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Violent relationships among hawkers and Inspectorate officers in central Nairobi

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INTIMACIES OF POLICING

VIOLENT RELATIONSHIPS AMONG HAWKERS AND INSPECTORATE OFFICERS IN CENTRAL NAIROBI

BY
BRIGITTE DRAGSTED

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED 2021

AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

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by

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Dissertation submitted

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Contents

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1. Introduction

Wangari is bent over a square piece of fabric spread out on the sidewalk in front of her. On it are about thirty pairs of socks. In twos, she picks up the pairs and shakes the dust off them before carefully arranging them once more, her movements flowing with the ease of habit. Less than a meter behind her, cars, buses and motorbikes roar past, their exhaust fumes warm and grainy in my throat. The midday sun is blazing.

"Brigitte, you have come!" I receive a warm-cheeked hug. "We are tired of *kanjo* [Nairobi City County Inspectorate officers] today. They are disturbing us since morning. I could have stayed in bed!" She laughs.

Wangari never smiles in the photos I took with her during fieldwork. I only have my memory to confirm to me her broken front teeth, one of them a deep gray color. The bottle that smashed into her face during the violent clashes between Inspectorate officers and hawkers in late 2014 not only broke her teeth and split her upper lip, it also motivated her to participate in a workshop on hawkers' rights in September 2016, which is where she and I met. Well-meaning attempts made in this and other workshops to organize the hawkers of central Nairobi around their rights only had limited success. After the daily street battles with bottle throwing and tear gas wore off in early 2015, most hawkers went back to concentrating on their business. Meanwhile, I stayed in touch with Wangari and started spending time with her and other hawkers to learn how they and Inspectorate officers relate to each other in such times of peace.

After greeting Wangari, I say hello to the other hawkers standing next to her. Mama Simon, always quick to make a joke, grabs my arm and changes the chant with which she advertises the second-hand trousers on her display to passing pedestrians: "Buy two, get *mzungu* [white person] for free!"

Everyone laughs. Wangari opens her mouth to shout something to Mama Simon, but her face freezes before any words come out. A sudden ripple moves through the lines of hawkers. In a split second, the relaxed atmosphere changes into a frenzy of packing up and running. Wangari bends down and, all in one movement, grabs the four corners

of the piece of fabric on which her socks are displayed, flings the bundle over her shoulder and sprints down the road.

The Inspectorate officers do not arrive immediately. Their patrol van has been spotted several streets away by the hawkers' lookouts and was heading in our direction. Wangari comes back from hiding her bundle of socks, and she and I leave the now empty sidewalk to go sit on a staircase in front of a doorway nearby. Mama Simon and a few other hawkers join us, all empty-handed, their wares safely hidden.

While we wait, Agnes entertains everyone with a long story in Sheng. I only catch half of what she is saying and my thoughts drift. On another occasion, I remember Agnes telling me in the same emphatic manner about the time she was arrested by Inspectorate officers, thrown into a patrol van and beaten until she thought she would not make it out alive. She and three other hawkers who were arrested with her spent the night in a holding cell at the local police station. In the morning, a female police officer saw them and urged them to report the abuse. The hawkers refused: "We said 'No! Why would we do that, and we are still here [hawking in the city center]?'" Reporting the incident would amount to starting a serious conflict with the officers. They would become targets of harassment. "I don't have another job to go and do," Agnes pointed out.

Two men walk towards us. They are both short and stocky, wearing brown windbreakers and serious expressions. "Here's *kanjo*," Wangari murmurs to me. It has been decades since the Nairobi County Inspectorate issued their employees with uniforms, but you can usually recognize Inspectorate officers by their fondness for windbreakers and leather jackets.

The two men stop by the stairs and greet the hawkers with friendly smiles and teasing comments. Agnes smiles back and responds good-naturedly to the comments. Mama Simon shakes both the officers' hands, laughing. Wangari raises her voice and says to me: "Brigitte, these are my good friends!" Then she introduces us.

One of the men shakes my hand and asks me in a friendly tone: "So, are you also a hawker? What are you selling?" This is a common joke made about my presence with the hawkers, and I usually play along.

"Towels," I say.

"How much?"

"Fifty bob."

Both officers laugh and nod to the women before continuing their walk down the road. During all this friendly banter, Mama Simon has

discreetly slipped one of the officers a bank note. I would have missed it if I had not purposely looked for it.

We stay on the stairs for a little while longer. Then Mama Simon checks the time and gets up to fetch her wares. The others follow. "It's time to work," says Wangari. "*Kanjos* are on lunch break now. They will be back at two-thirty."

The relationships I witnessed among hawkers and Inspectorate officers in central Nairobi confused me. I had come to Nairobi to study violent policing.[1] Along with this research interest came a particular idea of what police violence looked like. I had expected spectacular clashes in the streets, physical injuries, mass arrests, threats and hostilities. Instead, I found policing relationships that were full of familiarity and joking. Hawkers and Inspectorate officers meet each other every day on the same street corners. They call each other by nicknames, and they refer to each other as "friends." They are attuned to each other's daily rhythms. Moreover, hawkers and officers depend on each other to make a living. Officers complement their meagre salaries with bribes from hawkers, and hawkers get access to attractive selling spots through their bribe arrangements.

There were few street battles and mass arrests while I was in Nairobi, but violence was still tangibly present. It was merely located differently than I had expected. After having spent some time with the hawkers, I began to notice all the small things that spoke of violence, even when hawkers and officers were not face-to-face with each other. I noticed the hawkers' constant attention to the streets around them, and the ways in which they grabbed their wares and cleared the sidewalk in seconds. With time, I also came to sense the presence of violence in the things hawkers did to maintain friendly relations with officers: the warm handshakes and loud jokes, the careful displays of respect with which the jokes were balanced, the bank notes slipped between fists. And, not least, the hawkers' reluctance to involve formal justice mechanisms, such as Agnes' refusal to report the beating she took.

Later on, I talked to a number of Inspectorate officers, often because hawkers had introduced me to them as their friends. One of the officers called Richard told me he has recurring nightmares about being surrounded and overpowered by hawkers. Many of his colleagues are afraid to go to work because they feel outnumbered by the ever-increasing numbers of young, strong hawkers. I came to understand the emphatic handshakes and loud jokes as resulting equally from the officers' fear of those whom they police.

[1] Nairobi City County Inspectorate officers are a law enforcement service separate from the National Police Service and other security sector bodies (Nairobi City County Assembly 2017). While maintaining the title "Inspectorate officers," I refer in the following to the officers' function as "policing" and to their relationships with hawkers as "policing relationships."

What does one call relationships that are familiar and violent at the same time? Where the parties depend on each other economically and share the same space, while constantly worrying that past violent episodes will repeat themselves? How can we understand violent relationships where the parties feel each other's presence in bodily tensions and physical reactions? Where the possibility for new violence is woven into efforts to strike just the right balance between affectionate joking and appropriate respect? These kinds of violent relationships carry a strange resemblance to what we know about violence within romantic couples and families. I have come to think of policing relationships among hawkers and Inspectorate officers as violent intimate relationships.

I proceed with the notion that police violence, in some settings and some situations, is best understood as a form of intimate violence. Conceiving of police violence as intimate enables us to unpack violence in policing relationships with an attention to mutual attunements and dependence between police and policed. Meanwhile, intimacies in policing relationships are not the same as violent intimacies between romantic partners and family members. They call for analytical attention in their own right, and that is what I set out to develop in the present dissertation. I consider what it might mean to think of police violence as a form of intimate violence in a specific ethnographic context, asking: How is violence between hawkers and Inspectorate officers in central Nairobi intimate?

This question leads me to three further ones: How do hawkers and officers share a social space that is marked by past violence? How do notions of the good and proper, and of appropriate authority, play out in their relationships? And how do hawkers and officers experience the presence of the other, and the violence entailed in this presence, in bodily registers? [2]

To flesh out these three questions analytically, I draw on anthropological and feminist literature. First, I draw attention to the ways in which hawkers and officers are brought together in uncomfortably close proximity while harboring hostilities towards one another. I ask how violence between them is *neighborly* (Das 2006, 2010, 2015; Jeganathan 1997; Singh 2011). Secondly, I draw attention to the ways in which violence erupts when officers and hawkers fail to live up to gendered, classed and age specific ideals of proper persons and proper lives, and of appropriate authority and respect. I ask how violence between them emerges out of the operation of *normative* ideals (Berlant 1998, 2011; Povinelli 2006; Stoler 2013, 2016). Lastly, I draw attention to the ways in which hawkers and officers are implicated in each other at a bodily level, such as when hawkers carefully handle their bundles of wares with the

[2] The questions resemble some of those asked in criminological literature concerned with intimate partner violence (Anderson 1997, 2002; Barnett 2000, 2001; Campbell et al. 1998; Castro et al. 2020; Cravens et al. 2015; Eckstein 2011; Felson & Messner 2000; Johnson 2006; 2010; Jory 2004; Umberson et al. 1998; Umberson et al. 2003; Whiting et al. 2012). However, I conceive of intimacies of policing as calling for an analytical approach in their own right.

awareness that Inspectorate officers are keen to impound them. I ask how policing relations between them are *materially* embedded in attachments between bodies and objects (Haraway 1988, 1989/2012; Strathern 1988, 1992, 2004). These three analytical approaches to violent intimacies between officers and hawkers – that they are neighborly, normative and materially embedded – run through what follows. Drawing on different theoretical foundations, they highlight how hawkers and Inspectorate officers are implicated in one another in spatial, discursive and bodily registers. Together, they make up an analytical approach to intimacies of policing.

Conceiving of police violence as intimate contributes to anthropological literature on policing. Anthropological studies concerned with the experience of policed persons typically portray violent encounters with police officers as encounters with an impersonal state. Contrary to this, I propose that the experience of being policed can also be the experience of violence at the hands of a police officer with whom the policed person is relationally implicated. When it comes to the position of police officers, anthropological studies tend to attribute their violent actions to institutional pressures, to structures and to state effects. A view of police violence as intimate directs attention to what happens in policing relations rather than what kinds of state projects might drive officers to be violent. This does not equate to a view of police violence as less brutal or wounding. Rather, it offers a different way to conceive such violence, how it arises and how it is experienced.

A view of police violence as intimate also helps us to better appreciate the difficulties of addressing police violence within legal frameworks and interventions. Human rights-based remedies against police violence are fundamentally based on the assumption that survivors and perpetrators are strangers. An ongoing discussion within the human rights field concerns the importance of taking into account the ways in which persons exposed to police violence in many settings depend on personalized relationships to police officers. I contribute to this discussion by further thinking about how we might understand policing relationships that fall outside of conventional understandings of the relative positions of the rights holder and the duty bearer.

Empirically, the study is based on eight months of fieldwork in central Nairobi in 2016 and 2017. I conducted participant observation in a number of hawking locations around the city center. Through my interlocutors among the hawkers, I was introduced to Inspectorate officers. I spent time with the officers on the streets where they were stationed, and occasionally in cafés and public parks for more confidential conversations. Furthermore, in 2017 I set up an interview study in collaboration with five research assistants. The assistants conducted semi-structured interviews with fifty-nine hawkers.

In this introduction, I first elaborate on my analytical approach to violent intimacies in policing relationships, and I consider how this approach contributes to conversations within anthropological literature on policing. I then give a brief contextual introduction to policed hawking in central Nairobi. I proceed to describe

my fieldwork, positionality, main methods and research relationships. Finally, I present an outline of the dissertation.

Violent intimacies

To explore violent intimacies between Inspectorate officers and hawkers, I ask how they share a space, how ideals of the good and proper play out in their relationships, and how they affect each other in bodily registers. Analytically, I conceive of intimate police violence as *neighborly*, as *normative*, and as *materially* embedded.

Intimacy between hostile neighbors

Hawkers and Inspectorate officers share a violent history. Meanwhile, they constantly encounter each other in the streets of central Nairobi and make efforts to maintain friendly relations. To ask how violence between them is neighborly, I draw on a body of literature that describes the troubled intimacies arising in settings where people are brought together in too close proximity while harboring hostilities towards one another (Buch 2016; Das 2006, 2010, 2015; Goodfellow & Mulla 2008; Han 2012, 2013, 2017; Jeganathan 1997; Singh 2011).

Singh (2011) describes neighboring castes in rural India who historically have an exploitative relationship, who declare that they hate each other with a passion, but who also share elements of religious festivals. Singh proposes that we think of neighboring groups who are hostile towards one another, but who nonetheless make efforts to live with each other, as bound together by an "agonistic intimacy" (Singh 2001, p. 431). Jeganathan (1997) describes the efforts of Tamils living in an urban neighborhood in Sri Lanka to avoid potential victimization from their Sinhalese neighbors. Past episodes of mass violence where neighbors brutally killed each other inform the acts of the Tamil residents described by Jeganathan. When they feel that the potential for new violence becomes pressing, they prepare how to say certain words with a Sinhalese dialect if confronted with an angry mob, or they perform subtle signs of belonging such as hanging a flag with patriotic connotations over their front door. Such small acts show us how past violence becomes visible as possible future violence (Jeganathan 1997, pp. 184–222). Commenting on these and other ethnographies, Das (2015) notes how sociality in the shadow of past and potential future violence is marked by daily, quotidian efforts to keep violence "at bay." Such everyday relational work never completely resolves the possibility of annoyances and grudges erupting into violence. In this way, sociality remains layered with mutual apprehension (Das 2005, pp. 78–79).

Neighborly intimacy emerges from this literature as uncomfortable closeness to one another in a shared space. This space is not merely geographical, but social, political and historical. It is suffused with divisive political allegiances, with

memories of past violence and with the imposing presence of the violent other. Although hawkers and officers are not co-residents in Nairobi's city center, the ways in which they relate to one another carry a close resemblance to the intimacies of hostile neighbors described by Das and others. Conceiving of hawker-officer policing relations as neighborly intimacy allows me to direct attention towards the claustrophobic closeness of hawkers and officers in the streets of the city center. I unpack how small details of their interactions are layered with the memories of past violence and efforts to prevent violence from erupting once more. Furthermore, I consider the possibility for ethical acts amidst hostilities and mutual apprehension. Understanding hawkers and officers as hostile neighbors allows me to appreciate not only how they resent and fear each other, but also how the closeness and the sharing of a space compels them to recognize each other as persons with experiences and commitments similar to their own.

Normative ideals

Violence between Inspectorate officers and hawkers is related to gendered, classed and age specific notions of how proper lives should unfold and how proper persons should conduct themselves. For example, Inspectorate officers generally see hawkers as disorderly and dangerous urban youths, and they understand it as their role to contain the hawkers' disorderliness with violent policing. Moreover, officers sometimes resort to violence when they feel insecure about their own abilities to embody what they perceive as appropriate authority. To ask how violence between officers and hawkers is related to notions of the good and proper, I draw on writings about the operation of discourses (Berlant 1998, 2011; Povinelli 2006; Stoler 2013, 2016).

Dreams of the good life can cause suffering, according to Berlant (1998, 2011), when they are ill matched with the conditions of the people who aspire to them. In a Euro-American context, the idea of a good life, including upward mobility, job security and social equality, is now less reachable to ordinary citizens than it was a few decades ago. Today, many people aspire to a kind of life which they believe they ought to be able to live, but which they are unlikely to ever realize. When a person's attachment to unrealizable dreams stands in the way of their wellbeing, Berlant (2011) speaks of "cruel optimism." Among hawkers and officers, cruel attachments to elusive dreams are also present. In many ways, both hawkers and officers fall outside of Kenyan ideals of how a proper life should unfold. Their policing relations with one another often become the point at which these attachments translate into hurt. This is the case, for example, when hawkers' experiences of humiliation at constantly having to run from officers exacerbate their feelings of inadequacy about having amounted to nothing more than hawking.

Povinelli (2006) draws our attention to the ways in which hope, life and health are unevenly distributed in societies according to discursive evaluations of persons and their lives. Discourses, Povinelli argues, are not only about perspectives. They operate on the material matter of the body. They allow some people to occupy life-worlds while others live in death-worlds and rotting worlds. Discourses are felt in the flesh (Povinelli 2006, pp. 7–8). Hawkers and officers, too, are left behind in the societal distribution of hope, life and health. For example, most officers started working with the Inspectorate Department several decades ago, when state employment entailed the promise that one would be able to move on to a comfortable desk job with old age. As old men stuck in young men's jobs, officers experience the loss of this promised future as an acute, bodily sense of vulnerability to violence at the hands of young, strong hawkers.

Stoler's (2013; 2016) work on the enduring effects of imperial projects allows us to trace some of the notions of proper lives and proper persons, which have affected officers and hawkers through Kenya's history of colonial rule. Stoler (2013, p. 7) describes how material and discursive remnants of imperial projects linger in both obvious and unexpected sites. They work in distorted ways. Their effects today are less about straightforward repetition of the past than about "partial reinscriptions, modified displacements and amplified recuperations" (Stoler 2016, p. 27). I conceive of those notions of the good and proper that play out in the policing of hawking as emerging from the afterlife of colonial promises of development, progress and prosperity.

Across these writings, I locate police violence between officers and hawkers in the discrepancies between lived lives, on the one hand, and notions of proper lives, on the other. I understand violence as arising out of such discrepancies in several ways. I ask how we might conceive of violence as being not only about injuries inflicted on bodies, but also about assaults on one's dignity, and experiences that exacerbate the distance to the life one dreams of. I ask how we might conceive of police violence as arising, also, when policing agents are caught in awkward positions between commonplace notions of proper authority and powerful masculinity, on the one hand, and social settings in which their bodies are found lacking, on the other. Furthermore, I explore how the ideals that affect hawkers and officers travel in displaced ways from imperial visions of progress over postindependence optimism for development to contemporary notions of urban modernity.

Materially embedded policing relations

Hawking and the policing of hawking are immediately material. Hawkers' bundles of wares, which officers regularly impound and which hawkers then pay to have returned to them, are central to most policing encounters. So are the patrol vehicles in which Inspectorate officers detain hawkers. To explore how policing relations and police

violence might be embedded in these and other material practices, I draw on writings concerned with the social and its relationship to the material from economic anthropology (Strathern 1988, 1992, 2004) and feminist science studies (Haraway 1988, 2012).

Economic anthropology has classically been preoccupied with the ways in which social relations arise out of the exchange of gifts. So-called gift economies were contrasted with market economies: whereas people in market economies were understood to need the objects in circulation, people in gift economies were understood to need the social relations generated by the circulation of objects (Strathern 1992, p. 169). Strathern's (1988, 1992, 2004) writings, based on her ethnographic work in Melanesia, approach the question of social relations generated out of gift exchange by formulating a particular model of personhood. Strathern proposes that we think of a person in Melanesia as "composite." The same person can be understood as the result of a range of different relationships (1992, pp. 178–179). Rather than persons and objects existing as separate entities prior to exchanges, persons must be singled out from the relationships that make them up in order to enter into new exchange relations. Likewise, objects must first be singled out as separate from the persons who wish to exchange them (Strathern 1988, p. 15). In gift exchange, persons become momentarily incomplete. They decompose themselves in anticipation of the new relationship offered. That they have an object to offer their exchange partner as a gift is itself a result of such decomposition. If it were not for the external interest of the exchange partner, the object would not appear to them as detachable from themselves (Strathern 1992, p. 188).

Drawing broadly on Strathern's description of composite personhood we can ask how policing relationships are located in material practices, such as when hawkers' wares change hands between hawkers and officers. If hawkers handle their wares with the constant awareness that Inspectorate officers are eager to impound them, we can conceive of hawkers as anticipating relationships with officers already in the moment when they enter the city center with their wares over their shoulders. Conceiving of hawkers as composites, we can ask how policing propels them into decomposing themselves, into opening themselves up to relationships.

Once we begin to pay attention to hawkers and officers as composite persons who decompose and recompose themselves in relationships with one another, other types of composites come into view. Other material practices turn out to be efforts to act on social relations. For example, some female hawkers place young children next to their wares or in their arms in order to come into view as mothers for Inspectorate officers. The physical presence of the children's bodies in proximity to their own bodies allows female hawkers to occupy a new gendered position, which makes them less exposed to police violence. Haraway's (1989/2012) notion of the cyborg, half human and half machine, allows for a view of bodies that are extended and amplified with the prosthetic use of other entities. Haraway proposed the image of the cyborg in the

context of 1980s feminist debate in order to allow for positions beyond dualisms such as male and female, human and non-human, natural and artificial. The cyborg is made up of connections between organic and mechanic entities, which are not the same but which are nonetheless joined together in circuits. The connections of a cyborg have no claim to originality; they are not innocent (Haraway 1989/2012, p. 203). They are formed in the context of hierarchies and domination. At the same time, they potentially enable new ways of inhabiting these hierarchies (Haraway 1989/2012, p. 199). Among hawkers and officers, cyborg-like connections proliferate. Policing relations and the normative ideals that work through them constantly render the bodies of hawkers and officers inadequate. In order to compensate, in order to function in policing relationships, hawkers and officers prosthetically extend their bodies and themselves.

With different emphases, Strathen's notion of composite persons and Haraway's notion of the cyborg allow us to explore how policing relations are intimately present in the materialities of policed hawking. The notion of composite persons allows us to ask how material practices might open persons up to relationships. The notion of prosthetic connections allows us to ask how material practices can be efforts to fix problems in intimate policing relationships.

These three approaches to violent intimacies among hawkers and officers – as neighborly, normative and embedded in material practices – could be understood as characterizing such intimacies from different levels of proximity. From a distance, hawkers and officers come into view as neighbors. Moving closer, one notices how normative ideals play out in their encounters. At the very closest, hawkers and officers turn out to be implicated in one another at the level of bodies and personhood. To some extent, these three approaches reflect my own analytical journey, beginning with persons in space, and ending with the redrawing of boundaries between persons, bodies and objects. But then again, one approach does not displace the other. Intimate police violence is best understood with a combination of them.

Anthropology of policing

My account of intimate police violence among hawkers and Inspectorate officers in central Nairobi speaks to three themes within anthropological scholarship on policing. It speaks to questions around how policed persons experience police violence, to current conversations around how anthropological accounts can and should engage with the experiences of police officers, and to a recent interest in exchanges of bribes between police and policed.

The experience of being policed

Anthropological studies have traditionally privileged the experience of those who are policed. Monographs have been narratively positioned alongside marginalized people, describing how their lives are affected by the oppressive violence of the state embodied in the figure of the police officer (Karpiak 2010; Karpiak & Garriott 2018). One example is Bourgois' (2003) ethnography of crack dealing in a Chicago inner-city neighborhood. Police officers, in Bourgois' narrative, are portrayed as executers of state violence rather than as persons to whom neighborhood residents relate. In the text, the officers play the role as enforcers of the racial and class-based segregation of the inner city. Their actions are presented as the point at which the political and economic context translates into practices of exclusion (Bourgois 2003, p. 32; see also Karandinos et al. 2014). Comaroff (2013) notes that Foucauldian notions of populations, and the technologies for managing them, have been a theoretical cornerstone of much anthropological work on policing. Routine police work, in this view, produces and reproduces categories of disorderly populations. Such categories of disorderliness problematize groups of people who are seen as not-quite-citizens and legitimize violence against them (Comaroff 2013, pp. xv–xvi). A range of anthropological studies explore how police conduct against poor and vulnerable groups serve to further entrench their marginalization (see, for example, Caldeira 2013; Fassin 2013; Larkins 2018; Mutsaers & van Neunen 2018; Nuhrat 2018; Parnell 2013; Penglase 2013).

In line with these works, I also think of policing as a process that produces categories of disorderly populations. Meanwhile, I wish to challenge the assumption that policed persons experience such categorization as encounters with an impersonal state. To illustrate my approach, I will go into a little more depth with one particular anthropological account of experiences of policing and categorization. Han (2012, 2013, 2017) describes a low-income urban neighborhood in Chile where police presence is part of daily life for residents. The police officers who return every day in their armored Special Forces bus get to know the residents. They knock on the door and ask to use the bathroom, they reciprocate by helping to fix a broken kitchen sink, and they borrow an extension cord so that they can watch a football match on TV (Han 2013, pp. 380–381).

In one incident, a woman called Martita loses her son who is killed in a drug raid. A particular police officer shows her kindness, offering first condolences and then conversations and company. However,

> in the months following her son's death, Martita noted a shift in the officer's expressions of concern, from a quiet acknowledgement of loss to a more vociferous concern of Martita's risk of falling into narco. As Martita said: 'Little by little, he took out the theme, "Hi Señora Martita,

> when are you going to start working again? I can't wait to have your pizza again."' (Han 2017, pp. 167–168).

What Martita has noticed is nothing more than a shift in the tone of the officers' voice. This shift signals to Martita that, in the eyes of the officer, she has moved from being securely placed in the category of law-abiding citizen to being potentially implicated in the drug economy. The officer's friendly expressions of concern become an occasion for worry and fear to Martita, as she senses that her position as a law-abider is under threat.

In my reading, this ethnographic episode testifies to an intimate relational space between Martita and the police officer in which familiarity, care and concern become laced with exposure to violence. However, Han's (2017) own analytical interpretation emphasizes the "defiance to show one-self in the eyes of official institutions as belonging to the category of the law-abider," and the "labor and existential stakes involved in securing one's place within the category of "law-abider" (p. 169). In Han's interpretation, the police officer remains a non-person; a reflection of an oppressive social order, against whom Martita's existential experience takes shape.

What would it entail for our understanding of policing if we account for the experience of being policed not merely as facing an oppressive state violence, but also as encounters and relationships with other persons? How can we understand experiences of police violence if we conceive of police officers not merely as a feature on the urban environment, but as persons with whom the policed have relationships?

Experiences of police officers

There is overwhelming agreement in recent publications on the anthropology of policing that it is important to engage with the experiences of police officers (Beek & Göpfert 2013; Hornberger 2017; Jauregui 2013; Karpiak & Garriott 2018; Martin 2018a, 2018b; Mutsaers et al. 2015; Verdery 2018). This raises questions of positionality and representation. If we are to engage ethnographically with the experiences of police officers, how can this be balanced with a critical stance towards police violence? Engaging in this discussion, Hornberger (in Karpiak and Garriott 2018, p. 6) notes that "Just making police look nice isn't actually our contribution". Verdery (2018) proposes that the task of an anthropology of policing is "to present as complete a picture as possible not only of the officers' humanity but also of the structuring of the situation in which they seem to abandon it" (Verdery 2018, p. 115).

In line with Verdery's proposal, a number of anthropological studies of police officers have focused on how structures, systems and institutions beyond the officers themselves drive them to be violent. Several authors emphasize how police officers make efforts to be moral persons while working within systems that they do not have the power to change (Beek & Göpfert 2013; Jauregui 2013; Karpiak 2010). Jauregui

(2013, 2014) describes how Indian police officers respond to constantly shifting boundaries for what constitutes legitimate violence. Kyed (2017a, 2017b) describes how Mozambican police and community police officers respond to popular expectations that they suspend the law and exercise violence as a form of immediate justice. Martin (2018) advocates for a theoretical reengagement with the notion of "police culture," which was influential in criminological literature on police in the 1960s and 1970s. Martin (2018) suggests that we understand the position of police officers as one of translating structural violence into "overt, tangible form" (p. 35; for a similar argument see Haanstad 2013). Although the discussions are still ongoing, it seems that efforts to engage with the experiences of police officers in general locate the drive for violence beyond the officers themselves. Police officers in various settings are described as responding to expectations to be violent by communities, institutions or societal structures.

What would it do to our understanding of police officers if we suspend, for a moment, the search for an institutional pressure that compels them to be violent? Why should the dynamics that drive police officers to be violent necessarily be different from the ones that drive other persons to be violent? What would come into view if we look at relational dynamics between police and policed, in addition to looking for state projects that drive officers to be violent? What of the other dimensions of officers' positions that relationships accentuate, such as the fragility that old officers feel when faced with young, strong persons to police?

Exchange in policing relations

Within anthropological scholarship on policing in the Global South, especially in African settings, there has been a growing interest in exchanges of things like money, information and food between police and policed. An emerging body of literature argues that such exchanges should not simply be written off as a deviation from a Weberian ideal of rational governance. Drawing on notions of gift exchange from economic anthropology, these studies argue that exchanges between police and policed are central to policing relations in many settings (Andersen & Jensen 2017; Beek 2017; Blunt 2016; Hornberger 2017; Jauregui 2013, 2016; Jensen & Hapal 2018). The recent interest in exchange relations, and the emphasis it entails on police officers as social persons, can be read as a counterreaction to the theoretical preoccupation with sovereign power that has dominated the regional literature for the past decades (see Buur & Jensen 2004; Comaroff & Comaroff 2006; Das & Poole 2005; Hansen & Stepputat 2009; Lund 2006).

The notion of gift exchange does not self-evidently lend itself to an exploration of state violence. It was originally developed in studies of societies that were understood to be stateless. In fact, the notion of reciprocity as developed by Mauss (1925/2016) held political connotations as a form of social organization from which he believed

contemporaneous Western societies could learn in order to avoid the violence of war (Mauss 1925/2016, p. 197). What are the implications of applying this analytical framework to the study of police officers in their engagements with those whom they police? Does an emphasis on exchanges imply a bracketing of violence in policing relations?

Among the studies that employ notions of economic exchange to make sense of policing relations, there are different ways of going about the question of violence. In some cases, police violence is treated as a separate register, different from exchange relations. Beek (2017) describes a "sociability register," and Jauregui (2016, p. 13) an "exchange network" parallel to and separate from police violence. Here, policing relations are understood to be personal when they are economic, whereas they are understood as impersonal when they are violent. In other studies, police violence is understood as an element in economic exchanges, as a form of currency that enables police officers to extract values from policed populations (Andersen & Jensen 2017; Jensen & Hapal 2018).

While theoretical notions of gift exchange have sparked new conversations within this literature, there is still some room for exploring how an account for police officers as social persons allows for an account, also, of violence in policing relations. My own reading of Strathern, in particular *The gender of the gift* (1988), suggests that notions of force and exploitation are not easily applied to exchange relations, at least not in the sense in which we usually understand them. As Strathern (1988, pp. 133–67) puts it, if we want to understand domination in a gift economy, we must first reconsider what we think we know about sociality, personhood and value.

Could we draw on notions of gift exchange to open up our notions of what policing relations are in the first place? Can a view of police officers and policed persons as relationally implicated open up for new understandings of how violence plays out between them? How might an understanding of policing relationships as intimate offer new ways to approach sociality and force, dependence and exploitation in policing relationships?

Policed hawking in central Nairobi

Policing relations between Inspectorate officers and hawkers in central Nairobi are well known in Kenya. They are often drawn into political discussions as images of the relationship between the postcolonial state and its urban poor. At this point, it is worth briefly outlining the historical context to hawker-officer policing relationships and the place that these relationships occupy in Kenyan public imaginary.

With Kenya's independence from colonial rule in 1963, Nairobi experienced rapid population growth. The city's population grew from 157,865 residents just before independence to more than 500,000 in 1969 (Myers 2015, p. 332). Most of those

migrating to the city were poor and landless, seeking opportunities. Many turned to hawking in the streets. Illegal markets sprang up all over Nairobi, and police were sent to evict the hawkers. When police officers tried to enter the markets, they were met with stones thrown at them and hawkers ready to fight (Robertson 1997, pp. 133–134). A bureaucrat at the time wrote that the hawkers seemed to be emboldened by an "*uhuru* [freedom] attitude."[3]

"*Uhuru na kazi*" [freedom and work] was the mantra of Kenya's first president, Jomo Kenyatta. Although hawkers were breaking the law, both they and the city administrators recognized that the hopes and promises of the independence struggle were on the hawkers' side. Hawkers and their violent clashes with law enforcement officers posed a problem to Nairobi's newly elected local politicians. Evicting hawkers with violent police actions made the city's new administration look like a continuation of the colonial one.

Charles Rubia, Nairobi's first African mayor, advocated a moderation of police actions against hawkers. At a meeting with members of the press in 1962 Rubia explained his position on the policing of hawkers:

> My personal position is this – we cannot ignore the hunger and misery caused by an over-crowded city, by clamping down as if it were five years ago. On the other hand, we must retain some control – because if we let go altogether it would be difficult, and probably impossible to win it back when conditions improve (Rubia quoted in Werlin 1974, p. 269).

Rubia's statement encapsulates the political questions that have marked the policing of hawking in central Nairobi since independence. Hawkers are never completely accepted and accommodated. They threaten the ideal of a city, and a country, where things are under "control." On the other hand, hawkers are not completely excluded from the city either. They are politically significant as images of the struggling poor. In chapter two, I elaborate on the political significance of hawkers, and on the implications that this has for the ways in which they are policed.

Hawking is not legal in central Nairobi, but it is not a criminal offence either. It is regulated by so-called by-laws, which are enforced by the County Inspectorate, a special department within the County Government. By-laws also regulate issues such as parking, littering and obstruction of the sidewalk. Inspectorate officers have the authority to arrest persons who violate by-laws and bring them before the Nairobi City

[3] Municipal Council of Nairobi. (1961, March 15). Illegal Hawking Etc. [Report by the Director of Social Services and Housing]. (KNA RN/8/4).

Court, where they are fined. Officers also have the authority to detain persons inside patrol vehicles and in holding cells at the courthouse before they face the judge.[4]

During colonial rule, Nairobi's by-laws permitted the hawking of certain goods in certain parts of the city center. Hawkers wore special hawkers' badges and paid for hawkers' licenses, which had to be renewed yearly. The elaborate system of regulation that hawking was subject to under colonial rule gives an impression of control and orderliness.[5] Contrary to this image, however, it seems that hawkers continuously broke the by-laws and kept the Municipal Inspector and the officers under his command busy.[6] Furthermore, bribe payments seem to have been an integral part of the governance of hawking, at least under late colonial rule. In 1956, a commission of inquiry into alleged corrupt practices within the Nairobi City Council[7] found, among other things, that hawkers were systematically asked to bribe municipal officials in order to obtain hawkers' licenses.[8]

After independence, the Nairobi City Council initially maintained the system of hawkers' licenses and badges. The predominant view of hawkers in the late 1960s and 1970s was that they constituted a positive and productive part of the urban economy. However, the new administration was overwhelmed by the numbers of illegal hawkers. Different solutions were attempted to accommodate them in the city, such as the construction of kiosks run by the City Council and the relocation of hawkers to designated markets in the periphery of the city. Meanwhile, hawkers kept returning to sell their wares in the city center (Morange 2015, p. 251). Under the increasingly authoritarian rule of President Daniel Arap Moi in the 1980s and 1990s, hawkers were initially celebrated as honest, hardworking citizens. During the first many years of his presidency, Moi officially presented himself as a champion of hawkers (Kahiira 1989; Ndirangu 1985). By the late 1990s, however, hawkers were portrayed as opposition

[4] The powers of Inspectorate officers are detailed in the *The Nairobi City County Inspectorate Services Bill, 2017* (Nairobi City County Assembly 2017).

[5] For example, between 1935 and 1936, the General Purposes Committee of the Nairobi Municipal Council spent several meetings discussing a reduction in the fee specifically for ice cream vendors and then amending the by-laws in an elaborate process. See: Municipal Council of Nairobi. (1935, November 18). Report of General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 18th November, 1935. (KNA RN/1/59); Eckersley, F. (1936, March 2). [Copy of resolution by Town Clerk]. (KNA RN/1/59).

[6] The Nairobi Municipal Council appointed an Inspector in 1935 with the explicit aim of controlling hawkers who contravened the municipal by-laws (Municipal Council of Nairobi. (1935, February 18). Report of General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 18th February, 1935. (KNA RN/1/59)).

[7] Government of Kenya. (1956). *Report of the commission of inquiry into alleged corruption and other malpractices in relation to the Affairs of the Nairobi City Council, December, 1955 – March, 1956*. Government Printer, Nairobi. (KNA K 352/008 5).

[8] Transcription of the testimony of Nganga Karenaja, vegetable hawker, to the Commission of inquiry (City Council of Nairobi. (1956) *Record of commission of inquiry 1955–1956*, Vol. No. 8. (KNA RN/1/143, A1 21.2.56)).

supporters prone to violence and disorderliness. The president withdrew his support, and a series of large-scale evictions took place (Médard 2010, pp. 49–51). After Kenya's transition to multiparty democracy and the election of President Mwai Kibaki in 2002, the notion of hawkers as economically productive citizens was revived. Hawkers were framed as "small-scale entrepreneurs" in line with the neoliberal reforms of the Kenyan economy (Nyairu 2011; see also Morange 2015). At the same time, hawkers were also seen as potentially radicalized youth and associated with violent gang activities.[9] Images of cunning hawkers who tricked Inspectorate officers in the street were interpreted as a case of bright young minds lost to the criminal underworld (Muraguri 2007).

Over the decades, hawkers in Nairobi have continued to pose problems for local and national governments. The dilemma described by Rubia – between "controlling" hawkers and accounting for their political significance as images of the struggling poor – has played out in different constellations. While politicians have wavered between silently tolerating hawkers and actively evicting them, day-to-day policing relations between Inspectorate officers and hawkers by many accounts have continued to rely on the regular exchanges of bribes that began under Nairobi's colonial administration (Kamunyori 2007, pp. 27–34; Mitullah 1991, p. 20). One study estimates that Inspectorate officers in Nairobi in the mid-2000s made more than half their monthly salary in bribes in a single day (Kamunyori 2007, pp. 27–34). In chapter three, I discuss more extensively how we might conceive of colonial projects as recurring in the current-day policing of hawking in Nairobi.

In the spring of 2016, just a few months before the beginning of my fieldwork, the issue of bribe payments by hawkers to Inspectorate officers became the subject of intense public debate in Kenya. A four-part TV documentary entitled *Kanjo Kingdom* was broadcast in April and May (Africa Uncensored 2016). The documentary showed hidden camera footage of Inspectorate officers threatening hawkers with violence in order to collect bribes from them. It showed scenes of hawkers running in clouds of tear gas accompanied by the sound of gunshots, and of injured hawkers in hospital wards. The documentary alleged the existence of an institutionalized extortion racket reaching to the top ranks of the County Government.

The public outrage that followed the publication of the documentary should be understood against a backdrop of general outrage over questions of malgovernance. The adoption of Kenya's 2010 Constitution had been followed by a wave of cautious optimism that the country would become "more democratic," and that the new constitution would "prevent violence" (Kramon & Posner 2011, p. 99). The *Kanjo Kingdom* documentary was received by Kenyans as a sign that malgovernance and

[9] Hawkers were associated with the Mungiki ethno-religious youth movement. On Mungiki, and public perceptions of the movement in the 2000s, see, for example, Atieno (2007), Kagwanja (2003), and Rasmussen (2010).

abuse of force persisted in the newly restructured County of Nairobi. Bribe collection and violence by Inspectorate officers against hawkers was read as evidence of a rotten system that had outlived the constitutional reforms.

My preparations for my fieldwork were informed by these public debates. Sitting in Denmark in the spring of 2016, I eagerly followed the media storm that followed the airing of the *Kanjo Kingdom* documentary. The images that initially framed my understandings of hawker-officer policing relations were those from the documentary and subsequent new media reporting. They were images of street battles, of muffled, hidden camera scenes of extortion, and of bloodied bodies in crowded hospital wards. The conversations surrounding them were about a violent, predatory state exploiting its poor, urban citizens.

Fieldwork and methods

My original research proposal asked how violence is related to payments of bribes in the policing of hawking in central Nairobi. The proposal started with the following paragraph:

> From time to time, the CBD [Central Business District] area in downtown Nairobi is turned into a battle zone. Unsuspecting pedestrians can suddenly be caught in a cloud of teargas as hawkers run past with their goods in big bundles thrown over their shoulders. Police officers[10] will follow behind, guns drawn, and pick up any items left on the street.

I quoted reports by local human rights organizations that linked police violence against hawkers to the systematic collection of bribes from them[11] (Independent Medico-Legal Unit 2014, p. 30, p. 34, p. 42; Kagari & Thomas 2006, p. 21). Thinking that I knew what violence between hawkers and officers looked like, I formulated a research project to explore how payments of bribes might be related to violence. In other words, I thought I had the phenomenon of my study at hand: police violence consisted of spectacular street battles, flying tear gas canisters, mass arrests. I

[10] Administratively, there is a difference between police officers and law enforcement officers from the County Inspectorate Department. During the height of hawker-officer violence, Inspectorate officers received assistance from the police. Initially, I had not grasped this distinction.

[11] The *Kanjo Kingdom* documentary was not yet published when I developed my research proposal. However, its portrayal of hawker-officer policing relations was very much in line with the ways in which I had framed my project, and it played a role for the ways in which I planned my fieldwork in the spring of 2016.

envisioned my doctoral project as the finding of the background story, the underlying social explanation, which rendered this violence understandable.[12]

However, when I arrived in Nairobi in August 2016, people told me I was too late. The violence was over. "It is peaceful now because of elections," I was told by whoever I explained my research interest to. Hawkers make up significant voting blocs in Nairobi. In attempts to get their votes for the upcoming local and national elections, politicians were putting pressure on the Inspectorate to relax policing. There were no battles, no tear gas, no rubber bullets. The streets of central Nairobi were bursting with hawkers and markedly calm.

I began my fieldwork with the discovery that police violence was absent where I had expected to find it; as spectacular displays of state violence. This methods section tells the story about how I came to find something else, namely intimately violent policing relationships. I start by describing how the ethnographic field of my study came together, and I consider how my reliance on English shaped this field. I then describe how I encountered hawking and policing through participant observation among hawkers and officers. Next, I describe the interview study that I set up in collaboration with research assistants. I go on to explain how I understand the social settings I engaged in as marked by past violent events, including Kenya's history of colonial rule. Lastly, I consider the research relationships I entered with officers and hawkers.

I have not made a separate section on research ethics. Considerations about my positionality, conditions of access and the ways in which hawkers and officers gained from their participation in the research are discussed throughout.

From street battles to policing relationships

The beginning of my stay in Nairobi coincided with a series of workshops held by a local civil society organization, which meant to train "leaders" among Nairobi's hawkers as "human rights defenders," teaching them to refer cases of police violence and engage in advocacy. The workshops, like my own fieldwork, seemed to have been planned during the height of hawker-officer violence in late 2014 and early 2015. Now slightly out of tune with the actual situation of hawkers, they seemed like a good opportunity to learn about changing environments of policing. I asked to participate in one of them.

[12] Institutionally, my PhD project is part of a research program financed by the Danish Council for Independent Research and hosted by DIGNITY – Danish Institute against Torture. That I formulated my research proposal within a human rights organization probably contributed to my initial focus on spectacular state violence. Meanwhile, there is a strong tradition for critical and exploratory research within DIGNITY, which allowed me to participate in the kinds of discussions about applied work that I take up in the conclusion.

At the workshop I met Wangari, a formidable seller of socks in the summer and children's jumpers in the winter, participating as a "hawker leader." She was to become one of the most central persons of my fieldwork. I was sitting at a café table during a break between workshop sessions, drinking *chai* [milky tea]. Wangari came up to my table with her friend Njeri in tow, sat down, and looked around to make sure the organizers were out of earshot. Then she leaned in to me and explained that the workshop was "totally useless":

"Hawkers they do not want trouble with *kanjo*," she explained. "They will not report [abuse]. Even if we are there to assist them. They don't want that."

I asked why the two of them were there, if the workshop was useless. Wangari shrugged, pointed at her cup of *chai* and plate loaded with break-time snacks, and explained that each of the human rights defenders get a stipend for participating.

I have since reflected on, and also talked to Wangari about, how I might have looked to her, and what it was about me that made her come up and immediately volunteer this condemning perspective on the workshop we were attending. I was white and blond, I wore trainers and a backpack, and I was eagerly scribbling in my notebook during workshop sessions. I later learnt that hawkers, before being told who I was or what I was doing, generally placed me as either a journalist or an employee of an international development organization. The journalist and the non-governmental organization (NGO) worker are two social roles generally associated with whiteness in the settings where my fieldwork took place. By approaching me, Wangari was conscious that she placed herself as the object of either a news story or a development project. Moreover, when she criticized the workshop, she established herself not only as a hawker but also as an expert in matters pertaining to hawking. As she told me later, it was clear to her that "someone like me" could not be around without some sort of project backed by resources. While displaying her own authority towards me, Wangari was also assessing whether there was a role for her to play in whatever I was doing.

I told Wangari that I was researching for a PhD about hawking and how policing affected hawkers' work, and I asked her whether I could come with her to the place where she worked herself. Wangari became my entry point to a hawking location that I call BestBuy, which I introduce in more detail in chapter two. Among the hawkers at BestBuy,[13] Wangari was a person of authority. "She is our mother," the younger women would say. Being a "leader" among hawkers in a location like BestBuy is not a formalized or clearly defined position. It manifests in practice. When civil society organizations, local politicians, organized criminal organizations or Inspectorate officers want to engage with a group of hawkers at a particular location, they will ask

[13] "BestBuy" is a fictional name. To my knowledge it has no real counterpart in central Nairobi. Wa Mũngai (2013) has described the Nairobian habit of naming locations after landmarks with reference to the *matatu* [minibus taxi] industry.

to speak to their leader. At BestBuy, Wangari was the person many people would point to.

Wangari's friend Njeri was mostly silent during our first meeting at the workshop, but she turned out later to be loud-mouthed, cheerful and prone to insulting everyone around her. Njeri introduced me to another hawking location called Archives, a large open square right in the middle of the city center.[14] Like Wangari at BestBuy, Njeri often played a facilitating and representative role on behalf of the mostly young women working around her at Archives. In this way, my research relationships with Wangari and Njeri, and the facilitating role they played for my presence in the two hawking locations, mirrored existing forms of political organization among hawkers.

