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MEDIATING THE NATION-BUILDING AGENDA IN PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING: CONVERGENCE OF ACTIVE USER-GENERATED CONTENT (AUGC) FOR TELEVISION IN KENYA

A. Terah Ambala

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Johannesburg, 2016

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

A. Terah Ambala

2 December 2016

Abstract

The violence, destruction and death of more than 1 200 people resulting from the highly disputed 2007 election results in Kenya was a considerable watershed moment. It exposed the deep fragmentation within the nation-state and became a significant fissure for the simmering tensions among the 42 "tribes" of Kenya. In the mediascape, these events evinced the elitist and tribal hegemony in media ownership and revealed, more than ever before, that certain voices and narratives were privileged over others. These events also unmasked recurrent motifs which illuminated the stranglehold that the political, media and economic elites wielded over media instruments and platforms, for their own benefit.

This study aims to explore the extent to which active user-generated content in the digital media space can intervene in, and disrupt, some of these exclusionary practices in the public service mediascape, to potentially inspire a re-imagination in this space for nation building in Kenya. It is premised on a participatory action research approach that draws on theoretical discourse on nationalism and nation building, as this is the field from which the study's key problems stem and where conceptual discourses on digital media converge. The study also draws on participatory discourses in the media, as these potentially present an emancipatory platform for those on the margins of the hegemonic centres. Here it mainly draws on Bhabha's cultural difference theory, Billig's banal nationalisms, Jenkins' ideas on convergence culture, Carpentier's thoughts on maximalist media participation and Thumim's assertions on self-representation in the digital space.

The study also hinges on the practice-informed pilot project titled *Utaifa Mashinani Masimulizi ya Ukenya* (*UMMU*) digital narratives, co-created by the researcher together with the Abakuria (the Kuria people) of Kenya. This is a community marginally represented in the public service broadcasting-scape in Kenya and a people whose narrative discourse is seldom present in the public sphere.

The study argues that broadcast content – not just in Kenya but also in Africa – on User Generated Content (UGC) for broadcasting predominantly focuses on passive forms of UGC rather than Active User Generated Content (AUGC) - a term coined in this study to refer to user-generated content that entails a more meaningful, emancipatory and empowering form of participation amongst those traditionally referred to as consumers of broadcast content. It contends that although many contemporary television broadcasters around the world continue to create a perception of increasing and robust audience participation in televised content, in Kenya this is certainly not the case. It argues that significant forms of current participation on television are illusionary, minimalist and futile, as they largely entrench television's balance of power among the media elites. Ordinary people are often 'invited' to participate in broadcasting, but their entry point into these narratives tends to be limited to accessing already-completed narratives and engaging in what constitutes token participation, with minimal, and in most cases, no impact on the story, its conception, distribution and socio-economic benefits.

Drawing on insights from the *UMMU* project, the study proposes that AUGC can potentially disrupt some of the existing tropes and motifs in the Public Service Mediascape opening up spaces for multiple and diverse voices and narratives in Kenya. This potentially enables active participation from constituencies that have traditionally been on the margins of the Kenyan nation-state to partake in the nation building process.

Dedication

For Vincent “Vincenzo” Kabole Juma

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Abbreviations and acronyms

3D	three-dimensional
ANC	African National Congress
AR	audience rating/Action Research
AUGC	active user-generated content
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CA	Communication Authority of Kenya
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CCK	Communications Commission of Kenya
CDS	Centre for Digital Storytelling
CNN	Cable News Network
CPAR	Critical Participatory Action Research
DJ	disc jockey
DVD	digital versatile disc or digital video disc
EU	European Union
FGM	female genital mutilation
FM	frequency modulation
GADU	Ground Air Defence Unit
GBC	Ghana Broadcasting Corporation
Icasa	Independent Communications Authority of South Africa
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICT	information and communication technology
K24	Kenya 24
KAF	Kenya Air Force
KANU	Kenyan African National Union
KADU	Kenyan African Democratic Union
KBC	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
KICA	Kenya Information and Communication Act
KTN	Kenya Television Network
NFVF	National Film and Video Foundation

NGO	non-governmental organisation
NMG	Nation Media Group
NP	National Party
NRK	Norsk Rikskringkasting (Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation)
NTV	Nation Television
OAU	Organisation for African Unity
Ofcom	Office of Communication, UK
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
ORTB	Office de Radiodiffusion et Télévision du Benin
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PB	public broadcaster
PSB	public service broadcaster
PSM	public service media
PUGC	passive user-generated content
Qtv	Quality Television
RB	Radio Botswana
RMS	Royal Media Services
SA	South Africa
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SMG	Standard Media Group
SMS	short message service
SPO	self-reliance promoting organisation
SVT	Sveriges Television
TV	television
UGC	user-generated content
UK	United Kingdom
UMMU	*Utaifa Mashinani Masimulizi ya Ukenya*
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America

VOK	Voice of Kenya
VPRO	Vrijzinnig Protestantse Radio Omroep (Dutch Liberal Protestant Radio Broadcasting Corporation)
WWW	world-wide web

CHAPTER 1
Introduction

Purpose statement

This research aims to explore the extent to which active-user generated content (AUGC) in the digital media space can intervene in, and disrupt, existing exclusionary practices in the 'televisual-scape' and potentially inspire a re-imagination of public service media (PSM) for nation building in Kenya.

Research problems

Digital and social media platforms are increasingly gaining dominance, visibility and credence in the public psyche for their user-centricity. These platforms can potentially provide a complementary and conjunctional space, or, conversely, one to rival television broadcasting – especially in the context of the nation-building agenda. Hybrid terms such as 'prosumers', 'co-creators', 'prod-users' and 'actors', among others, are now conventional in academic parlance, accentuating increased production capacity among those previously perceived as content consumers. These developments demonstrate that, increasingly, the binary between the producers of broadcast content and its consumers is being blurred: eventually the two might converge at an acceptable confluence for both entities, or be completely disrupted and dislocated in an unpredictable fashion. Nissens (cited in Bardoel & d'Haenens 2008:353) aptly observes that for their continued survival and relevance, "public service broadcasting will have to follow its audiences, adopting cross-media strategies and developing new genres and formats, fostering audience interaction and participation and social integration". A one-time director of the British Broadcasting Corporations (BBC) New Media and Technology, Ashley Highfield (cited in Jenkins 2006:253), predicts that future television broadcasting will be unrecognisable from the contemporary model, in that the traditional "monologue-broadcaster-to-grateful-viewer"-relationship will break down sometime soon. It is arguably an opportune time, therefore, to explore these digital platforms in relation to contemporary television broadcasting, especially since both are aural-visual and,

more importantly, because the convergence of the two platforms has begun manifesting in several spaces.

The pervasive model in Kenyan broadcasting, this study argues, reflects the 'despotic pyramid' approach, in which television broadcast content is owned, generated and distributed by either the ruling elite and their associates or wealthy and influential businesspeople and politicians.[1] The families of former presidents of the country or their associates own three of the five leading free-to-air public service broadcasters (PSBs), therefore potentially influencing broadcast content and affecting editorial and programming decisions.[2] Of the remaining two leading PSBs, one is the public broadcaster, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), which is heavily controlled by the government of the day while the other has majority ownership by the Agha Khan (see Githaiga 2011). These, among other reasons, make the majority of the Kenyan citizenry predominantly passive consumers or "influencers" of media content (see PUGC).[3] This trend demands a critical rethink and reimagination of the existing model, and doing research on alternative ways of making it more inclusive is arguably urgent.

Linked to the above issue is the "tribal" question in Kenya[4] where the television broadcasting space has been, and continues to be, tribally hegemonic in representation, ownership, decision making and socioeconomic benefits to the stakeholders – who include the consumers of the content. The overwhelming dominance of the 'big' language communities in broadcasting (since colonial times, as will be discussed in chapter 5) at the exclusion of the 'smaller'

[1] See Mamdani's (2006) arguments on despotism.

[2] The leading free-to-air PSBs referred to here, in no specific order, are Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), Kenya Television Network (KTN), Nation TV (NTV), K24 and Citizen TV (Citizen) (see Methodology).

[3] Active user-generated content (AUGC), as used in this context, refers to instances in which citizens collaborate and directly participate in the conceptualisation, design, ownership and broadcasting of televisual content. Passive user-generated content (PUGC) refers to content sent to broadcasters (e.g., phone-ins, comments on social media and other platforms, letters and faxes), citizens appearing as guests on television shows and their tips/leads on potential stories to broadcasters, pictures and footage, etc., to already existing programmes and concepts in which the ownership is wholly and exclusively the broadcaster's.

[4] Language groups are commonly referred to as tribes in Kenya.

communities deprives the latter of an equitable 'voice' and representation in the national television broadcasting space. Three of the leading five free-to-air PSBs are owned by people belonging to either the Kikuyu or Kalenjin communities (see Githaiga 2011). These are the two largest (in terms of numbers) of over 42 language groups in Kenya, according to the *2009 Population and Housing Census* (2010), which reports that the Kikuyu constitute about 18 per cent of the population, while the Kalenjin comprise about 16 per cent. Although the two communities constitute around 34 per cent of the population, media moguls from these communities own more than 60 per cent of television broadcasting platforms in Kenya. Research on models that give a voice to the many smaller ethnic communities on Kenyan television is of profound significance in media studies, and in the nation-building quest in Kenya. Bloom (1990) argues that for nation building to be realised in full, the process needs to impact positively and tangibly on each individual member of the nation-state. He convincingly proposes that a sole image or set of symbols cannot by itself evoke identification simply because it is presented logically, attractively or otherwise, to an individual.

Research questions and objectives

To critically engage with the purpose statement of this study, three main research questions are posed. The first is: *To what extent and in which forms have television consumers participated in the broadcasting-scape in Kenya?* This question seeks to contextualise and critically engage with the broadcasting and user-generated content (UGC) space, to understand what the current context and relationship are between the broadcaster and the user, in respect of content generation, ownership, distribution and consumption in Kenya.[5]

[5] The broadcast policy and mentality established during the colonial era in Kenya, and adopted by successive leadership regimes (see chapter 5), was one that hoarded broadcast instruments and platforms among the political elite for their political and economic benefit, at the exclusion and expense of the majority of the Kenyan citizenry.

Building on the first research question, the second seeks to discuss and theorise on AUGC: *To what extent and in which forms can ordinary citizens of a nation-state actively participate in the (co)generation, (co)production and (co)distribution of content for aural-visual broadcasting, and what socioeconomic and cultural value can this participation offer in the nation-building context?* The community that generates the content includes citizens as well as broadcasters and/or broadcasting platforms. This question will ultimately seek to understand how AUGC can support the nation-building agenda and potentially emancipate those on the econo-political periphery in contemporary Kenya.

Premised on discussions around the second research question, the third intends to critically engage with texts and discussions in the public digital sphere on the *Utaifa Mashinani Masimulizi ya Ukenya* (hereafter *UMMU*) digital narratives pilot project with the Abakuria of Kenya.[6] It poses the question: *What kinds of public digital-sphere discourses emerge from an AUGC pilot project in the context of the nation-building conversation in Kenya?*

Rationale and significance of the study

Ubiquitous scholarly work and broadcast content – not just in Kenya but also in Africa – on UGC for broadcasting focuses predominantly on passive user-generated content (PUGC). In research commissioned by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco), responses from 32 broadcasters in 25 countries across six continents revealed that an overwhelming majority of UGC is passive (PUGC) (Scott 2009). It is an opportune time and an apt topic for both scholarly work on, and the generation of, AUGC and its convergence in televisual content, especially in the contemporary African context.[7]

[6] The UMMU digital narratives project was initiated by this researcher to provide a digital platform and space for 'ordinary', 'marginalised' or 'absent' voices and communities in Kenya to tell their stories through photography and short digital films/videos. This project will be extensively discussed in subsequent chapters.

[7] Henry Jenkins (2006:254)defines convergence as "representing a paradigm shift – a move from media-specific content towards content that flows across multiple media channels, towards the increased interdependence of communication systems, towards multiple ways of accessing media content, and toward ever more complex relations between top-down corporate media and bottom-up participatory culture'.

Statistics show that access to the digital space is increasing at a dramatic rate in Kenya. Internetworldstats.com reports that the number of Internet users in Kenya grew from 200 000 in December 2000 to about 31 985 048 by September 2015: according to the website, this represents a penetration rate of 69.6 per cent of the total population. The Communication Authority (CA) of Kenya (2015:20) confirms this figure, reporting that the number of Internet users in Kenya grew from 31.9 million subscriptions in the third quarter of 2015 to 35.5 million in the fourth quarter, translating to an Internet/data penetration rate of 82.6 per cent. This reveals that a significant percentage of Kenyans now have access to the Internet and the digital space, which means it is becoming an increasingly significant sphere in which citizens communicate or from which they access information. Studies on how this space might support AUGC could be useful at this point in time.

Chapter outline

Chapter 1 introduces and contextualises the study by outlining the purpose statement and the problems tackled by this research. It then briefly discusses the research questions and highlights the research objectives, as well as the rationale and significance of the study. Finally, this chapter concludes with an outline of the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 reviews literature which is pertinent to engaging with the topic. Two subthemes are discussed here: the first is titled 'Aural-visual narration of the nation: the public service broadcasting space in television as a site for the nation-building project' while the second is titled 'Convergence culture in television: from public service broadcasting to public service media'. Discourse on the former subtheme begins by understanding the nation-building quest. Here, discussions are premised on Bloom's (1990:71) proposition that nation building is not only a problem for developing states, but a key "on-going necessity of contemporary politics in all developed states". This section briefly introduces discourses on the nation and the nation-building agenda, and deliberates on why

a nation could be considered a more stable collective identity compared to other forms of collective identities in a political context.

The second section in this subtheme seeks to problematise the PSB, understand what it is and engage with the question whether PSBs are the best means of delivering public broadcasting efficiently to both viewers and listeners (Foster 1992). This section acknowledges that the definition of public service broadcasting is contested, with no clear dictionary definition and accedes that the concept is understood differently and in multiple ways around the world. An attempt will be made to present a variety of understandings and changing contexts related to PSBs in different parts of the world. It is also noted here that the lack of consensus on the definition has resulted in a number of scholars and stakeholders opting to suggest what a PSB ought to be, and the functions that can be expected of it, rather than to define it. In the context of these debates and divergent perspectives on the subject, this section outlines the context within which PSBs will be studied in this body of work.

The third section of this subtheme discusses public service broadcasting and its role in nation building over the years. Here, the PSB's role in the nation-building agenda entails (but is not limited to) aspects such as its informational, educational and cultural content, and its capacity to disseminate that content to all citizens within modernising states. Also discussed are PSBs' duty towards minority and other marginalised groups, as well as the diversity of tastes in pluri-ethnic and multicultural nation-states. The concept of PSM, which is extensively unpacked in the second subtheme of this chapter, is introduced here.

The second subtheme in chapter two is titled 'Convergence culture in television: from public service broadcasting to public service media'. It begins by acknowledging that developments in the digital media space, which are associated with convergence culture, globalisation and privatisation, are increasingly altering and reorganising the way in which television professionals and traditional consumers of television content interact with, and 'prosume' television. This is, to a significant extent, premised on discourses that argue that

power in the mediascape has been in the grasp of media professionals for a long time. As a result, those previously perceived as consumers are seldom involved in the conceptualisation, creation and distribution of media content and (perhaps more importantly) fail to benefit socioeconomically and culturally from it (see Burgess 2006; Jenkins 2006; Carpentier 2011; Langlois 2012). Jenkins' (2006) thoughts on convergence culture in the digital era are introduced and discourses are reviewed that engage with this concept, in as far as it offers opportunities for PSBs to relegitimise their role in society (and perhaps reinvent and reposition themselves in this new space by embracing PSM).

The second section of the latter subtheme discusses the concept and ethos of digital storytelling as a genre and its manifestation in PSM. It traces the origins of digital storytelling and unpacks the various definitions, practices and understandings of the concept, and how it has evolved from over two-and-a-half decades ago to the present day. A discussion on what distinguishes digital storytelling from other genres, and reasons for the increased interest in the genre among academics, researchers and practitioners, are also unpacked here. Finally, this section looks at several digital storytelling projects initiated and developed by PSBs (mainly in Europe, where the concept is being incorporated into the content repertoire and where broadcasters are experimenting with various possibilities of co-production with ordinary people). The use of the digital space in programming is also investigated.

Chapter 3 offers a theoretical and conceptual framework for engaging with the research aims, objectives and questions of this study. A framework for studying the extent to which AUGC could mediate in the nation-building agenda in Kenya might arguably entail a critical engagement with two key discourses: the first is on nationalism and nation building (the crux of the study, and the field from which the study's key problems stem), while the second engages with discourse on digital media, as this is arguably a potentially emancipating platform and space – ideologically, technically and practically – for interrogating the research problems discussed in the introduction.

This chapter begins by contextualising discourses on nationalism and discussing scholars who are generally referred to as primordialists: they believe that nationalism is premised on what Clifford Geertz (1973) describes as ineffable yet coercive ties. Next, the study looks at nationalism from a modernist take that, according to Llobera (1999:8), "emerges as a process of transition from traditional to modern society". Here, a discussion arises around ethno-symbolism as another movement of nationalism discourse which, according to Özkirimli (2000:215), advances that "modern nations are built around pre-existing ethnic cores and that earlier ethnic cultures provide the material out of which today's national identities are forged". The context within which nationalism has been theorised and which frames studies on and about Africa, is subsequently examined. The complexities of the phenomenon, its application and its manifestation on the continent are discussed, to offer a framework for understanding and engaging with the Kenyan context of nationalism and the nation-building process.

Notions of everyday nationalisms and the nationalisms of the subordinated and the peripheral are discussed as vital components of this study. This section critically unpacks Bhabha's (1994) theory of cultural difference and Billig's (1995) notions on banal nationalisms. The discourse concludes with a discussion of Özkirimli's (2000:227) analytical framework for studying nationalism, in which he persuasively argues that there is no such thing as a 'theory of nationalism' – he proposes an analytical framework for understanding the discourse. The five propositions which make up Özkirimli's framework are outlined in this section.

The chapter then discusses 'convergence in the digital mediascape'. To contextualise this, Finnemann's (2011) proposed five major media epochs or matrices in human history are unpacked, culminating in an understanding of what digital media are and entail. Finnemann (2011:84) observes that in addition to changing the role of 'old media', digital media "bring with them a range of new social, cultural and political issues". The new possibilities offered by digital media arguably form the foundations of the convergence culture

advanced by Henry Jenkins (2006). Jenkins (2006:3) succinctly proposes that the term 'convergence' should be understood beyond its traditional, technological sense, as referring to a confluence of "multiple media functions within the same device". Instead, he connotes a different meaning to the term, that of a 'cultural shift' in which consumers [of any content] "are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content" (Jenkins 2006:3).

Chapter 4 discusses the research design and methodology by focusing on three broad subsections: 'the research study design', 'methods of data collection' and 'methods of data analysis and interpretation'. The research study design unpacks the research type(s) and design applied in this study. PAR as a key methodological approach is considered and its principles are extensively discussed. This section also outlines the study's population and focus group, before briefly explaining how these were identified. The second subsection, which deals with 'methods of data collection', outlines and explains the choices, methods and approaches of data collection adopted in the study. The data collection instruments, date, and time period/duration of the data collection process are detailled. The third subsection, 'methods of data analysis and interpretation', highlights the methods and approaches, in respect of data analysis, adopted in the research, before explaining how these are linked to theories and concepts (see chapter 3). The analysis in this thesis is theory-centric and theory driven, implying that the section on 'methods of data analysis and interpretation' is important in stipulating the processes to be followed.

Chevalier and Buckles (2013:11) note that the first phase of a PAR process usually entails contextualising the research problem and establishing fact-finding and diagnostic thinking. This phase, according to Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2014:68) documents and discusses how things work, how things have come to be and the kind of consequences produced by certain practices. Chapter 5 sets out to engage with this phase of the PAR process by focusing on the first research question: *To what extent and in which forms has the television consumer participated in the broadcasting-scape in Kenya?* Two themes are explored in this

chapter. The first is titled 'Reimagining the Kenyan television broadcasting space: Active User Generated Content (AUGC) as an emancipatory platform' which undertakes a critical-historical reading of the broadcasting landscape in Kenya from its independence from the British in 1963, to contemporary times. The purpose is to examine the extent to which the average Kenyan citizen, who is the consumer of broadcasting content, has participated or been included in the production, ownership, distribution and agenda setting of broadcast content in that country. This section investigates the different political leadership eras in Kenya, beginning with the colonial government followed by the regimes of presidents Jomo Kenyatta, Daniel Arap Moi, Mwai Kibaki and, finally, Uhuru Kenyatta – in that order. The emphasis falls on the 'smaller' language groups which, this research argues, are on the periphery of the political and socio-cultural space in Kenya.

The second theme in chapter 5 deals with 'illusions of participation: power and empowerment in Kenya's contemporary television broadcasting-scape'. This samples prime-time television content from four contemporary television broadcasters in Kenya and critically unpacks forms of participation in programming with high audience ratings (ARs). These four broadcasters are KBC (the public broadcaster), Kenya Television Network (KTN), Nation Television (NTV) and Royal Media Services' flagship television broadcaster, Citizen TV. The latter theme seeks to contextualise and critically engage with contemporary participatory discourses on Kenyan television. The premise is that discourses on active and meaningful participation and inclusion in social and cultural spaces are not just of significant scholarly and intellectual value, but are also germane in the re-building and democratisation of the nation in the wake of the post-2007 election violence that exposed deep and historical 'tribal' fragmentations in Kenya.

The next phase of a PAR process, propose Chevalier and Buckles (2014), is to experiment with transformative action. They suggest that "progressive learning from these experiments feeds back into earlier plans and invites adjustments between objectives and actions" (Chevalier & Buckles 2013:11). Kemmis,

McTaggart and Nixon (2014:68) weigh in here, proposing that during this phase of the PAR project "we act to transform our practices, our understanding of our practices, and the conditions under which we practice". Fay (cited in McTaggart 1997:37) believes that "as confidence and theoretical understanding develop, participatory action researchers begin to engage the ways in which understandings are shaped (and distorted) by power relations". Chapter 6 focuses on this phase of the PAR process by engaging with the second research question: *To what extent and in which forms can ordinary citizens of a nation-state actively participate in the (co)generation, (co)production and (co)distribution of content for aural-visual broadcasting and what socioeconomic and cultural value can this participation offer in the nation-building context?*

These discussions will hinge on three case studies of AUGC projects, namely the South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC) *Project 10* documentary series from South Africa, the BBC's *Capture Wales* project and the *Utaifa Mashinani Masimulizi ya Ukenya* (*UMMU*)[8] digital narratives project. The three projects are centrally concerned with narrating a nation and using a participatory approach to allow ordinary people to tell their stories. The subsequent discussions and theorisations are framed according to two broad themes: the first is 'the individual and the community narrating the self', and the second is 'the everyday and the banal in narrating the nation'. It is important to point out that the *UMMU* digital narratives project was initiated by the author in an attempt to establish the extent to which ordinary citizens could actively participate in the content creation workflow. The project does not in any way claim to be a silver bullet to achieving AUGC as it had several challenges and required several iterative processes to improve it. As with many pilot projects, it provides several invaluable lessons that could potentially improve AUGC. It is also important to note that although the three AUGC projects are discussed in this chapter, this does not suggest that the three are comparable in terms of impact, context and value, among other aspects. The analysis rather intended to draw on and learn

[8] *Utaifa mashinani masimulizi ya Ukenya* loosely translates as banal/everyday/local nationalisms: narrations of 'Kenyan-ness'.

from the latter two existing AUGC projects in order to execute the *UMMU* digital narratives project.

In engaging with the theme of 'the individual and the community narrating the self', the chapter begins by exploring the notions of the 'self', the 'personal', the 'individual' and the 'other' in self-representations within the context of nationalism in postcolonial Africa. It discusses the forms, functions and manifestations of self-representation in the three aforementioned participatory UGC projects. The focus here is on their archival function, their cathartic role as well as the economic enfranchisement arising from the projects. These discussions are anchored on several scholars' thoughts, including Bhabha (1990), Billig (1995), Hall (1990) and Özkirimli (2000), who believe that the reproduction of the discourse on nationalism is sustained only if reproduced regularly.

Discussions on the latter theme, 'the everyday and the banal in narrating the nation', are premised on the argument that the media in Africa (and elsewhere in the world) have historically been at the core of nationalism and nation-building projects which attempt to coalesce, cajole and unite members of a nation, but conversely, that the media have also acted (in some instances) as a dividing and severing platform. The chapter acknowledges that the concept of national identity in African nation-states is at best tenuous, owing partially to overlaps, tensions and dualities between nations and states. The latter theme discusses aspects such as vernacular language in the everyday and banal narratives in nation building, as anchored in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's (1986) unceasing conviction that the culture of a people is carried through its language. Other aspects discussed include narratives that are relatable to the citizenry, the archetypes and tropes promoted by everyday and banal narratives, the binary between grand narratives and the banal/everyday narratives in nationalism, and the role of the everyday/banal narratives in offering a space and platform for contestation, negotiation and alternative or counter-narratives. Others include the ways and modes in which ordinary people can actively and meaningfully participate in narrating their nation but, where this is curtailed, engage in

radically disrupting existing, hegemonic broadcasting interactions in order to participate in narrations of their nation.

The next phase of a PAR process involves documenting and monitoring what happens in the study to "see if we are now preventing, avoiding or ameliorating the untoward consequence of our previous ways of working, and to check that our new ways of working are not producing new or different untoward consequences" (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon 2014:68). This constitutes the final phase of the study, but it is important to point out that there could be other phases in a PAR approach that entail several iterative stages and levels. This phase will be discernible in chapter 7, entitled 'Public sphere discourses on the pilot *UMMU* digital narratives project'. The chapter provides a response to the third research question: ***What kinds of public sphere discourses emerge from an AUGC pilot project in the context of the nation-building conversation in Kenya?***

These discussions will draw data from public sphere spaces set up for the pilot *UMMU* project, such as its blog, its social and digital media platforms (YouTube channels, Facebook page). The chapter begins by discussing key features of the public sphere as advanced by Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2014). These features will offer a number of guiding principles on how the concept of the public sphere can be understood in the context of this study. It contextualises the Kenyan digital-scape, outlining recent significant developments in the space and offering statistical and empirical information on these events. The next section entails a critical reading of texts, produced by the *UMMU* digital narratives participants, that are available in the public digital sphere. Theories and conceptual work already discussed in the study will provide a framework for these readings. The final section entails an analysis of discourses identified from the feedback and responses – of the participants, their families and friends, as well as the general public – which are available in the public digital sphere.

Chapter 8, the final chapter, summarises and concludes the study.

CHAPTER 2
Background and review of literature

Introduction

A critical engagement with the purpose statement/problems/questions and objectives of this study should ideally be premised on seminal and relevant literature that is germane in contextualising the topic under review. To this end, two subthemes are discussed in this chapter. The first deals with the 'aural-visual narration of the nation: the public service broadcasting space in television as a site for the nation-building project', while the second covers 'convergence culture in television: from public service broadcasting to public service media'.

Discourse on the former subtheme begins by interrogating the 'the nation-building quest'. Here, discussions are premised on Bloom's (1990:71) proposition that nation building is not only a problem for developing states, but a key "on-going necessity of contemporary politics in all developed states". This section briefly introduces discourses on the nation and the nation-building agenda, and deliberates on why a nation can be considered a more stable collective identity than other forms of collective identities within a political context.

The second section in this subtheme seeks to 'problematise the public service broadcaster', to understand what a PBS is, and engage with questions of whether PBSs are the best means of delivering public broadcasting efficiently to viewers and listeners (Foster 1992). This section acknowledges that the definition of public service broadcasting is a contested one, with no clear dictionary definition. In fact, the concept is understood differently around the world, and this section aims to interrogate the various understandings and changing contexts of PSBs. It is also noted here that the lack of consensus on the definition of a PBS has resulted in a number of scholars and stakeholders opting to propose what a PBS ought to be, and the functions expected of it, rather than to come up with a clear-cut definition. In the context of these debates and the divergent

perspectives of what PBSs are or ought to be, or the various understandings of the sector in different parts of the world, this section outlines the context within which PSBs will be understood in this study.

The third section of this subtheme discusses public service broadcasting and its role in nation building over the years. The discussion centres around the role of PSBs in the nation-building agenda, which entails (but is not limited to) aspects such as its informational, educational and cultural content, and its capacity to disseminate content to all citizens in modernising states simultaneously. The role of a PSB as regards minority groups and other marginalised interests and tastes in pluri-ethnic and multicultural nation-states, is examined. The concept of PSM, which is extensively unpacked in the second subtheme of this chapter, is introduced here.

The second subtheme in chapter two begins by acknowledging that developments in the digital media space, associated with convergence culture, globalisation and privatisation, are continuously altering and reorganising the way in which both television professionals and traditional consumers of television content are interacting with, and 'prosuming', television. This is, to a large extent, premised on discourses that argue that power in the mediascape has been in the grasp of media professionals for a long time. As a result, those previously perceived as consumers are seldom involved in conceptualising, creating, distributing and (perhaps more importantly) benefiting, socioeconomically and culturally, from media content (see Burgess 2006; Jenkins 2006; Carpentier 2011; Langlois 2012). Jenkins' (2006) thoughts on convergence culture in the digital era are introduced, and discourses which offer opportunities for PSBs to relegitimise their role in society, and perhaps reinvent and reposition themselves in this new space (through, for instance, embracing PSM) are reviewed.

The second section of the latter subtheme discusses the concept and ethos of digital storytelling as a genre and its manifestation in PSM. It traces the origins of the concept of digital storytelling to the establishment of the Centre for Digital

Storytelling (CDS) in Berkeley, California, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and credits its creation to Dana Atchley, Nina Mullen and Joe Lambert, who co-founded and run this not-for-profit community arts organisation. This section unpacks the various definitions and understandings of digital storytelling and traces its evolution since its inception over two-and-a-half decades ago. Under the microscope are what distinguishes digital storytelling from other genres and the increasing interest in the genre among academics, researchers and practitioners. Finally, this section looks at several digital storytelling projects initiated and developed by PSBs, mainly in Europe – a continent that seems to be incorporating the concept into its content repertoire and experimenting with various possibilities of co-production with ordinary people, in addition to using the digital space in programming.

Aural-visual narration of the nation: The public service broadcasting space in television as a site for the nation-building project

The nation-building quest

Nation building is a critical, ongoing agenda in many nation-states, not only in Africa but the world over. It is, in Bloom's (1990:71) words, "the very stuff – philosophically, theoretically and practically – of legitimacy in the modern state". Bloom (1990:71) submits that nation building is not only problematic for developing states: all developed states grapple with this issue, to the extent that "much of the art of contemporary mass politics is in attuning to, playing to and orchestrating this dynamic".

The question would then be what a nation is, and what gives it legitimacy over other existing forms of collective identity.

Friedrich (1966) believes that the notion of the contemporary nation has been narrowly constructed and too closely associated with events in traditional Europe. He argues for a departure from the traditional European understanding

of the term in favour of a more contemporary take on it. For Friedrich (1966:31), a nation should be any "cohesive group possessing 'independence' within the confines of the international order, as provided by United Nations, which provides a constituency for a government effectively ruling such a group and receiving from that group the acclamation which legitimises the government as part of the world order". This definition is fairly broad, but it aligns with Anthony Smith's more detailed explanation. Smith (1991:14) describes a nation as "a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members". Benedict Anderson's nuanced definition in his seminal work concisely captures the gist of both Friedrich's and Smith's definitions. He describes a nation as an "imagined political community. Imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (Anderson 1991).

Smith (1991:143) argues convincingly that other forms of collective identity (e.g., gender, class, race and religion) could "overlap or combine" with national identity, but that they seldom "succeed in undermining its hold, though they may influence its direction". Gender, he argues, is not as cohesive or as potent for collective identification and mobilisation, because of its "universality and all-encompassing nature" (Smith 1991:143). He explains that gender transcends geographical spaces, class divides and ethnic groupings, and is therefore uninspiring to collective consciousness and action. As regards regionalism and localism, they are in most cases "unable to sustain the mobilization of [their] populations with their separate grievances and unique problems"; regions are difficult to define, geographically speaking, as their centres are "multiple and their boundaries ragged" (Smith 1991:4). These latter arguments would, however, apply to many postcolonial nations – especially in Africa. Social classes, Smith opines, have a limited emotional appeal and lack cultural depth to effectively act as a basis for forming an enduring, collective identity. Social class, like gender divisions, is often territorially dispersed and consists, to a significant extent, of categories of economic interest, which are subject to rapid fluctuations. Smith (1991:4) further points out that "economic self-interest is not usually the stuff of stable collective identities". Religion, he contends, has similar attributes

to class identity as a mass mobilisation platform, the only difference between the two forms of collective identity being that class emanates from the "sphere of production and exchange", while religious identities emerge from the "spheres of communication and socialisation" (Smith 1991:5).

Deutch (1966:3) observes that scholars from different backgrounds have variously defined the notion of nation building: historians are more inclined to refer to it as the 'growth of nations' – a concept that imagines the process as 'organismic', much as a living organism goes through the stages of birth, maturity and eventually death. For social scientists, the preferred term is 'national development' which has connotations of influences from the past, "the environment, and the vast, complex and slow[ly] changing aspects of the actions and expectations of millions of people" (Deutch 1966:3). Statesmen and policy-orientated political scientists, Deutch (1966:3) suggests, speak of 'nation building' while suggesting a model that is either architectural or mechanical. The implication is that "a nation can be built according to different plans, from various materials, rapidly or gradually, by different sequences of step, and in partial independence from its environment" (Deutch 1966:3). Premised on these understandings, Bloom (1990:55) describes nation building in contemporary times as

> both the formation and establishment of the new state itself as a political entity, and the process of creating viable degrees of unity, adaptation, achievement and a sense of national identity among the people. Inherent in its usage is the fact that a state has already been created and that the nation, or community of solidarity, is to be built within it. Nation building as generally used within social theory is not, as such, concerned with how a community of people may come to perceive themselves as a nation and perhaps demand a state. It is concerned, in Toennies' classical terms, with how a *Gesellschaft,* or functioning society, may become a *Gemeinschaft* or homogeneous community.

