire', 78.
[788] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire'; Klose, 'The Colonial Testing Ground'; Pringle, 'Humanitarianism, Race and Denial'; Thompson, 'Humanitarian Principles Put to the Test'.
[789] KNA, AB 17/11, 46.

being granted to Mau Mau fighters into Nuruguru camp. Officials found evidence that inhabitants had removed stakes, which lined the camp moats and were a defence mechanism, to allow forest fighters access into the camp.[790] At the same time, the BRCS were highly concerned by the alarmingly high number of deaths from starvation in the Nyeri district camps. The BRCS milk distribution service became a vital means of attempting to improve this situation. In recognising this, District Commissioner George Hampson ordered Robinson to withhold visits to camps as punishment for this sign of cooperation with insurgent fighters. Though collective punishment was an established colonial tactic, this was illegal under the Geneva Conventions. Regardless of the vital services female welfare workers were facilitating in colonial Kenya, White European women in this era were viewed as capable, but weak.[791] Hampson attempted to exploit this assumption in a bid to overpower Robinson's authority on the matter.

Robinson was alarmed by this notion to withhold humanitarian aid and incriminate the BRCS in punitive action. Having challenged this notion, Robinson and Hampson came to an agreement that the Red Cross was not to be 'used' in such a manner.[792] This example highlights the deliberate attempt by the colonial authorities to undermine the Geneva Conventions to suppress the Mau Mau. It also emphasises the difficult conditions which individual humanitarian officers had to negotiate to prevent starvation in camps and uphold international humanitarian law. This case reveals the tensions and dynamics of humanitarian workers challenging colonial officials who sought to make them explicitly complicit in colonial violence. These findings directly contradict Eleanor Davey's claim that it was not until the 1980s that humanitarian actors showed awareness of the ways that aid operations could be co-opted and used to harm victims. Davey's argument focuses on the public stand Médecins sans Frontières made against the human rights abuses unfolding in Ethiopia.[793] In this example, Robinson negotiated the complicity of the BRCS in British brutality at an individual level. The BRCS as an organisation in the 1950s, showed limited awareness of the pervasive ways that colonial administrations could enact harm through its services. As a British woman, opposing a male British colonial official, Robinson refused to withhold relief which prevented starvation

[790] KNA, AB 17/11, 46.
[791] Möller, Paulmann and Stornig, 'Gendering Twentieth-Century Humanitarianism: An Introduction', 9.
[792] KNA, AB 17/11, 46.
[793] Eleanor Davey, 'Famine, Aid, and Ideology: The Political Activism of Médecins sans Frontières in the 1980s', *French Historical Studies*, 34 (2011), 558.

as this did not align with her humanitarian ethos. While Robinson made a private stand, it was a stand, nonetheless.

Criticism of the colonial government's failings in the camps and the necessary interventions then made by the BRCS were raised in the British Parliament. Barbara Castle, who became the voice of concern in Parliament on the issue of villagisation and other emergency abuses, applauded Red Cross work during a debate in June 1956. According to Castle:

> There are many officials in Kenya who do care. I met a number of them—such as probation officers, and that wonderful woman, the Red Cross worker, Miss Priest, with whom I went round [sic] the villages. These are devoted people—dedicated workers. We cannot pay too high a tribute to those individuals, but is it not wrong that the fate of thousands of human beings should depend on the accident of a person getting into the right job, when things have been so bad for so long?[794]

Castle's testimony stresses several issues regarding the wellbeing services provided in Kenya during the conflict. Not only does she highlight that it was a Red Cross worker providing dedicated services to those in the camps, as opposed to colonial officials, but she also places emphasis on the individual nature of this work. Castle suggests that the indictment of the situation in Kenya was that the colonial government was simply relying on individuals who were good at their jobs and who did care for simple humanity, to uphold health and wellbeing services and infrastructure. The BRCS's main operations were founded and operated to mitigate the widespread health crisis caused by the colonial government's punitive villagisation process, providing imperative infrastructure to maintain this work. In Lady Limerick's claim that Kenyan inhabitants had designated BRCS workers as '*mamas*' of the camps, she echoed the very same issues presented by Castle. As Limerick shows, it was individual BRCS field officers who were working hard to alleviate issues of starvation and disease in the colonial government's camps. They were the dedicated officers at the forefront, deciding 'the fate of thousands of human beings'.[795]

In negotiating their independence from the colonial administration, BRCS leaders were particularly concerned about the damaging reputation of military personnel conduct. In Whittington's report from March 1954, she acknowledges that the army and police in Kenya

[794] Hansard. 'Kenya (Situation)', June 1956. <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1956/jun/06/kenya-situation>.
[795] Hansard. 'Kenya (Situation)', June 1956.

had a 'bad reputation and lack of adequate discipline'.[796] From the breadth of literature produced, prior to and after the forced release of the 'migrated archive', scholarship now recognises that widespread human rights abuses and violent methods of torture underpinned the British counter-insurgency campaign. Allegations, however, of human rights abuses were publicly raised during the emergency. Eileen Fletcher, a Quaker originally involved in designing aspects of the 'rehabilitation' process in Kenya, wrote publicly about the violence and mistreatment of detainees, particularly children, that she had witnessed during her time in the Kamiti detention camp.[797] As previously noted, Limerick did not publicly comment on this. Castle used her platform in Parliament to challenge the conditions being imposed on detainees and forcibly resettled persons.[798]

It is evident that BRCS personnel at different levels upheld the view that they must continue to maintain their independence from the colonial administration. In a letter dated 3rd August 1954 from Frederick Pritchard, Secretary General of the BRCS, to the Directors of Medical Services in Nairobi, Pritchard highlights his concerns over the relationship of Red Cross workers to the colonial government. He argues that if the relationship is to be effective, the 'Red Cross worker must retain their Red Cross identity. They must remain as individuals, remain under Red Cross control, be employed, and paid by the Society, and be responsible to the Society for the performance of their duties'.[799] Individual BRCS workers, as well as those in the managerial structure of the Society, worked actively to negotiate the relationship between the supposedly 'independent' humanitarian organisation and the colonial government during the conflict. BRCS field workers were angered by the colonial government's attempts to use their humanitarian efforts as a reward to secure loyalty among those forcibly resettled. These examples have highlighted individual efforts of BRCS field officers in attempting to uphold their own views and notions of humanity that framed their humanitarian efforts.

The settler environment and social strata that the fieldworkers belonged to also challenged the BRCS's attempts to retain individual independence from the colonial administration. It was not uncommon for married couples in managerial positions to have a toe in both the colonial government and supposedly independent humanitarian organisations. Governor Evelyn

[796] BRCA, RCC/1/12/1/8.
[797] Katherine Bruce-Lockhart, 'Reconsidering Women's Roles in the Mau Mau Rebellion in Kenya, 1952-1960', in Martin Thomas and Gareth Curless (eds), *Decolonization and Conflict: Colonial Comparisons and Legacies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 165-166.
[798] Hansard. 'Kenya (Situation)', June 1956.
[799] BRCA, RCC/1/12/1/37.

Baring's wife was indeed the president of the Kenyan affiliate of the BRCS.[800] This was a tradition which Senn characterised as 'deplorable'.[801] The BRCS was quite literally in bed with the colonial government and Senn questioned the ability of the wife of the Governor of Kenya to remain 'neutral' in her position as President and Patroness.[802] The BRCS records show that evening networking events were the norm for field workers and colonial officials. White settlers and workers socialised and some even married. In her praise for Elspeth Rankin, a BRCS field worker operating in the Central Province camps, Limerick highlights some concerns of her upcoming retirement from service. Limerick recalls the chief of one of Rankin's camps, Kangosho camp, asking her if Rankin could stay permanently due to the great work and services she was providing. In her response, Limerick informed the chief 'he had better address that request to her future husband, as she is marrying the local D.O. in April'.[803] While evidence shows members of the BRCS made concerted efforts to challenge colonial officials, by nature of the White settler community, private conversations and romantic relations were the norm.

BRCS leader Limerick, did, however, use the social opportunities to further negotiate BRCS involvement in Kenya. Afternoon teatime with District Officers was a particularly important setting for Limerick to push the needs and agenda of the BRCS. As she explains: 'I spoke to them afterwards and tried to urge them to help our Field Officer to get Red Cross Centres started in the Reserve'.[804] Socialising among BRCS fieldworkers or leaders and colonial officials may have impacted the neutrality of the humanitarian organisation, but it provided an additional, less-official space for those in the BRCS to influence and develop its presence for improving the health and welfare of those villagised. While relationships had to be forged for matters such as access and security, and while this did impact the organisation's ability to act entirely neutral in its operations, the BRCS did challenge the government with a conscious effort to retain as much independence from colonial brutality and its coercive measures as they deemed necessary.

The idea that BRCS fieldworkers and community development officers were aligned on their approach to encourage 'self-help' among women in the camps is naïve. Both the colonial government records and BRCS correspondence demonstrates the ongoing internal disputes

[800] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire', 28.
[801] ACICR, BAG 209/231/001, Généralités; 29.12.1952 - 28.08.1959, 110.
[802] ACICR, BAG 209/231/001, 110.
[803] BRCA, 1594/27.
[804] BRCA, 1594/27.

evolving in this period. The BRCS was working closely with MW on community development activities and received financial support from the colonial government to enhance development efforts and 'community building'.[805] Women's clubs in the camps were an important tool for the government to encourage loyalism and deter women from supporting the Mau Mau. Colonial officials were constantly anxious to expand the presence of women's clubs, mainly for political reasons, and therefore wanted to retain full control over their activities as 'they could easily develop into bodies with an anti-government bias'.[806] The centralised control of women's groups, whether run by MW or the BRCS, enabled the colonial government to ensure the organisations were used as vehicles against the Mau Mau. Concerns were, however, raised in the colonial administration that the BRCS was casting a monopoly on women's club activities in Kenya. In December 1955, a staff member of the Kiambu District Commissioner's office wrote to Nancy Shepherd, Assistant Commissioner for Community Development and Rehabilitation, seeking clarification on how new clubs in the district were to be organised. The staff member argued that unless the DCD had a clear strategy on how many clubs were to be opened in each division of Kiambu, the Red Cross would 'snaffle the lot'.[807]

The use of language here indicates that, in the opinion of some officials working in community development, the BRCS overstepped its involvement in women's club activities, something with which it disagreed. It is unclear from this phrasing why exactly this staff member was concerned about the BRCS. It could reflect colonial fears about on-going anti-government activity in camps and a perceived need to maintain control of access and surveillance of these spaces. With the relationship between those actors operating in the camps not always remaining harmonious, colonial officials were concerned that too many stakeholders in the project resulted in an inferior result. The BRCS and community development officers were working in similar ways but sometimes with differing agendas, making the management of activities in the camps a site of tension and conflict. In addition to the BRCS as an external benefactor, church missionary groups, St John's Ambulance and the East Africa Women's League also attempted to support welfare work in the camps. In the eyes of C.M. Johnston, the then Provincial Commissioner for the Central Province in 1954, having too many voluntary organisations working on health and welfare in the troubled areas caused the colonial government too many problems. He argued that these organisations always seemed to 'tread

[805] BRCA, RCC/1/12/1/8.
[806] KNA, AB 2/26, Community Development Policy Villages Policy; 1956-7, 9.
[807] KNA, AB 15/62, Training Centre and Home Craft; Central Province home craft Kiambu; 1953-5, 194.

on each other's toes and fight for money'.[808] In Johnston's view it was 'far better to have one organisation' supporting the government and for him, this was to be the BRCS.[809] The BRCS had greater access to sources of international funding, this could have been an attractive factor in Johnston's decision. The BRCS was also contributing vast costs itself to deploy staff for assistance. Financial records of the BRCS dated 1954 reveal that the BRCS had budgeted £14,100 to cover the costs of its staff, supplies and travel. It then requested £5,609 from the colonial administration to cover the cost of extending the contracts of three fieldworkers until 1956.[810]

Further interrogation of Limerick's fieldnotes on her visit to Kenya also reveals BRCS concerns of the DCD. Her notes read: 'the more I see of this Department the less do I like the idea of the Red Cross being attached to it'.[811] What is a common and frustrating part of historical research for all historians are the major gaps one encounters in archival records. Limerick goes on to state '… but I have made a separate memo on all this'.[812] No doubt, this document would offer insight into Limerick's concerns, but it is missing from the records. It is also, therefore, unclear whether Limerick was most disturbed by the development agenda, or the community development workers. This chapter does, however, show that the BRCS worked closely with the DCD on a 'self-help' approach to developing Kenyan women. This work was like the BRCS' approach in Malaya.[813] Could this then infer that Limerick objected to those working for the DCD?