In the beginning of my fieldwork, I also attended an academic seminar on hawking in Nairobi organized by a local research institute. Here, I met an aspiring local politician who put me in touch with a shoe hawker called Wachira. I spent many daytime hours with Wachira, his friend Samuel and their group of fellow shoe hawkers at a place they called their "*baze*"[15] just outside the city center, near the Nairobi River. The shoe hawkers came here during the day to wash and repair the shoes which they would sell in the city center later that evening. To Wachira, interested in politics and things foreign, I presented a welcome opportunity to engage in discussions of everything from Marxism to the United States presidential elections.

Wangari, Njeri, Wachira and Samuel became gatekeepers (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995, p. 33) to my presence at BestBuy, Archives and the *baze*. Reflecting back, I realize that it is worth noting how potential conflicts, which could have arisen as a result of my presence, did not come about – at least not to my knowledge. The image of me as a journalist from some international news station created some concerns among hawkers that I would reveal their names or sensitive information about the ways in which they organized themselves in news media. This was one of the first things Wangari asked me. She, Njeri, Wachira and Samuel accepted my assurance that I would manage information about them and other hawkers in a way that did not expose them to harm, and they communicated this to others in my absence. In this way, I owe my access to these hawking locations to their trust. Meanwhile, the image of me as an employee of an international development organization created expectations that my presence would result in financial gain. Here, Njeri, Wangari, Wachira and Samuel were understood by other hawkers to be the natural recipients

[14] Whereas BestBuy is a fictional name, the open area in front of Kenya National Archives is an actual place and hawking location in Nairobi. Since it is so large, and used by so many hawkers, my description here will not give away the identity of Njeri or the other hawkers she works with.

[15] "*Baze*" is a Sheng term that can refer both to a network of friends and to the place where they hang out. As Van Stapele (2016, p. 310) describes, *bazes* can be differently constituted. Some are organized around economic activities, as was the case with Samuel's and Wachira's *baze*.

and distributors of any resources that might flow from having me around. In a later section, I discuss how I responded to these expectations.

Wangari, Njeri, Wachira and Samuel are all seasoned hawkers. Their role as my contact persons and main interlocutors meant that I got to hear about hawking primarily from their perspective. For that reason, my account of hawker-officer interactions emphasizes the experience of long-time hawkers over newcomers.

The three places, BestBuy, Archives and Wachira's and Samuel's *baze* by the Nairobi river, came with time to constitute the main geographical and social sites of my fieldwork among hawkers. The decision to focus on these three places was informed by the ways in which my analytical interest in a particular type of policing developed, namely the personal, mutually invested relationships that I encountered there. Drawing on Madden (2010), I understand an ethnographic field not as something "out there" waiting to be found but rather as something that a fieldworker creates. An ethnographic field maps an analytical interest onto a geographical, social or emotional landscape, which people inhabit. Ethnographers, in this sense, are "place-makers" (Madden 2010, pp. 37–55). That the ethnographic field of my study came together around intimacies of policing was less a "finding" than a choice from my side.

A few months into my fieldwork, it suddenly seemed that the spectacular state violence that had been at the center of my initial research design reappeared in Nairobi, ready to be studied. In an area called Eastleigh, relatively close to the city center, the Inspectorate began to evict hawkers from the streets in dramatic, military-style operations. Tear gas canisters were flying once more. Local news media reported daily scenes of battle.[16] I visited Eastleigh several times and saw for myself the landscape marked by spectacular violence. I saw the pedestrians walking quickly on eerily empty sidewalks lined with Inspectorate patrol vehicles, and I saw the hawkers hiding in alleyways with wide eyes. I could have changed, then, and focused my fieldwork on Eastleigh and the conflict that unfolded there. However, by that time something else had happened. I had been introduced to Kuria.

Njeri was the first hawker to introduce me to an Inspectorate officer. We were walking along Moi Avenue in central Nairobi when she stopped and greeted an elderly man with glasses wearing a grey suit about two sizes too large. Njeri made a high-

[16] Exactly how and why spectacular street battles like these arise is the subject of much speculation in Kenya, and it is difficult to pin down one certain truth around the question. News media reported that the owners of ground-level shops in Eastleigh had lobbied with the Nairobi County Government to have hawkers removed, because they constituted a competition to their businesses (Kakah 2016). Word of mouth at the time of my fieldwork had it that the shop owners paid large sums of bribe money to someone within the County Government to carry out the violent evictions of hawkers. Musila (2015) offers a fantastic analysis of the Kenyan popular grapevine of political gossip, and the ways in which Kenyans as political subjects operate with multiple truths in the aftermath of the authoritarian rule of President Daniel Arap Moi.

pitched remark to the man in Sheng, and they both laughed. Then she invited me to shake his hand.

"Brigitte, this is Kuria, my good friend."

We shook hands, and Kuria asked me what I was doing in Kenya. I said I was researching for a PhD about hawking and how hawking is policed.

"Ah. That is fascinating," Kuria volunteered. "I am with the Inspectorate myself."

I looked at Njeri who was wearing a wide grin. Deliberately not telling me that Kuria was an officer was Njeri's idea of a fantastic practical joke. "You should talk to him," Njeri said innocently, "for your research."

And I did. Kuria turned out to be happy for the distraction from his day-to-day activities and eager to make his position heard in a scholarly account of the policing of hawking. Like hawkers, the Inspectorate officers I came to know were generally curious and interested in talking to me. Unlike hawkers, I did not experience any expectation from the officers that their engagement with me should bring about financial gain. Officers generally associated me with the trope of a journalist. While all officers initially needed assurance that I would not publish stories about them mentioning their names or other specificities about them, they generally became interested in discussing the theme of hawking and how it is governed in Nairobi.

Besides Kuria, I got introduced to a number of other Inspectorate officers through the hawkers I knew. In particular, I spent many hours talking to Richard, who was often stationed at BestBuy, and Ndevu, who was stationed close to Archives. Sometimes those officers would see me talking to the hawkers, and they would motion for me to come over and greet them.

"Brigitte," Wangari would say, "go and talk to Richard. Otherwise, he will complain to me later that I am keeping you for myself."

To be introduced to officers carrying out a policing function by the people whom they police was not among my expectations when I started fieldwork. Hawker-officer relationships not only facilitated my access to Inspectorate officers as interlocutors. These relationships also became the central analytical preoccupation of my fieldwork, and the phenomenon around which my ethnographic field took shape.

Broken English

"You want to talk to hawkers? But they don't speak English! They didn't go to school."

This was the reaction of most people I talked to in the early stages of my fieldwork.

When I did engage in conversations with hawkers, they would often apologize:

"Sorry. My English is broken."

I never became fluent enough to speak the languages used in the social environments I studied. Predominantly, these were Sheng, Kikuyu and Kamba. A basic Swahili course in combination with some prior knowledge of other Bantu

languages[17] enabled me to follow parts of the conversations in Sheng going on around me. However, I did not get to a point where I could speak much myself.

The remarks about hawkers not speaking English turned out to be only partly true. My conversations and research relationships with main interlocutors among the hawkers such as Wangari, Njeri and Wachira were all conducted in English. However, it was clear that I engaged proportionately more with hawkers confident enough to approach me in English. I also had to continuously assure both hawkers and Inspectorate officers that it was not a problem that their English was "broken." My continued reliance on English without doubt provoked some of the embarrassments about class, education level and poverty that became important themes in the dissertation. It did not help that people teased each other.

"Mwende, why are you not talking to Brigitte? [To me:] She is shy! She didn't finish school. Haha!"

I did not at any point deliberately decide against learning Sheng, Kikuyu or Kamba. It was more a question of being overwhelmed. I realized that all of these three languages were being used among hawkers and officers, and I felt that if I put in the considerable effort it would take to learn one of them, I would still only be able to engage in a limited way.

English has a troubled history in Kenya. At different points in time, both colonial officials and anti-colonial freedom fighters have been apprehensive towards what they perceived as the loss of authentic selfhood engendered by learning English. A number of colonial officials perceived the violence of the Mau Mau resistance as a product of too-rapid modernization of colonial subjects; a dangerous hybridization leading to instability (Lonsdale 1990). Anticolonial stances such as that expressed by novelist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986), on the other hand, hold that speaking and reading in English to Kenyans entails succumbing to colonial hegemony.

Against this backdrop, Smith and Mwadime (2014) caution against approaching English in anthropological engagements with Kenyan settings as somehow less "authentic." When research participants use English to express themselves, they do so from a position of structural inequality. However, their efforts to make themselves understood in English should be taken seriously. They should not be taken as "mimicry" of the colonizer, but as creative ways of establishing new orders of reality (Smith & Mwadime 2014, pp. 9–12).

Smith and Mwadime raise this discussion based on Mwadime's own experience as a research participant who enjoys expressing himself in English. I found this kind of joy in some of my interlocutors, most notably Wachira and Agnes among the hawkers, and Kuria and Richard among the officers. To them, it seemed, engaging with me was enjoyable alone because of the chance to speak English. Meanwhile,

[17] I have a basic proficiency in isiXhosa and have gone through earnest attempts to learn chiShona.

many of the other hawkers and a few of the officers remained uncomfortable when speaking to me. I developed standard responses that aimed to put hawkers and officers at ease, such as displaying comically how my Sheng was even more "broken" than their English. I am aware, however, that the embarrassments that my presence and my reliance on English provoked were not to be mended with jokes.

While my whiteness in many ways caused curiosity and eagerness to engage with me, my continued reliance on English also generated situations where some hawkers and officers found themselves exposed and inadequate. Stumbling on their words in conversation with me, they found themselves lacking according to the codes that associate English proficiency with education level and social class. In important ways, the ethnographic field of my study became marked by the embarrassment I provoked among hawkers and officers. The themes of social class and experiences of inadequacy are most explicitly discussed in chapters three and five.

Methodologically, not being able to speak Sheng, Kikuyu or Kamba has been limiting to my ability to grasp the conversations and interactions between other people in the social settings I was part of. However, even though I could not understand more than fragments of the conversations conducted in these languages, I observed quite a lot from the ways in which they were used around me. I use "observe" here not to refer to eyesight but to the methodological notion of focused attention during fieldwork (Mogensen & Dalsgård 2018). I could understand some of what went on in Sheng. Furthermore, although I could not understand Kikuyu or Kamba, I could hear when hawkers and officers switched into them. Code switching to one's mother tongue and thereby foregrounding common ethnicity in a social interaction is in itself a highly politicized and deliberate act, especially in encounters between citizens and state employees.[18]

Over time, the "broken" English of my conversations with hawkers and officers became laced with Kikuyu and Kamba terms such as "*mwareero*," the fabric on which hawkers place their wares, and "*gethuguu*," the hawkers' lookout persons. I also picked up on particular ways in which they used English, such as when hawkers referred to their wares as "my work" or when officers said that hawkers lacked "respect." Many of these particularities that developed in the language I used with hawkers and officers became central to my analytical work with the fieldwork data. They became significant emic concepts with which I conducted domain analyses (Spradley 1980, pp. 107–119) to learn about hawkers' and officers' own interpretations of their social setting.

[18] Bratton and Kimenyi (2008), for example, argue that it is commonplace for Kenyans to expect state officials to discriminate according to ethnicity.

Strained bodies and trained attention

I got strong in Nairobi. My body was constantly active. I stood for hours on the sidewalk next to the hawkers, moving back and forth with them between the places where they spread their wares and the alleyways where they hid during Inspectorate crackdowns. I walked with Wangari and Njeri to buy fresh stock of socks and hairbands in basement outlets in the southern part of the city center. I walked with Inspectorate officers when they were at work, and I moved between the different locations that made up my field. At the end of each day, I was exhausted. And when I blew my nose, the tissue paper was pitch black from the exhaust fumes I had been inhaling.

The strain that fieldwork placed on my own body heightened my attentiveness to the bodily competence of hawkers, and to the endurance of the mostly elderly officers. I admired the agility with which Wangari turned her head towards a sound indicating the arrival of Inspectorate officers and, in the same flowing movement, bent towards her wares, collected the corners of the fabric, flung the bundle over her shoulder and took off. I noticed the many folds framing the faces of officers like Kuria and Ndevu. I was impressed by the resilience of these old men who were past retirement age, but who kept coming to the city center to face the ever-increasing numbers of young hawkers.

Amidst my heightened awareness of the bodily strain of hawking and policing, I became aware also of the strain imposed on hawkers by the materiality of their wares. Hawkers are weighed down by the heaviness and bulkiness of their wares. I have broken out in sweat several times when helping Mwende, Maria or Julia to carry sacks and carton boxes of fruits away during Inspectorate crackdowns. With time, I also got to appreciate how hawkers' wares weigh on them with an additional strain. If the wares are valuable, Inspectorate officers will be eager to impound them in order to collect a large bribe from the hawker. Hawkers who carry a bundle with wares of a high monetary value will look over their shoulders nervously. They will jump at the slightest sign of Inspectorate officers. I noticed the tenseness in Wachira's body when he was carrying a larger-than-usual bundle of shoes into the city center. On such evenings, he would say few words, and he would constantly be looking around him. In chapter four, I consider the ways in which policing relations are present for hawkers even outside of any face-to-face encounters with officers. I suggest that policing relations are materially embedded; layered into the ways in which hawkers handle their wares.

Besides physical strength, I developed another bodily ability during fieldwork. I learnt a new way of seeing the streets around me. At the beginning of my time spent with the hawkers, I was notoriously unable to recognize Inspectorate officers when they passed by:

"Brigitte. Did you see that *kanjo*?" asks Wangari.

I hadn't noticed a thing.

"You didn't see him? He was just here."

It dawns on me that the person whom I took for a customer and did not pay attention to was actually an Inspectorate officer. He talked to Wangari for a few minutes and then walked on.

"Do you know him?" I ask. "What did you talk about?"

"Yes, that one is my friend. He told me there is a vehicle [an Inspectorate van on patrol] down by Nakumatt [a supermarket]. I gave him two hundred [KSh]."

Policing relations of the type I came to study play out in subtle, nearly invisible ways. Learning to recognize Inspectorate officers when they walked in the streets, and when they had exchanges with hawkers, required attentiveness. I had to learn where to look, what to look for, and most of all to be constantly on the lookout in the first place. Hawkers are always attuned to their surroundings. When their wares are spread out on the sidewalk, their attention spans the entire street. With time, I got better at noticing when officers passed by. I knew to look for their particular style of clothes, their compact bodies and their closed facial expressions. I started detecting the change in atmosphere that sets in a few seconds before everyone runs down the street. In chapter two, I discuss the analytical significance of different ways of looking when accounting for policing and police violence.

My conversations with hawkers were marked by the constant alertness that hawking required of them. When we were in the street, and their wares were displayed, it was best to keep questions and expected answers simple. Our sentences were shorter than usual. When I look at the conversations captured in my fieldnotes, I sometimes think of those novels written entirely in cellphone text messages. The hawkers would talk with their eyes traveling at a steady pace between their wares, the other hawkers and the moving sea of bodies that flowed past us in both directions.

It was easier to strike up a conversation with depth and reflection when we were "on break," waiting in alleyways for officers to be out of the area. Still, conversations were dropped immediately when the hawkers' lookouts called to say that the coast was clear. Even when the whole group of BestBuy women were roaring with laughter at an anecdote Mama Simon was telling, giving each other high-fives. Even when difficult subjects came up, and Wangari or others fumbled with their English in order to express complicated emotions. When Agnes or Wangari picked up their cellphones and put them down again saying "*kazi!*" [work], everyone jumped up and went to fetch their wares, leaving the conversation hanging.

With Wachira and Samuel, the shoe sellers, I was able to have relaxed and reflective conversations during the day at the *baze*, while they washed and fixed their shoes. When they entered the city in the early evening, during peak selling hours,

Wachira and Samuel were too preoccupied with looking out and handling customers to talk much. The rhythms and intensities that conditioned my conversations with hawkers taught me just as much as the content of those conversations. In this particular case, finding interlocutors who did *not* have adequate time to engage in conversations with me contributed to rather than impeded my ethnographic insight (cf. Spradley 1979, p. 51).

A narrative of decline

With Inspectorate officers, time had a different quality. I would sit for hours with Richard on a large concrete flower pot up the road from BestBuy, or with Ndevu on the small wooden bench along Tom Mboya Street. I can see from my fieldnotes that our conversations spanned history, politics, personal life stories and every odd theme in between. I found that asking Inspectorate officers about hawkers and their work of policing them quickly spurred the officers into accounts of how it used to be in earlier times, ten, twenty, even thirty years ago. In my conversations with them, a picture emerged of Nairobi several decades ago. Everything seemed more proper in this earlier time. The hawkers were respectful, the officers resourceful and policing an orderly affair.

"Before, we were controlling hawkers," an officer called Joseph told me. "But today, we are just arresting."

The narrative that emerged from our conversations was one of decline. When officers "controlled" hawkers, the city was orderly. Today, with the number of hawkers having tripled in the space of a decade, officers are "just arresting" – a drop of water on a hot stone. The officers' experiences of decline are central to my discussion of the embodiment of authority in chapter five. However, it is important to note that my own position, and the officers' assumptions about my judgment of themselves, most likely had something to do with this emphasis on their order-making function.

Officers rarely discussed their collection of money from hawkers in conversations with me. I am not surprised that they hesitated to bring this up in our conversations. Although historical sources suggest that bribe payments have been part of the policing of hawking since the colonial administration of Nairobi,[19] discourses on so-called "petty corruption" are rife with stereotypes of big-bellied African men who collect money out of personal greed. Kenyans are aware of these stereotypes, and in particular of how they are held by white foreigners. As the late Kenyan author Binyavanga Wainaina satirically phrases it in his essay *How to write about Africa* (2005), "The

[19] Government of Kenya. (1956). *Report of the commission of inquiry into alleged corruption and other malpractices in relation to the Affairs of the Nairobi City Council, December, 1955 – March, 1956*. Government Printer, Nairobi. (KNA K 352/008 5).

Modern African is a fat man who steals and works in the visa office, refusing to give work permits to qualified Westerners who really care about Africa."

My positionality as a white researcher-cum-journalist did not give Inspectorate officers much reason to believe that they would be met with understanding when it came to their economic engagements with hawkers. Instead, they emphasized their order-making function. This emphasis, in turn, generated its own type of embarrassment. Clearly, hawking in Nairobi was not very orderly. Officers would go to great lengths to explain to me that it had not always been like that, and to express their dissatisfaction with the current state of policing. I understand the narrative of decline that dominated my conversations with officers as a reaction, to some extent, to concerns that I generated in Inspectorate officers about how they might be judged by me.

During my conversations with Inspectorate officers, I did not probe much to make them talk about the considerable bribe payments that I knew from hawkers played out in their policing relationships. A few officers did talk to me about collecting bribes. However, those same officers still showed investment in the image of a bygone era of orderly policing. In the final account, I have given equal emphasis to the ways in which officers are economically implicated with hawkers, and to their aspirations towards policing as order-making and experiences of decline. I do not see this as a question of official stories as opposed to reality, but rather as different dimensions of officers' experience, some of which entered more easily into their conversations with me than others.

Bad questions

Njeri once told me, laughingly, how she had been approached by someone from a company that sold milk and asked to recruit interviewees for a market research study. The company paid a small fee to each participant. Njeri enrolled all of the young women who hawked next to her at Archives. Afterwards, the women competed with each other about who had told the most outrageous lies to the interviewer.

"Mshortie told them she was fifty years old!" Njeri was beside herself with laughter. Mshortie was hardly twenty.

"Nyambura told them she was divorced and married for the second time, with six children!" Both Njeri and I knew that marriage, actual marriage, was something that few female hawkers would expect in their lifetime.[20]

The story of the milk company interviews hung at the back of my mind when I set out to conduct an interview study with hawkers in August 2017. The interview study had not been part of my initial research design, but a twin pregnancy had cut my

[20] On changing forms of marriage in Nairobi's low-income residential areas see, for example, Gudmundsen et al. (2017).

planned follow-up fieldwork from six months to three weeks. I would have to remain in Denmark during most of my pregnancy due to risks of complications, and I was advised not to attempt fieldwork after giving birth, with twin babies in tow. Since the follow-up fieldwork would be cut so drastically short, I wanted to substantiate impressions and questions from my first eight months of fieldwork with other data.

I thought it would be best if the interviews were carried out by a person who would keep stock of analytical themes, ask follow-up questions, and reflect on methodological issues – that is, a person with training in qualitative research. On the other hand, I feared that if a broad section of the hawkers I knew from BestBuy, Archives and the *baze* were placed in front of a stranger and asked a long list of questions, they would be tempted to react like Njeri's friends during the milk company interviews. I opted for employing Ruth Mwikali Jonathan, a third-year anthropology student at the University of Nairobi, to conduct the interviews. To work with her as research assistants, I employed Wangari, Njeri, Wachira and Samuel. Their role was to invite hawkers from their own locations, BestBuy, Archives and the *baze*, to interviews, and to be present during the interviews to bridge any communication gap and provide reassurance to the interviewees.

"And to make sure they don't talk nonsense," Wangari said with emphasis when I laid out this plan to her.

The conversational space in which the interviews eventually took place, then, was far from neutral. Each interviewee had an authoritative person from their own hawking location present. Furthermore, the interview was conducted by a university student who, unlike myself, was easily read into local categories of social class relative to the hawkers. I doubt that this setup lent itself to any unburdening of private sentiments. On the contrary, I expect that the conversations reflected topics and ways of talking about them that the hawkers deemed appropriate for sharing in public. I can see from the eventual transcripts that the interviews often took the form of group interviews, when Wangari and the other hawker research assistants were drawn into the conversation.

Ruth, Wangari, Njeri, Wachira and Samuel conducted fifty-nine individual semi-structured interviews with hawkers in the months of August, September and October 2017. One great advantage to the interviews taking place without me being present was that they were conducted in Sheng. The fifty-nine interviews conducted by Ruth and the hawker research assistants have provided me with an opportunity to hear the voices of some of those hawkers with whom I talked very little during fieldwork because they were shy about their English.

Another great advantage to the interview study was that I got an opportunity to discuss the material with Ruth. Our conversations have been important for my understanding of some of the nuances of gender positions and class differentiation among hawkers. It was Ruth who first pointed out to me that the female hawkers from

Archives and the male hawkers from Wachira's *baze* are in very different positions in terms of social class and normative gender expectations.

"The male hawkers would never marry the female hawkers," as she put it. Many of the male hawkers have wives at home whom they would not dream of allowing to work as hawkers. The female hawkers, typically, are single mothers.

These kinds of nuances are exactly those which hawkers would *not* talk about during the interviews. When Ruth and I had developed an initial draft for an interview guide, we discussed it with Wangari, Njeri, Wachira and Samuel. The draft interview guide had three sections. First, a mapping exercise to track the interviewee's movements in the Nairobi city center in the course of a day, and over the years they had been working as hawkers. Secondly, a narrative life history part. Thirdly, a social mapping exercise which visualized relationships between hawkers working in the same location. There were questions about policing and police violence in all three sections.

"Will hawkers feel comfortable answering this?" I asked Wangari, Njeri, Wachira and Samuel, thinking that the questions about police violence would be the sensitive ones.

"You have to take this out!" said Wangari.

She was pointing not at the questions about violence but at the opening question in the second section of the interview guide, the life history part:

"1) Please tell us about your childhood: Where were you born and how did you grow up?"

"Yes, they will definitely not feel comfortable answering that," Wachira agreed.

"This is also a bad question," said Wangari, and pointed a bit further down in the life history section:

"7) Please tell us about your family: Do you have children? Who do you live with?"

Most hawkers would be much more comfortable talking about bribing and police violence, they assured me, than talking about their childhood or their family situation. I asked why.

"Ah, Brigitte! Ok, you see, they will not have good answers to these questions. They will feel embarrassed."

Even though the hawkers came from different class backgrounds, I learnt, they would all feel embarrassed talking about their families and their upbringing. Those who had had secure childhoods and gone through tertiary education would be embarrassed that they did not amount to more than hawking. Those who came from struggling families, or who had even grown up without families, would feel embarrassed talking about that with their fellow hawkers present. By leaving out most questions about their personal life, and by focusing mainly on their work as hawkers, we designed the interview study from the onset to leave topics silenced that would make hawkers uncomfortable. The embarrassment that Wangari and the others

outlined, however, made an impression on me and forms a central part of my discussion of hawkers' dreams in chapter three.

Violence and time

The spectacular violence from late 2014 and early 2015, the violence portrayed in the *Kanjo Kingdom* documentary, accompanied my fieldwork. Even though the streets were calm, and no bottles or tear gas canisters flew through the air, the violence was present for both hawkers and officers when they talked to me about policing and their relationships with each other. It was present in Wangari's broken front teeth. It was present in my awkward handshake with her friend Dennis who was missing three fingers on his right hand because they had been cut off by Inspectorate officers inside a patrol car during the height of the clashes. It was present in Inspectorate officer Richard's nightmares. Richard told me he would sometimes grab his wife's arm in his sleep and say "Let's go!", dreaming that he was arresting a hawker.

Hawkers and officers told me that violence comes and goes in their policing relations. Periods with relative peace and calm give way to periods with clashes in the streets. It is not entirely clear what sparked the violence in late 2014 and early 2015. Some hawkers told me that it had to do with disagreements between hawkers and the Inspectorate on payments of bribes and arrangement for hawkers to have access to the streets.[21] Before the clashes of 2014 and 2015, the last time that spectacular violence erupted was in 2008. At that time, there was political pressure to relocate hawkers from the streets of the city center to the newly built Muthurwa market.[22] In my conversations with hawkers, as well as in the interviews conducted by Ruth, Wangari and the other research assistants, past violent episodes came up in unexpected places. What struck me in particular was how past violence came up when hawkers talked about "friendships" with officers. In chapter seven, I discuss the ways in which hawker-officer friendships are formed and maintained in awareness of the constant possibility of its reverse, namely enmity.

I understand episodes of heightened violence such as the clashes in 2014 and 2015, and the relocations to Muthurwa in 2008, as events that played an important role for the hawker-officer relations I encountered during my fieldwork in 2016 and 2017. This approach is central to the analytical theme of neighborly intimacy in the shadow of past violent events (Das 2006, 2010, 2015; Jeganathan 1997), which I employ throughout the dissertation. Rather than seeing the clashes of 2014 and 2015, and the relocations of 2008, as cases that illustrate how policing relations can sometimes be violent, I see them as generative of new sociality. These violent episodes shape the intimate policing relations that concern me in the present dissertation.

[21] Once more, see Musila (2015) on the Kenyan political sensibility for multiple truths.
[22] See Morange (2015) for a detailed account of the relocations to Muthurwa.

Hawker-officer policing relations are not only shaped by violent events they have personally experienced. They are also marked by another type of violence, which we date to the past but which has tangible effects in the present. An account of policing and violence in a Kenyan setting necessarily must engage with questions around the colonial rule of Kenya, and what form imperial projects takes in present-day policing.

I spent some of my fieldwork sitting in the first floor reading room of the Kenya National Archives, taking pictures of faded documents with my digital camera. I had been advised to visit the archive by Dr. Mary Njeri Kinyanjui, who also works on hawking in Nairobi.

"They have collected all the material relating to hawkers in special files and written 'hawkers' on the cover," she told me.

We wondered together how this could be. That all material related to the colonial and immediate postindependence governance of hawking had been compiled and archived thematically could mean either that hawking was dealt with bureaucratically as a separate theme, or that subsequent research interest at some point led an archivist to make the compilation. The archivists with whom I talked did not know. In either case, my own archival research on the governance of hawking during colonial rule and into independence was not a search for relevant material. Rather, it was an effort to establish a meaningful conversation between my fieldwork, on the one hand, and this compilation of documents, on the other.

The folders labelled "hawkers" contained correspondences dating from 1928 until well into the 1980s between the Nairobi Town Clerk, the Superintendent of Police and the Municipal Inspector on the policing of hawking. They contained minutes from Municipal Council meetings on the revision of the by-laws that governed hawking. And they contained correspondences between hawkers and the Licensing Superintendent around the issuing of hawkers' licenses. As Dirks (2002, p. 49) points out, working with archival material conditions you to write history with a particular attention to states. The documents showed how hawking constituted a problem and an object of regulation to municipal authorities both before and after independence from colonial rule.

What I eventually traced in the archival documents was not so much an additional subject position to those that my fieldwork revolved around. In other words, I did not make colonial-era bureaucrats into a third category of social actors besides hawkers and Inspectorate officers. Rather, I ended up comparing how a certain kind of anxiety about troubled progress has found expression in a mode of policing that keeps hawkers constantly moving their bodies. Stoler (2009) suggests that we approach archives as sites for political anxieties. Documents are not just expression of smooth hegemonic rule, but rather of uncertainties and attempts to know about situations and populations (Stoler 2009, p. 20). Colonial-era bureaucrats in Nairobi worried that hawkers who were permanently placed in the streets hindered the development of the city. This worry, rather than defining their particular historical period and position, reappears in

modified ways in present-day policing of hawking. I understand present-day policing as constituting neither a break from colonial-era policing nor a complete repetition of it. Rather, in line with Stoler (2016), I see colonial logics of policing as reappearing in the present in partial and displaced forms. Considerations about how we might understand the continued influence of imperial projects in the present-day policing of hawkers are part of several of the following chapters. They are most extensively discussed in chapter three.

Research relationships

Colonial forms played out not only in the policing relationships that were the focus of my fieldwork, but also in the relationships between myself and the hawkers and Inspectorate officers with whom I engaged. They played out in the various types of embarrassments I produced among hawkers and officers, in hawkers' apologies for their "broken" English, and in Inspectorate officers' hesitance to talk about their bribe collection from hawkers. Moreover, colonial forms also played out in the attention I received and the general interest that hawkers and officers had in talking to me. They played out in the assumption that I held an influential position, the feeling that my judgment of them mattered and the expectation that whatever I was doing was backed by a lot of money.

While on fieldwork, I found it easy to strike up relationships with both Inspectorate officers and hawkers. This meant that questions around access for me were not questions of *gaining* access, but rather of trying to understand what kinds of *expectations* came along with hawkers' and officers' eagerness to engage with me. According to Hastrup (2009), ethical questions in anthropological research necessarily arise alongside other questions related to the knowledge generating endeavor itself. The ethnographic method entails that the anthropologist cannot know the field in advance. The composition of the field, what constitutes "up" and "down," "outside" and "inside" not in a geographical sense but in a social sense, emerges gradually as the anthropologist enters into relationships with people (Hastrup 2009, p. 21).

Both hawkers and Inspectorate officers called me their "friend," but I had good reasons to question that this should be in any way redeeming of power asymmetries between us. After all, I was studying violent, unequal policing relationships in which the parties also called each other "friends." In line with Hastrup's description, I found that questions around what hawkers and officers might mean when they called me their "friend" presented themselves to me in parallel with questions around what they meant when they called each other "friends."

Situations such as the following constituted my basis for pondering on the implications of friendship between myself, hawkers and officers.

> One afternoon, I am standing on the sidewalk with a young hawker called Maria behind a large pile of oranges. A group of four Inspectorate officers walks up to us. I nod at two of them, Onesmus and Joseph, whom I've talked to on other occasions. They nod back, hesitate for a moment, and then address Maria reproachfully. Why did she not remove the oranges from the sidewalk when she saw them approaching? She is making their work difficult! The officers start throwing Maria's oranges into a canvas bag, handling them roughly.
>
> Maria shouts angrily at them in Sheng. I can't make out what she is saying, but she points at me and says "Brigitte" several times.
>
> When Maria and I have carried the bag of oranges to a nearby alley and the officers have walked on, I ask her what she told them back on the sidewalk.
>
> "I told them that you are here, and you see what they are doing to me. You are my friend. And you will not marry any of them after you have seen what they do to me!"

Maria's triumphant assertion that I would not marry any of the officers after having seen what they did to her made me wonder. Did Maria's claim to friendship entail expectations that I could protect her from police violence? Did her assurance to officers that I will not marry any of them indicate expectations to the contrary? What were the implications of my presence for relationships between officers and hawkers, and what would be the long-term consequences after I had left?

It was clear to me during fieldwork that hawkers often used my presence opportunistically to gain leverage in their policing relationships with Inspectorate officers. While the image of me as a journalist brought some concern to hawkers about whether I would reveal sensitive information about them, they also invoked this image actively in encounters with officers to generate the impression that the officers' conduct was being witnessed by an outside authority. How far these maneuvers by hawkers were accompanied by expectations that I would advocate on their behalf after completing my research is a relevant question to which I do not have a definite answer. I certainly did my best to explain to the hawkers what kind of audience typically reads a social science doctoral dissertation, and what kind of position I held within the organization I was employed by. My understanding is that the hawkers' opportunistic use of the impressions that my presence could bring about in encounters with officers was part of a general play with impressions and surfaces in policing relations, which I discuss more in chapter six.

Another relevant question is how far my witnessing of police violence obliges me to advocate, regardless of hawkers' expectations. I understand my own role not as one of choosing sides between hawkers and officers and defending one over the other, but rather of adequately describing the policing relationships I learnt about during

fieldwork and using this description to pose questions to our conventional understandings of police violence. In the conclusion, I discuss the possible implications that a view of police violence as intimate has for legal interventions and mechanisms that seek to address police violence in a Kenyan or similar setting.

Among the hawkers, the most emphatic positive response to my presence as a researcher came when I set up the interview study in which I employed Wangari, Njeri, Wachira and Samuel as research assistants. The four of them were paid for the work they did, and the interviewees received small fees to compensate them for the time they spent away from hawking during the interview. The hawkers had guided me towards this setup for a while with questions like "How will we benefit from your project?" Wangari put it bluntly from the beginning that it was obvious to everyone that there must be money involved for me to have come to Nairobi and spend so much time just hanging around with them. She and other hawkers thought it only fair that they should gain financially from this endeavor.

I like to think alongside Jöhncke's (2018) point that the important thing to consider when forming research relationships with people is not "rapport" with its implicit assumptions that sympathy is the key. Rather, Jöhncke proposes, the important thing to consider is whether both parties gain from the relationship. It is to recognize that both parties have legitimate interests. The difficult part, Jöhncke notes, is in each specific case to assess what constitutes a legitimate interest and adequate gain (Jöhncke 2018, pp. 126–127). Questions around what hawkers and officers expected of their research relationships with me, what I was able to offer them, and how this left the balances of legitimate interest and adequate gain, continued throughout my fieldwork.

These questions did not stop when I left Nairobi. One realization that has come to me very late in the process of working with my material has to do with Maria's comment about marriage to the officers who scolded her for not removing her oranges. During fieldwork, I sat for many hours and talked to male Inspectorate officers, tolerating joking remarks made by the hawkers insinuating I was becoming a girlfriend to the officers. The elderly officers seemed to enjoy and even encourage this kind of joking. It made me mildly uncomfortable, but I ignored the discomfort. I can think of at least two reasons why I did so. Firstly, this experience of being sexualized seemed to me like a kind of "noise" that disturbed what was otherwise a research endeavor focused on relations between other people. As Buch (2009) notes, anthropologists tend to think that their personal feelings of discomfort and troubled positionality have no proper place in the final account of the social settings they studied. Secondly, it was clear to me already during fieldwork that relations between male Inspectorate officers and female hawkers were very often sexually charged. Rumors about who was a girlfriend to whom and jokes about "looking for a husband from *kanjo*" were part of everyday talk among the female hawkers. Aware that I had

entered a sexually charged social field, the jokes that hawkers and officers made about me being the officers' girlfriend seemed nothing out of the ordinary.

While still on fieldwork, I attended consciously to the hawkers' expectations that they should gain financially from participating in my research, while I did not know what to do about the officers' enjoyment in insinuating to others that I was their girlfriend. This difference in attention and understanding reflects the difference between what I initially expected to find and what I ended up describing. I set out to study bribe payments and ended up writing about intimacies.

In the end, I did not find a place in the ethnography for my own feelings of discomfort at the jokes made by hawkers and officers about me being the officers' girlfriend. Chapter seven, which discusses sexual relationships and friendships between officers and hawkers, foregrounds the experience of female hawkers. This is primarily because I believe that their experiences and mine are of different orders and different kinds. Gender is not the only dimension, here. Gender and social class converge in particular ways to produce female hawkers as "single women" in the eyes of Inspectorate officers, as I discuss in chapter seven. Meanwhile, my own position and the jokes about me as a girlfriend were likely an experimentation with the stereotype of white women of "easy ways" as described by Musila (2015, pp. 82–90).

My description of my own experiences of unwanted sexual attention are limited to this methodology section. Primarily, this is because I felt that it would have been disturbing to try to fit them into the ethnographic account in chapter seven. Another reason is that I have come to realize very late how significant these experiences have been for my analytical process. Nonetheless, I can round off these reflections on my fieldwork and methods with the guess that I would probably not have ended up writing about intimacies of policing if I had been met by hawkers and officers as a male ethnographer.

Outline of chapters

The following chapters explore in different ways how violence between hawkers and Inspectorate officers in central Nairobi is intimate. The chapters are organized as a movement from the distant to the close-up, starting with a map view of central Nairobi in chapter two and ending with sexual relationships between officers and hawkers in chapter seven. As we move closer, at each stage, violent intimacies in hawker-officer relationships come into view differently. What at first resembled state violence increasingly looks like personal violence. What at one point seemed like the operation of a discursive formation begins to resemble an effect of material agency. My argument is that intimate police violence is all these things: state violence and personal violence, public and private, discursive and material. In order to account for and address police violence, we need not one but several approaches.

Chapter two asks how violence between officers and hawkers arises from their jointly inhabiting a space. Hawkers will tell you that they "live with" Inspectorate officers in central Nairobi. This living together entails regular payments of bribes, and it entails regular experiences of violence in Inspectorate custody. Every five years, hawker-officer relations in central Nairobi undergo a change when local politicians put pressure on the Inspectorate to relax policing because they want to win the votes of hawkers. The chapter argues that we must approach Nairobi's city center not as a geographical space but first and foremost as a social and a political one. It is the interplay between these two aspects, the social and the political, that forms the main concern of the chapter. I argue that police violence does not disappear during the five-yearly election campaigns; it becomes redeployed. If the withholding of police violence normally underpins neighborly relations between officers and hawkers, during election campaigns the withholding of police violence comes to underpin political relations between hawkers and local politicians. Intimate police violence, then, should not be understood in opposition to state-making violence. Rather, it is a particular form that such violence can take.

Chapter three asks how violence between officers and hawkers arises from their jointly inhabiting a historical moment. I trace the logic of keeping hawkers "on the move" in present-day policing to the colonial-era administration of Nairobi, and to colonial anxieties about the racialized bodies of hawkers and aesthetics of urban progress and modernity. Furthermore, I show how the constant alertness and mobility of hawkers in central Nairobi is related to an embarrassment about being hawkers in the first place. Hawkers intimately experience colonial ideals of modernity and progress not only in the form of injuries inflicted on their bodies, but also in their aspirations for a good life and in the discrepancy between those aspirations and the lives they live. The chapter argues that violence in relations between officers and hawkers arises from the afterlife of imperial projects in Kenya. We might understand police violence, also, as a form of imperial violence that works on the policed in somatic, emotional and existential registers.

Chapter four asks how policing relations and police violence between officers and hawkers are embedded in the materiality of hawking. Hawkers must handle their wares appropriately in order for the wares to yield profit. In their efforts to make their wares yield, hawkers are brought into policing relationships with officers. They pay an officer to look the other way, or they place their wares in a risky spot and end up having the wares impounded by the Inspectorate and paying bribes to have them released. I argue that hawkers' wares open them up to policing relationships. When these policing relationships become exceptionally violent, as they did during the clashes of 2014 and 2015, hawkers attempt to escape policing relationships with officers by walking away from their wares, pretending that they are not hawkers. I conceive of these stories of walking away as hawkers' attempts to redraw boundaries around themselves and their wares. We can conceive of policing relationships as

intimately present for hawkers in their attachment to their wares. Furthermore, we can conceive of this attachment as one that entails violence.

Chapter five asks how violence between officers and hawkers arises out of Inspectorate officers' efforts to live up to ideals about appropriate police authority. I show how officers find it difficult to perform what they understand to be proper policing in their relations with hawkers. Most officers are ageing and corpulent, carrying out work that was meant to be done by younger men. Betrayed by the fragility and inadequacy of their bodies, officers arrange their work around the use of policing equipment such as patrol vehicles to attain the necessary authority in their relations with hawkers. Inspectorate patrol vehicles are widely known to be sites for extrajudicial violence against hawkers. I argue that police violence arises out of material practices by which officers seek to address intimate, bodily experiences of inadequacy in relation to images of powerful masculinity.

Chapter six asks how female hawkers mitigate violence in their relations with Inspectorate officers by bringing young children with them to the street. Placing children in their laps or next to their wares allows female hawkers to pose as mothers. Meanwhile, the children they bring are not necessarily their own biological children. Inspectorate officers would tell me with annoyance about the proliferation of fake mothers who "hire" children from other people in order to escape arrest. What fake mothers show us, I propose, is that hawkers in and of themselves are unable to come into view for Inspectorate officers as deserving of ethical consideration. To come into view as human, female hawkers fake motherhood. Meanwhile, the attachments between female hawkers and the children they bring with them are considered problematic by both Inspectorate officers and hawkers, who both agree that children are harmed by being brought to the street. I argue that we need to look beyond pure positions in order to account for ethics in intimate policing relations.

Chapter seven asks why hawkers seek out and stay in violent policing relationships. Ethnographically, the chapter centers on friendships and sexual relationships between hawkers and Inspectorate officers. I propose that these kinds of relationships are difficult to account for, and that there are at least two reasons why. Firstly, we are not accustomed to seeing policing relations as intimate relationships. Secondly, we are not accustomed to seeing intimate relationships as violent. In order to account for friendships and sexual relationships between hawkers and Inspectorate officers, we need to think beyond categories of the political and the domestic. I propose that we understand intimate violence in policing relations as those hard-to-articulate pressures that make persons need one another.

2. Living with *kanjo*

I meet Nyambura and Njeri in a back alley a few streets from where Nyambura usually hawks face towels and hair bands. The two women sit on empty fruit sacks spread on the stairs to a doorway, resting their feet and enjoying the shade while waiting for Inspectorate officers to be out of the area so Nyambura can resume work.

Soon after I join them on the stairs, a young man in his late teens comes up to us. He is short and slightly built under his oversized T-shirt. He approaches the three of us with respectful reverence, waiting to be addressed by Njeri before he speaks.

"Brigitte, this is Daniel."

"Aaah, Daniel!" I have heard about him. Njeri has told me she recently employed a young man, Daniel, to sell her socks and handkerchiefs on her behalf. Njeri buys the stock, Daniel sells it, and they share the profits. This type of arrangement is how many young people enter hawking in central Nairobi.

"He was arrested yesterday. They took him to Central [Police Station], and he slept there." Njeri laughs. "He has been welcomed!"

Daniel laughs along with less gusto than the two women, looking down. Having seen the cells at Central Police Station on another occasion I don't blame him: overcrowded, windowless rooms with bare concrete walls where detainees sleep on pieces of cardboard on the floor, huddled next to each other.

"Nyambura went to talk to *kanjos* [Inspectorate officers] today so that he could get released with my things," Njeri continues. "She paid only two hundred [KSh] because they know her. If she had not been known to them, she would have paid five hundred or even one thousand five hundred!"

Daniel was welcomed into hawking in central Nairobi by a rough night on the floor of a police cell. He was welcomed into a violent space; one in which physical abuse and ill-treatment at the hands of Inspectorate officers are as common as the collection of bribes. As Njeri explained, hawkers inhabit this space differently depending on their relations with officers. Because Nyambura was "known" to the officers, she could get Daniel released from custody in return for a much smaller amount than a hawker not known to them would have paid.

Hawkers will tell you that they "live with" Inspectorate officers in the city center. "This is how we live with them" was a phrase I heard both in relation to the necessity of paying regular bribes to officers, as well as the occasional rough handling hawkers are subjected to in their custody. "Living with" Inspectorate officers implies that policing relations, with their economic and violent dimensions, are an inescapable part of dwelling in Nairobi's city center for hawkers. Living with *kanjo* is a condition rather than a choice. Seasoned hawkers like Nyambura mitigate their exposure to violence, as well as the hazard to their earnings posed by policing, by developing congenial relationships with officers.

The ways in which hawkers and officers live with each other in central Nairobi, the extrajudicial violence and the regular bribe payments that this living arrangement entails might seem like the result of an absent state. However, during the five-yearly local elections, hawker-officer policing relations come into view as central to local politics. Hawkers are key voting blocs for local politicians, and electoral candidates will try to win the votes of hawkers by forcing the Inspectorate to relax their policing. As the streets fill up with hawkers, local news media will speak with frustration about this politically motivated tolerance of petty crime.[23] After elections, hawker-officer policing relations usually return to their normal state.

In this chapter, I ask how hawkers and Inspectorate officers live together in Nairobi's city center, and how their living together entails violence. In order to answer this question, I approach the space they share not as a geographical one, but first and foremost as a social and a political one. What interests me is the interplay between those two aspects: that central Nairobi is a social space, which hawkers engage in by bribing Inspectorate officers, and that it is a political space, which hawkers engage in by voting for politicians who withhold police violence.