Lustick (1985:3) identifies two key stages in the building of a nation: the first, which is becoming increasingly challenging to achieve within the contemporary global space, is through the acquisition, "violent or otherwise, of new territory by

a state building core". The difficulty here arises from the view that there are very few (if any) 'new territories' outside of those legitimately recognised by the international world. Lustick's (1985:3) second way of building a nation is through what he describes as "the elicitation within new territory of loyalties and political commitments reflecting the ascription of legitimacy by the indigenous population to the authority structure emanating from the core". The latter process is at the heart of the discourses in this chapter and the remainder of the thesis.

Bloom (1990:56) explains that nation building as an academic field of enquiry mainly gained prominence in the aftermath of World War II, when "the withdrawal or ejection of the colonial powers thrust statehood upon many territories in which the cultural match between the new state and its society [was] tenuous, if not totally missing". Connors (cited in Bloom 1990:56), commenting on this new post-World War II colonial state, wrote that the true goal was not nation building at that time, but "nation-destroying". His argument was that these states were already made up of several 'nations' that needed to be "convinced" to transfer their primary allegiance to a single nation that would constitute one cohesive and integrated state. In African postcolonial discourse, this resonated quite strongly. Mamdani (1996) points out that there were two major contesting voices on the question of advancing the aspirations of newly independent nation-states: proponents of the 'national' model seemed to legitimise it premised on the nationalist struggle for independence. They foregrounded the multi-ethnic and countrywide view to nation building as a better platform for advancing the agenda of the newly independent states, than other intra-national platforms which were arguably smaller nations within the newly formed nations that shared a geographical space with the postcolonial states. Mamdani (1996:187) writes that

> both sides of the polemic seemed to agree on one point, national movements (multi-ethnic and countrywide) are legitimate in that they carry forward the legacy of the nationalist struggle, whereas tribal (ethnic and locale specific) movements are illegitimate because they distract from national unity.

Bloom insists, however, that the nation-building process goes beyond mere imagined belonging, as Anderson (1991) famously suggested – in Bloom's opinion, this process needs to impact positively and tangibly on each individual member of the nation-state, for it to be fully achieved. He posits that

> the evocation of shared group identification can be triggered only by meaningful and real experience. This is to say that any identification is only made if, in the first place, the dynamics of the situation are such that it is positively, psychologically beneficial for the individual so to do. This point may appear self-evident, but it requires to be bluntly stated lest it be thought that an image or a set of symbols can evoke identification simply because they are presented – logically, attractively or otherwise – to an individual. (Bloom 1990:51)

Bloom also suggests that nation building is an ongoing process and therefore needs to be seen as such.

> Nation-building, as an ideal model, is never complete, for two reasons: first, there are always individuals and groups who, for one reason or another based in previous identifications, do not identify with the nation-state. Second, historical circumstances change and there may, for example, be policy trends in government or changes in international relations, which actively alienate groups and individuals from the nation-state. (Bloom 1990:63)

Theories and conceptual discourses on nationalism, which anchor the nation-building conversation, will be critically discussed and unpacked in detail in chapter 3 of this thesis.

Problematising the PSB

Foster (1992:12) poses a significant question to anchor discussions in this section, asking: "What is public broadcasting and are public broadcasters the best means of delivering public broadcasting efficiently to viewers and listeners?" Debates on PSBs should ideally be premised on a fairly clear understanding of the institution(s), for as Collins (2002), Trappel (2008), Debrett (2009) and several other scholars explain, the exact ambit of public

service broadcasting is contested, with no clear dictionary definition and almost as many divergent understandings as there are countries in the world.

Syversten (2003:165) suggests that in Europe, public service broadcasting as a concept was – in the formative stages of broadcasting – used as a synonym for European broadcasting corporations which were set up as licence-fee-funded monopolies during the interwar period. He reasons, however, that the term has since been expanded to accommodate a variety of policies, programming strategies and regulatory arrangements. In the United States of America (USA), according to Hoynes (2003:119), educators worked to "carve out a non-commercial oasis on television" as the medium increasingly emerged in the post-World War years. In 1952, 252 stations were reserved for non-commercial educational use in America, helping to provide the infrastructure for a group of non-commercial stations that laid the foundation for what became the public television system (Hoynes 2003). Syversten (2003:165) points out that even with the relatively lengthy history of public television in Europe, the concept is still difficult to describe in simple and unambiguous terms – in the present context, the focus for such entities "is neither on the concept of 'public service broadcasting' as such nor on 'public service' as a characterization of certain institutions". Public broadcasting is rather seen as "a particular model of media governance, a set of political interventions into the media market with the purpose of ensuring that broadcasters produce programs that are valuable to society" (Syversten 2003:156). These are central tenets of public service broadcasting and the nation-building agenda that will be discussed extensively in this and subsequent chapters of this thesis. Hoynes (2003:119) notes that in the USA, the passage of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 laid the foundation for the federal government to commit funding for a public broadcasting system that would not be built around the need to deliver audiences to advertisers. Public television, in accordance with the vision outlined by the initial Carnegie Commission (1967) (whose report provided the blueprint for the Public Broadcasting Act) "would enliven public life by highlighting controversy, dissent, and debate; giving voice to diverse expression; and serving as a substantive alternative to commercial television" (Hoynes 2003:119).

The UK Committee on Financing the BBC (the Peacock Committee) seems to concur with those scholars who comment on the complexity of defining PSBs. According to Collins (2002:65), the Peacock Committee reported that when it comes to public service broadcasting there is no simple dictionary definition. "While the BBC is widely seen as the leading model of PSB, British definitions of PSB are nevertheless at odds with those of other nations because in the UK the term is applied to all free-to-air broadcasters" (Debrett 2009:809). Despite the BBC's worldwide prestige and acknowledged reputation in the field of broadcasting, its stakeholders have never reached consensus on the meaning of 'public service broadcasting,' Collins (2002:65) admits. "In Canada," he points out, "what Europeans would generally name 'Community Broadcasting' is known as 'Public Broadcasting', and in Australia what Europeans know as 'public service broadcasting' is known as 'National Broadcasting'" (Collins 2002:65). He makes the point that the Western European experience of public service broadcasting includes systems which are closely aligned with the state and "used as an instrument of central state power [and even] highly regionalised and pluralistic systems" (Collins 2002:65).

The context of PSB institutions is changing quite dramatically the world over, because of ever-changing funding, programming, technological and management structures. Such flexibility makes it difficult to attribute a rigid definition to PSB. Syversten (2003), for instance, suggests that the disruption of the broadcasting monopolies in the 1980s and 1990s have seen new institutions, which were privately owned and funded with advertisements, being included under the 'public broadcasting' umbrella. Bardoel and d'Haenens (2008:340) concur, pointing out that the PSB management style has, in recent times, emulated what was then considered commercial or private broadcasting, as "since around 1990 a new generation of management took the lead in order to make the old broadcasting bureaucracies 'meaner and leaner'". Broadcasters which previously held monopolies – the BBC, Swedish Sveriges Television (SVT) and the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) – "were made more cost effective, and the composition of content, scheduling principles among others were

'modernized'" (Syversten 2003:158). Debrett (2009:809) notes that the UK communications regulator, Ofcom, identified "flexibility in the system for provision (and providers) of PSB to change over time, as the needs and preferences of citizens change" as a key attribute of any public service provider. Hoynes' (2003:124) somewhat intense views in relation to public broadcasting debates in the USA have led him to conclude that this entails nothing less than the privatisation of the American public television system. He proposes that "despite past threats from conservatives in the U.S. Congress to privatize public broadcasting, it has been public television executives – looking for ways to ensure the survival of the public television system – who are leading the way toward a new, market-oriented version of public television" (Hoynes 2003:124).

The lack of consensus on possible definitions for PBSs has resulted in a number of scholars and stakeholders opting to suggest what a PSB ought to be, and the functions expected of it, rather than attempting to define it. Syversten (2003) is of the opinion that public service broadcasting should be regarded as a form of governance, rather than as a specific form of media institution: in his view, this will avoid the commonly used opposition between 'public' and 'commercial' television. Such opposition misrepresents the fact that "various forms of television often display more similarities than differences" (Syversten 2003:156). Instead of categorising media organisations according to strict oppositions ('state' vs. 'private', 'public' vs. 'commercial'), Syversten (2003:156) proposes that "public service regulation should be perceived as something that can apply to different institutions to a varying degree".

Fourie (2010:20) shares similar views, contending that the concept of a PSB as an institution should preferably be replaced with that of PSBs as a genre. In his view, the principles of what he refers to as 'traditional' PSBs are manifested in all broadcasters in a country as part of their programming, but a re-imagination of PSBs could be a starting point in addressing the many paradoxes and "tensions that arise from the dichotomies between public/private, culture/market, service/profit, national/global, citizen/consumer, and between quality/quantity" (Fourie 2010:21). Addressing these binaries in a PSB context,

Fourie (2010:21) argues, is likely to expose the public to what he describes as "socially responsible content".

Garnham (cited in Collins 2002:66) appears to concur with both Syversten and Fourie, averring that PSBs should provide to "all citizens, whatever their wealth or geographical location, equal access to a wide range of high-quality entertainment, information and education, and as a means of ensuring that the aim of the programme producer is the satisfaction of a range of audience tastes rather than only those tastes that show the largest profit". Blumler (cited in Collins 2002:65) lists the key mandates of a PSB as, among other things, "a comprehensive remit, generalised mandates, diversity, pluralism and range, cultural roles, place in politics and non-commercialism". Non-commercialism has, however, proven to be difficult to achieve, since PSBs are increasingly compelled to use commercial means to raise capital – this, because traditional sources are shrinking and are insufficient to run them. As regards content, Syversten (cited in Trappel 2008:315), lists "quality and diversity [as] the key features [of PSBs] together with requirements to respect minorities and foster national culture and identity".

In Europe, the PSB model could be described in terms of three broad characteristics, according to Syversten (2003). The first comprises a category of broadcasters granted specific sets of privileges:

> The first key feature of the public broadcasting form of governance is that certain companies or institutions are entrusted with a set of privileges to insulate them to some degree from the market forces. The privileges may be of an economic or technical nature; in the case of broadcasting, a monopoly on advertising revenue, license fee funding, and the privilege to broadcast over the air to the general public have been among the most valuable. (Syversten 2003:157)

Syversten (2003:157) identifies a number of these privileges as they obtain in his native Norway, pointing out that the first public broadcasting company, Norsk Rikskringkasting (NRK), established in 1933, is predominantly funded

through a compulsory licence fee paid by all owners of television sets in that country. He reiterates, however, that particular privileges are extended to privately owned television stations such as TV 2, which has the "sole right to transmit commercial over the-air television to the whole country" (Syversten 2003:157). These privileges are not confined to broadcasting media, but extend to other media (such as cinema) which also "enjoy financial privileges in the form of direct government subsidies and tax or duty exemptions that make them structurally similar to public broadcasting" (Syversten 2003:157).

The second characteristic of the PBS model of governance which Syvertsen (1992) identifies, is that the privileges mentioned earlier come with clear obligations that the broadcasters have to fulfil in order to continue reaping the benefits:

> These [privileges] go beyond satisfying the needs of the consumers and are linked instead to more profound cultural and social purposes. The duties may vary, but in the case of the European public broadcasters, they have historically been of three kinds. The first is universal coverage: that the services should be accessible to the whole population. Second, there is a set of content requirements, most typically that programming should be diverse and of high quality, that minorities and smaller 'taste groups' also be served, and that news and political issues should be covered in an impartial manner. The third includes the obligation to protect and strengthen national culture and identity. This implies that broadcasters should support arts and culture, that they uphold a national social and cultural sphere, and that they refrain from anything that could potentially threaten 'the national interest'. (Syversten 2003:157)

Debrett (2009:809) weighs in here, reminding us that the most important of the PSB principles are universal coverage and access to free service, given the social value inherent in reaching mass audiences via a shared public space for discourse. She lists the Broadcasting Research Unit's principles, as evident in parts of the UK where recurring elements of public broadcasting charters are accommodated. These are independent

> from government and from vested interests to enable the provision of fair and impartial news and current affairs; the servicing of the interests of minorities including children, in addition to mainstream audiences; the reflection of national culture and identity; and the provision of quality programming which encompasses a preparedness to innovate and to not be driven by audience size. (Debrett 2009:809)

Syversten (2003:157) concludes that from the outset, the public service broadcasting form of governance aimed to support a cultural and democratic sphere where rational debate could be fostered and the citizenry enlightened in respect of political, social and cultural matters, ensuring that it "is explicitly related to the idea of the public sphere as described by Jürgen Habermas".

Syversten (1992) identifies the third characteristic of the PSB model of governance as manifesting a control structure of appointed or elected representatives from society who monitor and assess the performance of broadcasters to ensure that they fulfil their obligations in line with the general consensus. In many nation-states around the world, the monitoring function is shared between parliament and government, and independent regulatory entities. The latter have been empowered by state structures to evaluate the performance of broadcasters and report to both government and parliament on whether those broadcasters have met their obligations. Such reporting, according to Syversten, forms the basis for the renewal (or revocation) of broadcasting privileges and licences. He sums this up by arguing that public broadcasting governance structures may represent "an attempt to create communication structures that are accountable to neither the market nor the state but to the public at large" (Syversten 2003:158).

Convergence culture, as argued by Jenkins (2006), is dramatically disrupting and reshaping the television broadcasting landscape (more on this later). In light of this, Syversten (2003:160) convincingly proposes that "neither the license fee nor the exclusive right to transmit broadcasting to a certain territory is a privilege that is likely to survive in a situation in which 'television' can be

received through a number of different distribution channels". As will be discussed in chapter 5, stakeholders predict that in future, television programmes will be broadcast and received in ways that are quite different from what we are used to at present. Ashley Highfield (cited in Jenkins 2006:253), former director of the BBC's New Media and Technology, boldly predicts that

> future TV may be unrecognizable from today, defined not just by linear TV channels, packaged and scheduled by television executives, but instead will resemble more of a kaleidoscope, thousands of streams of content, some indistinguishable as actual channels, these streams will mix together broadcasters' content and programs, and our viewers' contributions.

Syversten (2003:160) submits that if the privileges which have been afforded them somehow become less valuable to broadcasters, there will be little motivation for them to air content of high quality, despite the resulting programming perhaps having less popular appeal – this, at the expense of content with the potential to garner higher profits and draw high ARs. He argues that the public service broadcasting model relies heavily on privileges; and without broadcasting companies receiving some form of reimbursement, it would not be just to expect them to offer programming which meets the public's expectations or standards as regards diversity and quality (Syversten 2003:164).

In the context of the debates highlighted here, the divergent perspectives of what PSBs are (or ought to be), as well as the various understandings of the sector in different parts of the world, this study will consider two key aspects when defining the term. First, the focus will be on the services provided to society at large and the citizenry of the nation-state, rather than considering the ownership of the broadcaster. Second, broadcasters will be included as PSBs based on whether they are 'freely' accessible to the citizenry (i.e., free to air), rather than requiring viewers to pay a subscription (directly or otherwise) for broadcasts they receive.

Public service broadcasting in Africa

Broadcasting in Africa has been influenced, to a significant extent, by the continent's colonial heritage and especially by what is commonly referred to as the Reithian principles of broadcasting (see Teer Tomaselli & Tomaselli 1994; Eko 2000; Ndlela 2007; Teer-Tomaselli 2008). John Reith, who wrote the charters for the Australian, Canadian, Kenyan and South African public broadcasters, among several others, was the BBC's first director general. He argued that broadcasting should be developed in the interests of the nation and assigned through state intervention (Teer-Tomaselli 2008:75). Teer Tomaselli and Tomaselli (1994:46) point out that Reith (just like numerous colonial regimes) failed to recognise Africans as part of the listening or viewing audience, except on colonial terms, but rather assumed there was a homogenous audience "capable of making relatively uniform interpretations of programme content and flow". Eko (2000:86) suggests that broadcasting policy in Africa revolved around development communication – a Western scholar-inspired "national public service" concept that views broadcasting as a catalyst for development. Eko (2000:86) does, however, lament that "development communication soon became a tool for the promotion of the political ideas and views of the post colonial ruling elite in Africa to the exclusion of all others".

Ndlela (2007:69) asserts that PSB is not yet socially embedded in its ideal form in postcolonial Africa, since it was transplanted into an environment that lacked the necessary political and economic conditions that facilitated this process in Western Europe. In many African countries, public service broadcasting comprises a combination of "commercially sponsored and non-sponsored educational and cultural programming, political neutrality, avoidance of controversial issues, and journalistic restraint" (Eko 2000:88). Eko (2000:90) argues that in the 1960s and 1970s, developmental communication proponents viewed African countries as "fragile, fledgling societies facing many internal and external threats", and therefore national unity and cohesion were considered more important than press freedom. Because of this, African politicians used it to their benefit, arguing "that in situations of poverty, where the bare necessities

were absent, having mass media that concentrated on checking government action and criticizing it was a misuse of resources" (Eko 2000:90). This approach and attitude, which mostly benefited the postcolonial ruling parties and elite, were evident in countries such as Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, apartheid South Africa and post-1994 South Africa, among several others (see Heath 1986; Kariuki, 1996; Zaffiro 1999; Eko 2000; Ndlela 2007; Fourie 2010).

Several broadcasting systems emerged in postcolonial Africa from colonial and Reithian broadcasting make-ups. Banda (2006:9) categorises one of these systems as state broadcasting, which represents and is controlled by the state, despite usually being funded either wholly or partially by public money. In this regard Eko (2000:88) notes that this system of broadcasting was generally used to sustain authoritarian postcolonial governments on the continent. Banda (2006:9) differentiates between state and government broadcasting: the latter is controlled by the government of the day and represents the viewpoint of the executive, while being partly funded by public money. Banda (2006:9) identifies public broadcasting (PB) as a third system, being owned, accountable to and funded by the public. A fourth broadcasting model is public service broadcasting which usually has a specific remit to broadcast material which is in the public interest, but as Banda (2006:9) argues, a PSB need not be publicly owned, since privately owned broadcasters may fulfil such a role. Eko (2000:88) adds that private 'independent' commercial and/or community broadcasters, including religious broadcasters whose mission is public service programming, can be included in this model. He does, however, note that the degree of independence of PSBs and their neutrality vary from country to country.

Significant recent developments in public service broadcasting in Africa have attempted to reshape and improve broadcasting quality, as well as the experience, reach and policy thereof. One such significant development took place in 1963, when African broadcast professionals formed the Union of National Radio and Television Organisations of Africa (Urtna). Eko (2000:92) reports that Urtna was "an organization of African state-owned broadcasters whose main mission was the promotion of African broadcasting through

program exchange across the linguistic barriers erected by colonial powers. Urtna's Programme Exchange Centre in Nairobi, Kenya, received, translated and exchanged radio and television programs." Other significant developments took place in the 1990s, reports Ndlela (2007:67) – a time when a three-tier broadcasting structure intended to promote a more democratic broadcasting-scape in Africa gained significant momentum in several African countries. That structure focused on three key aspects: the first required the transformation of state broadcasters into "genuine public service broadcasters"; the second entailed the introduction of private commercial broadcasters into the African broadcasting sphere, while the third involved the establishment of community broadcasters. In addition, the structure advocated for the establishment of independent broadcasting regulators and a reduction in the state's role in the broadcasting sector (Ndlela 2007:67).

In South Africa, for instance, the SABC reconfigured its radio and television channels from 1995 onwards.[9] Teer-Tomaseli and Tomaselli (2001:126) suggest that pre-1995, SABC TV served only the interests of the middle class, which was predominantly constituted of races categorised as 'white', 'coloured' and 'Indian', and excluded 'black' Africans. The post-1995 SABC TV aimed for the following:

- The extension of airtime for all official languages (other than English) on television;
- An increase in local content programming;
- The extension of the TV footprint to reach all potential viewers;
- The introduction of regional TV slots in all provinces;
- Equity and universal access to religious programming;
- The provision of curriculum-based education on both radio and television; and
- The upgrading of the African language radio services. (Teer-Tomaseli & Tomaselli 2001:126)

These developments at the SABC seemed to impact other broadcasters in the

[9] Developments in Kenya's broadcasting sector are discussed extensively in chapter 5.

region. Zaffiro (1999:87), for instance, points out that the reforms that took place at the SABC and the creation of an independent broadcasting authority (IBA, later Icasa [Independent Communications Authority of South Africa]) in this country were grounds for arguments by domestic media interests in Botswana for that government to grant greater autonomy to Radio Botswana (RB) by giving it parastatal status. These developments, Zaffiro (1999) contends, pressed the Botswana government to allow for the establishment of commercial broadcasting and to reignite plans to establish a national television service (BNTS) in the country. Ndlela (2007:69), however, contends that there was still a monopoly by former state broadcasters in the southern African region, because the broadcasting market in countries like Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Namibia was too small to sustain any meaningful and commercially viable competition in the sector. The commercial potential of broadcasting, according to Ndlela, was minimal in nearly all southern African countries, with the exception of South Africa.

Although the SABC as a leading PSB in the region and the rest of the continent has inspired notable broadcasting developments, it has also faced several challenges. Fourie (2003:155; 2010:3) attributes these impediments to government's constant threat to the broadcaster's independence and autonomy, poor management, insufficient funding, increased competition due to technological convergence, privatisation, liberalisation, commercialisation and internationalisation. Fourie (2003:155) also sees the SABC's legal mandate, of having to cater for 11 official languages and their respective cultures in addition to having to do so on a limited budget, as a unique challenge not faced by many PSBs around the world. This, according to Teer-Tomaselli (2008:93), has meant that the SABC has not sufficiently changed its public face or structure to reflect the new South Africa. She further asserts that the SABC has not "catered for the educational and developmental needs of the country in a period of rapid change" (Teer-Tomaselli 2008:93) and that the broadcaster has not yet fully become part of the African continent, as this would reflect in its programming and scheduling.

In the face of numerous difficulties confronting broadcasting in Africa, Eko

(2000) singles out a number of positive and effective public service and educational programmes. Citing Ghana Broadcasting Corporation's (GBC) distance education programmes, which are broadcast daily to schools in rural areas and are produced by qualified educators, Eko (2000:90) points to the growth of localism – which entails broadcasting that serves as an instrument for promoting local cultures, identities and languages – as another significant derivative of public service broadcasting. He lauds Nigeria as a country that has "domesticated and indigenized radio and television", to give it what he calls "an African accent" (Eko 2000:91). Eko (Eko 2000:91) also reports on the creation of regional stations in Cameroon that led to creative local public service radio programming such as *Meet the Patient*, a 'reverse therapy' programme in which a reporter visited patients in local hospitals, and gave them an opportunity to tell stories, recite traditional proverbs or sing for the audience, among other offerings.

Eko (2000:91) further points out that the "Malawi Broadcasting Corporation was known for its popular, award-winning dramas on non-political, social and community subjects", while "in Tanzania, under the socialist government of Julius Nyerere, Radio Tanzania, Dar-es-Salaam, became the standard bearer and promoter of Swahili language and culture in East Africa as early as 1962". He attributes Swahili's lingua franca status in the region and its popularity on the continent to these events, and points out that Benin's Office de Radiodiffusion et Télévision du Benin (ORTB) produced a series of successful African puppet theatre programmes that were translated and widely distributed cross-continentally (Eko 2000:91).

Although the liberalisation and democratisation of the African broadcasting space has had numerous positive effects, it has also given rise to several challenges. Eko (2000:97) notes that although governments have given former state-controlled broadcasters greater autonomy, these regimes have reduced funding to the broadcasters. This has resulted in public service programmes being sacrificed for advertiser-sponsored shows that may not necessarily be attuned to the principles of the former's set of offerings. Such liberalisation has

resulted in fierce competition for broadcasting audiences and sponsorship from new, private commercial radio and TV stations: according to Teer-Tomaselli (2008:86), it culminated in the creation of hours of broadcasting entertainment programmes and, therefore, less educational, public affairs, children's and regional fare programmes. Geographical broadcasting coverage suffered as regions considered not lucrative enough to fund return on broadcasting investment lagged behind in receiving broadcasting services. Teer-Tomaselli (2008:91) adds that other nation-building content such as sports and sporting events were excluded from free-to-air television because of competition from privately owned pay television stations which denied many ordinary citizens an opportunity to receive their broadcasts.

Public service broadcasting and nation building

Over the years, public service broadcasting has made a significant contribution to nation building across the globe by impacting the economic, civic and socio-cultural spheres of society, both directly and indirectly (in this regard, see Foster 1992; Collins 2000; Moe 2008 and Debrett 2009). Foster (1992) observes that "public broadcasters have helped preserve national unity at times of crisis, have provided vital and (at their best) impartial information at times of unsettling and rapid change and have provided popular cultural reference points for a generation of viewers and listeners". Eko (2000:86) notes that

> [i]n Canada, the government has used public broadcasting to create a sense of nationhood. France uses it as a tool to promote French language and culture. The former Soviet Union used public broadcasting as a tool for popular political education. The Federal Republic of Germany has always considered public broadcasting a cultural space whose governance should include political parties and members of civil society. In the United Kingdom, the BBC is the classic statutory public service broadcaster, which has, over the years, set the standard for culture and the English language.

Banda (2006:8) suggests that although the PSB model in Africa was inherited from the colonial model, it is increasingly being reinterpreted to build and

sustain national unity. In South Africa, PSBs have been associated with the task of fostering national unity and working towards reconciliation, in Malawi they are seen as "representing Malawi to the World and [...] observ[ing] the principles and norms of a democratic society", and in Ghana the PSB echoes "the state's concern about shaping national identity" (Banda 2006:8).

Collins (2002:26), in discussing the national question and political legitimacy in Canada and the European Union, contends that

> [t]he mass media, and television in particular, have been invested with a central role [...] because of a pervasive belief in three linked presumptions; that polity and culture must coincide if states are to be legitimate and robust; that the media (and television in particular) are powerful and that citizens' symbolic identities are taken from television and are, positively or negatively, linked to political authority.

Foster (1992:13) rightly, and almost normatively, believes that the traditional broadcasting platforms associated with radio and television are uniquely able to address vast swathes of the population and can thus impact communities in significant ways. In Africa, reports by Chiumbu (2009) and Githaiga (2011), among others in the *Public broadcasting in Africa series*, confirm this with statistics suggesting that these platforms reach the majority of people in the African countries surveyed. It is important to note, however, that this has not always been the case with television in Africa immediately post-independence in the 1960s and 1970s. At the time, although television was regarded as an instrument of national unity, social and economic development, under Unesco, it was considered a luxury by most African countries because of its limited reach and difficulty in financing (Eko 2000:92). Television was therefore earmarked for educational programmes related to schools, teacher training and literacy, as well as the promotion of national development goals.

Gripsrud (cited in Moe 2008:322) acknowledges the impact of media generally, but singles out the role played by broadcasting in building Anderson's "imagined

communities" in suggesting that "if the press helped build such communities, radio and television intensified them through simultaneity". Gripsrud (cited in Moe 2008:322) is also of the opinion that broadcast media, because of their simultaneity, have facilitated (to a more significant degree than perhaps the print media) the contributions of a nation's citizens to the construction of public opinion.

The March 1977 Report of the Committee of the Future of Broadcasting in Britain (cited in Foster 1992:13) concludes that "at a time when people worry that society is fragmenting, broadcasting welds it together. It links people, gives the mass audience common topics of conversation, makes them realize that, in experiencing similar emotions, they all belong to the same nation". Moe (2008:322) cites several scholars who argue that

> in the case of radio and television organized as broadcasting, the centre was a national hub of power, and important informational, educational and cultural content could be disseminated to all citizens in modernizing states simultaneously, thus contributing to the project of Enlightenment. This made broadcast media fit as tools to construct a national identity.

PSBs, as already mentioned, continue to contribute to the nation-building project both directly and indirectly. A number of these contributions are embedded in government policies that dictate the establishment and licensing of PSBs, while others form part of the PSBs' own initiatives for public social advancement. Raboy (2008:363), referring to the nine-point mission statement of the European Council's resolution on the future of PSBs, identifies "impartial news coverage" as one of the key ways in which PSBs advance the societies in which they broadcast. Raboy's sentiments, outlined above, seem to echo Foster's ideas, formulated over a decade earlier. Foster (1992:12) identified the provision of programmes which inform and educate (e.g., news, current affairs, documentaries, cultural and other programmes of educational value) as a vital function of PSBs. "Impartial news and current affairs," according to Debrett's (2009:810) research, "is frequently ranked as the second most important PSB

principle", as it is inextricably entwined with the system's civic duty towards the public sphere. Debrett (2009:810) further posits that

> news and current affairs that is impartial and of good 'quality' (well-researched political reporting) goes hand in glove with universality as part of the *raison d'être* of PSB, providing readily accessible resources for an informed and active citizenship – an acknowledgement of the singular nature of the relationship between the media and democracy.

Foster (1992:12) notes that most governments ask their PSBs to cater for minorities within the nation-states, and this may be through "requirements for local productions reflecting the culture, language and lifestyle of the country or community in question" and providing a "universality of service provision and, linked to this, the provision of services of the same technical quality to all". Programming which caters to public interest and meets the needs of minority groups, according to Raboy (2008:363), could play a significant role in nation building. Such programming, opines Foster (cited in Raboy 2008:363), should "cater for a variety and diversity of interests and tastes, usually including popular as well as specialists tastes" and reflect the diverse ideas and beliefs prevalent in pluri-ethnic and multicultural societies. Such programming potentially fosters a sense of common identity, especially for segments of the citizenry which may not necessarily be at the centre of political or economic dominance, or are simply on the periphery because of their comparatively smaller numbers, lower visibility or limited influence in matters related to governance. (This core area of study for this research will be critically discussed in chapters 5–7.) Debrett (2009:811) suggests that the "representation of minorities to the mainstream and the servicing of minority groups' special interests" is a "double-sided principle", reflecting, in her opinion, "the system's broader civic and cultural functions". She asserts that "this dual goal has always been something of a tall order in the comprehensive schedule and is another reason for claims of PSB redundancy in the 1980s" (Debrett 2009:811).

Another key function of PSBs, which contributes to the nation-building project, is to be "a common reference point for all members of the public [and] a forum for broad public discussion" (Raboy 2008:363). Moe (2008:323) suggests that "different media should make relevant information available and assist the institutions of civil society by transmitting concerns from the periphery of society, generating public debate and mounting pressure for the political system to respond". Moe's point here closely echoes calls for minority voices to be given space to be heard, but it goes beyond that to suggest that PSBs should offer a platform which the citizenry can use to exercise checks and balances on the governing class.

Providing innovative, 'quality' content reflects the system's broader civic and cultural functions (Debrett 2009:812). By being pluralistic and innovative, offering varied programming and including original productions by independent producers, PSBs would be fulfilling their mandate as set out in the nation-building agenda (Raboy 2008:363). This, arguably, ensures the inclusion and accommodation of multiple voices within the nation-state in the broadcasting space, while maintaining high levels of technical quality in the provision of programming. While specifically referring to Europe, Van Dijck and Poell (2015:160) remind us that PSBs acquire their content from three main sources: by producing it themselves (in-house), outsourcing production to (commercial) companies or buying foreign-produced material (from commercial entities or other PSBs). This, they propose, is another significant function of PSBs since they not only create public programmes, but also promote and facilitate public service value outside their institutional space. Van Dijck and Poell (2015:160) believe that if the expansion of PSBs is impeded, "it may be a good idea to start spreading public value beyond PSB compounds" by promoting audience engagement and pushing public value content by using transnational flows which facilitate the circulation of media. Platforms such as PSM (to be unpacked later in this chapter) offer options and potential trajectories for the possible expansion and sustainability of PSBs in the face of a rapidly changing and converging broadcasting space. And as Hoynes (2003:122) aptly summarises these discussions, "with the airwaves more cluttered and more commercial, and with

the public fragmenting into bite-sized, demographically specific audience segments, public television's mission to provide free, universally accessible programming that is diverse and innovative may be more valuable than ever before".

Convergence culture in television: from public service broadcasting to public service media

Developments in the digital media space are increasingly altering and reorganising the way both television professionals and those traditionally perceived as consumers of television content are interacting with, and 'prosuming', television. This is, to a large extent, premised on discourses that advance that power in the mediascape has been in the clutches of media professionals for a long time, and that those previously perceived as consumers have seldom been involved in the conceptualisation, creation and distribution of media products, and (perhaps more importantly) have not reaped any related socioeconomic or cultural benefits (see Burgess 2006; Jenkins 2006; Carpentier 2011; Langlois 2012).

Langlois strongly asserts that in the contemporary socio-political space, access to instruments and platforms of communication portends the possibility of influencing ideas, ideologies and meanings, and therefore in a political context, possibilities of galvanising numerous forms of power.

> Communication as the codification of flows of meaning production and circulation is not only about transmitting signs but about embodying, producing, existentializing, and sometimes subverting relations of power, and thus about establishing specific roles, agencies, and relationships among the actors involved in the production and circulation of meaning. Communication is therefore inseparable from the question of power, in that communicative practices enact specific assumptions about how things can make sense, and about the roles, hierarchies, and legitimate practices between authors/producers and readers/consumers. (Langlois 2012:97)

Langlois (2012:93) advances that "critical approaches seeking to understand the distribution of power in the communication process and to point out the resulting unequal distribution of agency among communicative participants, have primarily been premised on the question of access to the means of communication and to free, unfettered expression and dialogue". To address this, he argues, the focus should be on empowering the user and arguably fostering a more democratic communicative space. He sees the world-wide web as offering a "platform on which human agents can develop new cultural practices of communication — new ways of expressing themselves and exchanging meanings, representations, and information" (Langlois 2012:94). Kidd (2006:7) outlines some of the benefits of participatory media as including

> increased trust in media; a feeling of shared responsibility for informing democracy; the creation of memorable experiences; the formation of a new generation of news consumers who are comfortable with interaction; the creation of better stories and storytellers; an informal virtual staff network; and also, the fostering of community.

Debrett (2011, 2015) acknowledges that "two decades of experimentation into interactive television has generated considerable critical commentary about the future of television as an industry, medium, platform, and discrete set of aesthetic forms and conventions". In addition, this commentary has had various implications as well as predictions for the future of television, including forecasts of the 'death' of broadcasting and significant power shifts towards a "democratized, interactive, do-it-yourself, on-demand, self-scheduling age" of television (Debrett 2015:559). Syversten (2003:155) reasons that changes related to convergence, globalisation and privatisation have changed the milieu within which broadcasters function, in the process creating new challenges which those broadcasters and policy makers are compelled to respond to. Hartley (2004) agrees, pointing out that although research shows that the tradition of mass broadcasting to national audiences remains the dominant mode in television, it is no longer the only form of broadcasting. Television has, in the digital era, moved towards post-broadcast forms such as "time-shifted

video and the generic bundles of cable TV to the customized library system of TiVo or online video streaming" (Hartley 2004:8). Hartley further contends that changes in television are not only in respect of content and how this is broadcast and received, but also in terms of television hardware: television screens are increasingly becoming interactive computer screens, offering manifold possibilities of what the television set can offer its prosumers.