BRCS concerns about the DCD were reciprocated. On the 17th November 1955, Winifred Moore, CDWO for Kiambu District wrote to Shepherd with her apprehensions on the developing work of the BRCS in Kenya. She feared 'it seems certain that they are to take over' the women's work that the DCD was pursuing. Winifred observed the challenges of implementing developmental measures against women's resistance and argued that the 'red carpet visits' rolled out for the Red Cross workers in districts did little to paint a realistic picture of the uncooperative Kenyans they had to work with in order to make improvements to camp life.[814] Not only does this letter provide a snapshot into an attitude held by community development officers working among those people forcibly resettled to camps, it also reinforces

[808] KNA, AB 17/11, 47.
[809] KNA, AB 17/11, 47.
[810] BRCA, RCC/1/12/1/37.
[811] BRCA, 1594/27
[812] BRCA, 1594/27.
[813] Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire', 58.
[814] KNA, AB/15/62, 189.

the tense relationship between colonial officials and the fieldworkers of the BRCS. What is evident from Moore's letter is that she felt undermined by BRCS fieldworkers, and this had triggered discontent. As she explains:

> I find that although the Red Cross Workers say that they know nothing about the project, they have already visited my clubs and spoken to the women. I had a leader in from Kiambu today, and she said that all the women were crying, (but I don't take this literally!)… these officials need to go on a wet day, to a club where the women are doing practically nothing without the guidance of loyal Com. Dev. Os [sic] out in the Bush. (Forgive my sarcasm!) They would see another picture.[815]

Moore alludes to the fact that the BRCS had feigned ignorance of the community development work implemented in the camps. Her letter suggests that she was particularly disgruntled by the fact that a Red Cross leader had visited her women's groups without consulting her. She goes so far as to imply that the fieldworker had lied about the misery of the women she encountered to accuse Moore of poor practice. It is evident from the numerous colonial records of community development meetings that BRCS leaders were invited and attended regularly.[816] The BRCS played an instrumental role in women's club activities. Nonetheless, forging cooperative working relationships between CDWOs and BRCS fieldworkers proved challenging.

Conclusion

Humanitarian organisations in the context of the late-colonial era in Africa were intrinsically entangled in the imperial and racist ideologies of empire. The ICRC claimed to provide 'impartial, neutral and independent' assistance to those in need with an expectation that National Red Cross Societies would follow suit. As Klose argues, the wars of liberation in the 1950s and 1960s 'posed new challenges' for international humanitarianism as the 'humanitarian objective was repeatedly overlaid and endangered by realpolitik'.[817] This chapter shows that humanitarian neutrality in a colonial setting was impossible. BRCS welfare officers had to engage closely with colonial officials to facilitate their work, to ensure their own safety and to extend the effectiveness of their operations. Asking whether the BRCS colluded with or resisted the British colonial government in Kenya is limiting. Instead, individual humanitarian actors navigated a continuum whereby they were influenced by

[815] KNA, AB 15/62, 189.
[816] KNA, AB 8/46, Minutes and Meetings; Maendeleo ya Wanawake; 1953-55, 19.
[817] Klose, 'The Colonial Testing Ground', 107.

changing ideas of humanitarianism and empire. While in many ways the relationships between welfare workers and colonial officials were cooperative, and in some cases romantic, female fieldworkers were instrumental in upholding their humanitarian ideals. The BRCS may not have taken a public stance against the brutality of the British counter-insurgency campaign, but it challenged policies where it could to improve conditions.

The racist and gendered ideologies informing BRCS operations limited its effectiveness in Kenya. Just as the colonial government was directing the public narrative of conditions and Kenyan experiences of villagisation, BRCS leader Lady Limerick attempted to situate her welfare officers as the saviours in this campaign. Relying on the racist tropes used to describe African women as sullen, uncooperative and 'beasts of burden', Limerick positioned the BRCS as the restorers of health among more 'primitive' populations. The BRCS was calculating in projecting the happiness and excitement of Kenyan women and children's interactions with welfare officers by comparing camp moral at the beginning of villagisation in 1954 with that of 1957. By 1957, military operations against the Mau Mau had largely ceased and some camps had lifted movement restrictions for inhabitants. Is it then any surprise that those in the camps were in better spirits? In addition, Limerick's unpublished fieldnotes detail the substandard conditions of the camps she visited in 1957; a fact she chooses to exclude from her *Telegraph* feature.

The impression given by Limerick in her press coverage did not reflect the findings in her fieldnotes and other institutional records produced by the BRCS. As these records show, fieldworkers had a mammoth task to travel and see to the vast populations that they were responsible for. This does not detract from their efforts to improve health services, quite the contrary, the BRCS was attempting to fill a void that the colonial government was not filling. Calling these White, female humanitarian workers '*mamas*' did, however, undermine and detract from the everyday actions and responsibilities Kenyan women upheld in caring for their families and their wider social networks. Oral testimony collated for this project shows a general ambivalence among the Gĩkũyũ who were forcibly resettled. Sophia's nickname for the BRCS fieldworker she saw in her camp was '*cũcũ wa iria*', the Gĩkũyũ translation for 'grandmother of milk'. This gave a literal description of the potential age of the fieldworker and the role she had providing milk to children. The following chapter, therefore, explores these lived realities in more depth. Gĩkũyũ women and girls worked tirelessly to alleviate suffering among their new, forced community. They were not idle Africans, awaiting aid from the West, as the BRCS liked those in the metropole to believe.

Chapter V: Female Navigations of Villagisation

Historians have sought to understand the overall impact of forced resettlement in relation to colonial counter-insurgencies.[818] They have shown that villagisation, as a tactic, causes the most disruption to civilian lives. While historians such as Caroline Elkins and Moritz Feichtinger have begun to probe the lived experiences of those forcibly resettled during the Kenyan Emergency, these analyses have mainly shown how women and girls encountered colonial state violence and modernisation efforts.[819] An aspect that remains under-researched and is important to the broader counter-insurgency literature is how women and girls navigated and made sense of this disruption and the fraught spaces they were forced into.[820] Women and girls living through villagisation were forced to renegotiate their social, political, economic and cultural place in their new communities. Camps were dangerous environments where violence – in both its physical and structural manifestations – was prevalent. People that were forcibly resettled had to adapt and adopt their own resilient responses to ensure their survival and that of their biological and social families. They deployed different tactics, all of which were gendered, to reconcile their changing circumstances. Villagisation both intensified and relieved broader gender inequalities impacting women and girls. Women's responses to their new environments were framed by their internalised, gendered sense of responsibility. The drive to collaborate, to rebel, to support others, to strive for social mobility were all influenced by women and girls understanding themselves as pillars of their community's stability.

To determine how and why women and girls responded in the ways they did to their new environments, this chapter engages most closely with Henrik Vigh's concept of social navigation and John Lonsdale's theory of moral ethnicity. Vigh departs from the binary categories of agency and victimhood in the context of war. Instead, he adopts social navigation to demonstrate the ways that agents 'seek to draw and actualise their life trajectories to increase their social possibilities and life chances in a shifting and volatile social environment'.[821] Social navigation identifies the relationship between victimhood and agency, whereby individuals

[818] Huw Bennett, *Fighting the Mau Mau: The British Army and Counter-Insurgency in the Kenya Emergency* (Cambridge, 2013); Paul Dixon, '"Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 32 (2009), pp. 353-381; David French, *The British Way in Counter-Insurgency, 1945-67* (Oxford, 2011).
[819] Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (New York, 2006), Chapter 8; Moritz Feichtinger, '"A Great Reformatory": Social Planning and Strategic Resettlement in Late Colonial Kenya and Algeria, 1952–63', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 52 (2016).
[820] Except for Carolyn Nordstrom, *Girls and Warzones: Troubling Questions* (Uppsala, 1997). For the first social history of villagisation in the context of Zimbabwe, see Heike I. Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe: A History of Suffering* (Oxford, 2013).
[821] Henrik Vigh, *Navigating Terrains of War: Youth and Soldiering in Guinea-Bissau* (New York, 2007), 11.

navigate a complicated path outside and alongside these binary categories. This form of tactical agency was not always at the forefront of every choice made by women and girls in Kenya.[822] It is also important to note that women's choices in camps were influenced by their political identities, economic motivations and cultural practices. As Tabitha Kanogo demonstrates, 'being a woman in the highly gendered colonial spaces precipitated a plethora of conflicts, contradictions and negotiations'.[823] When defining the actions of women and girls, the terms 'navigation', 'negotiation', 'adaption' and 'response' are used to encapsulate the active and reactive choices made by individuals to cope, survive, and at times, thrive in these camps. These responses were also influenced by ideas of moral ethnicity. Lonsdale argues that moral ethnicity is the 'contested internal standard of civic virtue against which we measure our personal esteem'.[824] Women and girls who were forcibly resettled, underwent an ongoing negotiation of their place and role as someone valuable to their ethnic group. Civic virtue differs for people based on their gender, age, class and ethnicity.[825] Women's actions were therefore influenced by their position in their society and how they saw themselves based on their other identities. These influences also inform how women choose to remember and reflect on their time villagised. This chapter, therefore, considers the tensions between individuals living in these spaces.

This chapter analyses the personal narratives and memories of Gĩkũyũ women who lived through villagisation in Kenya. These individual testimonies connect women's experiences to their lived environments. To minimise further marginalisation of Kenyan women's voices in this wider narrative, this chapter adopts a similar structure to Heather Switzer's study of Maasai schoolgirls.[826] Commentary and analysis is only injected after presenting extracts from women's interviews to reduce the impact of the author's voice on women's individual memories. Caroline Wanjiru acted as the interpreter for most of the interviews conducted for this thesis.[827] Her initials appear with some extracts presented. Assessing the day-to-day lives and experiences of female inhabitants is not a neatly analysable experience. To explore the unpredictable contingencies of life as they were, this chapter surveys female articulations of

[822] 'Tactical agency' as used by Alcinda Honwana, *Child Soldiers in Africa* (Philadelphia, 2006), 26-27.
[823] Tabitha Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya, 1900-50* (Oxford, 2005), 3.
[824] John Lonsdale, 'Moral ethnicity and political tribalism', in P Kaarsholm & J Hultin (eds), *Inventions & boundaries: historical & anthropological approaches to ethnicity & nationalism* (Roskilde, 1994), 131.
[825] Bruce Berman, and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa, Vol. 2* (London, 1992), 316.
[826] Heather Switzer, *When the Light is Fire: Maasai Schoolgirls in Contemporary Kenya* (Illinois, 2018).
[827] While Caroline acted as the main interpreter for this project, the exception to this is Sophia Wambui Kiarie's interview. On that occassion, I was joined by Joyce Wangari.

civic virtue in the camps through a chronological structure of the emergency. Moments of crisis, closeness, disappointment and excitement are identifiable in the evolving stages of this period. Each day brought new challenges. Firstly, the chapter explores the initial villagisation experience. While Chapter III presented the violence and rupture which characterised the transition, this section examines how women built and established themselves in these new sites. It then analyses the difficulties and opportunities that came in maintaining relationships and expressions of self, inside the camp spaces. Finally, it looks to the post-conflict environment, considering how women and girls consolidated control over the future of their household and livelihoods. Ultimately, women's and girls' responses to their new environments were framed by an articulation of their civic virtue. While women and girls forged their own, very personal paths through this period, this was influenced by how they understood themselves within their community - mainly as pillars of their community's stability.

Encountering Forced Removal

Villagisation disrupted every aspect of the day-to-day lives of those forcibly resettled. Women and girls had to re-establish a sense of place among new neighbours, finding their feet in these strange circumstances. Villagisation restructured rural social units, and this posed challenges with the way the colonial administration constructed these spaces. The colonial administration attempted to geographically map and categorise Kenyans in the central region as either Mau Mau or loyalists, but these binary indicators did not reflect the individual adherences of those moved. Those assumed supporters of the colonial state received better housing, greater space and tightened security in their section of the camp. Passive wing supporters of the Mau Mau experienced overcrowded huts, heightened punishments and detrimental living conditions. Oral testimony of women moved into these differing camps reflect the conflicting articulations of political motivations in this insurgency. Some women experienced tensions within their families, navigating the middle ground between loyalism and military activism. Some, to this day, continue to manifest their political ideologies in sympathising with both sides. Aside from these political tensions, women negotiated their civic virtue to learn to live with one another and to build communities of emotional support. While villagisation represented a wider divide and rule approach in Britain's counter-insurgency campaign, the memories of those formerly villagised do not necessarily represent memories exclusively of oppression and violence. As Heather Switzer demonstrates, having 'fixed in advance' ideas of oppression and resistance delimits the possibilities of participant agency and their articulations of their own

experiences.[828] What makes the job of the oral historian more difficult is disentangling how and why women choose to recall their lived experiences in the ways that they do. This section explores how women and girls navigated the initial stages of villagisation probing their performances of civic virtue in these environments.