To understand central Nairobi as a social space, I draw on studies concerned with the troubled intimacies that arise between people who live in close proximity to one another while sharing a history of violence. These studies describe how neighborly proximity in the shadow of past violence gives rise to a kind of sociality in which people constantly make efforts to prevent violence from erupting once more (Das 2010, 2015; Jeganathan 1997). Inspired by this, I conceive of hawker-officer policing relations as troubled neighborly relations affected by past violent episodes. In particular, I draw attention to the ways in which bribe payments arise out of hawkers' needs to keep relations with Inspectorate officers friendly.

To discuss how central Nairobi constitutes a political space, I engage with Das and Poole's (2005) argument that seemingly "marginal" spaces where the law is broken

[23] The policing of hawking was already in campaign mode in July 2016, with a year to go before the next elections. "Nairobi's central Business District (CBD) could soon turn into the biggest open-air market in Africa thanks to the resurgence of uncontrolled hawking on prime streets," one local news article read (Kebaso 2016).

by rogue state officials do not constitute an "outside" to state power. On the contrary, we can understand them as spaces from which states consolidate their power. In conventional political theory, Das and Poole note, state power is understood to originate from a violent establishment of sovereign authority in a lawless space located somewhere in a mythical past. They suggest that we might conceive of such spaces as contemporary, and as open to ethnographic appreciation (Das & Poole 2005, pp. 7–15).

Policed hawking in central Nairobi can be understood as a marginal space that serves as a ground for state-making in Das and Poole's sense. Local electoral candidates gain political authority by intervening in hawker-officer policing relations. Furthermore, hawkers make possible the continued operation of the Inspectorate by supplementing the low and irregular salaries of officers with bribes. However, as I discuss in the following, the case of hawker-officer relations challenges us to conceive of state-making violence not with reference to a sovereign drive for power, but rather with reference to the intimacies that arise between hostile neighbors. I consider the ways in which police violence underwrites both hawker-officer policing relations *and* political relationships between hawkers and electoral candidates. I suggest that the five-yearly intervention by local politicians constitutes not an absence of police violence, but a redeployment of violence in political relations.

The chapter progresses in four parts. First, I outline how policed hawking in central Nairobi is characterized in regional literature as a question of exclusion and resistance. Second, I characterize policed hawking as it comes into view from street level, as a social space characterized by troubled neighborly relations. Third, I describe the seasonal involvement of local politicians, and I propose that policed hawking constitutes a political space. Lastly, I argue that we should see the involvement of politicians as a transformation of the ways in which police violence underpins state-making rather than a suspension of violence.

An exclusionary space

"Money falls like rain in the city center," hawkers from all over Nairobi will tell you.

The Nairobi city center, also known as the CBD (Central Business District) or simply "*tao*" [Sheng for "town"] is a relatively small area of about two square kilometers. It is simultaneously the most profitable part of Nairobi for hawkers to sell their wares, and the most tightly policed one.

"If you work there – *tao* – you just put down your things [on the pavement, to sell] for thirty minutes, and you will have five thousand shillings," a hawker called Murefu once told me. "Or ten thousand! But *kanjos* are very harsh there. Those hawkers of town are always running, running, running."

Murefu himself works outside the city center, in an adjacent area called Ngara. I spent the early days of my fieldwork among Murefu and his colleagues before coming into contact with Wangari, Njeri and the other hawkers working in the city center. In Ngara, I noticed how the hawkers seemed to be simultaneously drawn to the city center and afraid of it, mythologizing it as a place of intense concentrations of violence and of money. Some would even brave entering the city center for short stints at a time, if they had not made any money on that day and needed to raise enough to pay for the bus ride home. They would do so with their hearts in their throats, jumping at the slightest commotion and returning to Ngara once finances allowed.

With time, I saw for myself that Murefu was not far off when he said that the hawkers working in *tao* are always running. While in Ngara, a hawker might stay for a whole week without having to make a run for it at the sign of an Inspectorate patrol van, in the city center bouts of packing up and running happen numerous times a day. In Ngara, a hawker might go to buy lunch leaving her wares with a neighbor to look after. In the city center, no one would dare burden others with two bundles to carry. The extra weight could make the crucial difference of seconds in case of an Inspectorate crackdown.

There are few sources of quantitative information about hawkers in central Nairobi. The available ones estimate that there are between 6,000 and 14,000 hawkers operating in the Nairobi city center (NCBDA 2003 in Morange 2015, p. 250). About 75 percent of them sell on sidewalks, while a smaller number walk around with their wares or sell at bus stations. Only 6 percent operate in designated sites (NISCOF 2006 in Mitullah 2010, p. 188). The majority of hawkers in the city center are 25–34 years old. Most of them sell clothes, bags and other textiles, while a smaller number sell shoes and fresh fruit and vegetables (NCBDA 2003 in Kamunyori 2007, p. 26).

The present-day city center corresponds more or less with that of colonial Nairobi of the 1930s and 1940s. Already by that time, it seems, hawking was more tightly policed in the "European" (white) city center than elsewhere,[24] and it seems that hawkers routinely defied the regulations in order to make profits.[25] As several studies

[24] The Nairobi Municipality 1947 by-laws for hawkers designated special rules for hawking in an area called "Commercial," corresponding to the following parts of the current city center: from Haile Selassie Avenue east along Race Course Road until Nairobi River, following the river south until Globe Roundabout, then along Murang'a Road to Moi Avenue and up to University Way; along University Way to Uhuru Highway and south until Haile Selassie Avenue. Within this area, the by-laws prohibit the hawking of goods except newspapers, flowers and charcoal, which are subject to licensing (Municipal Council of Nairobi. (1947). Government Notice: The Nairobi Municipality (Hawkers) (Amendment) By-laws, 1947. (KNA RN/8/4)).

[25] A number of memos indicate that city authorities were having difficulties preventing hawkers from selling in the city center in contravention of the by-laws. See, for example: Eckersley, F. (1935, February 5). [Letter to Superintendent of Police]. (KNA RN/1/59); Newmark, D. (1935,

of hawking in central Nairobi highlight, present-day policing in the city center maps onto a colonial geography of racial segregation. Efforts to keep the area "clean" and "modern" can be read as continuing the colonial-era racial zoning along class lines. Hawkers and other informal workers are pushed out according to logics of policing that reserve the city center for middle class residents and formal businesses (Egan 2014, p. 43; Kamunyori 2007, pp. 22–23; Morange 2015, p. 257). We might say that the exclusion of hawkers from the city center through violent policing, and the creative efforts of hawkers to nevertheless access the area, is a struggle as old as the city itself.

The narrative of exclusion and resistance is an intuitively appealing one. Police officers, representing the interests of an elitist urban governance, push informal workers like hawkers out of the city center, and the hawkers fight to remain. This struggle can be represented visually. To illustrate, I have copied in a map from Morange's (2015) study of hawker evictions in central Nairobi on the next page. In Morange's visualization, arrows in different shapes indicate the various eviction drives whereby hawkers have been pushed out of the city center over the decades.

In regional literature, this struggle between Nairobi's hawkers and the city's various administrations is interpreted in several ways. Besides the continuation of colonial segregation along new lines of class, Morange (2015) and Egan (2014) describe the rise of a new mode of urban governance with the advent of neoliberal calls to competitiveness in the 2000s. Egan (2014, p. 72) describes the continuation of violent evictions in this period. Morange (2015, p. 263) argues that relocations took the more subtle form of framing hawkers as "entrepreneurial" citizens and involving them in consultative processes that ultimately made them give up on their right to sell in the city center. While Morange and Egan emphasize drives for exclusion by city administrators and formal business owners, Kinyanjui (2013, 2014) draws attention to the creative efforts of hawkers to remain in the city center. Conceiving of hawkers' efforts as forms of "subaltern urbanism," Kinyanjui (2013, p. 154, 2014, p. 37) focuses in particular on female traders who gain access to shop space in a central location. Whether emphasizing continuation with colonial violence, new forms of neoliberal subjectivation, or the resistance by hawkers, literature on hawking in Nairobi portrays policing as an effect of the conflict between drives to exclusion and fights for access.

I would like to caution that while evictions and violent clashes are highly visible forms of policing, they are not the only ways in which policing relations play out in central Nairobi. On the contrary, I learnt during fieldwork that encounters and relations between hawkers and Inspectorate officers are often conducted in a nearly invisible manner, which cannot be captured by a map or by arrows showing drives for exclusion. Inspectorate officers often approach hawkers in the street and discretely collect bribes while pretending to be customers. As my fieldwork progressed and the

August 12). [Letter to Town Clerk]. (KNA RN/1/59); Eckersley, F. (1935, August 13). [Letter to Councilor D. Newmark]. (KNA RN/1/59).

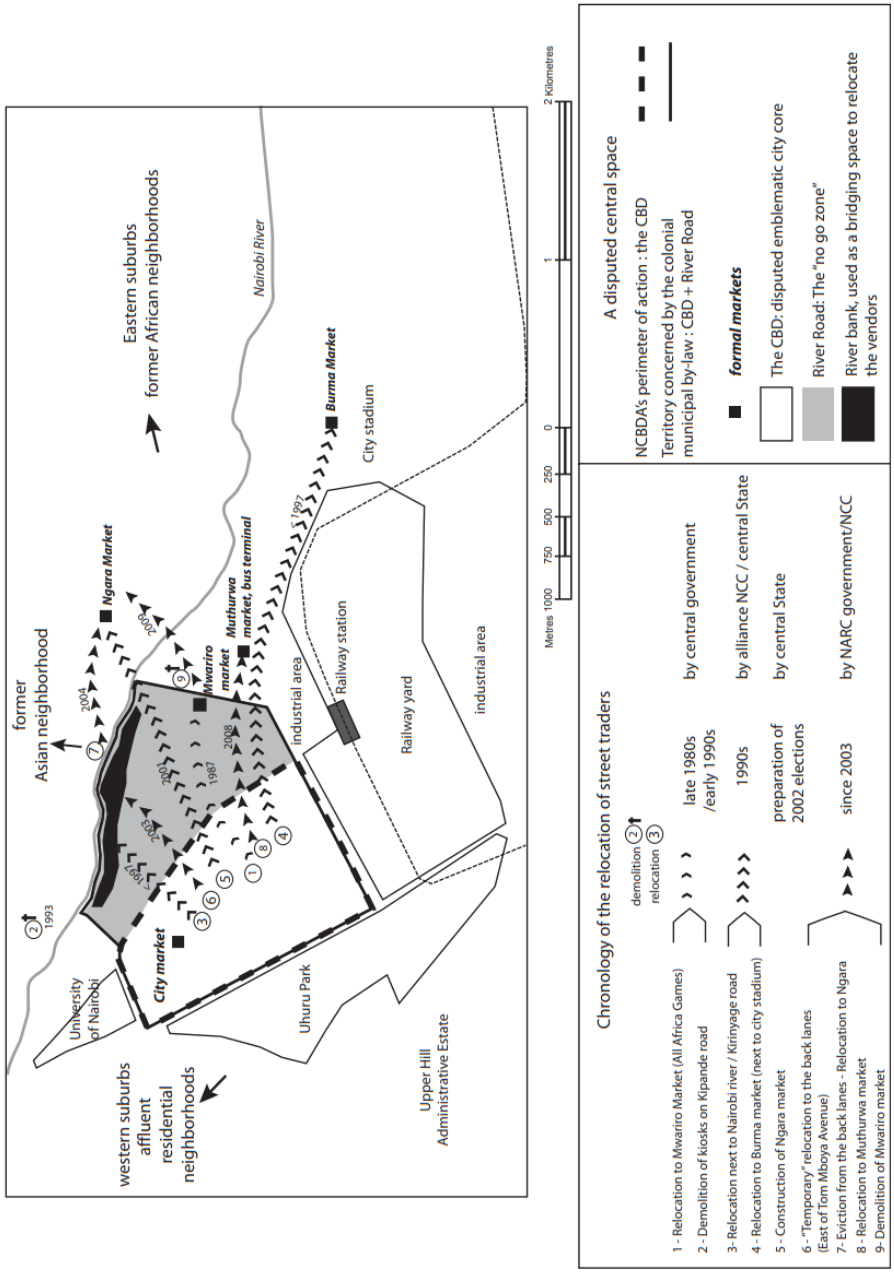

Figure 1: "Street trading in central Nairobi: a territorial battle over the control of space" (Morange 2015, p. 254)

hawkers with whom I engaged learnt about my research interests, they started making me aware of them. "Here's *kanjo*," they would murmur to me with the slightest tilt of their heads, and I would see the man in the leather jacket stopping by one of the hawkers, exchanging a few words and a handshake, and moving on. To account for these kinds of exchanges, and the policing relations they are part of, we need a different perspective than the one attained by looking at a map. Rather than approaching Nairobi's city center as a geographical space, we need to see it as a social space. A good way to do this is to move down to street level and familiarize ourselves with one of central Nairobi's many hawking locations.

A social space

"Come see me. I'm at BestBuy," says Wangari on the phone.

"BestBuy" or "by BestBuy" is how Nairobians refer to the stretch of sidewalk, about 15 meters, along a road in central Nairobi where Wangari and about thirty other hawkers come every day to work. In line with the local habit of naming locations with reference to landmarks, BestBuy is named after the adjacent minimarket where you can get everything from dried lentils to electric two-plate stoves. I make my way across the city center to meet Wangari there.

Already before I can see the hawkers, I can hear them. Rising above the roar of the busy traffic is Mama Simon's distinct shouting: "Mia, mia, mia, mia, mia! Mia moja, mia moja, mia moja!" [Hundred, hundred, hundred, hundred, hundred. One hundred, one hundred, one hundred!]. The sheer force of Mama Simon's voice amazes me. In a different context, I often think, she could be coaching opera singers. Slightly hoarse but with no sign of diminishing, she yells not only the prices of her wares but also her responses to customers' questions.

"Size twelve? In black color? No! I don't have that today! But see this one! In size twelve! It is very nice! You want black color? Come, take my number! I can get it for you!"

Finally, I find an opening in the hordes of speeding cars and buses and cross the road running. On the sidewalk, opposite the street-level shops and with their backs to the traffic, are the hawkers. Their wares are spread on pieces of fabric on the pavement in front of them – oranges, mangoes and lemons arranged into appealing piles and sprinkled with water; blouses, sweaters and trousers folded into rows of color. The hawkers stand or sit behind the displays, chatting to each other or attending to customers.

Wangari is shaking her socks to get the dust off. It hasn't rained in weeks. She turns around and squints her eyes at the sharp sun when I call her.

"You have come!"

Wangari jumps up and gives me a hug. Like all other hawkers at BestBuy, Wangari is agile and fit in a way that is evident in her movements. With effortless strength and precision, she can pick up heavy loads and dash in whichever direction takes her away from danger.

I fall into my usual routine of chatting to Wangari about her work and walking up and down the sidewalk to greet her colleagues. When I have passed Mama Simon ("Brigitte! You are here! Come sell my trousers for me!"), a sudden ripple goes through the line of hawkers. In a matter of seconds, they all grab the corners of their fabric displays and dash off with their bundles to hide in the nearby alleyways. Knowing where to find Wangari, I set off along the now almost empty sidewalk.

Wangari is sitting with Agnes and Julia on a small staircase in an alleyway from which they can see the sidewalk they have just left. They make space for me on the stairs.

"Are *kanjos* here?" I ask.

"Not here. They are around," Agnes says and draws a large circle with her index finger above our heads.

Most likely, someone further up the road was alerted via cellphone that the officers are in the area, which set the whole line of hawkers packing up and running. Once the three women reached the alley, Agnes checked with the lookout employed by their group, and he confirmed that officers are around. Now the three women are waiting for him to call again to tell them that the coast is clear.

"There is Brown!" says Julia suddenly.

Wangari and Agnes immediately spot the Inspectorate officer walking by on the sidewalk we just left. As usual, I need help to see him.

"Where?"

"There! With the grey jacket."

"He is standing now, texting on his cellphone."

Finally, I spot the officer. He is tall and broad shouldered, and the face bent over the small cellphone is pulled together in a frown of a dozen lines. Seeing his relatively light complexion, I guess that "Brown" is a nickname. Hawkers rarely know the officers' actual names but relate to them using nicknames. Brown finishes texting and continues on his route until he is out of sight.

After a while, Agnes gets a call. She barely puts the phone to her ear before she motions at Wangari and Julia: "*Kazi!*" [work].

A few minutes later, the stretch of sidewalk by BestBuy is once more lined with hawkers. Oranges and mangoes are arranged in piles and sprinkled with water. Shirts and trousers are shaken and folded next to each other.

In the course of my fieldwork, I came to know BestBuy as a place marked by predictable rhythms of packing, running, coming back, opening again, selling, packing and running once more. Even though days go by there without anyone actually seeing an Inspectorate officer, the officers' presence is continuously attested

to by the hawkers' bouts of running, by their watchful gaze up the road and attention to their cellphones. Hawkers are constantly attuned to co-presence of officers in the spaces they inhabit. They keep track of the officers' movements through a system of lookout persons, and they know the officers' routines in the course of a day, a week, a month and a year.

The morning hours, for example, are a bad time to get arrested. Inspectorate officers are "making targets," meaning that they comply with the daily quota of hawkers they are expected to arrest and bring to City Court to be formally charged under the by-laws. While officers are "making targets," they are less inclined to release a hawker in return for a bribe. In the middle of the day, between 12 and 2 p.m., Inspectorate officers are on lunch break, giving hawkers a window within which to operate undisturbed. In the afternoon hours, both hawking and policing picks up with intensified vigor when Nairobians fill the streets of the city center, commuting home from work. By 7 p.m., the Inspectorate officers working the day shift leave work, and the atmosphere in Nairobi's hawking locations relaxes. The night shift is thinly manned and keeps policing to a minimum.

Initially, I only glimpsed Inspectorate officers from afar, like the time Julia, Agnes and Wangari helped me spot Brown. However, I soon had an actual face-to-face encounter with one of them.

"Richard was asking about you today," says Wangari.

According to the organization of policing by the Inspectorate, the logics of which never are entirely clear to the hawkers at BestBuy, Richard is, during the time of my fieldwork, sometimes stationed a few paces up from where they work. Sitting on the rim of what appears to be a large flowerpot made of cement, although it contains only sand and cigarette buds, Richard gazes absentmindedly at the sidewalk, texts on his phone, or chats to the hawkers who pass by (their wares safely hidden) to greet him. On the days when Richard sits on the flowerpot, hawkers have to go on long breaks until he finally disappears. Although the hawkers are immensely frustrated with this new development, their approach to Richard's intensified presence is to develop a congenial relationship with him.

"Come," says Wangari. "I promised him to bring you, so you can meet him!"

When we reach the flowerpot, Richard is in a conversation with Mama Mwangi and two other women from BestBuy. He is dressed in a faded brown suit and crinkled leather shoes with dust clinging to them. In a manner similar to what you might see a suit-clad businessman do in one of Nairobi's upscale cafés, Richard holds his cellphone in one hand, the display turned upwards. With the same seriousness that his clothes and posture suggest, he discusses vigorously and authoritatively with the three women.

"What are they talking about?" I ask Wangari.

Mama Mwangi turns around and answers me: "We are telling him that we have children and that he must allow us to work."

Richard intervenes, saying: “We are talking about where they can go to work, since they are not allowed here. I told them that they can go to [another place in Nairobi, less central than BestBuy]. We have been getting complaints, lately, about hawking on this road. Our seniors [within the Inspectorate] do not tolerate hawking in such a central place.”

Not at all inclined to go somewhere else to work, the women make another attempt to persuade him. But Richard seems more interested, now, in greeting me and finding out what I am doing there. He questions me on my doctoral research, my experience of Nairobi’s tourist attractions, my opinions on international politics, my family situation, my food preferences. As the conversation drags on, Mama Mwangi, Wangari and the two other women drift back to the alleys where the other hawkers are on break. I try to answer Richard politely while silently worrying that I have robbed the hawkers of their chance to negotiate some concessions from him.

“So, will you let the hawkers work today?” I ask, when I find a gap in the conversation.

“They are impatient right now,” he says. “This is their time to sell.”

I check the time and realize he is right. It is a few minutes to 5 p.m. This is the peak selling hour for hawkers at BestBuy. Being forced to wait with your wares in a back alley around this time is like seeing your day’s earnings walk by and disappear into the distance.

Then I hear Mama Simon’s voice: “Mia mia mia mia mia! Mia moja, mia moja, mia moja!” The hawkers are back at BestBuy, shaking and folding clothes, carefully arranging fruits.

I glance at Richard. He says: “You see, these hawkers are not bad people. They just want to feed their families. That’s why I have to allow them to work for just thirty minutes, so at least their children will not go to bed hungry. But I am taking a risk. If my seniors see that there are hawkers here when they have stationed me, I will be in trouble.”

I never witness the transaction directly, but Wangari tells me later that Richard conceded to let the hawkers spread their wares undisturbed in return for a small collection of notes. This is only one of many occasions where they reach such an arrangement.

“How do you come up with the amount that you pay him?” I ask Wangari.

“We just ask him if he will let us work. If he agrees, we each put fifty bob [KSh].”

The policing of hawking in central Nairobi, when seen from street level at a hawking location like BestBuy, comes into view less as an order-making exercise than as the mutually attuned co-presence of hawkers and officers. Policing, from this vantage point, involves more than simply a drive for exclusion met with resistance by hawkers. It involves relationships in which the parties approach each other with caution, but in which they nonetheless make efforts to stay friendly once they meet each other face

to face. Furthermore, when seen from street level, the policing of hawking comes into view as revolving to a large extent around the payment of bribes by hawkers to Inspectorate officers.

There are numerous ways in which money might change hands between hawkers and Inspectorate officers. Besides ad-hoc arrangements such as that between the BestBuy hawkers and Richard, another common occasion for hawkers to pay money to officers is when they have the bad luck to get arrested or have their wares impounded. In such a situation, hawkers will politely approach Inspectorate officers, asking "How can we help each other?" The officer will then inform them of the expected size of the bribe. At the time of my fieldwork, the going rate for a hawker getting released prematurely from a patrol van was 1,000 KSh. Getting your impounded wares back cost 500 KSh.

A common trope about so-called "petty corruption" in an African context is that this type of relationality between state employees and citizens is a feature of the post-colonial state. Contrary to this assumption, it would seem that the policing of hawking in central Nairobi has been an occasion for payments of bribes since colonial times. A 1956 commission of inquiry into alleged corrupt practices within the Nairobi City Council[26] found, among other things, that hawkers were systematically asked to bribe municipal officials in order to obtain hawkers' licenses.[27] More recent studies of hawking indicate that the systematic collection of bribes from hawkers continued into independence (Mitullah 1991,p. 20; Kamunyori 2007, pp. 27–34). Kamunyori (2007, pp. 27–34) estimates that Inspectorate officers in Nairobi in the mid-2000s made more than half their monthly salary in bribes in a single day.

In the early 1990s, international society was scandalized by the apparent change of Kenya from a "model" developing country and "economic miracle" into a locus of "corruption" and failure (Haugerud 1997, pp. 25–26). As Blunt (2010, p. 144) points out, what could otherwise have been conceived of as a Kenyan moral economy of distribution between population and political patrons was seen by donors of development aid as dysfunction. The subsequent placement of austerity measures, in line with the push for Structural Adjustment Programmes throughout the aid sector, coincided with other developments in the world economy, such as a plunge in coffee prices, to leave the Kenyan state severely cash strapped (Haugerud 1997, p. 25). The result was not, as donors had hoped, an end to patron-client relations. Instead, the balance between elite consumption and client networks was upset (Blunt 2010, p. 144). It became apparent that the previous tying of service delivery to political

[26] Government of Kenya. (1956). *Report of the commission of inquiry into alleged corruption and other malpractices in relation to the Affairs of the Nairobi City Council, December, 1955 – March, 1956*. Government Printer, Nairobi. (KNA K 352/008 5).

[27] Transcription of the testimony of Nganga Karenaja, vegetable hawker, to the Commission of inquiry (City Council of Nairobi. (1956) *Record of commission of inquiry 1955–1956*, Vol. No. 8. (KNA RN/1/143, A1 21.2.56)).

support, a type of political patronage that Kenya to a large extent inherited from colonial governance, had ensured a certain measure of stability (Haugerud 1997, p. 35, p. 74).

Mbembe (2001) characterizes the 1990s shift in the economic foundations of power in Kenya, among other countries, as a crisis befalling a political system that until then had relied on an "economy of allocation" (p. 51). Economic things, such as salaries for public sector employees, functioned in this system as social and political things, as means of creating credit with the population (Mbembe 2001, p. 46). Blunt (2016) suggests that in this climate, the meanings attached by Kenyans to bribing street-level police officers changed. Until the 1990s, bribes to police officers were generally evaluated positively with a notion of "gifting" the police in order to get preferential treatment. When people's experience of the state shifted from a mutually benefitting form of "convivial consumption of public resources" to a burdensome imposition of an overly rent-seeking state, police officers demanding bribes were increasingly seen as "parasitic" (Blunt 2016, p. 386).

In the case of hawkers and Inspectorate officers, I would like to propose that rather than asking whether bribing is considered legitimate by hawkers or not, we can see bribes as a necessary element in the policing relations that hawkers become part of once they enter central Nairobi. Hawkers dwell in the streets of the city center with a constant awareness of the presence and actions of Inspectorate officers. They know when the officers are "making targets," what time they go on lunch break and what time they knock off in the evening. Throughout the day, hawkers keep in contact with their lookout persons who track the whereabouts of the locally stationed officers. On their part, Inspectorate officers are also attuned to the daily and seasonal rhythms of hawking. It was telling that Richard remarked to me "They are impatient right now. This is their time to sell." Inspectorate officers have a well-developed sense of peak and off-peak selling times, and of the variations in hawkers' frustration over being kept from working at different times of the day.

Within this mutually attuned co-presence, bribes are a way to keep policing relations friendly. For hawkers, it is not a question of whether or not to relate to officers, but rather one of engaging in policing relations with an eye to their own safety and abilities to make a living. I propose that we direct our attention away from questions of legitimacy and instead explore what bribing can tell us about policing as played out in social relations where people inhabit the same space.

At this point, I draw on writings by Das (2010, 2015) and Jeganathan (1997). I am interested in their descriptions of how such a shared space is marked by violence, and how people make this violent space habitable by keeping social relations friendly. Das (2015) describes how people who live as neighbors in the aftermath of mass violence are constantly alert to the ways in which small grudges might erupt into violence. Such neighbors make constant efforts in everyday interactions to keep violence "at bay" (Das 2015, pp. 78–79). Jeganathan (1997) describes Tamils who live in a

predominantly Sinhalese urban neighborhood in Sri Lanka. His ethnographic descriptions show how the Tamil residents orient themselves in relation to past violent events not as something finished and left behind, but rather as experiences that inform them about where and how violence might erupt again. Past violence becomes visible for them as possible future violence (Jenganathan 1997, pp. 184–222, see also Jeganathan 2006). Furthermore, the Tamil residents act according to their expectations of where and how violence will emerge again. For example, when one family perceives the possibility of new violence as pressing, they hang a flag with patriotic connotations over their front door in order to perform belonging (Jenganathan 1997, pp. 184–222).

Like the Tamil residents described by Jeganathan who fear violence at the hands of their Sinhalese neighbors, hawkers dwell in the streets of Nairobi's city center with a constant awareness of the co-presence of Inspectorate officers and the potential for violence that this entails. Past violent episodes, both the spectacular street battles and the more quotidian arrests, are present for hawkers and inform their ways of occupying the streets. This includes the system of lookout persons, which allows them to keep a distance to officers, as well as the friendly chats and bribe payments that hawkers engage in once they are face to face with officers in the street.

In contrast to regional studies of policed hawking in central Nairobi, which focus on spectacular street battles and which understand policing as a drive for exclusion, seeing policing of hawkers in central Nairobi as relations between intimately hostile neighbors allows for a different understanding of violence. In this view, violence is not a question of accessing a space or of being pushed out and fighting to remain. Rather, violence is present as a constant possibility in the social space that hawkers and officers share. Hawkers act on this ever-present possibility of violence by investing in relations with officers. When hawkers pay bribes, they shape the social space in which they dwell, making it less prone to violence.

A political space

Every five years, policing relations in central Nairobi undergo a significant seasonal change when local and regional politicians appeal to hawkers in order to gain their votes in elections. Although hawkers live in low-income areas in the peripheries of the city, many of those working in the city center register as voters there in order to influence the elections of councilors for the area. When election campaigns roll out, hawkers in the city center come into view for electoral candidates as powerful constituencies.

As Mwende put it in the run-up to the August 2017 elections: "Campaign season has started. The next few months we will be very comfortable here. Councilors will

tell the officers to leave us alone. Then they will come and sweet-talk us because they want our votes."

Or, as Wachira told me with a big grin: "These days we are selling tax free."

With almost a year to go before the August 2017 elections, hawkers at BestBuy in the fall of 2016 found their working environment markedly calm. As this coincided with the beginning of my fieldwork, many hawkers felt the need to explain to me that what I was experiencing was an exception to the rule.

As Mwende put it: "Now it is very peaceful here. But you see, this is because of elections. The *kanjos* in this area used to be very harsh. When elections are over – woooh! I tell you. We will be back to running."

The same prediction was made by the Inspectorate officers I talked to. On one occasion close to the elections, I walked with Kuria on Moi Avenue when we passed several hawkers sitting along the pavement with small displays of citrus fruits.

Kuria shook his head and said: "You see? Hawkers! Here, on Moi Avenue! At this time of the day! This is because of elections. These politicians are making it difficult for us to do our jobs."

"What would happen if you were to remove those women?" I enquired.

"No, you see, the councilors would come complaining to us that we are interfering with their votes. They can even send gangs of youth to beat you up in your home. We just try to keep out of trouble until after the elections. Then we can resume work."

That the period of grace for hawkers would end after elections were over was not only a conviction held by hawkers and officers but also an expectation held widely by other Nairobians I encountered and reflected in local news media (see, for example, Chweya 2018). As the following conversation between me and Agnes shows, however, there were still instances of hawkers placing hopes in promising candidates, and of hawkers holding some degree of claims on elected candidates once these were in office.

> "Are you going to vote for Maina[28] [the current councilor]?" I ask Agnes amidst the relaxed atmosphere and bustling business all around us on the sidewalk.
>
> "Ah, this guy! You know, we put Maina where he is now? Hawkers voted him into office. He was a young man and we believed he could make a change for the better for people like us. So, all us hawkers came together and told each other 'We vote for Maina!' We supported him

[28] This is a pseudonym. While the local councilor's patronage of Agnes and the other hawkers is nothing out of the ordinary, I have anonymized him so as to not single him out for breach of conduct. Meanwhile, I have not found it necessary to anonymize former Nairobi Governor Evans Kidero or current Governor Mike Sonko who are mentioned later in this section.

then but he has not done anything for us. This time we will go for someone else."

Agnes thinks for a moment. Then she adds: "Ok, I don't want to say he has never done anything for me, because he has helped me get my things [wares] back." She describes how, recently, Inspectorate officers impounded the wares of ten people at BestBuy. "They told us that they cannot give us back [the wares]. We have to come to City Hall in the morning, to the court." The hawkers called Maina, and he talked to the Inspectorate officers and made them drop some of the charges: "He said 'These are my people. You must reduce [the fines]. At least give them only one or two [charges].' And we each paid five hundred only. So, I can say that he has done something for me."

"If he has helped you, is there a possibility that you will vote for him again?" I ask.

"I'm still waiting to hear from others who we will support," Agnes says.

Agnes' final remark that she is waiting to hear from other hawkers who "they" will support shows the strategic ways in which hawkers gain concessions from politicians by collective voting. In the last months before the August 2017 elections, hawkers working in the city center were attending numerous meetings by different electoral candidates. Some of the seasoned hawkers whom I knew from my 2016 fieldwork were approached by candidates for the local councils as well as people from the leading electoral campaigns to "organize" hawkers into attending these candidates' rallies. Hawkers, on their part, invited electoral candidates to attend fundraisers for funerals in their extended families, the implication being that the electoral candidates were expected to make financial contributions corresponding to their interest in the hawkers' votes.[29]

In this way, the five-yearly "campaign season" is a time when local politics upsets the balance of established power dynamics between hawkers and Inspectorate officers, and when hawkers make the most of their temporary upper hand. Literature on hawking and urban governance in Nairobi suggests that this seasonal relaxation of the policing of hawkers in the city center in connection with elections has been recurring for decades (see Kamunyori 2007, p. 31; Médard 2010, p. 49; Morange 2015, p. 251). In this light, we can understand how both hawkers and officers took the interference of politicians in the policing of hawking in 2016 for granted and explained them to me as natural.

The political involvement in central Nairobi's economy of policed hawking is not limited to the campaigning of local councilors but also includes County level politics.

[29] Haugerud (1997) extensively describes the politicization of events like funeral fundraisers.

The 2017 elections saw Mbuvi Gideon Kioko, popularly known as "Sonko" [Sheng for "rich person" or "boss"], elected as Nairobi's new County Governor. Besides being known for his wealth (Ndubi 2019) and flashy lifestyle (McKenzie 2011), Sonko had also by the time of the election made a name for himself as a champion of Nairobi's poor residents. In 2015, he launched the so-called "Sonko Rescue Team," which offered "services" to Nairobi's residents such as ambulances, fire extinguishing, garbage collection as well as free lease of limousines for wedding ceremonies (Sonko Rescue Team 2017), arguably competing with the incumbent County Governor Evans Kidero for service delivery. Among hawkers and officers, Sonko was known for his involvement in a 2016 legal case where four County Inspectorate officers were charged with murdering a hawker. Then a senator, Sonko announced publicly that he would personally reward any incriminating information about the officers brought to him by members of the public with 100,000 Ksh and threatened to resign his position if "harassment of hawkers" was not stopped (Kimuyu 2018). For hawkers, this case represented a much-welcomed official acknowledgement of the violent policing they were subject to.

Inspectorate officers I talked to, on the other hand, explained Sonko's involvement as populism. Kuria, for example, let out a small, exasperated rant when I mentioned Sonko in a conversation we had close to the August 2017 elections.

"He is telling them that they have a right to hawk here! What about the by-laws? Hawking is illegal here in town! We [Inspectorate officers] are just doing our job, yet he tells the hawkers: 'The City Council officers should not harass you!' What harassment? How can it be harassment when we are arresting them for doing something that is against the law?"

Policed hawking in central Nairobi, then, is not only a social space where hawkers and officers invest in relations with one another, but also a political space where electoral candidates appeal to hawkers as constituencies. At this point, I draw on Das and Poole's (2005) description of "marginal" spaces from which the states re-found their power. We can conceive of policed hawking as a marginal space with significance for state-making in several senses. Firstly, local politicians come into view for hawkers as significant political authorities when they put pressure on Inspectorate officers to relax policing. That is, police violence, and the ability of local politicians to regulate this violence, is a significant ground for local politics in central Nairobi. Secondly, hawker-officer relations consolidate state-making in the sense that bribe payments from hawkers make possible the continued operation of the Inspectorate department despite the low and irregular salaries paid to officers. In effect, hawkers finance the policing they are subject to. We might think further of this with Roitman's (2005a, 2005b) notion of frontiers of wealth creation, developed from an ethnography of cross-border smuggling in the Chad Basin. Roitman (2005b, p. 220) describes frontiers as spaces where states establish an alternative fiscal base that ensures the stability of political regimes even in situations of economic bankruptcy.

We can also view the social space that hawkers and officers jointly inhabit, the violence and the bribe payments it involves, as a frontier space and as a site for the generation of political resources, in several senses of the word. From this space, Nairobi's County Government ensures the continued running of its law enforcement department. In addition, local and County level electoral candidates consolidate their voting bases.

Violence as value

> "You need to understand one thing," Wachira says. "We are here politically, we are beaten politically, and we come back again politically! In fact, we are here for the benefit of the MP, of the councilor, of the Governor. For the benefit of all those people. They want our, *nini*? [what?], our votes."
>
> With still a year to go before the August 2017 elections, Wachira and I sit by the side of the road looking at the long line of hawkers standing behind their wares in the sun. Wachira lays out to me with confidence how things are going to play out in the near future. First, before the elections, hawkers will enjoy "peace and quiet." Then, whoever gets into power will spend the first six months consolidating their bases within the County Government.
>
> "From the seventh month, they will start working! They will say that the city is now very dirty, and they will start cleaning it." He makes a swiping movement with his hand. "And they will continue! Cleaning, cleaning, cleaning."
>
> Then, with two years to go before the next elections, they will relax policing once more.
>
> "Like now," Wachira says with a broad smile. "We are just enjoying now!"

"Cleaning," in case of any doubt, is a common euphemism for violent crackdowns on hawking. Wachira's description of oscillating modes of policing between "peace and quiet" on the one hand and "cleaning" on the other could be read as a style of governance that alternates between enforcing the law and suspending it. Das and Poole's (2005) argument about state margins would be in line with such a reading. They describe margins as spaces where the *suspension* of formal law allows states to consolidate their power. Along the same vein, Comaroff and Comaroff (2006) draw attention to "actively sustained zones of ambiguity" between presence and absence of

the law. Strategic lawlessness, they argue, is an increasing mode of governance, furthered by a global neoliberal world order (Comaroff & Comaroff 2006, pp. 5–11).

I want to argue for a different interpretation. Rather than seeing Wachira's periods of "peace and quiet" as an exception to the policing of hawking, as a suspension of violence, I propose that police violence is still present during election season. It is present as a potential, as a possibility for violence, which informs the ways in which hawkers engage in relations. As I described previously, drawing on Jeganathan's (1997) account of violent neighborly relations in a Sri Lankan urban neighborhood, when past violence appears to hawkers as potential future violence, it informs the ways in which they act in social relations. I want to propose that police violence is still present as potential future violence for hawkers during election times, but that during election times it informs the ways in which they relate to *politicians*. To allow for this reading, I draw inspiration from another realm of anthropological theory, namely economic anthropology. I suggest that what happens during election times is a shift in emphasis from one type of relationship – that between hawkers and Inspectorate officers – to another – that between hawkers and local politicians.

We can conceive of the withholding of police violence during election season in Nairobi as a transformation of value. Strathern (1988) describes value transformation in gift exchanges in Melanesia as a process whereby items move from one sphere of exchange to another. For example, men transform pigs, which they have raised and fed jointly with their wives in the context of their domestic household, into gifts to be exchanged with male exchange partners in a ceremonial sphere (Strathern 1988, pp. 159–167). When valuable items are moved from one sphere to the other, the ways in which they are understood to be made up of social relations also shifts. A pig that was understood to be the result of a husband and wife's joint labor instead comes into view as the result of an exchange relationship between the male exchange partners (Strathern 1988, pp. 159–167). Value transformation, then, is about a shift of emphasis from one relationship to another.

In the case of policed hawking in central Nairobi, we can conceive of the withholding of police violence as the value that underpins relationships – *both* policing relationships and political relationships. It is the hawkers' consciousness of their exposure to violence from officers that makes them enter into congenial relationships and pay bribes to officers. Similarly, it is this exposure to violence that makes them vote for politicians who have the capacity to temporarily withhold police violence. Thinking along the lines of value transformations, we might say that local politicians put pressure on the usual workings of policed hawking in order to transform police violence from one sphere of exchange into another. Rather than yielding bribes, police violence – and the withholding of it – comes to yield votes. Election season, from this perspective, is not a time when police violence is absent. Rather, it is a time when a transformation occurs in the ways in which police violence against hawkers underpins state-making.

Conclusion

I have argued that hawkers who "live with" Inspectorate officers in central Nairobi inhabit a space that we should understand as social and political rather than geographical. If we approach policing in central Nairobi by looking at a map, what comes into view are spectacular clashes and evictions. Periods where such spectacular street fights do not occur seem like periods in which police violence is absent. However, if we approach policing ethnographically, what comes into view are regular bribe payments through which hawkers seek to act on the policing relations with Inspectorate officers that condition their presence. Violence, here, forms the basis of neighborly relations.

Every five years, local politicians insert themselves into this social space in order to gain electoral support. I have argued that we can understand the relaxed policing that accompanies their seasonal involvement as a transformation of the ways in which violence against hawkers underpins state-making, rather than as a suspension of violence. Whereas hawkers' exposure to violence normally makes them pay bribes to officers, politicians by withholding this violence effect a transformation of value. Instead of yielding bribes, the violent capacity of Inspectorate officers comes to yield electoral support.

If we conceive of policed hawking as a marginal space from which the state re-founds itself, it becomes clear that this margin is not based in the first instance on an exercise of state violence as we usually understand it. That is, as injuries inflicted on the bodies of the policed by police officers who are strangers to them. Rather, the Inspectorate as a state institution, as well as the authority of local political candidates, both come into view as based on policing relations characterized by a mutually apprehensive neighborly intimacy. Within these neighborly relations, hawkers constantly make efforts to mitigate their exposure to this violence through bribe payments to officers, and through five-yearly voting.

3. On the move

The white City County Inspectorate van has been parked around the corner the whole morning, preventing the hawkers who usually spread their wares at BestBuy from working. Wangari feels the pressure of not having sold a single pair of the socks that are currently tied up in her bundle and hidden away in a nearby backyard. It is almost midday.

"Come, Brigitte, I want to go and open [start selling]. I can't sit here and not work the whole day."

"But the van is still there?"

"Yes. I need to *ficha*."

Wangari is already walking towards where her bundle of socks is hidden. I have trouble keeping up with her on the busy street.

"What is the word you used?"

"*Ficha.* Playing hide-and-seek with them! I put my things for a few minutes. When *kanjos* come, I remove." She turns to me for a moment and illustrates by swaying from side to side with her upper body like a fighter ready to dodge a blow.

I follow Wangari to a place a bit further up the road, not visible from where the Inspectorate van is parked but still much closer to the van than what would generally make a hawker feel comfortable. Wangari has stopped minding me altogether. With her back to a wall, trying to look in all directions at the same time, she puts down her bundle on the pavement and unties the knot, not taking the time to organize the socks neatly as she usually would. A customer walks up to her and asks about prices, and she answers without looking at him, her eyes darting from side to side. After about five minutes, she suddenly jumps towards her pile of socks, collects the corners of the fabric and runs off.

"*Kuficha*"[30] means "to hide" in Swahili. In the sense in which Wangari used it, though, the word connotes not just staying hidden but also being alert, looking out and running to a place where one can hide. Not just hiding, but "playing hide-and-seek," as Wangari explained. *Kuficha* indicates at one and the same time a bodily competence mastered by experienced hawkers like Wangari and a position of vulnerability.

[30] Swahili verbs carry the prefix "ku-" to denote the infinitive form.

"*Kuficha*, yes, Wangari is right," Julia says when I ask her about the word a few days later. "That is what we do as hawkers. We are always ready to run. You have seen us there at BestBuy."

Mwende adds: "The meaning of *kuficha*, it's like you are on your feet."

The alertness and mobility that hawkers refer to as *kuficha* arises out of the ways in which hawking is policed in central Nairobi. Inspectorate crackdowns do not aim to completely remove hawkers from the city center. Rather, the aim is to make hawkers get up and move about from time to time to prevent them from becoming too permanent. If hawkers were allowed to remain stationary for too long, Inspectorate officers explained to me, they would begin to set up tables and umbrellas on the sidewalk, turning the street into a "market."

That hawkers must be kept moving about in the streets of Nairobi is not new. Nairobi's colonial administration of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s made great efforts to ensure that hawkers did not become too permanent in the streets. Colonial-era Inspectorate officers were frequently ordered to keep hawkers "on the move,"[31] and city by-laws were amended in the 1940s to specify that a "hawker" should be someone working "elsewhere than a fixed place."[32] Hawkers' bodies, once they became too static on the sidewalk, triggered a range of racial anxieties related to pollution, disorder and stunted progress. Static hawkers were understood to be a health hazard and a security threat, and they were seen to jeopardize the modernity of the city by bringing about aesthetic association with rural-style open air markets.

The central concern in this chapter is how we might understand violence in relations between hawkers and Inspectorate officers in central Nairobi as a result of their jointly inhabiting a historical moment where colonial-era logics of policing continue to exert an influence. That is, I ask how we might conceive of intimate police violence as a form of colonial violence. In asking this question, I draw on Stoler's (2013, 2016) description of the ways in which colonial projects linger in material and discursive sites, bringing about new forms of violence in the present. Stoler argues for a view of "colonial presence" in our time that conceives neither of abrupt rupture, a total break with the past, nor of exact repetition of the same (2016, p. 26). Rather, the environments in which we live are marked by colonial discourses and material remnants working in distorted ways through "partial reinscriptions, modified displacements and amplified recuperations" (2016, p. 27). Importantly, according to Stoler, the violence that these discourses and material remnants generate is unevenly distributed. Poor and vulnerable people disproportionately bear the violent effects of

[31] See for example: Municipal Council of Nairobi. (1944, February 18). [Departmental instruction letter to Chief Inspector]. (KNA RN/1/60).

[32] Municipal Council of Nairobi. (1947). Government Notice: The Nairobi Municipality (Hawkers) (Amendment) By-laws, 1947. (KNA RN/8/4).

colonial projects in our time. In Stoler's words, "ruination" is a process that "allocates imperial debris differentially" (2013, p. 7).