The increasing use of smartphones and tablets, according to James Thickett (cited in Wilson 2016:175), is creating "a nation of media 'multitaskers'", since these platforms are fragmenting attention across multiple screens during traditional television viewing. Thickett (cited in Wilson 2016:175) reports that his team's research, published by Ofcom in 2013, shows that families now tend to congregate in the living room to watch television, much like their counterparts did in the 1950s. However, contemporary families are concurrently involved in performing other tasks: "They are tweeting about a TV show, surfing the net or watching different content altogether on a tablet" (Thickett cited in Wilson 2016:175). Van Dijck and Poell (2015:148) concur, pointing out that social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp and YouTube) impact the social practice of television, along with its cultural form, "while also disrupting broadcasters' conventional production and distribution logistics". A number of free-to-air broadcasters around the world have been at the forefront of experimenting across a range of hybrid formats, which include so-called "red-button television" (Debrett 2015:557) as well as other platforms in the transmedia, enhanced television and multiplatform spaces. This, in pursuit of younger audiences. Broadcasters are clamouring to reinvent themselves for the on-demand era of television broadcasting, which means convergence culture is strongly entrenching itself in the traditional television-scape.

Jenkins (2006:3) perceives convergence culture as not only entailing the confluence between 'new' and 'old' media, but more significantly as a cultural shift in which consumers of any content "are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content". Convergence is viewed as both a top-down corporate-driven process and a

bottom-up consumer-driven process: "corporate convergence coexists with grassroots convergence" in situations where "media companies are learning how to accelerate the flow of media content across delivery channels to expand revenue opportunities, broaden markets, and reinforce viewer commitments", while consumers are learning how to use these different media technologies "to bring the flow of media more fully under their control and to interact with other consumers" (Jenkins 2006:3). Jenkins (2006:18) foresees this new media environment as having the capacity to raise expectations that this will result in a freer flow of not only ideas, but also content.

Hartley (2004:8) explains that as this "repurposing of the TV platform unfolded, so the 'national' aspect of television changed, and 'media citizenship' began to migrate to sites based not on national identity but on communities that were more fragmented, more international, more virtual, and more voluntary than heretofore". In recent years, social media have begun contesting PSBs' 'exclusive' right to produce television content as a form of speaking to, and engaging with, viewers as citizens, by addressing these users of social media as social participants in these discourses (Van Dijck & Poell 2015). Debrett (2015), however, sees this differently: she recognises any new digital innovations which are premised on convergence culture as offering an opportunity for PSBs to re-legitimise their role in society, and perhaps reinvent and reposition themselves in this new space (for instance, by embracing PSM). She cautions, however, that transformation, or embracing and incorporating aspects of PSM in traditional broadcasting approaches, may require more than simply adding new platforms to PSBs' traditional broadcasting context. It will require a significant shift in the way broadcasting is conceptualised and implemented.

A vital consideration for the continued existence of PSBs (and for any other segment of the broadcasting space) is to embrace principles of convergence for a more user-centric and user-friendly dissemination of programming. To this end, AUGC becomes a significant platform (among several other strategies) for sustaining the efficient provision of programming for PSBs.

> The evolution from a television dissemination mode of pre-produced broadcasts for passive viewers to the interaction mode offered by the computer and digital networks where users can be senders as well as receivers is undoubtedly the major change that public service broadcasters have to go through in order to become true public service media in a multimedia environment. (Anderson cited in Bardoel & d'Haenens 2008:357)

Nissens (cited in Bardoel & d'Haenens 2008:353) aptly sums up the way forward for PSBs by reasoning, quite convincingly, that PSBs of the future will have to be led by their audiences – this will require them to adopt cross-media approaches and to create new genres and formats which encourage interaction and participation on the part of the audience, as well as social integration. This appears to show that PSBs will need to evolve towards PSM.

Over the past decade-and-a-half, a number of PSBs around the world have been repositioning themselves within the changing broadcasting space by adopting aspects of convergence culture, and implementing policies and strategies that align with the dynamism of television's evolution towards PSM. Padovani and Tracey (2003) explain that PSBs are increasingly incorporating the use of digital technologies in their content: for instance, several broadcasters in Europe, North America and Asia are actively adapting to the ever-changing broadcasting-scape. The Finnish public broadcasting company, Yleisradio, has set out to become the main national content provider for digital communications in that country, while the BBC, which has been vigorously pursuing digital expansion, has seen its website become Europe's most visited, thanks to its online service. In Canada, recent audience research commissioned by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, CBC, shows that its website is considered highly reliable by users, with 21 per cent of Anglophone web users relying on its information and 33 per cent of Internet web users believing that Radio Canada is the most credible source of information (Padovani & Tracey 2003:135). In Japan, the Japanese public service broadcaster, Nippon Hoso Kyokai, has been at the forefront of the digital evolution since the early 2000s (Padovani & Tracey 2003).

Van Dijck and Poell's (2015) research appears to support that of Padovani and Tracey as regards the inroads PSBs are making into the digital sphere. They cite a BBC report which states that "in 2004, the BBC issued a policy report embracing digitization for public broadcasting as a means to encourage co-creation of content and the growing involvement of users" (Padovani and Tracey cited in Van Dijck & Poell 2015:159). Their research also shows that the BBC enthusiastically endorsed the possibility of including more UGC in their programming: in 2005, BBC News launched The Hub – a platform for British citizens to submit audiovisual footage and documentaries for broadcasting.

In 2011, the BBC launched *Up for Hire*, a television format that incorporated social media elements and was featured on BBC3, BBC's Radio 1, special blogs, a Facebook page and a live Twitter feed (Van Dijck & Poell 2015). In the spring of 2013, Dutch public broadcaster VPRO aired four live editions of the experimental show *Upload TV*, with the aim of familiarising television audiences with the finest selection of web-based videos and promoting user-generated audiovisual productions as a new cultural form (Van Dijck & Poell 2015). Other initiatives by the BBC were the *Video Nation* project and Cymru Wales' digital storytelling project, *Capture Wales*. Some of these UGC projects by PSBs will be discussed in greater detail in the 'Digital storytelling and PSM' section of this chapter.

The growing incorporation of PSM into PSBs' repertoires of content has meant that several entities and bodies have initiated discussions and even created policy documents to engage with the concept. Van Dijck and Poell (2015:159) highlight various central values of PSM, as defined by the European Union, arguing that these need to be produced both inside and outside public broadcasting institutions, in order to facilitate public communication. Included are the values of universality, independence, excellence, diversity, accountability, and innovation, among others.

> 'Universality' refers to the need to address issues that are both locally and globally relevant. 'Independence' means impartiality from commerce, government, and specific audience demands. 'Excellence' stands for standards in

> quality content and expertise. 'Diversity' anchors the principles of democratic representation and equal opportunities for all civic groups to express themselves. 'Accountability' obviously denotes a high level of trust in the accuracy and relevance of information. 'Innovation' entails a pledge to the exploration of new technological, aesthetic, and cultural forms. To this set of values, we would like to add 'not-for-profit', which refers to using surplus revenues toward achieving its public goals rather than distributing them as profit or dividends. (Van Dijck & Poell 2015:159)

Van Dijck and Poell (2015) believe it is unlikely that the PSB's role and function, as currently constituted, will cease to exist in the near future and argue that the "future of PSM need not depend on the survival of public broadcasting service as a content-producing institution". They concede that it is imperative that public value be promoted beyond the traditional approaches offered by PSBs:

> [T]hese shifts from PSB to PSM, from public space to public value, and from content production to content selection and distribution require an international dialogue between creative producers, policy-makers and academics to develop new perspectives on public value and on the technologies and practices through which such values should be created and facilitated. (Van Dijck & Poell 2015:160)

Digital storytelling and PSM

As mentioned before, the concept and ethos of digital storytelling as a narrative approach can be traced back to the establishment of CDS in Berkeley, in the latter part of the previous century, and credited to the work of Dana Atchley, Nina Mullen and Joe Lambert, who co-founded and run the not-for-profit community arts organisation. Atchley coined the phrase 'digital storytelling' after he began incorporating digital multimedia into his stage-based storytelling performances (Meadows 2003; Kidd 2006; McLellan 2007; Robin 2008; Thomson 2016). Robin (2008:222) informs us that since the early 1990s, the CDS has been providing training and assistance to anyone interested in creating and sharing their personal narratives. The concept later spread to other parts of the world, in various permutations, and has piqued the interest of scholars and researchers in

various fields in recent times.

There are various definitions for the term 'digital storytelling', but at their core they all appear to acknowledge that it entails narratives told by people who are not necessarily professionals, and who use the digital space as a platform for disseminating those personal accounts. Burgess (2006:207) defines digital storytelling as a "workshop-based process by which 'ordinary people' create their own short autobiographical films that can be streamed on the Web or broadcast on television". Meadows (2003:189) explains that digital stories are "short multimedia narratives, usually personal stories, made for publication on the Internet, that make use of low-cost digital cameras, non-linear editing software and notebook computers".

McLellan's (2007:66) definition is quite close to that of Meadows: he describes digital stories as short movies, usually not more than five minutes in duration, featuring images, video clips, soundtrack and narration. Kidd (2006:5) explains that "during a digital storytelling workshop, participants are responsible for providing a story idea, a script, images, their voice, their creative, and often their emotional, energy". She points out that because participants in a digital storytelling process are urged to include personal stories using first-person accounts, the featured stories carry a strong emotional resonance. During the process, participants are usually introduced to the basics of industry hardware and software and how to use them properly. Throughout, participants "remain completely in control of the story told, the images used to 'illustrate' it, the words, the tone, the cadence, and its 'truth'" (Kidd 2006:5).

At its core, digital storytelling sees computer users using their creativity to tell stories by applying traditional processes such as choosing a topic, doing a measure of research, writing the script, and expanding a gripping tale or account (Robin 2008). This material "is then combined with various types of multimedia, including computer-based graphics, recorded audio, computer-generated text, video clips, and music so that it can be played on a computer, uploaded on a web site, or burned on a DVD" (Robin 2008:222).

Couldry (2008:373) makes a distinction between digital storytelling and earlier genres of storytelling, which include photography, as well as radio and television broadcasts. Novices are now recounting their personal stories using digital formats which allow them to store and exchange such material in "sites and networks that would not exist without the World Wide Web and that, because of the remediation capacity of digital media, have multiple possibilities for transmission, retransmission and transformation available to them" (Couldry 2008:373). Thompson agrees, adding that digital storytelling narratives usually employ technologies that are widely available to users and therefore tend to be relatively inexpensive. Most digital storytelling projects are therefore reliant on technologies that are aimed at ordinary consumers, rather than seasoned digital media professionals (Thomson 2016). It is no wonder, then, that in the formative stages of digital storytelling, Lambert (cited in Robin 2008:222) was quoted as saying he was impressed by how easily ordinary people were able to "capture their story in a really powerful way in a relatively short amount of time for a relatively small amount of money".

Another significant difference between digital storytelling and other forms of broadcast media, is that in the former contributors are not just the originators of their own material but, for the first time, they have also become the editors (Meadows 2003). Digital storytelling is thus turning individuals from passive viewers of television content to 'active masters' of the television experience:

> […] no longer must the public tolerate being 'done' by media – that is, no longer must we tolerate media being done to us. No longer must we put up with professional documentarists recording us for hours and then throwing away most of what we tell them, keeping only those bits that tell our stories their own way and, more than likely, at our expense. If we will only learn the skills of Digital Storytelling then we can, quite literally, 'take the power back'. Not for nothing is the computer we use called the 'PowerBook'. 'Think Different' the Apple advert tells us. Digital storytelling isn't just a tool; it's a revolution. (Meadows 2003:192)

Burgess (2006:207) intimates that digital storytelling is not merely a media form, it is also acknowledged as a field of cultural practice, "a dynamic site of relations between textual arrangements and symbolic conventions, technologies for production and conventions for their use; and collaborative social interaction that takes place in local and specific contexts". Thus, digital storytelling is a movement whose central ethos is to give a voice to 'ordinary people' – an ethos which departs significantly from even the most empathetic social documentary traditions. Burgess (2006:207) contends that "formal constraints create the ideal conditions for the production of elegant, high-impact stories by people with little or no experience, with minimal direct intervention by the workshop facilitator". A personal narrative must be recounted in the storyteller's own, unique voice, for it to be central to the process and to give priority to the arrangement of symbolic elements. In this sense, "narrative accessibility, warmth, and presence are prioritized over formal experimentation or innovative 'new' uses for technologies" (Burgess 2006:207).

Since researchers and academics rigorously engage with the digital storytelling genre, Couldry (2008) offers three potential approaches for such engagement: "studying how digital storytelling's contexts and processes of production are becoming associated with certain practices and styles of interpretation" is the first potential approach. Here, Couldry is suggesting that the genre is increasingly becoming associated with certain emancipatory practises among ordinary people, thus there is potential in grappling with the encoding aspects and their likely impact on an audience.

Couldry's (2008:383) second proposed approach entails studying how the "outputs of digital storytelling practices are themselves circulated and re-circulated between various sites, and exchanged between various practitioners, audience members and institutions". Studies could thus focus on the content as well as discourses stemming from the processes of digital storytelling projects undertaken by audiences, stakeholders and institutions, both private and public.

Third, Couldry (2008:383) believes studies could be done on the long-term

consequences of digital storytelling as a practice for specific people in specific locations, where there would be consequences in terms of a wider social and cultural impact, even to the extent of impacting democracy itself. Here, Couldry appears to suggest that the focus could be on the impact and effect of the digital storytelling genre (holistically speaking), and that the decoding process must receive particular attention – especially in respect of how it could potentially serve as a platform for equitably giving a voice to those who would ordinarily not be heard.

As academics and researchers engage in digital storytelling as both theory and praxis, Couldry (2008:383) cautions that it is important to acknowledge that there are still several 'unknowns' to grapple with in this relatively new genre. He refers to these as 'pressure' features which stem from the oversaturation of the online information environment. His finding is that the first pressure in digital storytelling entails the complexity of mixing text with other materials (sound, video, still images) to make a visual presentation out of narrative over and above its textual content. This is, perhaps, a pressure that does not currently manifest in social media spaces for ordinary people using these platforms, yet taking cognisance of this aspect is imperative. The second pressure is that of limiting the length of the narrative, whether due to online users' limited attention span or limitations in the file size of videos/sound tracks for online distribution. Further research on the different contexts of use, users and experiences of online content could illuminate whether this is a genuine pressure. Third, there is the pressure of working towards standardisation, given the sheer volume of material available online. It reminds us of "people's limited tolerance for formats, layouts or sequences whose intent they have difficulty interpreting" (Couldry 2008:383). The fourth pressure requires stakeholders to take into account "the possibility that any narrative when posted online may have unintended and undesired audiences" (Couldry 2008:383). As we are still in the very formative stages in the development of digital storytelling, it is impossible to predict which pressures will turn out to be more salient or stable than others, or even whether different (and as yet unidentified) pressures will become more important in the future (Couldry 2008:383).

Research shows that PSBs began implementing principles of digital storytelling in the early 2000s, when European stakeholders were introduced to the concept by the CDC. Daniel Meadows, creative director and one of the founders of the *Capture Wales* series on the BBC, recounts how he attended his first CDS workshop in October 2000, where he was introduced to the concept of digital storytelling, with its roots in community arts and an oral history that could be traced back to pre-literacy traditions in different cultures (Meadows 2003). Although *Capture Wales* is considered one of the earlier digital storytelling projects on the BBC, it was a successor to another seminal BBC participatory project entitled *Video Nation* that could arguably (and perhaps pedantically) be classified as an analogue project.

In 1993, Chris Mohr and Mandy Rose of the Community Programmes Unit "started *Video Nation* using a series of cameras distributed across the UK" (History of BBC's *Video Nation:[sp]*). The project entailed giving contributors Hi-8 cameras for a year, during which time they were asked to film their everyday lives (History of BBC's *Video Nation*). The website reports that more than 10 000 tapes were shot and submitted, from which approximately 1 300 shorts were edited and shown on television. The popularity of the format saw viewership figures ranging from one million to nine million, leading to the packaging of themed series of shorts such as *African shorts*, *Hong Kong shorts*, *Coming Clean* (a ten-part series on housework) and *Bitesize Britain* (ten 15-minute programmes about the nation's eating habits), among others (History of BBC's *Video Nation*). Permutations of this genre of participatory content could be found in other PSBs around the world. In South Africa, for instance, the SABC commissioned the *Project 10* documentary series in 2004 "to coincide with the tenth anniversary of South Africa's first democratic elections" (Ambala 2005:16).[10] The project encouraged South Africans from diverse backgrounds to tell their own personal and intimate stories on the theme of 'ten years of freedom' in the nation. 13 South African filmmakers were approached and funded to tell their stories. All

[10] The first democratic post-apartheid elections in South Africa were held on 27 April 1994, where the African National Congress (ANC) party/movement won and formed the new government led by President Nelson Mandela.

13 narratives were documentaries about South African nationals, unfolding within or outside the borders of the country. According to Ambala (2005:16), the website states that the project was[11]

> [an] initiative to deliver strong, personal, narrative-driven films, and to develop a new generation of South African filmmakers brave enough to take risks and able to recognize the power of their own voices in a free society … The concept was to give 13 filmmakers the opportunity to make films about how they have experienced or understood the last 10 years of freedom [in South Africa]. (www.project10.co.za cited in Ambala 2005)

Thumim (2007:19) states that the *Capture Wales* project, started in 2001, was fully funded by BBC3 and run by BBC Wales' New Media Department and Cardiff University's Centre for Journalism Studies. This project, initiated by Meadows (among others), taught people to create short digital stories for posting on the *Capture Wales* website, in either English or Welsh. In addition, "the audio tracks from selected digital stories were played on BBC Radio Wales and Radio Cymru" (Thumim 2007:19). The *Capture Wales* initiative involved holding workshops in Wales with around ten participants at a time, over a five-day period (Kidd 2006), where the attendees engaged in scripting and storytelling sessions, took photographs, recorded voice-overs and learnt how to use software such as Adobe Photoshop and Premiere. The participants had to produce a complete film and screen it on the final day to their friends and families. Kidd (2006:7) notes that the stories, which were approximately 250 words and between two and three minutes in length, facilitated a connection with communities, an opening-up of new lines of talent, the building of an archive of what she refers to as the "real Wales", while providing training opportunities for ordinary people.

Although not in the original strict definition of digital storytelling as defined earlier by Meadows (2003), Burgess (2006), Kidd (2006) and McLellan (2007), PSBs in Europe are increasingly experimenting with digital participatory content on their broadcasting platforms that draw on other aspects of the digital space,

[11] The website is no longer available.

such as social media. Van Dijck and Poell (2015:155) note that in 2011, the BBC launched a new television concept show titled *Up for Hire* that explicitly incorporated social media elements and addressed one of the most critical socioeconomic issues at the time, namely youth unemployment in the UK. The programme, which featured five live TV shows a week, was concurrently transmitted on BBC3, Radio 1, special blogs, a Facebook page and a live Twitter feed. *Up for Hire* "was supported by several second screen applications, such as a website featuring nine short 'how-to-find-yourself-a-job' video clips" (Van Dijck & Poell 2015:155). These videos were produced by BBC Learning and embedded in a proper BBC context, rather than distributed through YouTube (Van Dijck & Poell 2015:155). In addition, "the BBC also collaborated with Lab UK to create the Get Yourself Hired Test for the *Up for Hire* website" (Van Dijck & Poell 2015:155).

Other public broadcasters in Europe are increasingly embracing participatory approaches in their broadcasting content and experimenting with the various digital platforms available to them. Van Dijck and Poell (2015) identify Dutch public broadcaster VPRO as one such entity: it aired four live editions of the experimental show *Upload TV* in the spring of 2013, with the purpose of familiarising "the television audience with the finest selection of web-based videos and to promote user generated audio-visual productions as a new cultural form" (Van Dijck & Poell 2015:156). Similar to what *Up for Hire* had done, the format attempted to merge social media aspects – Twitter feeds, viewer-submitted content, live chats via Google Hangout – with elements which are typical of live television, "such as conversations with studio guests, contest and game elements, as well as pre-recorded videos featuring interviews with prominent YouTube stars" (Van Dijck & Poell 2015:156). *Upload TV* was bolder in its experimentation with social media than many other broadcasters, including their British counterparts:

> Unlike the BBC example, the Dutch program *Upload TV* explicitly addressed the differences between mass media's and social media's clashing production styles and logics. An independent producer of online content, who once was a freelance

> television producer, explained in *Upload TV* how he took refuge to online cross-media productions after his work had been repeatedly turned down by (public and commercial) broadcasters. He articulated his plea for independence and creative autonomy launching provocative statements such as 'We no longer trust the professional', 'No more TV bosses', and 'Internet makers need to take over TV'. (Van Dijck & Poell 2015:156)

As academics and practitioners continue to engage with the theory and praxis of digital storytelling, it is significant to acknowledge that "digital storytelling in its current institutionally supported form is not […] a complete and magical solution to unequal access to media power by any means […] in comparison to the decentralized, accretive and networked, but equally 'ordinary' kinds of storytelling made possible by personal weblogs" (Burgess 2006:209). Burgess notes that distribution channels for this genre of narratives, as currently manifested in PSBs, remain limited and are generally under the control of entities that facilitate digital storytelling projects. This point will form the core discourse of this study's chapter 6, in which the thesis grapples with the forms and manifestations of control and, by extension, power, that still lopsidedly reside with PSBs that initiate digital storytelling projects with ordinary people.

Second, Burgess (2006:209) points out that

> as digital storytelling projects proliferate in a range of institutional contexts and the resulting weight of evidence begins to accumulate, it is becoming clear that these constraints and the sociality of the workshop process combine to shape the practice of digital storytelling so that as a cultural form it is marked by a fairly predictable, if not uniform, range of ways to represent the self.

But perhaps as evidenced by the case of the two aforementioned broadcasters, the BBC and VPRO, the BBC and VPRO, there is a move towards experimenting with the content and television formats, to veer away from the formulaic workshop approach alluded to by Burgess, and over to other, novel ways of engaging in an active participatory approach with ordinary people.

Van Dijck and Poell's (2015) research found that certain scholarly arguments propose a change from PSB to PSM, to emphasise the significance of extending beyond radio and television, in their traditional sense, to encompass the full spectrum of the Internet. They note arguments advancing that the Internet can function within a public service system to "involve and activate citizens, while making sure that core public service values of deliberation, reciprocity, and free and universal access are realized" (Van Dijck & Poell 2015:158).

CHAPTER 3
Theoretical and conceptual framework

Introduction

A framework for studying the extent to which AUGC could mediate in the nation-building agenda in Kenya would arguably entail a critical engagement with two key theoretical or conceptual discourses. The first could be discourse on nationalism and nation building, as this is the crux of the study and the field from which the study's key problems stem. The second would be to engage with discourse on digital media and participation, as this is arguably a potential emancipating platform and space – ideologically, technically and practically – for the research problems discussed in the introduction. This chapter focuses on these two theoretical areas as a framework for the analysis and discussion which follow.

This chapter begins by contextualising discourse on nationalism through discussing scholars who are generally referred to as primordialists. They believe that nationalism was premised on what Clifford Geertz (1973) felt were indefinable yet coercive ties resulting from generations of existence. Next, the study looks at nationalism from a modernist take which, according to Llobera (1999:8), "emerges as a process of transition from traditional to modern society" in which the main cause for the development of nationalism (in some instances) focused specifically on the spread of industrialisation, and on socioeconomic, political and cultural conditions. The chapter also focuses on ethno-symbolism as another movement of nationalism discourse which, according to Özkirimli (2000:215), advances that "modern nations are built around pre-existing ethnic cores and that earlier ethnic cultures provide the material out of which today's national identities are forged".

The context within which nationalism has been theorised and framed in studies in and about Africa, is also assessed by examining the complexities of the phenomenon as well as its application and manifestation on the continent. These

interrogations offer a framework for understanding and engaging with the Kenyan context of nationalism and the nation-building process.

Notions of everyday nationalisms and the nationalisms of the subordinated and the peripheral are critically discussed, as these form the crux of the present study. This section critically unpacks Bhabha's (1994) theory on cultural difference and Billig's (1995) notions on banal nationalisms. The discourse on nationalisms is concluded by discussing Özkirimli's (2000:227) proposed analytical framework for studying nationalism, in which he persuasively argues that there is no such thing as a 'theory of nationalism'. Instead, he proposes an analytical framework for understanding the discourse by putting forward five propositions. This chapter subsequently discusses the role of convergence in the digital mediascape. To contextualise this, Finnemann's (2011) proposed five major media epochs in human history are unpacked, culminating in a definition and understanding of what digital media are and what they entail. The chapter then discusses Jenkins' (2006) convergence culture and Carpentier's (2011) theory on media participation.

Background

> National identity is not only something which is thought to be natural to possess, but also something natural to remember… this remembering, nevertheless, involves a forgetting, or rather there is a complex dialectic of remembering and forgetting. The remembering not being experienced as remembering, is, in effect, forgotten. (Billig 1995:37)

The study of nationalism(s) has consistently been informed and underlaid by a multidisciplinary space. Political studies; international relations; social theories; and literary, film and cultural studies; among other disciplines, have over the years engaged with issues of nationalism. This study will draw on many of these disciplines while engaging with and framing a conceptual and theoretical context within and from which to understand the phenomenon.

Contextualising discourse on nationalism

Smith (1991:72) points out that over the years 'nationalism' has signified multiple albeit related ideas, among them "the whole process of forming and maintaining nations or nation-states". In addition, the concept has come to signify a "consciousness of belonging to the nation, together with sentiments and aspirations for its security and prosperity" (Smith 1991:72). In many critical texts and discourses, the term is used to refer to "a language and symbolism of the nation and its role as well as an ideology that includes a cultural doctrine of nations and the national will and prescriptions for the realisation of national aspirations and the national will" (Smith 1991:72). Finally, to round off the definition, Smith notes that the term denotes a social and political movement aimed at achieving the goals and realising the will of the nation.

Attempts have been made to categorise 'movements' or 'phases' within the evolution and chronology of critical thinking on nationalism, to arrive at a more cohesive understanding. So far, absolute consensus on these 'movements', ideologies or even the terminology to refer to them, has been elusive. Bacova (1998), for instance, notes two distinct movements among nationalism theorists: the primordialists and the instrumentalists. Llobera (1999), however, outlines three categories or 'movements': primordialists and sociobiological theorists, instrumentalists, and modernisation theorists. Özkirimli (2000), on the other hand, cites several scholars who categorise theories pertaining to nationalism into primordialism, modernism and sociobiologism. It seems pertinent to investigate what each of these entails.

Primordialism

Llobera (1999) cites Geertz (1973) who posits that primordialism assumes that group identity is a given and that in all societies there is a certain innately primordial, irrational attachment based on blood, race, language, religion and region. Bacova (1998), however, argues that primordial attachments are reliant on ethnic affiliation and that loyalties in such contexts

are directed to ethnic groups, whereas nationalism is indicative of loyalty to the state. He suggests that these two notions are 'propagated' and submitted to public discourse in different ways: "certain 'natural' primordial human loyalties and social affiliations exist and function even without intentional and targeted cultivation, but the ideology of nationalism has to be constantly repeated, promoted and propagated" (Bacova 1998:38).

Llobera (1999:1) explains that "modern states, particularly, but not exclusively, in the third world, are superimposed on the primordial realities which are the ethnic groups or communities". Some theories of nation building, such as those proposed by Broucek *et al*. (cited in Bacova 1998:37) "argue that ethnic communities 'turn into' 'nations' after fulfilling some criteria such as living in a particular territory, development of economic and cultural life, self-awareness of a social unit and unification of the language".

Both Llobera and Bacova acknowledge Geertz as a key proponent of the primordial 'movement', but Özkirimli (2000:213) disagrees, advancing that "the term is wrongly stretched to cover the position of scholars like Geertz and Shils who focus on ways in which ethnic identities are perceived by individuals". He proposes that it would be more prudent to refer to theirs as a 'constructivist' approach, since both authors' perceptions of culture are based on the meanings attached to it.

Modernism

Llobera (1999:8) points out that those theories of nationalism which are generally referred to as modernist, maintain that nationalism emerges as a process of transition from traditional to modern society. The main causes of the development of nationalism in some of those societies are the spread of industrialisation, and socioeconomic, political and cultural conditions. Özkirimli (2000:213), however, proposes that modernism is a broad generalisation on the part of theorists who hold disparate and sometimes contradictory views on the concept. He contends that "the only apparent point of intersection among these diverse interpretations is their belief in the modernity of nations and

nationalisms hence the term modernists coined by Smith (1986)". For him, the only notable confluence of the perspectives which theorists ascribe to this movement is that they view nationalism through a modernist lens, but apart from that there is little else they have in common.

The debate between two key theorists at the centre of the modernist movement, Ernest Gellner (1983) and Benedict Anderson (1991), is a case in point. Although the two agreed on certain key aspects of nationalism, Gellner critiqued Anderson's (1991:6) definition of the nation as "an imagined community, [i]magined as both inherently limited and sovereign" as suggesting that nations are fabricated and false entities. Anderson (1991:6) responded by arguing that "Gellner is so anxious to show that nationalism masquerades under false pretences, that he assimilates 'invention' to 'fabrication' and 'falsity', rather than to imagination and creation'.

Ethno-symbolism

Both Billig (1995) and Özkirimli (2000) cite several scholars who contend that ethno-symbolists constitute another movement of theorists of nationalism. According to Özkirimli (2000:215),

> [e]thno-symbolists make two different and compatible claims. On the one hand they acknowledge the modernity of nationalism as an ideology and a movement incorporating many of the factors identified by the 'modernists' into their analyses while on the other hand they hold that modern nations are built around pre-existing ethnic cores and that earlier ethnic cultures provide the material out of which today's national identities are forged.

Nationalisms and nation building in Africa

Nation-state formation in Africa, as currently constituted, can be attributed almost exclusively to the aftermath of Western nations' invasion and colonisation of the continent. Critical and scholarly work on nationalism in and about the continent has for years been uncritically viewed through the Western lens of nationalism (Norbu 1992).

> […] the European paradigm is often uncritically used as the standard measurement for the study of third world nationalism. But the latter differs from the former in several critical aspects: the salience of culture in national identity formation, the voluntaristic process of mass mobilisation as a means for a nation-in-the-making, and such a nationality struggling to create or seize state power structure as the basic goal of any non-western nationalism. (Norbu 1992:5)

Smith (1983:125) concurs, reasoning that once applied to the African continent, the Western model produced an anomaly, which is "a state which aims to turn itself into a nation, and a set of old ethnic communities and nations aspiring, it is hoped, to become one new nation".

Özkirimli asserts that several of these theorists (of the primordial, modernist or ethno-symbolists movements) considered the experiences of the 'subordinated' in such former European colonies and their postcolonial successors, in particular women, ethnic minorities and the oppressed classes, when theorising on nationalism. He argues that Marxist as well as Neo-marxist scholars, having grounded their theories on the history of nations which occupy "a dependent (or peripheral) position within the world political economy, fell prey to Euro-centrism concentrating on the experiences of countries like Scotland and Ireland, and ignoring the disillusionments of the dozens of former colonies in Asia and Africa" (Özkirimli 2000:192).

Having colonial powers withdraw or being ejected from Africa post-1950 "thrust statehood upon many territories in which the cultural [or ethnic] match between the new state and its society were tenuous, if not totally missing" (Bloom 1990:56). The composition of these nation-states, in sub-Saharan Africa especially, was "ethnically heterogeneous, lacking, as they usually did, a single core ethnic community around which the state could be formed as it was within Western Europe" (Smith 1983:124). Smith (1983:125) rightly points out that except for Somalia, these African states form part of "poly-ethnic state-based territorialism", being made up of numerous ethnic communities varying

in size and antiquity, and without a common cultural base underlying the territorial community. In his view, however much the intelligentsia on this continent support the ideal of a territorial nation, there are overwhelming challenges and dilemmas in creating a political community under these circumstances (Smith 1983:126).

Rivkin (1969:8) suggests that, as early as the late 1960s, the leisurely pace of the nation-building processes experienced "in Biblical times, in the European middle ages, in the American Revolutionary Period, and more recently in the era in which the older Commonwealth states of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand evolved, no longer seems possible, or at any rate tenable, for Africa and the Africans" because of the urgency to establish so-called modern nation-states within a comparatively short period of time. In his view, the process of nation building in postcolonial Africa has the added duty of being "inextricably and indistinguishably intertwined" with that of economic development: the production and growth of a modern economy is now a prerequisite for nation building in these nation-states (Rivkin 1969:9). Ayoob (1995:41) advances this debate by identifying six factors and forces that he argues 'overload' the political capacity of African countries in their quest for nation or state building:

1) the lack of adequate time required for state building;
2) the near impossibility until recently of alienating judicial sovereignty once it is achieved;
3) the highly disruptive colonial inheritance;
4) the accentuation of ethnic fissures in the early stages of modernization leading to frequent attempts at secession;
5) the demands for political participation, economic redistribution and social justice at a very early stage of the state making process;
6) the unrepresentative and authoritarian character of many regimes, which spawns a vicious circle of violence and counter-violence as regimes are challenged and react with brutal force.

Brennan (2012:159) asserts that pedagogy on and about nationalism in Africa has generally concentrated on organisational aspects, thus neglecting intellectual

content. Intellectual discourse (both as theory and practice) on nationalism in Africa has, however, existed pre- and post- the colonial eras. Early intellectuals from the continent include Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, Senegal's Léopold Sédar Senghor, Guinea-Bissau's Amílcar Cabral, Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, Kenya's Oginga Odinga and Jomo Kenyatta, Angola's Agostinho Neto, Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser and Burkina Faso's Thomas Sankara, among others. Some of these leaders were inspired by, or worked in collaboration with, thinkers of African ancestry in the diaspora, such as Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Marcus Garvey, George Padmore and W.E.B. du Bois, to name a few. Also notable for the contribution to critical thinking on the continent are the DRC's V.Y. Mudimbe, Nigeria's Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe, Uganda's Mahmood Mamdani and Okot p'Bitek, Kenya's Ali Mazrui and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, South Africa's Steve Biko and Thabo Mbeki, Ghana's Kwame Anthony Appiah and Cameroon's Achille Mbembe – the list is not exhaustive.