The women interviewed for this project ranged regarding their involvement to the Mau Mau and the passive wing support. Their experiences and backgrounds demonstrate the limitations of the colonial government's categorisation of inhabitants. The woman who was most rooted in the cause, is Grace Njoki Kanguniu, who joined at an early age.[829] This is apparent in how she positions herself in the wider narrative of the Mau Mau and her experience of being villagised. Grace Kanguniu had begun messengering for the Mau Mau in 1953 at the age of twelve. There was confusion in the early stages of her interview when we tried to establish where Grace Kanguniu was born and where she grew up. Grace Kanguniu offered three separate locations, one of which was a short stay during what she thinks was 1953. While she was born in Meru in 1940, she describes how she 'grew up to become grownups with my brothers and sisters' in Ndundu in 1953.[830] She was arrested and returned by the police to her 'homeland' which was in the south Nyeri district where she went on to be villagised into the Kamatu camp. In this moment of the interview Grace Kanguniu reasserted to Caroline and I that she was 'a big girl' when 'they went to the forest in 1953'.[831] Grace Kanguniu associated her coming of age from a child to an older girl in relation to her time in the forest in 1953. She declared outright in her interview that she had taken the oath, and that was most likely the time when this took place. Grace Kanguniu was particularly interested and forthright in retelling an account of having saved several forest fighters from capture. Fragments of the conversation which she regularly returned to are as follows:

GK: Coming back to the work that I was doing in 1953 after I was brought here from there I mixed with the people from the forest and became their scout. I became one who truly worked with them.

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[828] Switzer, *Maasai Schoolgirls in Contemporary Kenya*, 6.
[829] Two Grace's were interviewed for this project and are referred to in-text as follows: Grace W. Mwathe is referred to in-text as 'Grace', Grace Njoki is referred to in-text as 'Grace Kanguniu', a name she requested be used.
[830] Grace Njoki Kanguniu, interview, Nyeri County, 26th April 2019.
[831] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.

GK: I mixed with them a lot, those people who stayed in the forest here in Muthea, actually there's a post there in Muthea… There in Mt. Kenya there's their post and there's another here at this place called Kabiruini îhu. There was a cave here that was called Wîruiru.

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GK: Now that's where I wanted to tell you about. Those people came from the forest and came to a place called Kwa Nyamindi. They came and climbed up and as they got here, we met them and we went down here where we were with you, I told you that's my home, that's where they came. At our home so that they could stay a while before we ascended on that ridge. Yes, and when they finished, they ascended that way and when they did they were found out that they were present by the police who came and found them - When I had left and they had ascended, I descended to the bottom of the ridge.

CW: Ok, so you're a scout and informer?

GK: One descended to receive the information from me and had worn women's clothes, a man wore our clothes and came down. He came and received word that there were police looking for them and when he took that information they were rounded up and beaten.

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GK: I was somewhere hidden since I knew they were coming. So, I waited and reported the information.

***

BR: And did you have good relations with those you ended up working with in the Mau Mau? Or was it just a case of now you do as you are told now that you have taken the oath?

GK: I was happy to be part of the struggle for independence, so it was all a collective dependency. It was a struggle we fought for our children even though then I didn't have one, for the children I bore and those of my children.

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GK: Do you know I didn't even finish what I was telling you? Now at the ridge when they were caught by the government who came at three o'clock because we climbed up at ten o'clock and they were rounded up at three o'clock. They were beaten up while there at the ridge and we could hear gunfire down here. They then came down close to where I was as I was waiting for them to show them where to go. They came down and I, they went back to the forest. They came for me and we went together to a place called Ngunio where we named Kangunio. I was called Kanguniu because of how I had taken them there.[832]

Grace Kanguniu had become frustrated during the interview. Caroline was interpretating her story and at times I had interjected with questions related to the story but not in consideration to the direction Grace Kanguniu had hoped the conversation was going. The extracts above show several occasions where she steers the interview back to this story. Having played this important role in the Mau Mau at such a young and impressionable age, Grace Kanguniu positions herself as an agent throughout her interview. She was not a silent bystander or a victim, instead she places herself as the protagonist in the wider dominant narrative of the Mau Mau. Grace Kanguniu remained committed to the Mau Mau movement long after the war and has been an active member of the Mau Mau War Veterans Association. Her pride was evident during the time we spent with her. She showed us numerous documents and photographs hung up on the walls of her home. She also presented a book filled with Mau Mau songs, identifying the song lyrics which described the story of her leading forest fighters to safety. At the end of the interview when asked if there was anything she wished to add, she said: 'I would only ask her [Bethany] to remember me like Jesus at the Cross with the thief, that when she goes back, she remembers me'.[833]

Not all Gĩkũyũ women forcibly resettled were as dedicated or supportive of the Mau Mau efforts. In contrast to Grance Kanguniu, Grace W. Mwathe's experience is indicative of navigating the grey middle area between Mau Mau families and loyalists. Before being villagised, Grace's family endured ongoing interrogations to determine which 'side' of the fight they were on. She recalls her father bearing the brunt of this pressure. She explains:

[832] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.
[833] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.

GM: My father, let me say, my father was a bit affected by this movement and he died in 1954. He died in 1954, I was in class four at that time.

BR: And if you feel comfortable enough telling me, how did that happen in 1954? Was he killed or did he become ill or—?

GM: He became frustrated I think, and his mental condition was not all that good. So, my mother had gone out for, looking for goods to sell. I was also not at home. In the house he hanged himself. We found him in the morning like that and he was taken, and he was buried here in Tumu Tumu cemetery.

BR: I am so sorry to hear that. And so, was that in terms of, when you say due to his frustrations, was that due to the frustrations of the colonial powers—?

GM: *(Speaking at the same time)* Of course! Of course! Erm, his frustration was somehow because of the oath. Have you taken it, have you? all these. The way you answer, you are beaten.

BR: So even if you had or had not taken the oath you were tormented?

GM: *(Speaking at the same time)* Yes! You had to be beaten thoroughly heee! Because he is a grown up, why is the answer that way? So, and we had a very brutal chief in that area. He was called Shadrack, and he was a brutal person. Yes. Beat![834]

The assumption that all Gĩkũyũ people in the central region of Kenya who were not employed by the colonial state had taken the oath and swore allegiance to the Mau Mau had a detrimental impact on those who found themselves navigating the space in-between. Grace was forcibly resettled into a punitive camp. While she and her family did not identify with the Mau Mau or the colonial state, the colonial government's geographic mapping of villagisation meant the treatment of those inside was uniform. As Grace recalls, 'now all of us in the village, were treated the same. All of us in the village were treated the same'.[835] The only comeuppance Grace and her family experienced in this injustice, was that at least there was an end to this 'finger-pointing' her family had endured in the build up to her father's suicide.[836]

[834] Grace W. Mwathe, interview, Nyeri County, 26th April 2019.
[835] Interview with Grace.
[836] Interview with Grace.

Married women endured a double-burden if their family members and their husbands were committed to differing sides. Beatrice's case is particularly revealing of these challenges. During the interview, Beatrice described the surrounding trenches and fences enclosing the camp space. When doing so, she explained that a three-month curfew was enforced on her camp. Beatrice describes why this curfew was imposed:

BM: It came into place so that people could not take food to the Mau Mau.

BR: Did you ever give the Mau Mau food?

BM: Mau Mau? How will I give them? My brother was a General in the Mau Mau. Yes. He was called Wamutundu. He had - General Wamutundu. He was very fierce, and he was younger. And I tell you what, we never gave them food. None of them came to my home. They never came to our homes. To the homes of their sisters or even Thiiyu. They never came to borrow food or anything. No. They said that they would not disturb their own villages. From Mbogo-ini, all over Kirimukuyu they never came there. So, do you hear my brother was a general? Even oathing took place. It took place in nineteen forty-two. That's when oathing started here.[837]

Beatrice took time in this part of the interview to outline her brother's success in the Mau Mau. She repeats herself when explaining his rank in the insurgent group and his promotion to general status and concludes: 'So, do you hear my brother was a general?' It is difficult to state for certain what Beatrice means by repeating this point as she does not go on to explain anymore. One could suggest there is an expression of pride here, that Beatrice was hoping to impress with this information of her brother's success. It is unclear from Beatrice's testimony how she associates herself to the Mau Mau, both then and at the time she was interviewed. She recalls being aware that oathing was taking place in her area but does not position herself within that narrative. In ways she also distances herself from the Mau Mau by her age and gender. When she explains how the war began, she certifies that, 'the war was fought by young men… When the war started it is when young men organised themselves and they decided that there were those who would go to the forest'.[838] Beatrice's interpretation of the conflict was that it was a fight among men. She indicates that women provided a supportive role in supplying the

[837] Beatrice Muthoni Mukubu, interview, Nyeri County, 30th April 2019.
[838] Interview with Beatrice.

forest fighters but believes men did not approach their own families or communities – a classic insurgency tactic.

While Beatrice's brother was heavily involved in Mau Mau activity, it is important to note that administrator's resettled Beatrice into the loyalist section of her camp. Women not only had to contend with their own political allegiance, and that of their family members, so too did they have to negotiate with their husband's. Beatrice explained early in her interview that her husband was employed by the colonial government's agriculture department and worked far away from his family. In the early stages of the emergency, Beatrice's local chief, Gachingiri, escorted her to secure her safely in a camp for protective purposes. Beatrice recalls that it was 'because of people's hatred or jealousy, it was decided I would be moved, together with my children'.[839] Being married to a man working for the colonial government brought risk of attack from the Mau Mau and, therefore, she had received greater protections and access to resources for her family. Beatrice materially benefitted from her husband's allegiance to the colonial state. She was able to afford to purchase a pre-built hut just for her and her children in a camp. Her hut was in the loyalist section close to the security post. While she gained greater rewards based on her marriage as opposed to her family connection to a Mau Mau general, ideologically, it is unclear how Beatrice defines her own political identity.

In positioning herself as a loyal and loyalist wife, but also a proud Mau Mau sister, she disassociates her own views and actions from the events which she recalls. She reveals little, explicitly stating in her interview neither that she identified as a loyalist or Mau Mau sympathiser. This further shows that it was not as clear cut as the colonial administration's counter-insurgency practice suggests. Beatrice's narrative of the insurgency does, however, demonstrate a conflicting interest between the moderate and more radical pursuits for independence. This is particularly evident in her descriptions of Jomo Kenyatta. Beatrice bookmarks the beginning and end of the conflict with Kenyatta's imprisonment in Lokitaung detention camp and his eventual release in 1959. While she chooses to discuss her brother's role in the Mau Mau and her knowledge of oathing ceremonies taking place in her area, she very much takes herself out of this narrative, never explaining if she had taken the oath. Beatrice's recollections from this time are evident of the complexities and challenges women faced during this period. Political ideologies were in constant negotiation and contradiction, even seventy years later. Family connections and their husband's political leaning heavily

[839] Interview with Beatrice.

influenced married women's views on the ongoing conflict. Camps were not simply populated by 'loyalists' and 'Mau Mau sympathisers', and this impacted the interactions between those resettled.

The environments in the camps were comprised of individuals and families with varying views of the current situation in Kenya. Regardless of this, the testimonies shared for this project reflect the compassion women extended to others in creating new alliances for support. Learning to live with one another began in individual huts. Women and girls had to re-establish their positions in a household, adapt to those around them and negotiate new responsibilities. Having lost all privacy, and, in many cases, having been forced into a single hut with multiple other families, a question posed to each interview participant was: how did you all get on with one another? While this could not have been a monolithic experience for each woman interviewed, there was a unanimous sense of positivity in answering this question. As Grace W. Mwathe explains:

GM: Now, you are like—here we are, we are in this now. Are we not friendly?