We can approach the policing of hawkers in central Nairobi as a process of "ruination" in Stoler's sense. Through modes of policing that keep hawkers "on the move," material and discursive remnants of Nairobi's colonial governance come to have contemporary, violent effect on hawkers. What these modes of policing bring to bear violently on hawkers, I argue, is a certain frustration about troubled temporal unfolding entailed in ideals of "development" and "progress." "Development" in a Kenyan context denotes an expectation of continuous improvement in material living conditions (Haugerud 1997). At the same time, "development" has a quality of something withheld; an elsewhere against which Kenya always comes up lacking (Smith 2008, p. 38). This sense of obstructed temporal unfolding is at stake, I argue, when hawkers who become too static are understood to threaten the urbane quality of Nairobi by bringing about aesthetic association with rural markets. If frustrations about the unattainability of "development" can be described as something like a national sentiment in Kenya, this frustration has disproportionately violent effects on hawkers in Nairobi.

Colonial ideals of development and progress exert violence on hawkers not only in the form of bodily strain that comes with being in a constant state of alertness. Hawkers are also affected emotionally by notions of the good and proper life entailed in these ideals of progress. Among hawkers, there is a widespread conviction that hawking is not a satisfactory occupation, and most hawkers dream of moving on to better things in their lives, such as opening their own shop. In this way, the bodily unsettlement of hawkers who *ficha* in central Nairobi is exacerbated by an emotional unsettlement about lacking respectability and a temporal unsettlement about being on the wrong track in their life trajectories. If *kuficha* is a response to violent policing, violation is experienced intimately in mutually reinforcing emotional, somatic and existential registers.

The chapter progresses in five parts. First, I draw on archival material to describe how colonial ideals of progress and development gave rise to a logic of policing that seeks to keep hawkers "on the move." Next, I propose that we approach the bodily state of *kuficha* among present-day hawkers as a site for the continued working of this colonial mode of policing. In a third section, I describe *kuficha* as an emotional state in addition to a bodily comportment. In a fourth section, I describe *kuficha* as a temporal unsettlement. Finally, I look at a particular public debate around the management of hawking in late 2017 and argue that hawkers disproportionately bear the violent effects of a dream of progress that permeates Kenyan public imaginary.

Fragile progress

In the spring of 1935, the Town Clerk of Nairobi found it necessary to appoint a Municipal Inspector to control hawking by Africans in the city center.[33] Nairobi at this time was rapidly growing from a railway post into a town, and municipal authorities were concerned with the increasing presence of "unemployed natives living in the town for no ostensible reason" (Hake 1977, p. 46). Towns like Nairobi were intended by the British colonial administration to be primarily white, European spaces. Well into the 1950s, the colonial administration operated with the principle of keeping Africans in rural areas. Through pass laws, and through the planning of African housing purely as single person accommodations for predominantly male migrant workers, urbanization by Africans was actively constrained (Lonsdale 2001, p. 212; Werlin 1974, pp. 47–49). When it came to hawking, Nairobi's municipal government held that only a certain number of hawkers selling specific wares were necessary. Hawking was administrated based on a licensing system that regulated the number of persons hawking within designated areas and the goods they were allowed to sell.[34]

Besides controlling the number of hawkers and the types of wares sold by them, Nairobi's municipal authorities were also concerned with ensuring they did not dwell too permanently in the streets of the city center. The Town Clerk of Nairobi wrote to the newly appointed Municipal Inspector on July 18, 1935:

> Complaints are made that a number of hawkers have fixed stalls in various places in the town […] To set up a fixed stall is not 'hawking' and these persons are not to be allowed to 'dig themselves in' in this fashion[35]

The imperative to prevent hawkers from setting up "fixed stalls" and "digging themselves in" functioned as an operating logic more than an actual legal principle for the first ten years after the appointment of an Inspector for hawking. Calls to keep hawkers from "taking up stand," and to keep them "on the move," continued in routine communication between the Town Clerk and the Municipal Inspector.[36] Then, in a

[33] Municipal Council of Nairobi. (1935, February 14). [Letter from the Town Clerk to the Superintendent of Police]. (KNA RN/1/59); Municipal Council of Nairobi. (1935, February 18). Report of General Purpose Committee Meeting held on 18th February 1935. (KNA RN/1/59).

[34] Municipal Council of Nairobi. (1928). General Notice: The Local Government (Municipalities) Ordinance 1928, By-law no. 325. (KNA RN/8/4).

[35] Eckersley, F. (1935, July 18). [Letter to Municipal Inspector]. (KNA RN/1/59).

[36] Municipal Council of Nairobi. (1944, February 18). [Departmental instruction letter to Chief Inspector]. (KNA RN/1/60).

1946 amendment to the city's by-laws, it was specified that a "hawker" was anyone who offered goods for sale "elsewhere than a fixed place."[37] Even with this legislation in place, though, the problem of static hawkers continued to be discussed by Nairobi's bureaucrats after independence.[38]

Why did hawkers' bodies and wares become a problem to be addressed by policing once they became too fixed in space? What fears were colonial Inspectorate officers responding to when they intervened to keep hawkers "on the move"? In my reading, the general principle held by the colonial administration was that cities like Nairobi were white spaces, and that Africans should enter them only as temporary workers who fulfilled a function, translated into at least three specific tropes about the relative permanence and mobility of African bodies in the city. These three tropes weave through the communications of bureaucrats about the policing of hawking in Nairobi from the 1920s until independence.

Firstly, various references to hygiene in the communications combine a concern about outbreak of diseases with a discomfort about the congregation of non-white bodies in the city center.[39] This kind of racial anxiety, combining concerns about hygiene with an imperative to control the movements of racialized bodies, was central to the planning of Nairobi in the early twentieth century. Murunga (2006) shows how in the 1910s and 1920s, racial segregation in Nairobi was legitimized with reference to hygiene and disease control. A discourse that associated disease with particular locations developed into one that focused on the bodies of Africans and Indians as inherently diseased and therefore in need of containment (Murunga 2006, p. 92).

Secondly, the policing of hawking in Nairobi was influenced by an anxiety about dangerous elements hiding in dense crowds of people. What in the 1940s took the form of a suspicion that pickpockets hid in crowds of African hawkers[40] developed in the 1950s into an association of urban hawkers with the anti-colonial Mau Mau movement. In 1953, all hawkers from the Kikuyu, Meru and Embu groups were denied hawking licenses since they were suspected of collaborating with Mau Mau (Robertson 1997, pp. 136–137).

[37] Municipal Council of Nairobi. (1947). Government Notice: The Nairobi Municipality (Hawkers) (Amendment) By-laws, 1947. (KNA RN/8/4).
[38]: Municipal Council of Nairobi. (1962, February 15). [Letter to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Lands]. (KNA RN/8/4).
[39] See for example: Evans, M. (1936, February 13). [Letter to the Town Clerk]. (KNA RN/1/59); Municipal Council of Nairobi. (1936, September 24). [Departmental instruction letter to the Municipal Inspector]. (KNA RN/1/59).
[40] See for example: East African Traders Association. (1942, April 22). [Letter to Town Clerk]. (KNA RN/8/4); Gulam. (1946, September 8). [Letter to Town Clerk]. (KNA RN/1/60).

The third trope that recurs in the communications is a concern that the presence of static hawkers disturbs the quality of the city center as an urban, modern space.[41] In December 1935, the secretary of the Indian Christian Union complained to Town Clerk Eckersley about a group of African hawkers near the Unions' club:

> Dear sir, I beg to bring into your notice that some Native banana and snuff sellers squat near our club fence, making it a Native Market, and create a nuisance in the vicinity and damage our garden.[42]

By bringing about associations to a marketplace, permanent hawkers threatened the very urbaneness of Nairobi. Concerns about permanent hawkers turning the city into a "rural market"[43] and bringing about a "villagization"[44] of the city continued after independence.

The concern about permanent hawkers turning the streets of the city into rural markets combines the racial anxieties from discourses on hygiene and on security threats with notions of troubled temporal unfolding. The image of a modern city turned into a rural space threatens a reversal of the ideals of progress and development that served as a key legitimization for colonial government. As Smith (2008) and Haugerud (1997) both show, colonial authorities in Kenya legitimized their rule with the promise of development conceived of as material improvements. After independence, this promise of continuously rising material standards associated with "development" and "progress" lived on as a political contract between elected officials and their constituencies (Haugerud 1997, p. 10; Smith 2008, p. 37). We can understand colonial anxieties about hawkers' bodies becoming too permanent in the streets of the city center as one specific expression of the imaginary of development that combined racial anxieties tied to hawkers' bodies with ideals of proper temporal unfolding. The image of the urban street turned into a rural market, together with the practice of policing that sought to keep hawkers constantly "on the move," marks the fragilities of such ideals of progress. Keeping hawkers in a state of constant movement, then, was part of an effort to protect the colonial project in Kenya.

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[41] See for example: Wahid, A. (1935, July 10). [Letter to Town Clerk]. (KNA RN/1/59); Municipal Council of Nairobi. (1946, August 20). [Letter from Town Clerk to Chief Municipal Inspector]. (KNA RN/1/59).
[42] Frank, S. H. (1935, December 19). [Letter to Town Clerk]. (KNA RN/1/59).
[43] Municipal Council of Nairobi. (1980, February 28). [Letter from Town Clerk to the Mayor of Nairobi]. (KNA RN/1/169).
[44] Githunguri, G. G. J. (1972, June 17). [Letter to the Mayor of Nairobi]. (KNA RN/1/169).

Unsettled bodies

Nothing much happens at BestBuy between 10 in the morning and 12 noon. Customers are few. The "flow" from the morning rush hour is long gone and will only pick up again once office workers from the surrounding high-rise blocks go on lunch break. Hawkers arrive leisurely with their bundles of goods over their shoulders, take the time to stop and joke with others before reaching their spot, cleverly harass a fruit seller for a free plum.

Mwende slaps Wangari hard on the shoulder as she dumps her bundle of lemons and ginger root next to Wangari's display of socks. Wangari tries to snatch the hustled plum out of her hand and is met with a torrent of insults. She laughs and translates some of the more ingenious ones to me. While this exchange goes on, Mwende spreads the square piece of white fabric in which she carried her wares on the dusty pavement, squats down behind it and begins to carefully arrange the little green lemons and the chunks of ginger root into appealing piles.

When Mwende has finished organizing her display, she waves over a tea hawker carrying a huge thermos flask and buys a metal tumbler full of warm, milky *chai*. It is quiet for a while. Mwende sips her tea. Wangari checks her phone. I seize the calm moment to ask them both whether I can do a mapping exercise with them. In my backpack are printed maps of central Nairobi, markers in different colors and a voice recorder. My idea is to map the work histories of individual hawkers over time by plotting on the map the different areas in which they have worked. This is my first attempt to try it out in practice.

"When you first started hawking, in which place did you sell?" I ask Wangari.

The voice recorder on my knee flashes its steady red diode. Wangari and Mwende bend their heads over the black-and-white map, markers in hand. Wangari frowns, turns the map, looks up to study the sidewalk in both directions, looks down at the map again.

"Come again?" she says.

"When you first started hawking, in which place did you sell?"

Wangari looks up again, scans the sidewalk, looks down at the map. She frowns.

"I first started selling at Globe…" Wangari says, tracing street names with her index finger. She looks up again, scans the sidewalk in both directions, looks down at the map and traces the same streets with her finger a second time.

"Globe is here," I offer.

Wangari makes a cross with one of the markers. Then she looks up at the sidewalk again. The extent of her confusion surprises me. I had expected that it might be unfamiliar to hawkers to relate to the spaces in which they work by pinpointing them on a map, but Wangari's disorientation goes beyond this. It is as if she never gives herself enough time to study the map before compulsively looking up and about her.

"Which year did you start working at Globe?" I ask.

Wangari exchanges a few words in Kikuyu with Mwende.

"Come again?" she says to me.

"Which year did you start working at Globe?"

But we don't get any further.

"Here's *kanjo*," says Mwende, and Wangari makes a startled jump, drops the map and reaches for her wares. A few minutes later, when a group of Inspectorate officers walk around the corner, all the hawkers at BestBuy are gone.

My first attempt at participatory mapping reveals little about hawkers' work histories but, by the confusion it brought to Wangari, draws attention to the degree of alertness required of hawkers at BestBuy. Wangari's difficulty with concentrating on the map in front of her testifies to how hawkers constantly need to keep an eye on their surroundings. Naively I had chosen the morning hours to attempt a mapping exercise because of my impression that nothing much happens around that time. The incident shows, however, that even while hawkers leisurely organize their wares, drink tea or joke with each other, their gaze constantly takes in the street around them.

After the failed attempt at a mapping exercise with Wangari, I tried a few more times with other hawkers but stopped[45] when Murefu was nearly arrested because he became too immersed in the activity. Head bent over the map, looking for a particular location along Moi Avenue in which he worked in 2014, Murefu failed to notice the senior Inspectorate officer until he stood cross-armed right in front of Murefu's display. While the officer shouted abuse, Murefu groped for his wares and ran off before the senior could call any of his subordinates.

On another day, I am at BestBuy standing between Mama Simon and Mwende. Seeing as I am just chatting to Mama Simon with my hands in my pockets, Mwende enrolls me to help her. She is taking apart the seams of a large sack that previously contained oranges to make a new display-cum-carry-bag for her goods.

"Brigitte, take this side! I'll work on the other side."

I sit down on the sidewalk next to Mwende, feel the air thickening slightly as my face levels with the exhaust pipes from the vehicles speeding by, and start undoing the seams with my fingers. The material is coarse and flexible; some sort of durable white plastic fiber, woven unevenly together, with patches of dirt and rancid fruit juice. Mwende will wash it and put it to use tomorrow, a white background for her carefully arranged piles of lemons and ginger.

Hundreds of similar sacks arrive in Nairobi each day from Jomo Kenyatta airport and from the seaport in Mombasa, carrying fruits and vegetables, second-hand shoes and clothes to Gikomba and Marikiti markets, where hawkers buy their stock. Once re-worked into displays-cum-carry-bags for hawkers' goods, they are called

[45] The work history mapping instead became an element in the semi-structured interviews with hawkers that were carried out by Ruth, Wangari, Njeri, Samuel and Wachira in my absence in August–October 2017.

mwareeros. Organizing your goods on a *mwareero*, as well as quickly picking up the four corners and flinging the bundle over your shoulder without losing any items, are some of the first skills that new hawkers learn.

Next to us on the sidewalk are the *mwareeros* of Mwende's colleagues. Shades of pale white, blue and yellow underneath colorful goods. Frilled at the edges where the fabric is coming apart, the four corners of the material pointing upwards, retaining the shape from the bundles into which they are tied when it's time to run.

"You know I didn't always sell from a *mwareero*?" says Mwende. "I used to sell in Huruma [a low-income residential area]. I sold potatoes and onions by the side of the road there. When I came here to town, I changed. Every day we have to pack and run. You can't run with potatoes. You will be so tired!" Mwende laughs. "Also, you cannot sell tomatoes. They will be squashed. So now I sell these lemons."

Unlicensed hawking, the type of hawking where you have to run from Inspectorate officers, is often referred to as "the work of *mwareero*." For example, a hawker can say (as they often do): "This work of *mwareero* is not something you can stay in when you get older." In this way, the phrase conveys via a material reference what *kuficha* says about hawkers' bodies and the environment in which they work.

The state of alertness that hawkers are constantly in, which is sometimes described with the term *kuficha* as well as the accompanying material practice called "the work of *mwareero*," are responses to the condition of being policed. Wangari has been trained by years of working as a hawker to have her gaze constantly attuned to her surroundings. She was unable to concentrate on the task of reading a map because this attunement is so engrained in her – with good reason, as we saw, since she had to pack up and run during the mapping exercise. Mwende described the material practice of working with a *mwareero* as one that demands a careful selection of the types of wares a hawker specializes in, allowing the hawker to maintain mobility without damaging the goods. "The work of *mwareero*" is an economic practice as well as a response to being policed, a handling of one's stock under the particular circumstances that demand of hawkers that they can run away frequently.

When talking to Inspectorate officers in central Nairobi, I found that many of them described it as a deliberate policing strategy to keep hawkers in a constant state of movement. Some of the officers' descriptions of their work would carry a striking resemblance to the discourses that informed the governance of hawking during Nairobi's colonial administration. For example, one officer called Kipara commented that "We must keep them [hawkers] on their feet. Otherwise they will start putting up their own structures here, and there will be no more road. This will be a market."

That the main purpose of present-day Inspectorate policing is to keep hawkers "on their feet," preventing them from becoming too stationary on the sidewalk, corresponds to my general impression of crackdowns in central Nairobi. These crackdowns seem to aim mostly at making hawkers get up from the sidewalk and

move away for the duration of time that the vehicle lingers nearby. Kipara's comment carries several resemblances with the logics that underwrote colonial-era policing of hawking: the imperative to keep hawkers "on their feet" as well as the fear of temporal regression encapsulated in the image of the street-turned-market.

The resemblances with colonial fears and logics of policing do not end there. The concerns about criminals hiding in dense crowds of people, and the conflation of hawkers with suspected criminals, that were prevalent in the 1940s and 1950s also seem to live on in the ways in which present-day Inspectorate officers talk about their work. Richard, another Inspectorate officer, explained to me that it is important to keep hawkers moving about in the city center: "Where there are hawkers, there are pickpockets. They hide in those crowds of people. Sometimes the hawkers themselves can even be the pickpockets, if they have not sold anything that day."

What do we make of these seeming repetitions of colonial-era racial anxieties in present-day policing of hawking in Nairobi? In many respects, hawking and the policing of hawking is vastly different today than it was at different points during colonial rule. The colonial administration permitted and regulated hawking. Although hawkers continuously contravened these regulations even during the colonial administration,[46] the policing of hawking was still an exercise in managing an activity that was legal and considered relevant to the urban economy. Today, in contrast, hawking of any kind is strictly prohibited in the city center. In principle, the task of present-day Inspectorate officers is to ensure that there are no hawkers at all in the streets. However, Inspectorate officers with whom I talked would often shake their heads with irony when relaying this. Completely ridding the city center of hawkers is an impossible task, they explained. Here is a conversation between me and an Inspectorate officer named Kuria:

Brigitte: Sometimes I see you passing a hawker in the street without doing anything. Are you not supposed to do something?
Kuria: I'm supposed to! Every time I see hawkers, I'm supposed to chase them away. But hawkers are so many. You can't finish them.
Brigitte: 'You can't finish them'? [Laughs.]
Kuria: [Serious] They will always be here. You can never finish them.

Present-day Inspectorate officers understand their own role as one of pragmatically containing a potentially overwhelming number of hawkers from taking over the

[46] See for example: Eckersley, F. (1935, February 5). [Letter to Superintendent of Police]. (KNA RN/1/59); Newmark, D. (1935, August 12). [Letter to Town Clerk]. (KNA RN/1/59); Eckersley, F. (1935, August 13). [Letter to Councilor D. Newmark]. (KNA RN/1/59).

streets. They encourage mobile hawking as a practical response to impossible demands made on them in the contemporary context of mass unemployment, swelling numbers of hawkers and underfunding of the Inspectorate's work. Outnumbered by hawkers, and with diminishing resources at hand, Inspectorate officers talk about their policing as a question of precariously keeping a flood at bay.

In this light, keeping hawkers "on their feet" or "on the move" is not an exact repetition of colonial modes of policing. The imperative of making sure hawkers move around rather than sitting still is similar, but the context in which it plays out, the problems it seeks to address and the positions of the officers executing it are different. At this point, I draw on Stoler's (2016) notion of history as neither complete rupture nor exact continuity of the past. Colonial projects, technologies and modes of governance continue to exert an influence today, she argues, but we should think of them as dislocated and reconfigured. They work in combination with current dynamics, living on in material infrastructures and lending weight to some ideas and practices while complicating others (Stoler 2016, p. 28).

I understand the policing logic of keeping hawkers in central Nairobi "on the move" or "on their feet" as arising from a certain resonance between the practical circumstances facing present-day Inspectorate officers and the afterlife of colonial anxieties related to hawkers' bodies. In turn, the alertness of hawkers who *ficha*, and the material practice of *mwareero* work, are both responses to the violence that this mode of policing entails. We might conceive of the bodily comportment of hawkers, and of their material practices related to their wares, as sites where colonial violence continues to work in displaced ways.

Unsettled minds

> One of the floor-level shops at BestBuy has two loudspeakers attached on each corner of the shopfront. On most days, the overburdened speakers bellow out either gospel music or English-language children's songs, to advertise that these two albums can be bought inside. Today is a good day, however, as the speakers screech out local dance tunes, and the hawkers at BestBuy listen with a spring in their step.
>
> "Do you hear this song, Brigitte?" says Wangari.
>
> The loudspeakers now play a song with a dancehall beat and lyrics in Sheng that I can't make out.
>
> "What is it about?"
>
> "You hear how they say "*stima*" [Sheng for "electricity"]? Eh! So this song, it's about – you know – when *stima* is gone in the ghetto, and

then it comes back. And people are so happy and excited they shout: '*Stima*!'" Wangari laughs.

A few paces down the sidewalk, Maria and Julia jump up and dance to the song. Mwende hums along and rocks her shoulders to the music while organizing her lemons.

"You see Mwende dancing down there?" Wangari says, raising her voice. "She is a ghetto girl. She stays in Huruma. She is one of those people in the song who will get so excited and shout '*Stima*!'"

Julia and Maria laugh. Mwende shouts back that Wangari herself has grown up in Huruma and is no different. Wangari makes a few purposeful dance moves.

Most of the hawkers at BestBuy stay in Nairobi's "Eastlands" in areas such as Huruma and Dandora that carry entrenched stigma. The high frequency of power outages in such areas is by no means the only problem faced by residents. Known for being overcrowded and ripe with criminal activity, these areas continue the EastWest divide of Nairobi originating in colonial-era city planning[47] (Anderson 2001, p. 145; Médard 2010, pp. 3037). Inspectorate officers and other Nairobians often use reference to the Eastlands areas in which hawkers live to convey other, implied meanings about their assumed motivations for hawking. Kuria explains how he sees hawkers as people desperate to make money and therefore prone to violence:

> The person who is hawking is someone who is coming from a home with no food. […] They stay in Mathare.[48] Have you been to Mathare? Do you have slums like that in Denmark? They have children there and there is no food in the house, and they know that: 'If I come to town, I can make something.' […] If you try to arrest someone who has not eaten for a day – that person will fight you!

Van Stapele's (2016) argument about "spatial othering" of young men living in Mathare, another Eastlands community, could easily be applied to residents of Huruma and Dandora as well. Once in the city center, residents of Huruma and Dandora expect to be treated with reservation and suspicion merely by mention of the area in which they stay. Richard's easy conflation between hawkers and pickpockets, mentioned earlier, speaks to the same suspicion.

[47] As Médard (2010) points out, the East–West divide of Nairobi into an affluent, spacious western part and an overcrowded, poor eastern part is by no means absolute. Upscale pockets to the East and large unplanned settlements to the West, such as Kibera, are examples of exceptions (pp. 30–37).

[48] Despite Kuria's conviction that hawkers live in Mathare, I found that most of the hawkers at BestBuy live in adjacent areas, which nonetheless carry stigma comparable to that of Mathare.

With Kuria's and Richard's comments in mind, we can understand the alertness of *kuficha* as more than a bodily comportment serving a practical purpose – a readiness to run. We can understand the position of being "on your feet" in the city center as an emotional state of discomfort in a space where hawkers know they are looked on with suspicion and prejudice. We can also understand Wangari's teasing of Mwende for being a "ghetto girl" as a playful acknowledgment of the stigma that both of them endure when hawking in the city center.

Susan was asked during an interview to describe her experience of hawking when she was still new:

> Ruth: Can you tell us about the very first day or week that you worked? How was it?
>
> Susan: I had a lot of stress. I would sit like this and shiver because I was not used to that, and every time I would be told to run away and when I heard how much fine [other hawkers] were being charged [when taken to the court], I would sit like a thief who has stolen somewhere. That is how I used to be.

Susan's remark that she would "sit like a thief" hints at the ways in which entering the city center to hawk is an emotional experience that manifests in hawkers' bodily comportment. Hawkers embody the fear and stress of being exposed to the risk of arrest, and the uncomfortable knowledge that they are policed along the same lines as thieves.

In a classical sociological study, Harcourt (1998) comments on the so-called "broken windows hypothesis" applied in order-maintenance policing in New York in the 1990s. The hypothesis held that responding intensively to petty misdemeanors reduced more severe crime in urban neighborhoods. Harcourt argues that categories of the "disorderly" applied in this policing strategy in fact produced subjects to be violated through techniques of policing. Persons targeted as potentially disorderly were disproportionately exposed to police violence (Harcourt 1998, pp. 297–299). Han (2017) takes up the problematic of policed populations being exposed to violence by virtue of being cast as potentially disorderly. She describes how residents in a Chilean urban neighborhood make continuous efforts to belong in the category of "law-abider" in their encounters with locally stationed police officers in order to escape the potentially lethal targeting that association with the local drug economy would entail (Han 2017, pp. 166–171). Their efforts to remain in the category of "law-abider" extends into intimate and family relationships. Residents conduct themselves and their behavior towards friends and family members with an acute attention to the ways in which these are associated with drugs. Han (2017) describes policing and the categorization it entails as an "condition of life" for residents that involves emotional strain and existential questions as well as exposure to violence (p. 180).

I draw inspiration from Han's notion that being policed as "disorderly" is a condition which policed persons inhabit and which they are constantly aware of. In Wangari's remark about Mwende being a "ghetto girl," we can see how hawkers dwell in Nairobi's city center with the awareness that they are seen as not properly belonging there. Furthermore, from Susan's recollection of how she "sat like a thief," we can see that, for Nairobi's hawkers, being policed as disorderly is not only an existential condition but also a somatic one. If colonial violence works in displaced ways through modes of policing that keep hawkers in a constant state of alertness, we can understand this violence as intimate in more than one way. It works on hawkers' bodies, which are never allowed rest, and it works on hawkers' sense of self-worth, imposing on them the discomfort of being associated with criminals. *Kuficha*, then, is a response to a condition of violence that wears on a hawkers' dignity as well as her body.

Dreaming of permanence

Peter has worked as a shoe hawker in downtown Nairobi for twelve years. On several occasions I follow him around the CBD over the course of an evening, as he chases the flows of customers and dodges the movements of Inspectorate vehicles. Often when I meet him in the late afternoon, he invites me to admire his stock of formal men's shoes from Gikomba market, which he has spent the day polishing and repairing. Peter prides himself in having a knack for selecting good quality items that appeal to "high-end" customers. Almost everyone buying from him is dressed in a suit and tie.

We are waiting around in a back alley in the early evening hours when Peter tells me about several other pairs of shoes that he selected at Gikomba earlier in the day but has not brought with him:

"You can't carry many pairs [of shoes] if you are selling like this. If you have thirty pairs here and you hear that *kanjo* are just around the corner – already you can start shaking!"

Peter holds out his hand horizontally in front of him and illustrates by making the hand tremble.

"Because if they come here and they take everything, you will just be back to zero. You have to find some money and go to Gikomba, buy ten pairs and come back here. Start all over."

And once again, like on several previous occasions, Peter shares with me his dream of quitting hawking and opening his own shop: "I don't like selling here on the street. If I had a chance to go somewhere in a shop and sell, that would be much better. But the problem is capital, like I've told you."

Peter has indeed told me. Many times. By now, Peter's dream of opening a shop enters our conversations with a predictable pattern to it: Hawking is not all bad since

it allows Peter to sustain his family, but now, this business of always running from *kanjo* – eeeeeeh! What kind of life is that? How will he go on running when he gets older and his body is no longer strong? No, what Peter would really like to do is open his own shop where he can keep a large number of shoes and customers can come to him. He will be comfortable, sitting in his shop and attending to customers. And he can market the shop using social media, just as he does with his current returning customers. But now, the problem is getting the capital to start up. Securing a lease in the city center alone costs 2 million KSh under the table. Added to that would be the cost of stock, easily another million. Peter just doesn't see how he can bring up that kind of capital.

Versions of this dream recur throughout my conversations with Peter. The staggering amounts of two million shillings to secure a lease and one million to buy stock are fixed components. They hover over Peter, making the realization of his dream both tangible and unreachable at the same time.

Peter is not the only hawker who dreams of owning his own shop. In fact, the dream of quitting the "work of *mwareero*" and setting up business in a fixed, licensed place is so widespread that it is the rule rather than the exception among the hawkers of central Nairobi. In the interviews with hawkers conducted from August to October 2017, the dream of opening one's own shop usually entered the conversation when the hawkers were asked about their plans for the future.

"I pray that God will help me I get a place where I can settle," said an elderly female hawker called "*mathee*" [grandmother] by her colleagues. She already has grandchildren but continues hawking because she needs the income it brings.

"I would be happy to leave this work of *mwareero* and set up work where I am comfortable. Where I am not disturbed by *kanjo*," said a younger female hawker. A single mother, she started selling second-hand clothes in the city center when her children entered school in order to earn enough for their school fees.[49]

The dream of opening a shop is typically associated with being able to "settle" and with being "comfortable" among hawkers. It is born out of the bodily state of unsettlement that the policing of hawkers encourages, and which hawkers refer to as *kuficha* or as the work of *mwareero*. That is, the dream of a shop is born out of unsettlement in both bodily and existential registers, relating both to the concrete, physical violence and the categorization as disorderly, which hawkers are exposed to by policing.

Smith (2008) notes how the Kenyan ideal of "development" in present-day use has an individual aspect. In addition to denoting collective efforts and expectations of state-led improvements, "development" also refers to the work of individuals to transform their present, starting with each person's growing up: "You have developed

[49] State primary school is free in Kenya, although parents or guardians have to cover the costs of uniforms and schoolbooks. Government secondary schools are fee-paying.

well!" (Smith 2008, p. 6). The widespread dreaming among Nairobi's hawkers of leaving the streets and opening their own shops reveal the contours of a normative framework for such individual development. Hawking does not amount to having developed well. Hawkers dream of permanence both in the sense of a physical place where they will not have to run from Inspectorate officers, and of a more satisfactory end point to their life trajectories in accordance with imaginaries of personal development.

As a particular instantiation of the Kenyan dream of development, the dream among hawkers of opening their own shop has a cruelty to it. Berlant (2011) describes "cruel optimism" as the attachment to an elusive ideal associated with the good life, which the optimistic person is unlikely to ever realize. Optimism is cruel, according to Berlant (2011, p. 13), when the attachment itself causes suffering to the person experiencing it. Among hawkers in central Nairobi, cruel forms of dreaming exacerbate the somatic condition of *kuficha*. In associating permanence with the good life, and in attaching this ideal to the elusive goal of owning one's own shop, hawkers experience the violence of modes of policing that keep them "on the move" as an unsettlement not only in bodily and emotional registers but also in relation to the unfolding of their life trajectories. The dream of opening their own shop lends to hawkers' experience of *kuficha* a further unsettlement: a sense of troubled temporal unfolding.

Embodying national unsettlement

When Mike Sonko was elected Governor of Nairobi County in August 2017, a few months followed when the policing of hawkers in central Nairobi was markedly relaxed. Having exerted himself to win the votes of hawkers by citing plans of regulated access to city streets as well as the construction of markets in central locations, Sonko began his career as Governor with official radio silence on the matter of hawkers combined with vast de facto tolerance. As hawkers flocked to town from all directions, pedestrians were increasingly forced to compete with vehicles on the roads because the sidewalks had become blocked by hawkers' wares. Local news media cried of "hawker headache" (Omulo 2017), "hawkers menace" (Mutavi 2017a), "hawkers invasion" (Musambi 2017), and "madness in city streets" (Mutavi 2017b).

On the social media platform Twitter, Sonko was judged mercilessly. One tweet (Rein 2017) from November 1, 2017, compared Nairobi with Gikomba market, which is generally associated with dirtiness and petty crime. Responses to this tweet spoke of the "decay" of the city and the loss of "glory:"

@Asamoh_: Oya @MikeSonko did your [pre-election] manifesto include having hawkers all over in the CBD? Nairobi is looking like Gikomba.

@lalloyce: […] I don't think we should expect much from his administration, beyond the decay of the city.

@wangeciouma: […] we want the glory of nairobi back.

Another tweet (Ma3Route 2017) from November 2, 2017, accompanied by a picture of a pavement in the central Nairobi lined with vegetable hawkers, sarcastically integrated Nairobi's promotional motto of being a "green city in the sun" with the common Swahili pseudonym for street traders and open-air artisans – *jua kali*, meaning "hot sun." Some of the comments helped spell out the implied meanings of the pun:

@Ma3Route: How we've made our Nairobi capital city CBD "CITY UNDER UNDER THE SUN [sun emoticon]

@WaridiNyambura: My QUESTION to Sonko is Nairobi an international capital city or a village marketplace? […]

@jimmymbandi: Unfortunate in Kenya we assume we are very developed but we cannot manage a city. […]

On November 8, 2017, a few days after Twitter exploded with angry conversations about hawkers turning Nairobi into a village marketplace, the Governor took to explaining himself via his official Twitter account. Accompanied by four pictures of streets in the city center with Inspectorate vehicles visibly present and no hawkers, Sonko (2017) promised to solve the problem of hawkers' obstructing the sidewalks. Comments to his tweet, both critical and supportive, reiterated the danger of hawkers turning the city into a marketplace and stunting its development:

@MikeSonko: For the time being, my administration is working on means and ways that will ensure a progressive and humane relocation of hawkers to designated streets and lanes where they can freely do their businesses without obstructing other people as well as other business owners.

@Edd_wiz_: Finally Mr Governer. Dont turn the whole of the CBD into a Grand Muthurwa [another Nairobi market]

@omondidacon:	Have it done very fast !!!! This is our capital city not capital Market!!!!!!! Get it done!!!
@BonfaceMutethia:	This is how the city should look like. There must be a difference between CBD and Gikomba. Well done.

Who was talking to whom during those days early in November 2017, when Twitter fired up with anxieties about hawkers, capital cities and rural markets? Statistically, Twitter users in Kenya belong among what Al-Saqaf and Christensen (2019) call elite social media users. That is, compared to other social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp, Twitter is disproportionately used by middle-class citizens and people who are professionally involved in political debate such as journalists, politicians and celebrities (Al-Saqaf & Christensen 2019, pp. 153–154). Although different positions are voiced in the tweets and comments, they have in common an insistence that the streets of central Nairobi should be kept free of hawkers. For the present purposes, I understand the tweets as one contemporary site for the continued life of the image of an urban street regressing to the stage of a rural market through the too-permanent dwelling of hawkers' bodies. The tweets can be read as a particular instantiation of the afterlife of the colonial anxiety about permanent hawkers who upset the proper temporal unfolding associated with "development." They indicate that the policing of hawking in Nairobi still takes place amidst dreams of progress that are sensitive to the aesthetic quality of bodies and displayed goods on the sidewalks of the city, once these become too permanent.

Smith (2008) argues that in a Kenyan context, "development" as a temporal orientation came to describe not necessarily an end point that one could expect with certainty to reach, but rather something spectral and withheld. Development in some ways is synonymous with "the impossible and the absolute," combining the experience of paternalistic colonial administration and the religious imaginaries of salvation and redemption from missionary projects (Smith 2008, p. 38). It also arises out of postindependence experiences of Kenya's place in international political economy, such as the economic crisis and austerity of the 1990s. During this period, when half of the traffic lights in Nairobi were permanently broken, Kenyans experienced a sense of decline; a collective feeling that the country was retracting its development and moving backwards (Smith 2008, pp. 11–15).

If hawkers' dreams of owning their own shops are a cruel optimism in Berlant's (2011) sense, if they mark frustrations about the temporal unfolding of individual hawkers' lives, we might see a parallel, national frustration about troubled temporal unfolding in the public outcry directed towards Mike Sonko in late 2017. If hawkers suffer the frustrations of not "developing" in their personal lives, those Kenyan Twitter users who fumed over Sonko's relaxed governance of hawking experienced a

parallel frustration about troubled national level "development." Taking this particular Twitter storm as an indication, we might understand the contemporary policing of hawking as guided by a collective cruel attachment to an elusive ideal of national development. In a sense, then, we can understand the state of *kuficha* as a passing on of such national frustrated dreaming to the bodies of hawkers via violent policing.

The argument that marginalized people who are constantly on the move are pushed into this state by the political economy which they inhabit is made in different ways by Tadiar (2004) and Vigh (2006). In the context of Metro Manila, Tadiar emphasizes the ways in which elite dreaming results in violent policing that chases informal workers such as street hawkers around the city. The "national bourgeoisie" (Tadiar 2004, p. 85) is caught between conflicting desires for the economic profits generated in informal economies, on the one hand, and ideals of urban modernity, on the other. The result is that hawkers and other persons engaged in informal economic activities in Manila are subject to a style of policing that alternates between violent crackdowns and de facto tolerance (Tadiar 2004, pp. 80–92). Vigh, on the other hand, describes an involuntary state of constant mobility emphasizing not the desires of elites but the efforts of marginalized people themselves. He argues that young men who are violently mobilized within patron-client networks in Guinea-Bissau navigate a social terrain that is constantly shifting. In order to survive, they need to address immediate obstacles as well as constantly orient themselves within the social landscape they occupy (Vigh 2006, pp. 51–54). While Tadiar understands forced states of bodily mobility as an imposition by the violent desires of elites, Vigh understands it as a response, a survival mechanism, by which marginalized people find their way through impossible economic circumstances.

When hawkers in central Nairobi *ficha*, meanwhile, it is less easy to make a separation between elite and subaltern modes of dreaming, and between elite and subaltern modes of desiring and orienting oneself individually and collectively. Hawkers' running from Inspectorate officers, their embarrassments at being hawkers, and their dreams of opening their own shops are not easily explained as subversive tactics or idioms of resistance pitted against an elite imaginary. Rather, I argue that the dream of development that unsettles hawkers' bodies and minds, and the dream that directs modes of policing that chase them about the city, is *the same* dream in different instantiations.

Conclusion

I have argued that the state of alertness and readiness to run, which hawkers refer to as *kuficha*, is a response to a violating condition that we should understand as historical. The policing of hawking in central Nairobi revolves to a large extent around keeping hawkers in a constant state of movement. We can understand the imperative

to keep hawkers "on the move" as a result of the afterlife of colonial dreams of development and progress, and the ways in which these dreams continue to play out in Kenyan politics. I have conceived of this continued effect of colonial projects not as an exact repetition of the same, but as a lingering on of aesthetic ideals for the city and racialized anxieties around hawkers' bodies in displaced forms, which resonate with the current conditions facing Inspectorate officers.

Kuficha is not only about bodies that move. For hawkers, *kuficha* also entails the emotional unsettlement that comes with being looked down upon as a "ghetto girl" in the space of the city center. It entails the temporal unsettlement of life trajectories that do not seem to be on the right track. Bodily mobility, notions of the good and respectable life, and frustrations about troubled temporal unfolding are all combined in the state of movement which hawkers sometimes refer to as *kuficha*, or via a material reference as the work of *mwareero*.

Furthermore, I have proposed that we understand hawkers' dreams of permanence and respectability not as an opposition to elite imaginaries for a city that excludes them, but rather as part of the same dream. While dreaming of a progression towards something proper that seems constantly out of reach is a shared experience among hawkers and better-off urban residents, the violence that this dreaming generates is disproportionately felt by hawkers. In this sense, hawkers who are constantly on the move in Nairobi's city center embody the frustrated dreams of their nation.

4. The work

It is winter in Nairobi. The hawkers at BestBuy are wearing coats and gloves. When I arrive, they have just come back to place their wares after hiding from Inspectorate officers.

"Hi Brigitte! We have put down our work [wares] just now," says Wangari.

She is organizing a display full of second-hand children's jumpers. She started selling these instead of her usual socks when the cold weather began. One by one, Wangari picks up the jumpers and shakes them, then folds them and places them next to each other in narrow lines so that the color and pattern of each one is visible. Alternately standing straight to shake a jumper and bending over to place it, the movements of her body are mirrored to our left and right by other clothes hawkers organizing their wares.

While the hawkers selling clothes stand and bend, Mwende sits on the sidewalk organizing little green lemons and yellow-brown ginger roots on her display into neat piles. These days, she sits on several large pieces of cardboard stacked on top of each other, to shield her somewhat from the cold.

Wangari buys a mug of hot cocoa from a mobile vendor and offers me a sip. Mwende says something to Wangari in Kikuyu, and Wangari grudgingly hands her the mug. The two women begin to argue about the size of Mwende's sip of cocoa but fall silent when everyone suddenly starts packing up and running. Inspectorate officers have been spotted once more. Wangari makes a small, involuntary jump, gropes for her bundle of jumpers and sprints off before I have time to notice what is going on. Mwende passes me the cocoa mug while she collects her lemons and ginger roots with calm efficiency.

"She [Wangari] is stressed now that she has clothes rather than socks!" Mwende remarks.

When Wangari changed from selling socks to selling children's jumpers that winter, she became "stressed," as Mwende put it. Socks are cheap and easy to replace, should they get impounded by Inspectorate officers. Second-hand jumpers, on the other hand, are expensive and time consuming to stock. Wangari traveled to Gikomba market to buy the jumpers, bargained for each one of them, then washed and repaired them at

home before finally bringing them to town. The startled jump she made at the first signs of the Inspectorate crackdown, and the urgency with which she ran away, shows how the types of wares hawkers brings with them have implications for the ways in which they dwell in the streets of the city center.

Wares require different bodily movements of the hawkers who sell them. Fruit hawkers like Mwende sit on the ground behind their piles of produce. They constantly have their hands on their fruits, turning apples in their palms to look for brown spots, sprinkling water on grapes to make them look fresh. Clothes hawkers, meanwhile, stand upright behind their displays. They shake the dust off each piece of clothing, fold the clothes against their own bodies, and bend over to place them on their displays. Hawkers refer to their wares as "my work."[50] "*Kanjos* took my work," they might say, or "let me go and hide my work." I take my cue from this emphasis on the centrality of the material properties of hawkers' wares for the work of hawking.

I am particularly interested in the implications that hawkers' wares have for their policing relations with Inspectorate officers. An important reason why fruit hawkers sit on the ground while clothes hawkers stand behind their displays is that their wares expose them differently to policing. Inspectorate officers are far more interested in impounding clothes than fruits because they can demand larger bribes in order to return the clothes to the hawkers. Clothes hawkers stand behind their displays in order to be ready to run.

In this chapter, I ask how hawkers' wares bring hawkers into policing relations with Inspectorate officers. In order to answer this question, I approach wares as material objects that condition the ways in which hawkers dwell in the city center. Besides the requirements that wares place on hawkers for their productivity – such as folding a jumper nicely or sprinkling water on a bunch of grapes – wares also condition hawkers' presence in the city center by being the occasion for Inspectorate officers to arrest them. Wares, I argue, open hawkers up to policing relations.

In arguing that wares open hawkers up to policing relations, I propose that we conceive of relationality in a particular way. Rather than understanding policing relations as something that arises only once hawkers and Inspectorate officers are face-to-face with each other in the street, I see policing relations as embedded in the ways in which hawkers handle their wares. Theoretically, I draw on Strathern's (1992) description of Melanesian gift exchange as a process that begins with persons evaluating and rearranging themselves in anticipation of the relationship that the exchange will bring. Before an exchange can take place, according to Strathern, the item to be exchanged must first be made detachable from the person who will give it. This happens through the interest of the person about to receive the item. This external

[50] When hawkers speak in English, they use the terms "work" and "job" interchangeably. The Swahili word "*kazi*" translates to both. Here, I emphasize the English term "work." I elaborate on this decision in footnote 51.

interest "elicits" the item (Strathern 1992, p. 178). Inspired by this description, I understand hawkers as already implicated in policing relations the moment they enter Nairobi's city center with their wares over their shoulders. Aware of the interest that Inspectorate officers have in impounding their wares, hawkers respond by handling their wares in particular ways.

Policing, in this view, conditions the ways in which hawkers carry, place and run with their bundles of wares. That policing has effects on the policed even when officers are not physically present has been noted by other studies. Han (2017) describes policing as a "condition of life" for the policed, which affects them even in the absence of face-to-face encounters with police officers. However, the contribution I make to policing literature is that we might see this effect on the policed as an implication in *relationships* even when officers are not physically present. As I go on to discuss, seeing hawkers as implicated in policing relationships through the ways in which they are attached to their wares allows us to bring police violence into view in new ways.

The argument proceeds in four parts. First, I describe hawking as a form of cultivation; as a question of managing the productive capacity of hawkers' wares. Secondly, I show how hawkers' wares bring them into relationships with Inspectorate officers. Thirdly, I argue that the material properties of hawkers' wares have implications for the types of policing relationships they establish with officers. Lastly, I look at hawkers' efforts to escape police violence by redrawing boundaries around themselves, their wares and their relationships with officers.

Placing the work

Mutuku sells second-hand shoes. He comes to the city center in the early evening, when the day shift Inspectorate officers finish their work. Then, Mutuku moves himself around over the course of the evening with his bundle over his shoulder, following the "movement" of people in the streets of the city center:

> When I am at BestBuy, the people [customers] are from college. So, once the lectures are over, you find that [in] the area around BestBuy there is no movement. Then I look for a place where there is movement. The movement at Moi Avenue ends at ten in the night. It is busy until ten. There is another place called Posta. I work there mainly on weekends. When you observe places like Moi Avenue, on holidays there are no people. And BestBuy also. The place I will find movement is there at Posta.

Nairobi's city center emerges from Mutuku's account as a place with rhythms and seasons. Hawking shoes requires an attunement to these rhythms, and an ability to place one's wares in the right place at the right time, where the "movement" of the streets will allow them to be productive.

Finding the right spot to place one's wares is not only a question of the environment, but also a question of what wares one is selling. Mshortie initially started out selling children's toys, but she changed to selling towels instead because the toys were not "moving:"

> With selling toys, I felt they were not moving. [Then I copied] someone else when I observed that they are selling towels and I observe they [the towels] are moving. So, I find an option of how I will put the towels and observe if they will move.