Eminent African scholar Ali Mazrui (2014) proposes that nationalisms in Africa tend to focus on five broad aspects, one of which is language. He cites the examples of Somalia and Somaliland, whose nationalism coalesced around the Somali language. The second aspect which he highlights is religion, citing as an example the nationalistic *Majimaji* rebellion in Tanganyika, whose central thrust was the belief that holy water provided by Kinjikitile Ngwale would protect the *Majimaji* fighters against German weapons. Mazrui also suggests that nationalisms in Africa coalesced around race: perspectives such as pan-Africanism and negritude impacted several movements, notably those led by postcolonial leaders such as Nkrumah, Senghor and Kenyatta. Mazrui identifies territory as another aspect that nationalisms in Africa hinged on, giving examples of regional bodies such as the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) (now the African Union [AU]) and the East African Community, among others.

Nkrumah (1964:78), one of the continent's earliest proponents of pan-Africanism, writes that "the emancipation of the African continent is the emancipation of [hu]man[ity]", philosophising that two aspects are paramount for this to be achieved: an adherence to the principles of egalitarianism in all

human societies, and a mobilisation of all our resources towards the attainment of the first principle. Nkrumah acknowledges that African nation-states' attainment of independence from colonialists meant that the African personality and communities had to grapple with Western, Islamic and Euro-Christian elements, in addition to their own traditional African heritage, in shaping their collective identities. He proposes what he calls *consciencism* as "the map, in intellectual terms, of the disposition of forces which will enable African society to digest" these elements (Nkrumah 1964:79). For him, at the basis of the African personality is a cluster of humanist principles derived from traditional African society (Nkrumah 1964:79).

Negritude is another philosophy that, to some extent, informed nationalisms and nation building in West African countries previously colonised by France. Thinker, poet and politician, Léopold Sédar Senghor, who later became president of Senegal, was one of negritude's key proponents on the continent. Mazrui (2014:ix) describes negritude as a philosophy of nostalgia that idealises the African past and uses it as a guide in formulating contemporary policy. Senghor (cited in Mazrui 2014:111) explains negritude as

> the whole complex of civilized values – cultural, economic, mythmaking, the gift of rhythm, such are the essential elements of negritude, which you will find indelibly stamped on all the works and activities of the black man.

This movement and philosophy have, however, been criticised by several literary scholars and practitioners such as Ezekiel Mphahlele, Gerald Moore, Wole Soyinka, Ferdinand Oyono and Ousmane Sembene, as romanticising the African past and endorsing colonial stereotypes related to the intellectual inferiority of the African (see Ischinger 1974). Nobel Laureate, Soyinka, for instance criticised the movement at a conference at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, in 1962, arguing that "a tiger does not proclaim his tigritude, he pounces" meaning that excessive focus on a romanticised African past does not provide a conceptual framework for engaging with contemporary challenges on the continent. Mazrui (2014:111), however, seems to see some positive aspects in

the movement, arguing that "negritude is not merely a description of the norms of traditional Black Africa; it is also a capacity to be proud of those values even in the very process of abandoning them. Sometimes it is a determination to prevent too rapid an erosion of the traditional structure."

Both Mamdani and Mazrui consider Nyerere's philosophy of *ujamaa* as a key nationalist movement in postcolonial Africa, while Mamdani deems *mwalimu*, Nyerere's approach, to be the most successful attempt at dismantling the structures of indirect rule through sustained yet peaceful reform.[12]

> In an era when it was fashionable to think of violence as the way to 'smash the colonial state', Nyerere taught otherwise: first, that the backbone of the colonial state and its legacy was not the army and the police but its legal and administrative apparatus, and that it required political vision and political organization – not violence – to 'smash' these. (Mamdani 2012:107)

Mazrui concurs, proposing that Nyerere's concept of African kinship solidarity experiment, *ujamaa,* as it unfolded in Tanzania, was Africa's most original form of socialism. In his view, Nyerere used this to narrow the gap between rich and poor and to "discipline Tanzania's leaders away from corruption and temptations" (Mazrui 2014:ix). Mazrui also points out that Nyerere did not just stop there, but linked this form of socialism with ambitions to further self-reliance in the attainment of development. Brennan (2012:159) describes *ujamaa* as 'African socialism' or 'family-hood', which views capitalism and the urban division of labour as nothing but exploitation. He argues that in the then Tanzanian context, the ideal national citizen was an African who was either an urban labourer or a rural farmer who not only refrained from, but actively fought against, exploitation (Brennan 2012:160). Mamdani points out that the Arusha Declaration of 1967, which articulated the principles of *ujamaa*, was a significant part of Tanzania's nation-state-building project. He reminds us that Nyerere asserted that this declaration, together with Tanzania's national language, Kiswahili, and a highly politicised and disciplined army, transformed more than

[12] Tanzanians affectionately referred to President Nyerere as Mwalimu, meaning teacher (see Mamdani 2012; Mazrui 2014).

126 different Tanzanian tribes into a cohesive and stable nation (Mamdani 2012:119).

The works of African literary and cultural scholar, James Ogude, demonstrate that intellectual discourse on nationalisms and nation building in Africa can and does manifest within diverse cultural and literary spaces. He argues that "the emergence of cultural nationalism as an engagement with the epistemological practices that came with colonialism was an attempt at the recovery of African gnosis repressed by colonialism" (Ogude 1999:1). The knowledges on nationalisms created in these spaces and on these platforms were reconstructed from what colonialism attempted to repress, but more importantly, arose within historical contexts created by colonialism. Ogude cites novelist and thinker Ngugi wa Thiong'o, whose novels (*The River Between* [1967] and *Matigari* [1987]) significantly contributed to the (re)production of new knowledges in this field. The new narrative around nation formation consisted of a dialogue, "not just with the West whose discursive instruments had appropriated to subvert the colonial project, but also dialogue with other adjacent zones of knowledge such as history, anthropology, political science, religion, etc." (Ogude 1999:1).

Arguably, therefore, the study of nationalisms and nation building in Africa (and in the case of this specific study, Kenya) will take cognisance of these debates and attempt to engage with frameworks that offer alternative ways of conceptualising and theorising issues that could be applicable to and apt for the continent. A few of these are discussed here.

Everyday nationalisms and nationalisms of the subordinated and the peripheral

Premised on the preceding debates, some scholars have attempted to articulate frameworks of analysis that consider the experiences of those previously on the periphery of scholarship on nationalism. Stuart Hall (1990), Homi Bhabha (1994), Michael Billig (1995) and Umut Özkirimli (2000), among others, offer alternative insights into the framing of these studies. Some of their ideas are discussed below.

Cultural difference theory

> A nation's existence is, if you will pardon the metaphor, a daily plebiscite, just as an individual's existence is a perpetual affirmation of life … The wish of nations is, all in all, the sole legitimate criteria, the one to which one must always return. (Renan cited in Bhabha 1994:229)

Bhabha (1994) proposes, as a central tenet of cultural difference, a context in which minorities (or, broadly speaking, those on the periphery of the political centre) are not simply invited to the centre, but conversely and additionally, radically disrupt and deconstruct existing hegemonic interactions. In cultural difference, the point of reference for discourse is dynamic and oscillates between the perspective of the 'othered' and that of the centre.

Bhabha appears to be a proponent of the notion of the nation manifesting itself in the everyday lived experiences of its members. In this regard, he poses very apt questions that could frame discourses on ways of narrating the contemporary nation. He questions how a nation's modernity could, for instance, be narrated: as "the event of the everyday and the advent of the epochal?" (Bhabha 1994:203). He also ponders how what he calls the "splitting of the national subject" can be conceived, and how to "articulate cultural differences within the vacillation of ideology in which the national discourse also participates, sliding ambivalently from one enunciatory position to another" (Bhabha 1994:203). He wonders "what forms of life […] are struggling to be represented in that 'unruly' time of national culture and […] what might be the cultural and political effects of the liminality of the nation, the margins of modernity, which come to be signified in the narrative temporalities of splitting, ambivalence and vacillation?" (Bhabha 1994:211). As if responding to some of these questions, Bhabha (1994:209) proposes that

> [t]he scraps, patches and rags of daily life must be repeatedly turned into the signs of a coherent national culture, while the very act of the narrative

> performance interpellates a growing circle of national subjects. In the production of the nation as narration, there is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious recursive strategy of the performative. It is through this process of splitting that the conceptual ambivalence of modern society becomes the site of writing the nation.

Bhabha suggests that a nation's continued existence is premised on disparate and multiple representative discourses of everyday lived experiences being turned into a national culture, which is cohesive in nature. He seems to imply that the narration of any nation should not be a monopoly of any one ideology of the members of a nation who assume superiority and assign themselves authority to narrate on behalf of the nation: rather, all groupings in the nation should have the potential to include their lived experiences, stories and discourses in the national narrative.

Williams (cited in Bhabha 1994:212) cautions that if a dominant ideology assigns itself the role of articulating the nation's narrative, "there will be areas of practice and meaning which, almost by definition from its own limited character, or in its profound deformation, the dominant culture is unable in any real terms to recognize". Bhabha (1994:212) elaborates on this:

> In place of the polarity of a prefigurative self-generating nation 'in-itself' the extrinsic other nations, the performative introduces a temporality of the 'in-between'. The boundary that marks the nation's selfhood, interrupts the self-generating time of national production and disrupts the signification of people as homogenous. The problem is not simply the 'selfhood' of the nation as opposed to the otherness of other nations. We are confronted with the nation split within itself, articulating the heterogeneity of its population. The barred nation itself alienated from its eternal self-generation, because of a liminal signifying space that is internally marked by the discourses of minorities, the heterogeneous histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities and tense locations of cultural difference.

Bhabha (1994:213) argues that the multiplicity of narratives and counter-narratives to dominant ideologies within the nation disrupts its "totalising boundaries", whether these be actual or conceptual. This often results in a rethink of so-called 'essentialist identities' which result from the monopoly of a dominant ideology. For him, "the political unity of the nation consists in a continual displacement of the anxiety of its irredeemably plural modern space" Bhabha (1994:213). He sums up this discussion by suggesting that

> [o]nce the liminality of the nation-space is established, and its signifying difference is turned from the boundary 'outside' to its finitude 'within', the threat of cultural difference is no longer a problem of 'other' people. It becomes a question of otherness of people-as-one. The national subject splits in the ethnographic perspective of culture's contemporaneity and provides both a theoretical position and a narrative authority for marginal voices or minority discourse. They no longer need to address their strategies of opposition to a horizon of hegemony that is envisaged as horizontal and homogenous. (Bhabha 1994:215)

In other words, what Bhabha proposes is that once the notion of nationhood and nationalism as a discourse is critically considered and examined, the debate ceases to be about tensions between those who belong to the nation and those who are foreign to it (i.e., who belong to other nations). Rather, the conversation should then be about the tensions between those within the same nation (or one grouping or several groups) whose rights, freedoms and responsibilities are trampled on by dominant or elite groupings within the same nation. These conversations awaken the need for those on the margins to question and challenge the situation.

Banal nationalism

Billig (1995) advances these debates further, having coined the term 'banal nationalism' to capture what he believes are the 'unconscious' and mundane practices that propagate the continued existence of nations, especially in already established nation-states. Billig (1995:93) argues that nations are not reproduced magically, but require "banal practices rather than conscious choice

or collective acts of imagination". His argument is that the continued existence of nationalism manifests itself in the everyday events practised by citizens of these nations, thus it is essential to study such mundane events, to analyse and consider them when attempting to understand nationalism. For him, "small words, rather than grand memorable phrases, offer constant, but barely conscious, reminders of the homeland, making 'our' national identity unforgettable" (Billig 1995:93). He suggest that we should not only pay attention to words like 'people', but become what Özkirimli (2000) calls "linguistically microscopic", since the secret of banal nationalism lies in tiny words such as 'we', 'this' and 'here'.

Billig (1995:95) proposes that "[j]ust as a language will die rather for want of users, so a nation must be put to daily use". He argues that there is a perception that national identity is thought of as being an aspect that is not only possessed but also remembered naturally, and that there is what he sees as a complex dialectic of remembering and forgetting, and that the remembering that is not experienced as such, is, in effect forgotten (Billig 1995:37–38).

This complex dialectic of remembering and forgetting is paralleled by a theoretical neglect on the part of scholars of nationalism. Billig (1995:6) further contends that "nations are reproduced within a wider world of nations" and that "for such daily reproductions to occur, one might hypothesise that a whole complex of beliefs, assumptions, habits, representations and practices must also be reproduced". But even more importantly, "this complex must be reproduced in a banally mundane way, for the world of nations is the everyday world, the familiar terrain of contemporary times" (Billig 1995:6).

Özkirimli (2000:199) notes that Billig's approach critiques orthodox theorisations that opt to associate nationalism with "those who struggle to create new states or with extreme right wing politics". Özkirimli (2000:199) maintains that "nationalism is a property of 'Others', the peripheral states which have yet to complete their nation building processes, and not 'ours', the established nation state of the West". He cites Billig as arguing that for those in the West, their

perception is that "nationalism is a temporary mood […] only manifesting itself under certain 'extraordinary' conditions, that is in times of crises, suddenly disappearing once normal conditions are restored" (Özkirimli 2000:199).

Billig (1995:37) concedes that it is not easy to study nationalism because it is deeply embedded in contemporary ways of thinking, making it difficult to step outside the world of nations and rid the researcher of those assumptions and common-sense habits which come from living in that world. He believes that as nation-states establish their sovereignty without significant challenges within their borders, those symbols of nationhood which may previously have been wittingly displayed do not disappear from view, but are assimilated to form part of the environment of the established homeland.

Another significant contribution by Billig, as regards the lens through which the framing of nationalism can be viewed, is his contention that for a nation to be imagined as a unique entity, it should be envisioned as one nation amongst numerous others. Foreigners therefore do not simply constitute 'others' who are separate from 'us', they are like 'us' and form part of the imagined universal code of nationhood. This approach to nationalism diverges significantly from a mentality which is ethnocentric and isolationist, as has been evident in a number of other approaches (Billig 1995).

Some postmodernist approaches

Özkirimli suggests that it is possible to distinguish two themes that repeatedly appear in postmodernist analyses: the first is "the production and reproduction of national identities through popular culture", which requires a refocus on communication technologies and popular genres previously excluded from academic discourse (Özkirimli 2000:195). Such an approach requires a re-reading of texts and a reconstruction of meaning, given that every text represents a narrative which can be interpreted and understood in manifold different ways (Özkirimli 2000:195). In his opinion, "hegemonic discourses, or 'meta-narratives' are nothing but a sham; thus, they should be explicitly rejected" (Özkirimli 2000:195). This point of view holds that identity is neither as

transparent nor as unproblematic as was previously thought, thus "instead of thinking of identity as an accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (Hall cited in Özkirimli 2000:196).

The second theme that constantly appears in most modernist analyses of nationalism refers to "forms of contestation inside nationalism's dominant frame" (Eley & Suny cited in Özkirimli 2000:197). Özkirimli (2000:197) notes that Bhabha lays emphasis on the contribution of people on the national 'margins', which includes "ethnic minorities, foreign workers and immigrants, in the process of defining national identities".

These two postmodernist themes constitute a central premise in the analysis of how AUGC for television could mediate the nation-building agenda in PSB, especially among the so-called 'smaller tribes' and those whose narratives are on the margins of Kenya's 'national' discourse.

Özkirimli's proposed analytical framework for studying nationalism

Another significant consideration in framing this study is Özkirimli's (2000:227) proposed analytical framework for studying nationalism, which persuasively argues that "there is no 'theory of nationalism' but rather an analytical framework". The five propositions to this framework are briefly highlighted here.

Özkirimli (2000:227) contends that most social phenomena – including nationalism – hardly ever have a single universal theory: "nationalism is a protean phenomenon, capable of taking on a multiplicity of forms depending on the – historical, social and political – context over which it reigns [and] this diversity precludes the possibility of formulating an 'overarching theory'." But he is quick to point out that the absence of a universal theory does not mean

we should not (or cannot) theorise nationalism at all – rather, practical theories may be formulated to account for its various aspects.

His second proposition is premised on McClintock's (cited in Özkirimli 2000:228) views, which advance that in addition to the existence of different types of nationalisms within a nation, different (and in some instances, conflicting) constructions of nationhood may be advanced by members of that nation. In certain contexts, "divergent ideologies and movements compete to capture the allegiance of the 'nationals' [and] in that sense, nationalisms is rarely the nationalism of the nation, but rather represents the site where very different views of the nation contest and negotiate with each other" (Duara cited in Özkirimli 2000:228).

The third proposition is that the discourse of nationalism is the ultimate explanatory and legitimating framework in today's world. To elucidate, Özkirimli draws on Billig's ideas which submit that our consciousness is shaped by a

> variety of movements, ideologies and policies, arising in different contexts and following different historical trajectories [...] joined by the use of a common rhetoric [and that] nationalism is, first and foremost, a form of reading and watching, of understanding and of taking for granted. (Billig cited in Özkirimli 2000:229)

The fourth proposition draws on the work of Billig (1995) and Hall (1990), amongst other scholars, who believe that the reproduction of discourses on nationalism is sustained only if reproduced regularly. In this regard, nationalism entails "a heterogeneous set of nation oriented idioms, practices and possibilities that are continuously available or 'endemic' in modern cultural and political life" (Brubaker cited in Özkirimli 2000:230). Essed's (cited in Özkirimli 2000:231) views on the matter are just as pertinent, in that in order to comprehend nationalism it is imperative to take into account everyday manifestations, so that "when the nationalist discourse seeps into everyday life, its reproduction becomes inevitable".

The fifth proposition should and will inevitably be a core consideration in framing this study. Here, Özkirimli (2000:203) submits that "individual self-definitions change according to one's differential positioning along the dimensions of gender, race, ethnicity, class or place in the life-cycle". As Malkki (cited in Özkirimli 2000:232) points out, identity is neither fixed nor a given means of categorising, but is rather kinetic and follows a process which is "partly a self-construction, partly categorisation by others, partly a condition, a status, a label, a weapon, a shield, a fund of memories, etc."

Convergence in the digital mediascape

> In the world of media convergence, every important story gets told, every brand gets sold, and every consumer gets courted across multiple media platforms. (Jenkins 2006:3)

Perhaps prior to engaging with notions of convergence in digital media, it would be useful to give a quick overview of the historic phases of media development. Finnemann (2001) suggests that there have been five major media epochs or matrices in human history, culminating in contemporary society's digital mediascape. These matrices can be characterised "according to specific time and space constraints, material storage, reproduction and distribution capacities and perceptual and semiotic repertoires" (Finnemann 2011:68).

Finnemann (2011:68–69) sees the first media matrix as the orally centred society, which is characterised by "local synchronicity" or the "here and now condition of embodied human existence". The second is the script society or culture, which entailed a separation of time and space within the mediascape. This matrix was about asynchronous communication being added to local synchronicity. The third is print culture, which separated time and space to an even more significant degree than the script society did, and widened the reach of media consumers through the ability to produce many copies and achieve a comparative economy of scale. Societies which are centred on analogue

electronic media constitute the fourth matrix, which is characterised by the "separation of speed of communication from speed of transportation of humans and goods and, therefore, formed global synchronicity". Digital media-centred societies constitute the fifth matrix, which is characterised by an "integration of storage capacities of print with [the] transmission speeds of electronic media". Such phenomena manifest themselves in both asynchronous and synchronous formats, which allow users to employ the options in whatever permutations they please.

Finnemann concedes that debates and discourse abound on digital media, with arguments being advanced on whether such media can indeed be defined, since they are incredibly diverse and 'malleable' and thus constitute a "meta-medium". For him, digital media can be understood as separate, definable media:

> A basic characteristic of digital media is that they integrate the storage capacities of print media with the transmission speed of electronic media. This integration opens up an indefinite array of new mixtures ranging from a number of speech-like near synchronomous written formats (emails, chat, texting, status updates, blogs, comments, etc.), interactive location-sensitive communication, fictitious 3D landscapes to not yet created new formats and genres also including asynchronomous, and globally distributed formats. The integration of storage capacities and transmission speed is based on a new kind of textualised, variable and editable functional architecture that contrasts to previously known media and machines. (Finnemann 2011:83)

Finnemann (2011:84) observes that in addition to changing the role of so-called old media, digital media entail "a range of new social, cultural and political issues, whether these involve social networking, or civil and professional collaboration, copyright, privacy, political strategies [and] economic development". These new possibilities arguably form the foundations of convergence culture, which continuously offers a platform and ideological space to radically disrupt and deconstruct what Bhabha (1995) sees as existing hegemonic interactions. The new possibilities enabled by digital media also offer spaces and platforms for everyday nationalisms to be narrated.

Jenkins (2006) proposes that the term 'convergence' be understood beyond its traditional technological sense, where it refers to a confluence of multiple media functions within the same device. An expansion of the term would entail a 'cultural shift' in which consumers [of any media content] are urged to uncover fresh information and establish links between various media contents which are widely dispersed (Jenkins 2006:3). This suggests that convergence is not necessarily technology-, application- or platform-bound or confined, but dependent on, or reflective of, shifting relationships between existing technologies, industries, markets and audiences. Convergence thus "offers the logic by which media industries operate and by which media consumers process news and entertainment" (Jenkins 2006:15), which means it should be perceived as

> both a top-down corporate-driven process and a bottom-up consumer-driven process. Corporate convergence coexists with grassroots convergence. Media companies are learning how to accelerate the flow of media content across delivery channels to expand revenue opportunities, broaden markets, and reinforce viewer commitments. Consumers are learning how to use these different media technologies to bring the flow of media more fully under their control and to interact with other consumers. The promises of this new media environment raise the expectations of a freer flow of ideas and content. Inspired by those ideals, consumers are fighting to participate more fully in their culture. Sometimes corporate and grassroot convergence reinforce each other, creating closer, more rewarding relations between media producers and consumers. Sometimes, these two forces are at war. (Jenkins 2006:18)

The use of the term 'media' is premised on historian Lisa Gitelman's (cited in Jenkins 2006:13) ideas which operate on two levels: the first is "a technology that enables communication", while the second (which largely develops from the first) is "a set of associated protocols or social and cultural practices that have grown up around that technology". The term 'media', as used here, could encapsulate what Habermas (cited in Valtysson 2010:201) refers to as a communicative space, affected by "the strategic actions of the system which

contain the market and the state, and the communicative actions of the life-world which contain cognitive rationality (technology and science), aesthetic [and] expressive rationality (arts) and ethical rationality".

A central tenet of Jenkins' definition of convergence includes participatory culture in which, it is possible to argue, both the consumers and producers of content 'actively' participate in Habermas' communicative space, with both parties deriving some degree of value at every stage of the process as a whole. Jenkins (2006:3) suggests that, "rather than talking about media producers and consumers as occupying separate roles, we might now see them as participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understands". He suggests that "story tellers now think about story telling in terms of creating openings for consumer participation" while concurrently "consumers are using new media technologies to engage with old media content […] for collective problem solving, public deliberation, and grassroots creativity" (Jenkins 2006:169).

The key challenge to participatory culture, a key component of convergence, is the limited, skewed, unequal or nonexistent media literacy among consumers in the communicative space, *vis-à-vis* those who traditionally produce it. According to one skills-based approach, as argued by Livingstone (cited in Madianou & Miller 2013:176), media literacy consists of several parallel processes: access to media content, skills and the ability to analyse and evaluate media content, and the ability to produce content.

Jenkins (2006:170) appears to concur with these sentiments, arguing that "just as we could not traditionally assume that someone is literate if they can read but not write, we should not assume that someone possesses media literacy if they consume but do not express themselves". Hargittai (in Madianou & Miller 2013:176) points out that in discussions around the second-level digital divide, although access is a prerequisite it does not necessarily guarantee a particular user's media literacy. Jenkins (2006:171) states that difficulties around defining literacy result in decisions about who has the right (or not) to participate in a

specific culture, and under what circumstances, but he concedes that "corporations – and even individuals within corporate media – still exert greater power than any individual consumer or even the aggregate of consumers". Regarding consumers' ability to engage with convergence culture, Jenkins (2006:3) suggests that certain consumers are better able to contribute to, and participate in, such an emerging culture than others are, and that this should always be kept top of mind in any discourse on convergence culture.

Building on participatory debates, Carpentier (2011) contends that subject positions are significant in related processes as they can potentially structure so-called discursive positionings and material practices. "[S]ubject positions such as 'audience member' or 'media professional' circulate widely in society, and carry specific – sometimes dominant – meanings that affect the position and power relations of actors in participatory processes" (Carpentier 2011:179). The media sphere is a space for citizens to voice their opinions and experiences, and to interact with other voices, using three pervasive forms of participation (Carpentier 2011:70): the first entails involvement in media production, and is an active form of participation, i.e., the participant significantly contributes to the process of content production, either through access to, interaction with, or participation in media organisations/communities. Participating in the workings of society through the media is the second form of citizen participation, which can be either active or passive and involves the use of media platforms and spaces. The third and more passive form of participation involves the audience interacting with media content which is exclusively and wholly produced by media professionals.

In the mainstream media in particular, media production is in the hands of a select few media professionals who have the requisite "expertise and skills, institutional embeddedness and autonomy" and can rely on management and power strategies in their pursuit of well-defined objectives (Carpentier 2011:68). Carpentier opines that where there is a guarantee of participation in the process of media production by media professionals, the focus should shift towards ensuring that non-professionals or amateurs participate in the

professional system. The opening up of the media system can take one of two forms, since it is mainly up to those media professionals to decide how much power will be delegated and how much participation they will allow (Carpentier 2011:68). The two forms of openness correspond to the minimalist and maximalist media participation archetypal models, developed from concepts related to democratic political participation, as found in politics and political studies.

Minimalist media participation focuses on control by media professionals, is unidirectional, and generally serves the needs and interests of those media professionals. Maximalist media participation, conversely, balances control between the media professionals and popular participation from 'ordinary people', thus striving to attain the multidirectional participation that Jenkins (2006) describes as a confluence between a top-down corporate-driven process and a bottom-up consumer-driven process. In terms of minimalist media participation, the involvement of the 'person in the street' is limited to access and interaction, while maximalist media participation attempts to maximise participation in media production by opening up spaces for ordinary people to contribute meaningfully. This results in what is referred to in this study as active user-generated content or AUGC.

Carpentier (2011) points out that minimalist media participation assumes the existence of a homogenous mass audience and, like the attributes of minimalist democratic political participatory dimensions, tends to be hegemonic in excluding minorities and those occupying marginal spaces. He notes that minimalist media participation focuses on macro participation and interaction through media channels. Maximalist media participation, conversely, combines micro and macro participation by acknowledging audience diversity and heterogeneity. It takes a more holistic view of media participation, including diverse constituencies in the media landscape. Lastly, in minimalist media participation the media space is constructed as non-political in that it excludes participation from other fields in social spaces, while maximalist participation

acknowledges a broad definition of the media space that includes the political and other fields as dimensions of the social (Carpentier 2011).

Having discussed several concepts, theories and critical thoughts that constitute the framework of this study, in order to provide the tools for critical analysis, chapter 4 will discuss the research design and methods, and outline the methodologies to be followed in order to critically engage with the research questions, aims and objectives.

CHAPTER 4
Research design and methodology

Introduction

The research design and methodology chapter outlines and discusses the approaches, processes and procedures to be followed in responding to the three research questions addressed in this thesis. As previously mentioned, each of the questions will be dealt with in a chapter, such that chapter 5 will engage with research question 1, chapter 6 with research question 2 and chapter 7 with research question 3. Here is a recap of the three research questions:

1. *To what extent and in which forms has the television consumer participated in the broadcasting-scape in Kenya?*
2. *To what extent and in which forms can ordinary citizens of a nation-state actively participate in the (co)generation, (co)production and (co)distribution of content for aural-visual broadcasting and what socioeconomic and cultural value can this participation offer in the nation-building context?*
3. *What kinds of public sphere discourses emerge from an active user-generated content (AUGC) pilot project in the context of the nation-building conversation in Kenya?*

This chapter comprises three broad subsections: the research study design, methods of data collection, and methods of data analysis and interpretation. The research study design unpacks the research type(s) and research design applied. This section also outlines the study population and the focus group participating in the study, and briefly explains how the study population and focus group were identified. The second subsection, dealing with the research study design, outlines and explains the choices, methods and approaches of data collection adopted in the study. The data collection instruments, and the date and time period/duration of the data collection process are also highlighted. The third subsection, on methods of data analysis and interpretation, highlights the

methods and approaches adopted in the research and explains how these will be linked to theories and concepts already discussed in chapter 3. The analysis in this thesis is theory-centric and theory driven, implying that the 'Methods of data analysis and interpretation' section is important in setting out the processes to be followed.

Research study design

This study takes on a qualitative approach in terms of its design. It grapples with emancipatory and advocacy objectives in a participatory context, as collaboratively done by the researcher and the community that formed part of the research focus group. Participatory Action Research (PAR) was therefore identified as one potential approach. This subsection begins by unpacking PAR.

Participatory action research

PAR is increasingly gaining authority as an effective research approach in many academic disciplines, ranging from the arts and design field, to the social sciences, humanities, medicine, engineering, information technology, architecture, media studies, public relations and business-related fields, among many others (see Fals-Borda & Rahman 1991; Whyte 1991; Chevalier & Buckles 2013; Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon 2014). Its proponents argue that it is an effective approach to research that brings a confluence between the researcher/academic, and the practitioner/research subjects, sometimes referred to in PAR as the users, animators or actors.

Chevalier and Buckles (2013:12) propose that PAR is more than a method of research, for them it is "a commitment on the part of both researchers and actors to jointly observe, problematize and transform behaviour". Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2014:12) seem to concur, for them PAR "expresses a commitment to bring together broad social analysis, the self-reflective collective self-study of practice, and transformational action to improve things". Kemmis et al. perceive the method as having a strong commitment to participation and social analysis, which reveal the disempowerment and injustices prevalent in societies. For this

reason, Fals-Borda and Rahman (1991:6) contend that "people can be mobilized with PAR techniques from the grassroots up and from the periphery to the centre so as to form social movements, which struggle for participation, justice and equity without necessarily seeking to establish hierarchical political parties in the traditional mould".

Chevalier and Buckles (2013:38) recognise that PAR allows for multiple constructions of reality, and concede that there is a need for "a framework or theory to acknowledge and promote this multiplicity". They assert that "researchers bring forth this tension whenever they facilitate co-investigation grounded in real life at the same time as they offer their own expert framing of PAR in action" (Chevalier & Buckles 2013:38). They point out that researchers who use PAR end up, paradoxically, as experts who are able to assist groups in accessing both their own expertise and that of the collective (Chevalier & Buckles 2013:38). Whyte (1991) advances a similar argument, cautioning against the hegemony of any one research style or approach as this could deprive researchers of other research strategies that have "equal claim to the mantle" of academics. He reasons that scientific logic does not require a unilateral adherence to a specific social research model or research method: the fact that we live in a complex world necessitates the use of a gamut of techniques and approaches, along with intellectual and methodological rigor, rather than a single-minded adherence to a particular research modality (Whyte 1991:19).

Cardinally, PAR is a useful approach for researches with an emancipatory agenda aimed at marginalised people or communities on the periphery, as it entails collaboration between the two parties, culminating in the enfranchisement of not only the research process but also the living conditions of the participating parties. Fals-Borda and Rahman (1991:3) suggest that PAR is an experiential methodology that entails the attainment of "serious and reliable knowledge upon which to construct power, or countervailing power, for the poor, oppressed and exploited groups and social classes – the grassroots – and for their authentic organisations and movements". This collaboration does not, however, manifest itself in the traditional skewed approach, where the researcher or academic

remains in the proverbial ivory tower of knowledge, while the actors remain as subjects or tools used solely for data collection purposes. Whyte points out that despite being an applied research, PAR also differs from the conventional model of what he calls pure research in terms of the respective roles of the two agents of the research. He argues that in traditional conventions of pure research, "members of organizations and communities are treated as passive subjects, with some of them participating only to the extent of authorizing the project, being its subjects, and receiving the results" (Whyte 1991:20). In such a scenario, researchers are deemed professional experts who design the project, gather and interpret the data, and advise a course of action to the client or organisation (Whyte 1991:20). Contrary to traditional conventions of pure research, as defined by Whyte (1991), PAR should take an equitable approach in which both the researcher and the actors participate in the research process, significantly and actively contributing to the knowledge resulting from the process and subsequently improving the participants' living conditions.

PAR, contend Fals-Borda and Rahman, acknowledges that there are always at least two types of agents of change in situations involving disenfranchised people. The first type includes those who are external to the situation (academics, theorists and researchers), while the second includes those from within the exploited communities. Both agents are unified in the sole purpose of achieving the shared goals of transformation (Fals-Borda & Rahman 1991:4). McTaggart (1997:31) concurs, advancing that the aim of PAR is not only to change individuals, but also to impact the culture of their group(s) or society/societies. He is nonetheless quick to caution that these changes should not in any way be imposed, but rather that individuals and groups should agree to work together to change themselves individually and collectively. Their interests are mutual thanks to an agreed 'thematic concern' (McTaggart 1997:31).

Fals-Borda and Rahman (1991:4) contend that

> [t]hese animators (internal and external) contribute their own knowledge, techniques and experiences to the transformation process. But their knowledge and experience stem from different class conformation and realities (one Cartesian and academic, the other experiential and practical). […] The sum of knowledge from both types of agents, however, makes it possible to acquire a much more accurate and correct picture of the reality that is being transformed. Therefore academic knowledge combined with popular knowledge and wisdom may result in total scientific knowledge of a revolutionary nature, which destroys the previous unjust class monopoly.