BR: Mmh

GM: Yes! You have to be friends! You have to be friends! You have been put there by circumstances, why do you fight? Who are you fighting? If you have to fight, you have to find somebody, and you don't know where he or she is, who made the situation to be like that. So here you have to share and be friendly with one another as much as possible.

BR: And so—?

GM: (*Speaking at the same time)* if I have got a problem, I have to tell you. If I get a baby, you have to share with me how to get—how to suck my baby, yes! All of these. And we are usually hospitable.

BR: I have experienced that.

GM: Our culture is to—I know you today, we make friends and then we build each other. Yes.[840]

Grace summarises the practice of civic virtue powerfully here, as she explains 'we build each other'. Her sense of belonging and purpose to those around her is evident. Grace describes the

[840] Interview with Grace.

scenario of a woman learning to breastfeed from another mother, an example of women teaching one another in social reproduction – an intergenerational process. Grace asked to conduct her interview in English, which is not her first language, this is evident in her translation of breastfeeding. Grace compares her experience of friendliness with those she had lived with in the camp to the circumstances she found herself in for this interview. Having only met Grace for a short while before conducting this interview, her comparison here demonstrates that although we were strangers not long before we spoke, we were now friends. Furthermore, she attributes this to her cultural interpretations of social interactions, suggesting 'we are always hospitable'. Grace articulates her position in her community both in 1954 as a fifteen-year-old, and in 2019 as an eighty-year-old woman as a custodian of hospitability to those she encounters. As Grace elaborates on her living situation in the camp, she seeks to recall the positive aspects of living with many people. For example, she explains, she 'never felt lonely'.[841] Grace chose not to dwell on the loss of privacy, space and freedom she experienced. Instead, she focuses on forging friendships and how she maintained the expectation to be hospitable among her peers, her family and her community elders.

Despite their differences, women extended compassion to those in their new communities. As Grace Kanguniu expresses, 'that time people didn't have anything against anyone, and you'd easily get help when in trouble. When you moved around, you'd see that people loved each other'.[842] Similarly, Sophia Wambui Kiarie recalls that there was 'a feeling of community and of sharing everything; happiness, grief, food and water'.[843] These findings are significant when compared to those in Heike Schmidt's study of villagisation in Zimbabwe. Schmidt developed a love and healing framework which revealed that people were forced to 'forget' their suffering and sought to reconcile this in their new community. Everyone in these villages had experienced violence and feelings of uprootedness. These shared legacies of suffering contributed to an evolving 'keep ethnicity' which bound those in the Honde Valley together after the liberation war.[844] 'Keep' was a nickname used by those forcibly resettled in this region. Schmidt found that the opportunity was given to people to leave the keeps in 1980, but some preferred to stay. Despite the violence and coercion inhabitants experienced in the keeps, they had formed a new social space with a 'feeling of a chosen community' and developed

[841] Interview with Grace.
[842] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.
[843] Sophia Wambui Kiarie, interview, Kiambu County, 4th April 2019.
[844] Heike I. Schmidt, 'Love and Healing in Forced Communities: Boderlands in Zimbabwe's War of Liberation', in Paul Nugent and A.I. Asiwaju (eds), *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities* (London, 1994), 184.

processes of healing. Several male elders expressed to Schmidt: 'We love each other'.[845] While this thesis does not present similar findings of Kenyans choosing to stay in the camps, sharing processes of grief and love are prominent in these testimonies.

Susan Wanjiru Giteru lived in a particularly overpopulated camp which meant at one stage she believes she was living with up to thirty others in her hut. As this seemed more extreme compared to other women interviewed for this project, it was important to get a sense of how this overpopulation manifested in their living spaces and how families adapted. In a similar response to Grace Kanguniu, Susan explains:

> We loved each other so much and with some flour found somewhere we would make porridge with everyone taking a cup each. If it is maize, it was boiled to share with everyone a little, a little, there was not anyone mean towards another.[846]

The responsibilities expected of Susan, at this age, can be inferred from this short excerpt. While she assumes flour was 'found somewhere', older women in her camp provide differing memories of food security and production and these are explored later in the chapter. Susan's testimony does, however, demonstrate her general awareness to the lack of resources in her camp and the need for families to share what they could with one another. She explains and re-emphasises that everybody had 'a little, a little' when the group shared around the food. Bookending her memories of eating and sharing limited resources among numerous people, she reinforces the love and kindness she remembers from this time.

Like Grace Kanguniu and Grace, recalling nicer and more tranquil memories of living with so many people in a small space could reflect their young ages during villagisation. Jacob Dlamini is instrumental in arguing that fond memories and nostalgia of township life in South Africa during apartheid shows that people do not lose their moral compass because the state subjugates them.[847] It could also reveal a juxtaposition to Susan's memories of those working as camp security and the colonial government. Later in her interview when asked how the guards treated her family in the camp, her tone became bitter. Her voice became angrier and at one point she stopped herself, expressing: 'Woi! Let me be quiet'.[848] When she did answer, she explained they were 'treated badly with contempt and hunger in the village for, for where are you to find

[845] Schmidt, 'Love and Healing in Forced Communities', 193 - 197.
[846] Susan Wanjiru Giteru, interview, Nyeri County, 30th April 2019.
[847] Jacob Dlamini, *Native Nostalgia* (Johannesburg, 2009), 13-14.
[848] Interview with Susan.

food in the village?'.[849] While her memories relating to food security and its relationship to the restrictions forced upon them by the colonial government were angry and bitter, the way she recalls eating with those she lived with has a very different undertone. When comparing the testimonies of Susan, Grace Kanguniu and Grace it is evident that women reflecting on their time in the camps remember the new communities and social families they established with fond memories. Learning to live with one another and share sought after resources was one aspect, but so too was finding people to lean on. Coming together to share sustenance, emotional support and kindness was imperative to the wider networks of household community inside these fraught and violent spaces.

Establishing Routines

Once physically established in the camps, women and girls sought to reconfigure their lives and routines amongst these new social units. In doing so, this required an extension of efforts toward social cohesion, tolerance and compassion. That is not to say there were no disputes between neighbours. Alliances were made, but so too were rivalries. Villagisation had a dire impact on the health and wellbeing of those forcibly resettled and required women and girls to make active and often pragmatic choices for their family's survival. All physically abled women played an important role to the colonial government's counter-insurgency and future development operations, providing manual labour for these endeavours. Those remaining in the camp all day, mainly young girls, had to mature fast to provide additional support to their family. Women formed economic networks which redistributed resources to those in need; some women had to align themselves with colonial guards to achieve this. Establishing new alliances, adopting new responsibilities outside of the expected age grades and making tactical economic choices are core memories explored by the women interviewed for this project. Gĩkũyũ women and girls reshaped Gĩkũyũ notions of femininity in various ways as pillars for social cohesion.

Women performed their social ages in relation to their civic virtue when it came to the division and management of household labour. Beatrice commanded an established sense of self in how she directed and protected those she interacted with in the camp. Beatrice is the oldest woman who was interviewed for this project. At the time of the interview in 2019, Beatrice and her son believed she had reached the impressive age of one-hundred-and-five years old. Both her chronological and her social age, having had several children who were now elders with their

[849] Interview with Susan.

own children, played a factor in her interactions with Caroline and I and how she recalls her experiences in the 1950s. As Beatrice was thirty-five when she was resettled in 1954, her testimony differs from that of Grace Kanguniu, Grace, Susan and Sophia. Being a married woman, with multiple children, Beatrice had earned womanhood among her Gĩkũyũ society having proved her productivity.[850] The way she recalls directing those around her was influenced by the responsibilities she had to care for those in her family. Beatrice was resettled with her younger children; it is unclear how many she moved with. She also had two older children at this time who were residing with her mother-in-law not far from her home in the Tumu Tumu area of Nyeri. When exploring how Beatrice's day-to-day routine played out once being resettled, she reflects on how her family coordinated responsibilities:

BR: Since you were not given work to do during the day, what did you do, maybe taking care of the children?

BM: We would take care of our children. Then they would open the gate at four pm when we would go to the river to fetch water.

CW: So, someone did not go to fetch water or search for food whenever they wanted?

BM: No! Only when the gate would be open and you would be accompanied by the police. We would go to fetch water at four pm. So, if you were not as strong, it was hard. But since I had sons and daughters, my eldest son and there was another young man I lived together with and his mother, they were able to carry jerrycans and bring plenty of water. Those who did not have would come to borrow with a jug at night. There was so much suffering and so many children of those who were weak died.[851]

Beatrice recognises that for many in her camp, seeking necessities such as water could be a challenge. Beatrice managed those around her sensibly and delegated tasks to maintain the health of her family. Beatrice went further than this, however, emphasising that others brought their jugs to her home to access her water supply. Not only was Beatrice the custodian of care for her immediate family, but she retained an authoritative position in her community whereby

[850] John Lonsdale, 'Authority, Gender and Violence: The war within Mau Mau's fight for land and freedom', in E.S. Atieno Odhiambo and John Lonsdale (eds), *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration* (Oxford, 2003), 49-50.
[851] Interview with Beatrice.

it became her responsibility to care for those less fortunate than her. Gĩkũyũ society primarily understand women as the guardians of the domestic welfare of their communities. As they are mainly responsible for production as well as reproduction, others expected women like Beatrice to concern herself with ensuring there was adequate food for those dependent on her.[852] It was these ingrained acts performed by women like Beatrice which challenged the colonial administration's paternalistic and racist 'self-help' rhetoric. While colonial officers and humanitarian workers described Kenyan women as 'sullen' and unable to help themselves, women made daily sacrifices on their own accord to ensure the wellbeing of their wider communities were upheld to the best of their ability.

Beatrice's duty to others is an integral theme threaded throughout her interview. In how she recalls her time in the camp, Beatrice positions herself as a patron to those around her. It is through this understanding of self that Beatrice describes how she interacted with her local *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* (MW) network:

BR: When you were in the village was there the *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* group or such things?

BM: *(Speaking at the same time)* They were there. That is when they started, during the emergency.

BR: Were you a member of *Maendeleo ya Wanawake*?

BM: Yes. I was a member, but I never used to go to work. I had been selected to care for children… Not my children! (*laughs*) Because they were able. And the food was only given to those children who were disabled. And a person who was not able to give their children food would—because they don't have a place to farm—let's speak the truth, now you don't have a place where you can get a cent, but because I have, will my child not sleep full? Will yours not sleep hungry?[853]

During this part in the interview, Beatrice's tone is a helpful indicator to understand how she understood her role. When she explains 'because they were able', Beatrice refers to the fact her own children did not receive food from MW. Her laugh reflects a warm moment where she considers her own personal circumstances and her children who may have questioned her as to

[852] Tabitha Kanogo, 'Kikuyu Women and the Politics of Protest: Mau Mau', in Sharon McDonald et al (eds), *Images of Women in Peace and War: Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspectives* (Madison, 1987), 81.
[853] Interview with Beatrice.

why they could see her giving out food to other children but not giving that same food to them. Her tone and body language changed in the moment she says, 'let's speak the truth'. Beatrice became more serious at this point of the interview and signified a shift in how we should understand what she was to go on to say. What follows is a very matter of fact line of questioning where she emphasises the challenges those more disadvantaged than her encountered. Beatrice could recall having the good fortune to put her children to sleep at night being well nourished. Other women did not have this opportunity, as she describes. In this testimony it is evident that Beatrice related herself to others by considering what it meant to her to be a mother. Beatrice was wholly aware of the importance of caring for her children's health and, therefore, empathised with other women around her over this issue.

Beatrice's social age also granted her the protection to care for others around her and explore new companionships without damaging her own respectability in her community. One part of the interview which really stood out both in the moment and when reflecting on the transcript and audio is Beatrice's description of a man she cared for in her hut. When asked if she had lived with just her children, Beatrice responded:

BM: Mine?

BR: Alone?

BM: Yes.

BR: Everyone in their own houses?