While Mutuku moves himself and his shoes around the city center, chasing the movements in the streets, Mshortie keenly pays attention to the different capacities of toys and towels for "moving" in the place where she works.

Like Mshortie, Barasa also emphasizes the importance of being able to "observe" how one's wares are selling at a particular hawking location. When Barasa saw that the second-hand trousers he was selling were not "moving" in the spot where he sold them, he scouted for another location to place his wares:

> I would leave my work with someone else [at the old place] and observe how people [at BestBuy] are doing. I observed the kind of things that are moving, the flow of customers. This kind of work [trousers], to do well, requires flow of customers.

Items that do not move are sometimes described as "dead stock." "You have to know how to pick shoes that many people will be interested in," Wachira once told me. "If you pick the wrong kinds of shoes, you will end up with dead stock which is not moving." Dead stock, with their dead weight, are a burden. You carry them with you day after day, exposing yourself to policing with just half a kilo more to slow you down, but you do not make any profit from them.

Some hawkers talk about the ability of their wares to move in productive terms. The wares "work" in the active sense of the verb, rather than passively *being* "work" in the sense of the noun. This is how Jaymo described his decision to change his type of wares:

> Jaymo: After selling chiffon tops I stopped and started selling jumpers.
> Ruth: Why did you change?

Jaymo: I felt that […] when they [the tops] come here they *nikazia* ["don't work"], they don't produce a lot of cash. So, there is this friend of mine who was selling jumpers who told me that jumpers were not bad, that they bring money.

Ruth: Were you making good money selling jumpers? How would you compare it with chiffon tops?

Jaymo: Jumpers made good [money]; more than that of chiffon tops.

An emphasis on "work" in a Kenyan context implies claims to wealth production associated with cultivation. According to Lonsdale (1992), Kikuyu nationalists who would take political power in Kenya at independence operated with a "labor theory of value" which privileged the cultivation of land through agricultural production (p. 333; see also Blunt 2010, pp. 98–128; Droz 2006). "Working the land," making it yield through cultivation, was held to be a stronger claim to belong to a place than having been there originally or having reaped it through fishing and herding (Lonsdale 2008). When hawkers speak of their wares as "work,"[51] we can understand this as a claim embedded in a moral ethos of wealth generation via agricultural activities.

Hawkers describe their work as a question of generating profits by making their wares yield. The wares are productive when placed in the right way in the environment of the city center. A hawker must know how to place her wares close to where the movement, or the flows, of the city will make them move as well. She must observe the productivity of her wares relative to other items sold in the environment, changing, if necessary, to a different type of wares more capable of yielding profit. We might understand hawking, then, as a form of cultivation that depends on the proper supporting of the productive capacities of hawkers' wares.

[51] Some hawkers refer to their wares as "my job." In a Kenyan context, "job" has a shorter but no less politicized history than the concept of "work." Unemployment has regularly been a major topic during Kenyan elections, especially recently. During the 2017 elections, "jobs" were fiercely demanded by the electorate and elaborately promised by politicians. In one speech, incumbent President Uhuru Kenyatta promised to "create 1.3 million jobs" each year of his second term, should he be re-elected (Wanambisi 2017). "Jobs," then, are something to be given to the voters by their elected officials. We could say that while the notion of "work" in Jomo Kenyatta's mantra "freedom and work" placed responsibility on all citizens for contributing to the nation's wealth (Blunt 2010, pp. 114–115), "jobs" imply a political contract rather than a productive activity. In the present analysis, I emphasize "work" over "jobs" because my interest is in exploring the continuities between Kenyan (particularly Kikuyu) notions of work as cultivation and the ways in which hawkers' wares place requirements on them for their productivity.

Paying for the work

Wangari is in the middle of an anecdote when the whole street starts packing and running. For a split second she stands completely frozen, her head turned in the direction where the movement of packing hawkers started. Then she leaves her story line hanging mid-air while she grabs the four corners of her fabric display and throws it over her shoulder as a bundle, taking off in the opposite direction.

All around me, hawkers pick up their wares and start running in the same direction Wangari took. After a few moments, however, I spot her and some of the hawkers who usually stand next to her still with their wares in bundles over their shoulders. They have come back, but I don't approach them. It seems like they are on edge; their heads darting from side to side. Then, they run into one of the side alleys.

The clothes hawkers have all gone. Julia, Mwende, Maria and the other women selling fruits have gathered their heavy bundles together but remain where they are, craning their necks to see what is going on in either direction. They also seem anxious, preoccupied with looking out.

Jaymo comes back from the alley where he has hidden his wares. He looks calm now. I ask him: "What is happening?"

"*Kanjos* came on both sides of the road at the same time. They arrested a lot of people."

"What about *gethuguus* [lookout persons]?"

"I don't know if they were sleeping or what," Jaymo says.

More hawkers who have managed to hide their work join me and Jaymo. Wangari is one of them. We walk a bit further up the road from where we can see three white County Inspectorate vans parked on the sidewalk. Several hawkers from BestBuy are standing by the vans, talking to officers. In the middle is a considerable pile of bundles with hawkers' wares. Two officers take the bundles one by one and load them into the back of one of the vehicles.

Barasa comes towards us and says something to Wangari and Jaymo in Kikuyu, unsmiling. Then he continues down the street.

"His work was taken by *kanjo*," Wangari says to me.

"Where is he going now?"

"He wants to get money from his Mpesa [mobile banking service]," she says. "They have taken everyone's work with one thousand."

"They arrested more than thirty people," says Jaymo. "Thirty people, and one thousand from each, that's thirty thousand. *Kanjos* are making a lot of money today."

Once their wares have been taken by Inspectorate officers, hawkers in central Nairobi have several opportunities for getting them back before they are officially impounded. In the first instance, they can pay a bribe to officers while the wares are still in the Inspectorate van. This is what Barasa set out to do in the incident above. If the wares reach the Inspectorate depot, a hawker might still be able to convince the

officers there to hand them back in return for a bribe. In the last instance, hawkers can appear in City Court and pay an official fine to get their wares returned to them. The last option is time consuming and expensive compared to the previous two.

Kenyan news media regularly portrays the policing of hawking in central Nairobi as revolving around the collection of bribes from hawkers. The 2016 TV documentary *Kanjo Kingdom* by a group of Kenyan investigative journalists and public interest researchers alleges a far-reaching extortion racket within the County Inspectorate Department. According figures presented there, hawkers in Nairobi by early 2016 paid 80 million KSh every month in illegal bribes to Inspectorate officers inside Inspectorate vans (*Huyo* 2016). This figure excludes bribes paid at police stations, directly on the street and at the depot where impounded hawkers' wares are stored. The total amount of bribes was estimated to be 416 million KSh per month (*Huyo* 2016). Studies by Kenyan human rights organizations (Atemi 2013, pp. 21–22; Independent Medico-Legal Unit 2014) also portray Inspectorate officers as prone to collection of money from hawkers. One study shows how policing practices such as arrests and confiscation of hawkers' wares are closely linked to demands for bribes (Independent Medico-Legal Unit 2014, p. 43).

The ways in which hawkers' wares routinely become an occasion for hawkers to pay money to Inspectorate officers alerts us to an important dimension to the wares' productive capacities. While capable of "working," of yielding profits to hawkers if placed in the right way in relation to the "movement" of the city's streets, hawkers' wares at the same time constitute a potential occasion for parting with a share of those profits to Inspectorate officers. The situation recounted above where Inspectorate officers captured more than thirty hawkers in what resembled a military operation, seemingly for the sole purpose of collecting money from them, lends itself easily to a description of predatory extortion. However, hawkers' wares also become an occasion for engagements with Inspectorate officers in ways that are less immediately experienced by them as malevolent. This is the case, for instance, when hawkers at BestBuy approach the locally stationed officer, Richard, in order to persuade him to look the other way for a short while.

"We told him to have pity on us!" said Mama Mwangi on one occasion, when I asked her to recount a conversation she and a few others had had with Richard. The result of their conversation was that the hawkers at BestBuy got to place their wares on the sidewalk during peak selling hours, which they would have otherwise missed out on. I knew they had paid Richard a small collection of cash. What I wanted to know from Mama Mwangi was how they had phrased the request. "We told him we have children at home," she said. "He should allow us to put our work, just for thirty minutes. At least we can buy dinner."

We can conceive of Mama Mwangi and the other BestBuy hawkers as being propelled into a relationship with Richard by their need to place their wares on the street where he is stationed. In this case, the payment of a bribe was proposed to

Richard as an act of charity on his behalf; Richard was asked to show "pity." What this incident has in common with the aforementioned military style mass impounding of hawkers' wares is that hawkers' wares, and the need to support the wares' productive capacities, open hawkers up to policing relationships with Inspectorate officers. In this way, the cultivational activities of hawking entail not only the handling of material objects but also engagement in social relationships.

A recent body of literature, ethnographically focused on policing in the Global South, points to the importance of exchanges between police officers and those who they police (Andersen & Jensen 2017; Beek 2017; Blunt 2010, 2016; Jauregui 2013, 2016; Jensen & Hapal 2018). Among these, I find Hornberger's (2017) discussion of food exchanges between South African police officers and those whom they police particularly relevant to our understandings of how hawkers' wares bring hawkers into policing relations. Hornberger describes police officers in an urban area in South Africa who constantly have to negotiate bribe offers made to them by those whom they police. While the police officers in many cases accept the bribes offered, they are also concerned about the ways in which these bribes allow the policed to have claims on them. All bribes are not the same, Hornberger argues. Police officers experience bribes in the form of food as particularly risky. Food is powerful because it creates "deep embodied solidarities" (Hornberger 2017, p. 210). Drawing analytical attention to the materiality of the bribe offered and received, Hornberger argues that policing relationships emerge out of bribing not so much according to the monetary quantity of a bribe but rather from its qualitative properties (p. 211).

In line with Hornberger's approach, I am interested in the significance of the material properties of that which is exchanged between police and policed for the policing relationships that emerge out of those exchanges. In central Nairobi, the bribes that hawkers hand to Inspectorate officers most of the time are monetary. However, the wares that Inspectorate officers impound, and which occasion the bribes, differ in their material qualities. In the following, I am interested in the implications of these material qualities for policing relations.

Materially embedded policing relations

When I look back now, I can appreciate how Wangari from the onset of my fieldwork emphasized the importance of hawkers' wares for the ways in which they inhabit the streets in the city center. Hawkers habitually refer to one another by way of the items they sell. Wangari applied this referential style when talking to me:

"Johnnie asked about you," she would say, and specify: "the one who sells men's shorts."

Wangari was often annoyed at how little attention I paid to the wares sold by each of the about thirty hawkers at BestBuy.

"You don't remember Mama Shiro, the one who sells scarves? Serious? Brigitte, it's only her who sells scarves at BestBuy! You don't remember?"

Her annoyance testifies to an awareness, which I was lacking, of the material embeddedness of hawking. In an important sense that I had not yet understood, hawkers at BestBuy and elsewhere in central Nairobi see each other as being conditioned by the items they sell. As I later came to appreciate, a hawker's relationship with Inspectorate officers hinges on the material properties of the wares she carries into the streets. This policing relationship, in turn, shapes the ways in which she inhabits the space, her movements and composure.

Take *kamare*, for example. Among hawkers in central Nairobi, *kamare* refers to cheap items such as shower caps, combs, handkerchiefs, washcloths and hair nets. Because they are light to carry and easy to replace should they get impounded by Inspectorate officers, items like these are well-suited for selling in a tightly policed place like the Safaricom store by Kenya National Archives where Njeri works.[52]

> Njeri and I are sitting on the dusty pavement in front of the Safaricom store. Njeri has offered me a piece of cardboard, a flattened fruit box, to protect my jeans from the dirt. She herself has wrapped a *leso* [printed cloth] around her waist and legs.
>
> "*Kanjos* took my job yesterday," says Njeri, "and they didn't want to give it back to me for some reason. I had to go and buy these with two K [2,000 KSh]!"
>
> On the square, laid out on a purple piece of fabric spread out in front of her are an assortment of colorful handkerchiefs, plastic combs, checkered washcloths, white plastic shower caps with little flowers on them, and disposable hair nets packed in cellophane that glitters in the sunlight. The wares are neatly arranged into little colorful piles. Njeri picks up the handkerchiefs, which are all tied together at the tips with a rubber band, and shakes them to get the dust off. To our right and left, other female hawkers are sitting in *lesos*, selling variations of the assortment found on Njeri's display.
>
> "I'm wondering why they [officers] didn't want to give it to me?" she says again.
>
> There is a barely discernable stir in the environment around us. Within a split second, the pace of the hawkers' movements drastically picks up speed. Everyone is grabbing the corners of their fabric displays and rushing off. There is a calmness to the women's efficient getaway.

[52] While the open area in front of Kenya National Archives is an actual place and hawking location in Nairobi's city center, the Safaricom store is a made-up landmark. To my knowledge there is no Safaricom store by the place that Nairobians call Archives.

They are quick without seeming panicked. “Stay here! I’m going to hide my job,” Njeri says to me.

She comes back a little later empty-handed. We stay by the Safaricom store until Njeri spots the officers that caused the alarm a little further up the road. Three stocky men in heavy jackets, as if completely unaware of the midday heat. “I’m coming,” she says, telling me to remain behind once more. “I want to ask them about my job from yesterday.”

She walks up to the officers, and I can faintly hear her greeting the three men: “Mambo!” The rest of their conversation is muted by the noises of the traffic. I pretend to be typing on my phone. Njeri says something that makes the officers laugh. One of the officers replies to her, and she laughs in turn. They continue to talk for a while. One of the officers leans his shoulder against a signpost. Njeri’s small body is animated, her hands alternately resting on her hips and gesticulating in the air.

Njeri comes back a while later and reports a partial success. The three officers do not know why their colleagues refused to give her the wares, but they have promised her to check up on the matter. Those officers who impounded her wares are new to the area. She does not yet know them the way she knows the three men who have now promised to check for her wares. The following day, she happily informs me that her “friends” managed to find her wares, and that she has gotten them back.

“I only paid three hundred!” she says.

With time, Njeri will also establish familiar relationships with those newly stationed Inspectorate officers who impounded her goods. The mostly female hawkers selling *kamare* by the Safaricom store know and greet officers by name. It is not unusual to see them chatting and joking, once the hawkers have hidden their wares. *Kamare* allow for this type of relationship because they are relatively easy to replace. When a hawker carries *kamare* in her bundle, areas that are tightly policed by Inspectorate officers seem approachable to her.

This is certainly not so for those mostly male hawkers who sell second-hand shoes. Losing a bundle full of second-hand shoes, paid for with a significant start-up capital and carefully repaired and polished, is nothing short of a disaster. Cautious to avoid Inspectorate officers as far as possible, shoe hawkers like Samuel and Wachira only enter the Nairobi city center in the early evening, once the Inspectorate has relaxed its policing and the streets have turned into an unofficial night market.

I got to appreciate the ferocity with which shoe hawkers hold onto their wares after having watched Wachira and Samuel spend whole days repairing batches of battered

second-hand shoes. I spent many afternoons sitting next to Wachira while he patiently transformed broken and heelless shoes he had bought wholesale from Gikomba market into something that looked as if it were brand new.

"This bow is no good."

Wachira shows me the black, shiny ballerina shoe with the broken bow in front. He rummages around in a yellow plastic bag among ribbons, buttons and plastic gemstones for something to replace it. Next to him on his worktable are small bottles of glue, tins with shoe polish, scissors, tiny pieces of sponge, a washcloth, a knife. We are at the *baze* where Wachira and his group members come every day after they have been to Gikomba to fix up their shoes before going to the city center in the evening to sell them. Their workdays are long, Wachira and Samuel have often told me, but at the *baze* they can "relax." Wachira and I drink sweet tea out of metal tumblers and discuss international politics, on which he is always very keen.

"Everyone is talking a lot about Trump and what he will do," Wachira says. Our conversation takes place not long after Donald Trump has been elected president of the United States. "But really, there is not much that he can do. He can't just immediately decree to send all immigrants out of the country. America has got laws. If he wants to change anything, he has to go through the senate. Not much will happen."

A radio somewhere is playing Kikuyu dance music. Some of the other *baze* members are napping. Samuel shouts to Wachira from a distance that he is going out to buy shoelaces. While commenting on United States politics, Wachira has found a pair of matching black plastic squares lined with gold. He holds one on top of the broken bow to assess whether it will do. Then he carefully removes the bows on both the left and right ballerina shoes with his knife and sticks on the gold-rimmed plastic squares with glue. While the glue on ballerina shoes dries, Wachira takes up another shoe that needs a new sole.

Sensing a pause in the conversation, I ask his opinion on the recent change in the deployment of Inspectorate officers. Wangari and the other hawkers selling clothes and fruits at BestBuy have been talking about this the whole week. Most of the officers who used to be deployed in the city center have been moved to other areas. The redeployment happened without warning. "No-one knew!" Njeri told me. "Even *kanjos* were surprised. They received a letter and then they had to move." The new officers are harder for the hawkers' lookout persons to spot, so hawkers are often surprised by them and there are many arrests.

On the other hand, they seem to be quite lenient once they catch a hawker. Is this the beginning of a new era of more friendly policing relationships? At BestBuy there is much speculation.

Presently, Wachira says: "Yeah, I heard that officers have changed."

"What do you think about the new ones?"

"They don't come very often now, just once or twice in an evening. Before they used to come all the time."

"Have you met them yet?"

Wachira shakes his head. I would have been surprised if he had. Like the other shoe hawkers from the *baze*, Wachira only enters the city center in the evening.

"You always stay out of their way," I comment.

"Not even out of their way," he says with emphasis, "Very far away!"

Wachira does not know a single Inspectorate officer by name. He might have heard about some of the notorious ones from other hawkers, but he would have trouble recognizing them. His encounters with Inspectorate officers are limited to running away when the alarm sounds, never staying long enough to actually meet them. This is apparent in his response to my question of what he thinks about the new officers: "They don't come very often." Shoe hawkers do not develop the kinds of policing relationships that the BestBuy hawkers keep with Richard, or that Njeri keeps with almost every officer in the area where she works.

Njeri and Wachira in many ways constitute opposites when it comes to relative closeness or distance in their policing relationships with officers. *Kamare* and shoes respectively propel them to sell in different places, at different times of the day. However, even for hawkers who work in the same place at the same time, the properties of their wares allow them to inhabit the sidewalk differently, and to keep different levels of proximity to Inspectorate officers. This is the case with those hawkers at BestBuy who sell fruits and those who sell second-hand clothes.

I arrive at BestBuy one cloudy afternoon. The sidewalk is empty. Or rather, it looks that way to someone who is used to finding a dense line of hawkers displaying their wares on the tiles, their backs to the busy road. I know that Wangari and the other clothes hawkers will be waiting out the presence of Inspectorate officers in one of the alleyways, their bundles of clothes safely hidden. Before calling Wangari to find out where she is, I decide to look for two of the fruit sellers, Julia and Maria.

I find them where I had expected to. Sitting in a small open space with a sack of oranges and a cardboard box of apples, they are not exactly out of sight for Inspectorate officers, but also not exactly

"obstructing the sidewalk," which seems to be the most frequently cited mandate for officers to police hawkers.[53] If they had been clothes hawkers like Agnes, Mama Simon or Jaymo, Inspectorate officers would have been quick to impound their wares and carry them to the Inspectorate vehicle. As it is, Julia and Maria are confident they will be left alone.

"The officers can't carry fruits," Julia once explained to me. "They are heavy, and they have little profit." Fruits are also perishable, other hawkers have pointed out. Even if officers were to carry the heavy sacks and boxes to their vehicle, they would lose value quickly if not picked up by the hawkers they were taken from.

Julia is going through the pink lady apples in her carton box. Even though the apples are protected by layers of cardboard, many have little brown marks on them. She hands me a particularly bad one, frowning.

"They came to Nairobi by plane. But the people handling the boxes have not been careful. Look at this! The ones that come on a truck from Mombasa [port] are better."

Still going through the apples, picking out the worst ones to take aside, she says: "Sometimes I think it would be better if I had known about other works like going to Gikomba to get clothes. But since my sister has taught me about this work of fruits, this is the one that I know."

I stay for a while longer and then ask if they know where Wangari is. They tell me where to find her, and I make my way to the alley where she is sitting with Mama Simon and Mwende.

"Brigitte!" Mama Simon cries. "We are on break! *Kanjos* are too much today! Go tell Richard to allow us to work, since you are friends with him!"

"I don't think Richard is there," I say. "I just passed by where he usually sits."

"You miss your friend! Hahaha!"

Mama Simon walks off, still laughing. Neither she nor Wangari have their wares with them. The bundles are hidden in the storeroom where they also keep them during the night. Mwende sits on the ground, her *leso* wrapped around her, shelling a large pile of the green peas that are currently part of her stock. I sit down beside her and offer to help.

[53] Morange (2015) notes that the County Inspectorate's policing of hawkers in central Nairobi effectively rests on a series of city by-laws stemming back from Nairobi's colonial era administration, which have only been "cosmetically" updated (pp. 252).

Wangari also sits down and reaches for the peas, but Mwende slaps her hand.

"No!" she says, and to me: "She will eat them, that one."

When I think of Mwende, I automatically think of looking down. Most of my conversations with her have been conducted like that, me standing with Wangari and Mwende sitting next to us on the pavement with her *leso* wrapped around her legs, fiddling with this or that on her display while talking. Fruit hawkers seem to be pulled towards the ground by their wares, towards the dirt and exhaust fumes from the road, against which their *lesos* can only partly protect them. Clothes hawkers, on the other hand, inhabit the sidewalk with a lightness in their composure. When the alarm sounds, they almost fly away to hide their wares.

A hawker holding a sack of oranges or a box of apples knows that Inspectorate officers will pass her without an interest in her wares, other than perhaps scolding her if they think she is obstructing the sidewalk. On the other hand, a hawker holding a bundle of second-hand clothes knows that officers will chase after her in expectation of the 500 KSh to 1,000 KSh they can demand in return for the wares. An attention to hawkers' wares allows us to extend our conception of policing relations to one that sees relations as being materially and bodily embedded prior to any actual face-to-face encounters between police and policed.

At this point, we can engage Strathern's (1992) notion of the "eliciting" interest of another person, which occasions an exchange relationship. Strathern (1992) proposes that we think of a person in Melanesia as "multiple and composite," "internally differentiated in the various origins of his or her being" (pp. 178–179). Rather than persons and objects existing as separate entities prior to exchanges, persons must be singled out from the relationships that make them up in order to enter into new exchange relations (Strathern 1988, p. 15, 1992, p. 178). The same goes for things. Objects can be conceived of as manifestations of the different human relationships that went into producing them, or of those that were established through their exchange (Strathern 1988, p. 149). A person does not have a gift to give to another person until the other's interest "elicits" it. The gift comes about when an item that previously seemed like an aspect of a person comes to appear to them as detachable from themselves (Strathern 1992, p. 187). The implication of this notion of personhood is that gift exchange can be a quite anxiety-provoking activity. Persons decompose themselves in the process of turning aspects of themselves into objects that respond to the interest of an exchange partner (Strathern 1992, p. 188).

Strathern's description of gift exchange as a process of decomposition, of separating out aspects of oneself in anticipation of the interest of the other, draws our attention to what might be at stake for hawkers who enter the city center with their wares over their shoulders. We can conceive of policing relations as entailed in the ways in which hawkers are attached to their wares. When Njeri walks confidently

through the tightly policed area by the Safaricom store with her bundle of *kamare*, and when Wachira cautiously enters the city in the evening with his shoes, we can conceive of them as already entailed in policing relationships through the ways in which they carry their wares. Their wares differentially open them up to exchange. Hawkers' handling of their wares, the different levels of urgency with which they grab them, hold onto them and hide them, can be conceived of as a separating out of the wares in anticipation of the interest that these awaken in officers.

In her study of everyday life in a poor urban neighborhood in Chile, Han (2017) describes how residents live with policing as a "condition of life." Han argues that ethnographies of policing should pay attention to the ways in which "lives are marked by police action" beyond immediate face-to-face encounters with police officers (Han 2017, p. 165). Residents in the Chilean neighborhood experience surveillance in the minute details of their neighborly relations, draw on the possibility to call police in family conflicts, and anticipate police involvement when weighing possible future developments of their lives (Han 2017, p.165). In Han's description, police presence is an "existential" circumstance for the neighborhood residents (Han 2017, p. 169).

In line with Han, I believe that it is important to pay attention to the ways in which lives are marked by policing beyond face-to-face encounters between police and policed. However, I conceive of the presence of Inspectorate officers as more than an existential background to hawkers' lives. I conceive of them as social persons, their presence in hawkers' lives as *relational*, also outside of any face-to-face encounters. Policing relations with Inspectorate officers are embedded in the ways in which hawkers handle their wares.

Redrawing boundaries

"Hey gal," says Agnes. "How are you? How is your PhD research going?"

Agnes is sporting a short, hip hairstyle, her natural curls bleached into a caramel color at the tips. Today, her hair is crowned by a pair of sunglasses. She is wearing a long, knitted cardigan over a blouse, the same style of chic casual wear that she specializes in selecting from Gikomba and selling to well-employed female customers.

Agnes hooks her elbow around mine and tells me in her emphatic yet serene way that today she is full of gratitude towards God.

"I never saw myself as a hawker. But that was his plan for me, and I am just grateful. We have struggled here, Brigitte, truly we have. But we always remain humble."

Agnes often shares her spiritual reflections about persevering and keeping faith. When she started hawking six years ago, she was "in a lot of stress." She had lost her job, and she had a young baby to care for. Coming to the street with her baby and

putting hawking wares on the ground was humiliating to her. Even more humiliating was the sympathy of the people who bought her things.

"I was looking like someone with a lot of problems," she explains during an interview. "I was looking like: 'Ah, this girl has stress!' Some customers came with kind hearts. They greeted me and they said 'Hi, how much are you selling?' I tell them. They didn't even bargain. Most of them they didn't bargain."

Agnes unhooks her arm from mine, "Excuse me, this is my customer here." She goes to greet and hug a woman in a formal skirt and blazer, then disappears into the building next to us where her surplus stock is kept. In addition to putting wares on the street, Agnes also markets her clothes on WhatsApp groups to regular customers. The woman has probably come to get an item posted there.

Seeing Agnes perform middle class style and sociality in this way, I am always reminded of the strategy she has told me she used during the heat of the violent clashes between hawkers and Inspectorate officers in December 2014 and January 2015. She would put her wares on the sidewalk and stand at a distance from them. If a potential customer showed interest, she would quickly assist the person and withdraw once more to stand at a distance from her wares. If Inspectorate officers came, she would calmly walk away from the wares, turning herself from a hawker into just another pedestrian.

The violent clashes of late 2014 and early 2015 were a difficult time to be a hawker in Nairobi. "*Kanjo* that time looked like fire," as a hawker from Archives put it in an interview. "We used to work with tension," Julia recounts. Hawkers and Inspectorate officers threw stones and bottles at each other in the streets, officers fired tear gas and rubber bullets, people from both sides were stabbed to death at night in the alleyways.

Hawkers at that time discovered a new and frightening entailment to their policing relationships with Inspectorate officers. If they encountered officers in the city, and if the officers recognized them as being hawkers, they would be attacked and assaulted by the officers even after they had given up their wares. The association alone between a hawker and her wares was enough to make her a target of violence. In hawkers' accounts of back then, a distinction emerges between their "work" and their "bodies."

"It is either I take the work, or I keep my body safe," Mutuku explains about his reasoning at the time. "So, I would run and hide myself in a shop or a moving vehicle, leaving the work on the ground."

"I would leave my work and run away my body," says Barasa. "I would leave work, say it is not mine and run away. So, it was better for the work to be taken, I be safe."

"Sometimes I would sell from afar," says another hawker, describing the same style that Agnes told me she used during the height of violence. "It means you stand a distance from your work. […] They [officers] would come and take the work and I would leave them to go with it because if they found you there, they would stab you or beat you."

Detaching the "body" form the "work" was not a strategy open to all hawkers. Some would be recognized as hawkers by Inspectorate officers without carrying their wares with them. For those hawkers, the only option was to come late at night when the last officers had gone home and try to see if they could still find customers around the city center. Some left Nairobi altogether until the violence was over. Others sold their wares via WhatsApp groups and arranged meetings with the buyers in safe places.

When Agnes turned herself from a hawker into just another pedestrian, we can conceive of her as leaving her policing relationship with Inspectorate officers behind on the pavement along with her wares. At a time of heightened violence, when the possession of hawkers' wares implicated her in dangerous policing relationships, Agnes stepped out of the category of hawker by stepping away from her wares. Haraway (1988) describes objects as "boundary projects." Objects are not stable, she argues, but constantly subject to change, to redrawing of the boundaries that contain them (Haraway 1988, p. 595). Social science has been preoccupied with the ways in which our discursive representations operate on objects, Haraway notes. We have been less attentive to the ways in which objects shift "from within" by virtue of their materiality. By proposing the notion of boundary projects, Haraway draws attention to the ways in which discursive *and* material processes both operate on objects. People might attempt to "contain" objects (discursively), but the objects condition such attempts of containment (materially), supporting some efforts and resisting others (Haraway 1988, p. 595). Agnes' stepping away from her wares could be seen as an effort to redraw the boundaries around both herself and the wares left behind, so as to redraw the boundary that included her in a policing relationship with officers. Agnes' effort could be called discursive, since she seeks to escape the legal category of "hawker," but it is also very much materially conditioned.

Importantly, the redrawing of boundaries that Agnes undertook is not equally open to all hawkers, because the material qualities of some hawkers' wares bring them into closer proximity with officers than others. Agnes would not have been able to use this strategy had she been implicated in close relationships with officers like Njeri and the other women selling *kamare* at the Safaricom store. While Njeri's ability to talk to officers, make jokes with them and ask them to check for her wares might seem like a privileged type of policing relationship in some respects, the violence of late 2014 to early 2015 brought into view how proximities in policing relations also entail exposure to violence. Besides *kamare* hawkers, another group for whom proximities in policing relations affect their ability to detach themselves from their wares are fruit and vegetable hawkers. Maria, Julia and Mwende often sit with their heavy sacks and boxes in plain sight when Inspectorate officers pass by BestBuy, greeting the officers and sometimes exchanging a few words. Pronouncing their attachment to the fruits and vegetables they sell in their relationships with officers, Maria, Julia and Mwende become firmly placed in the category of hawkers through these daily encounters.

There is an important sense in which the difference between Agnes and Njeri is a difference in their performance of social class, which in turn is enabled by the materiality of their wares. Agnes' style of dress, her manner of communicating with her customers, pre-empt the moment at which she simply takes a few steps away from her wares and ceases to be a hawker. On the other hand, Njeri, who sits on the dusty pavement, her clothes only partly protected from the dirt by her *leso*, is more firmly entrenched in the range of Kenyan social categories that associate persons with "streets," which generally encompasses "street families," "street dwellers," and "street hawkers". Inspectorate officers, in my conversations with them, readily associated the female hawkers selling *kamare* by the Safaricom store with "streets" in a way they did not apply to the hawkers at BestBuy.

In emphasizing the importance of discursive categories that associate some hawkers more readily than others with the "street," my approach differs from that of Henare, Holbraad and Wastell (2007) who have called for an anthropology that attends to the ways in which "things present themselves" (p. 5), and which places "our experience of things" at the basis of concept development (p. 13). Knowing about things, they propose, constitutes more than a "perspective." We might take people's knowledge of things as enunciations of ontological "worlds" (p. 14). In a deliberate move, questions of positionality are occluded in this account: "We may or may not know what assumptions precipitate our informants' conceptual creativity […]. This is a matter of ethnographic remit" (p. 15). In line with Henare, Holbraad and Wastell, I am interested in the ways in which hawkers in Nairobi know about their wares, and in the ways in which this knowing, more than merely being a "perspective," constitutes the work (world) of hawking to them. For the purpose of exploring hawker-officer relationships, however, I find it significant to pay attention to the ways in which hawkers know about and attach themselves to their wares differently, precisely because of their different ways of inhabiting discursive categories of respectability.

My approach would be to say that their "things" – their wares – present themselves differently to Njeri and Agnes based on the ways in which they are read discursively by Inspectorate officers. Njeri's bundle of *kamare* is more stubbornly attached to her in her policing relations with Inspectorate officers than Agnes' bundle of clothes is attached to her. We can attribute their sticky attachment to Njeri to the material properties of *kamare*, which propel her into close relationships with officers and which frequently occasion her to emphasize her attachment to them in her engagements with officers. At the same time, we can account for their sticky attachment by reference to the discursive association between Njeri and the "street" to officers. In line with Haraway's description of shifting boundaries around objects, I approach this not as an either/or question, but rather from the view that discursive processes and material ones are mutually constitutive. Furthermore, it is not only the boundaries around hawkers' wares, understood as objects, that shift. Discursive readings of the hawkers, and social relations with Inspectorate officers, shift as well.

Conclusion

I have proposed that we understand hawking as a form of cultivation; as a question of properly supporting the productive capacities of hawkers' wares. This entails knowledge and skills in relation to placing the wares in the urban environment that enables their productivity. Furthermore, it requires of hawkers that they engage in relations with Inspectorate officers in order to access the places that allow their wares to yield. Hawking as a material activity, and the demands that their wares place on them, bring hawkers into policing relations with Inspectorate officers.

Han (2017) describes policing as a condition of life for the policed. I have argued that while policing certainly conditions hawkers' presence in the city center, it does so in a different way than Han describes. Rather than an existential backdrop against which hawkers conduct their lives, we can conceive of policing as present for hawkers through relationships that compel them to evaluate and redraw their attachment to their wares. My proposal that policing is nested in the ways in which hawkers carry their bundles of wares, place them on the sidewalk and either stand or sit close to them, is an argument for the intimate layering of policing *relations* into the materiality of hawking.

If we conceive of the material and the relational as mutually entailed in this way, we might furthermore conceive of hawkers' exposure to police *violence* as nested in the material qualities of their wares. Different wares require different styles of hawking, and these different styles in turn differently expose hawkers to violence. When violence becomes pressing, hawkers might attempt to redraw boundaries by walking away from their wares and the policing relationships they entail, but they might not succeed if their wares are too stubbornly attached to them by their combined material and discursive effects.

5. Old men

> Outside the display window of an electronics shop facing a busy inner-city street is a small wooden bench. On the bench, under a sign advertising a passport photograph service with four identical, broadly smiling head shots of former United States President Barack Obama, Ndevu sits watching the traffic. His tall frame is slightly hunched under the brown windbreaker, and his hair has more grey streaks than the former President's in the pictures. From time to time, Ndevu exchanges remarks with David, the second-hand book vendor standing a few paces away. The two of them spend many hours a day like this, David selling his books and Ndevu resting his feet while the unit of Inspectorate officers under his command patrols the inner city.
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> "You have to be strong to do this job," Ndevu says on one of the days where I join him on the wooden bench. "You cannot come to work if you are sick. Now, I'm going towards sixty myself. I cannot be running. I should leave this job for someone who is younger and has more energy, and I should be moving to a different job myself."
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> Our conversation drifts towards Ndevu's early days in the Inspectorate. He started working as an officer in 1995.
>
> "How would you compare the hawkers of today with those that were there when you started working?" I ask.
>
> "The hawkers of today are young. They have that youthful energy." Ndevu clenches his fists and tightens his upper body to illustrate. "You cannot arrest them unless there is a vehicle [Inspectorate patrol van], because they become violent. If they see that there are only two of you [officers], they fight! You have to be able to bundle them inside the vehicle."

The Nairobi County Government has not recruited any new officers to its Inspectorate Department for the past 18 years.[54] Most Inspectorate officers are above the age of fifty. Since most of the hawkers in central Nairobi are in their twenties, this means

[54] This was the situation during my fieldwork in 2016 and 2017. Since then, there have been some new developments within the Inspectorate Department. However, I characterize the situation of Inspectorate officers as I experienced it during fieldwork, employing the ethnographic present as a narrative style in Hastrup's (1990) sense.

that hawker-officer policing relations are conducted across an age gap of at least one generation. Like Ndevu, many of the officers with whom I talked feel intimidated by the large numbers of hawkers full of youthful energy, and they told me they wished they could move on to desk jobs within the County Government rather than having to run after hawkers in the streets. Ageing and tired, the officers feel stuck in a job meant for young men.

In addition to feeling inadequate in their own abilities to perform their jobs, Inspectorate officers are perpetually annoyed by the lack of respect shown to them by hawkers. The youthful hawkers of today, they told me, do not behave themselves appropriately in policing encounters. For one, hawkers have the audacity to run away or fight after having been arrested if the officers do not physically restrain them. For this reason, the officers explained, they increasingly rely on locking hawkers inside patrol vehicles in order to perform arrests.

The white Nissan vans used by the Inspectorate to patrol the streets of central Nairobi are known and feared among hawkers. There are numerous stories of hawkers who have been locked inside Inspectorate vans and beaten severely. Extrajudicial violence perpetrated inside County Inspectorate vans is reported as one of the common human rights abuses experienced by hawkers (Independent Medico-Legal Unit 2014, p. 41). When hawkers spot a white van up the road, the sidewalk is cleared within seconds.

In this chapter, I ask how violence between officers and hawkers arises out of the officers' efforts to exercise state authority. In asking this question, I understand state authority not as a quality that unproblematically imbues state employees but rather as a normative ideal, the embodiment of which can be compromised. In the case of hawker-officer relations in central Nairobi, the ageing bodies of Inspectorate officers become obstacles to their living up to expectations about appropriate policing. I argue that the officers' use of patrol vehicles, and the violence it entails, constitute a material practice aimed at fixing a crisis in their embodiment of authority.

That elderhood, and the bigger bellies that often accompany it, should be an impediment to authority does not immediately resonate with Africanist literature. On the contrary, much emphasis has been placed on the symbolic privileging of seniority and bodily corpulence in African settings with notions such as the "politics of the belly" and the "old men of the state" (Bayart 2009, p. 69, pp. 235–241; see also Mbembe 2001, p. 107). What the case of Nairobi Inspectorate officers brings to our attention, I argue, are the ways in which bodies enter into policing not only as symbolically invested entities, but also as material sites. Ageing and bulky bodies obstruct the realization of normative authority by their fragility and slowness. As old men caught in young men's jobs, Inspectorate officers compel an attention to the material aspects of embodying state authority.

From an attention to the ways in which Inspectorate officers experience inadequacy and fragility in material, bodily registers, I go on to consider their efforts

to overcome these inadequacies. In particular, I focus on the officers' use of patrol vehicles to detain hawkers. I conceive of this use of patrol vehicles, and the violence it entails, as a material practice by which Inspectorate officers compensate for their problems with embodying authority in policing relations. For this approach, I engage with notions of the prosthesis and prosthetic relationality. At the turn of the century, in the aftermath of Haraway's essay *A manifesto for cyborgs* (1989/2012), a body of literature emerged that discussed how the notion of prostheses might help us to think of conditions that produce bodies as lacking, and practices that seek to address these lacks (Jain 1999; Kurzman 2001; Nelson 2001). I draw on those discussions in order to think of Inspectorate officers' use of patrol vehicles not only as a violent practice, but also as an effort to inhabit a setting in which their bodies become fragile and they themselves vulnerable. I propose that we understand the violence entailed in the Inspectorate's use of patrol vehicles as a result of the various circumstances that come together to produce Inspectorate officers' bodies as lacking. These circumstances include unfulfilled promises of career advancement within the municipal sector as well as broader changes in the political economy of Kenya's patronage state, both of which significantly lessen the privilege of being a public sector employee. This is not an argument in defense of officers; nor is it an attempt to describe their policing as somehow less violent. Rather, it is an effort to account for police violence as intimate also from the position of policing agents.

The chapter progresses in five parts. In the first section, I show how the privileges once attached to public-sector employment have been unraveling incrementally in the officers' lifetime. In the second section, I describe Inspectorate officers as obstructed in their life cycle progression, unable to age appropriately. In the third section, I consider the type of authority that officers aspire to, and which most of the time they fail to attain. The fourth section discusses the ways in which officers' ageing bodies obstruct their performance of authority. Finally, the fifth section proposes the officers' use of patrol vans as a prosthetic extension meant to overcome these obstructions.

Privilege unraveling

Kuria's office is at the end of a corridor in a one-story, concrete building that was once painted pale blue. By the time I reach it, I have passed a reception desk and four holding cells with iron bars for doors. The driver of the motorbike taxi that took me here demanded payment upfront when I told him where I wanted him to take me. "Are you sure you know where you're going?" he said, looking at me with an expression that I took for either annoyance at the risky journey I was compelling him to do, or curiosity at what someone like me might be wanting in a place like that. When we reached the destination, he dropped me off almost without stopping the bike, hurrying

away before any uniformed person could look too closely at his bike and find occasions to elicit bribes from him.

"Brigitte, hi! One moment!" says Kuria when I approach the open door to his office.

He is sitting behind a large wooden desk that takes up half of the room. Along the wall, opposite the desk, are chairs of various makes lined up next to each other. The desk and the assortment of chairs are the only furniture in the room. The walls are bare and windowless, and from the ceiling shines the yellow light of a single electric bulb. Behind Kuria, on a nail in the concrete wall, is a hanger with a large, navy blue workman's jumpsuit. Kuria notices me looking at the jumpsuit. "I wear this when I handle the hawkers' wares," he says. "They are so dirty." Presently he is sitting in a grey suit, glasses on his nose, bent over a lined exercise book into which he is copying information from a stack of forms next to the book.

"There!" he says, shuts the book and disappears out of the room, returning a few minutes later. A timid tea vendor from the street outside follows Kuria with a large thermos flask full of *chai* and two metal tumblers, which she carefully wipes with a tablecloth before leaving everything on the desk and backing out of the room. Kuria and I each have a cup of *chai* while I ask him about his current work of handling impounded hawkers' wares. When I first met him about half a year ago, he was stationed in the city center on the streets. He likes his new job, he says. But it is hectic! There is always something to attend to.

We don't get to talk long before Kuria's statement is illustrated. Other Inspectorate officers come to ask for instructions, cracking jokes and greeting me cheerfully. Two hawkers come, heads bent nervously and mumble to their feet about goods that were impounded by vehicle number so-and-so. Kuria escorts them out of the office to the storeroom, reappearing a little while later without the hawkers.

A tall man wearing a cap and a hoodie enters the office. Although his body shape is closer to that of Inspectorate officers, full and compact rather than the slender frame of most male hawkers, he looks a bit too young and a bit too urbanely stylish to be an officer. He and Kuria seem to be very familiar with each other. They talk for a while in Sheng, and I gather that it is about goods belonging to the man that have been impounded by Inspectorate officers. A hawker, then. I read Kuria's newspaper and give them time to discuss the issue.

After a little while, the two men switch to English and include me in the conversation. I learn that the hawker is called Matthew. We talk about the upcoming presidential re-election,[55] and then the conversations drifts towards the newly elected Nairobi Governor Mike Sonko. Like all other Inspectorate officers at this time, Kuria

[55] After the Kenyan opposition contested the results of the August 2017 presidential elections at the Supreme Court, the presidential election was rescheduled for October 26, 2017. My visit to Kuria's office described here took place in September 2017.

uses every opportunity to rant about Sonko, who has made a name for himself in the years preceding his election as a champion of Nairobi's hawkers:

"He [Sonko] has been talking very bad about the Inspectorate. He even said in a speech that we are 'thugs'! But what we don't understand is how will he keep the city clean without the Inspectorate? He will realize with time that he has to come and sit down with us."

Matthew keeps quiet during the conversation about Sonko. We leave the subject, and Kuria encourages Matthew to tell me how he came to start hawking in Nairobi. The hawker obliges. When he finished his degree, he was unable to find a job and rather than sitting at home he looked for something to do. He started out selling someone else's wares until he knew enough to start his own business. Now he employs other young people to work for him.

Kuria chips in: "This one is learned. People with his education are supposed to work for the government. Twenty years ago, someone with that degree would go to [the Department of] Labor, and they would get a job. I went to Labor myself."

Kuria sits back comfortably in his chair behind his desk, reminiscing about his youth, emphatically declaring his sympathy with this day's young graduates for whom employment prospects are grim. He pours more *chai* for me and himself, and once again urges Matthew to have some. The hawker refuses politely, like he has done before. Standing by the door, his body language reveals impatience and mild irritation. It dawns on me that Kuria is dragging time. I had assumed that they were waiting for something, but it transpires that they are not waiting for anything besides Kuria deciding to take Matthew to the storeroom and find his goods.

After more urging and Kuria's continued unhurried attitude, the hawker resigns himself to having a cup of *chai*. He drinks it quickly, now answering Kuria's attempts at conversation with short sentences. When Kuria attempts to refill his cup, Matthew has had enough. He exclaims something in Sheng that I don't understand, and Kuria laughingly gets up and fetches his bundle of keys to go to the storeroom. I ask if I can join them.

It turns out that two young men employed by Matthew have been waiting outside the office all along, to help carry the goods. There are four large sacks of clothes and handbags, which they quickly take off with. Kuria and the hawker part with a handshake and smiles.

"I have known this guy for many years," Kuria tells me when we return to the office. "Since he was a kid."

I comment that Matthew was picking up a rather large amount of clothes, for a hawker.

"Yes," Kuria says, "there is a lot of money in business. Some of these hawkers that you see here, they make a lot of money! You think they are poor, but they are not."