McTaggart (1997:31) submits that PAR facilitates change in the individual researcher, but also that by doing this, it supports others in their personal efforts to change, before they ultimately and collectively change institutions and societies. He believes that every participant, academic and 'worker' in a PAR project should strive to do the following:

1. Improve his or her own work and the way it is understood (theorized);
2. Collaborate with others engaged in the project (academics and workers) to help them improve their work; and
3. Collaborate with others in their own separate (academic and worker) institutional and cultural contexts to create the possibility of more broadly informing (and theorizing) the common project, as well as to create the material and political conditions necessary to sustain the common project and its work. (McTaggart 1997:31)

Several researchers agree that PAR stems from Kurt Lewin's work in the 1940s and 1950s on action research. Chevalier and Buckles (2013) and McTaggart (1997) affirm that Lewin coined the expression 'action research' in his seminal 1946 paper 'Action research and minority problems', and defined it as "comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action". From the concept's inception, the idea of research that leads to, or results in, social action amongst a people, was a core aspect of the methodology. Arguably, therefore, it is an ideal approach for research such as this, which not only seeks to understand the context in which a

marginalised community in Kenya finds itself, but also aims to work with such a community to change their living conditions by having them act as key drivers of the process. McTaggart (1997:27) explains that Lewin described action research as "proceeding in a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of planning, acting, observing and evaluating the result of the action". This structure was deemed suitable for the present research, which intended to give rise to an intervening action, driven and implemented by a community whose narratives are on the fringes of the Kenyan broadcasting-scape. Obtaining insight into the extent to which this intervention could improve the context of the community, formed part of the process which embodies Fals-Borda and Rahman's (1991:13) crisp and nuanced assertion that

> [t]he basic ideology of PAR is that a self-conscious people, those who are currently poor and oppressed, will progressively transform their environment by their own praxis. In this process, others may play a catalytic and supportive role but will not dominate.

The key form of participation in PAR, according to Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2014), takes place in Habermas' public sphere, when participating in communicative action with others. This, they argue, entails a conversation in which "people strive for intersubjective agreement about the ideas and the language they use, mutual understanding of one another's perspectives and points of view, and unforced consensus about what to do" (Kemmis *et al*. 2014:48). Fals-Borda and Rahman (1991:5) accept Kemmis *et al*.'s sentiments and build on them, contending that

> recognition of this constructive and altruistic mode of participation, as a real and endogenous of, and for, the common people, reduces the difference between the bourgeois intellectuals and grassroots communities, between elite vanguards and base groups, between experts (technocrats) and direct producers, between bureaucracies and their clients, between mental and manual labour.

Fals-Borda and Rahman inform us that, historically, PAR approaches have typically been initiated by so-called 'voluntary' bodies, which include entities

that perceive themselves as 'social action groups', 'non-governmental organisations' or 'self-reliance-promoting organizations' (SPOs). The latter, they claim, is a more contemporary expression that is functionally not only more communicative, but also presents greater challenges (Fals-Borda & Rahman 1991:18). McTaggart (1997:36) believes that work by these voluntary bodies is of significant benefit to users, animators or actors (whom he collectively refers to as 'workers'), as well as to researchers and academics. Three general kinds of knowledge can be identified in this regard: "knowledge developed by workers; knowledge shared by the group; and knowledge developed by academics" (McTaggart 1997:36). Although these three forms are closely related, the first category of knowledge, that of the workers, is the cardinal focus of PAR projects. Fals-Borda and Rahman (1991:5) conclude that the proof of the success of users/animators/actors' intellectual knowledge in PAR initiatives is that eventually the "transformation processes continue even without the physical presence of external agents, animators or cadres".

McTaggart (1997:37) contends that to fully grasp the nuances of PAR as a research approach, it is useful to identify what it does *not* entail. Perhaps this is a useful way to differentiate PAR from other methodological approaches, and to summarise the arguments already discussed. He lists several critical aspects that, in his view, the PAR approach does not embody:

> 1. Participatory action research is not the usual thing social practitioners (academics and workers) ordinarily do when they think about their work. It is more systematic and collaborative in collecting evidence on which to base rigorous group reflection, and in planning change.
> 2. Participatory action research is not simply problem solving. It involves problem posing. It does not start from a view of 'problems' as pathologies. It sees values and plans problematized by work in the real world and by the study of the culture and nature of work by people themselves. It is motivated by a quest to improve and understand the world by changing it and learning how to improve it from the effects of the changes made.
> 3. Participatory action research is not research done on other people. It is research by particular people on their own work, to help them improve what

they do, including how they work with and for others. Participatory action research is research that treats people as autonomous, responsible agents who participate actively in making their own histories and conditions of life, able to be more effective in making their histories and conditions of life by knowing what they are doing, and collaboratively potent in the construction of their collective history and conditions of life. It does not treat people as objects for research, but encourages people to work together as knowing subjects and agents of change and improvement.

4. Participatory action research is not a 'method' or 'technique' for policy implementation. It does not accept truths created outside that community or truths created by researchers working inside the community who treat the community as an object for research. Participatory action researchers may accept propositions from outside as worthy of testing, or they may elect to study their own situation from first principles, as it were, to develop their own understandings of what is happening as a guide to action.

5. Participatory action research is not 'the scientific method' applied to social (educational, agricultural) work. There is not just one view of the scientific method, there are many. Participatory action research is not just about testing hypotheses or using data to come to conclusions. It adopts a view of social science that is distinct from a view based on the natural sciences (in which the objects of research may legitimately be treated as 'things'). Participatory action research also concerns the 'subject' (the researcher) himself or herself. Its view is distinct from the methods of the historical sciences, because action research is concerned with changing situations, not just interpreting them. Participatory action research is systematically evolving, a living process changing both the researcher and the situations in which he or she acts; neither the natural sciences nor the historical sciences have this double aim. (McTaggart 1997:37–39)

The study population

McTaggart (1997:37) opines that the quest of participatory action researchers is to understand their subjects' subjective, lived experiences within their institutional milieu, by giving working accounts of the situations in which they create meaning. He contends that participatory action researchers "also use the views of others to engage their own experience and to discipline their own

subjective interpretations" (McTaggart 1997:37). In this study, the researcher remains cognisant of Fals-Borda and Rahman's caveat that, while engaging in a PAR project, it may be challenging to truly establish a subject/subject relationship, as opposed to the more pervasive subject/object relationship, with a participating community at the very outset of the project – especially with people who are traditionally victims of a dominating structure. This is because they see "the inertia of traditional attitudes and images of self and of others" keeping the participants "implicitly subordinate in research (as well as decision making) in which formidable outside researchers/activists are present" (Fals-Borda & Rahman 1991:17).

Even more importantly, Fals-Borda and Rahman caution the researchers in PAR projects that they – as professionals who come from the outside – must avoid getting carried away by their own self-image. They must also guard against imposing their own ideas on people, either consciously or unwittingly. It may therefore be necessary to make the community the subject and to define, from the outset, the process as being an independent inquiry on the part of the people, in which "the consultant may be consulted at the initiative of the people" – this will enable the people to become "independent and masters of themselves [who] experience their capability and power to produce knowledge autonomously" (Fals-Borda & Rahman 1991:17). These authors conclude that the experience may entail a mutual agreement being reached between the parties involved, with an authentic subject/subject relationship emerging if a research partnership arises from shared interests (Fals-Borda & Rahman 1991:17).

In this study, an AUGC PAR project was piloted with the Abakuria of Kenya. It entailed working with a focus group of eight participants in a digital video production workflow. The participants were drawn from amongst 'ordinary people' in the community who were nevertheless required to have some basic computer skills in order to fully participate in the postproduction phase of the project. The focus group was constituted of adult participants above the age of 18, and the researcher strived to obtain equitable gender representation among the participants. Participation was voluntary; anyone was free to withdraw their

participation at any point during the project.[13] The study intended to obtain a fair age spread among the adult participants in the project, in order to reflect multiple generational perspectives and inputs. However, from the start it was a possibility that the majority of the participants would be between the ages of 18 and 40, owing to the computer skills requirement potentially precluding the older generation in Kenya, who are generally not computer literate.[14] To mitigate this, the participants were encouraged to consider incorporating some older characters in their narratives.

The Abakuria were selected as the study population for three main reasons: the first is that, numerically, they are one of the minority communities in Kenya, estimated at 260 000 people from approximately 45 million inhabitants counted in the 2008 Kenyan census on population and housing (see *2009 Population and Housing Census*…). This numerical disadvantage has meant that Abakuria voices and representations have been relegated to the margins of socio-cultural and political discourse in Kenya. The second reason for selecting the Abakuria is that little or no content is available in the Kenyan broadcasting-scape in the Abakuria language, as will be discussed later in this chapter. This study's primary objective is to give marginalised communities a voice and a platform for self-expression and self-representation. The third reason is that the Abakuria are situated close to a major urban area, Kisumu, which made it comparatively more accessible for this research study, considering that the research was fully funded by the researcher. Kehancha, the main town of the Abakuria, is about a three to four-hour drive from Kisumu, whereas some of the other marginalised groups in Kenya inhabit far-off areas, often only accessible via poor road networks, and subject to poor security and limited communication infrastructure.

The Abakuria of East Africa settled in the south western part of Kenya and the north eastern section of Tanzania. Tanzania's Abakuria population is slightly bigger than Kenya's, estimated at about 430 000 people compared to Kenya's 260 000. Oloo, Wanjiru and Newell-Jones (2011:[sp])) describe the Abakuria as

[13] Please see the Participant information sheet and the Consent form in the appendix.
[14] This will be discussed in detail in chapter 7, which draws information from statistics on Internet use in Kenya.

"an ethnic and linguistic group resident in [the administrative province formerly known as] Nyanza Province in southwest Kenya". The enactment of the current constitution of Kenya in 2010 replaced eight provincial administrative units with 48 counties and located the Abakuria within the administrative county of Migori. The Abakuria are represented in the Kenyan legislature by two constituencies, Kuria East and Kuria West.

Oloo *et al*. (2011) inform us that the Abakuria ethnic group is made up of 13 clans: the four main clans in Kenya are the Bwirege, Nyabasi, Bugumbe and Bukira, each with its own council of elders – an all-male body that is respected to the point of being revered. Oloo *et al*. (2011:[sp]) explain that the council decrees when important cultural events take place, instructs the community when to start planting or harvesting, and whether or not the fields should be tilled. This council, according to Oloo *et al*. (2011), also settles disputes in the community and has a strong hold on members, reinforced by local beliefs that the elders have supernatural powers and can cast spells and curses on individuals who go against their decisions. Oloo *et al*. (2011) also point out that the Abakuria have low school completion rates, especially among girls, and that the practice of genital mutilation for females, which the community refers to as female circumcision, is still prevalent among the Abakuria.

As of 1 January 2016, the Abakuria of Kenya did not have a single radio FM station or television station broadcasting in their language. This is in contrast to certain dominant language groups which have several radio FM stations and television stations broadcasting in their languages and dialects. The Kikuyu, for instance, have Kameme, Coro and Inooro FM radio stations and Inooro TV among others broadcasting in their language. The Kalenjin have Chamgei FM, Kass FM, Rehema radio and Kass TV broadcasting in Kalenjin languages and dialects. The Luo have Lake Victoria FM, Radio Nam Lolwe, Ramogi FM and Lolwe Television Network, among others, while the Kamba and Luhya-language speakers have Mbaitu FM, Musyi FM, Mulembe FM and Sulwe FM, broadcasting content in their languages and dialects. As of 1 January 2016, there were over 100 FM radio

stations and at least 20 television stations operating in Kenya – a significant number of these broadcast in vernacular languages and dialects (see CA 2015).

The *UMMU* project was run and funded by the researcher, who also facilitated and trained the participants in production workflow. Participants were introduced to the basics of narrative structure, character design, and story scripting and storyboarding. In addition, they were introduced to film shots as a grammar of film-making and taken through discussions on motivations for shot selection, arrangement and timing in the film-making process. The participants received training in basic photography and cinematography, and learned how to use camcorders and cameras (including cell phone cameras) in framing and shooting stories. They were also offered foundational training in the use of Adobe's Premiere edit suite, which they would later use to edit their narratives.

Identifying the study population

Since I had never lived near or interacted closely with the Abakuria of Kenya, I needed to identify structures within the community that would direct me towards a potential focus group. In December 2014, World Vision Kenya was recommended to me as a good entry point into the community. As an international body that runs several projects in the area, World Vision "is an international Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation working in almost 100 countries worldwide to create lasting change in the lives of children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice" (see www.wvi.org). I was encouraged to contact them since their projects had objectives that corresponded with those of my study. World Vision gave me the contact number of the chair of a youth organisation in the area, and I promptly used this lead.

In July 2015, I made my initial trip to Kehancha, the administrative headquarters of Kenya's Abakuria. I met the youth group chair, Mr Siambai, at Komotobo Mission, located about ten kilometres from Kehancha, although this was an hour's drive away due to the poor state of the roads. After explaining my study objectives to Mr Siambai, he took me on a tour of the area and introduced me to

other youth and Christian organisation leaders. We held initial discussions and agreed that they would identify about seven to 14 adult participants of equitable gender representation and a fair age spread who possessed some basic computer skills. These individuals would constitute the focus group for the project piloted in January 2016. With the assistance of Mr Maroa, who is based at Maranatha Mission, the final focus group was identified and the project commenced. Both gentlemen participated in the pilot AUGC project.

Methods of data collection

McTaggart (1997:37) points out that in PAR, data are collected in the usual "naturalistic research ways", such as through participant observation, interviews, the compilation of field notes, logs, document analysis, and the like. This study employed several data collection techniques, as will be discussed shortly, in an effort to critically engage with the three research questions guiding this study. The PAR process usually begins by acknowledging that some kind of improvement or change is desirable (McTaggart 1997:27). The first step in the action research spiral, according to Chevalier and Buckles (2013:11), is what they term "a problem awareness phase that seeks to 'unfreeze' a situation through fact-finding and diagnostic thinking". In their view, a shift in understanding opens the door to movement and allows for an encompassing idea or action plan to be drawn up, with a view to changing existing mindsets and breaking down any defence mechanisms while avoiding the potential risk of inertia. Kemmis *et al*. (2014:68) agree with these sentiments, advancing that the initial approach to a PAR study would be similar to the way an historian would approach matters: "Like the historian, we want, first, to understand how things work here, how things have come to be, what kinds of consequences our practice have produced and do produce." They suggest that during this phase

> [w]e produce a critical stance towards what happens: in conversation with others involved in and affected by our practice (as a public sphere), we ask: Are the consequences of our practice in some way untoward (irrational, unsustainable, unjust)? If we come to the conclusion that the consequences of our practice are in some way untoward then we know we must make changes to

> our practices (and to our understanding of our practices and to the conditions under which we practice) in order to prevent, avoid or ameliorate those untoward consequences. (Kemmis *et al*., 2014:68)

What these scholars propose, in a nutshell, is that it is important to understand and contextualise the problematic situation in any PAR project, before contemplating a solution for it. This is precisely what the present study intends to achieve, in responding to the first research question: *To what extent and in which forms has the television consumer participated in the broadcasting-scape in Kenya?* This question forms part of the problem awareness phase; it seeks to chronicle what has transpired in Kenya's broadcasting-scape (historically speaking), to understand how things work in the contemporary space, and to identify the possible consequences that the aforementioned have produced. The section titled 'Forms, contexts and relationships in Kenya's television broadcasting-scape' constitutes chapter 5 of this thesis. It critically engages with the broadcasting and UGC space in Kenya, to interrogate prevailing contexts and relationships between television broadcasters and 'prosumers' in respect of content generation, ownership, distribution and consumption. Two themes are explored in this chapter: the first re-imagines the Kenyan television broadcasting space by using AUGC as an emancipatory platform which adopts a critical-historical analysis of the broadcasting landscape in Kenya, from its independence from the British in 1963 to contemporary times. The objective here is to chronicle, unpack and discuss key historical discourses in Kenya's broadcasting sphere. The historical analysis will, to a large extent, rely on secondary data such as existing publications, information from a variety of media outlets, earlier research done by other scholars and reliable personal records by stakeholders in the Kenyan broadcasting space. The second theme in this chapter deals with illusions of participation, and how power and empowerment are reflected in Kenya's contemporary television broadcasting-scape. The data were collected from samples of prime-time television content disseminated by four of Kenya's leading contemporary television broadcasters. The section critically unpacks modes of participation in these broadcasters' shows with high ARs. The intention here is to understand contemporary forms of

participation between broadcasters and their viewers, and with this in mind, the TV stations whose programming is analysed in this chapter are Citizen TV, NTV, KTN and KBC.

After the contextualising phase in PAR has established fact-finding and diagnostic thinking, as proposed by Chevalier and Buckles (2013:11), and documented how things work, how things have come to be and the kinds of consequences produced by practice (as suggested by Kemmis *et al*. [2014:68]), the next phase is to experiment with transformative action. Chevalier and Buckles (2013:11) suggest that "progressive learning from these experiments feeds back into earlier plans and invites adjustments between objectives and actions". Kemmis *et al*. (2014:68) weigh in here, proposing that during this phase of the PAR project the aim is to see practices being transformed, and to not only comprehend those practices more fully, but also the conditions under which they unfold. Fay (cited in McTaggart 1997:37) believes that "as confidence and theoretical understanding develop, participatory action researchers begin to engage the ways in which understandings are shaped (and distorted) by power relations". Academic participants (or others) may bring social theory to the group's attention, but the way in which this is done must scrupulously avoid academic imperialism (see chapters 6 and 7 of this thesis).

Digital narratives, sometimes referred to by academics and practitioners as digital storytelling, is a technique which is increasingly being used as a data-collection method in a variety of studies in fields such as education, health and medical research, the humanities and social sciences, and marketing, among others. "Digital Storytelling makes use of low-cost digital cameras, non-linear editing software and notebook computers to create short, multimedia stories. These are essentially personal stories and are made for publication on the Internet" (Meadows 2003:189). Couldry points out that even novices can recount personal stories using digital formats to store and exchange the end product. It should be borne in mind that without the world-wide web, the wide array of sites and networks used for this purpose, would not exist. In digital storytelling, "the remediation capacity of digital media have multiple possibilities for

transmission, retransmission and transformation available to them" (Couldry 2008:373). Digital stories, in the context of this study, are not just data-collection techniques as an end unto themselves – they are also an important outcome of the research study, where the intention was to have marginalised communities on the continent narrating their stories.

Chapter 6, which deals with 'ordinary people' narrating the nation, grapples with the second research question: *To what extent and in which forms can ordinary citizens of a nation-state actively participate in the generation, production and distribution of content for aural-visual broadcasting and what socioeconomic and cultural value can this participation offer them in the nation-building context?* These discussions are based on data collected from three case studies entailing AUGC projects: the SABC's *Project 10* documentary series from South Africa, the BBC's *Capture Wales* project and the *Utaifa Mashinani Masimulizi ya Ukenya* digital narratives project from Kenya. The three projects, which are centrally concerned with how a nation is narrated, use a participatory approach to enable regular people to recount stories that matter to them.

The next phase after experimentation with transformative action can entail documenting and monitoring what happens, to "see if we are now preventing, avoiding or ameliorating the untoward consequence of our previous ways of working, and to check that our new ways of working are not producing new or different untoward consequences" (Kemmis *et al*., 2014:68). This phase will be the last in the present study, but it is important to point out that there could be other phases in a PAR approach that entail several iterative stages and levels. The third phase will be unpacked in chapter 7 under the title 'Public sphere discourses on the pilot *UMMU* digital narratives project'. This chapter will aim to respond to the third research question: *What kinds of public sphere discourses emerge from an AUGC pilot project in the context of the nation-building conversation in Kenya?* These discussions will draw data from analysis and engage with public sphere spaces set up for the pilot *UMMU* digital narratives project, such as its vlog (video blog), social and digital media platforms

(YouTube channels, Facebook) and other secondary digital platforms that may respond to the primary *UMMU* digital platforms.

Methods of data analysis and interpretation

Chevalier and Buckles (2013:40) reason that in terms of PAR, "the path of theory is a crossroad of migratory views and ideas". They acknowledge that similar to most approaches to research, PAR must rely on a set of propositions to explain important occurrences or phenomena in specific settings. But they are quick to point out that complementary and alternative lines of reasoning inspired by different perspectives and disciplines might be necessary in PAR, in order to determine whether or not those propositions are sound. This study's analysis and theorisation will therefore hinge on theories and principles drawn from several fields in cultural studies, film and media studies, and political science, among others.

For Chevalier and Buckles (2013:39), engaged theory informs practice and, conversely, practice informs theory. Kemmis *et al*. (2014:25) note that in critical participatory action research (CPAR) the objective is to close the gap between the roles of theorists and practitioners, so as to "secure processes of research in which practitioners are theorists, and theorists are practitioners". To create this feedback loop, Chevalier and Buckles suggest, the specificity of theory in relation to practice must be acknowledged. To this end, "theory and practice must be constructed as on-going activities and conversations that remain distinct even as they interact and overlap" (Chevalier & Buckles 2013:39). They caution, however, that the goals, steps, time frame and audience involved in each conversation can never be exactly replicated or similar, and that "this means that engaged researchers cannot tread along the reflective action path alone. They must take part in other conversations and communities as well, including those concerned with investigating theory" (Chevalier & Buckles 2013:39). Researchers should thus not consider themselves as guides and counsellors in the PAR process, but rather as mediators. There is no purpose in researchers "merely sit[ting] at facilitat[ing] tables of thoughtful action" – they should also

bring insights of theoretical practice into the PAR process and take something away, as input into their own work (Chevalier & Buckles 2013:39).

Chapter 5

As already discussed, chapter 5 interrogates two themes, the first relates to a reimagining of the Kenyan television broadcasting space, using AUGC as an emancipatory platform, while the second focuses on illusions of participation, and the role of power and empowerment in Kenya's contemporary television broadcasting-scape. The first theme's critical-historical analysis interrogates the broadcasting space in Kenya from its inception in the 1920s (see Heath 1986:51) to contemporary times, grounded in the propositions of Bhabha's (1994) cultural difference theory and Billig's (1995) banal nationalism, and in discourse stemming from Jenkins' (2006) writings on convergence culture, Carpentier's (2011) ideas on media participation and in work about digital content creation drawn from Earnshaw and Vince (2001), among others.

This historical analysis will focus on five broadcasting eras, commencing with the colonial era's inception of broadcasting in Kenya in 1928, to the end of official colonial government in 1963. The second era comprises the administration of Kenya's founding president, Jomo Kenyatta. His government led the country from independence in 1963 to his death in office in 1978. The third era is that of President Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, whose 24 years at the helm of the state began in 1978 and ended in 2002. Emilio Mwai Kibaki's presidency (2002–2012) forms the fourth era of discussion in this section, followed by Uhuru Kenyatta's era (2012 to present). The analysis will reflect on whether the broadcasting discourses entered into during these five eras align with the aforementioned theories by Bhabha and Billig, and if they do, the extent to which these theories are applicable to, and discernible in, the broadcasting space during these periods. This section will also introduce and briefly theorise on what is here referred to as AUGC, as it pertains to television broadcasting.

The second theme in this chapter relies on Jenkins' (2006) ideas on convergence culture and will also focus on Carpentier's (2011) thoughts on participation in

media, and on Thumim's (2012) and Burgess' (2006) writings on self-representation. This theme will rely on a critical textual analysis of prime-time television content sampled from the four contemporary television broadcasters in Kenya with the highest viewership: Citizen TV, KTN, NTV and KBC. The analysis will be based on programming aired on the four television stations' prime-time slots over a period of one week in May 2015. Prime-time tends to be categorised differently from one country or region to the next, but for the purposes of this study on the Kenyan broadcasting context, it will refer to the hours between 18:00 and 22:00, East African time.

In the analysis, the second theme will further be split into two subthemes: 1) inviting the ordinary people and 2) narrating the everyday. These subthemes will seek to critically unpack forms of participation and to contextualise contemporary participatory discourses on Kenyan television in the sampled programming with high ARs, which are shown during prime time on Kenyan television. Here, the focus will be on several sets of content: 1) news bulletins in Kiswahili (Kenya's national language) and English (the official language of communication), sampled from the aforementioned broadcasters; 2) programming during the Sunday prime-time slot, which has the highest ARs in all four leading broadcasters. Three shows will be discussed: *The Churchill Show* on NTV, KTN's *Jalang'o with the Money* and KBC's long-running courtroom drama, *Vioja Mahakamani*; and 3) content narrating everyday stories such as KBC's documentary public service announcement *Tell the Ombudsman* and NTV's *Weddings with Nonni Gathoni*. The section will also discuss foreign or international shows aired by these broadcasters.

Chapter 6

Chevalier and Buckles (2013:40) believe that for action to be taken in terms of PAR, a theory of intervention is required. They contend that propositions alone are insufficient in working towards an understanding of a field of intervention: this complex terrain also requires theoretical investigation. The analysis in chapter 6 will therefore undertake a critical textual and discourse analysis of the three UGC texts: the *Project 10* documentary series aired on SABC 2 in 2004 in

South Africa, the *Capture Wales* project run by the BBC in Wales and the pilot *UMMU* digital narratives project initiated by the researcher with the Abakuria community of Kenya. This chapter employs discussions and theorisations framed along two broad themes: 1) the individual and the community narrating the self, and 2) the everyday and the banal in narrating the nation. In addition to framing the analysis on the theories identified in chapter 3, the discussions here will be grounded in the African philosophy of *ubuntu* that acknowledges that individuals are who they are because of other individuals. The philosophy which is unpacked in chapter six does not in any way disregard or diminish the role of the individual, but almost always considers the individual in the context of others. This was a considered choice in designing the *UMMU* project, as the participatory research approach wittingly attempts to structure part of its framework on progressive pedagogy emanating from the African continent.

In engaging with the individual and the community narrating the self, the chapter will unpack the notions of the 'self', the 'personal', the 'individual' and the 'other' in self-representations within the context of nationalism in postcolonial Africa. It will discuss the forms, functions and manifestations of self-representations in the three aforementioned participatory UGC projects. The focus of the analysis in this theme will be on the projects' archival function, their potential for catharsis, as well as the opportunities they afford for economic enfranchisement. The discussions are anchored on several scholars' thoughts, including Bhabha (1990), Hall (1990), Billig (1995) and Özkirimli (2000), among others, who believe that for the reproduction of the discourse on nationalism to be sustainable, it must be reproduced on a regular basis.

Discussions around the everyday and the banal in narrating the nation will be premised on the argument that public media in Africa (and elsewhere in the world) have historically been at the core of nationalism and nation-building projects which attempt to coalesce, cajole and unite members of a nation. Conversely, certain sections of the media have also acted as a dividing and severing platform for citizens within a nation. In the analysis, the thesis will acknowledge that the concept of national identity in African nation-states is at

best tenuous, owing partially to the overlaps, tensions and duality between nations and states.

This latter theme discusses aspects such as vernacular language in the everyday and the role of banal narratives in nation building, anchored on Ngugi wa Thiong'o's (1986) firm belief that the culture of a people resides in and spreads through its language. Other aspects discussed include relatable narratives, archetypes and tropes promoted by everyday and banal narratives, the binary between grand narratives, the banal and everyday narratives in nationalism, and the role of everyday and banal narratives in offering a space and platform for contestation, negotiation and alternative/counter-narratives. Other topics include the ways and modes in which an ordinary person can either actively and meaningfully participate in narrating their nation, or, where this is somehow not possible, engage in radically disrupting existing hegemonic broadcasting interactions so as to participate in narrations of their nation.

Chapter 7

Whereas chapter 6 will focus on the process of encoding UGC texts based on the three case studies identified, chapter 7 will focus on how these texts are decoded and the conversation stemming from them. Attention will be on the discourses arising from the pilot *UMMU* project with the Abakuria, by focusing specifically on public sphere. The aim is to critically unpack and understand the kinds of conversations developing from the community involved in the project, as well as other communities – not only those within the nation-state, but also people outside it who have access to the project content. The content will be made available in the public sphere on platforms in digital and social media spaces. Two analytical approaches will be employed: 1) critical discourse analysis and 2) critical textual analysis.

Chevalier and Buckles (2013:40) aptly sum up the role of theory in a field such as PAR that seeks a confluence between participation, practice and theory, as follows:

Dialogism goes beyond the simple notion that *episteme* is a field opposite to that of *techne* and that the two must connect. More importantly, it is a call to acknowledge diversity and multiplicity in both fields and ways in which they interface in real settings. As with any practice, theoretical activity becomes sterile if it refuses to evolve, mutate, diversify and intermesh. The theory of engaged research is no exception to this rule. As it stands, PAR constitutes a richly diversified stance on the issue of knowledge and history.

CHAPTER 5
Forms, contexts and relationships in Kenya's television broadcasting-scape

Introduction

This chapter seeks to unpack the first research question: *To what extent and in which forms has the television consumer participated in the broadcasting-scape in Kenya?* The aim is to contextualise and critically engage with the broadcasting and UGC space in Kenya, and to understand the prevailing contexts and relationships between television broadcasters and 'prosumers' in terms of content generation, ownership, distribution and consumption. Two themes are explored in this chapter: 1) 'Reimagining the Kenyan television broadcasting space: AUGC as an emancipatory platform', which takes a critical-historical reading of the broadcasting landscape in Kenya from its independence from Britain in the early 1960s, to the present time; and 2) 'Illusions of participation: power and empowerment in Kenya's contemporary television broadcasting scape', which samples prime-time television content from four contemporary television broadcasters in Kenya, and critically unpacks forms of participation in programming with high ARs. The latter theme seeks to contextualise and critically engage with contemporary participatory discourses on Kenyan television. The premise is that discourses on active and meaningful participation and inclusion in social and cultural spaces in Kenya are not just of significant scholarly and intellectual value, they are also germane in the re-building and democratisation of the Kenyan nation in the light of the post-2007 election violence, which exposed deep and historical 'tribal' fragmentations.

These arguments are anchored in conceptual discourses on convergence culture as well as debates on self-representation.

Reimagining the Kenyan television broadcasting space: AUGC as an emancipatory platform

A critical-historical reading of the Kenyan broadcasting space reveals a recurring motif in which the political and economic elites have repeatedly wielded a stranglehold over broadcast platforms and instruments, and, it would seem, maintained exclusionary policies for their own benefit. This group has moreover usurped the role of not only agenda setting, but also, it might be argued, ownership of the national narrative, relegating the majority of Kenyan citizens to the role of spectators in their own nation's story. Significant sections of the Kenyan citizenry have therefore largely remained, at best, passive participants in the narration of their nation and, at worst, victims of policies which have excluded their perspectives and interests from enjoying any articulation within a broadcasting sector which should be (constitutionally, morally and normatively speaking) a national resource.

The unwitting and almost unconscious ceding of these broadcasting resources, rights and responsibilities, among other national resources, by the Kenyan citizenry has been meticulously choreographed over generations of governments, from the colonial era to the contemporary administrations.[15] The effect has been that holders of Kenya's collective memory have, in Billig's (1995) words, "forgotten to remember" that they have both a moral and a constitutional right and responsibility to contribute to and benefit from these national resources. This forgetting to remember has become so deeply entrenched in the citizens' psyche that they have normalised it, and are almost oblivious to the travesties they endure on a daily basis.

This chapter engages with Bhabha's (1994) cultural difference theory and Billig's (1995) ideas on banal nationalism in two ways: first, it interrogates the broadcasting space in Kenya from its inception in the 1920s (see Heath 1986:51) to contemporary times. The Kenyan context seems to be the antithesis

[15] The models, events and practices were, in some instances, official government policies, but in many cases they were unofficial events supported by the government, either by omission or commission.

of the principles of cultural difference and banal nationalism, and unravelling these will potentially offer some insight into the need for urgent intervention. The second approach is to propose what I refer to as AUGC for television broadcasting as a potential intervention in response to the aforementioned theories.

In his seminal work, *Banal nationalism* (1995), while theorising on "everyday nationalisms and nationalisms of the subordinated and the peripheral", Billig (1995:37–38) convincingly proposes that

> national identity is not only something which is thought to be natural to possess, but also something natural to remember ... this remembering, nevertheless, involves a forgetting, or rather there is a complex dialectic of remembering and forgetting. The remembering not being experienced as remembering, is, in effect, forgotten.

Billig coined the term "banal nationalism" to capture what he believes are the 'unconscious' and mundane practices that propagate the continued existence of nations. He argues that reproducing nations in this way does not happen as if by magic, but that "banal practices rather than conscious choice or collective acts of imagination, are required" (Billig 1995:6). His argument is that the continued existence of nationalism manifests in the everyday events lived by citizens of these nations.

Billig (1995:6) also contends that any nation reproduces itself within a wider context which includes other nations around the world and, "for such daily reproductions to occur, one might hypothesise that a whole complex of beliefs, assumptions, habits, representations and practices must also be reproduced". Most importantly, he interestingly posits that "this complex must be reproduced in a banally mundane way, for the world of nations is the everyday world, the familiar terrain of contemporary times".

This view concurs with Bhabha's (1994:209) suggestion that "the scraps, patches and rags of daily life must be repeatedly turned into the signs of a

coherent national culture, while the very act of the narrative performance interpellates a growing circle of national subjects". He is, however, quick to caution that, "in the production of the nation as narration, there is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious recursive strategy of the performative". Bhabha's (1994:209) conclusion is that this act of splitting enables the conceptually ambivalent modern society to "become the site of writing [read narrating] the nation".

Billig and Bhabha's respective principles offer the foundations of the cultural difference theory, as espoused by Bhabha (1994:232), who compellingly proposes:

> The analytic of Cultural Difference intervenes to transform the scenario of articulation – not simply to disclose the rationale of political discrimination. It changes the position of enunciation and the relations of address within it; not only what is said but where it is said; not simply the logic of articulation but the topos of enunciation. […] It is constituted through the locus of the Other which suggests both that the object of identification is ambivalent, and, more significantly, that the agency of identification is never pure or holistic but always constituted in a process of substitution, displacement or projection.

What Bhabha advocates as a central tenet of cultural difference is a context in which the minority, or broadly those on the periphery of the political (and, as can be argued, economic) centre are not simply *not* invited to the centre, but conversely and additionally, that a radical disruption and deconstruction of the existing hegemonic interactions takes place. In cultural difference, the point of reference for discourse is dynamic and oscillates concurrently from the perspective of the 'othered' as well as the centre.