BM: Yes. But those who are weak would come to your house to live with you. Like this man I live with, he is family from my mother's side. *(Whispering)* He did not have a wife. Now he comes and I spend the day with him. That was the same way it was in the village. But he does not sleep here. He goes to sleep at his home. Now do you understand? That's how we lived with such people. Because I would not be able to walk them to their home and you see I had children. We slept like sheep—they would put mats on the floor to sleep on. The most important thing was for dawn to break so that you would go to search for food for your children. The problem that was there was cooking. Because I have my pot cooking, you have yours and the other person has theirs. This was because, if you do not have a house, and I cannot

> kick you out—is there a person who would walk a sheep that comes to their house?[854]

Beatrice begins to whisper when she explains that the male companion she had was not married. She becomes even quieter when she says, 'but he does not sleep here'. At that moment of the interview, Beatrice demonstrates self-awareness of how this situation could be interpreted. Beatrice was in her thirties during this period. She was married with several children, but her husband worked away from her for the colonial government. Though her testimony does not explicitly reference or infer to any form of infidelity, in this moment of the interview Beatrice remembers and reflects on gender normativity and what it means to her, to be a good wife and mother. On the one hand, she emphasises the care she provided to this man. Stressing that he was 'weak', a phrase she uses elsewhere in the interview to describe unwell children, showing that she believed he needed support. Gĩkũyũ labour theory of value is evident in Beatrice's comment, as Lonsdale shows, Gĩkũyũ society understood moral ethnicity as 'the direct investment of human toil'.[855] On the other hand, Beatrice presents a retrospective concern for her own reputation, particularly her female respectability. Beatrice was running a loyalist household due to her geographic placement in the camp. She needed to hold a reputable position, though she also had her own sense of duty to those around her. Her social age at this time granted her greater freedom to be able to have companions such as this as opposed to when she was younger and less established in her community. Beatrice's memory and retelling of this living circumstance highlights that women questioned and reconsidered gender normativity, most notably when their husbands were not present. It is also important to reflect on the positionality of both Caroline and I in this interview setting. At the time of the interview, we were both unmarried women, with no children of our own. To us, Beatrice is a respected elder, who we listen to and learn from. In this moment Beatrice may have been reminding us about our own respectability and roles as women.

Beatrice used her position to formulate beneficial alliances for resources. In contextualising the living conditions and challenges Beatrice can recall, concerns of child mortality are evident in her testimony: 'there was so much suffering because when people were enclosed in the camp—someone who didn't have food—many children perished. Because people didn't have food. Because there was no place you could go to collect food. It was dangerous'.[856] Being

[854] Interview with Beatrice.
[855] John Lonsdale, 'The Moral Economy of Mau Mau: Wealth, Poverty and Civic Virtue in Kikuyu Political Thought', in Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley, Vol. 2,* 334.
[856] Interview with Beatrice.

hyperaware of the danger these circumstances had to child health, Beatrice turned to those in her network for support:

BM: There was nothing to do except staying at home. If you have nothing to eat you would spend the day hungry together with your children. Then you would take a cent to buy some flour from a Home Guard. Home Guards were given flour by the government and then they would resell. But there was a person who had a maize mill, and he would mill his own maize and he was called Waciira wa Gatotho. He was the one who milled flour for us. He was the one allowed to do so. So, he would mill his maize, and sometimes he would buy flour and bring it to the village to resell.

BR: Was he not a Home Guard?

BM: He was a Home Guard. His wives also lived in the village. Now—*(inaudible)*. That flour was not expensive. You could buy flour with a cent and even if you went with three shillings you could also get flour. It is not as expensive as now.[857]

Beatrice was able to purchase a pre-built, round mud house in the Mbogo-ini camp where she was living. As her testimony demonstrates, her socioeconomic position did not always guarantee her family's food security. With limited time to cultivate food outside of the camp, as she recalls, she and her children went hungry. To counteract these challenges Beatrice established and maintained cooperative relations with a Home Guard. As she explains, Waciira wa Gatotho was a gatekeeper for Beatrice to access flour at a reasonable rate. Beatrice supplemented this with whatever she could gather in her daily outings from the village. When asked if she remembers her daily routine in the Mbogo-ini camp, Beatrice relays:

BM: Where will we go to work? You could only go to your farm, and you could only go accompanied by the police. They would open the gate at four pm to allow us to go gather food.

BR: Four pm?

BM: Yes. You would go with the police, and you would get either bananas, or uproot maize, or beans or whatever was available.

[857] Interview with Beatrice.

While money and personal connections inevitably provided women and their families with greater security, resources were scarce, forcing women to adapt to what they could find.

It was vital that women forged economic alliances to share, combine and redistribute the scarce resources in the camps. As Grace Kanguniu demonstrates, often people were relying on the most able to obtain sustenance such as flour for the rest of the camp to buy or borrow from:

> That time in the camp was a time of great adversity since as I told you there were no exits and thus going out to look for food to eat was quite a challenge. If there's one with strength, they are able to get their own share of flour. Now people would go buy or borrow for your children to have little porridge. It reached a point since we got to the camp in '54 up to '56. We were there in '55 and '56 where the camp folded now in 1957.[858]

Grace Kanguniu lived in a camp for three years, where resources were sparse. Sharing between families was a common theme in several women's testimonies and is reflective of the mutual support enacted between inhabitants. As Sophia also recalls, children were particularly useful to families to move between houses in the evening when it was not allowed, going undetected by camp security. She describes how 'if you don't have salt the kids would be the messengers to either take your food to your neighbor, ask for salt'.[859]

Sophia also reminisces on the role her family played in sharing their own resources more widely than the casual requests by neighbours. As Sophia's family were forcibly resettled quite close to their land, they had good access to continue cultivation and harvesting food to bring back to the camp. Sophia remembers her family taking active efforts to provide meals for others:

> Yeah, let them tell you where you will go from there or stay there. And so, the people do not fit in these small round houses. They would sleep in between. And you know, they would sit whether it is raining or not, they would sleep here, those who are displaced from the farm. The people from the Gĩkũyũ who are squatters, from their English farms [sic]. And they were chased out, they would go to the leaders. And so those who are not sympathisers would be among them. Then you can see the congestion in those areas and

[858] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.
[859] Interview with Sophia.

these people would go to the camp to be assigned to work and they will come here. So, my family is cooking big pots.[860]

Sophia's family willingly gave up sought after and valuable sustenance for the moral good. While the British Red Cross Society (BRCS) positioned its humanitarian welfare officers as the sole bearers of charity, the practice of making sacrifices to help others was ingrained and widely extended among inhabitants of the camps.

Young girls adapted to take on even more responsibility in their households due to the implications forced labour had on families. As several women interviewed for this project were children during the 1950s, it was important to get a sense of their day-to-day routine and how that differed during villagisation, and how this may have contrasted with their parent's experiences. As Sophia was not old enough to walk the long distance to attend school with the older children in her camp, she and her twin sister remained at home all day, alone. She remembers spending this time 'learning and doing things for the family', describing herself as 'responsible'.[861] She went on to explain her and her twin's day-to-day in more depth:

So, we're not going to school. We were the responsible people. We had to collect the firewood, look after cattle, draw water on our way home with our cows. Although we had two men who were employed by my grandfather for me. And they stayed loyal to the family but, they needed side, side help. So we were, we were the side to helpers. Then we would go to the grazing fields in the morning, and we'd look for, for food from the farm. They had no time to farm. And so, they were harvesting, *cietagwo cia meiteka*, they are called the dropped pickings. So, if a potato was green, you would put it back. You were taught any grain that you find, you plant because it'd be food for tomorrow. The pumpkin, anything, the seeds would be shared by families. If you cooked a pumpkin, you would make sure that you give the seeds to the people who owned land who'd go around and plant. So, when the pumpkins grow, you share and God bless the farms, the cultivation by the pumpkin grow. The potatoes would continue to grow, continue to grow in the weeds and so the smaller children go to the farm and harvest. The small girl would go to the farm and harvest and the people would share. Any green vegetables, either from

[860] Interview with Sophia.
[861] Interview with Sophia.

> pumpkin, *nî kurî karenge kangî gatarîagwo getagwo Kahurura*, there's another pumpkin that's not eaten called *kahurura*.[862]

In this extract, Sophia offers a presentation of her knowledge and culture as a Gĩkũyũ girl. Sophia's understanding of responsibility, at that age, in that environment, was shaped by watching her mother's and older sister's homemaking and agricultural production. While mothers expected young girls to support them in homemaking tasks, Sophia and her twin directed more of these duties with the absence of their older female relatives. Sophia and her twin had only been four-years-old when they were villagised in 1954. Sophia and her twin sister played a contributing role in sustaining their family and contributing to their livelihoods. Sophia was quite clearly prepared for this work demonstrating her resourcefulness of reusing pumpkin seeds to continue future cultivation and successful harvest. Her testimony also suggests that she and her sister were not an exception, other girls their age were also responsible for these tasks for their family. Sophia describes her own actions in first person but in one moment switches to say, 'and so the smaller children go to the farm and harvest'.[863] This extract offers insight into the pre-existing expectations of Gĩkũyũ girls and how they adapted these when villagised.

Gĩkũyũ girls not only negotiated responsibility at home, but some were also forced into the colonial administration's labour force. The intensive forced labour regime women in camps had to participate in had a direct impact on the ways girls had to adapt into new roles within their families. While this chapter has examined women's labour in relation to domestic work in the home, the forced labour regime was a key aspect of camp life that women had to endure. This physical work was mainly to support the colonial government's counter-insurgency campaign. They were expected to dig trenches and clear roads for operational access, for example.[864] Forced labour consumed the week, with Leah Nyaguthia Kariuki recalling:

> There was not any work on Saturday or Sunday, but the other days were mostly spent going round and slashing about. We were shown there by the Home Guards who got us digging trenches, it was just pure torture then. We would be forced to dig the trenches

[862] Interview with Sophia.
[863] Interview with Sophia.
[864] It is unclear from the evidence whether women and girls were forced to work on plantations alongside migrant labourers. Heike Schmidt explores this dynamic in the context of Zimbabwe, where villagers were employed as tea pickers, see Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence*, 188-189.

but there was not any work done on Saturdays and Sundays where some could go to Church in Tumu Tumu. But that came later on.[865]

The colonial government's forced labour regime was largely made up of women and men from the resettlement camps and detention camps.[866] Girls also, however, were expected to contribute to this effort. As Esther describes:

BR: Did you do communal labour?

E: I? I was a student. But on Saturdays I would go to communal labour because nobody would be left in the camp. No. We students went to communal labour on Saturdays. When there, we would be made to dig dams like another one that is close to here. Even these farms were demarcated at that time. We would come carrying shrubs and plant branches which we would plant on the boundaries after surveyors had divided the land.

BR: And what did you do on Sundays?

E: We did laundry on Sundays. Us students, but parents were made to go to communal labour that day. There was no church. No.[867]

As Esther explains, while she spent her weekdays at school, she had to contribute to the colonial government's development operations at this time. Esther's testimony contradicts Leah's, suggesting there was variation in how punitive the forced labour regime was depending on the camp. Some camps had a seven-day labour regime, while others had five. Similarly, Esther played a supporting role to her mother's homemaking responsibilities. As her mother was working a seven-day week for the forced labour regime, on Sundays, Esther stepped up to take charge of homemaking tasks. Esther describes doing laundry on Sundays for her and her mother. This was a shift to her usual Sundays when she would have been in church had they not been villagised. Supporting one another in domestic labour, whether related or not, was not an unusual act among Gĩkũyũ girls and women. Before the colonial administration introduced villagisation, Gĩkũyũ women helped in one another's homes wherever possible when a woman's authoritative position in the Mau Mau had interfered with her domestic duties.[868]

[865] Leah Nyaguthia Kariuki, interview, Nyeri County, 30th April 2019.
[866] Bennett, *Fighting the Mau Mau*, 81-82.
[867] Interview with Esther.
[868] Kanogo, 'Kikuyu Women and the Politics of Protest', 92.

Women had a shared understanding to sustain the productivity of households. They performed this female solidarity in their own households, as well as for those in need of support.

Grace's testimony reflects the rigidity of day-to-day life in the camps. She describes the rules and expectations that she had to adhere to:

BR: Do you know what—did you have to leave very early in the morning?

GM: Of course! Very early.

BR: So, would you—?

GM: Because at 8:00am, you should be in school.

BR: Okay.

GM: At eight. Up to four o'clock. Somewhere there.

BR: So, you would have left for school before people had started communal labour during the day, and you then probably arrive back after they finished or—?

GM: Erm, those who were going for labour, because it is away from the village, it is where you are supposed to go to do manual work. You have a hoe or a machete, you go there. You have to wake up early. They had to wake up early, and come late, and they had to go in a line. Not any, not any—follow the order. A queue.

BR: And was that to stop people talking? When they were moving?