In the early evening hours, when Kuria's shift is over, he and I travel to the city center and walk together to catch our different modes of transport home. Since Kuria has previously told me which area Matthew sells in, and since this area is on our route, I ask Kuria whether we can pass by and say hi to Matthew. He agrees and sets out to find Matthew among the increasingly dense crowds of hawkers that line sidewalks and bus stops in the inner city of early evening.

After some searching, we spot Matthew's broad body filling out that youthful hoodie and the two young men who came with him to Kuria's office earlier in the day. They are standing next to two large piles, one with jackets and trousers, and another one with handbags. The piles are so large that the three men cannot possibly grab them and run away, should an Inspectorate crackdown take place. Knowing a bit already about the economy of policed hawking in Nairobi's city center, I judge Matthew to be among those hawkers who pay regular fees to officers in order to be allowed to trade freely in a particular place. If that is the case, the impounding of his goods earlier in the day likely had to do with some disagreement between him and the person within the Inspectorate with whom he has the arrangement.

We greet Matthew and the young men. When Matthew first sees Kuria, he looks worried, but when Kuria explains to him that I wanted to say hi, he smiles broadly and shakes my hand. Spreading out his arms, he says: "This is where we work! We will be here until late in the evening. You are welcome to come later and look at these handbags!"

I thank him, and we leave. As we walk away from the mountains of clothes and bags, Kuria repeats: "There is a lot of money in business!"

In the 1970s and 1980s, when Kuria went through school and started working, the difference between salaried employment and informal economic activities was a clear-cut class distinction in Kenya. This is when Hake (1977) published *African metropolis: Nairobi's self-help city*, in which he contrasts "modern" Nairobi, consisting of a small class of elite civil servants, with "informal" or "self-help" Nairobi, in which the poor masses are housed, characterized by unplanned slum areas and informal occupations. Kuria's expression of pity for Matthew – "Twenty years ago, someone like that would go to Labor, and they would get a job" – is informed by this kind of urban distinction. He describes a world no longer in proper balance where "learned" young people could end up fending for themselves with informal employment in the streets.

As Mbembe (2001) has argued, the public sector salary became in the first decades after independence a political tool rather than an economic one. Postindependence states used salaries for public sector employees to guarantee political support from their constituents and, in turn, people aspired to public sector employment as a desirable position within the patronage state. In his description of the "politics of the belly," an analysis of political patronage systems in Africa, Bayart (2009) notes a

generational element to the question of opportunities within the state bureaucracy. With both social standing, political power and economic opportunities dependent on one's position within the state, "seniors" consolidated their privileged position at the expense of "juniors", the "youth" (Bayart 2009, pp. 235–241). "The 'politics of the belly' is firmly located in the continuity of the conflicts of the past," Bayart writes, with a reference to pre-colonial African age-set systems. "Today as yesterday, what is being fought for is the exclusive right to the riches claimed by the holders of 'absolute seniority'. The young challenge this claim" (Bayart 2009, p. 241). This is a view of African politics as a fundamentally generational conflict between "seniors" occupying positions of privilege within the state, and "youth" challenging them from positions of relative weakness outside the state.

However, against the grain of this dominant framework, we heard Kuria repeat the phrase "there is a lot of money in business." In the situation, it seemed to be directed just as much to himself as it was to me. A pondering, rather than a confident statement. It would seem that Matthew's financial success troubled Kuria's comfortable narrative about his own luck to be a public sector employee, and by implication his superiority to Matthew.

Kenyan ideals for powerful masculinity include wealth as a central element, displayed through conspicuous spending. The term "*wabenzi*" denoting powerful male figures, for instance, associates Kenyan "Big Men" with Mercedes Benzes (Bayart 2009, p. 69). Meiu (2015) notes how the Kenyan ideal for powerful masculinity is made up of the two central dimensions of wealth, symbolized by largess, the "*spatial* dimensions of power," on the one hand, and elderhood, or its "*temporal* dimensions" on the other hand (p. 479; emphasis in original). Neither Inspectorate officers nor hawkers in a Kenyan context count as Big Men proper, a figure embodied by the President and other elite political-cum-businessmen. However, the twin ideals of wealth and seniority can be understood as generalized qualities associated with male authority to which an officer like Kuria might aspire, just like the Samburu villagers described by Meiu (2015, p. 480; see also Blunt 2010, p. 7 on the combined qualities of elderhood and bigness as a generalized template for authority in Kenya).

In Kuria's pondering on the observation that "there is a lot of money in business," wealth and seniority, the spatial and the temporal dimensions of male power, become disconcertingly disconnected from each other. Commonplace notions of how seniority should be linked to wealth, and of how state-employment should be superior to informal economic activities, have been unraveling incrementally in the lifetime of Inspectorate officers. We can understand Kuria and his colleagues in the Inspectorate as inhabiting a historical moment in which vectors of privilege in post-independence Kenya are shifting.

Obstructed ageing

Shiko meets me with a frown, gesturing at the empty sidewalk where usually she and her fellow hawkers form a dense row of wares and bodies. Now you have a rare chance to study the arrangement of the pavement tiles.

"It is empty here, you see? We have not been able to work the whole morning! Ndevu just sits there."

Shiko points with the slightest nod of her head, not looking in the direction she is indicating. I follow the direction of her nod and spot Ndevu a few paces up the road, sitting on his small wooden bench and typing on his cellphone

"Come, I want to ask him how long he is going to stay."

Shiko walks up to Ndevu's bench with me in tow. She greets him politely, and Ndevu looks up from his phone, straightens his back and responds to her greeting with the thinly disguised impatience of someone who has been disturbed while doing something important. Turning to me, the lines of his face rearrange themselves into a courteous smile: "Ah, our visitor!" He asks me at length in English about the progress of my research and only afterwards addresses Shiko's question. From their short conversation in Sheng, I gather that he will remain there for the whole day, and that he suggests she find a different place to work for the time being.

Shiko frowns and remains silent while Ndevu initiates a conversation with me about election politics. After a little while, she tells us both that she will go to another place along Tom Mboya Street to set up her work. She leaves.

In an ironic tone, Ndevu asks me: "What do you think? Should I call one of my men to go and arrest her at Tom Mboya?"

I laugh politely and say that he wouldn't do that since he and Shiko are friends.

"You are right, I cannot do that. That one – we know her very well. We have known her since she was a young child. She was running around here without shoes, selling matchboxes. Now she has grown up."

I stay for a while with Ndevu, sitting next to him on the bench. From time to time, hawkers approach him to ask how long he is planning to stay, or whether he knows when such-and-such Inspectorate vehicle will move away. "It is not yet time," Ndevu tells them, or: "Come again at five."

Ndevu comments on some of the hawkers to me, after they have left: "This one is a student," he says, after a young man has approached us and walked away. "He comes here when classes finish, to earn his tuition fees." Or: "That one is my friend. I have known him for many years."

Three women approach us with bundles strapped to their backs. It is hard to make out whether the bundles contain babies or hawkers' wares. One of the women is holding a small child by her hand, and Ndevu bends down with a large, grandfatherly smile on his face and stretches out his hand to the child.

"Mtoto!" [child] he says.

The child walks up to him and shakes his hand. Ndevu seems delighted by this small interaction.

"Is this your first-born?" he asks the woman to whom the child has now gone back, and she smiles and nods.

When the women have consulted Ndevu about what time they can come back and work, they leave. He turns to me with a darkened expression on his face.

"This is how new hawkers are brought. They are taken here to the streets by their mothers, and then they grow into hawking. We have seen it many times. They start with matchboxes or chewing gum." He shakes his head disapprovingly.

For Inspectorate officers like Ndevu, policing relations with hawkers take the form of dealing with a continuous stream of youngsters coming to the streets, sometimes as young children brought there by their mothers, and growing into young adults in the officer's presence. Meanwhile, for hawkers like Njeri, Inspectorate officers are constant figures present on street corners, the same faces embodying the same authority while she herself grew from a child selling matchboxes into an adult.

My conversations with Inspectorate officers about their work of policing hawkers in Nairobi often spanned several decades. Officers reminisced happily about the late 1970s, when hawkers in the CBD were still licensed and carried badges, and less happily about the early 2000s under President Mwai Kibaki, to whose hawker-friendly policies many attribute the dramatic increase in hawkers. They shook their heads when discussing the building of Muthurwa market in 2008, which was intended to bring an end to street hawking in the CBD, but only ended up as a source of extra income for those hawkers well connected enough to get allocated a stall, which they subsequently let out before returning to the streets.

When being told about a specific incident, I sometimes had to ask for an approximate year to place the story in the considerable timeline emerging through our conversations.

"When was this, again?"

"I think in 1995. No, no, it must have been 1997."

While hawkers like Njeri habitually think of Inspectorate officers as old men, at least a generation older than themselves, Inspectorate officers were initiated to the work at a time where officers were frequently younger than hawkers. Kuria, Ndevu and the other officers with whom I talked would laughingly share anecdotes from when they first started working in the Inspectorate and the seasoned hawkers took advantage of their young age and lack of experience.

"We were fresh from training, with our heads shaven…"

"Those women [hawkers] saw that we are not experienced. They used to take advantage."

A news report from around the same time that Kuria started working in the Inspectorate describes Nairobi's hawkers as being for the most part middle aged

women: "[there are] only very few young ones" (Ngunjiri 1982). Another news report from a few years later describes Inspectorate as "young men with brutal faces" (Kahiira 1989). The article describes a typical scene in the policing of hawking in Nairobi:

> One late afternoon on Tom Mboya Street, Nairobi, a middle aged woman carrying a young child on her back is standing […]. Then suddenly she bends down, picks up a laid out sack with mangoes and oranges on it and disappears in a smelly lane […]. Too late. Hot on her heels are three young plainclothes City Commission askaris. As they catch up with the running woman one grabs the sack while another blocks her way. (Kahiira 1989)

The image of young, fit Inspectorate officers of the 1980s and 1990s who effortlessly run after and catch a middle-aged hawker speaks to the disconnect felt by present-day officers between the work they are employed to do and their advanced age. Enforcing County by-laws against hawking was never meant to be a job for old men. When Ndevu and his colleagues started working with the Inspectorate, they expected to be able to move, with time, to other jobs that would not require them to police the streets. There was an understanding that municipal employees would move on to desk jobs as they gained seniority.

> Joseph: I started working for the Inspectorate in 1992. I didn't ask to work for the Inspectorate, but it was the job I was offered and I thought "let me just take it." Other people were offered work in the Inspectorate and they said "Inspectorate? Hey – no!" But I took it.
>
> Brigitte: Why didn't you want to work in the Inspectorate?
>
> Joseph: The Inspectorate? No, I think many of us had ideas about other jobs that we wanted to do. They were telling me then that I can move to another department after some years. We have many departments in the Council. [Such as the Department of] Social Services – many! It used to be that after some years you can move, but now we have been here for twenty years and there is no possibility to move.

Joseph, Ndevu and their colleagues are stuck in a job that they initially expected to move on from. They accepted the role of patrolling the streets with the expectation that seniority and advanced age would eventually entitle them to a desk job – a more suitable occupation for an ageing man. Their situation resembles the obstructed life cycle progression of young people across the African continent at the turn of the

twenty-first century, as described in the volume *Navigating youth, generating adulthood: Social becoming in an African* edited by Christiansen, Utas and Vigh (2006). The contributions to the volume describe how young people in different African settings are prevented from transitioning from childhood into proper, socially recognized adulthood due to changes in the economic and political environments in which they live. Unable to attain the material markers of adulthood, they become stuck in a degrading perpetual state of youth (Christiansen et al. 2006). The case of Inspectorate officers illustrates that the struggle to progress in one's life cycle does not necessarily end with the attainment of socially recognized adulthood. While the public sector jobs held by Inspectorate officers in many ways represent the elusive foundation for proper adulthood desired by the young people described in the work on youth in Africa, Inspectorate officers in turn find that their jobs do not allow them to age with dignity. They are unable to progress into socially recognized elderhood.

Expectations of authority

"Back in 1976, the hawkers were few," Kuria once told me. He originally started working with the Inspectorate in the mid-1970s. "We greeted them when we saw them, not like now. If you arrest one of them [back then], he just walks in front of you to Moroto [Inspectorate post]. You walk behind him. Even ten of them."

An image kept recurring in my conversations with Inspectorate officers about their work of policing hawkers. In the Nairobi of some decades ago, stretching from the 1970s to the 1990s, an Inspectorate officer arrests a hawker; the hawker obligingly walks in front of the Inspectorate officers through the streets of the city center, all the way to the police station. The officer does not even need to touch the hawker, such is the respect that the hawker holds for the act of arrest. And so they walk, the officer and the hawker, through the streets of this now-gone city, in an orderly fashion.

During fieldwork, I was struck by the preoccupation of Inspectorate officers with the respect they ought to be shown by hawkers, and with the failure of present-day hawkers to perform this respect. Back in the days, hawkers used to be "mature," the officers told me. They used to obey officers' orders to pack up and clear the street without protest, to greet officers when they met them and to walk in front of officers to the police station without running away. Old men complaining about disrespectful youth is of course an almost universal stereotype. However, in the case of hawker-officer relations in central Nairobi, Inspectorate officers' complaints about hawkers' lack of respect can teach us something central about police authority. The following

conversation is between me and an Inspectorate officer called Onesmus, who heads a unit within the Inspectorate that patrols a section in the city center:

Brigitte: Based on your experience, what are the kinds of qualities that you need in order to perform this job [Inspectorate officer] well?

Onesmus: An officer should be a leader. That means you should be clean at all times, not walk around with dirt on your clothes and not be drinking on duty. […]

Brigitte: Do you find that among your colleagues there are different styles of doing the job?

Onesmus: It is the situation that needs you to have a different style. If hawkers start creating commotion, throwing stones and bottles […] you have to respond. That's when we [are assisted by] police officers and we use tear gas.

Brigitte: When you are engaging with hawkers, what kind of attitude do you appreciate in them?

Onesmus: When we arrive with the vehicle and they already see us from afar and just decide to clear the street. Because they know that they are not supposed to be selling, and we are the ones enforcing the by-laws. Sometimes there are those stubborn ones who remain behind, and if they try to argue with us – that's when conflicts can arise. […]

Brigitte: What about when you engage in a conversation with a hawker, what kind of attitude do you appreciate?

Onesmus: There are those ones who say "My senior – I didn't know. Sorry, sorry." […] Some others think that they can joke with you, but I don't like that. What we are doing is work. They are not supposed to be joking with us.

What emerges out of Onesmus' account is a sense that the officers' opportunities for living up to their own ideals, in his case that of the "leader," depend on whether or not the demeanors of the hawkers they police allow them to do so. In response to my question about whether different officers have different "styles" of policing, Onesmus responded that a rough "style" like using tear gas does not have to do with the personality of the officer in question, but with the actions of the hawkers. The wish underlying Onesmus' account – to carry out policing without having to resort to rough methods – indicates why the image of the 1990s Inspectorate officer walking behind the obliging hawker might so captivate the imagination of Inspectorate officers.

Contrary to the insistence by many Inspectorate officers that today's hawkers are disrespectful and obstinate, hawkers relayed to me how they make great efforts to

conduct themselves in a respectful manner. A hawker called Maria explained during an interview that when she approaches officers to ask them to return her goods in exchange for a bribe, it is best to give the officers some time "to settle" first. Once she has done so, she must "go down," meaning be "humble" when addressing them:

> Maria: Once my [wares are] taken, I give them some time. At times, they might have their own pressure, and then they can refuse to listen or give me back the [wares].
> Ruth: How long do you take before approaching them?
> Maria: Thirty minutes or even an hour so they can settle.
> Ruth: Once you have allowed them time to settle and you approach the officers, how do you talk to them?
> Maria: I would approach them and I request for their assistance. That means I have to go down. Be humble, asking for their help.

Hawkers emphasized during interviews how it is best to talk to officers "sweetly," to be "friendly" and to stay "very calm" even if officers talk to them in an abusive way or throw their wares all over the sidewalk. During fieldwork, I noticed how hawkers used respectful terms of address such as "boss," "*mzee*" [elder] and "senior" when talking to officers. "There is something here, boss!" hawkers would say when offering a bribe, or: "Boss, how can we help each other?" A hawker called Mutua describes how the amount of bribe money demanded by an officer can increase drastically if a hawker shows the wrong demeanor: "[The amount can be] five hundred or one thousand, or when you joke around, they ask for three thousand." Other hawkers explained how "being rude" or "throwing insults" at officers can result in officers' specifically targeting a hawker with harassment.

The heightened awareness by both officers and hawkers of the importance of "respect" in policing relations, and the tension around the realization of this respect, reveal how minute details of interaction become charged with meaning in hawker-officer relations. When hawkers fail to show respect, officers' authority is threatened not only in the context of their personal relationships with hawkers, but as figures meant to embody state power.

Mbembe (2001) suggests that a heightened tension around the show of respect for authority figures in minor details of everyday interactions is a particular feature of postcolonial societies, which he describes this as "intimate tyranny" (pp. 128–133). Mbembe's intimate tyranny entails a notion of postcolonial governance as operating by a scalar form of power. Quotidian relationships of authority and domination serve as sites where idioms of state power are reproduced. Mbembe lists policing relationships as an example of such quotidian relationships, alongside others that ordinarily one would understand as intimate: "relations between parents and children,

between husbands and wives, *between policemen and victims*, between teachers and pupils" (p. 107, emphasis added).

Police violence is listed alongside violence between husbands and wives, parents and children, teachers and pupils. In my reading of Mbembe's notion of intimate tyranny, the domination exercised in policing relationships does not reproduce state domination because the relationships are official or impersonal. On the contrary, they do so because "policemen and their victims" know each other, because violence between them plays out in a mundane, everyday space.

The form of domination operating in these quotidian relationships is unstable, according to Mbembe. Authority is constantly at risk of collapsing when the postcolonial subjects who were supposed to be submissive do not play their part. For that reason, minor acts of noncompliance such as failing to shave one's beard can be met with disproportionate, violent sanctions (Mbembe 2001, pp. 128–133). We might understand the obsession of Inspectorate officers with the show of "respect" they expect from hawkers in the light of Mbembe's description of intimate tyranny. However, Nairobi's Inspectorate officers seem less fearsome than the officials described by Mbembe; less capable of lashing out with spectacular violence when the policed do not submit to them. Their authority, in many ways, is not only fragile and unstable; it is already lost, and now lamented for.

Berlant (1998) describes the confusion and frustration that comes about when our expectations of unproblematic intimate relations such as marriages do not live up to our expectations (p. 285). Whereas Berlant is concerned primarily with the normative plot of the heterosexual, monogamous couple, bolstered by the institution of marriage, I propose that there are plots, too, for policing relations in Nairobi. As Berlant notes, normative intimacies are treacherous. They promise unproblematic interpersonal relations, but our lived realities rarely conform to them (Berlant 1998, p. 281). Likewise, the image of authority and respect that Inspectorate officers aspire to seems self-evidently natural to them, yet it consistently proves difficult to realize.

This is how I understand the image that constantly surfaced in my conversations with officers, of the obliging hawker in the Nairobi of the 1970s through to the 1990s who walked in front of an Inspectorate officer all the way to the police station in an orderly fashion. I understand this image as more than a recollection of how things were. I see it as a normative plot in Berlant's sense. The image of the obliging hawker of times past tells of a policing relationship where Inspectorate officers unproblematically embodied authority. Kuria's comment that "hawkers were few" and that "we greeted them when we saw them" indicates that the authority imagined in this normative plot is not an impersonal one. Rather, it is a personal relationship in which one party dominates the other. Mbembe's intimate tyranny seems present in the contemporary policing of hawking more in the form of that erstwhile authority that officers mourn the loss of than in their actual policing relations with hawkers.

Experiences of inadequacy

At the time of my fieldwork, Inspectorate officers told me that some areas of the city center had been completely taken over by hawkers. Officers typically associated these "no-go" areas with the numbers as well as the youthful "energy," and thereby violent potential, of hawkers. Onesmus explained:

> Some areas are even difficult for us to go [today], like Globe Roundabout, because there are many youths there. Young people have energy, and they use that energy. […] If they try to negotiate with you for you to allow them [to work], and they fail to get what they want, they start throwing bottles and stones.

Kipara offered similar descriptions of swelling numbers of hawkers with youthful strength:

> Hawkers are so many now! Back [in the 1990s] there were just a few in each street. We would know them, that in this street there is so-and-so. Now many young people who finish school in the rural areas, they come here to Nairobi to seek their futures. The hawkers of today, because they are young, they have that energy to fight you.

Ndevu, meanwhile, related to me how some officers are now so old that they cannot patrol the streets anymore:

> Among the people in my unit, some of them have been here longer than me. They were here when I started myself, and they taught me the ropes of the job. […] The seniors, you cannot ask them to walk around the whole day. You just have to allow them to [sit down], and then around two p.m. you allow them to leave because they will be tired.

Hawkers have a well-developed sense of the limits of officers' physical energy. As Wangari remarked to me one day when she and her colleagues were annoyed about an officer who lingered on the corner by BestBuy: "He won't stay much longer. They cannot stay in such a place the whole day. They get tired."

In Africanist literature on political authority there seems to be little consideration of the bodies of policing agents. When such bodies are discussed, they are usually related to the much-theorized idiom of "bigness," which associates physical corpulence with power, epitomized in Bayart's (2009) description of the symbolic value of the big belly. Like corpulence, "elderhood" and "seniority" are associated with male power in this literature. However, the ways in which old age is embodied

for the most part eludes description (see Bayart 2009, pp. 240–241; Blunt 2010; Kagwanja 2006; Ogola 2006). Meiu (2015) describes how Samburu men who grow old without amassing wealth fail to achieve authority as elders; they are "infantilized" as social persons in the communities in which they live (p. 480). In the case of Inspectorate officers, however, rather than an "infantilization," it seems to me that officers suffer from the troubling tiredness and slowness of their bodies *as aged*. They have difficulties embodying authority precisely because their bodies are visible, to themselves and to those they police, as fragile and lacking.

It should be relatively unsurprising that aged and bulky bodies make it difficult to perform police work. That this kind of troubled embodiment is unaccounted for in Africanist scholarship on political authority likely has something to do with the emphasis in this literature on bodies as symbolic referents. I would like to argue that we need to account for the ways in which the bodies of those who police enter into policing not only as symbolically invested entities but also as material grounds for experience and relationality.

Povinelli (2006) argues that discourses operate on the material matter of the body, on the flesh, in ways that differentially allow people to inhabit "life-worlds, death-worlds, and rotting worlds" (p. 8). The stark differences between the life expectancies of indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, for example, reveal how discourses differentially distribute health, leading to an institutionalized blindness to the hazardous health conditions of indigenous citizens (Povinelli 2006, p. 75). Thinking alongside this, I understand Inspectorate officers' experiences of inadequacy not just as a symbolic crisis but as an acute lack of strength experienced in the flesh. Furthermore, I draw on Povinelli's description of how privilege has consequences for the ways in which bodies are allowed care and conducive conditions. Nairobi's Inspectorate officers would not experience seniority and bodily corpulence as an acute disadvantage had they been allowed to move on to desk jobs. It is their stuckness in jobs meant to be performed by young men that place Inspectorate officers in situations where their ageing, bulky bodies are found lacking.

Prosthetic authority

The arrival of one of the Inspectorate's white Nissan pickup vans produces immediate reactions from Nairobi's hawkers. "Here's *kanjo*," hawkers will say at a tiny speck of white far up the road, and the sidewalk will be cleared in seconds.

"That vehicle means authority," Joseph once told me. "When you see the vehicle there [in the street], no hawkers will be selling near it."

The vans have seen better days: bruised and bent from stones thrown at them, the engines coughing at the strain of carrying loads of offenders to City Hall day after day. They were designed in the first instance to carry material objects, not people. I

imagine that those white vans would make a handy vehicle for someone running a farm, or a small construction enterprise perhaps. They have been adapted for use in policing in the city center with the addition of low benches in the back, a canopy under which hawkers crouch and wire mesh covering most of the windows. Richard once told me that the wire mesh and benches were crafted by artisan wood and metal workers in Nairobi's Kamukunji area.

"We had to put those bars on the windows," he said, "because otherwise the hawkers would simply climb out of the window if the van was stuck in traffic."

In 2014, the Kenyan human rights organization Independent Medico-Legal Unit carried out a study of torture and ill-treatment experienced by hawkers in Nairobi. Nine types of ill-treatment were surveyed. Besides beatings, sexual harassment and coercion to give bribes, "being bundled into trucks in an undignified manner sometimes resulting in injury" was listed as a common form of ill-treatment of hawkers in the hands of Inspectorate officers[56] (Independent Medico-Legal Unit 2014, p. 1). Nearly half of the surveyed hawkers working in Nairobi's city center reported having experienced this (Independent Medico-Legal Unit 2014, p. 41). The report indicates that it is not only a question of hawkers getting injured by rough handling when they are detained inside vehicles; the vans in some instances function as a site for the exercise of police violence, conveniently hidden from scrutiny:

> Sometimes the beatings take place inside the Inspectorate vans after arrests. This happens particularly after serious confrontations. If [an officer] has been hurt in the process, they would corner a hawker […], bundle them into their van and beat them up as a form of revenge. (Independent Medico-Legal Unit 2014, p. 33)

This account resonates with what hawkers told me during fieldwork. During times of heightened violence between officers and hawkers, such as the period in late 2014 and early 2015 where there were daily street battles, Inspectorate vans functioned as venues for extra-judicial violence against hawkers. One of Wangari's friends had three of his fingers cut off inside an Inspectorate vehicle in late 2014.

In the officers' own accounts, Inspectorate vans assist them in detaining hawkers who would otherwise run away. In the accounts of hawkers and their human rights advocates, meanwhile, Inspectorate vans are a piece of torture equipment which enable extra-judicial violence. We do not need to see a contradiction between these two aspects to the Inspectorate vans and their use in the policing of hawkers. Joseph's comment that "the vehicle means authority" speaks to the ways in which they are

[56] The study focused on four different kinds of perpetrators: Inspectorate officers, police officers, fellow hawkers and "political agents." However, the results showed that hawkers experienced violence overwhelmingly at the hands of Inspectorate officers.

combined. The vans enable compliance by hawkers who are unable to run away or fight back once they have been arrested. Furthermore, by making hawkers clear the sidewalk at their mere presence in the streets, the vans offer Inspectorate officers the kind of obedience and respect that they otherwise feel unable to achieve. The vans are pieces of police equipment that ensure via their material properties what the officers cannot achieve with bodily ableness. They allow officers to live up to their ideals of proper police authority.

Haraway's (1989/2012) image of the cyborg opened up a conversation within social science about connections that violate and connections that enable survival. In the aftermath of Haraway's essay, discussions around the imagery of prostheses and of prosthetic relationality emerged within anthropology, science studies and disability studies (Gray & Mentor 1995; Jain 1999; Kurzman 2001; Nelson 2001; Stone 1995; Wright 2001). Some found that the image of the prosthesis and of prosthetic relationality can be used metaphorically to draw attention to connections as varied as finance capital, international relations, indigenous rights movements and manager-employee relations (Nelson 2001; Wright 2001). Others cautioned that the use of the prosthesis as metaphor risks perpetuating notions of what a normal body should look like (Kurzman 2001). Jain (1999) draws attention to the ways in which bodies come to be seen as lacking, and as needing prosthetic enhancement, in the first place. Prostheses are never neutral, she argues. Bodies are problematized differentially by the societal position of the person perceived as disabled, and the ways in which bodies are amplified by prosthetic enhancement tells of privileges and positions (Jain 1999, pp. 32–33).

Drawing on Jain's attention to the ways in which the need for a prosthesis comes about, I understand Inspectorate officers' need for patrol vehicles as a result of the various economic, political and historical circumstances that come together to produce their bodies as lacking. In this reading, the violent practices around the Inspectorate's use of patrol vehicles have to do with the disappointed expectations that officers had for their possibilities to age with dignity. They have to do with the lack of resources in the Inspectorate Department, which has resulted in a small number of ageing Inspectorate officers policing a vast number of young hawkers, as well as the structural unemployment that led to the swelling numbers of hawkers in the first place. They have to do, also, with normative expectations of powerful masculinity, and the particular ways in which old age and bodily corpulence fail to underwrite authority in the case of Inspectorate officers.

Conclusion

I have argued that the violent practice of detaining hawkers inside Inspectorate vehicles is an attempt on behalf of officers to overcome their experiences of bodily

inadequacy and lack. Police violence, in this situation, arises out of the pressure of normative ideals about appropriate authority and the ways in which the elusiveness of these ideals is felt by officers in material, bodily registers. It results from the compromised condition of officers who have been denied the opportunity to move on to comfortable desk jobs in their advanced age, and who acutely experience the strain of having to perform the work of young men.

The inadequacies felt by Inspectorate officers in their policing relations with hawkers include experiences of unraveling privileges. In the lifetime of Inspectorate officers, the advantages of state employment have been deteriorating to a point where the wealth and influence that officers expected to attain with old age remain elusive. In this way, intimate police violence between officers and hawkers is a result, also, of particular unfulfilled promises of Kenya's postindependence state to care for its senior employees.

6. Fake mothers

Julia sits in her usual spot at BestBuy selling pink lady apples from South Africa out of a carton box. She sprinkles water on the apples from a plastic bottle with small holes drilled into the cap. In her lap, her six-week-old daughter Kiki lies wrapped in a plush blanket.

"Hi Julia," I say. "How's business?"

"Let's see, it's still early. Here, hold my baby!"

She passes me the little warm bundle and gets up to stretch her legs. Kiki stares out at the world from within the folds of the blanket, smacks her lips and yawns. She is surprisingly light to hold.

Julia and I are chatting to Wangari and Mwende when there is a sudden outburst of activity. All the way down the sidewalk, the line of hawkers transforms into a hectic frenzy of packing and running, followed by a cascade of big bundles of goods bouncing down the street on the backs of running hawkers. Up the road, two Inspectorate officers appear, walking slowly down the now empty pavement.

While everyone else runs away, Julia sits back down behind her apple box. She pulls urgently at my trouser leg.

"Brigitte! Give me my baby!"

Julia quickly arranges the bundled-up little body in her arms and stares at the officers without saying anything. It is generally known that Inspectorate officers cannot arrest mothers with young children, since they are not allowed in detention cells. The officers pass Julia, Kiki and me with frowns and a surly remark about innocent children being brought to the streets by irresponsible mothers.

It is not uncommon in central Nairobi to see a whole line of hawkers packing up and running away while a few young women with babies in their laps or with small children next to them remain behind, ready to face the approaching officers. Bringing young children in order to avoid arrest is an established practice among female hawkers. Inspectorate officers do not have the facilities required to detain children.[57] They usually leave them alone.

[57] According to the Constitution of Kenya (2010), article 53 (1) (f), children in detention have the right to be held separate from adults and in conditions that take account of the child's sex

What interests me here is the deliberate way in which Julia arranged herself with Kiki when the officers approached; the urgency with which she called out to me: "Brigitte! Give me my baby!" As Kiki was still an infant at the time and Julia had to work, she could not leave her behind with other people. Bringing such a young baby to a violent, policed environment placed both Julia and her child in a vulnerable position. On the other hand, Julia's deliberate way of arranging herself with Kiki's little body rather than running from the officers speaks to something more than vulnerability. It also illustrates the ways in which female hawkers with young children gain leverage in policing relations.

The leverage gained by female hawkers with children in policing relations has given rise to yet another type of deliberate arrangement: some female hawkers bring other people's children along, pretending to Inspectorate officers to be the children's mothers. Officers would tell me in condemning tones about such fake mothers who "hire" other people's children in order to circumvent the law. Hawkers would shrug their shoulders: faking motherhood, they told me, can be a necessary way to get by when policing is tight.

While Inspectorate officers are annoyed by the proliferation of fake mothers, they nonetheless feel compelled to show consideration towards female hawkers with children. Encountering them in the street causes officers to evaluate their own conduct and to question the appropriateness of police violence. In conversations with me, officers on their own account went into extensive explanations of the difficult circumstances that make young women bring children, and of the detrimental effect this may have on the children. They emphasized how their own position is difficult when faced with these women, being policing authorities and not social workers.

In this chapter, I explore the role played by young children in policing relations between hawkers and Inspectorate officers. I ask how we might understand the need to mitigate violence in policing relations through attachment between female hawkers and young children. Children, I argue, allow female hawkers to come into view as fully human. As mothers, female hawkers with children call for a different type of treatment than the violent policing usually applied to hawkers. They elicit an ethical response from Inspectorate officers. Importantly, though, they do so through modes of fakery. I am interested in how female hawkers become human by faking.

I want to challenge a central feature in anthropological literature on ordinary ethics, namely its assumption that ethical situations come about when people are brought close to each other. That is, the assumption that ethics arises from intimacy, and that intimacy is about mutual discovery.[58] Das (2010, 2015) describes ordinary

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and age. The holding cells where hawkers are usually placed at Nairobi City Court and at Central Police Station do not provide for this.

[58] In his work on mistrust, Carey (2017) also critiques the assumption that intimacy is about mutual discovery. My interest, however, lies with the material practices that bring about ethical

ethics as an ethics based not on abstract rules but rather of coming into proximity with the other and responding to the others' needs (2015, p. 115). We might understand moral aspirations, according to Das, as emerging out of the gradual discovery of what it means to be the other. For example, she describes how Hindu and Muslim neighbors in low-income neighborhoods in Delhi become less antagonistic in cases of interreligious marriages, when the new relatives make efforts to accommodate one another in everyday situations (Das 2010, p. 397). Meanwhile, fake mothers in Nairobi tell of a setting where ethical situations are not brought about merely by proximity to the life of another. Without children, female hawkers do not come into view for Inspectorate officers as vulnerable. The gradual discovery of what it means to be the other (cf. Das 2010, p. 397) does not come about on its own. It is initiated by female hawkers through attachment between their own bodies and the bodies of young children.

As a way of developing a different approach to the ethical situation brought about by fake mothers, I draw on Haraway's (1989/2012) contrast between two images. The first image is that of Mother – the original, natural, biological motherhood, which branches of the 1980s feminist movement claimed as their privileged position. The other image is that of the cyborg, half human and half machine, who has no claim to originality but who forms connections in order to inhabit violating conditions (Haraway 1989/2012, pp. 199–200). I propose that in order to conceive of the attachments between female hawkers and the children they bring with them, we are better off orienting ourselves towards the image of the cyborg than that of the Mother. Guided by this image, I consider how fake mothers become human by faking motherhood, and what this tells us about violence in intimate policing relations.

The argument proceeds in four parts. First, I argue that female hawkers with children complicate the Inspectorate's usual ways of policing hawkers in central Nairobi. Second, I show how Inspectorate officers engage with female hawkers with children based on a general assumption that hawker mothers are potentially fake mothers. Third, I argue that bringing children is a prosthetic, material practice aimed at fixing a social lack. Finally, I consider the form of ethics occasioned by female hawkers with children.

Single mothers

"Come meet me! I'm at Archives," says Njeri on the phone.

I walk the few blocks from BestBuy to the open square around the large brick building housing Kenya National Archives. The already dense afternoon flow of

situations in the policing of hawking, rather than with the philosophical implications of mistrust as a basis for social relations.

pedestrians becomes even denser as I approach the square around Archives. My shoulders rub against those of other pedestrians, and I become conscious of how I hold my arms. Archives is a nodal point in the city center. Here, pedestrians walking between central *matatu*[59] bus stops interlace with each other before heading in different directions once more.

The square is packed with hawkers and their displayed wares, lined up in rows to offer pedestrians narrow passageways. Most of the hawkers are women, sitting on the ground with fabric *lesos* wrapped around their legs next to heaps of fruits, vegetables or *kamare*. Some have babies in their laps. Little children totter around, followed by admonishing cries from the women. There are hardly any male hawkers.

What always struck me about Archives as a place for hawking is the apparent contradiction between its central location, and thereby its desirability as a hawking spot, and the types of hawkers who have access to it. I would have expected a profitable, central spot like Archives to be occupied by male hawkers, especially the ones well-connected with the organized system of lookout persons. Instead, this square right in the middle of Nairobi's city center with its massive and steady flow of customers is lined with young women in dirty *lesos* with children in their laps, selling small piles of tomatoes or plastic shower caps. These are the types of hawkers that seem the most vulnerable; the ones that passing pedestrians easily place in the social categories associated with the "street" (i.e. "street families" or "street dwellers").

I make my way through the rows of hawkers to the space in front of the Safaricom store, which Njeri and her group of friends use as their regular spot. Mshortie and Nyambura wave at me cheerfully. Njeri is counting bank notes to give change to a customer. Several of the women have small children sitting next to them, and two have babies in their laps. Another young woman arrives while I wait for Njeri to finish, with her hawking wares strapped to her back in the fashion of a baby wrapper. This seems to be the default way in which the women at Archives carry their wares: covering the wrapper with a thin cotton *leso*, as they would with a baby strapped to their back. You would have to lift the *leso* to know whether there is really a baby is underneath.

When Njeri has finished with the customer, I go to sit with her. Mshortie and Nyambura join us. I notice that Mshortie's belly is huge and protruding.

"She's pregnant!" says Njeri who has seen me staring.

Mshortie laughs and lifts her blouse so the three of us can feel the firm, stretched-out skin on her bulging belly. I ask Mshortie if she does not get tired, sitting on the pavement the whole day and running from *kanjo* while heavily pregnant.

[59] *Matatus* make up the passenger bus infrastructure of Nairobi. They are run by private vehicle owners organized in associations (wa Mũngai 2013).

"Running is good!" she says. "If you are active, like we are, the baby will come early. You can give birth after seven months, not nine. And the birth will be easy. You will not need stitches."

Nyambura and Njeri grimace in agreement. They are also mothers.

Mshortie's reasoning – that running with heavy loads in a policed environment while pregnant is an advantage because a premature birth will entail less risks of complications for the mother – illustrates the embodied vulnerabilities that come with carrying a pregnancy in a context of poverty and criminalized livelihood. At the same time, her ability as a young woman to hawk in this central area of the city speaks simultaneously of considerable leverage in policing relations. In my own eyes, the young women at Archives with their dirty *lesos*, small heaps of tomatoes and little children in their laps epitomize the convergence of vulnerability and leverage in policing relations that female hawkers with children hold in most parts of central Nairobi.

From my conversations with Inspectorate officers, I learnt that the officers also interpret these women as vulnerable. The women, they would tell me, come to the streets with pregnant bellies and young children because they are single mothers, unable to rely on a male provider. However, in the eyes of Inspectorate officers, the vulnerability associated with single mother hawkers is not necessarily one that equates to innocence. The young women are partly to blame themselves.

> Ndevu and I sit together on a small bench along Tom Mboya Street, when a group of women with hawkers' bundles on their backs pass by. Two young children are with the group, staring at Ndevu and me with shy, curious expressions. When they have walked on, Ndevu says:
>
> "The problem is that many of these women are single mothers. They don't do family planning. They just go out and then they have babies. It is better to stay in a marriage."
>
> "Some women hawkers have told me that they left marriages because their husbands were abusive," I say.
>
> "But it is better to make it work! You can go to marriage counseling. It's better than being a single mother, taking the children to the streets like this."
>
> Ndevu has remarked to me on other occasions how children who are brought to the streets by their mothers "grow into hawking." They start with boxes of matches or packets of chewing gum, and when they grow older, they become regular hawkers. At times, such comments by Ndevu seem to imply that hawking is a social problem created by poverty, and that you cannot blame individual hawkers for their dire circumstances. Now, however, I sense a good deal of disapproval from

> Ndevu at the poor choices made by female hawkers who bring children with them.
>
> "Njeri is also a single mother," he says. We both know Njeri; she was the one who initially introduced me to Ndevu. "That's why she must come to town to look for money."

Ndevu's remark that "staying in a marriage" is better than "taking the children to the streets" implies that if the young women had only stayed in relationships with male providers, they would be able to care for the children at home. The same does his remark that Njeri "must come to town to look for money" because she is a single mother. This reasoning does not necessarily represent the practical arrangements of female hawkers. Many leave their children with relatives or domestic workers[60] when they come to the city, and many are in committed romantic relationships without seeing this as a reason to stop hawking. While not necessarily an accurate description of the family situation of female hawkers who bring children to the city center, Ndevu's remarks illustrate how hawker mothers are associated with vulnerability in the eyes of Inspectorate officers: they are seen to be dislocated from the care of a male provider. Meanwhile, the young women are understood to be partly to blame for their circumstances because they have not made appropriate efforts to maintain committed relations to the fathers of their children.

Inspectorate officers' concerns about single mothers among the hawkers resonate with a much older trope about single women that was also evident during Nairobi's early urban history. In the 1920s, and for the following decades, the presence of unmarried women in Nairobi's African neighborhoods was a source of concern for both the colonial administration and traditional authorities in the rural areas from which the women migrated to town (Robertson 1996). The colonial administration originally intended for male African laborers to stay only temporarily in the city. African housing was deliberately not planned to accommodate families. Despite this, a number of women did find their way to Nairobi's African neighborhoods. Most of them were engaged in petty trade or sex work, or a combination of the two. Finding opportunities in the city outside the confines of customary law, these women became property owners and were a significant social authority in the urban neighborhoods in which they stayed (Bujra 1975; Frederiksen 2001; Robertson 1996, 1997; White 1990).

Single women troubled both the colonial administration and traditional authorities in the rural areas because they were dislocated from the control of male authorities and considered to be sexually promiscuous (Robertson 1996, p. 56). These tropes

[60] Domestic workers are not only a feature of middle-class households in Kenya. Several of the hawkers I knew during fieldwork had "house girls" who looked after their children and homes while they were hawking in the city center.

about single women persist in Kenyan popular culture today (Frederiksen 2001). They reverberate in Ndevu's concerns about single mother hawkers who "don't do family planning" and who bring their children to the streets because they are unwilling to stay in marriages.

Embodying both vulnerability and obstinance, single mother hawkers with their children trouble Inspectorate officers like Ndevu because they complicate the officers' usual modes of policing. Hawker mothers do not easily fit the general stereotype of a hawker as a potentially violent, unruly youngster. Officers generally speak of their job as "hawker control," and they readily associate hawkers with petty criminal activities such as pickpocketing as well as with organized crime, often referring to hawkers as "goons" and speaking of them as organized in "cartels." Because they are seen as potentially violent, hawkers are understood to call for violent containment.

Drawing on policing literature, we can conceive of this as the discursive production of hawkers as "disorderly" and in need of policing. That policing technologies produce groups of people as problematic and legitimize violence against them has been noted by a range of anthropological scholarship (see, for example, Caldeira 2013; Fassin 2013; Larkins 2018; Mutsaers & van Neunen 2018; Nuhrat 2018; Parnell 2013; Penglase 2013). Within this line of analysis, Han (2017) proposes that categories of the disorderly not only figure in the institutional gaze on policed subjects, but that marginalized people themselves are aware of these categorizations and make continuous efforts to belong in the category of "law-abiders" (pp. 166–171). The case of female hawkers in Nairobi who bring children with them can be interpreted in line with Han's argument that the policed are aware of their categorization as disorderly and make efforts to escape it. By bringing children, and becoming "single mothers," female hawkers emphasize their own femininity and vulnerability in the eyes of Inspectorate officers. However, while Han describes the efforts of policed subjects in Chile to stay in the category of "law-abiders," something else plays out when female hawkers in Nairobi bring children. While female hawkers escape being policed as hawkers by becoming "single mothers," they cannot necessarily be described as entering a category of model citizens.

Fake mothers

When Inspectorate officers speak about female hawkers with children, the trope of the single mother appears alternately with another trope: that of the fake mother. Inspectorate officers would talk to me at length about female hawkers who "hire" babies in order to escape arrest. Here is a conversation between me and Joseph:

Joseph: You know, those ladies? Some of them hire the babies.
Brigitte: Really? They hire them from their mother?

Joseph: Yes, from the mother. Sometimes if a hawker has two babies, she can hire one of them and keep the other one for herself. She gets two hundred or three hundred per day. Sometimes you can know that this one hired a baby, because you know them. You see them all the time, so you notice if one is pregnant. Then if you have not seen her pregnant and suddenly she has a baby, you can be surprised.

Brigitte: What can you do when you meet a hawker and she has a baby?

Joseph: You can't put her in the cell, so you have to take her straight to court. Or you just have to tell her "please don't bring this baby tomorrow." We used to have some tricks to test if this woman is really the mother. Like, you can ask her to breastfeed the baby. Then, if she is not able, she can't be the mother.

Brigitte: But even if she is not the mother, you still can't bring the baby to the cell?

Joseph: No, but if you can find the real mother, then you can tell her to leave the baby with her.

Joseph's description of "tricks" to find the "real" mother gives the impression that Inspectorate officers actively make efforts to reveal fake mothers among the hawkers. Contrary to this impression, my own observations at BestBuy and at other hawking locations was that Inspectorate officers generally leave female hawkers with children alone. This is what hawkers told me as well. The following incident illustrates the type of non-interfering approach to potential fakery in hawker-officer relations that I mostly experienced during fieldwork:

> When I come back to Nairobi for follow-up fieldwork in august 2017, Julia's daughter Kiki has grown from an infant into a lively toddler. Julia still brings her to work, and Kiki spends most days roaming around the 30 meters of pavement by BestBuy.
>
> One afternoon, I'm chatting to Wangari and Julia while Kiki plays further down the road. Julia sits on the sidewalk, organizing a large heap of oranges into neat piles of five on the side where pedestrians pass. The little orange pyramids line up steadily along the edge of her *mwareero*. Suddenly, the hawkers to both sides of us jerk into action, collecting their wares and running off. Wangari stops mid-sentence, snatches up her bundle from the ground and continues across the road, all in one movement. Julia quickly gets up and fetches Kiki, then places

the child demonstratively on top of the heap of oranges that are still not organized.