Cultural difference as a theory therefore is a useful tool with which to critically engage with the issue of narrating Kenya in the broadcasting space. It offers a lens through which the concerns and interests of those on the political, economic and hegemonic periphery can be addressed. The tenets of the cultural

deference theory are anchored in integral questions raised by Bhabha (1994:211), some of which will be addressed in this study:

> How do we conceive of the 'splitting' of the national subject? How do we articulate cultural differences within the vacillation of ideology in which the national discourse also participates, sliding ambivalently from one enunciatory position to another? What are the forms of life struggling to be represented in that 'unruly' time of national culture? [...] what might be the cultural and political effects of the liminality of the nation, the margins of modernity, which come to be signified in the narrative temporalities of splitting, ambivalence and vacillation?

Kenya's political eras

Before delving into a critical reading of Kenya's broadcasting landscape during the different eras, it is important to acknowledge that international broadcasters have played a significant role in shaping Kenya's mediascape. The BBC, for instance, has radio and television broadcasts in Kiswahili and English. Other international players such as CNN, Al Jazeera, CCTV Africa and CNBC Africa, among several others, also have a presence in the country. This historical reading of the broadcasting-scape in Kenya, however, will focus on domestic media because the central premise of the thesis is that Kenya's political, economic and media elites have systematically maintained control over these platforms and instruments for their own benefit, at the expense of the majority of Kenyans.

The colonial era

When did this "forgetting to remember", as suggested by Billig, begin? How was the choreography of the ceding of these broadcasting resources, rights and responsibilities by Kenyan nationals crafted? Research suggests it began in the late 1920s, when the then British colonial government introduced broadcasting in Kenya to cater mainly for Europeans residing in the colony. Heath (1986:51) points out that "Kenyaradio, which was the first radio broadcasting station in Kenya, introduced in 1928, was directed towards English-speaking white settlers, rather than African Kenyans or Asian railway workers, as one of

the 'attractive' packages used to lure them to settle in Kenya". She proposes that the primary aim of radio was to entertain listeners and create a cultural link between the homes and missions of Europeans (who were by then scattered across the vast spaces of Kenya) and Britain.

Van der Veur (2002:82) adds that the Belgians, British and French ideas of colonisation involved organising the public and private lives of Africans, in such a way as to establish them as subordinates, but "while a legal framework was in place in the West, the model imposed on colonial Africa had no such pretensions". Here, Van der Veur could be suggesting one of two things: first, that the legal framework in existence in colonial Africa was so weak structurally (in terms of control and execution) that the colonial administration in the colonies could arbitrarily manipulate it at will or completely ignore it without repercussions. Or, he might be suggesting that a legal framework such the one in existence in the West was simply not applied to the African colonies. Either way, Hailey (cited in Van der Veur 2002:82) points out that "local governors invariably based decisions regarding broadcasting on perceived administrative benefits, and on the wishes of the settler communities, rather than in response to the needs of the indigenous population".

Even when radio broadcasting was finally introduced to Kenyans during World War II by the colonial government, it was mainly, according to the Ministry of Communications and Information report of 2007, aimed at keeping the friends and family of African soldiers up to date on the war as it unfolded. Whether this was an incentive or a trick to sway indigenous people in the colonies to participate in the war, or whether the intention was to genuinely inform listeners about Africans fighting for the British in the war, the intention behind this move was clearly not to benefit the indigenous people, but rather the colonialists. Heath (1986:87) believes that the main motivation for availing these services to Kenyans at that point in time was to rally support for war veterans who were fighting for the British.

But even these broadcasts, the report adds, were relayed in Swahili, Luo, Kikuyu, Nandi, Luhya, Kamba and Arabic[16] (Ministry of Communications and Information 2007). These were, arguably, the beginnings of the 'big tribe' mentality, which on a hegemonic pyramid elevated some language groups, and either overlooked or simply ignored the other 37 'smaller' language groups.[17] This divide-and-rule strategy which the British colonialists used repeatedly (not only in Kenya but also in some of their other colonies) culminated in a highly polarised nation-state, divided along tribal lines, in contemporary Kenya. Kikuyu, Luhya, Kalenjin, Luo and Kamba, respectively, are the five most populous language groups in Kenya, according to the 2009 population and housing census.[18] The elite in these language groups have subsequently spurred ethnic sentiments amongst their numerically strong populations, so as to dominate the sociopolitical and economic spaces in the country.

It is debatable whether the colonial government's intention was to build a nation-state in which a sense of belonging, on the part of its citizens, was its core aspiration, or whether the aim was simply to explore and exploit the resources of the land – including its people. What emerged during this administration, as Billig (1995) points out, is that the everyday reproduction of specific beliefs, assumptions, habits, representations and practices became the norm, and, as argued in subsequent administrations, the culture.

The Jomo Kenyatta era

The nascent postcolonial administration, led by the state's first president, Jomo Kenyatta, who hailed from one of the 'big five' language groups in Kenya, the Kikuyu, had an invaluable and unique opportunity to disrupt and transform the colonial broadcasting model through its conception, articulation, forms of

[16] The Nandi are the biggest language group of the grouping later referred to as the Kalenjin-speaking people.
[17] The Kikuyu, Luhya, Kalenjin, Luo and Kamba elites have subsequently galvanised the ethnic sentiments of their fellow language speakers to dominate the sociopolitical and economic milieus. Kiswahili became the unifying national language, while Arabic has gradually faded away and is mostly spoken in pockets along the Kenyan coast.
[18] Nandi, together with a number of other similar dialects, forms what the 2009 Kenyan population and housing census shows to be the third-largest language group, the Kalenjin. Omosule (1989) describes 'Kalenjin' as a corporate name for the 'Nandi-speaking tribes' that came to prominence during the reign of Kenya's second president, Daniel arap Moi.

representation and inclusivity of the myriad divergent interests in narrating Kenya. Instead, as Ligaga (2008:52) points out, "the Kenyan government, alongside other government institutions, adopted existing structures put in place by the colonial [regime] and continued to use them as they had been used in the pre-independence era".

Arguably, the first postcolonial administration did not simply entrench the colonial broadcasting model – they stretched its (mis)use to its tensile strength, adopting an extreme authoritarian personal use of the resource. These were the beginnings of what Musila (2008:111) aptly describes as "the big politician" syndrome, which she unpacks as

> [a] common figure of political lore in Kenyan social imaginaries, [that] can be traced back to the repressive one-party state during the Moi regime and further back to the Kenyatta regime. Often deeply anchored in patronage relations, the big politician was believed to command so much power as to border on the untouchable, enjoying comprehensive immunity guaranteed by his uninhibited access to state institutions and resources. […] in Kenya, the big politician is a unique variant of Bayart's (1993) Big Man, as a signifier of economic and political power [...].

Hyden and Leslie (2002:9) point out that Kenya became the first East African country to bring its broadcasting services under the control of the state. Ligaga (2008:55) further explains:

> As a result, VOK (Voice of Kenya) was formed […] by an act of parliament, replacing KBC that was associated with the colonial government. The name change ensured that the government would have total control of broadcasting without risking colonial interference.

Heath (1986:191) argues that "the idea of an independent broadcasting station was not popular with the new [Kenyan] African government". She substantiates this by quoting Achieng Oneko, a Luo-speaker and Kenya's first Minister of Information and Broadcasting post-independence, as arguing that

broadcasting "provided the new state with a useful tool for preaching and maintaining nationalism and pride that Kenya needed at the time". She points out that Oneko argued that it was impossible to achieve national unity by remaining neutral, and that "KBC's purpose [was] to help in bringing about national unity, to help […] exploit and conserve […] economic resources and inspire […] [the Kenyan] people to have greater self-respect" (Heath 1986:191). It is arguable, however, from historical records, whether the need to wield control of the broadcaster, on the part of the government in the role of custodian, was done on behalf of the Kenyan people, or whether this was simply a game of musical chairs in which the Kenyatta government displaced the colonial government while maintaining existing structures.

Cox (cited in Ligaga 2008:57), for instance, points out that "the opposition party was not allowed to air its views on VOK because the government felt that they would incite people", when in reality government feared that its leadership would be criticised if it granted the opposition sufficient space to do so. In the context of the then single broadcasting platform, the VOK, what the state was doing, in essence, was to stifle alternative and counter-narratives, thereby monopolising, owning and totalising the national narrative. Other voices struggled to be represented during that 'unruly' time in Kenya's national culture, as alluded to by Bhabha, while the big politician and the elite from the main language groups entrenched themselves both politically and economically. Having experienced these exploitative models of broadcasting from two foundational, successive administrations, the Kenyan citizenry subconsciously normalised the model and began to forget that it was an atrocity. The act of ceding their rights and responsibilities to narrating their nation's story was now being institutionalised, and the common axiom, 'the media has its owners', was gaining credence.

The Toroitich arap Moi era

It is perhaps during the 24 years when the Kalenjin-speaking Daniel Toroitich arap Moi was president (1978–2002) that the most radical shifts in the Kenyan broadcasting-scape occurred. These, arguably, can be attributed to his lengthy

tenure in power, perhaps what Kariuki (1996) refers to as "Paramoia" and Throup and Hornsby (1998:39) as his "new paranoid style of Kenyan politics" resulting from his tumultuous experiences in the years preceding and immediately after his ascension to the presidency. An attempted coup in 1982 was a defining moment in Moi's approach to broadcasting, as were pressures from religious groups, civil society and the West, and a dwindling economy in the late 80s and early 90s. Throup and Hornby (1998:26) sum up this era by succinctly arguing that "after the ascension of President Daniel Arap Moi […] Kenyans' freedoms diminished. The state became more authoritarian, dissent was stifled and political power increasingly became more focused on specific ethnic groups."

It was in October 1976, according to Throup and Hornby (1998:20), that notable Kikuyu politicians who had gained prominence because of Kenyatta's presidency and "who had long resented Moi's continued occupancy of the vice presidency, attempted to block his automatic ascension to the presidency on Kenyatta's death".[19] Ogot (1995:191) points out that his rivals "believed [Moi] was not ambitious and therefore referred to him as the passing cloud". Throup and Hornsby (1998:27) add that "Moi was not Kenyatta, [as] he had held onto the vice presidency for 11 years because he was a compromise candidate who appeared not to pose a threat to the major power blocks behind the throne". They contend that Moi did not have the recognition or the legitimacy afforded to Kenyatta as the 'father of independence' and conclude that Moi "also lacked the education and the intellect required personally to master the civil service and politics to the extent that Kenyatta had".

"On August 1, 1982, rank and file members of Kenya Air Force (KAF) at GADU (Ground Air Defence Unit) base in Embakasi in Nairobi staged an unsuccessful coup d'etat" *(East African*, July 2002, cited in Oluoch 2003:31). One of the key institutions to be seized by the masterminds of the coup attempt was the VOK, the then public broadcaster.

[19] The Kenyan constitution at the time provided for the automatic assumption of the presidency by the vice-president in case of the death, incapacitation or resignation of the president. Ogot (1995) estimated Kenyatta to be in his late 80s at the time.

These events could have evinced Moi's paranoia and hardened his resolve to gain greater authoritarian control, and he subsequently "turned his attention towards the control of basic institutions such as the ruling party, the university, the public service, the judiciary and parliament [and the broadcasters]" (Ogot 1995:201). Ligaga (2008:59) adds that "the Presidential Press Unit's boss [and Moi's spokesman] Lee Njiru's duties [were] to scrutinize and censor VOK's announcements and messages before they were released to the public", and that

> there was a pointed lack of freedom of speech and expression which accompanied most cultural productions in Kenya. The cultural policy that was developed under Moi's rule demanded a more stringent hold over cultural productions, as opposed to what had been in place during both Kenyatta's government and the colonial state.

During Moi's presidency, for instance, all news bulletins had to start with a story about the president and his activities, and this would typically take up 15 minutes of the 30-minute prime-time news bulletin in Kiswahili at 19:00 and in English at 21:00. On Sundays, the news bulletins' first story would always be about the president attending a church service somewhere in the country.

According to Heath (cited in Ligaga 2008:61), " Moi, who had until 1988 ruled the nation with an iron fist desperately wanted to change the face of his regime, in order to attract foreign investment and present his government as a democratic regime". Maxon and Ndege (1995:151) explain that during the first decade of Moi's tenure, Kenya's economy was subjected to economic problems originating both within the country and stemming from the international community. Kariuki (1996) adds that alternative voices from the churches, the law society of Kenya, Kenya's democratic movements and the international community increased their opposition to Moi's regime, compelling him to liberalise the broadcasting sector.

Although KTN, a second broadcaster, was introduced, the Moi family and their close associates owned it (Githaiga 2011). Heath (cited in Ligaga 2008:65) argues that "Moi, in introducing a second broadcasting station and in making KBC independent of the government, was not in fact keen to relinquish control of the media".[20] Kariithi (2003:[sp]) concurs, adding that "although about two dozen applications for new radio and television licenses were submitted between 1985 and 1995, the government […] stubbornly refused to allow full private sector participation in the industry, and instead used heavy-handed tactics to regulate electronic news flows". As an example he refers to KTN delaying the live transmission of CNN's news, even though the signal was received clearly – obviously the aim, he suggests, was to "sieve out anything which could be unpalatable to the government" (Kariithi 2003). Heath (cited in Ligaga 2008:66) contends that "if anything, [Moi] now had more control, while giving the impression that the media had been liberalized. The establishment of KBC and KTN was a move to increase the confidence of foreign investors while retaining control of broadcasting." Heath (1986) concludes that the firing of the news editor, Rose Lukalo, in January 1992, for running the news that former vice-president Mwai Kibaki had resigned from government, revealed, for instance, the tight control Moi's government still had over broadcasting.

In the Moi era, media control was not just exerted through a control of media content, but also the broadcast languages via his (in)famous *nyayo* philosophy. One of *nyayo*'s doctrines was to stop *ukabila,* which would apparently sow divisions among Kenyans (see Hansard 1985–1995).[21] This was used as an excuse to curtail and disallow broadcasting in Kenya's local languages. The concern with the *nyayo* philosophy was that a number of its tenets were reactive and retaliatory to perceived (or real) opposition and threats to Moi's presidency, and therefore conflated his deep paranoia with cultural life. This paranoia became a constant trait during his leadership (see Kariuki 1996). Rambaud (2009) informs us that during the Moi regime, broadcasting in Kenyan vernacular languages was disallowed by his administration. Viewed from Wa

[20] The public broadcaster, VOK, had been renamed KBC in an attempt to portray it as a new institution.
[21] *Ukabila* is Kiswahili for 'tribalism'.

Thiongo's (1986) perspective this was a travesty to local culture, as culture is carried through language.

Again, these events can be seen as the antithesis of cultural difference, as proposed by Bhabha. Moi's regime was intent on stifling participation in national discourse in the broadcasting space (among other spaces of cultural and political articulation), and imposed a monolithic enunciatory position. Other voices struggling to be represented were relegated to the periphery of the national narrative. These were the everyday realities of the people, subsumed by and entrenched in (perhaps unwittingly or even unconsciously) their daily political and social existence. Billig suggests quite convincingly that the reproduction of nations occurs in unconscious, everyday practices, and in this regard Moi's 'big politician' syndrome was forced through as the dominant ideology.

The Mwai Kibaki era

The formative days of the Kibaki presidency (another Kikuyu leader) in December 2002 were marked by perhaps the highest ever levels of optimism in postcolonial Kenya, arguably only comparable to the euphoria at the beginning of the Jomo Kenyatta presidency. A Gallup International annual end-of-year survey, which interviewed more than 67 500 people in 65 countries (in November and December 2002), found that Kenyans were the most optimistic people in the world.

The broadcasting-scape manifested some of this optimism. Rambaud (2009:57) points out that "there was [a] mushrooming of commercial private radio stations broadcasting in English, Kiswahili and local vernaculars, which had been disallowed during Daniel Arap Moi's era", which "made it possible to disseminate information, especially to the rural fraternity", and this "greatly reduced the monopoly of the state-owned Kenya Broadcasting Corporation".

Indirectly, 3 May 2005 was the hallmark of the Kibaki administration's interference in Kenya's broadcasting landscape: several local and international

media reported that Kenya's first lady, Lucy Kibaki, had stormed into the Nation Media Group's (NMG) newsroom, destroyed and confiscated notes and other material, and assaulted a cameraman. At the time, NMG was perceived to be highly critical of the president. According to Ogola (2011:123), the first lady complained "about the manner in which the group's flagship title, the *Daily Nation*, had been covering her family". This event jolted the broadcasting landscape which had, until that day in Kibaki's presidency, been reasonably untainted by obvious and direct government interference. Arguably, though, the incident was probably not directly sanctioned by the government and might have embarrassed the administration as much as it did the citizenry. Government's failure to condemn it publicly or take any action, legal or diplomatic, against the first lady may, however, have made it complicit.

The Kibaki administration's direct hand in 'interfering' with the broadcasting space in Kenya became apparent in March 2006. Ogola (2011:123) points out that "the Standard Media Group's (SMG) head office in Nairobi was raided by masked gunmen who shut down the group's KTN studios, confiscated several computers from the newsroom, disabled printers and destroyed copies of the following day's newspaper". According to Ogola (2011:123), "the government had previously expressed indignation at the group's criticism of the Mwai Kibaki administration". When asked about the incident, the internal security minister at the time, John Michuki, responded with the (in)famous statement that went viral: "If you rattle a snake, be prepared to be bitten" (Ogola 2011:124). The statement could have been interpreted as a veiled warning to those broadcasting entities critical of the government and the Kibaki administration, to expect direct and firm repercussions – tactics that had been used more overtly during arap Moi's administration.

Literature from this administration's first five-year term in office strongly suggests that Kibaki was not entirely 'hands-off' when it came to the broadcasting space in Kenya. His control of the mediascape was effected not only through the restriction of content (which he did), but also through the fostering and funding of coverage that he deemed positive to himself and his

administration. Kibaki arguably (mis)used the Royal Media Services (RMS) in ways similar to arap Moi's (ab)use of the KBC – and in return, RMS flourished. Rambaud (2009:70) argues that Samuel Macharia, the proprietor of RMS, "was able to expand his chain of companies during the Kibaki era, thanks to radio frequencies allocated by the Kibaki government from 2003". Three years into the Kibaki administration, RMS, according to Githaiga (2007:35), owned 12 radio stations and the coverage of Radio Citizen, their flagship channel, exceeded that of any private station. Citizen TV and radio's phenomenal growth during the Kibaki presidency saw it eclipse KBC as the most watched station (see Githaiga 2007; Rambaud 2009). Rambaud (2009:70) claims that Kibaki could "bank on [the] undying support from Citizen TV [since] the group proprietor, Samuel Macharia, is a close friend of Kibaki and they are both from Nyeri, a County in central Kenya, in the mount Kenya region. [Macharia] supported the Mwai Kibaki campaign in the 2002 elections."[22]

A media monitoring study (27 November to 10 December 2007), led by Strategic Research and Public Relations and financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (see Rambaud 2009:68) shows Citizen TV's blatant campaigning for Kibaki in the run-up to the 2007 elections. Of the three leading privately owned stations, Citizen TV allocated 56 per cent of its airtime to Kibaki, compared to 27 per cent for his main rival, Raila Odinga. KTN, conversely, apportioned 35 per cent for Kibaki compared to 33 per cent for Odinga, while NTV's ratio was 33:37 per cent. While the latter two broadcasters made an attempt at equitably apportioning airtime, Citizen TV clearly favoured Kibaki.

In the run-up to the 2013 elections, RMS's fortunes changed when its owner, Macharia, supported Kibaki's former rival, Odinga, in the presidential race against Uhuru Kenyatta. The Communication Commission of Kenya (CCK) shut down six RMS broadcast transmitters, allegedly because they had been acquired illegally. A report in the *Standard* newspaper indicated that

[22] Citizen TV and radio are the flagship broadcasters of the RMS group.

> [a] further 22 FM and 2 TV unauthorized frequencies which are said to have been illegally acquired by Royal Media Services between 2008 and 2012 are pending adjudication in the courts. The six are part of 17 transmitters put up illegally by Royal Media Services in the recent past without a license from CCK, and therefore in contravention of the law. (see Oyaya 2013; *Royal Media Services Ltd v. Attorney General* 2013)

The newspaper further quotes CCK Director-General, Francis Wangusi (cited in Oyaya 2013), as saying "in some instances, the interferences are so intense that the services of other broadcasters using duly authorised frequencies have been rendered completely inoperable [...] the Commission shall in the next few days shut down the remaining 11 illegal stations to ensure that all players in the broadcasting sector operate within the law." These events could be construed to imply that RMS received unfair advantages over its competitors, and that this was sanctioned by the Kibaki presidency to reciprocate for favourable coverage to the administration. However, when the broadcaster opted to support an opponent, government's favour was systematically (and, in some instances brutally) withdrawn. The political elite were once again orchestrating the narration of Kenya.

Rambaud (2009:69) contends that "KBC radio and television became a government mouthpiece after the defeat of Mwai Kibaki in the 2005 referendum", with editorial and production policies systematically beginning to show ethnic bias. He adds that "in 2007, KBC extensively campaigned for Mwai Kibaki, covering Kibaki's Party of National Unity (PNU) rallies live for hours in the afternoon while Raila Odinga only got a few minutes in the evening bulletin".[23]

[23] Kenya held a referendum for a proposed new constitution in 2005. Mwai Kibaki campaigned for the YES group in support of the proposed constitution which was defeated by the NO group led by Raila Odinga, amongst others. The proposed constitution was voted down by a majority 58 per cent of Kenyan voters.

The formative stages of the Uhuru Kenyatta era

In his opening speech during Kenya's 11th parliament in April 2013, Uhuru Kenyatta, Kenya's fourth president and son of Jomo Kenyatta, was quoted as saying: "… we will legislate to increase local content to 60% from the current 40% in local free to air TV channels" (Capital FM blog). The speech demonstrated an attempt to grow local content and consequently stimulate the growth of broadcasting in the country. Media reports, however, indicate that K24 Television, owned by Mediamax Network, is on a massive rebranding and rebuilding phase quite similar to what Citizen TV did during Mwai Kibaki's first term. Mediamax, formerly known as TV Africa Holdings, is a media firm "linked to the Kenyatta family", according to *Business Daily* (Wa Micheni 2009). Just like Citizen TV did before establishing itself as the leading broadcaster in Kenya, K24 has "poached senior reporters and anchors from Citizen TV and KTN's Swahili news teams" (see vibeweekly.com). This particular motif, established during Kenya's colonial era, in which the political and economic elite wielded a stranglehold on broadcasting platforms and instruments, seems to be recurring.

This section has identified several forms of media control prevalent during Kenya's different political eras. To summarise: the colonial government controlled the airwaves by denying the resource to indigenous people, opting to rather broadcast only to colonial settlers. When the airwaves were finally available to the Kenyans, radio was used as a carrot to entice local people to fight for the British in World War II. The content at the time focused on informing locals about the war, rather than their everyday lives. Kenya's first postcolonial government, led by Jomo Kenyatta, also presented aspects of media control to benefit the regime at the exclusion of the majority of Kenyans. It established media control by denying access to voices perceived to be oppositional or threatening to its ideologies, and used the publicly funded broadcaster VOK as a government mouthpiece.

Moi's government perhaps demonstrated the tightest grip in controlling the media. Just as Kenyatta's government had done, his government denied perceived oppositional and marginalised voices access and representation in broadcasting. His government also intimidated broadcasting professionals against broadcasting stories deemed unfavourable to the regime, by either firing or arresting them. When the airwaves were eventually opened up through pressure exerted by local and international communities, Moi tightened his grip on the broadcasting space through ownership of the first privately owned broadcasting station, KTN. His administration also slowed down the process of issuing broadcasting licences to other private entities. Moi's government maintained media control by prescribing which languages could be heard over the airwaves.

Mwai Kibaki's and Uhuru Kenyatta's governments similarly maintained media control for their respective regimes' benefit, using similar tactics, i.e., controlling access to the airwaves and denying other voices an opportunity to participate in these spaces. Both governments intimidated private broadcasters whose stories were not favourable to their administrations by threatening to withhold government advertising or cancelling broadcasting licences. Both governments supported or established ownership of private broadcasting entities that covered them favourably. These entities were, in many instances, accused of unfairly receiving broadcasting advantages such as licences, bandwidth and government contracts and funds that were not accessible to competitors in similar ways or quantities.

AUGC

The concept of convergence – specifically that of social and digital media – offers not just an alternative site for reimagining and reconfiguring the broadcasting model in Kenya, but also a platform that potentially upholds the principles of the cultural difference theory. Convergence as an intervention can not only efficiently transform the monopolised and exclusivist scenario of articulation in Kenya's broadcasting space that Bhabha advocates, it can also change the position of enunciation, especially for disenfranchised and 'othered'

groups, as well as relations of address within those groups (i.e., minority language groups, politically and economically marginalised sectors).

Henry Jenkins (2006:254) defines convergence as

> representing a paradigm shift – a move from media-specific content towards content that flows across multiple media channels, towards the increased interdependence of communication systems, towards multiple ways of accessing media content, and toward ever more complex relations between top-down corporate media and bottom-up participatory culture.

Social and digital media offer new platforms for reimagining and reconceptualising traditional ways of narrating nations not only on Web 2.0 sites, but also across traditional broadcasting platforms. D'Haenens and Bardoel (2008:353) propose that media consumption patterns and the social acceptance of new media will "develop gradually", observing that "youngstars […] make extensive use of digital media on their own terms and conditions, mainly by virtue of computer socialization at a very young age".

The director of BBC New Media and Technology, Ashley Highfield (cited in Jenkins 2006:253), boldly and eloquently predicts that

> Future TV may be unrecognizable from today, defined not just by linear TV channels, packaged and scheduled by television executives, but instead will resemble more of a kaleidoscope, thousands of streams of content, some indistinguishable as actual channels. These streams will mix together broadcasters' content and programs, and our viewers' contributions. At the simplest level – audiences will want to organize and reorganize content the way they want it. They'll add comments to our programs, vote on them, and generally mess about with them. But at another level, audiences will want to create these streams of video themselves from scratch, with or without our help. At this end of the spectrum, the traditional 'monologue broadcaster' to 'grateful viewer' relationship will break down.

Inspired by the views of D'Haenens and Bardoel on the use of digital media on users' own terms, and Highfields' prediction that the traditional monologue-broadcaster-to-grateful-viewer relationship will break down because audiences wish to create and distribute their own content, it is possible to propose – as an intervention to the Kenyan broadcasting space, and specifically for television broadcasting – what I call active user-generated content or AUGC.

AUGC, as used in this context, refers to instances in which citizens collaborate and directly participate in the conceptualisation, design, ownership, distribution and broadcasting of televisual content. This contrasts directly with the current dominant practice of passive user-generated content or PUGC, which essentially entails content such as phone-ins, comments on social media and other platforms, letters and faxes to the broadcasters, citizens appearing as guests on television shows, and viewers' or listeners' tips or leads on potential stories to broadcasters, pictures and footage supplied by the public, etc. to already existing programmes and concepts in which ownership resides wholly and exclusively with the producers or broadcasters.

This definition of AUGC goes beyond citizen journalism and its permutations such as participatory/street/public journalism, which tend to be associated with content on news and information. AUGC would entail other forms of personal and communal expression and narration, including (but not limited to) the realm of news and information, expressed in a multitude of ways (e.g., experimental, arty or avant-garde approaches) in addition to the more conventional approaches and narrative structures. AUGC would be located in multiple platforms and on several digital formats, either concurrently or at different times. Whereas AUGC is not necessarily a new concept, and aspects of it may be experienced in some form in a few broadcasters in Kenya, it is a term that will be able to capture this specific type of content for television and other broadcasting platforms, thus encouraging research and engagement with and in it.

The contention here is that AUGC will potentially intervene to effectively transform the monopolised and exclusivist scenario of articulation within Kenya's broadcasting space (see Bhabha 1994), to mediate on everyday nationalisms and the nationalisms of the subordinated and the peripheral (see Billig 1995), and that it will change the position of enunciation, especially from the disenfranchised, the peripheral and 'othered' groups and the relations of address. Because of the ubiquitous nature in which content narrating the nation is conceived, made, distributed and owned in AUGC, this will most certainly encourage an adherence to the principles of cultural difference which, in Bhabha's (1994:212) words, "would ensure that no political ideologies could claim transcendent or metaphysical authority for themselves". The AUGC approach would provide a platform for engaging with what Bhabha (1994:212) refers to as "the appropriate [space] for representing those residual and emergent meanings and practices in the margins of the contemporary experiences of society".

Recent developments in the North of Africa and the Middle East have demonstrated that regimes formerly perceived as being authoritarian and wielding control over the media and other broadcasting instruments have been unable to sustain this stranglehold due to the emergence, increased use and accessibility of digital and social media platforms. Howard and Hussain (2011) suggest that digital and social media platforms played a pivotal role in facilitating the so-called Arab Spring in parts of North Africa and the Middle East. They argue that these platforms enabled "people interested in democracy [to] build extensive networks, create social capital, and organize political action with a speed and on a scale never seen before" (Howard & Hussain 2011:35). "Digital media became the tool that allowed social movements to reach once-unachievable goals (of opportunities for action), even as authoritarian forces […] devised both high-and low-tech countermeasures" (Howard & Hussain 2011:36). Arguably, these platforms will inevitably infiltrate the broadcasting space with or without the help of broadcasters, as predicted by Highfield, although (as discussed in chapter 7) the elite are also attempting new ways to bring their control into these spaces.

It seems possible to suggest that AUGC will not only have an impact on peripheral citizens, but will also give broadcasters an invaluable opportunity to reinvent themselves and remain relevant players in future broadcasting spaces. The Eastman Kodak bankruptcy is an apt example of the dwindling clout of a powerful entity through its failure to reinvent itself, especially in a contemporary world driven by digital technology (see Chunka 2012; the *Economist* 2012). Chunka (2012) argues that Kodak's 'denial' of (and refusal to accept and adapt to) digital technology led to its decades-long decline, which culminated in the company filing for bankruptcy in January 2012.

Illusions of participation: power and empowerment in Kenya's contemporary television broadcasting-scape

Digital media workflows continue to offer spaces and opportunities for participation, emancipation, remediation and inclusivity, gradually reshaping constituents traditionally perceived as consumers of media content into the now common lexes of co-creators, prosumers, prod-users or actors. Theorists and practitioners in television broadcasting have consistently argued and predicted that the traditional 'monologue broadcaster' directed towards the 'grateful viewer' will be significantly disrupted, and that the prosumer or actor will have a more active role in television content workflow (see Highfield cited in Jenkins 2006; Jenkins 2006; d'Haenens & Bardoel 2008; Thumim 2012).

Although many contemporary television broadcasters around the world continue to create a perception of increasing and robust audience participation in televised content, in Kenya this is certainly not the case. It can be argued that significant forms of current participation on television are illusory and futile, as they largely entrench television's balance of power among the media elites.[24] The proposal made here is that these forms of participation are passive, minimalist (Carpentier 2011) and entail engaging with content produced by media elites

[24] The term 'media elites' is used in this article to refer to media professionals and media owners, celebrities and experts as a binary to ordinary people (see later chapters).

rather than actively participating in the process of content creation. This is, arguably, a stagnation during a time which Ellis (2000:51) refers to as television's era of scarcity: "television came from [the] elite, and it remained an honour for anyone outside that elite to be 'invited' […] on the screen."

Anchoring the debates on conceptual discourses about convergence culture and self-representation, the Kenyan television broadcasting-scape still extensively manifests the traditional approaches of 'old media', in which content workflows are still largely (and in many cases almost exclusively) conceived, shaped, distributed, controlled and beneficial to the media elites. This argument is premised on a critical textual analysis of prime-time television content sampled from four television broadcasters in Kenya. The analysis suggests that, at best, Kenya's citizenry are afforded token and peripheral participation in contemporary television workflows and that their participation is mainly non-existent. This research seeks to contextualise and critically engage with contemporary participatory discourses on Kenyan television – an area that has not received sufficient critical attention from scholars in the region, which explains the author's decision to spur debate on the topic.

This conversation's context is a backdrop against which a nation-state is still recovering from the 2007 post-election violence which exposed the deep 'tribal' fragmentation that has been simmering since its independence in 1963. Kenya, which has over 42 language groups (locally referred to as tribes), saw over 2 000 of its citizens killed in the post-2007 election period. The deaths were primarily attributed to tribal rivalry in Kenya (Somerville 2011).[25] Discourses on active and meaningful participation and inclusion in social and cultural spaces are not just of significant democratic, scholarly or intellectual value, they are also

[25] The current president, Uhuru Kenyatta, and deputy president William Ruto were indicted at the International Criminal Court of Justice at The Hague (ICC) for crimes against humanity, for their central roles in the post-election 'tribal' violence. The charges have since been dropped for lack of evidence and the disappearance or non-cooperation of witnesses.

pertinent in respect of the building and continued existence of the Kenyan nation.

As pointed out in chapter 3, Jenkins (2006) proposes that the term 'convergence' be understood beyond its traditional, technological sense, of a confluence of "multiple media functions within the same device". Instead, he connotes a different meaning, namely that of a 'cultural shift' in which consumers of any content "are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content" (Jenkins 2006:3). Jenkins (2006:3) seems to suggest that convergence is not necessarily technology-, application- or platform-bound or confined, but is rather a shifting of "relationships between existing technologies, industries, markets, and audiences". He argues that convergence "offers the logic by which media industries operate and by which media consumers process news and entertainment" (Jenkins 2006:15).

A central tenet of Jenkins' definition of convergence includes participatory culture, in which both the consumers and producers of content 'actively' play in Habermas' communicative space and both parties derive value from every stage of the process as a whole. In his seminal book *Media and participation: A site of ideological-democratic struggle*, Carpentier (2011:67) proposes that media participation affords the 'ordinary person' the "opportunity for mediated participation in public debate and for self-representation in the variety of public spaces that characterize the social". He sees these discursive structures as significant in making provision for the "(co-)structuring of discursive positionings and other material practices". Carpentier (2011:67) also sees the media sphere as serving as a location in which citizens' views and experiences can be expressed, and where they can hear or interact with other citizens' voices. He suggests that media participation, especially in community and other media, afford 'ordinary people' opportunities for self-representation and self-management, thus locating them closer to "the logics of direct, delegative and participatory democracy" (Carpentier 2011:68). Jenkins (2006:3) suggests that, "rather than talking about media producers and consumers as occupying

separate roles, we might now see them as participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understands". He suggests that for storytellers, the act of storytelling involves establishing an opening which will allow other consumers to participate. Meanwhile, "consumers are using new media technologies to engage with old media content […] for collective problem solving, public deliberation, and grassroots creativity" (Jenkins 2006:169).