GM: When you are moving you can talk but you have to be careful what you are talking. You don't talk about anything because you're—those who have the oath, they cannot just talk anyhow because they don't want to be known. So, you are talking just anything else but not about the oath. Yes.[869]

This is a striking example of the rules and boundaries Grace felt she had to follow. Her emphasis on queueing, following orders, having good time management demonstrates the inflexibility of life in the camps and the controlling nature of people's day-to-day lives.[870]

[869] Interview with Grace.

[870] For a broader discussion on colonial processes which introduced time, work-discipline, and commodity production to African populations, see for example Charles H. Feinstein, *An Economic History of South Africa: Conquest, Discrimination, and Development* (Cambridge, 2005).

Grace was exposed early on to seeing her mother and other family members adhering to the orders of the camp's security and inevitably became accustomed to this level of compliance.

With the camps housing vast populations of the passive wing support to the Mau Mau, not all inhabitants complied with the orders enlisted on them. Grace explains how women and children upheld their support in an environment heavily guarded and monitored:

BR: And whereabouts was that tower in terms of the village?

GM: It has to be by the gate. So that they can check. So that the enemy, the Mau Mau is not coming to get anything—contact. But all the same, these who had, who were partners, the ladies knew how to make that those are fed.

BR: Oh, so even the villagers, people in the villages were still actually able to help the Mau Mau fighters?

GM: They had to find a way.

BR: Do you know how they did that?

GM: Erm, because they had gardens, they had gardens. To work in the gardens. By the time they are going to the garden, they know how to take something for the brothers and sons and the daughters and the husbands. Those who were inside the forest. And there would be a communication either by way, by a song or whatever or by a little child. A little child working here, a little child may be sent with a message. But it is not for those who don't know how to, who did not take the oath (*inaudible*) even the young ones knew what everything is going—being done. If it is food, I have this, this, eh, I have food there but here I have put something else to cover the food. And when I go there, I know how to hide eh—in the garden.

BR: You know how to hide—

GM: How to hide it. Yes. How to hide it. Yes. How to hide it.[871]

Grace's account demonstrates the level of coordination women maintained in supporting their male relatives and companions operating in the forest groups. She also highlights the important

[871] Interview with Grace.

role played by children in this network, sending messages to enable this communication.[872] Sophia describes being given a cup of porridge to take to a neighbour as an excuse to send a message.[873] Counter-insurgency tactics to divide 'insurgents' from the 'people' fail to recognise the instrumental role of kinship ties with relatives offering support to fighters.[874] Women not only had to adapt their strategies to continue supporting the movement, they also actively put themselves at risks in order to do so. Women upheld their position as custodians of their community and nurturers to their families. Regardless of the limited resources they had in the camps, women adhered to their internalised duty to continue supporting their families whether they were in the camps with them, or whether they were fighting on the outside. Where women and girls did not have the ability to circumnavigate camp security structures to provide support, they often turned a blind eye and chose not to inform on Mau Mau activity. As Susan explains, if livestock was near the camp gate and there was no guard in sight, Mau Mau members 'would take it, but we would not mind'.[875] In this example, there was little advantage to informing on others in such instances. Women and girls were aware of the levels of brutality from both the colonial forces and the Mau Mau. They also experienced intermittent curfews where there was suspicion of people leaving food for forest fighters. It is important to note, that as the dire effects of villagisation progressed, women's support for forest fighters declined.[876]

Whilst the examples presented thus far reveal that women supported and cared for one another, this was not always the case. Grace Kanguniu relays an instance she experienced whereby a fellow inhabitant physically harmed her. Grace Kanguniu explains:

> **GK:** Tumu Tumu Hospital was there to treat people, because like this wound you can see here (*demonstrating*) I don't know whether not going there is what made the wound get there because I was cut by someone with a machete. I was then begged to go Tumu Tumu Hospital, but I refused to go. I think that's why my leg is having so much trouble today together with the beating we underwent. But alas I see with all that may God be glorified. So, the hospital was there; Tumu Tumu and Karatina. People were being treated there even people from the forest by a man called Nguhuni wa Kungu.

[872] For an exploration of juvenile involvement in the Mau Mau, see Stacey Hynd, 'Small Warriors? Children and Youth in Colonial Insurgencies and Counterinsurgency, ca. 1945–1960', *Comparative Studies in Society and History: an international quarterly*, 62 (2020), pp. 684-713.
[873] Interview with Sophia.
[874] Hannah Gurman (ed.), *Hearts and Minds: A People's History of Counterinsurgency* (New York, 2013), 9.
[875] Interview with Susan.
[876] Lonsdale, 'The Moral Economy of Mau Mau', 457.

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GK: It's me who refused, it's someone who cut me, but I refused to go since I'd be forced to reveal who had cut me. So, I stayed there until I healed.

BR: Could you tell us what made him cut you?

GK: Why he wanted to cut me? What could I tell you now? Maybe he was angry at me thus he cut me.

BR: Because of anger?

GK: Yes, because remember it was a war time.

It is revealing that Grace Kanguniu did not want to inform on the perpetrator of this attack. As her testimony explored in this chapter is indicative of, Grace Kanguniu narrates herself as the lead protagonist in the wider Mau Mau story. She subverts the more fragile victimhood discourse often denoted to women in war, shrugging off this attack and excusing it due to it being 'war time'. The threat of violence from guards was widespread. Refusing to inform on the perpetrator of this attack could have been a way for her to protect herself and her family against retaliation. Grace Kanguniu may have been protecting herself from others branding her an informant.

Preparing for Life after Villagisation

As military measures against Mau Mau eased from 1956, women sought opportunities to consolidate control over the future of their households and livelihoods. Daniel Branch shows that Gĩkũyũ society most closely measured virtue in households. He argues that this was assessed through 'the ability of men to harness the productive power of the household in order to beget wealth'.[877] This chapter challenges and expands this notion, demonstrating that villagisation offered a unique opportunity for Gĩkũyũ women who were separated from male partners to renegotiate their moral ethnicity in their households. Women made concerted efforts to plan and reimagine their lives outside of the camps' fences, and these differing articulations are explored in more depth in this section.

For some, villagisation offered a unique opportunity to obtain greater financial independence. When asked if she could discuss her involvement with her MW club, Beatrice explains:

[877] Daniel Branch, 'The Enemy Within: Loyalists and the War Against Mau Mau', *Journal of African History*, 48 (2007), 294.

BR: Did you pay to become a member of *Maendeleo ya Wanawake*?

BM: No, we did not pay.

BR: Was there something else—like registration?

BM: No. Later, we started contributing money as part of women groups. There were no men in the groups. So, after we contributed money, we would assess whether it was enough, and if so, we would give it to two people at a time.

BR: Like a merry-go-round?

BM: Yes, like merry-go-rounds. Now we would do it like that. At that time, we lived in grass thatched houses. Through the *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* merry-go-rounds we started building tin roofed houses.

BR: Were you happy to be a member of *Maendeleo ya Wanawake*?

BM: Oh, do you ask?! *(laughter)* That is where I got money to fund my wedding. We were given money through those groups. Once you got the money you would use it to buy what you wanted. That was the time we solemnized our marriage in the church.[878]

As Beatrice's account shows, joining her MW club meant she could have an increased, and equal chance to gain economic support from her female club members. Not only was this money then used to improve the home structures they lived in, but Beatrice also went on to fund her own wedding with this monetary supply. It is striking that upon her first mention of money during the interview, Beatrice immediately clarifies that there was no male involvement in the club activities. In this instance, Beatrice positions herself and the other women in her club as financially independent from their husbands or any other man for that matter. A sense of pride is exuded in this sentiment that money was now being controlled by women. These Rotating Savings and Credit Associations, also known as money-go-rounds, gave women access to savings when needed to meet household costs. The groups also brought likeminded people together, mainly of the same gender and ethnicity.[879] Beatrice's laugh when asked if she was happy to have been a part of MW demonstrates her joy in this endeavour. As Kanogo

[878] Interview with Beatrice.
[879] Shirley Ardener and Sandra Burman (eds), *Money-Go-Rounds: The Importance of Rotating Savings and Credit Associations for Women* (Oxford, 1995), 14-18. For a case study of a successful Rotating Savings and Credit Association in the Kiambu area of Nairobi see Nici Nelson, 'The Kiambu Group: A Successful Women's ROSCA in Mathare Valley, Nairobi (1971-1990)', in Ardener and Burman (eds), *Money-Go-Rounds*, pp. 49-69.

shows, the colonial period in Kenya enabled women to seize opportunities 'amid the conflicting policies, unintended consequences, and inconsistent compromises' of colonial rule.[880] While the administration introduced MW in camps as a way of controlling women's time and so-called development, women redefined themselves within these new dynamics. It is important to note that while Beatrice joined MW during the emergency period, the economic value she experienced from the group came in the post-1956 era as military measures gradually dissipated in central Kenya.

Women adopted a similar merry-go-round approach to physically rebuild their lives in preparation of moving out of the camps. Leah describes this process:

LK: When one builds their house, but it's not this one which I recently built. I would then build my house then summon the other women who would carry my things for me. That's what we'd do for each other.

CW: But you were happy to leave the village?

LK: Yes, one was happy because you are now entering your own house why would you be upset?

CW: No.

LK: That's what we'd do as we were happy moving in someone out of the village and into their new home.

It was most effective to establish work parties, such as these, when family labour was unavailable for agricultural demands.[881] Here, women reimagined this process for the purpose of homemaking. Through the Swynnerton Plan of 1954, the colonial government demarcated land in the African Reserves and allocated plots to families currently living in the camps. Women and children were, once again, having to physically rebuild their homesteads, often on their newly assigned land. They then needed to move their possessions from the camp to their new homesteads. Leah remembers the joy she felt helping others move. She recalls helping numerous women resettle who assured her that they would also support her in this process. For those who were a part of MW during this transition period, the merry-go-round approach was

[880] Kanogo, *African Womanhood*, 2.
[881] A.K.H. Weinrich, *African Farmers in Rhodesia: Old and New Peasant Communities in Karangaland* (Oxford, 1975), 91.

extended to offering further financial support to improve house structures for sought after materials. As Beatrice relays:

> So, we would contribute money for each other. So, if you did not have a house then they would build for you. They would buy iron sheets for you and that is the time tin roofed houses were built. Because of *Maendeleo*.[882]

Kenyan women used this developmental women's organisation to suit their needs at the time. To adapt the MW organisation to equip each member with the financial backing to rebuild their homes and improve them outside of the camps, women brought a new meaning to the clubs. While MW had focused on 'advancing' women's homecraft and domestic duties through the eyes of the Colonial Office, Kenyan women co-opted these pre-existing structures to evolve the organisation in a way which benefitted the members. Taking ownership of this enabled women to seek greater independence with their finances, especially when many of their husbands were absent in this transition.

As interest in MW and the BRCS women's clubs grew in the late 1950s, so too did the entrepreneurial efforts and artisan skills of many women who established further avenues of internal trading in camps. Making and selling sisal baskets was one of these endeavours which Sophia describes:

SK: The grandmother who gives milk would remind the aged to do some artwork. Now, rather than just idle away your time, know how to make a basket, can you make a row? They would walk to the social hall to make ropes.

JW: Ropes, using sisal?

SK: Making sisal baskets and they would be introduced to knitting. And the same knitting was also introduced in schools, but the social hall was where people would go. The aged or the sick would assemble; nobody was supposed to be in the village during the day. People would either be at the social hall or working in the trenches and roads.

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[882] Interview with Beatrice.

BR: Aside from Red Cross workers were there workers who were there as community development workers not just Red Cross, or did you have *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* or anything like that?

SK: Only Red Cross who would teach people how to do artwork and remind them. 'Do you know how to make a basket?' And now we'll be buying that from you. So, the old, the very old women who would not work making the trenches and the roads would be at the social hall.[883]

While Sophia initially explains that basket making was the Red Cross' attempt to prevent women from being 'idle' in the camps, Kenyan women adopted these skills and used them for their economic gain. In many cases, women were now the main economic agents of their families, working to build up their livelihoods and prepare for the future. Gĩkũyũ women expanded their market trading from primarily agricultural products to artisan goods.[884] It is unclear from the testimonies shared in this project, how exactly women went on to use this income. Beatrice's earlier example demonstrates that money from the MW money-go-round contributed to homemaking as well as her wedding. Assessments of women's experiences of conflict often neglect these personal and individual aspirations. This entrepreneurial spirit was not a temporary passing-time activity while women were villagised, it went on to serve them well in the transitional phase to Kenyan independence and after. Women who continued participating in women's clubs developed extremely well attended homecraft markets.