It takes a little while before the officers arrive. In the meantime, Wangari and a few other hawkers have come back without their wares and stand close to Julia, looking in the direction where they expect officers to appear, talking in Kikuyu. As usually is the case during a tense situation, polite efforts to include me, the *mzungu* lady, in the conversation cease. I play peekaboo with Kiki, who is climbing around on the oranges.

When the officers come, four of them, they seem to be in a hurry to get somewhere. They rush past, glancing at the heap of oranges and Kiki sitting on top of them, making no attempt to talk to Julia about either the fruits of the child.

"Hi, Brigitte!"

I realize that I know one of the officers, the section head Onesmus, with whom I've talked a few times. He stops for a moment while his colleagues continue ahead, stretching his hand out to shake mine.

"Do you know this child?" I ask. The last time I met with Onesmus, we talked about female hawkers bringing children to work.

"Yes," he says, and nods in the direction of the group of hawkers, "one of these women is her mother." Then he excuses himself and hurries to catch up with his colleagues.

Onesmus' phrasing, that "one of these women" is mother to Kiki, indicates that Inspectorate officers in many cases relate to female hawkers with children without certainty that the female hawker is the actual, biological mother to the child.

"Don't they know who is mother to which child?" I once asked Wangari.

"We don't want them to know that," she replied. To the extent that they can, she explained, hawkers actively prevent Inspectorate officers from knowing who the biological mother to a given child is.

Onesmus' remark shows that he has encountered Kiki often enough to know that the child probably has a mother among one of the women at BestBuy. It also shows that he has never attempted, or at least never successfully so, to find out exactly who her mother is. That Kiki was climbing around on Julia's oranges was not necessarily an occasion for Onesmus to believe that it was Julia. His comment speaks of the same resigned acceptance as that by Inspectorate officers of female hawkers at Archives who carry their hawking wares on their backs in the style of baby wrappers. Officers would only need to lift the *leso* know whether the women actually have a baby strapped to their back – but most of the time they do not attempt to.

I am interested in what this apparent normalization of fakery does to the ways in which Inspectorate officers show consideration for female hawkers with children. The

relationship between the original and the fake has been the source of some theorizing within Africanist literature. Comaroff and Comaroff (2006) describe African experiences of modernity at the turn of the twenty-first century, and of integration into the world economy, as marked by the prevalence of counterfeit forms. In their writing, and in that of Ferguson (2007), the counterfeit is significant not because it imitates the real but because it implies a relationship to the original. Counterfeit forms reveal dependencies and inequalities. When a villager in Lesotho builds a square house rather than a round one in imitation of European style houses, Ferguson (2007) argues, we must take seriously the villager's awareness of material inequality and his aspiration that someday this inequality might be addressed (p. 17).

Although we could understand fake mothers among Nairobi's hawkers in juxtaposition to their "real" counterparts, as imitations that reveal inequalities – say, that fake mothers illuminate the privileges afforded "real" mothers – Onesmus' comment calls for a different approach. What plays out in day-to-day encounters between female hawkers with children and Inspectorate officers, rather than a distinguishing between the real and the fake, is a resigned assumption on behalf of officers that any female hawker who appears to be a mother might in fact be a fake mother. For female hawkers, this means that the leverage they gain in policing relations by bringing children is the same, whether the children are biologically their own or not.

In a Kenyan context, Blunt (2004) describes recent experiences of heightened anxiety about fakery. During the economic crisis and hyper-inflation of the 1990s, rumors began to circulate about satanic cults that posed as legitimate businesses, luring unsuspecting citizens into schemes of murder and devil worship. During this period, Blunt argues, Kenyans experienced a generalized panic about fakery, imitation, and signs that were not backed by substance. This characterization is an illustrative contrast to what seems to be at play in hawker-officer policing relations. Rather than a panic reminiscent of that surrounding the satanic fakes of the 1990s, fake mothers seem to call forth in Inspectorate officers a pragmatic suspension of any search for originals.

I find that Inspectorate officers' approach to fake mothers more resembles another approach to fakery also found in more recent Kenyan history. Musila (2015) and Cohen and Odhiambo (2004) describe how ordinary Kenyans under the authoritarian rule of President Daniel Arap Moi in the 1980s and 1990s were acutely aware that seeking knowledge that went beyond a given official story was associated with risks. Citizens learnt to maneuver between different truths, between official statements from the Kenyan and foreign governments, and rumors from the unofficial grapevine of gossip. Most sought to orient themselves between these different truths without interrogating them, finding the least risky path between them (Musila 2015).

We might describe Inspectorate officers as practicing a similar kind of maneuvering. They treat all female hawkers with children as mothers, while

suspecting that they might potentially be fake mothers. Different from the crisis-inducing fakes of the 1990s described by Blunt, and from Comaroff's and Comaroff's counterfeits that illuminate inequalities, fake mothers in policing relations most of the time provoke in Inspectorate officers a pragmatic suspension of the search for "real" mothers. That is, the presence of fake mothers extends a suspicion of potential fakery to all female hawkers with children. This suspicion, meanwhile, does not prevent officers from showing consideration towards them.

Prosthetic mothers

One early evening I meet Wangari by BestBuy just as it starts to rain heavily. She is with a girl who looks to me to be about seven or eight years old. Wangari introduces her as the daughter of Maria's cousin. The girl doesn't say much but sticks close to Wangari while eating potato chips from a plastic bag. Wangari looks up at the sky that seems to hold much rain still to pour down and moves all three of us across the road where she sets up her wares underneath the awning outside a bakery store.

The ground where the girl sits starts to get wet from the rainwater now flowing over the sidewalk. Wangari moves the girl to the other side where it is still dry.

"A *kanjo*! The one in black." Wangari nudges me with her elbow, pointing up the road to a man wearing a black windbreaker who is walking in our direction.

"I cannot move," Wangari says. "He cannot arrest me because I have a child here." She points at the girl next to her who is still crunching potato chips.

The officer passes Wangari who, I notice, is the only hawker left at BestBuy. The other hawkers do not come back, even after the officer has left, probably because of the rain. BestBuy is now a blur of shining, wet surfaces reflecting the yellow and red lights from the floor-level shops and the vehicles speeding by. After a little while, even Wangari gives up on selling anything in the heavy downpour.

"Let's go," she says to me, and starts packing up her wares.

The child follows her without a word. Wangari hides her wares in a nearby backyard. Together we go to one of the low-budget cafes nearby that offer hot savory dishes like *ugali*, *getheri*, beef stew and *pilau*, but where I mostly see hawkers buying sugary tea and cheap *mandazi*. Wangari orders three teas and an extra plastic tumbler in which she swirls the child's tea for a while until it is cool enough for her to drink.

"She has helped me so many times," Wangari says, and nods towards the girl drinking her tea. "Because the officers they don't know if I'm not her mother. So, when I have been arrested, the others say 'go to your mother' and she comes to me. 'Mummy, mummy!'" Wangari laughs.

The child frowns in concentration, trying to understand what Wangari is saying about her in English. Wangari says a few words to her in Kikuyu and continues to me:

"One time I was in Central [Police Station], I had been arrested, and Maria came with her and told them 'How can you arrest this child's mother? I am still a student so I can't take care of this child, I have to go to class tomorrow.' And they released me. I walked away from Central!"

I ask some further questions about bringing children to work. Can the officers still impound your wares, even if they can't bring mothers and children to the holding cells? Yes, Wangari says. If officers see that you have a child, they leave you but they might still take your wares.

"What about you, then? That officer who passed us just now could have carried [impounded] your socks, even if he couldn't arrest you?"

"You also know which one [officer] is good and which one is bad," Wangari explains. "That one who was passing, he is a good one. He would not do that."

She asks the girl to go downstairs and see whether the other hawkers at BestBuy are back at work. Then Wangari looks into her tumbler of tea for a while.

"Me, I don't want to bring my children here," she says, still looking into the tumbler. Then she looks at me: "You know that my first born, Shiko, is fourteen years old now? That young girl who sells plums next to Mama Simon, Julia's younger sister, she is only fifteen. She is still in school. Do you know how Julia came here, to BestBuy?"

"How?"

"Ok, you know that their mother is also a hawker? When Julia was still in school, their mother brought her there to Tom Mboya Street during school holidays to help. Now Julia, she saw how we make money here. When school started again, Julia left home in the morning, then she puts her school uniform in her bag and goes to Marikiti [wholesale fruit market], and she spends the whole day hawking in town. Meanwhile her mother is paying school fees!"

Wangari's expression is serious.

"That's why I'm saying, I don't want Shiko to know about this place. She just has to concentrate on school only. Because you cannot control them."

The girl has not come back. We make our way down to the street where the other hawkers are just starting to unpack their things. Maria comes and complains to Wangari, saying she found the girl several streets away, roaming around alone. Wangari apologizes to Maria, fetches her bundle and starts organizing her socks. Maria does not send the child back to where we are for the rest of the evening.

Wangari's relationship to Maria's cousin's child gives us a window into the type of attachment built between female hawkers and the children who allow them to gain recognition as mothers in policing relations. The episode on that rainy evening speaks of an ambiguous relationship. On the one hand, Wangari clearly cares for the child. She makes sure the girl does not get wet, she swirls her hot tea in order to cool it and the child seems content and trusting in Wangari's presence. Maria, the child's great

aunt, supports this relationship. She regularly sends the girl over to Wangari's spot, knowing that Wangari will buy her chips and look out for her. And, as Wangari recounted, Maria once brought the child to Central Police Station to get Wangari out of detention.

On the other hand, as Wangari explained to me, she would never bring her own children to a hawking location like BestBuy. It is not only Inspectorate officers, but also hawkers themselves, that frown on children who are brought to the "streets" and who "grow into hawking." Wangari herself uses a considerable portion of her earnings from hawking to send her two children to private schools, hoping for them to make something better of themselves. I suspect that this was why Wangari waited for the child to leave us before confessing to me that she would never bring her daughter, Shiko, to BestBuy. Her care for Maria's cousin's daughter is interlaced with pity for this child who goes through what she herself wants to spare her own children from.

To describe the attachment between female hawkers and the children they place next to them on the sidewalk, we need an imagery different from the one oriented towards the biological, the innocent and the original. At this point, I draw on Haraway's (1989/2012) contrast between two images: that of Mother, the innocent and natural, and that of the cyborg, half human and half machine, made up of impure connections and with no claim to originality. Haraway proposed the contrast between these two figures in the context of 1980s feminist politics. With it, she problematized the tendency within feminist scholarship at the time to insist on motherhood as a privileged position. The latent moral superiority of such a claim might come as a resource in some respects, she noted, but claiming association with the natural and the innocent also makes for a limiting position (Haraway 1989/2012, p. 200). Proposing the image of a cyborg as an alternative, Haraway wrote: "Why should our bodies end at the skin, or include at best other bodies encapsulated by skin? […] For us, in imagination and in other practice, machines can be prosthetic devices, intimate components, friendly selves" (Haraway 1989/2012, p. 201).

The figure of Mother unproblematically, organically, includes "other bodies encapsulated by skin." The cyborg, in contrast, exists by virtue of connections made in the context of domination. For example, Haraway describes the writing of Chicana author Cherrié Moraga in English and Spanish, two conquerors' languages, as a violation that nonetheless allows survival. There is no claim, here, to an original language before violation (Haraway 1989/2012, p. 199). Cyborg connections can be violating, just like they can be conditions of possibility.

I find that the image of the cyborg better allows us to conceive of the attachments between female hawkers and the children they bring than the image of Mother. Children allow female hawkers to gain leverage in a policed environment where parenthood and the responsibility it places on hawkers cannot be recognized unless the hawkers have children physically present with them. At the same time, bringing children to the streets is experienced by both hawkers and Inspectorate officers as a

problematic act. The only type of parenthood recognized in the policing of hawking is a violating form of motherhood; the type where the mother, fake or real, exposes the child to the corrupting environment of the street.

Haraway's image of the cyborg has been taken up within the field of critical disability studies to examine how the use of prostheses reveals our investment in that which we perceive as normal (Campbell 2009; Reeve 2012; Shildrick 2013, 2015). If we understand the attachment between female hawkers and the children they bring as a prosthetic attachment, as their way of seeking consideration from Inspectorate officers, we might say that hawkers in and of themselves are deemed not fully whole in policing relations. This is not a physical incompleteness but a classed and gendered one. As already noted, in the policing of hawking, both male and female hawkers are normally perceived as disorderly and prone to violence, and therefore in need of violent containment.

Crompvoets (2012) notes how some prostheses are not meant to address physical dysfunction but rather to allow the user to embody gendered positions considered normal and proper. Her empirical example concerns women who use breast prostheses after mastectomy. Breast loss is understood as a loss of femininity, and breast prostheses promise to make the women "whole" in relation to gendered expectations. However, as Crompvoets also shows, the material experience of wearing a breast prosthesis does not always correspond to expectations of "wholeness." The ways in which female hawkers prosthetically extend themselves into motherhood by bringing young children has parallels with the troubled wearing of a breast prosthesis. They engage in a material practice that offers them inclusion into the position of mothers, but their experience of attaching themselves to the actual children they bring is wrought with ambiguities, such as Wangari's expressions of care and pity for Maria's cousin's child.

Humane officers

When we were having tea in the restaurant on that rainy evening, Wangari told me that the Inspectorate officer who passed us earlier in the street was a "good one." In principle, he could have confiscated her wares, but he did not do so. He saw Wangari sitting with a child and moved on.

What do we make of the officer's reaction to the presence of Maria's cousin's daughter next to Wangari, silently eating her potato chips? Knowing how hawker motherhood plays out in hawker-officer policing relations, we can assume that the officer was in no way convinced that Wangari was the girl's biological mother. Nonetheless, the presence of the child brought Wangari into view for him as something else than a regular hawker; as requiring consideration rather than "control."

"What do you do when you meet a woman [hawker] who is carrying a small baby?" I once asked Ndevu.

"If you try to arrest someone like that, you feel bad in your heart," he said. "And if you try to put her with the baby into the vehicle [patrol van], the baby can even faint because it is crowded in there. So, with those women you can't be very harsh."

"You just leave them?"

"Yes, most of the time you just decide to leave them."

Ndevu's comment that arresting a woman with a baby makes you "feel bad in your heart" indicates that when Inspectorate officers encounter female hawkers with children, something more is at stake for them than upholding the law. Arresting a woman with a child affects the way they feel about themselves. In conversations with me, Inspectorate officers would go to great lengths to describe the vulnerabilities of women hawkers with children, as they understood them, and to justify their own actions when faced with these women in the street. Not all officers had the same approach. Some told me that they avoid arresting female hawkers with children, but that they confiscate their wares in order to discourage them from bringing the children to the street. From all the officers, however, I sensed a more or less explicit concern about how their treatment of these women reflected on themselves.

Esmeir (2012) describes how a particular notion of the humane emerged in the process of juridical reforms that were to ensure the "humane" treatment of prisoners and animals in colonial Egypt. Violence only became a problem for the project of humane reforms once it was considered disproportionate in its application. When violence became disproportionate, it threatened the humanity of the one who exercised it (Esmeir 2012). The humane reforms, then, protected in the first instance the perpetrator of the violence rather than the victim. Prisoners belonged discursively to those categories of policed subjects which were understood to be not fully human, and against whom a certain amount of violence was rationalized in the interest of a larger narrative of progress towards greater humanity (Esmeir 2012).

In the same vein, we can understand female hawkers with children as constituting a problem related to the proportionality of violence applied in the policing practices of Inspectorate officers. Without children in their arms or by their side, female hawkers, just like male hawkers, are understood to call for police violence in order to be "controlled." As mothers, female hawkers move out of the category of hawkers against whom police violence is appropriate and proportionate. Exerting violence on them would threaten the officers' own humanity. In this sense, I understand female hawkers who bring children as posing an ethical problem to Inspectorate officers, and as eliciting an ethical response from them.

Anthropological writings on ordinary ethics (Lambek 2010, 2015) locate ethics as tacitly present in all human language and action. Ethics, in this understanding, is happening most of the time "without calling undue attention to itself" (Lambek 2010, p. 2). Within a view of ethics as embedded in the ordinary, Al-Mohammad (2010)

proposes an anthropological notion of ethics as relational, an intersubjective ethics of "being-with" rather than an ethics of the "self." Whereas Al-Mohammad describes ethical relations between persons who are mutually sympathetic and devoted to one another, Das (2015) considers ethical responses in encounters between persons whose relations are marked by hostilities and conflict. She describes these as persons who did not willingly enter into relationships with one another, but whom "fate has contingently attached" (Das 2015, p. 115). In these situations, she argues, obligation takes the form of a response to the needs of the other with whom one has come into proximity, even if this proximity was not willingly sought (Das 2015, p. 115).

We can conceive of the Inspectorate officer who passed Wangari and the child without attempting to impound Wangari's wares as a case of ordinary ethics in the context of mutually apprehensive policing relations. Hawker-officer relations span hostilities and suspicion as well as mutual consideration. The presence of Maria's cousin's child next to Wangari can be understood along the lines of the unwanted but nonetheless obligating proximity to the needs of another described by Das.

However, the encounter between Inspectorate officers and female hawkers who bring children also compels us to revisit what we understand by ethics. Rather than "discovering" what it means to be the other, as Das (2010, p. 397) describes, hawker mothers elicit an ethical response from officers by modes of faking. The ethical claim made in this encounter has to do not merely with suffering and the recognition of suffering. In order for Inspectorate officers to recognize the needs of hawkers, and for these needs to constitute an obligation on officers, it is not enough for the hawkers in and of themselves to come into proximity with officers. Julia's careful arrangement of infant Kiki in her arms while the hawkers all around her ran down the road speaks of an ethics that is less about discovery than about bringing oneself into view through attachments that enable and violate at the same time.

Conclusion

Female hawkers who bring children with them constitute a window into that which mitigates violence in policing relations between hawkers and officers. Contrary to the emphasis on mutual discovery within anthropological writings on ordinary ethics, I have argued that hawkers in and of themselves are unable to come into view as fully human in encounters with officers. Female hawkers with children escape the category of disorderly and in need of violent "control" by prosthetically extending themselves into motherhood. They need to be fake in order to be human.

The children whom they place in their arms or next to themselves on the sidewalk allow them consideration in policing relations. At the same time, both hawkers and officers agree that children are harmed by being brought to the streets. In this way, the prosthetic connection that allows female hawkers ethical consideration is

simultaneously a violating one. In order to account for ethics in intimate policing relationships, we need to recognize attachments that resemble more those of cyborgs than those of Mothers. We need to look beyond pure positions and account for intimacies that allow for the inhabiting of a violating condition while bringing about new forms of violation.

7. Friends

> Njeri and I are walking together in Nairobi's city center. A man calls out to Njeri and she stops to shake his hand. They exchange an informal greeting, then a joke and a little laughter. The man is short and broad, lines of old age framing his face. His grin reveals two broken front teeth, the stubs a striking dark blue color. An Inspectorate officer, I guess. Sure enough, when he has walked on, Njeri says:
>
> "He is a *kanjo*. He works in the store [where impounded wares are kept]. I met him last time when I went for my job [wares]."
>
> Njeri lowers her voice a little and turns her face towards me, her tone turning dramatic with gossip:
>
> "He said 'If you give me your body, we can find a solution'!" She laughs loudly. "I refused him! I can't. I'd rather just leave my job there. Come back and find money to get a new one."
>
> She continues, this time without laughter, talking to the pavement as we walk: "That is the problem with some of these officers. They want to start a relationship with you, and if you refuse, they will find something – anything – so that they can arrest you. I can't do that! But other women agree to that. You are a bread winner, they have taken your work, you want to feed your children. They [the women] don't see any other way."

Sexual relationships between female hawkers and male Inspectorate officers are common in central Nairobi. They are not openly displayed, but they attract a good deal of commentary. Hawkers will say that so-and-so is the "girlfriend" or the "wife" of an officer, that she is "in a relationship" with an officer, or simply that she has a "friend" among the officers. As Njeri pointed out when she told me about the officer with the blue teeth who wanted her body, hawkers are often in a position that makes it difficult for them to refuse intimate offers from Inspectorate officers. It is this position, a position from which intimate relations look both violating and difficult to refuse, that concerns me in the following.

The position from which female hawkers enter into sexual relationships with Inspectorate officers illuminates the position from which most hawkers enter into (non-sexual) "friendships" with them. Hawkers exert themselves in order to become and remain friends with those who police them. Their efforts include regular payments of money, courteous ways of talking to the officers and refraining from reporting

physical abuse by Inspectorate officers to the police. Like sexual relationships, friendships between hawkers and officers are both violent and enabling. Hawkers explained to me that they become "friends" with officers because being "enemies" with them would be detrimental to their ability to work in the city center. They also explained that their friendships with officers are based on the mutual understanding that everyone needs to support their families: "The *kanjos* are also working," as Wangari put it. "We all have to work. We have children to look after." Friendships are based on mutual recognition of the other party as a social person, and on mutual implication in each other's efforts to make a living and fulfil other intimate obligations.

In this chapter, I ask how we can understand friendships and sexual relationships between officers and hawkers as policing relationships that are both intimate and violent. In approaching this question analytically, I run into two key theoretical problems. These theoretical problems are the point of the chapter. I argue that much police violence is invisible to us, firstly, because we are not accustomed to seeing policing relationships as intimate relationships and, secondly, because we are not accustomed to seeing intimate relationships as violent.

Das (2008) describes the state and the family as violent, gendered institutions in which men and women are exposed differently to violence. Women are expected to submit to male heads of households within a domestic setting, while men are expected to risk their lives going to war for their nation. Both are subject to a founding violence that allocates them to political and domestic communities respectively (Das 2008, pp. 285–286). Das notes that many forms of violence in the home remain difficult for us to name as violence. The assumption that women "consent" to violence in the home is deep seated and related to fundamental assumptions in our political theory about the relationship between the state and the family[61] (Das 2008, pp. 292–293).

Friendships and sexual relationships between officers and hawkers sit uneasily between the types of relationality which Das describes as political and domestic. They can easily be described within registers of state-citizen relations as police misconduct: as illegal extortion and as officers' misusing their power to obtain sexual favors from female hawkers. If we conceive of hawker-officer relations as state-citizen relations, these types of exchanges epitomize state violence. However, such an interpretation does not account for the ways in which officers and hawkers are mutually implicated in each other's efforts to make a living. It does not account for hawkers' interest in, and active efforts to form, friendships and sexual relationships with officers. And it does not account for the combination of violence in their relationships with those

[61] In Das' (2008) description, men are also exposed to gendered violence that can be difficult to interrogate in relation to "consent," such as when they are expected to heroically fight for the nation (p. 293). However, my interest presently is with contrasting intimacies between officers and hawkers with types of exchanges that are conventionally interpreted as state violence, namely extortion and sexual abuse by state officials.

forms of mutual understanding, the recognition of the other as bound by other intimate obligations, which Wangari described.

On the other hand, if we conceive of friendships and sexual relationships between officers and hawkers within registers of intimacies, it becomes difficult to locate violence within them. We arrive at the problem that Das (2008) noted around assumed consent in domestic relations. At this point, I make a leap into a different theoretical register.[62] I draw inspiration from Strathern's (1992) description of how persons in Melanesia exert influence on one another in order to create for each other the need for a relationship. Strathern draws our attention to the ways in which gift exchange comes about only as a result of a particular type of pressure – an influence exerted – by which one person makes the other person see the gift and the relationship offered as necessary to complete them. Strathern (1992) refers to this pressure or influence in some places as "coercion" and in others as "compelling" (p. 176–179). I take my point of departure in this ambiguity in Strathern's language use. I propose that friendships and sexual relationships between officers and hawkers allow us to see intimate police violence in those hard-to-articulate relational dynamics that make persons need other persons.

The following discussion is built around a story that developed over the course of some months during my fieldwork. Njeri is at the center of this story. A conflict developed between her and a particular group of Inspectorate officers. The unfolding conflict between Njeri and the officers mobilized an apparatus of human rights organizations, their lawyers and paralegal workers who supported Njeri in filing court cases against the officers and in seeking witness protection. I first examine the commentary that the conflict elicited from other hawkers, who maintained that it is best to be "friends" with officers rather than involving human rights organizations. Second, I consider the ways in which hawker-officer friendships are underpinned by violence. Third, I discuss how hawker-officer relationships sit uneasily between private and public forms of relationality. Lastly, I argue that in order to account for intimate police violence, we need to pay attention to the pressures that make persons need one another. The lack of this attention, I suggest, is why human rights work fails to reach hawkers in Nairobi, and most likely many other survivors of police violence.

Working together

I am still in bed, sleeping, when Njeri's phone call wakes me up. Drowsily I try to make sense of what she is saying. Something about her being at a police station.

[62] I do not mean to disregard scholarship on the forms that violent intimacies can take within families and couples. By discussing violent intimacies between officers and hawkers with reference to Strathern's work on composite personhood, I seek to continue my exploration of intimate police violence with the analytical language developed in previous chapters.

"I'm here since yesterday. They arrested me. I slept in the cell!"

The seriousness of it gets to me. Njeri has been on bad terms with a particular group of Inspectorate officers for a while. Now, apparently, they have managed to get her arrested.

"I'm so hungry," she says. "Can you buy me breakfast?"

I promise her to do so and prepare to leave for the police station. Worried that Njeri might be expecting more from my presence than breakfast and doubting that there really is more I can do for her, I call Chep who runs a small hawkers' association and acts as an informal contact person to several Nairobi-based human rights organizations. For the past two months, Njeri has been receiving legal assistance and financial support from one of these organizations under a program categorizing her as a "human rights defender." It is rare for hawkers in Nairobi to challenge Inspectorate officers by refusing to plead guilty to charges against them and by filing assault cases against officers in return. Njeri, at the moment, is doing both these things. Chep picks up the phone quickly and tells me he is already at the police station with Nyambura, Njeri's friend. They are waiting for a lawyer also affiliated to the organization. Relieved to hear that other people more capable of helping Njeri are already at work, I jump on a *matatu*.

The police station is a two-story brick building with several police officers in khaki uniforms standing by the entrance. When I arrive, Nyambura and Chep are outside, a little distance from the entrance and the officers. Chep is puffing on a cigarette and typing on his phone, his thin body full of restless energy.

"Did you see my e-mail?" he asks as a greeting.

Chep has added me to his mailing list of human rights professionals to whom he sends ad-hoc updates on the situation of hawkers in Nairobi. In the last weeks, several e-mails had "Njeri" and her surname in the subject heading, as her conflict with the group of Inspectorate officers escalated. Nyambura clutches a bag, which she tells me contains spare clothes for Njeri. She has not been allowed to bring them to her.

"Njeri asked me to buy her breakfast," I say.

Nyambura says they will probably allow that, if we buy the food at the police station's canteen. She leads me to a side building where the canteen is and orders *chai* tea and *chapati*. Half of the café tables around us are occupied by men, some in police uniforms and others in civilian clothes. Most look up to stare at us before going back to their food. Nyambura touches my arm and nods her head discretely in the direction of a group sitting around two tables. The ones without uniforms are Inspectorate officers, she whispers. The officers who are harassing Njeri.

Three of the Inspectorate officers come up to us and greet Nyambura, asking her about me in Sheng. I am surprised at the change of tone in Nyambura's voice. When she whispered to me who they were, her voice was full of distaste, the corners of her mouth pointing down. Now, she smiles, responds to the officers in a light tone and laughs. The men laugh as well.

"Have you ever been arrested?" I ask her, as we walk back outside with a tray of tea and *chapati* for Njeri.

"No. *Kanjos* have taken my job [wares] many times. But I have not been arrested."

Chep has been joined by a tall man wearing a dark grey suit, a tie and shiny black leather shoes. He introduces himself to me as Michael, the lawyer representing Njeri in her various ongoing cases against Inspectorate officers. Next to Michael, Chep, Nyambura and I look scruffy in our casual clothes. Before I have a chance to ask him about his representation of Njeri, a big-bellied police officer in a khaki green uniform comes towards us with brisk steps and bellows to us in angry English:

"What are you doing here? Who are you here to see?"

Chep explains with an authoritative air that we were here for Njeri, but he is cut short and his authority punctuated by a furious outburst from the police officer. The gist of his angry rant, partly in English and partly in Swahili, goes something like this:

> You [addressed to Chep] are the problem! With you it is always about beatings. Every time this one [Njeri] is arrested she is beaten. She is always beaten! When I talk to hawkers, I always tell them they must not resist arrest. Just go with the officers when they are arrested. You come here [to the police station], you take your fingerprints, you pay the cash bail. This issue of hawking is petty. The solution is not always going to court, bringing lawyers.

Having expressed his frustration with hawkers and human rights organizations who bring problems of violence to his police station, the officer continues, still in his bellowing fashion, to outline how hawkers and Inspectorate officers should find ways of "working together:"

> You must talk to the Municipal Government and find ways of working with them so that hawkers can sell in this city. There will always be hawkers here. Even if one of them is offered a job in industrial area, he will come back here because he is getting good money. The *askaris* [Inspectorate officers] have their jobs because of hawkers. Everybody needs to chew. Everybody has got families to feed. So, find ways of working with them!

When he has finished shouting, the police officer turns around and storms back inside the station building.

"We really pissed him off," Nyambura observes.

In the process of analyzing my material, I have returned several times to the angry rant of the police officer. His insistence that hawkers should find ways of "working together" with Inspectorate officers, and his chastising Chep for involving human

rights organizations and the formal legal system in the case of Njeri reflects a privileging of complicity and conviviality in policing relations. Much in line with the police officer's proposed ways of "working together" between officers and hawkers, a number of studies show that vulnerable groups often engage with authority persons like police officers in informal ways that circumvent the law, rather than seeking redress within formal processes (Andersen & Jensen 2017; Hornberger 2004, 2010, 2011; Jauregui 2014, 2016; Kyed 2017a, 2017b). When the police officer complained to us in an annoyed fashion that Njeri is "always beaten," his problem seemed to be not so much the beating in itself, but rather Njeri's response of involving human rights organizations and their lawyers. His insistence that hawkers and Inspectorate officers should instead find ways of "working together" reveals that in the case of policed hawking in Nairobi, extra-legal arrangements between officers and hawkers are far from secret or marginal. The fact that a uniformed police officer encourages such arrangements as preferable to formal channels speaks of their practical institutionalization.

Most of the hawkers with whom I spoke agreed with the police officer that finding informal agreements with Inspectorate officers is preferable to challenging them. In the days and weeks following Njeri's arrest, I talked to several other hawkers about her situation. While expressing concern and sympathy for Njeri, they also pointed out that she had brought the situation upon herself because of her unhelpful attitude.

"Njeri is fighting too much," Wangari said when I talked to her a few hours after Njeri's arrest. She continued:

> When you get arrested, you just calm down. You try to control your temper. Talk nicely to the officers. The *kanjos* are also working: 'I have five hundred here in my pocket. Now, how can you help me?' […] We all have to work. We have children to look after. You don't fight like that. […] When I am arrested, I don't call Chep. I just try to solve it then and there. If you talk nicely to them, you can give them five hundred and go.

On another occasion in the weeks following Njeri's arrest, Wangari pointed out to me that she would not do what Njeri does because she prefers to stay friends with officers.

"Most of these officers are my good friends," she said, and asked rhetorically "What if I go to the police like Njeri to complain?"

Making friends with officers is advice commonly given to new hawkers. Mshortie recounted during an interview how she was taught by other hawkers to create friendships with officers when she first started working at the Safaricom store by Archives.

Mshortie: When I was first arrested, I did not know where to begin and how I would ask for my work. However, God helped me as things became good between me and the *kanjo*. We came to know each other. […]

Ruth: What did other people [hawkers] instruct you to do?

Mshortie: They told me to be friendly with them [officers] and that I should not be afraid of them, and that when I'm arrested, I should do one-two-three things. Then from there, we would be friends. Once we become friends, they know I'm working and they are working.

Ruth: What do you mean by 'one-two-three'?

Mshortie: It means once my things have been taken, I speak to them. And that when I don't have money, they might help me, or if I have something I can buy them tea [common euphemism for a bribe] with, I give them.

From Mshortie's and Wangari's descriptions we learn that friendship between officers and hawkers entails first and foremost an acknowledgement that both parties are "working." They are all in the city center in order to earn money to sustain their families. From this acknowledgement follows the agreement that hawkers part with a share of their profits to officers, so as to enable both of them to continue working.

Mshortie described how her friendships with officers rest on a mutual understanding that if she has made profits she will share them with the officers, and if she has no money, they will accept to go without a bribe. This description of positive working relationships was echoed by many other hawkers during interviews. In friendships, officers receiving bribes from hawkers also reciprocate. If they experience the hawker as forthcoming and willing to pay on some occasions, they will show understanding on other occasions.

Hornberger (2010, 2011) speaks of a "vernacularization" of human rights in policing relations whereby policed persons negotiate their own types of claims on police officers, applying concepts that seemingly draw on universal human rights. On closer inspection, however, those vernaculars turn out to have different meanings, having been filtered through local understandings. Hornberger's (2010) argument is that although they diverge from the original, these claims function as a form of "rights" in policing relations, even though they "would not hold up before an official court" (p. 272).

When Wangari explained how she prefers to maintain friendships with officers rather than calling Chep, we can understand this as an indication that friendships enable her to make claims on officers in a different way than Chep's ability to mobilize lawyers and other institutional support. In line with Hornberger's notion of vernacular rights, we can conceive of friendships between hawkers and officers as a

parallel, informal avenue through which to make claims in policing relations. Importantly, however, hawker-officer friendships do not constitute a form of right expressed in language with reference to a local interpretation of human rights frameworks. Rather, they take the form of a mutual recognition of the other as a social person with obligations to family, and the sharing of profits from hawking that follows from this recognition. Friendships constitute a form of right located in social relations and upheld by material exchange.

Keeping quiet

Back on the day of Njeri's arrest, a little while after the angry police officer in khaki has stalked off, we learn that she is scheduled to appear in City Court at 10 a.m. We make our way there from the police station. Walking on the broad, freshly swept sidewalk of the "uptown" part of Nairobi's city center, passing formal retail stores, franchise fast food outlets and government buildings, our path is eerily unobstructed on the bare, hawker-free concrete.

City Court is a large, white, three-story brick building with pillars in front. We enter the yard behind the building through a broad gate, along with a steady flow of police and Inspectorate vehicles arriving with this morning's catch: hawkers to be charged with obstructing the sidewalk, unlucky pedestrians to be charged with loitering and smoking on the street. The sex workers who have been arrested during the night are already in the holding cells. The street children have been driven to juvenile facilities.

Once inside the yard, our little group ends up standing at a distance from the entrance to the courtroom, much like we stood outside the police station. While we wait for the court session to begin, Chep and Michael ask Nyambura about the details of the night before when Njeri was arrested. She should not have come to the city center in the first place, they agree. The organization currently supporting her under their human rights defender program is paying her a stipend in order to enable her to stay home.

They also discuss whether the claims made by the police that she assaulted an officer might be true.

"Njeri has a problem," says Chep. He tells us how he heard from a police officer at the station that there was a small woman who kicked and screamed, holding on to the frame of the door to the cell when she was brought in. Michael adds that when Njeri called him in the morning, he heard her hauling swearwords at the officers.

"They [officers] are not used to someone who is bold like Njeri," says Chep.

We go inside a little later and sit in the gallery of the courtroom, surrounded by surfaces and panels of polished red-brown wood. The detainees being charged with petty crimes are all seated at the back. Njeri is among them. I give her a small wave,

and her face twitches. The judge takes her seat at the bench in front, in a black frock and with a wooden hammer. The public prosecutor, in suit and tie, stands next to the bench. He begins to read out names from a stack of documents. One by one, the hawkers, loiterers and smokers walk up to the bench. While they walk, the prosecutor reads out their charges in Swahili.

"Selling fruits on Tom Mboya Street."

"Selling handkerchiefs on Ronald Ngala Road."

"Smoking in public."

Njeri seems to be the only one with any legal representation. Without exception, the accused plead guilty to the charges, some of them while they are still walking from their seat up to the judge's bench.

"*Kweli* [it's true]."

"*Kweli*."

"*Kweli*."

The prosecutor hands their sheet to the judge who looks at the document and decides on the size of their fine:

"One thousand three hundred."

"One thousand five hundred."

"Three hundred."

Then, the convicted are taken by uniformed guards down a staircase to the left of the bench, leading to the holding cells. For many of them, the charge, conviction and ruling are executed in one flowing movement, as they keep walking from their seat in the back of the court room down to the cells.

The prosecutor runs through his entire stack of papers, but Njeri is never called up. Michael goes up to the bench to inquire. It seems there has been an error, and she will not be charged until the afternoon session at 2 p.m. We get an opportunity to talk to Njeri before she is also taken to a holding cell. For the first time, Njeri strikes me as small and fragile. Usually bursting with mischievous energy, expressing herself through teasing comments and laughter, Njeri now stands with tears in her eyes and a drooping mouth listening to Michael's advice. Before being taken away she turns to me.

"I'm so confused."

"We are all here. We will get you out."

"I don't even have shoes to wear."

I look down with her, at her dusty bare feet. Then she follows the officers who led her downstairs to the cells.

Njeri is charged in the afternoon court session and pleads not guilty to all charges while Michael looks sternly at the judge and prosecutor from where we are seated. She is released from custody that evening after paying a considerable amount of money in bail, some of it fundraised among the human rights organizations supporting her. She calls me up at 8 p.m. sounding her normal, cheerful self again.

"I'm out now! I'm looking for shoes to wear, haha!"

But the escalating conflict between her and the officers increasingly subdues Njeri's usual cheerfulness in the weeks following her arrest. She attends several court hearings in which she is charged large rates of bail money. She attends meetings with the human rights organizations supporting her, where she is chastised for continuing to come back to the city center. Njeri amasses considerable debt.

In the second week after her arrest, I am walking in the city center with Njeri and Chep. Njeri and I walk ahead while Chep trails behind, smoking a cigarette. These days, Njeri's joking voice is shriller than it used to be. She has received another death threat from the officers.

"We are born one day. We all die one day. Isn't it?" she says. And then she laughs too hard.

"I tried to keep quiet," she continues.

I ask her what she means.

"They say I should keep quiet and not answer when the officers are talking to me. You know those officers, most of them are not educated? They can abuse you a lot. They can just say anything. And they kick your work, so that it becomes scattered. I tried to keep quiet, but the same officers kept on coming for me, arresting me. All the time."

We talk about the witness protection program, the possibility of senior officers within the Inspectorate intervening and Njeri's opportunities for starting a small-scale trading business in a different area. She seems resigned and sad.

"I will be a stranger there," she says, about starting a business in a new area. "It will be like starting from zero."

Later that day, I talk to Wangari at BestBuy. I tell her what Njeri has told me about trying and failing to "keep quiet" in exchanges with Inspectorate officers. I ask Wangari whether she also finds it hard to keep her composure in the face of insults.

"Njeri cannot keep quiet," is Wangari's reaction. "What I do, if a *kanjo* is behaving to me in a bad way and I get annoyed, I go to him at a time when I am not in job, and I tell him 'I am just trying to work. I am a mother of two. If I had done bad to you in any way, I am very sorry.' So next time he sees me in the street it is just *'Mambo!', 'Poa!'* [informal greeting]. When you are not working but just walking: *'Mambo!', 'Poa!'*"

I comment that it must be difficult to remain so calm.

Wangari says: "If you have nowhere to go, you have to keep quiet. If you have somewhere to go, then you can answer them back. I can never do what Njeri is doing because my two kids are depending on this job."

Njeri's difficulties with "keeping quiet" illuminate how good relationships between hawkers and officers require more than money. They also require of hawkers that they tame their own urge to react to demeaning treatment. "Keeping quiet" entails

Wangari saying "I am very sorry" to an officer who behaves rudely towards her, just as it entails pleading guilty with a "*kweli*" in City Court without legal representation.

Agnes was once beaten severely by officers while detained in a patrol vehicle. She never laid any charges against the officers who beat her. Instead, despite the violence she experienced, she continues to greet the same officers and maintain "friendly" relations with them.

> Agnes: Now, we [herself and the officers who beat her up] are friendly a bit. Even if we are not that close, we are friendly a bit. So that you can go and talk to them and pretend – because you have to pretend – to be good to them.
>
> Ruth: Is there an officer whom you consider your enemy?
>
> Agnes: No, I just balance them. Because even if they did what they did to me – that time they beat me – I still say hi to them. […]
>
> Ruth: So, in case you had an officer who was your enemy, how would it affect your work?
>
> Agnes: I don't think I could be working here. […] So, even if I don't like him, I have to pretend. Because [otherwise] I won't work there.

"Friendly relations," in this vein, describe a deliberate effort at maintaining peace by laying bounds on oneself, because it would be too great a disadvantage to become "enemies." Agnes' remark that "I won't work here" and Wangari's remark that "you have nowhere to go" illuminates why most hawkers shun human rights organizations. As we saw, Chep and Michael went to great pains to discourage Njeri from coming to the city center during the time of her ongoing court cases against the officers. Being the object of protection by human rights organizations required of Njeri that she occupied a position outside the policing relations that are a precondition to hawking. Njeri's ambivalence about the idea that she go to another area to work ("I will be a stranger there"), and her continued disregard for the admonitions from the human rights organizations to stay out of the city center, show how difficult this requirement is to live up to. In a sense, human rights organizations can only protect hawkers by requiring of them that they cease being hawkers.

On a broader level, the term "friends" not only connotes personalized relationships between individual officers and hawkers but also describes the general level of peace in their policing relations. This is how Maria described the violent clashes between hawkers and officers in late 2014 and early 2015:

> That time there was a lot of violence. [Throwing] bottles, fighting. It even got to a point where people were being murdered. The murders went on until it got to a point where they all became friends.

In this account, friendly policing relations between officers and hawkers in Nairobi denote the absence of violence of an exceptional, murderous type, the memory of which is still present for both parties. In order to understand hawkers' investment in friendship with officers we must pay attention to the ever-present possibility of its reverse, namely enmity and violence. As Wangari and Agnes both emphasized, their ability to work in central Nairobi comes with inescapable relations to officers. The general reasoning among hawkers is that it is better to stay friends with officers than to become their enemy.

Hawkers who make friends with officers are informed by their own and other hawkers' experiences of enmity. This includes times of heightened collective violence, such as the clashes of late 2014 and early 2015, as well as stories of specific relations of enmity, such as the one that unfolded with Njeri at its center of during my fieldwork. We can understand hawkers' friendships with Inspectorate officers alongside the writings of Das (2010, 2015) on the ways in which neighbors who share a history of violence attempt to keep violence from erupting once more. In Das' (2015) terms, such uneasy neighbors make continuous efforts to keep violence "at bay." However, the possibility that small tensions and grudges between them will erupt into violence remains. It is never completely resolved by such efforts. Keeping violence at bay entails continuous relational work (Das 2015, p. 79). In a similar vein, we can conceive of friendships between officers and hawkers as relations in which the possibility for violence is never completely resolved. Violence continues to underwrite policing relations, demanding continuous work of hawkers. Njeri's assurance that she tried her best to "keep quiet" in the face of insults, and Wangari's description of her efforts to resolve any grudges between her and Inspectorate officers, illustrate this kind of work.

We now have two interrelated ways of understanding friendships between officers and hawkers. On the one hand, they can be seen as a vernacular, circumstantial form of right for hawkers, which involves the mutual recognition between hawkers and officers that both parties have obligations towards their families. On the other hand, friendships can be seen as an effort to keep the ever-present possibility of violence at bay. These two understandings resemble each other, the difference being a question of emphasis: one highlights the advantages that hawkers gain in friendships with officers, while the other highlights the pressures on hawkers to enter into friendships.

What both these understandings show is that for hawkers there is no easily available position outside of policing relations. The alternative to "working together" is arrest. The alternative to friendship is enmity. Njeri's conflict with the officers, her difficulties with "keeping quiet" on the one hand, and her hesitance to start over in a

new place on the other, illuminate both the imperative of friendships with officers and the degrading experiences hawkers have to endure in order to maintain those friendships.

Police violence as domestic violence

Several weeks into Njeri's conflict with the group of officers, and exactly one week after she was arrested and held at the police station, I finally learn what caused their conflict in the first place.

"One of them [in the group] proposed to me, and I refused him," Njeri says. It is a side remark, mentioned as if it does not carry much importance.

A lot of things fall into place for me with this piece of information. Nyambura's and Chep's hesitance and discomfort when I asked them on previous occasions why Njeri and the officers were fighting each other. "I just don't know," Nyambura told me, evasively. Vague formulations in conversations between Michael and Chep where they discussed the attitude of the judge presiding over one of Njeri's cases: "She just wants to keep out of whatever fight they are having."

It is common knowledge among hawkers and Inspectorate officers that many male officers have relationships with female hawkers. That it is common knowledge, however, does not mean it is spoken about freely. In contexts where I was present, such relationships were referred to either with a lot of giggling and high-pitched voices, or in hushed, indirect ways, with raised eyebrows.