Carpentier (2011:70) proposes three forms of participation in media spheres: the first is participation in media production, which entails active involvement supported by three elements: access to, interaction with and participation in media organisations or communities. He identifies participation in society through the media as a second form of media participation by citizens (either active or passive) and it entails participation in societal activities through media platforms and spaces. The third is a more passive form of participation, which entails the audience interacting with media content which is exclusively and wholly produced by media professionals.

Jenkins (2006:170) advances similar sentiments, arguing that "just as we could not traditionally assume that someone is literate if they can read but not write, we should not assume that someone possesses media literacy if they consume but [do] not express themselves". Hargittai (cited in Madianou & Miller 2013:176) points out that in discussions around the second-level digital divide, although access is a prerequisite, it does not necessarily guarantee a particular user's media literacy. Jenkins (2006:171) adds to this debate by pointing out that "the current struggle over literacy [is] having the effect of determining who has the right to participate in our culture and on what terms", although he concedes that "corporations – and even individuals within corporate media – still exert greater power than any individual consumer or even the aggregate of consumers": even with regard to consumers' ability to engage with convergence culture, "some consumers have greater abilities to participate in this emerging culture than others" (Jenkins 2006:3).

In the mainstream media in particular, media production is in the hands of a select few who can be described as 'media professionals' who are "characterized by specific forms of expertise and skills, institutional embeddedness and autonomy, and the deployment of management and power strategies to achieve specific objectives" (Carpentier 2011:68). Carpentier argues that where there is a guarantee of participation in the process by these media professionals, the focus should shift towards bringing on board non-professionals, yet doing so within the professional system. Such an opening up of the media system can take one of two forms, "since media professionals are often in positions to decide about the degree of power to be delegated and the intensity of participation that is allowed (for)" (Carpentier 2011:68).

Carpentier proposes that minimalist media participation focuses on control by media professionals, is unidirectional and generally serves the needs and interests of the media professionals. Maximalist media participation, conversely, balances control between the media professionals with popular participation from the 'ordinary people' and strives for multidirectional participation that Jenkins (2006) suggests is a confluence between a top-down corporate-driven process and a bottom-up consumer-driven process. In minimalist media participation, suggests Carpentier, participation on the part of the 'ordinary person' is limited to access and interaction, while maximalist participation attempts to optimise participation through opening up spaces for the citizenry to become involved in the process.

The advent of the mass print media, and perhaps even further back to the era of scriptures, elevated exclusive and minority sections of society (or individuals in those societies) to the duty of telling stories on behalf of, or to, others. The digital mediascape, however, continues to provide a platform that affords the majority of those who use it a chance to 'actively' tell their stories in different ways and to the best of their abilities, tastes and skills. This has permeated to the media, which were previously perceived as tightly controlled, exclusivist and elitist (e.g., the broadcasting space and the print media), and opened these up to the

majority of the people for self-expression and self-representation. The BBC, for instance, submits that

> [t]elling a story is something that millions of people enjoy doing. The BBC has launched a range of initiatives that have shown that many people want to cast off their roles as a passive audience and broadcast for themselves. From *Voices* through *Video nation* to *Digital storytelling* and *Telling lives*, hundreds of people with no previous broadcasting experience have taken the opportunity to tell their stories. For some, it has given them the skills and confidence to change their lives. (*Building Public Value ...* in Thumim 2012)

By having participants telling their stories, these BBC projects did far more than just equip them with the skills and confidence to change their lives: it gave them a platform and a means of self-representation. Thumim (2012:6) convincingly proposes that when self-representations are produced, these inevitably result in the production of 'bounded texts', "however fleeting or ephemeral" they may be. Burgess (2006:206) argues that self-representation "preserves the distinction between the everyday (as signifier of a particular form of mundaneness, viewed from above by the privileged cultural critic or artist) and the specific dignity of everyday lives, expressed using vernacular communicative means".

Billig (1995) shares similar sentiments regarding the impact and effect of everyday experiences in discussing identity formation at various levels, but specifically at the national level. He coined the term "banal nationalism" to capture such discourse, arguing that "the reproduction of nations does not occur magically", but rather that "banal practices rather than conscious choice or collective acts of imagination, are required" (Billig 1995:6). His argument is that the continued existence of nationalism manifests in the everyday events experienced by members of these nations and, therefore, it is imperative to study these events, to analyse and consider them when attempting to understand nationalism. For him, "small words, rather than grand memorable phrases, offer constant, but barely conscious, reminders of the homeland, making 'our' national identity unforgettable" (Billig 1995:6).

Thumim (2012:38) argues that "the idea of self representation is used to promise a more truthful account in order to address perceived absences in representation, misrepresentation and the idea that it is the representations that are made by others that are mediated, consequently indirect and intrinsically less truthful". However, in undertaking to deliver the truth, "the idea of self-representation is also used to make claim to authenticity and, in so doing, privileges the discourse of personal experience" (Thumim 2012:38). Thumim seems to concur with Billig and Carpentier, among others, in proposing that self-representations have political implications. She does, however, suggest that self-representations embody therapeutic aspects for those who create them:

> The concept and discourse of self-representation contains a valorization of experience, which has a therapeutic function and at the same time invokes the possibility of material political outcomes, which has a democratic function. Thus the very words 'idea' and 'practice' of self representation hold together two (uncomfortably different) discourses – that is, to say therapy, with its emphasis on individual, personal and even private development, and democracy, in which the aggregation of individuals as the collective public is privileged. (Thumim 2012:9)

Four television stations in Kenya – Citizen TV, KTN, NTV and KBC – provided the texts studied in this chapter. These stations were selected based on either their position in terms of market share, or their viewership figures in the Kenyan broadcasting space. KBC has, however, been included in the study since it is partially funded by the taxpayers through television licences, and therefore has a mandate to give a voice to citizens through its programming. KBC has also been included because it is the oldest television broadcaster in the country. Although there might be mention of statistical figures, these are primarily used to contextualise the discussions. The analyses here will undertake a qualitative reading of the case study texts under two themes: 'inviting the ordinary people' and 'narrating the everyday'.

The present analysis is based on programming aired in the four television stations' prime-time slots over a period of one week, between 25 and 31 May 2015. Although the idea of prime-time is a universal concept, there seems to be no concurrency on what these times are. Prime-time tends to vary from one country or region to another, but for the purposes of this study, it is the period between 18:00 and 22:00 in Kenya.

Contextualising contemporary Kenyan television

Towards the end of 2014, according to GeoPoll (a media research company with a presence in several African countries) citing *BuzzKenya*, there were over 15 local television stations in Kenya (Elliot 2014). An article published by the CA's director general, Francis Wangusi, in the *Kenya Gazette* (the official government publication), stated that the entry of three new stations, which had received broadcasting licences in January 2015, would bring the total number of free-to-air TV channels in the country to 38 (Munda 2015).

In 2014, Kenya, through the CA, "set out to enforce a directive that would have all television stations in Kenya air 40% local content in their program lineup" (Mwenesi 2014). Wangusi (in Mwenesi 2014)is also quoted as saying that the CA was busy developing a framework that would draw CA "close[r] to the producer to help young artists [in providing TV] content". The expectation, therefore, was that there would soon be wider representation and a greater number of 'ordinary (youthful) voices' on Kenyan television.

GeoPoll's most recent statistics (October 2014) on Kenyan television position Royal Media Service's Citizen TV as leading in terms of both market share and viewership, with an average of 1.42 million viewers per 30-minute time block. KTN comes second with 535 000 viewers and NTV third with 442 000. The statistics show that K24, QTV and KBC respectively are in the fourth, fifth and sixth positions in terms of television viewership, all with an average of fewer than 300 000 viewers per half hour (Keane 2014). The research further states that Citizen TV's average viewership in October [2014] was over 2.2 million;

audience numbers stayed high throughout the prime-time schedule, never dipping below an average of two million before 10pm (Keane 2014).

In October 2014, data from GeoPoll showed that KTN and NTV both had their daily peaks of viewership later in the evening: KTN's highest viewership was in the evening news slot in English at 21:00, with an average of 930 000 viewers tuning in from 21:00–21:30. NTV similarly had its largest daily audience during its 21:00 news broadcast in English, with an average of 828 000 viewers. GeoPoll lists the following television stations in terms of daily audience measurement viewership numbers per half hour, in descending order: Citizen TV: 1 425 000, KTN: 535 000, NTV: 442 000 and K24: 296 000. Others include QTV at 281 000 viewers, KBC at 271 000 and KissTV at 130 000. Family TV and GBS occupied the eighth and ninth positions respectively, at an average of 107 000 and 78 000 viewers per half hour (Keane 2014).

It is of significant interest to this study that new data from Kenya's biggest cell phone operator in terms of subscriber numbers, Safaricom, reveals that 67 per cent of local sales, as of April 2014, involved smartphones (itnewsafrica.com). The website reports that more than 100 000 new smartphones are shipped to customers in the country each month (itnewsafrica.com), which suggests an ever-growing platform with potential for Internet availability and connectivity to the digital space. As the phenomenal worldwide growth of the social media space suggests, this offers a potential complementary or even rivalling platform for conventional and traditional television broadcasting.

'Inviting' the ordinary people

The idea of studying ordinary people is gaining credence in many theoretical spaces in different fields. Carpentier (2011) points out that the concept is often viewed as synonymous with the idea of 'the people'.[26] Carpentier (2011:179) argues that the subject position of ordinary people is closely related to the

[26] It is important to acknowledge here that the concept of 'ordinary people' is a construct with a long history that has evolved over various iterations, and that its use here is premised on just one of these theoretical strands.

subject position of the audience, but that the two groups remain distinct. He suggests that the former's subject position "gains its meanings by becoming juxtaposed to a series of more elitist subject positions that also circulate in the media sphere, such as media professionals, celebrities, experts and politicians" (Carpentier 2011:179). These articulations "(co)define the levels of participation that are socially desirable and possible" (Carpentier 2011:179). The term 'media elites' refers to any practitioners/owners/celebrities or experts who normally either produce media content or feature in it, as a binary to ordinary people who normally only consume the media.

Beyond defining the levels of participation, as argued by Carpentier, this binary between the subject position of the media elites (as if they are pitted against the ordinary people) inevitably results in skewed power relations in the mediascape, favouring the former. The perception which is often created in participatory contexts, is that ordinary people need to be invited into these public spheres by the media elites. The Kenyan television-scape manifests this in several ways, as will be discussed in this chapter.

A significant proportion of the four hours of prime-time television viewing in Kenya is dominated by news bulletins in both Kiswahili (Kenya's national language) and English (the official language of communication). Across the four broadcasters, news bulletins take up at least 25 per cent of prime-time viewing, with the daily news bulletins in Kiswahili and English each taking up between 30 minutes and one hour at 19:00 and 21:00 respectively. Statistical data from GeoPoll suggests that the highest daily viewership in Kenya's three leading broadcasters occurs during the 21:00 news slot, with Citizen TV, KTN and NTV claiming an average of two million, 930 000 and 825 000 viewers respectively (Keane 2014). This analysis therefore begins by looking at ordinary people's participation in news bulletins.

Invitations to ordinary people to participate in news bulletins often take several forms, most commonly (in both Kiswahili and English)through the use of social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, as well as short message services

(SMS). The broadcasters generally choose a question, subject or issue, which they perceive as topical, and pose it to the 'viewers' early in the news bulletin. They then either read the responses during the bulletin, poll the responses or do both. This kind of 'participation', which is arguably passive, fits into what Carpentier (2011) categorises as the minimalist media participation archetype. The conceptualisation, selection, arrangement and dissemination of the content – i.e., the entire production process – is unidirectional in that it flows from media professionals to ordinary people and is virtually under the exclusive control of the former. The ordinary peoples' entry point into these narratives is limited to accessing the already completed narrative and engaging in what can be deemed a token participatory process that bears minimal (and in most cases no) impact on the story. These forms of participation at the macro level offer very little tangible (if any) form of empowerment to ordinary people, since they treat the media consumer as a homogenous mass audience, solely capable of unitary and uniform engagement within the communicative space. The absence of such responses in the stories, for instance, seldom impacts the media professionals' narrative, thus demonstrating not merely the futility of such participation, but also how illusory passive forms of participation tend to be.

Other forms of participation during news bulletins entail interviews – either in the television studios (news anchors) or in the field (news reporters) – and phone-ins. Significant numbers of interviews and phone-ins, however, seem to completely exclude ordinary people's voices and participation, by focusing on perceived 'traditional' newsmakers who mostly turn out to be the media elites. Whenever ordinary people are invited, the resulting interviews follow passive forms of participation and usually manifest archetypes of minimalist media participation. In these stories, the agenda, content, structure, length and focus of the interview are almost always controlled by the media professionals. Carpentier (2011:179) succinctly reminds us that "the articulation of the concept of ordinary people – for instance, as an active, relevant social group with valuable opinions and knowledges, or as a passive mass – contributes to (pre)structuring the positions people (can) take in society, and may enable or limit their role in participatory processes".

A case in point was the invitation of Victoria Mutheu to participate in *Citizen Nipashe*, Citizen TV's news in Kiswahili. Mutheu's apparent newsworthiness stemmed from an episode in which Kenya's president, Uhuru Kenyatta, and part of his entourage bought drinks and snacks from her tuck shop by the roadside. Arguably, this chance encounter with traditional newsmakers positioned Mutheu at the threshold of becoming a media elite. The anchor's tone, demeanour and interviewing approach, however, appeared to 'put her back in her place', demonstrating the power imbalance in the studio. The establishing phase of the interview, which focused on the biographical, was rushed, giving Ms Mutheu minimal opportunity to express herself even during this concise and passive moment of self-representation. When asked to briefly contextualise her business, Ms Mutheu – in her excitement and with some naivety – attempted to explain the symbiotic relationship between her tuck shop and her hair salon adjacent to it. At this point, the interviewer interjected and asked her to contextualise the business in relation to the encounter with the president. The rest of the interview centred on the president, with the anchor asking questions such as whether the president had paid for the refreshments himself, how much change she gave him, whether the president took the change, how many drinks he consumed, what the president's mood and demeanour were like and how the dignitaries around him reacted. The story thus ceased to be about Ms Mutheu and shifted to the media elites, accentuating the futility of these passive forms of participation. This example reveals two significant concerns: the first is that the media professional deemed her ordinariness as not sufficiently worthy of a news story, and therefore this part of the interview was rushed and even brushed aside. However, perhaps more concerning was that the media apparatus was wielded to construct presidential power by exploiting the woman's 'ordinariness'. Ms Mutheu, because of her 'ordinariness', in essence was not allowed to speak. Her ordinariness did, however, need to be produced in order to add to the splendour of the president. It is thus not simply that ordinary people are silenced, but that their very status as such is exploited in some media spaces to make the elites even more powerful.

The 19:30–21:00 slot on Sundays seems to be the next most popular among viewers after the news bulletins. All the broadcasters seem to air their flagship shows during this time which is dominated by comedy and entertainment talk shows, reality shows and dramas. NTV airs *The Churchill Show*, KTN has *Jalang'o with the Money*, while KBC broadcasts *Vioja Mahakamani*. *The Churchill Show*, that airs every Sunday at 20:00, commands an audience viewership averaging 1.95 million, according to GeoPoll, and has among the highest ARs in the country. In all three shows, ordinary people are invited as audience members, but their participation is largely peripheral.

A popular, charismatic comedian and FM radio host, Churchill Ndambuki, usually hosts *The Churchill Show* at the Carnivore, a popular restaurant in Nairobi. The show has an established structure and talk show narrative formula that entails inviting a celebrity, politician or newsmaker for an interview. It also features interludes in the form of performances by both regular and invited stand-up comedians and a live band. Although the show has a sizable (usually paying) audience which runs into the hundreds, there is a distinct and defined divide on a spatially, hierarchical and participatory level, between the media elites and the ordinary people, which is rarely disrupted or negotiated during the show. The show's set has three levels, spatially constructing and reinforcing power hierarchies among the participants. The lowest level is reserved for the ordinary people, while the media elites occupy the two upper levels. The middle level is generally used by 'ancillary' anchors and stand-up comedians or by invited up-and-coming stand-up comedians or performers, many of whom are recent entrants or still new to celebrity-hood. The upper (most opulently designed) level is almost always reserved for the guests of the day, usually 'established' or 'renowned' celebrities or politicians, and the main anchor of the show, Ndambuki. The participation by ordinary people is almost always passive, being limited to interacting with media content exclusively created and produced by the media elites. Their role is generally restricted to clapping, cheering and giving bursts of laughter in response to the media elites' performances. Carpentier (2011:179) argues that "subject positions such as 'audience member' or 'media professional' circulate widely in society, and carry specific – sometimes

dominant – meanings that affect the position and power relations of actors in participatory processes". "The discursive affordances of these signifiers," proposes Carpentier (2011:179), "normalize specific types of behavior, and disallow other kinds of behaviour … subject positions are not necessarily stable, and they can be contested, resisted and re-articulated". As with many television narrative formulas found among broadcasters across the African continent and elsewhere in the world, these have usually been widely tried and tested. *The Churchill Show* is no different, as this formula and structure are evident in other international shows. What this reinforces is that passive participation is not a uniquely Kenyan phenomenon, but one that is practised by many broadcasters around the world.

KBC's long-running courtroom comedy drama, *Vioja Mahakamani*, manifests participatory structures which are similar to *The Churchill Show.* It has a distinct participatory, spatial and hierarchical division between media elites and ordinary people that is never transcended or disrupted during the shows. The themes explored in each episode are generally situational, and many of the performances are improvised. These two aspects – situational themes and improvised performances – position the show ideally for active participation on the part of ordinary people. However, the small group who are invited to sit in the courtroom gallery, which is reserved for the public, are hardly ever involved in any aspect of the unfolding drama. Their only interaction with the show or its content extends to muffled and stifled giggles in response to humorous moments. *Vioja Mahakamani* is premised on traditional courtroom structures and procedures, thus hierarchical divisions, spatial separation and the balance of power between the media elites and the ordinary people are obvious and ingrained. The magistrate sits on the highest level on a raised dais, physically looking down onto the ordinary people. The court officials and the accused/offenders occupy the middle level, while ordinary people are relegated to the lowest level. There could be merit in the argument that the show attempts to be faithful to traditional court experiences, yet there are many instances in which traditional structures and procedural aspects are negotiated, reconfigured

and re-imagined to heighten the drama and humour in the show. This could also be done in a way that involves ordinary people more actively.

Narrating the everyday

The everyday increasingly constitutes a significant repertoire of contemporary content in media production manifesting in 'new' content. Social and digital media spaces are arguably giving the everyday increasing visibility and attention, while genres such as reality television are giving it ever greater prominence. Burgess (2006:204) proposes that the everyday is now a ubiquitous part of the production logics of the "creative industries"', and cultural production is now increasingly part of the logics of everyday life. Carpentier (2011:180) notes that there are several schools of thought regarding the concept of the everyday. He sees the essentialists as theorising the everyday as "the repetitive, the unpurposeful, the unnoticed and the routine-based", while the relationists see the everyday as "different from the exceptional, or the sublime and its enchantment" Carpentier (2011:180). He does, however, point out that Lefebve's approach to the everyday underscores the critical, political and emancipatory potential of the everyday "as the site where social changes reside" (Carpentier 2011:181). Roberts (cited in Carpentier 2011:181) summarises Lefebvre's position by stating that the everyday unfolds within a social or an experimental space "in which the relationships between technology and cognition, art and labour are configured and brought to critical consciousness […] It is not simply the expression of dominant social relations, but the very space where critical thinking and actions begins."

The everyday has always constituted a significant proportion of television programming the world over. Modes and genres such as documentaries, dramas, variety shows, investigative journalism and current affairs shows, among others, largely engage with, and draw content from, the everyday. This article argues that in the Kenyan context, a significant proportion of the everyday as currently experienced on television manifests minimalist media participatory archetypes which esteem, benefit and give currency to the perspectives and voices of the media elites, while generally subordinating ordinary people's perspectives and

voices. Significant current television contexts in Kenya largely reflect Ellis' (2000:51) era of scarcity, in which "a small group of adepts, the programme-makers, [accumulate] practical knowledge of the effects of the process of witness", but these knowledges, he argues, "ha[ve] no wider currency".

KBC's documentary public service announcement, *Tell the Ombudsman*, features everyday people from around the country telling stories of the assistance they have received from the recently established Office of the Ombudsman in Kenya. It features a variety of people, ranging from the working class to the middle class, from several counties. The stories are narrated by ordinary people and, in many instances, in their vernacular languages. Set in the people's everyday spaces, the show appears to have minimal staging, capturing what appears to be the authentic, lived experience of the participants. Some of these are useful pointers for a show, which is set up to reflect maximalist participation by ordinary people. However, this set-up does not seem to have a pay-off in the show, as the ordinary people's participation ends up being limited to accessing the broadcasting platform and interacting with the platform only as subjects. The show's tone and gaze are established and maintained by a voice-over delivered by a media professional who introduces the characters and steers the structure and direction of the narrative. Arguably, the design and formula of such a show set it up as an ideal space for active and maximalist participation by ordinary people. Presenting and anchoring the show could easily and ideally be achieved by ordinary people in the communities involved, rather than by the media elites who anchor the stories. These ordinary people would be better positioned to engage with the participants on a more personal level, as they have a better understanding of the nuances and experiences of ordinary citizens. Arguably, as Thumim (2012:38) convincingly proposes, the promise of a more truthful account that would address perceived absences in representation as well as misrepresentations, would potentially be amplified – as would the therapeutic potential of such self-representations. Involving ordinary people more actively in the production process would also inevitably lead to the transfer of knowledge and skills, thus creating a maximalist and active participatory space. Unfortunately, the participation, as currently structured in *Tell the Ombudsman*,

ends up being unidirectional: ordinary people's participation is limited to them being pawns on the show, used to extol the virtues, and demonstrate the efficiency and efficacy, of the Office of the Ombudsman. Participation in this context is arguably illusionary.

Reality television claims to bring the everyday into television. Wedding shows are a popular subgenre on Kenyan television, with the leading broadcasters airing such shows during prime-time on Sunday evenings. NTV has *Weddings with Nonni Gathoni* while Citizen TV broadcasts *The Wedding Show* during this slot. However, even as the everyday is brought to the small screen, these shows continue to manifest strong, minimalist participatory archetypes. The voice, gaze and power, it seems, are still under the strict control of the media elites.

In *Weddings with Nonni Gathoni*, for instance, these everyday narratives cease to be about the primary protagonists who, in any event, would be expected and assumed to be the bride, the groom and their families, and ends up being about the media elite presenting the show. In an episode covering the nuptials of Nancy and Elikana, the entire opening sequence, given significant airtime, is about the presenter. It opens with shots of Nonni Gathoni in what appears to be her home, preparing for an event by going through the process of applying make-up, dressing for the occasion and driving off in a sleek car. At some point in this opening sequence, the presenter says: "Let me take you through my experience of Nancy's and Elikana's wedding." This sequence establishes whose narrative the show is about, whose voice, gaze and perspective the story is told from, and where the control and power lie in the show. The presenter's voice-over narration guides the viewer throughout the narrative and only allows for interludes of quickly cut vox-pop montages from the bride and some family members. In the segment after the first advertising break, the bride and groom are given an opportunity to narrate their story. This session is tightly guided, controlled and directed by the presenter, who asks leading questions. The session has obviously been tightly edited in postproduction, given the choppy and punctuated flow of the sequence. Instead of the event's protagonists, the presenter undertakes the very personal ritual of introducing the couple's family

members and guests, taking away the narrative's agency from them. The couple is arguably denied active and meaningful self-representation in their story, depriving them of even the ephemeral bounded narrative that Thumim (2012:6) argues for. Even in such tightly and highly mediated spaces, there seems to be a latent fear – on the part of the media elites – of losing control, voice and perhaps power, to the everyday. This 'exclusive-club phobia' mentality, that the everyday could spoil the purposeful, the elegant and the traditional media decorum and therefore requires supervision and control, is deeply manifested in these shows.

Everyday narratives also find their way into Kenyan television through fictional accounts in dramas, soap operas and sitcoms. These traditional representations of the everyday constitute popular genres, which are broadcast during prime-time by all four broadcasters under study. The production of fictional narratives on television has traditionally entailed a tightly and closely controlled process managed by the media elites. This situation still obtains on Kenyan television, as all the fictional narratives broadcast during the study period were conceptualised, produced and performed by media professionals, with minimal participation from the ordinary people who consume these shows. It is perhaps an opportune moment to deconstruct and rethink some of these traditional models of fictional narrative production on Kenyan television, by promoting participatory culture through actively involving ordinary Kenyans in the production pipeline. As Jenkins (2006) suggests, storytellers should now think about storytelling in terms of creating openings for prosumer participation.

Another significant proportion of prime-time is taken up by content that can be described as either foreign or international. These include South American (mostly Mexican) soap operas, British and American sitcoms, dramas and game shows, and Nollywood films. Foreign content constitutes approximately 25–50 per cent of prime-time viewing across the four broadcasters. A significant category of programming content on Kenyan television seems to completely exclude ordinary people and everyday events, even at the archetypal level of minimalist participation. Pointing out these absences is not a simplistic advocacy for an all-exclusive 'Kenyan'-dominated programming regime, but an attempt to

engage with what these absences portend. It perhaps serves as a reminder that there is still great potential (and numerous opportunities) for active and meaningful participation on the part of Kenyan prosumers.

Conclusion

Premised on Bhabha's cultural difference theory and Billig's ideas on banal nationalism, this chapter has critically interrogated the history of Kenya's broadcasting space from its inception in the 1920s to contemporary times. This history, it has been argued, demonstrates a broadcasting discourse that is exclusionary, hegemonic and elitist, and therefore an antithesis to the key principles espoused in Bhabha's and Billig's aforementioned theories. AUGC is proposed for television, anchored in discourse on the convergence of digital media as a potential intervention to mediate a radical disruption and deconstruction of existing dominant models, for a more dynamic and inclusive broadcasting discourse. This chapter has also focused on Carpentier's (2011) thoughts on participation in media production and Thumim's (2012) arguments on self-representation, to critically engage with content sampled from Kenya's prime-time television between 25 and 31 May 2015. The argument put forward here, is that significant examples of programming sampled from the four television broadcasters during this period still bear evidence of passive and minimalist participation on the part of the content's prosumers, who merely engage with content produced by media elites, rather than actively participating in the process of content co-creation. The findings indicate that significant forms of participation with prosumers are illusory and futile, as they largely entrench television's balance of power so that it tips the scales in favour of the media elites.

CHAPTER 6
'Ordinary people' narrating the nation: insights from the *Project 10* documentary series, the *Capture Wales* project and the *UMMU* digital narratives project

Introduction and context

The central argument in chapter 5 is that Kenya's broadcasting models and discourses, since the country's independence in the early 1960s, have shown the broadcasting-scape to be not only exclusionary but also hegemonic and elitist. The proposal is that this motif can be disrupted if ordinary people have access not only to the means of production, but also the platforms of distribution, so that they can actively and meaningfully engage in this space. AUGC is proposed as one potential intervention to mediate a radical disruption and deconstruction of the dominant models, to arrive at a more dynamic and inclusive broadcasting landscape and discourse. This chapter seeks to discuss and theorise on AUGC and its (potential) role in broadening Kenya's broadcasting-scape to include and benefit those who have historically been at its fringes. It will engage with the second research question, which is: *To what extent and in which forms can ordinary citizens of a nation-state actively participate in the (co)generation, (co)production and (co)distribution of content for aural-visual broadcasting and what socioeconomic and cultural value can this participation offer in the nation-building context?*

These discussions will hinge on three case studies of AUGC projects: the SABC's *Project 10* documentary series from South Africa, the BBC's *Capture Wales* project from the UK, and the author-initiated pilot project *Utaifa Mashinani Masimulizi ya Ukenya*, focusing on digital narratives in Kenya.[27] The latter, as discussed in chapter 4, is a PAR project undertaken with a community whose narratives are on the fringes of the hegemonic centre in Kenya, the Abakuria. The first two were projects initiated, supported and funded by public broadcasters in South Africa and the UK respectively, while the third is a very low-budget project

[27] *Utaifa mashinani masimulizi ya Ukenya* loosely translates as banal/everyday/local nationalisms: narrations of "Kenyan-ness"

involving a marginalised community in Kenya, initiated and run by the researcher.[28] The three projects are centrally concerned with the narration of a nation and the use of a participatory approach to enable ordinary people to tell their stories. The *Project 10* documentary series was primarily broadcast on television in South Africa, while the *Capture Wales* project had airtime on both television in Wales and the digital online space. *UMMU*'s narratives were predominantly broadcast on online digital spaces and shared via social media.

The discussions and theorisations are framed in accordance with two broad themes. The first is titled 'the individual and the community narrating the self', while the second is 'the everyday and the banal in narrating the nation'.

In engaging with the 'the individual and the community narrating the self' as a theme, the chapter begins by unpacking notions of the 'self', the 'personal', the 'individual' and the 'other' in self-representations within the context of nationalism in postcolonial Africa. It discusses the forms, functions and manifestations of self-representation in the three aforementioned participatory UGC projects. Here, the focus is on their archival function, their cathartic function as well as the possibility of economic enfranchisement stemming from the projects. The discussions are anchored on several scholars' thoughts, including Bhabha (1990), Hall (1990), Billig (1995) and Özkirimli (2000), among others, who believe that any reproduction of a discourse on nationalism must be reproduced on a regular basis, if it is to be sustainable.

Discussions on the latter theme, 'the everyday and the banal in narrating the nation' are premised on the argument that public media in Africa, and elsewhere in the world, have historically been at the core of nationalism and nation-building projects which attempt to coalesce, cajole and unite members of a nation. Conversely, the media have been known to divide their audiences. This chapter acknowledges that the concept of national identity in African nation-

[28] The *UMMU* project's budget was just under R20 000 with the air ticket from Johannesburg to Nairobi being one of the biggest expenses at about R7 500.

states is at best tenuous, due in the main to overlaps, tensions and dualities which exist between nations and states.

The latter theme discusses aspects such as the role of vernacular languages in everyday and banal narratives around nation building. This approach is anchored in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's firm conviction that the culture of a people is embedded in its language. Other aspects to be discussed include the relatable narratives, archetypes and tropes promoted by everyday and banal narratives, the binary between grand narratives and the banal and everyday narratives in nationalism, and the role of everyday and banal narratives in offering a space and platform for contestations, negotiations and alternative or counter-narratives. Others points which are touched on include the ways and modes in which ordinary people can either actively and meaningfully participate in narrating their nation, or where this is somehow impeded, engage in radically disrupting existing hegemonic broadcasting interactions in order to participate in narrations of their nation.

Insight into the three projects

SABC's Project 10 documentary series, South Africa

Ambala (2005:15) explains that in 2004, the SABC commissioned the *Project 10* documentary series "to coincide with the tenth anniversary of South Africa's first democratic elections".[29] The project aimed to encourage South Africans, as individuals, to give subjective and personal accounts or stories, which suit the theme of 'ten years of freedom'. To this end, 13 local filmmakers were chosen and received funding to tell their stories. All 13 narratives were documentaries about South African nationals and their lives within or outside the country. According to Ambala (2005:16), the project's website states that the project was[30]

[29] The first democratic post-apartheid elections in South Africa were held on 27 April 1994 where the African National Congress (ANC) party/movement won and formed the new government led by President Nelson Mandela.
[30] The website is no longer available online.

> [An] initiative to deliver strong, personal, narrative-driven films, and to develop a new generation of South African filmmakers brave enough to take risks and able to recognize the power of their own voices in a free society … The concept was to give 13 filmmakers the opportunity to make films about how they have experienced or understood the last 10 years of freedom [in South Africa]. (www.project10.co.za cited in Ambala 2005:16)

The initiative, according to Ambala (2015:16), "was developed and Commissioned by SABC 1, a public broadcaster, and supported by the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF)". According to the *Project 10* website (cited in Ambala 2015:16), "the training, which ran concurrently with the commissioning of the documentaries, was developed by the Amsterdam-based Maurits Binger Film Institute and supported by the Netherlands Culture Fund of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs".

According to the website (cited in Ambala 2015:18), selecting the final group of filmmakers was no easy task, since the selectors had to choose films which would be broadly representative of South Africans' lived experiences over the past decade. In the end, the majority of filmmakers participating in the project were women from previously disadvantaged backgrounds.

Ambala (2015) gives a synopsis of each of the 13 documentaries cited from the *Project 10* website. He writes that *Being Pavarotti*, which was directed by Odette Geldenhuys, a human rights lawyer based in South Africa, is set in the tourist seaside town of Hermanus, which is popular for whale watching. The documentary narrates the story of the talented 13-year-old Elton Nkanunu, from a poor background. "Nelson's love of opera music begins after his cousin gives him a tape by Italian tenor Luciano Pavarotti. His passion leads Elton from performing solo at open-air festivals to opening acts for established opera singers" (www.project10.co.za cited in Ambala 2015:19).

Kethiwe Ngcobo and Minky Schlesinger's *Belonging* narrates then 39-year-old Kethiwe Ngcobo's story. Born in exile to parents who fled South Africa during the early 1960s for political reasons, she moves back to South Africa and has "to grapple with the intricacies and difficulties of her history (as a South African born in exile), her new environment and her attempts to fit into what she perceived to be her homeland" (www.project10.co.za cited in Ambala 2015:19).

Jane Kennedy's *Cinderella of the Cape Flats* is a story set in the South African textile industry. It follows participants "in the annual Spring Queen pageant that brings together workers from several textile factories. The story follows the lives of several contestants from their families to their workplace and into their brief moments of fame and glory on the catwalk parades. The film shows their experiences in the factories, the long hours they have to work and the meagre incomes they earn" (www.project10.co.za cited in Ambala 2015:19).

Ambala (2015:20) writes that "Lederle Bosch's *The Devil Breaks my Heart – Ten Years Later* is a sequel to the documentary *The Devil Breaks my Heart,* made in 1993 by Zackie Achmat. It tells the story of four young men now in their late teens and early 20s who were featured in [a] 1993 documentary". The story shows how the lives of Tshepo Mmola (19 years of age), Donovan Rhode (21), Heino Benard (16) and Springbok rugby player Bolla Conradie (24) have turned out ten years after the initial documentary about them.