When looking to life post-villagisation, young Gĩkũyũ women considered their civic virtue in progressing in their age grade society. Marriage, for young women, was and continues to be an important stage to progress to womanhood. Security relaxations across camps in the post-1956 period of villagisation enabled greater interaction between families and individuals. This was a prime opportunity for women and men to make marriage alliances. Agnes Wanjiru Mwangi met her now-husband John and they married while they were still villagised. John was a teacher and through his profession had secured a relatively good relationship with the guards of his camp. He earned a comfortable salary which enabled him to build a large home; the home Agnes moved into. They had an Anglican church wedding and Agnes explained that it was the first such union in their camp. She described how a 'rich man' loaned them a 'lorry' to transport them to the church for their wedding.[885] Agnes' tone changed during this later stage of the

[883] Interview with Sophia.
[884] Ester Boserup, *Woman's role in economic development* (London, 1970), 90-94.
[885] Agnes Wanjiru Mwangi, interview, Murang'a County, 20th April 2019.

interview. She smiled more as she reflected on this time in her life. Her marriage to John was something she seemed happy to speak about and demonstrates the shift in her circumstances in the latter years of villagisation. Agnes and John went on to have two children while still in the camp and John's employment enabled them to afford a house girl to care for the children while both John and Agnes were working during the day. It is unclear from Agnes' interview what work she began engaging in as a married woman. Agnes does go on to explain that they continued to employ the same house girl who cared for the four children after the conflict. By becoming a wife and then having children, Gĩkũyũ women gain greater authority in their ethnic group through their social age. In addition to this, economic factors mainly financial security and mobility are important considerations in this process.

It is striking that while much of the discourse shared by women interviewed for this project explores themes of motherhood and childcare, little was shared on their experiences of reproduction and childbirth. Women did give birth in the camps, with Sophia explaining that this was normally because of rape.[886] Women in the loyalist sections were often the wives of colonial guards and were, therefore, able to continue family planning during the emergency. It is unclear why women were less forthcoming in discussing their experiences of childbirth in the camps. Child mortality rates were a concern to humanitarian workers operating in the camps. There was a high likelihood that newborns would not have survived due to the heightened levels of malnutrition among women.[887] This would have contributed to the trauma experienced by women in the camps and may also reflect the silence of childbirth in the testimonies shared in this thesis. Women may be carrying feelings of shame and concern for cultural stigmas regarding babies being born out of wedlock. Marriages broke down as men returned from detention camps to find their wives raising children that were born from rape.[888] Agnes gave birth to two babies during her time in the camp but spoke of this time fondly, though in little detail.[889] Having only known Agnes for a short while, she simply may not have wanted to share these deeply precious and personal moments with me. Grace Kanguniu spoke of her entry into motherhood as she was moving out of the camp. She recalls it being 'quite unbearable' coping with her young child as she dealt with a lot of sickness with them.[890] What was most striking as she described becoming a mother was the reason she gave for the speed

[886] Interview with Sophia.
[887] John Blacker, 'The Demography of Mau Mau: Fertility and Mortality in Kenya in the 1950s: A Demographer's Viewpoint', *African Affairs*, 106 (2007), 226.
[888] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, 270-271.
[889] Interview with Agnes.
[890] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.

that she had her second child. Grace Kanguniu explains: 'we could not do family planning since a lot of our people died and we needed to give birth to replace them'.[891] In her commitment to the Mau Mau, Grace Kanguniu had manifested an internal duty to become a mother and to conceive at a more rapid rate that she would have hoped.

An additional and notable silence in the interviews conducted for this project relate to the practice of clitoridectomy and whether Gĩkũyũ girls pursued this in the camps. Clitoridectomy, as Anna Adima emphasises, 'symbolises the progression from girlhood to womanhood, complete acceptance into the ethnic group, and the solidification of Gĩkũyũ identity'.[892] Clitoridectomy among Gĩkũyũ girls, and Kenyan girls more broadly, has been a historically contentious issue. This could be a reason as to why the women interviewed were not forthcoming to discuss this topic. Clitoridectomy has been integral to Gĩkũyũ culture, as well as many other African communities. In the context of the colonial period in Kenya, clitoridectomy came under attack from missionary societies from the late nineteenth century. Most notably the Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) worked to eradicate the practice among Christian girls. The CSM sought to change the attitudes of its African followers through educating against clitoridectomy in schools.[893] Soon after, missionaries began calling on the colonial government to outlaw it.[894] When the CSM demanded its followers in 1929 to swear an oath against clitoridectomy, many in the Gĩkũyũ ethnic group protested 'in the form of a dance-song called *Muthirigu*'.[895] As Adima explores, these lyrics decried those who sought to intervene in this cultural rite and was later incorporated into Gĩkũyũ anti-colonial activism.[896]

Gĩkũyũ girls negotiated their authority through this 'culturally available practice of ritual convention', as Kanogo argues.[897] While the colonial government never officially banned the practice, it did begin regulating it by 'limiting the extent to which a girl's genitalia were cut'.[898] The colonial government's attempts to change the practice were largely ineffective.[899] The colonial administration's and African male elders' attempts to interfere in this practice directly

[891] Interview with Grace Kanguniu.
[892] Anna Adima, 'The Sound of Silence: The 1929-30 Gikuyu "Female Circumcision Controversy" and the Discursive Suppression of African Women's Voices.' *Gender a výzkum / Gender and Research,* 21 (2020), 19.
[893] Adima, 'The Sound of Silence', 19.
[894] Lyn Thomas, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2003), 22.
[895] Adima, 'The Sound of Silence', 19-20.
[896] Adima, 'The Sound of Silence', 19-20.
[897] Kanogo, *African Womanhood*, 97.
[898] Adima, 'The Sound of Silence', 20.
[899] Penelope Hetherington, 'The Politics of Female Circumcision in the Central Province of Colonial Kenya, 1920-1930', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth Studies*, 26 (1998), 122.

attacked girls' transition to womanhood. It is notable that among the Gĩkũyũ, 'circumcision' was as acceptable for girls as it was for boys, yet the focus of missionaries was more targeted at girls.[900] Wambui Waiyaki Otieno's memoirs reveal her anger toward her Christian mother for preventing her from undergoing clitoridectomy.[901] Lynn Thomas' much necessary intervention into the discourse of clitoridectomy in colonial Kenya demonstrates that girls played an active role in rethinking and reimagining this practice. In her research on adolescent girls in Meru, Thomas reveals the ways they adapted the rituals by foregoing the celebrations and preparations associated to the initiation ceremonies as well as the instruments used. They also went on to take ownership of their own clitoridectomy, nicknaming the practice *Ngaitana,* translated by Thomas as 'I will circumcise myself'.[902] This act of defiance in the context of anti-colonial discontent in the 1950s reveals the agency girls wielded to retain cultural practices important to their cultural identities. While this chapter does not offer new primary evidence of Gĩkũyũ girls performing this aging practice in the camps, it is very likely that young females sought ways to do so regardless of the colonial state's efforts to restrict it.

Conclusion

As this chapter explores, women and girls adapted and negotiated their place in their new communities formed through villagisation. Reimagining their social, as well as their political, cultural and economic identities and values were core ways that women remember their time in camps. While in some ways women and girls' actions had to be reactive to the ever-changing circumstances they were forced into, in other ways, they used this time to evaluate, aspire and prepare for a new life outside of the camps. Gĩkũyũ girls and women used villagisation as an opportunity to reconsider the gendered expectations they had, and how this could be different; mainly being separated from male members of their families enabled this process to happen. Civic virtue played a prominent role in how women contemplated their place in these new environments. While in many ways villagisation brought great hardship to health and wellbeing of those forcibly resettled, women resorted to their internalised social sense of responsibility as custodians to the domestic welfare of their community. This was enacted through the ways women adapted to their new surroundings, shared resources and lessons together, and established trading networks.

[900] Wambui Waikyaki Otieno, *Mau Mau's Daughter: A Life History* (Colorado, 1998), 26-27.
[901] Otieno, *Mau Mau's Daughter,* 28.
[902] Thomas, *Politics of the Womb*, 75.

Many women recall navigating conflicting identities, mainly political and cultural, throughout their time in the camps. While the colonial government sought to categorise inhabitants as either Mau Mau sympathisers or loyalists, this differentiation was not always so clear cut for individuals. Women were often pulled in opposing directions depending on their family's and husband's allegiances. Beatrice's example shows the conflicting ideologies women had to negotiate. On the one hand, she was proud of her brother's prominent place in the Mau Mau and on the other, she reaped the benefits which came with heading a loyalist household. Culturally, girls reimagined what it meant to be Gĩkũyũ. For some, continuing to under-go secretive clitoridectomy could be a political act of resistance against the colonial government, or an effort to adhere to the cultural and generational pressures that came with being Gĩkũyũ. Upholding cultural norms also demonstrates a determination to uphold normalcy and nurture psychoemotional support which came from peers in age grades.

Women and girls did not simply act in a sphere of survival throughout their time in the camps. Their testimonies show a concerted effort to adapt and adopt tactics and responses to forge their own paths through this period which best supported their own desires and needs, and that of their dependents. Women performed and rearticulated their moral ethnicity to harness effective productive power in an environment which the colonial government heavily controlled. The ways they enacted this was informed by their social age, gender and socioeconomic status. The testimonies so graciously shared by the women who were interviewed for this project have contributed to an ever-growing oral archive whereby women's experiences of conflict are given the platform necessary to challenge androcentric accounts of counter-insurgency. To analyse women's experiences of violence in counter-insurgency measures such as forced resettlement would be telling only part of the story. Women do not necessarily recall their time villagised solely through a lens of violence and victimhood. Instead, women describe themselves as economic agents and family and community caregivers. Their duty to those around them and the communities they were forced into shaped the ways they lived their lives while living in camps.

Conclusion

This thesis contributes to an improved understanding of Kenyan women's experiences of forced resettlement during the British counter-insurgency campaign, 1952-1960. By doing so it considers the relationship between counter-insurgency warfare, humanitarianism, empire and decolonisation. The thesis adopts a gendered approach to analyse the campaign in Kenya and demonstrates that violence and coercion in the late-colonial era was articulated through a wide spectrum of practices which followed patterns characteristic of British colonial rule in Africa. Humanitarian and developmental discourses were prevalent in British justifications of its brutal counter-insurgency practice. The thesis offers the first gendered reading of villagisation, a strategy introduced to contain and control mainly Gĩkũyũ women and girls who were suspected of aiding Mau Mau fighters, to reveal the ways the British colonial administration sought to subdue this demographic of the Kenyan population. Using the oral testimony of those forcibly resettled during this period alongside the colonial records and the papers of humanitarian organisations, this research argues that Britain conducted a developmental counter-insurgency campaign in Kenya which was inherently gendered in its design to reconfigure Gĩkũyũ society.

The colonial administration was particularly concerned by the role Gĩkũyũ women and girls were playing to sustain anti-colonial action. While two detention camps were established to incarcerate female fighters, villagisation targeted Gĩkũyũ women and girls *en masse*.[903] First and foremost, camps were introduced to regain control of the 'eyes and ears' of the Mau Mau, also known as the 'passive wing'. The colonial state needed to break the so-called 'backbone' of the movement and they secured this through forced resettlement into enclosed spaces controlled by colonial guards. In attempting to control the narrative of its operations in Kenya, the colonial government called these spaces 'villages' – arguing that they were introduced to protect Kenyans from Mau Mau attacks. This was far from the reality. The British made deliberate attempts to propagate a feminine view of the camps to conceal the militarised and masculinised spaces erected to punish Gĩkũyũ women assumed to be supporting Mau Mau fighters. The wake of the Holocaust remained at the forefront of international humanitarian organisations' minds, as well as Western governments. While the term 'village' denotes connotations of a safe rural life, this was not the case for the camps introduced in Kenya. These sites involved a carceral-style infrastructure surrounded by spike-filled moats, barbed-wire

[903] Katherine Bruce-Lockhart and Bethany Rebisz, 'Discourses of Development and Practices of Punishment: Britain's Gendered Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Colonial Kenya', in Martin Thomas and Gareth Curless (eds), *The Oxford Handbook on Colonial Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies* (Oxford, 2022) (In Press), 5.

fences with a drawbridge entrance. This drawbridge was purposely situated by the Home Guard post ensuring guards had full control over who could enter, and more importantly, who could leave the camp.