> Inspectorate officers have parked two patrol vehicles right in front of the Safaricom store by Archives. Njeri, Nyambura and the other women who usually sell there are gathered in an alleyway from where they can keep an eye on the officers. Some of them wear their wares on their backs wrapped like babies. Mshortie opens a pack of corn chips for her three-year-old child.
>
> Joy comments that the child's jacket is nice. "Bring one for my baby, *sindiyo* [right]?"
>
> "Why not?" says Mshortie. Then she tells the other women in excited tones that one of the officers standing by the patrol cars is now in a relationship with a female hawker they know.
>
> "Noooo!" Everyone is surprised.
>
> Their talk drifts towards another officer who was in a relationship with another female hawker but got tired of her telling everyone that they are together.

Mshortie agrees with the officer. “You have a boyfriend and you love him. I have a boyfriend and I love him. But we don’t go around and talk to everyone about that!”

The need for euphemisms and indirectness about sexual relationships between officers and hawkers has imbued the term “friends” with another possible meaning. Besides referring to personal arrangements for bribe payments and the general absence of battles in the streets, “friends” can also refer to sexual relationships. This parallel possible meaning sometimes caused confusion during interviews with hawkers. For example, Mama Simon was embarrassed when she was asked whether she had a “friend” among the officers. Switching from Swahili to Kikuyu, she lectured Ruth who was interviewing her that she has never wanted any “friendships” even when she was not married.

Ruth: Is there any officer who you consider your friend?

Mama Simon: [Speaking in Kikuyu]: I have no friend who is a *kanjo*. I even won’t want to be! I have never done such while in this Nairobi, and I won’t do it. I have told you that I came here to do work, not create friendships. Even when I was not yet married! I still did my work, and I joined this business before I was married.

The frankest description I get during fieldwork regarding friendships between hawkers and officers involving sex is from Wangari. I am standing with her at BestBuy, the *mwareero* with socks spread out in front of us, the afternoon sun beating down. Opposite us, on the other side of the pavement, is a print shop. Wangari waves to the attendant operating the print shop, a cheerful young woman fresh out of college.

“Her mother is a hawker,” Wangari tells me, “and her father is a *kanjo*.”

“Serious? How does that work, in a marriage?”

“There are many hawkers who are *kanjo* wives. You see that lady up there? The one with the blue top?” Wangari points further up the road where a woman with a blue blouse is talking to Mama Mwangi. “She is a wife to a *kanjo*. She works by Commercial [another hawking location]. There are many of them there.”

“But seriously, how does that work between a husband and a wife?”

Wangari says she once asked about this to a female hawker who is “wife to a *kanjo*.” The woman told her: “A husband is a husband. The rest is just work.”

“If you become friends with one of them [officers],” Wangari continues, “they tell you to go work by Commercial.”

“So, when you say ‘friends,’ you mean ‘wives’?”

“Ah, most of them they are not married like that. It’s more like they are girlfriends to the officers. When you become their girlfriend, they move you there, to

Commercial. Even that lady with the blue top she used to work here by BestBuy. Then she moved there. When there was violence last year, and *kanjos* were going through beating people, they can't notice if someone is a wife of someone. That's why they keep them there at Commercial. The problem is they keep you there for one or two years. Then they chase you away."

"What would happen if someone tried to move to Commercial without being a *kanjo* wife?"

"You can do that, but when they see you there, they will take you! Leaving all the other ladies there."

Wangari's description of a special zone for female hawkers in relationships with Inspectorate officers indicates that to officers it can pose a practical problem to police hawkers without accidentally harassing a hawker who is involved with their colleague. Richard hinted at the same thing when he told me how officers sometimes have to intervene on behalf of hawkers they are related to.

"Sometimes you have to call your colleague: 'You have arrested my friend. Can you let him go?' We all have our sons and our cousins and our girlfriends here."

Wangari's description of "*kanjo* wives" stationed in bulk at Commercial, and Richard's example of calling his colleague to have his "friend" (son, cousin, girlfriend) released, suggests that officers' intimate relationships with hawkers complicate their exercise of violence. At the same time, the harassment and death threats experienced by Njeri draw our attention to the ways in which intimate relationships themselves are underpinned by potential violence.

Becoming "friends," increasing intimacy with officers, can just as well bring about problems as it can bring about solutions to a hawkers' exposure to violence in policing relations. Echoing Njeri's experience, Julia described during an interview how she might become "friends" with an officer, but if he then "wants her" and she does not want him, they can become "enemies."

> Ruth: Is there any officer who you consider your enemy?
>
> Julia: Like me, to say the truth, I laugh with them, but I know *kanjo* is not a friend. […] Maybe if you become friends it is because he wants you. And when you don't want his things, then what? You will end up being enemies, and it is not him who will arrest you, but he will be sending others to do so just to witness you being miserable.

Literature on the messy interrelatedness of "transactional sex" (Lowthers 2017) "commercial sex work" (Camlin et al. 2014) and gendered violence (Gudmundsen et al. 2017) from a Kenyan context suggests that the relationships between Inspectorate officers and hawkers constitute a type of intimacy also found elsewhere. For example, women in Kenya who encounter infrastructures in the forms of migration routes

(Camlin et al. 2014) and agricultural industries (Lowthers 2017) are frequently compelled to enter into sexual arrangements with men who hold relatively powerful positions as gatekeepers and managers. Lowthers (2017) describes how flower farm managers systematically hire young women for low-skilled, low-paid jobs, and how these women are met with expectations of being sexually available (p. 457). Similarly, from the perspective of police studies, Gudmundsen, Vestergaard and Jensen (2017) describe how women living in a poor neighborhood in Nairobi who are known locally to be "single" are frequently asked for sex in return for favors by local police officers.

Both flower farm managers and police officers perceive young women as being open to intimate relations because they are "single." It would be tempting to see these situations as a question of young women being exposed to predatory, violent forms of "public" relationality because of their lack of protection from benign forms of "domestic" relationality. However, as Das (2008) notes, the domestic is merely violent in a different way than the public. An illustrative example of this can be taken from White's (1990) study of prostitution in colonial Kenya. Historians have described how some of Nairobi's most successful African urbanites during colonial rule were women who combined small-scale trading and beer brewing with prostitution (Bujra 1975; Robertson 1997; White 1990). One of the common forms of prostitution referred to as "*malaya*" entailed more than sex, extending to various "domestic services" such as "food, bathwater, conversation, and, when a man spent the night, breakfast" (White 1990, p. 15). This form of prostitution is described in some literature as entailing less vulnerability for the women practicing it than the other predominant form of soliciting in the streets. Contrary to this view, White emphasizes how the *malaya* form of prostitution made the women practicing it *more* vulnerable. Because it "mimicked marriage," it carried with it the same type of exposure to domestic abuse as marriage, such as the difficulty of refusing customers once these were inside their rooms, and the need to silently accept abuse out of a concern not to disturb neighbors (White 1990, p. 16).

That Njeri's conflict with the Inspectorate officers originated in her refusal of an intimate proposal by one of the officers can be given a new emphasis in the light of these studies. Rather than (only) seeing the harassment and death threats Njeri suffered as a form of state violence, we can conceive of them (also) as intimate police violence. The proposal by the officer in the first place was motivated by an evaluation of Njeri as "single," as unbound by particular domestic intimacies and therefore as open to new intimacies. The relationship he offered Njeri was familiar to both of them – a well-known type of intimate relationality in a Kenyan context whereby young women often enter with men in relatively powerful gatekeeper positions.

We might conceive of this type of relationship as situated uneasily between public and private forms of relationality. Violence in these types of relationships is visible to us in instances where conflict emerges, such as when Njeri turned down the officers' proposal. However, had Njeri not turned down the officers' proposal, it would not

have been immediately clear to us that there was violence involved. Here, I draw on Das' (2008) description of how many forms of domestic violence are invisible because intimate relations are assumed to rest on consent. We might say that had Njeri accepted the officer's intimate offer, violence would have become invisible because it would have been moved into a domestic type of relationality. The spectacular conflict between Njeri and the officers, and the whole apparatus of human rights mechanisms that sprang into action, only came about because police violence took on a public, recognizable form.

Needing each other

Njeri's conflict with the group of officers is eventually settled. About two months after the day where she told me in a shrill voice that "We are born one day. We all die one day," I find Njeri hawking in front of Archives in the city center. She is the only hawker with wares on the pavement. There is an Inspectorate vehicle just around the corner, but Njeri seems unconcerned about that.

"I talked to the officers, and we solved things," she says, happily. "We are just friends now. They said: 'You come here and work. We will not disturb you.'"

Nyambura is with her. Their arrangement, they tell me, is that Nyambura goes to buy new stock once Njeri runs out in return for being allowed to place a few of her own wares on the *mwareero*. Njeri attends to a steady flow of customers while we talk, putting handkerchiefs in plastic carrier bags, counting change from her purse. She tells me she has made 11,000 KSh in profits that day alone.

"It's good to be Njeri these days?" I say.

"It's good to be Njeri these days!" says Nyambura, and laughs.

Njeri becoming "friends" with the officers who had harassed her entailed her withdrawing the numerous cases she had filed against them with the help of human rights organizations. When Njeri withdrew her cases, the officers withdrew theirs. And for several months afterwards, she enjoyed a privileged policing relationship that allowed her to sell in central locations even when other hawkers were unable to. I no longer saw Chep and Njeri spending time with each other. Her new friendship, it seems, came at the expense of older ones.

In this way, the story of Njeri, the officers and the human rights organizations eventually ended with Njeri opting back into the prevalent relational model of "friendship" that both the police officer at the station where she was detained and her fellow hawkers had been encouraging all along. What the human rights organizations who supported Njeri missed, or rather, did not have the mandate and institutional framework to address, are the ways in which policing relationships are fundamental to hawking in central Nairobi. Hawkers need relationships with officers in order to be hawkers in the first place.

At this point, I reach a more speculative analytical terrain. In order to account for the pressures that make a person see a relationship with another person as inevitable and necessary, I draw inspiration from Strathern's (1992) description of the ways in which gift exchanges in Melanesia come about. In Strathern's description, persons become momentarily incomplete in gift exchanges. They rearrange themselves in response to the other person's interest. An aspect of themselves that before did not appear to them as detachable comes into view as a gift, which then forms a relationship with the person who receives it (pp. 177–179).

I want to dwell on Strathern's description of this moment in which persons and their relational compositions shift in order to anticipate the gift exchange, and the new relationship it will bring. The recipients' interest in the gift and the relationship that comes with it is what "elicits" the gift (p. 178). However, Strathern notes, the eliciting interest of the recipient should not be understood as the cause of the exchange. The person who eventually gives a gift in the first instance actively works to bring about that eliciting interest (p.178). Strathern in some places uses the terms "force" and "coercion" to describe this influence, and in other places talks of "compelling" and "persuasion:"

> *Coercion* is essential to the manner in which the 'gift' is created. People must *compel* others to enter into debt: an object in the regard of one actor must be made to become an object in the regard of another. The magic of the gift economy, then, lies in successful *persuasion*. (Strathern 1992, p. 177, emphasis added)

When describing the influence that makes a person see a gift and the relationship that comes with it as a necessary part to complete them, Strathern's language shifts between these terms. I take my point of departure in this ambiguity. I propose that we explore the forms of mutual implication in which hawker-officer violence plays out by adopting a notion of personhood closer to the one which Strathern describes. Here, persons do not have a position available to them outside of relationships with others.

Analogous to Strathern's description of how Melanesian exchange partners come to see themselves as incomplete, we might revisit Njeri's difficulties with staying out of the city center during the height of her conflict with the officers, much to the frustration of the human rights organizations supporting her. That Njeri could only become the object of protection for human rights organizations by ceasing to be a hawker can be given new analytical weight in this light. There is a sense in which violence in hawker-officer relationships consists in the inescapability of friendships in the first place. If a hawker refuses friendship, they have to refuse that which enables them to be hawkers. We might say that policing relations complete them. Strathern helps us to conceive of this not as an inherently benevolent imperative of sociality,

but as a pressure exerted – as a compelling or a coercion which makes a person need a particular other person.

In order to account for violence in hawker-officer relations, we need to be able to locate violence in relations centered on mutual recognition of one another as social persons, and on mutual implication in each other's efforts to fulfil other intimate obligations. Njeri's story offers a starting point for such a task. That she opted back into friendship with the officers who had been sending her death threats, and that soon after doing so she was able to hawk in a central part of Nairobi, illustrates those pressures that make hawkers need policing relations. These pressures have to do with potential bodily harm, but also with exactly those intimate obligations that hawkers and officers recognize in each other – the need to "work" in order to sustain yourself and your family. The evaluation of Njeri as open to an intimate relationship because she was "single," and the recognition that she needed to work in order to sustain her children, were all part of the ways in which violence played out in policing relations between her and the officers.

Conclusion

I have discussed how we might conceive of friendships and sexual relationships between officers and hawkers as policing relationships that are both intimate and violent. In approaching this question analytically, I have run into two problems. First, policing relations are usually understood as a public form of relationality, as instances of the state-citizen relation. Meanwhile, I have shown how friendships and sexual relationships between officers and hawkers sit uneasily between those forms of sociality that we usually distinguish as political and domestic. Secondly, if we do conceive of hawker-officer relations as domestic or intimate forms of sociality, it becomes difficult to account for violence between them. In short, police violence disappears from view once it takes on the character of domestic violence. Njeri appears to us as a victim of police violence, while the many "*kanjo* wives" who agree to intimate relationships with Inspectorate officers, or who appear to us to seek out these relationships themselves, do not.

The story of Njeri is also a story about the difficulties that human rights organizations have with addressing intimate police violence. What human rights organizations miss, or what they at least do not have the mechanisms to recognize and address, are the pressures that make people who are exposed to human rights violations need intimate relationships with the perpetrators of the violence. I have proposed that we direct attention towards those pressures that make hawkers experience friendships and sexual relationships with Inspectorate officers as necessary in order to allow them to be hawkers in the first place.

Conclusion

The relationships I witnessed among hawkers and Inspectorate officers in central Nairobi do not quite fit with what we usually understand by policing. I have taken this misfit as an occasion to revisit some of the assumptions we commonly make about what police violence is. I have tested the notion that police violence, in some cases and some situations, is best understood as a form of intimate violence.

Police violence is intimate when it plays out amidst mutual attunements and dependence between police and policed. I have emphasized three aspects of these mutualities in relations between hawkers and officers: I have asked how hawkers and officers share a social space that is marked by past violence. I have asked how notions of respectability, and of appropriate authority and respect, play out in their relations. And I have asked how hawkers and officers experience the presence of the other, and the violence entailed in this presence, in bodily registers. Analytically, I have characterized violent intimacies between them as *neighborly*, as *normative* and as *materially* embedded in attachments between bodies and objects.

In this conclusion, I begin by outlining how this approach has brought violence between Inspectorate officers and hawkers into view. The outline is organized not as a chronological movement through the chapters, but as a consideration of what each of the three analytical dimensions – the neighborly, the normative and the material – have brought. Next, I return to the three themes within anthropological scholarship on policing, which I outlined in the introduction, and I consider the contributions I make to each of them. I go on to consider how my account of police violence among officers and hawkers might help us think in new ways about violent intimacies also beyond policing relations. Finally, I briefly consider how an attention to intimacies of policing can further our understanding of the challenges related to addressing police violence within a human rights framework.

Intimacies of policing

I have described violence between officers and hawkers as *neighborly* in the sense that they encounter each other every day and cannot escape each other, even though they fear each other and share a violent history. In chapter two, I proposed that we approach Nairobi's city center not as a geographical space but rather as a social and political one. Hawkers mitigate their exposure to violence in this space by paying bribes to Inspectorate officers, and by forming political alliances with local electoral candidates during the five-yearly elections. In this view, the potential for violence in

policing relations between Inspectorate officers and hawkers is a political resource. I conceived of violent neighborly relations between officers and hawkers as fostered by the political governance of central Nairobi, as a form of state-making violence. In both chapters two and seven, I characterized neighborly relations between hawkers and Inspectorate officers as shaped by past violent events. I showed how hawkers speak of their friendships with Inspectorate officers by describing the ever-present possibility of its reverse, namely enmity. Friendly relations between them are informed by the memories of past times of heightened violence such as the clashes of 2014 and 2015. Meanwhile, I do not see the hawkers' investments in friendly relations with officers as merely utilitarian arrangements. They are violent intimate relations, and like other violent intimacies they entail troubled ethical questions. In chapter six, I showed how female hawkers who place young children in their arms or next to them challenge Inspectorate officers' exercise of violence by bringing themselves into view as mothers. Confronted with female hawkers with children, Inspectorate officers experience their own exercise of violence as disproportionate. Their humanity is threatened.

Conceiving of police violence as *neighborly* has allowed me to draw attention to the ways in which the political dimensions of a space like Nairobi's city center can foster intimacies, and to the ways in which violence plays out in these intimacies. Importantly, this is not state violence as we conventionally understand it, as violence between strangers. Rather, it is violence between persons who meet each other every day, and who constantly make efforts to live with each other, although these efforts can never completely resolve the possibility for new violence.

I have described violence between officers and hawkers as *normative* in the sense that it is related to notions of how proper persons conduct themselves and how good lives unfold. In chapter three, I discussed how colonial dreams of development and progress play out in the present-day policing of hawkers in central Nairobi. I argued that dreams of development are not only sedimented in policing technologies that seek to keep hawkers "on the move" but also in hawkers' own experiences of being on a wrong path in their life trajectories. Hawkers experience police violence intimately in multiple, mutually reinforcing registers, from bodily strain and hurt to emotional and existential experiences of inadequacy. In chapter six, I noted that while hawkers become exposed to police violence when they are evaluated as falling outside of categories of respectability, their efforts to escape police violence do not necessarily situate them as respectable. Female hawkers who bring children with them compel Inspectorate officers to show consideration, but they are at the same time seen, both by themselves and by others, as bad mothers who expose the children to harm. In chapter five, I showed that Inspectorate officers, too, experience themselves as lacking in relation to ideals of the good and proper life. The predominantly ageing Inspectorate officers feel stuck in jobs that were meant to be performed by young men, while the comfortable desk jobs that they were originally promised would follow with seniority

remain elusive. The officers' stinted career progression becomes an acute, bodily experience of inadequacy in their policing encounters with young, strong hawkers. Police violence, here, results from officers' efforts to assert ideals of authority from a position where their bodies are found lacking.

Conceiving of police violence as *normative* has allowed me to draw attention to the ways in which violence plays out amidst hawkers' and officers' aspirations to become good and proper persons in settings that make those aspirations hard to realize. This, in turn, has brought into view how hawkers and officers relate to each other not merely from positions as police and policed, but also from gendered, classed and age-specific positions as old men, bad mothers and unruly youth. It has brought to our attention how police violence is shaped by the afterlife of imperial projects sedimented in structural unemployment, underfunded public sector work, classed ideals of respectability and gendered images of state authority.

I have described violence between officers and hawkers as *materially* embedded in attachments and detachments between bodies and objects. I have argued that such attachments are sites in which policing relations become present for hawkers and officers, and in which they seek to act on their policing relations with one another. In chapter four, I showed how hawkers experience the violent presence of Inspectorate officers when they stand behind their wares ready to grab them and run, or when they decide to walk away from their wares pretending not to be hawkers. Wares, I argued, open them up to policing relations. In chapter five, I showed how Inspectorate officers experience the violent presence of hawkers in the fragility of their own bodies, and how they compensate for this bodily fragility by violently detaining hawkers in patrol vehicles. I approached patrol vehicles as prostheses that compensate for the officers' bodily fragility. These vehicles produce in hawkers the kind of behavior that Inspectorate officers find they cannot adequately bring about by embodying state authority. In chapter six, I showed how female hawkers arrange themselves physically with the bodies of young children in order to transform themselves from disorderly thugs into mothers. I approached female hawkers with children as a prosthetic constellation, too. The children allow female hawkers to occupy a gendered position that complicates Inspectorate officers' exercise of police violence.

Conceiving of police violence as *materially* embedded has allowed me to draw attention to the ways in which questions of neighborly ethics, of normative ideals and of social personhood all play out for hawkers and Inspectorate officers in bodily registers. Walking away from a bundle of wares is an attempt by a hawker to walk away, also, from her policing relationship with Inspectorate officers, once this relationship becomes exceptionally violent. Detaining hawkers in a patrol vehicle is an attempt by an Inspectorate officer to live up to ideals of powerful masculinity. Bringing a young child is an attempt by a female hawker to bring about an ethical claim, to produce in officers the consideration that mere proximity did not bring about.

Intimacies of policing come into view differently, depending one's vantage point. The chapters have been organized as a movement from the distant to the close-up – from a map view of central Nairobi in chapter two to sexual relationships between hawkers and officers in chapter seven. Over the course of the chapters, I have described violent intimacies between hawkers and officers as a form of state-making violence, as underpinned by the political governance of central Nairobi. I have described them as discursive and historical, as an imperial project sedimented in dreams, bodies and urban aesthetics. I have described intimate violence in hawker-officer relations as arising when bodies, persons and lives are found lacking. I have described how hawkers and Inspectorate officers mitigate their exposure to this violence by drawing boundaries around themselves as relational persons, and by prosthetically extending their bodies and selves. I have described their violent intimacies as giving rise to particular forms of ethical claims. And, lastly, I have proposed that we need a different understanding of force in policing to make sense of settings in which the parties in a violent policing relationship depend on one another.

Revisiting police violence

In the introduction, I outlined three themes within anthropological scholarship on policing to which my account of intimate police violence speaks. Let me consider the contributions I make to each of these themes.

The first theme concerns how policed persons experience police violence. I noted that classical anthropological studies of policed persons, such as the writings of Bourgois (2003), describe police officers not as persons to whom the policed relate but as executors of a discriminatory state violence. This type of violence operates by discursively framing certain groups of people as dangerous and thereby legitimizing violence against them. Within this literature, I narrowed down on a particular ethnographic example from Han's (2017) account of policing in a Chilean urban neighborhood. I noted how Han ethnographically describes what I would call an intimate relationship between a police officer and a resident, but how she analytically interprets the police officer as "the eyes of official institutions" and as an "existential" backdrop against which the woman's experience takes place (p. 169).

I proposed that a view of police violence as intimate makes possible an attention to encounters with police not merely as encounters with a violent state, but as experiences of violent relationships in which understanding, care and concern are accompanied by exposure to arrest and incarceration. I have shown how we might conceive of the gaze of a police officer not merely as "the eyes of official institutions" (cf. Han 2017, p. 169) but as a perspective held by someone with whom a policed person is relationally implicated. Analytically, I have drawn on Strathern's (1992) description of how Melanesian persons decompose themselves in expectation of an

exchange with another person, and in response to that other person's perspective on themselves. I have suggested that if we attend to policing *relations*, the perspective of a police officer does not only evaluate policed persons according to categories of disorderliness, but also according to the ways in which they are open to new relationships. In chapter four, I described how hawkers who enter the city center nervously clutch their bundles of wares out of an awareness that the wares implicate them in violent policing relations. A particularly heavy bundle of shoes makes a shoe hawker particularly nervous. He anticipates the interest that the shoes awaken in an Inspectorate officer, which increases with the relative value of the shoes in the bundle. He experiences the perspective of the officer as one that evaluates himself not only as a hawker breaking the law, but also as someone from whom the police officer can expect a bribe. In chapter seven, I showed how young female hawkers are evaluated by Inspectorate officers not only as potentially dangerous thugs but also as single women who are potentially available as girlfriends. When female hawkers are arrested or have their wares impounded, they encounter not only order-making violence but also intimate offers that require a different notion of police violence.

If we pay attention to neighborly closeness, to friendships and sexual relationships between officers and hawkers, we can approach the experience of being policed in new ways. A view of police violence as intimate does not equate to a view of it as less brutal or injuring. Perhaps on the contrary, in some ways, intimate police violence is more injuring than violence between an officer and a policed person who are strangers to each other. Hawkers would often tell me about Inspectorate officers: "One moment you laugh with them, and the next moment they arrest you." There is a particularly injuring quality to being arrested and thrown into a patrol van by someone with whom you have just made jokes. In the case of female hawkers, there is a particularly injuring quality, too, to being harassed by a policing agent who also happens to be an ex-boyfriend or a disappointed suitor. That police violence is intimate does not mean that the state is irrelevant. Intimate police violence is hurtful precisely because of the confluence of care, concern, familiarity – intimacy – and the harm that this relationship always entails as a potential. It is hurtful because alongside forms of friendship and mutuality is the ever-present possibility that officers will arrest and incarcerate hawkers, or that they will impound the wares on which the hawkers' livelihoods depend.

The second theme to which I make a contribution concerns questions around how to engage with the experiences of police officers in anthropological accounts. Although conversations around this are still ongoing within anthropological scholarship on policing, I noted how, when it comes to violence, there is a tendency to point to structures, cultures and institutions beyond the officers. As Verdery (2018) phrases it, the interest in the humanity of police officers often takes the form of an interest in "the structuring of the situation in which they seem to abandon it" (p. 115). When police officers are violent, they are understood to respond to a demand, to

exercise a requirement, which originates beyond them. Analytically, the studies focus on how state projects drive officers to be violent.

Hawker-officer relations as I have described them call for a reconsideration of what we focus on when we want to understand police violence from the position of police officers. Rather than asking how state projects, cultures or institutions might drive the police to be violent, we can direct attention towards what goes on within relationships between police officers and those whom they police. Chapters five and six respectively showed that Inspectorate officers and hawkers relate to each other not from neutral positions as citizens and state officials (if these neutral positions exist), but from gendered, classed and age specific positions. Inspectorate officers enter into policing relations as old men who have been left behind in the economic and political processes that have shaped the postcolonial Kenyan state in the past decades. Their difficulties with attaining the authority they believe they should hold alert us to the ways in which state power is not necessarily unproblematically embodied by law enforcement officers. The waning privileges of public sector employment in awkward combination with prevalent notions of powerful masculinity produce Inspectorate officers' bodies as lacking. We might say that Inspectorate officers engage in violent practices not so much as an exercise of state projects, but as a result of the awkward position they occupy within them. Meanwhile, female hawkers who bring children with them pose a different kind of problem for Inspectorate officers' exercise of authority. By bringing themselves into view as human, female hawkers deny Inspectorate officers the imperative of policing unruly urban thugs by violently containing them. Female hawkers with children problematize the same police violence that before seemed to the officers to be proportionate and appropriate. An attention to intimacies in the experiences of police officers suggests that police violence is not necessarily the straightforward execution of a state project. Violence can also be the result of the difficult position that officers occupy when such projects correspond poorly to lived experiences. Furthermore, violence can be sensitive to the ways in which officers are drawn into policing relations as human beings.

The third theme within anthropology of policing to which my account of violence between officers and hawkers speaks concerns a recent interest in exchange relations between police and policed. Within regional scholarship on policing in the Global South, especially in African settings, a body of literature explores how exchanges of things such as money, information and food between police officers and those whom they police are central to policing. I noted in the introduction how analytical notions of exchange relations from economic anthropology do not self-evidently lend themselves to an exploration of state violence. Among the studies that employ these notions to make sense of policing relations, there are different ways of going about the question of violence. In some studies, violence is seen as a separate register within policing relations, apart from exchange (Beek 2017; Jauregui 2016). In others, violence is described as a form of currency in policing relations. They describe

fluctuations in the "price" of being spared from police violence (Jensen & Hapal 2017, p. 40; 2018, p. 58).

In the case of hawker-officer relations in central Nairobi, I have looked at exchanges as an occasion to revisit the ways in which we understand personhood, sociality and force in policing. To pose this kind of question, I have been inspired by Strathern's discussion of labor and exploitation in *The gender of the gift* (1988, pp. 133–167). Here, Strathern engages with classical Marxist notions of alienation, surplus and extraction, arguing that these concepts do not make sense in a Melanesian setting. If we want to understand who "dominates" in a gift economy, we first have to revise our understandings of how social relations emerge out of material exchange (pp. 166–167). Inspired by this, I have proposed that focusing on exchanges between police and policed has the potential to open up for new understandings of police violence by allowing us to revisit some of our assumptions about sociality and personhood in policing relations. I have shown that for hawkers and Inspectorate officers in central Nairobi, there is no easily available position *outside* of their policing relations with one another. In chapter four, I proposed that policing relations with Inspectorate officers and the violence they entail are implicated in the ways in which hawkers handle their wares with an eye to supporting the wares' productive capacities. Policing relations do not only arise once hawkers and officers are face-to-face with one another. Policing relations are a condition for the productive capacities of hawkers' wares. They are layered into hawkers' attachment to their wares. If we conceive of hawkers and officers as mutually implicated in these ways, violence is not about strangers inflicting harm on each other's bodies. Rather, violence has to do with the ways in which persons make each other up, need each other and condition each other. In chapter seven, I asked how we might understand hawkers' descriptions of their relations with Inspectorate officers as "friendships," both those that involve sex and those that do not. A notion of police violence as the impersonal exercise of state power does not enable us very well to understand these kinds of intimacies. I suggested that we conceive of intimate violence in policing relations as exactly those hard-to-articulate pressures that make people need one another, not being able to refuse one another. A notion of personhood closer to the one Strathern describes makes possible an expanded understanding of force in policing relations. The potential for opening up such questions has perhaps been underexplored in current literature on exchanges in policing.

Revisiting intimacies

Besides contributing to conversations within anthropological scholarship on policing, my account of intimate police violence between officers and hawkers in central Nairobi also has the potential to help us think in new ways about how intimacies can

be violent. A few questions arise in relation to the literature I have drawn on to formulate my analytical approach. In the following, I consider how my account of hawker-officer policing relations speaks to literature on neighborly intimacy, on normative ideals and on relationships between the material and the social.

To characterize hawker-officer relations as a form of troubled neighborly intimacy, I have drawn on literature concerned with how people live with each other in the aftermath of collective violence. Das (2006, 2010, 2015) and others describe how proximity does something to relations between people who otherwise loathe each other. An ethical situation arises, for example, when Muslim and Hindu neighbors become in-laws through interreligious marriages. The new relatives go through a slow and gradual process of discovering what it means to be the other (Das 2010, p. 397). Ethical questions, here, arise not from formal contracts but from the necessity of living together and the ways in which proximity compels people to see each other's suffering. Das and others describe this kind of ethics as an ethics of the "ordinary" (Das 2015, pp. 78–79; see also Lambek 2010, 2015).

In chapter six, I proposed that neighborly proximity gives rise to ethical situations, also, between officers and hawkers in central Nairobi. However, the kind of ethics arising in their policing relations differs in important ways from the one described in the anthropological literature on neighborly intimacy and ordinary ethics. In hawker-officer relations, proximity to the suffering of the other is not enough. Instead, female hawkers make claims on officers by faking humanness, by prosthetically extending themselves into motherhood. The attachment between female hawkers and young children that enable the women to come into view as human are understood by both hawkers and Inspectorate officers to be violating to the children. The attention to impure positions, to intimacies that are simultaneously violent and enabling, also applies to exchange relationships, to friendships and to sexual relationships between officers and hawkers as I described them in chapters four and seven. That proximities compel hawkers and officers to *see* each other is not necessarily benevolent. Drawing on Strathern's description of gift exchange, I argued that the officers' perspectives on hawkers is what causes hawkers to decompose and recompose themselves in anticipation of relations to officers. In its most violent form, this anticipation causes hawkers to walk away from the wares that make up their livelihood, as I showed in chapter four. Or it might cause a female hawker to enter into an intimate relationship because she "does not see any other way," as Njeri noted in chapter seven. Neighborly intimacy in hawker-officer relations, then, challenge us to think of intimacies that arise from proximity, and of mutual discovery, as holding the possibility for both consideration and violation.

To account for the ways in which ideals of proper lives and proper persons play out in policing relations between officers and hawkers, I have drawn on literature that describes how societies are shaped by the operation of discourses. Discourses are not merely about ideas, Povinelli (2006) notes. Societies distribute wealth, health and

hope unevenly among their citizens according to how they fit into categories of what is considered good and proper. People experience discourses in their bodies, in their "flesh" (Povinelli 2006, pp. 7–8). I have picked up on this notion of the flesh as a site for the operation of normative ideals. Hawkers and officers, in different ways, fall outside of Kenyan ideals of how persons should conduct themselves and how lives should unfold. Both experience this not only at the level of thoughts and ideas, but also as physical conditions that strain and wear on their bodies. In chapter three, I showed how hawkers are never considered to fully belong in Nairobi's city center. This ambivalence in the governance of hawking creates for hawkers a space in which they can never relax, in which their bodies are constantly unsettled. In chapter five, I showed how Inspectorate officers are tasked with a type of policing that they are no longer physically fit to perform. Officers experience this discrepancy between their role and their capabilities in their flesh as an acute bodily sense of inadequacy and vulnerability.

The case of hawkers and officers in central Nairobi points to something beyond how discourses work on bodies, how they are felt by persons as violating conditions that wear on the flesh. Both Inspectorate officers and hawkers engage in material practices in order to *address* the inadequacies they experience in their bodies. We might say that the prosthetically extended bodies of Inspectorate officers with their vehicles, and of female hawkers with young children, act on their abilities to inhabit categories of the normal. These connections allow hawkers and officers to carve out new positions for themselves, which to some extent mitigate their exposure to violence in policing relations. Meanwhile, there is nothing inherently benevolent about the connections that make up hawker mothers and authoritative Inspectorate officers. While enabling them to inhabit violent conditions from better vantage points, Inspectorate officers' use of patrol vehicles, just like female hawkers' bringing children, entail new forms of violence.

To conceive of policing relations between hawkers and officers as embedded in attachments between bodies and objects, I have drawn on two different theoretical approaches. One is Strathern's (1988, 1992, 2004) description of composite personhood in Melanesia, where persons can be conceived of as relationally composed in a range of ways, depending on what is emphasized at any given time. The other is Haraway's (1989/2012) image of the cyborg who forms monstrous connections between unlike entities in the context of hierarchies. Haraway's and Strathern's approaches allow for different readings of the connections formed in hawker-officer policing relations. For example, female hawkers who bring children with them can be read as cyborgs, as discussed in chapter six. They can be understood as extending their own bodies with the bodies of the children and thereby gaining leverage in the violent conditions they inhabit. Meanwhile, drawing on Strathern's framework, they could also be understood as composite persons who act on their policing relations with Inspectorate officers by foregrounding that they are made up

of other relationships, namely those to the children they bring with them. In this reading, female hawkers emphasize their relational composition as mothers, imposing their relationships to the children as more important than their policing relations with officers.[63]

In the chapters, I have moved between the approach inspired by Haraway and that inspired by Strathern without commenting on the differences between them. It is worth noting, however, that it makes a difference whether we approach female hawkers with children as cyborgs or as composite persons. There is a difference between saying that they form connections that were not there before and saying that they emphasize relations that are already there. The first approach draws attention to the violent conditions they inhabit and to which they respond, while the latter opens up for an exploration of force in relations between people who do not have a position as separate available to them. I believe that both are relevant for our understandings of violent intimacies in policing relations.

Addressing police violence

As a last note, I consider how an attention to violent intimacies in policing relations can further our understanding of the challenges related to addressing police violence in a Kenyan and similar settings.

Chapter seven told the story of Njeri, who got into a conflict with a group of Inspectorate officers and received legal and financial assistance from several local human rights organizations. While Njeri's experiences of harassment by Inspectorate officers were not unique among hawkers in central Nairobi, her reaching out to human rights organizations for assistance was atypical. Hawkers generally shun those forms of support, and other hawkers advised Njeri against "fighting" with the officers. As the conflict between her and the officers escalated, Njeri found it increasingly hard to be in the position that the organizations' assistance placed her in. She eventually opted out of her engagement with these organizations and instead became "friends" with the Inspectorate officers who had been harassing her.

While Njeri sought assistance from specific Nairobi-based human rights organizations, I understand the dynamics illustrated in her story as going beyond the capabilities or shortcomings of those organizations. Njeri's story illustrates the

[63] In the chapters, I have mostly drawn on Strathern's description of how persons separate out aspects of themselves in anticipation of an exchange (chapter four), and how we might conceive of the interest of a person in an exchange as generated for them by the recipient of a gift (chapter seven). The aspect I emphasize here – that a person's relational composition can be differently emphasized – is part of the same notion of personhood. I draw on Strathern's discussion of how "domination" in a gift economy relates to the ability to determine how social relations emerge out of the circulation of objects (1988, pp. 166–167), as well as her engagement with questions of the figure and the ground (2004, pp.113–114).

challenges of addressing police violence with conventional human rights mechanisms in a setting where policed persons depend on friendships with policing agents. Njeri's eventual decision to turn her back on the organizations and instead improve her relationship to the group of officers points to the type of mutual implication that has been my central analytical preoccupation in the preceding chapters. With different theoretical approaches, I have explored how being a hawker in central Nairobi necessarily entails policing relationships to Inspectorate officers. I have argued that there is no easily available position for hawkers outside of such relationships. As I also showed in chapter seven, the less visible backdrop to Njeri's story are all those hawkers who maintain friendships and sexual relationships with Inspectorate officers in order to avoid conflict in the first place.

As Merry (2007) notes, violence is complicated. Human rights frameworks in many settings run into problems if they do not adequately consider the ways in which different forms of violence mark people's lives (Merry 2007, p. 47). Among human rights practitioners concerned with addressing state violence under the UN Convention against Torture, there is a growing attention to the importance of context. Recent discussions concern the need to take into account the particular circumstances under which persons become exposed to violence, as well as the circumstances under which rights-based interventions operate (Celermajer 2018). This kind of attention includes a revisiting of some of the central assumptions within the anti-torture field around how state violence is best addressed (Kelly 2019). For example, in line with what Njeri's story shows, recent studies suggest that survivors of state violence in many settings are not necessarily interested in holding the perpetrators legally accountable. Survivors are, understandably enough, concerned with keeping themselves safe. This is often at odds with the exposure that comes with legal prosecution (Kelly 2019, p. 330; see also Christiansen et al. 2019; Jensen, Kelly et al. 2017).

My account of hawker-officer relations in central Nairobi speaks to this interest in the contextual circumstances of human rights work. I have described dynamics in policing relations that cause survivors of police violence to *avoid* available mechanisms for addressing human rights violations, rather than seeking them out. That persons at risk of violence from state officials are often engaged in relationships with those same officials has been noted elsewhere. Hornberger (2010, 2011) describes how formal human rights mechanisms are often not available to the persons most exposed to state violence. This could be because of their citizenship status, or because they are engaged in criminalized livelihood activities. As a way of keeping themselves safe, such persons engage in informal relationships with state officials, which give them access to a measure of protection but which at the same time make this protection contingent on precarious, circumstantial and interpersonal dynamics (Hornberger 2004, 2010, 2011). A number of other studies, all describing settings in the Global South, similarly note how persons at risk of violence from state officials

often seek out relationships with those same officials. In some passages, these kinds of relationships are described as "informal," as specific interpersonal arrangements with state officials that circumvent formal procedures (Hornberger 2004, 2010, 2011; Jauregui 2014, 2016; Kyed 2017a). Elsewhere, studies invoke notions of "parallel" moral orders and systems of policing (Jensen & Hapal 2017, 2018), or of an "everyday" that is distinct from formal state-citizen relations (Jensen & Hapal 2015; Jensen & Jefferson 2009; Jensen, Andersen et al. 2017; Kyed 2017a).

What comes into view if we think of relationships between state officials and persons exposed to state violence in terms of intimacies of policing?[64] My approach to violent intimacies in policing has entailed an attention to shared spaces, to shared ideals of the good and to the ways in which bodies are materially separated from, or extended with, objects in order to function within these spaces and ideals. If we want to understand the dynamics that keep survivors of human rights violations from seeking out rights-based mechanisms, I believe that there is room for engaging more extensively with questions around bodies, neighborliness and dreams that seem self-evidently right. Intimacies of policing, as I have conceived of them here, allow for this in different ways than a focus on "informal" relations, or on "parallel" orders.

[64] The term "intimate" appears in some studies, although it seems to serve a different analytical purpose. Jensen and Hapal (2015) show how policing is related to intimate dynamics within communities and families; and Jensen, Andersen et al. (2017) use the term intimate to emphasize an analytical connection between violence and economic engagements between persons.

English summary

This dissertation argues that police violence, in some settings and in some situations, is best understood as a form of intimate violence. Empirically, the dissertation is concerned with violent relationships among street hawkers and County Inspectorate officers in central Nairobi, Kenya. Based on ethnographic fieldwork and interviews among both hawkers and officers, the dissertation explores how violence in their relationships plays out amidst forms of mutual implication in spatial, discursive and bodily registers.

The time of my fieldwork in Nairobi in 2016 and 2017 coincided with electoral campaigns for the August 2017 general elections in Kenya. In order to win the votes of street hawkers, it is common for local political candidates to pressure the County Inspectorate into relaxing their policing of hawking. Hawkers and officers told me that I was witnessing a predictable, seasonally recurring period of calm in their policing relationship. However, what came into view for me during this period was not the absence of violence. Rather, it was the location of police violence in different registers of relationality from where we usually expect to find it. Hawkers and officers meet each other every day, joke with each other and call each other by nicknames. They refer to each other as friends. The dissertation characterizes such friendships as violent intimate relationships.

Central to my analytical notion of violent intimacies in policing relations is an attention to the ways in which policed persons and policing agents are mutually implicated. I combine three theoretical approaches to explore such mutualities among hawkers and Inspectorate officers. First, I show how they share a social space in which past violence continues to shape their engagements with one another. I conceive of violence between them as neighborly. Second, I show how violence erupts when hawkers and officers fail to live up to ideals of how proper persons should conduct themselves and how proper lives should unfold. I conceive of violence between them as normative. Third, I show how hawkers and Inspectorate officers experience the violent presence of the other in bodily registers. I conceive of violence between them as materially embedded.

The dissertation characterizes violent intimacies among hawkers and officers as political and historical. I show how decades of political ambivalence towards hawking in central Nairobi has pushed hawkers and Inspectorate officers into intimately violent policing relations. Furthermore, I show how violence in hawker-officer relations arises from dislocated imperial projects of development and progress in the aftermath of British colonial rule in Kenya. While the violent intimacies I describe are politically

and historically specific, I propose that they have the potential to help us think in new ways about police violence, also beyond the Kenyan context.

A view of police violence as intimate does not equate to a view of it as less brutal or less injuring. Rather, it opens up new ways of understanding how police violence arises and how it is experienced by policed persons.

Dansk resumé

I denne afhandling argumenterer jeg for, at politivold under nogle omstændigheder bør forstås som en form for intim vold. Empirisk beskæftiger afhandlingen sig med voldelige relationer mellem gadesælgere og betjente fra de lokale myndigheder (såkaldte "County Inspectorate officers") i centrum af Kenyas hovedstad Nairobi. På baggrund af etnografisk feltarbejde og interviews blandt både gadesælgere og betjente undersøger afhandlingen, hvordan vold i deres relationer hænger sammen med former for rumlig, diskursiv og kropslig forbundethed.

Mit feltarbejde i Nairobi i 2016 og 2017 faldt sammen med en periode med valgkampagner op til Kenyas præsident- og parlamentsvalg i august 2017. Under valgkampagner er det er udbredt, at lokale opstillede kandidater presser Nairobis County Inspectorate til at begrænse deres kontrol af gadehandel, for derved at vinde gadesælgernes stemmer. Gadesælgere og betjente forklarede mig, at jeg var vidne til en forudsigelig og sæsonbestemt periode, hvor politirelationen mellem dem er relativt fredelig. Dog oplevede jeg ikke, at det var en periode hvor politivold var fraværende. Jeg oplevede snarere, at perioden synliggjorde vold som værende indlejret i politirelationer på andre måder end vi normalt forventer. Gadesælgere og betjente møder hinanden hver dag, de laver sjov med hinanden, og de har uformelle kaldenavne for hinanden. De omtaler hinanden som venner. Afhandlingen karakteriserer disse venskaber som voldelige intime relationer.

Omdrejningspunktet for min analytiske tilgang til voldelig intimitet i politirelationer er en opmærksomhed over for former for forbundethed i sådanne relationer. Jeg kombinerer tre teoretiske tilgange for at undersøge disse former for forbundethed mellem gadesælgere og betjente: For det første viser jeg hvordan de deler et socialt rum, hvor tidligere voldelige episoder fortsat former deres relationer. Jeg forstår vold mellem dem som nabovold. For det andet viser jeg hvordan vold opstår, når gadesælgere og betjente ikke formår at leve op til forventninger til hvordan ordentlige mennesker bør opføre sig, og hvordan ordentlige liv bør forløbe. Jeg forstår vold mellem dem som normativ. For det tredje viser jeg, hvordan gadesælgere og betjente oplever hinandens tilstedeværelse som en kropslig erfaring. Jeg forstår vold mellem dem som materielt indlejret.

Afhandlingen beskriver voldelig intimitet mellem gadesælgere og betjente som politisk og historisk. Jeg viser hvordan årtiers politisk ambivalens over for gadehandel i Nairobis centrum har skubbet gadesælgere og betjente ind i intimt voldelige politirelationer. Yderligere viser jeg hvordan vold i relationer mellem gadesælgere og betjente drives af den fortsatte indflydelse fra idealer om udvikling og fremgang, som

stammer fra det britiske kolonistyre i Kenya. Mens den voldelige intimitet jeg beskriver er politisk og historisk specifik, foreslår jeg også at den kan hjælpe os med at forstå politivold på nye måder, selv uden for en kenyansk kontekst.

En begrebsliggørelse af politivold som intim er ikke ensbetydende med en forståelse af volden som mindre brutal eller skadelig. Det er derimod en måde at åbne op for nye forståelser af hvordan politivold opstår, og hvordan den opleves af de personer som udsættes for den.

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