The colonial state designed camps to ensure its eyes and ears were fixated on the women and girls it believed to be instrumental to sustain Mau Mau efforts. These were male-designed and male-controlled spaces mainly populated by women and children. It was not enough to separate these actors from the insurgent group. The administration focused its gaze on women's and girls' bodies like never before. Camps were designed so that the day-to-day lives of inhabitants were monitored. This was done both through the built environment and the implemented activities. Camps were ideally situated on a hillside. Planners placed the security post at the most visible point on the ridge, with the huts erected in straight lines down the hillside. This design feature was instrumental in ensuring guards at the security post had full visibility of those populating the camp. In addition to this, as Sophia's testimony shows, guards ordered women to build their huts with windows facing the direction of the Home Guard post.[904] Home Guards could, therefore, use binoculars to see movement among inhabitants. The colonial administration was anxious that while grouping the Gĩkũyũ ethnic group into enclosed spaces would prevent supplies from reaching the Mau Mau fighters, camps could develop into hotbeds for anti-colonial aggression. Enabling full visibility of those forcibly resettled was an absolute priority in the design and governance of the camps.

The colonial administration justified the introduction of villagisation on humanitarian grounds. It claimed the concentration of civilians would improve the livelihoods of those they moved and protect them from the ongoing violence raging between the British armed forces and the Mau Mau. The external discourse propagated by the administration in its public relations material emphasises the reformative aspects of villagisation. It describes the social halls erected, it presents playgrounds which happy children frequented, and well stocked shops with an inviting smile on the face of the shopkeeper. These feminine aspects of villagisation contributed to the administration's lie that these were protective spaces for women and children. Women and girls who were forcibly resettled make little mention of these characteristics of the 'villages' depicted by the administration. Instead, Esther describes herself

[904] Sophia Wambui Kiarie, interview, Kiambu County, 4th April 2019.

as being ‘encamped’, and looking like ‘caged people’.[905] Women’s memories centre the security-related infrastructure encasing them and preventing their freedom.

In response to Mau Mau, Britain embarked on a colonial developmental counter-insurgency campaign. Torture and wide-spread incarceration were instrumental to Britain’s efforts, and the historiography has explored this at great length. In addition to this, however, colonial officials pervasively attempted to control and reconfigure Gĩkũyũ women’s beliefs, identities and future development. Thomas Askwith, lead architect of the Department of Community Development and Rehabilitation, said that Kenya, and Africa more broadly, was ‘backward largely because its women are backward’.[906] Villagisation operated as part of the punitive counter-insurgency campaign against the Mau Mau, but it was also a stepping-stone to the wider mission of rural revolution in Kenya. Through *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* (MW) and the British Red Cross Society’s (BRCS) women’s clubs, the colonial administration sought to advance African women to encourage ‘self-help’ practices which would contribute to the economic reform of central Kenya. Club activity focused women’s responsibilities to homemaking and social reproduction. Colonial administrators believed that by stabilising African families who were challenging colonial power, it could quell Mau Mau activity. This study, therefore, entangles the histories of late-colonial development alongside assessments of counter-insurgencies to demonstrate the gendered articulations of this colonial developmental counter-insurgency approach.

As the perceived custodians of their wider communities, Community Development Officers targeted Gĩkũyũ women in the camps to reform their social networks. It was now their responsibility to restore the balance and de-escalate the ongoing tension between Gĩkũyũ society and the colonial administration. This development work was coded as feminine. Community Development Officers understood women in their context as mothers and wives and sought to prepare them as moral - preferably Christian - wives. The homemaking training offered to Gĩkũyũ women was based on British notions of ‘respectable femininity’ which challenged their perceived deviance.[907] By anchoring women to their family life, colonial administrators extended social engineering efforts, in the hope this would complement the punitive counter-insurgency campaign against the Mau Mau. White British women were essential to this enterprise. Their alleged duty to lead African women to advancement was

[905] Esther, interview, Nyeri County, 26th April 2019.
[906] Kenya National Archives, MSS 4/66, The Story of Kenya's Progress by Thomas Askwith; 1953, 110.
[907] Bruce-Lockhart and Rebisz, ‘Discourses of Development and Practices of Punishment’, 4.

entrenched in the racist ideology that influenced the civilising mission. White women attempted to engage with African women to ensure they were not as 'primitive as their mothers had been'.[908]

How effective these social engineering efforts were is difficult to quantify. Chapter II does, however, show the vast limitations in the colonial administration's practices of engaging Gĩkũyũ women in these programmes. Implementing new practices framed by British notions of modernity was unrealistic and culturally ignorant. In one example explored, Gĩkũyũ women were encouraged to make tablecloths, although they did not have tables in their huts. In another case, women were shown a video of an English woman washing her hands from a running tap in her kitchen. Gĩkũyũ women did not have access to running water. While some Community Development Women's Officers recognised that their teaching needed to adapt and align more closely to the lived realities of Gĩkũyũ women, this was further limited by racist and imperial ideologies shrouding the administration's views of African women. When women did not respond encouragingly to an activity introduced in their women's club, community development workers often blamed this on African 'primitivism' and women being uncooperative. British women involved in this work perceived African women to be 'child-like', and 'beasts of burden'.

Humanitarian organisations were intrinsically linked to these developmental practices. In many ways the BRCS sought to counteract the prevailing dire conditions of camp life by supporting women's club activities, opening medical clinics and establishing a milk distribution service. BRCS involvement highlighted the failings of the colonial administration in its duty to the welfare of Kenyan women and children. BRCS support did, however, contribute to the colonial administration's brutal regime against the Mau Mau. Providing powdered milk in liquid form to babies and children in the camps, subsequently freed up mothers' availabilities to continue in the forced labour regime. While the BRCS' work was undoubtedly built on ideas of international compassion, it was framed by imperial ideologies of African women which undermined the effectiveness of alleviating the true suffering women and girls were experiencing in the camps. By adopting a subaltern approach to humanitarianism in this campaign, this thesis centres the experiences of Gĩkũyũ women who have been marginalised based on their gender and race, both during villagisation and in the existing literature on the topic. Historians have shown that European humanitarianism was intrinsically connected to

[908] Emily Baughan, 'Rehabilitating an Empire: Humanitarian Collusion with the Colonial State during the Kenyan Emergency, c.1954-1960', *Journal of British Studies*, 59 (2020), 16.

empire, but this research provides insights of local contexts and interactions, and how these related to global trends of humanitarianism in this era. Evidence presented in Chapter IV reveals the attempts made by individual welfare officers to challenge colonial authority and uphold their humanitarian integrity. It also explores the ambivalence Gĩkũyũ women and girls had toward humanitarian actors and their efforts.

Gĩkũyũ women and girls interviewed for this project recalled the camps as a gendered topography of terror. Previous assessments of counter-insurgency campaigns that geographically map the battlefield terrain fall short of demonstrating the ubiquity of suffering inflicted on people. A spatial analysis alongside oral history reveals an intimate map of anguish, showing the gendered ways this violence was articulated in this campaign. The testimonies shared in this project express the fear and terror which characterise women's memories of this period in their lives. It was not the singular result of the punitively built environment that enabled colonial violence. It shows that this terror ruptured the fabrics of Gĩkũyũ society. Colonial guards forcibly removed families from their homesteads and burned their livelihoods to the ground. This was a direct attack on Gĩkũyũ women by obliterating their domains of social reproduction. Individual guards enacted menace and torture against the camp population in an arbitrary way. Physical forms of punishment were widespread. Rape and sexual violence were a daily threat and lived reality. Guards entered huts to extend their authority over female bodies. They also forced women and girls to central but closed off locations, like the security posts where they were imprisoned, violated and humiliated.

Despite these conditions, Gĩkũyũ women and girls actively renegotiated their civic virtue in the new communities populating the camps. They adapted and adopted resilient responses to enable their own survival, and that of their families and wider social networks. These responses were influenced by Gĩkũyũ women and girls understanding themselves as pillars of their community's stability. Women resorted to an internalised, gendered sense of their responsibility to the welfare of those around them. Women shared and extended resources, lessons, grief and compassion among one another. Gĩkũyũ girls determined their own paths toward adulthood. Married Gĩkũyũ women sought opportunities to further consolidate control of their households and livelihoods while their husbands were detained or away working for the colonial government. Efforts to renegotiate their moral ethnicity and femininity were prevalent in the memories shared by Gĩkũyũ women. This study challenges depictions of Kenyan women in this period represented through the lens of victimhood. Adopting a similar

approach to Heike Schmidt's social history of villagisation in Zimbabwe, this research reveals the lived gendered experiences of counter-insurgency warfare in Kenya.[909]

This thesis shows the importance of engaging with African women's voices when assessing colonial instruments of power. Archival material which reveals the experiences of Kenyan women in villagisation are close to non-existent. BRCS and the International Committee of the Red Cross records give some insight into the living conditions women and children faced in the camps. This material was, however, authored by humanitarian workers who engaged in the same ideologies that framed colonial rule. Lady Limerick, the then Vice-Chair of the BRCS, depicted Gĩkũyũ women as 'sullen and uncooperative'.[910] She positioned her White, female welfare officers as '*mamas*' of the camps' populations, working tirelessly to restore the health and happiness of African women and children. While the BRCS undoubtedly made necessary interventions to support the wellbeing of those forcibly resettled, this public narrative diminished the daily efforts and sacrifices Gĩkũyũ women and girls made to care for one another. The oral testimony explored in Chapter V demonstrates this at length. Gĩkũyũ women were not idly waiting for British intervention as the BRCS would have you believe. As Moritz Feichtinger argues, 'it is ethically and academically imperative to take the experiences and perspectives of the affected people into account'.[911] This thesis responds to this call.

Methodologically, Chapter V takes a different approach to the others. African voices have been actively supressed from the wider and popular discourses of British colonial rule. It was important to make methodological decisions when sharing Gĩkũyũ women's testimonies to avoid further marginalising and sanitising their experiences through a British lens. In Chapter V, Gĩkũyũ women narrate their stories and memories of villagisation. They reveal the unpredictable contingencies of life as they were and present moments of crisis and closeness that took place. Reflecting this posed great analytical challenges in structuring their testimonies. The chapter uses women's memories to connect women's personal experiences to their lived environments. Structuring this chronologically, illustrates that life in the camps was just one thing after another.

[909] See Heike I. Schmidt, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe: A History of Suffering* (Oxford, 2013).
[910] British Red Cross Society Archive, 1594/27, Vice-Chairman's (Lady Limerick) Visit to East Africa Jan/Feb 1957.
[911] Moritz Feichtinger, 'Strategic Villages: Forced Relocation, Counter-Insurgency and Social Engineering in Kenya and Algeria, 1952-62' in: Martin Thomas and Gareth Curless (eds), *Decolonization and Conflict: Colonial Comparisons and Legacies* (London, 2017), 138.

While this thesis explores the motivations behind the British female-led interventions made among Kenyans in the camps, there are limitations in this assessment. Just as the oral testimony of Gĩkũyũ women enhances this examination of villagisation by considering local variations and tensions, so too would the voices of individual welfare workers. Although I made attempts to scout out former BRCS employees to interview, these efforts were largely unsuccessful. Future research is necessary to provide greater insight into how MW leaders and humanitarian fieldworkers understood their work and the impact it was having. While Chapter IV opens this dialogue by revealing some of the archival evidence related to this, the personal diaries and memoirs, as well as the oral testimony of British women active in development work in the colonies would be illuminating.

A final, conclusionary thought is on colonial discourse and practice. This thesis has worked to challenge the official messaging of the military strategists, the Department of the Community Development (DCD), and the BRCS – all of which were active in the camps. The colonial administration asserted these spaces were reformative and humanitarian in approach. The DCD claimed that it was Kenyan women who had failed to maintain stability in their families. The BRCS hailed itself as the White saviours of unwell and incapable Africans. The oral testimony shared in this thesis challenges all these assumptions. Gĩkũyũ women detail the daily efforts they made to uphold their moral ethnicity in the social reproduction of their ethnic group. Women and girls made sacrifices to maintain the health of those in their community in the face of governmental failures and negligence which did not prioritise this. As Gĩkũyũ women recall, the camps were violent and terrifying places to inhabit. When asked how her life changed after guards permitted her to leave the camp she was forcibly resettled to, Esther explained: 'I tell my family that if I heard war was beckoning, I would take poison or hang myself. Because I would not want to see the life we lived in the camps. No, I would not want to see that life again'.[912]

[912] Interview with Esther.

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