Ambala (2015) synopsises the documentaries *Hot Wax*, *Ikhaya* and *Meaning of the buffalo*, respectively, as "*Hot Wax* directed by Andrea Spitz is the story of Ivy Lakaje, a beautician who runs her business in the up-market Rosebank area of Johannesburg. The story chronicles her life both in her business and at home with her family" (www.project10.co.za cited in Ambala 2015:20). "*Ikhaya*, by Omelga Hlengiwe Mthiyane, is the story of Zimbili Kamanga, a school teacher who fled her home after violence erupted in Bambayi in KwaZulu-Natal just before the 1994 elections. The story documents her journey back to Bambayi where she re-lives her experiences and meets her old friends as well as the new occupants of her 'home'" (www.project10.co.za cited in Ambala 2015:20).

"*Meaning of the Buffalo* is a story about the Balete – the people of the buffalo – who live in the remote arid village of Lekgophung in the North West Province of South Africa. The director of the film, Karin Slater, tries to find out how the people become associated with the totem of the Buffalo" (www.project10.co.za cited in Ambala 2015:21).

The next three stories, *Mix* directed by Rudzani Dzuguda, *My Yeoville* by Sello Molefe and *Solly's Story* by Asivhanzhi Mathaba, are synopsised by Ambala (2015) as follows: *Mix* "tells the story of Tumelo and Dominique, two young female disk jockeys (DJs) and the dilemma they find themselves in when their parents refuse to acknowledge their chosen lines of profession" (www.project10.co.za cited in Ambala 2015:21). *My Yeoville* "is a story revolving around living in Yeoville, an area that the director describes as a tiny cultural enclave in Johannesburg. It tells of the changes that have taken place in the area in the postapartheid era and its downward trend towards increased urban decay" (www.project10.co.za cited in Ambala 2015:21). *Solly's Story* "is the portrait of […] a young man from deep rural Venda in the Northern Province [who] has defied the odds to survive poverty and marginalisation [and] now coaches the under 12 and under 17 South African national soccer teams" (www.project10.co.za cited in Ambala 2015:21).

The last three stories in the series are *Nabantwa' Bam* directed by Khulile Nxumalo, *Through the Eyes of my Daughter* by Zulfah Otto Sallies and *Umgidi* by Gillian Schutte and Sipho Singiswa. *Nabantwa' Bam* – which means 'with my children' – directed by Khulile Nxumalo, revolves around the family of 60-year-old Beatrice Kubheka, a mother of two sons, Nhlanhla and Miles, who all live in Soweto Township.[31] Miles is an articulate, well-travelled and still upward mobile young man while Nhlanhla is a more township-savvy person who is unemployed and homebound. It tells of their ambitions, their tribulations, their successes and their setbacks (Ambala 2015:21). *Through the Eyes of my Daughter* "is the story of the director's 15-year-old daughter Muneera, brought up in the predominantly

[31] Soweto (South Western Township) is a South African township located in the South of Johannesburg, famous for its impassioned uprisings against apartheid education (*Project 10*, 2004).

Malay quarters of Bo-Kaap in Cape Town.[32] It tells the story of the young girl growing up in the new generation post-apartheid South Africa" (www.project10.co.za cited in Ambala 2015:22). In *Umgidi*

> Sipho goes back to Robben Island, the infamous apartheid political prison, where he was circumcised while an inmate. He wants to officially join his *Myirha* clan and symbolically unite with his ancestors and the rest of his clan members. *Umgidi* also tells the story of Sipho's brother Vuyo, who discovers that the family adopted him. He sets out to find who his real parents are. A further twist emerges when Vuyo reveals that he is gay, highlighting the antagonism this revelation creates in the strict and conservative African family and their *Myirha* clan. (www.project10.co.za cited in Ambala 2015:22)

BBC's Capture Wales series, UK

The *Capture Wales* series was an offshoot of the BBC's award-winning *Video Nation* project, started in 1993 by Chris Mohr and Mandy Rose of the Community Programmes Unit. In the *Video Nation* project, cameras were distributed across the UK from which over 10 000 tapes were shot and submitted to the BBC. From those, 1 300 short narratives were edited and screened on television (History of BBC's *Video Nation* [sp]). Thumim (2007:19) states that the *Capture Wales* series project was fully funded by BBC3 and run by BBC Wales' New Media Department and Cardiff University's Centre for Journalism Studies, starting in 2001. She notes that the project taught people to post short digital stories on one of the *Capture Wales* websites, in either the English or Welsh language. In addition, states Thumim (2007:19), "the audio tracks from selected digital stories were played on BBC Radio Wales and Radio Cymru". Kidd (2006:7) adds that the *Capture Wales* initiative involved holding workshops with around ten people at a time in Wales over a five-day period. Each workshop entailed participants engaging in script-writing and storytelling sessions, practising photography, recording voice-overs and learning how to use software such as Adobe's Photoshop and Premiere. The participants produced a completed film and screened these on the final day to their friends and families. The stories were

[32] The Bo-Kaap is the Muslim Malay Quarter in Cape Town (*Project 10*, 2004).

approximately 250 words and between two and three minutes in length.

Thumim (2007:19) points out that during the first three-year funding period of *Capture Wales*, "there were ten members of the Capture Wales team, three of those [were] full-time and the rest part time and free-lance". The team, she adds, consisted of a creative director, an executive producer, a project producer and a web-producer, as well as a Welsh-language workshop trainer. Other members of the team were an English-language and a Welsh language script consultant, a workshop trainer, a post-producer, two researchers and an audio engineer. She cites the BBC Wales *Annual Review 2002–2003* (cited in Thumim 2007:21) which states:

> At the heart of these projects is a desire to establish a dialogue with communities through the sharing of skills and stories, the discovery and nurturing of talent, and the exploration of both our heritage and our future potential. Such a dialogue will influence the way we work in the future, enrich our output and enable communities to become more actively involved in the broadcasting process.

Thumim (2007:22) argues that *Capture Wales* "aims to give members of the public living in Wales a voice on a BBC platform that is to facilitate self-representation […] *Capture Wales* aims to contribute to 'Wales' New Economy' and 'the knowledge economy', by providing skills in new media usage."

Utaifa Mashinani Masimulizi ya Ukenya (UMMU) digital narratives, Kenya

The *UMMU* digital narratives project was conceptualised by the author with the intention of providing a digital narrative platform and space for ordinary 'marginalised' and 'absent' voices and communities in Kenya to tell their stories through photography and short digital films/videos. A pilot project with participants from the Abakuria community in Komotobo, Kuria East, in Migori County, was held in January 2016. It entailed working with a focus group of eight participants drawn from ordinary people in the community in a digital video

production workflow. The eight participants, aged between 20 and 45, were drawn from a radius of about ten kilometres of Komotobo where the training and shooting took place. Participants were required to have some basic computer skills, which would enable them to fully involve themselves in the postproduction phase of the project. Two participants were female, the remainder were male. The researcher's intention was to ensure an equitable gender representation among the participants, but this was a challenge partly because of the very patriarchal nature of the Abakuria community. The female participants could thus not avail themselves for a significant part of the duration of the project. As observed by Oloo, Wanjiru and Newell-Jones (2011), the girl-child school dropout rate among the Abakuria is high. In an attempt to mitigate this, the participants chose to make two out of the three protagonists in their three short stories, women.

The eight-day workflow entailed a preproduction phase in which the focus group of participants brainstormed, conceptualised and planned the production of the digital photography and three film narratives. The production phase entailed shooting the three video narratives and taking photographs on location, while the postproduction phase involved basic editing, sound design, titling and subtitling of narratives which were narrated in the Abakuria language and in Kiswahili – Kenya's national language. The three film narratives, alongside several photographic narratives shot by the participants, were uploaded onto digital and social media platforms for broadcasting and were shared by the participants, their family and friends via social media and other digital platforms.

The project was run and funded by the researcher, who facilitated and trained the participants in the production workflow processes. Participants received a basic introduction to the narrative structure, character design, scripting and storyboarding of stories. They were introduced to film shots as a grammar of film-making and were taken through discussions on motivations and reasons for shot selection, shot arrangement/structure and shot timing in the film-making process. Participants were also introduced to basic photography and cinematography and trained how to use camcorders and cameras (including cell

phone cameras) in framing and shooting stories. Thereafter they were introduced to, and given foundational training in, the use of Adobe's Premiere edit suite, which was used to edit the three short narratives. Support was received from the University of Johannesburg's Digital Media Department, which loaned the project two editing suites and three cameras for the duration of the project.

The three short films made during the project are *Oogotoraa Amatwi*, *Amabeere* and *A history of Komotobo Maranatha Mission. Oogotoraa Amatwi* is the story of an Abakuria traditional ear beauty procedure that stretches the earlobe and other parts of the ears, for both customary and aesthetic reasons. The short story takes the form of an interview done by one of the participants, Everlyn Gati Chacha, who interviews an elderly and well-respected woman in the village, Machera Mwita. Mama (Mrs) Mwita explains the significance of *oogotoraa amatwi* in Abakuria culture, informing her audience about the stage in a girl's life in which the ceremony takes place and how the procedure unfolds. She concludes the short interview by offering grandmotherly advice to Abakuria girls on dealing with contemporary Abakuria life.



Figure 1: Mama Machera Mwita showing *oogotoraa amatwi*
Picture by *UMMU* participant

Amabeere is Abakuria traditional sour milk. The narrative of this short film is a documentary chronicling the process of making and consuming the milk. It follows the protagonist, Catherine Matinde's, morning routine, showing her milking her cows and getting the milk ready to prepare *amabeere*. She explains the process of making the traditional brew, taking the audience through the different stages involved. The short narrative ends with participants consuming the milk accompanied by *ugali* – a firm porridge made from either maize, millet, cassava or sorghum flour.



Figure 2: Mrs Matinde preparing *amabeere*
Picture by *UMMU* participant

A history of Komotobo Maranatha Mission is a short story told by the respected Pastor David Mairo, an elder in the community, and a former teacher in the Komotobo area. He gives his account of Komotobo Maranatha Mission, which was established by Swedish missionaries in the area, and outlines his role in the process. He identifies projects initiated by the mission at Komotobo, among them a primary and secondary school, a school for the hearing disabled, a health centre, a children's orphanage and a church. Pastor Mairo also explains his role in the establishment of World Vision, an international NGO set up within the mission's compound.

The participants took several photographs to capture key moments in these narratives, as well as other narratives, which were of interest to them (see Appendix 3 for some of the images).



Figure 3: The Komotobo Maranatha Church
Picture by *UMMU* participant

Perhaps before delving into discussions on AUGC in this chapter, it would be useful to give a brief background on the Abakuria of Kenya.

The individual and the community narrating the self

While working on the *UMMU* pilot project with the Abakuria, it became apparent how easily and involuntarily a marginalised community comes to accept and normalise its absence from the national broadcasting discourse. When the participants in this project were asked whether their minimal representation or the absence of their voices, and other cultural productions, from the traditional television broadcasting space concerned them, the response was either that they were not conscious of such exclusion as they had always been on the margins of the national story, or that they had come to accept the situation. This scenario also manifested itself in other cultural productions such as music, arts and literature created in and by the Abakuria. During the postproduction process, for

instance, it became apparent that the participants could easily access music to score their films from some of their more dominant neighbouring communities such as the Luo, but somewhat struggled to obtain music in their own language. Ironically, in the few instances when they sourced music in Abakuria by their own performers, they did not have basic information such as who the artists were or where they piece had been performed. On the other hand, they could easily identify the music of the Luo performers, and they could even attend live performances. Even when the project managed to source music played by members of the community it was almost always in Kiswahili. This did not come as a big surprise, as a visit to their main town, Kehancha, revealed that there were several cultural spaces playing the popular *ohangla* music, either live or recorded, in Dholuo (the Luo language) but very little (if any) music was in the Abakuria language. A visit to the bookstores and magazine vending stalls also revealed very little literature in the Abakuria language.

This seeming apathy towards owning, displaying and exhibiting their own cultural productions seemed unusual. Perhaps the lack of a means of producing tangible – what Thumim (2012) calls "bounded" cultural texts – by the Abakuria could be a central causal factor. What stemmed from discussions with participants was that many of the narratives about the Abakuria were transferred orally from one generation to the next, or from one individual to another, thus leaving behind no such bounded text. A means of sustainably and continuously producing self-representative bounded texts in audiovisual and other cultural spaces could potentially represent an intervention in this instance. Thumim (2012:6) convincingly proposes that "when someone produces a self-representation, they produce a bounded text, however fleeting or ephemeral the text might be". The production of bounded texts by the Abakuria is perhaps the first step towards actively participating not only in the broadcasting space but also in the national narrative in Kenya. These bounded texts also play a notable role in archiving these communities' individual and collective narratives, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

As television progressively moves towards Ellis' (2000) "era of plenty" on the African continent, ordinary people and their representations of the self are increasingly becoming central to content and the creation of such content. Thumim (2012:38) argues that self-representations inherently promise "a more truthful account in order to address perceived absences in representation, misrepresentation and the idea that it is the representations that are made by others that are mediated, consequently indirect and intrinsically less truthful". Thumim (2012:38) also proposes that self-representations "make claim to authenticity" by privileging a discourse which is reflective of personal experience. Whereas this argument can to a large extent be compelling, it is important to interrogate notions of the 'self', the 'personal', the 'individual' and the 'other' in self-representations, especially within the context of marginalised communities in African nation-states.

While conceptualising the *UMMU* project and knowing the project's aims and objectives in the context of giving a voice to marginalised communities in postcolonial African nation-states (specifically Kenya), it is important to theorise on the discourse of the 'self' to guide the PAR project. Is the self necessarily synonymous to the individual, or can the idea of the self exist outside the confines of the individual? How do these representations of the self manifest in the *UMMU* project? The proposition here is that the idea of the *self* in a self-representational perspective is dynamic and pliable, and can be constructed and understood in multiple ways depending on the framework of the representation. In the context of the *UMMU* project, the notion of the self is not considered in a singular sense, which only acknowledges the individual: rather, it is applied in its plural context, which embraces both the individual and his/her community. For the continued existence of these 'imagined communities', and for communities to sustain their sense of belonging both within larger groupings and in the context of the Kenyan nation, it is essential that marginalised groups be encouraged and supported to continually and constantly imagine, re-imagine and represent themselves in the broadcasting space (in the plural sense, without excluding the individual). In the fourth proposition of his framework for sustaining nationalism, Özkirimli (2000:230) draws on the ideas of Billig (1995) and

Stuart Hall (1990), among other scholars, who believe it is vital to continuously reproduce discourses on nationalism, as that is how these are sustained. Nationalism is viewed as entailing "a heterogeneous set of nation-oriented idioms, practices and possibilities that are continuously available or 'endemic' in modern cultural and political life" (Brubaker cited in Özkirimli 2000:230).

Individual participants proposed the three stories fleshed out and produced by the focus group in the *UMMU* pilot project, although the group of eight participants interchangeably worked as a unit on each narrative. *Oogotoraa Amatwi* is a story proposed by one of the participants featuring his elderly mother as the storyteller, although a different participant interviewed the protagonist. This narrative features several *selves* represented in the story in multiple ways. The protagonist represents herself when she narrates the story from her own perspective as an elderly and respected member of the Abakuria community. She does this in her own voice, as a woman who has experience and knowledge of the subject. This gives the story a sense of immediacy, authenticity and believability in the process of self-representation. She speaks in the vernacular, meaning that the story is able to convey cultural nuances, idioms and subtexts that might have been lost if narrated in a different language.

The interviewer also represents her-*self* in the film in multiple ways. The story primarily targets young women like her, who belong to the Abakuria community. Through her role in the story, she is able to directly engage with the respondent and ask questions that she feels are pertinent. The interviewer came up with the interview questions and was given leeway to ask follow-up questions. She had a free hand in interviewing the respondent, therefore her voice as a young Abakuria woman is present in the narrative. The intention was to have the two disparate generations engaging in a narrative space, much as it was in the Abakuria tradition in which a grandmother would orally convey the cultures, traditions and teachings of the community to the younger generation, in the vernacular. This context, though, had the additional benefit of binding and archiving the text. The implication here is that this became a shared narrative

between interviewer and interviewee, as both their voices receive prominence in the story.

The individual who proposed this concept arguably also represents him-*self* in the story, in several ways. First, he conceptualised the narrative and featured his mother who, to an extent, is an extension and a representation of his identity at the family and clan level. As proponents of *ubuntu* assert, he is who he is to a significant extent because of his mother. As one of the cameramen, he framed the shots and captured the images that told the story in ways which he felt best highlighted the narrative. This participant was also intricately involved in the postproduction process that included aspects of the editing process and translating the narrative into English. The significance of this involvement is that he was able to actively contribute to the narration of the story and, to a large extent, participate in the process of how the narrative was encoded in another language.

The second story, *Amabeere*, took a similar approach to *Oogotoraa Amatwi'*s although it belongs to a different genre. The concept was similarly proposed by an individual in the focus group, but was told by the entire team. In this case, it focused on a participant's partner who was interviewed by a different participant. This story has a documentary style approach, rather than the television magazine style adopted by the preceding interview. It uses cutaways of scenes that emphasise and amplify the narrative. The protagonist represents herself in the narrative by explaining the process she follows while making traditional sour milk. However, she inadvertently represents her community, since *amabeere* is a cultural product and the brewing process has been passed down to her by others in her community.

The third story, *A history of Komotobo Maranatha Mission*, is a collaborative narrative suggested by the focus group. It revolves around a significant space and event that six of the eight participants had a direct relationship to, as beneficiaries of the services and facilities offered by the mission (schools, health centre, church). The protagonist who tells this version of the history of the

mission is a respected elderly pastor from the area. Having been personally involved in the establishment of a number of the facilities at the mission, he therefore has first-hand knowledge of, and information about, certain events. His version of the history is therefore bounded, archived and relayed in his own voice in this AUGC project, for future generations. Finally, the participants represented themselves and their story as active members, beneficiaries, employees and participants of the Komotobo mission, in different facets and production pipelines of the film-making process.

In contextualising and defining notions of the 'self', the 'personal', the 'individual' and the 'other' in self-representations in the *UMMU* pilot project, the individual and the community which the participants belong to are used to refer to anyone who ascribes to the identity of the Abakuria within that specific community, as well as the Abakuria community of Kenya at large. This includes, among others, those in Kenya who speak the language, those who live in the community, those born to a parent who either lives in the community or speaks the language, etc. The 'personal' similarly takes a plural sense, to imply that which affects or is attributable not only to the individual but also to other social and cultural groupings within the community (family, relatives, friends and the entire Abakuria people). The 'other' therefore implies those who do not ascribe to, or fit into, the aforementioned categories. The researcher constantly grappled with the extent to which his intervention in the production process as an 'other' among the Abakuria would interfere (if at all) with the focus group's self-representation. The researcher was quite keen to give the focus group members every opportunity possible to represent themselves as best they could. Perhaps the question should have been whether this was a legitimate concern or whether it was a pedantic and purist approach to the self-representation discourse in film-making.

The literature shows that questions of authenticity and 'truth' have been raised in the film-making space since the production of one of the earliest documentary films, Robert J. Flaherty's 1922 ethnographic docudrama *Nanook of the North.* Flaherty's staging of certain events and locations in the narrative, and the use of

other characters to play members of Nanook's family, were heavily criticised as inauthentic. It is also an accepted understanding in film discourse that key stages of the production process – such as the narrative design and conceptualisation, cinematography, sound design and postproduction work such as editing, among others – could alter not just perspectives, but also the meanings and intentions of the story. Thumim's (2012:38) argument mentioned earlier in this chapter, that "self-representation is used to promise a more truthful account in order to address perceived absences in representation, misrepresentation and the idea that it is the representations that are made by others that are mediated, consequently indirect and intrinsically less truthful" also persuaded the researcher to consider lessening (and, where possible, eliminating) his undue mediation of the process.

In the *UMMU* pilot project with the Abakuria, the participants completed the entire postproduction process without intervention on the part of the facilitator. They finalised all the editing work on their own, which included shot selection, shot arrangement and timing, and all the transitions, sound design and scoring. The participants also handled the titles, credits and subtitles in all three films. The only involvement on the part of the facilitator was in helping to subtitle one of the narratives, *A history of Komotobo Maranatha Mission*, which was not completed by the participants due to time constraints. The production phase was a little more challenging, as it was the first time the participants captured moving images for public consumption, and they therefore needed some assistance. To this end, the facilitator assisted the crew in setting up cameras for one of the productions (*Oogotoraa Amatwi*), but the participants did all the camerawork on their own. They were subsequently able to set up cameras for the production phase of the remaining two films. The preproduction phase was completed through a workshop led by the facilitator, although the participants suggested all the themes and topics, and proposed all the potential narrative structures and characters who featured in the stories. This was done in an effort to ensure that the narrative's ownership largely resided with the participants, and that they were empowered to use the platform to tell their stories in their own 'voices'.

The final cuts of the films and photographic productions might not have been done at a professional level in terms of technical aspects, but this was neither an expectation nor an immediate objective of the project (see chapter 7). The project set out to gain insight into, and an understanding of, the extent to which ordinary marginalised people in Kenya could narrate their own stories, and the potential ways in which this could be done. The envisaged outcome was to empower the participants to use the platforms available to them, as Bhabha (1990) proposes, by radically unsettling and deconstructing already present hegemonic exchanges in the mediascape. Empowerment, as Fortunati (2014:174) sums up from a number of theorists, is

> a process by which the empowered gain mastery over their personal affairs, influence over the political problems that affect them, ability to articulate their own stories, capacity for self-action and the transformation of self-definition, capacity to access information and resources, confidence and autonomy to make meaningful and free choices and to translate their choices into desired actions and outcomes, capacity to increase agency for shaping their lives and the community in which they live.

This quote will form the basis of several arguments in chapter 7.

During post-project discussions with the participants, one recurring comment received as feedback was that the short self-representational films had the dual function of archiving not just the personal, individual and communal narratives of the Abakuria, but also the identities of the storytellers. Kidd (2006:8) notes that during the *Capture Wales* project a common motive for narrating a story was the wish on the part of the storytellers to "commemorate a life, to pin it down before it is lost to others, and even to themselves". The participant whose mother was the protagonist in the film *Oogotoraa Amatwi*, revealed that the most compelling outcome for him was that his grandchildren, who were quite young at the time of filming the story, would have an opportunity not just to see their great-grandmother, but to also hear her speak and listen directly to her advice. The participants were also unanimous that it was a significant achievement for them

to be able to film their pastor, and elder in the community, giving his version of the history of the Maranatha missionaries whose presence in Komotobo deeply impacted the community in manifold ways. They felt that his version of the mission's history needed to be captured and archived, since he continues to play a key role in the mission and was personally involved in numerous projects, including the establishment of World Vision in the area.

From a socio-cultural perspective, and even in the wider discourse of the nation, it is vital that members of the community have the means and the capability to capture these narratives because, as Thumim argues, self-representations promise a more 'truthful' account of the subjects they represent. The *Capture Wales* project had similar responses to the *UMMU* digital narratives project as regards the archival role of these narratives. Kidd cites some of the feedback she received from the *Capture Wales* project participants:

> 'I needed to sanctify what was a very small, and very short life, which would have gone otherwise unnoticed.'
> 'I wanted to reclaim my uncle's story and make something positive out of it.'
> 'It's a tribute to my mother.'
> 'A celebration of my mother's life. I wanted to show that you can be thankful and celebrate life without being overwhelmed by grief.'
> 'I wanted to capture and relive something of the memories of my father.' (Kidd 2006:9)

Catharsis is another significant socio-cultural function of self-representations not just in the aural-visual field, but also in many forms of storytelling. Films such as *Night and Fog* and *Schindler's List*, for instance, arguably offer a cathartic outlet for victims and survivors of the Nazi genocide, and their relatives and friends. On the continent, films such as *Hotel Rwanda* and *Shooting Dogs* play a similar role in relation to the 1994 Rwandan genocide, for victims and survivors, and their loved ones. In South Africa, *Sarafina* and *Mapantsula* can be deemed cathartic for anyone affected by the brutal apartheid regime. Recounting traumatic events usually unleashes the healing process in those who narrate the tales and in societies affected by such atrocities. In the *Project 10* documentary series, a

numbers of the stories were cathartic for both the subjects and the narrators. Kethiwe Ngcobo, the subject in the documentary *Belonging*, explains that the making of the documentary had a healing function for her and that it helped her deal with and confront some of the emotional struggles she faced while living in exile and on her return to South Africa. *Ikhaya* similarly had a cathartic effect for Zimbili Kamanga, who journeyed back to the home in KwaZulu-Natal that she had fled just prior to the 1994 elections. Upon her return she met with her former neighbours and friends, and the occupants of what used to be her home. The journey and its narration began her healing process. *Umgidi* opened up many family wounds and pent-up emotions in Sipho Singiswa's family, and narrating the story may have helped them confront certain events that have been hidden away in the family closet. This potentially represents the start of the family's healing process.

In the *Capture Wales* project, Kidd informs us that many participants explained the healing process that their narratives either kindled in their own lives or achieved in the course of the storytelling process. She quotes some of the participants recounting their experiences as follows:

> 'Yes I had a story to tell and in a strange way telling this story would be putting the past to sleep, a moving on process.' [The story intends to] 'officially announce the end of my dream – a bit of self-therapy if you like.'
> 'Telling my story felt as though I had lifted a heavy burden from my back. The slate was clean and I could move on. That period of my life now had a line drawn under it.'
> 'It allowed me to come to terms with the loss of my grandson and my grandmother. Boosted my confidence no end.'
> 'Telling and making the story was a kind of a catharsis.'
> 'It was a very emotional and cathartic experience.'
> 'Personally I gained a lot emotionally from my experience because of the story I told. It was therapeutic for me and my family.'
> 'In a way I won't go into detail over, it has helped to lay a personal ghost.'
> 'Yes, it took a lot of courage to write my story and admit that I had been ill.' (Kidd 2006:9)

The therapeutic process for a marginalised community within a nation narrating itself, this thesis proposes, can be experienced in two ways. The first would be as discussed in examples from the *Project 10* documentary series and the *Capture Wales* project. In these instances, the healing process usually occurs at an emotional or a psychological level. Individuals or communities access this kind of outlet through the process of narrating events that affected them directly, be it emotionally or psychologically. They thus confront and deal with these issues in some way in the narrative, thereby purging, to a certain degree, their pent-up emotions. The second way in which the healing process can be experienced, is usually much more complex and perhaps less discernible amongst affected members of the community. This does not in any way imply that the former is a simplistic or simple process: complexity, as used here, denotes a less direct relationship in this cathartic context, where the cathartic process may take a comparatively longer period of time to realise and acknowledge. It is referred to here as a socio-cultural cathartic experience, which is a culmination of the emancipatory processes discussed in this chapter that eventually lead to marginalised communities being afforded a voice and a platform on which they can use those voices. These marginalised communities self-empower by disrupting the ubiquitous and pervasive hegemonic broadcasting structures that previously excluded them, and gate-crash or self-invite their participation in the national broadcasting space by including their own discourses, ideologies and stories among the many competing, counter and complementary national narratives in the space. It is the latter process of healing which the *UMMU* project hopes to facilitate amongst participants.

A number of cultural theorists such as Smith (1983), Hall (1990), Bhabha (1994), Billig (1995) and Özkirimli (2000), among others, focus on the socio-cultural aspects of nationalism, and engage in the disenfranchisement-related discourses of marginalised communities in the national context through this prism. The *UMMU* project proposes that it is equally important to focus on the economic aspects of nationalism and nation building, since, as discussed in chapter 5,

economic enfranchisement is a key enabler of either inclusion in, or exclusion from, the national discourse in the broadcasting-scape.

One meaningful contribution of an AUGC project is the economic capital that it offers participants in terms of skills transfer and as a means of earning an income. The nation-building process would be incomplete if it were only situated in the socio-political and cultural paradigms, at the expense of economic factors. Participation in the three projects discussed in this chapter potentially had, and continue to have, economic benefits for the participants and their communities in terms of economic capital. The participatory approach followed in the three projects inevitably resulted in the transfer of skills and knowledge, not only in terms of the technical aspects of the production process, but also in the conceptual realm of representing the self.

In the *Capture Wales* project, Kidd (2006:12) reports that many participants indicated that they had experienced difficulties in using the technology during the project, but that this motivated them to have a further 'relationship' with the technology, "far surpassing their previous limitations". In the *UMMU* digital narratives project, a significant outcome is the skills transfer to the participants and the potential to use these skills for personal economic empowerment. The participants interchanged their roles in each of the narratives, such that at the end of the process they had skills and at least some experience in multiple aspects of the film-making process. A participant who, for instance, directed one film would operate the cameras in the next and be the interviewer in the third. Someone who did the offline editing in one film would do the online editing in the second and sound design in the third. There was extensive collaboration both in specific stages of the film-making process and in narrating the three stories. The intention was not merely for the participants to familiarise themselves with the different technologies through repeatedly executing the requisite technical and conceptual skills, but also to practise these skills and build their confidence and knowledge in applying their craft. Their increasing confidence, skills and knowledge in terms of the production process were discernible as they made subsequent narratives more efficiently and within a shorter time span.

Perhaps one positive outcome of the project was that at the conclusion, the participants resolved to form a production company that could have an economic impact on them and their community. The participants felt that they had sufficient technical and conceptual skills to enable them to conceptualise and execute digital narrative projects, not just to include their voices and opinions in the national broadcasting space, but also to use these skills for economic empowerment. The project therefore not only had a socio-cultural impact on the community, but also potentially an economic one.

The everyday and the banal in narrating the nation

Public media in Africa, and elsewhere in the world, have historically been at the core of nationalism and nation-building projects attempting to coalesce, cajole and unite members of a nation. Conversely, certain sections of the media have sadly acted as a divisive platform for many nations. Several scholars argue that the concepts of identity and belonging in African nation-states are at best tenuous, partially due to the duality of nations in Africa, which view them as territorial states. Crane (1998:55) argues that the "state is a political apparatus, ideally bureaucratic, aimed at controlling people, territory and resources". Conversely, he reasons that the nation "is a collective identity, an 'imagined community' that draws people together and, at times, may move them to extraordinary political action". He suggests that there could be numerous overlaps between the state and the nation, but is quick to caution that national identity is not in all cases an expression of state interests. This incongruence tends to create a chasm between state interests and national interests. Bloom (1990:56) opines that the end of colonialism in Africa forced nationhood on territories and people with disparate cultural and ethnic backgrounds while Smith (1983:125) argues that several states are made up of disparate sets of old ethnic communities and nations aspiring to turn into one new nation. Norbu (1992) notes that the "European paradigm is often uncritically used as the standard measurement for the study of third world nationalism", even though these ethnically heterogeneous communities, as Smith (1983:124) points out,

lack a single core around which the state could be formed, as was the case with Western Europe.

This thesis argues that significant media platforms on the African continent have, for a long time, taken their cue from Smith (1983), Bloom (1990) and Norbu (1992), who challenge existing schools of thought. The focus in narrating nations has been on grand narratives about nation-states, where 'constructed' state heroes are forced on citizens at the expense of ordinary people's experiences, aspirations and everyday heroes.[33] It is possible to refer to these 'state heroes' as constructed, since in many instances the political elites and other hegemonic structures create grand narratives about such individuals (either themselves or members of their circle) and 'impose' these on citizens. Such constructions usually take on a top-down approach, in which the members of the nation-state in question often do not participate: not in constructing the narratives, or in necessarily relating to these 'constructed' state heroes.

During Kenyatta's and Moi's regimes, for instance, the KBC presented both leaders as national heroes, part of an elite group of politicians who had liberated the country from the colonialists. Other political elites such as Jaramogi Oginga Odinga (Kenyatta's first vice-president), Paul Ngei, Harry Thuku, Argwings Kodhek, Dr Njoroge Mungai, Masinde Muliro and Ronald Ngala, among others, were also presented as heroes. Although these personalities may have played a role in Kenya's formative governments, there was a glaring absence of narratives in the media that told the stories of ordinary heroes. This may have alienated a number of ordinary Kenyans from the grand 'national' narratives, since these ordinary people knew and experienced heroes in their daily lives but could not see or hear their stories reflected in the media. The media narratives of Kenyan heroes during the formative stages of building the nation-state were also incredibly problematic, since most of these heroes hailed from dominant communities. The narratives demonstrated a glaring lack in terms of the representation of women, the disabled and other marginalised groups.

[33] 'Heroes' is used here to refer to both the male and female genders.

The political elite in Kenya took these grand narratives to ridiculous ego-massaging proportions, naming national holidays after themselves. October 10 and 20 were for a long time referred to as Moi Day and Kenyatta Day respectively. October 20 commemorated the detention of six politicians who served in Kenya's first government in Kapenguria in the then Rift Valley province: Paul Ngei, Achieng' Oneko, Kung'u Karumba, Bildad Kaggia, Jomo Kenyatta and Fred Kubai. The state, however, chose to elevate Kenyatta not just above the other six detainees, but also above all other heroes: beyond political discourse or any other socio-cultural space in the Kenyan nation-state. Moi Day, however, was an arbitrary holiday introduced by President Moi to give Kenyans a day off work to honour his accomplishments since he took over leadership of the country in 1978. The narratives in the media justifying these name days were extremely thin and lacking in substantive rationalisations.

Since the promulgation of Kenya's new constitution in 2010, however, Moi Day has been scrapped from the list of national holidays, while Kenyatta Day has now been renamed *Mashujaa* Day, which is arguably more in line with the African philosophy of *utu* (in Swahili) or *ubuntu* (in the bantu languages of Africa) that acknowledges and exalts the collective over the individual.[34]

In a number of African nation-states, the political elite have attempted to stifle certain ethnic communities' traditions, cultures and vernacular languages on the pretext that these sow division and disrupt the nation-building agenda. In Kenya, during Kenyatta's and Moi's regimes, for instance, broadcasting in vernacular languages was frowned upon and referred to as tribalism. KBC television and its affiliate radio stations predominantly aired their programmes in English, the official language of communication in Kenya, or in Kiswahili, Kenya's national language. This situation is not uniquely Kenyan, as several other nation-states in Africa have, for a long time, discouraged or even penalised marginalised and smaller language groups from using their vernacular languages in broadcasting. Botswana, for instance, now considered by many international bodies to be among the most democratic countries on the continent, has stifled the use of

[34] *Mashujaa* means 'heroes' in Kiswahili.

minority and marginalised languages, including Kalanga and Baswara, in favour of using (almost exclusively) Setswana, which is spoken by nearly 80 per cent of the population, on the nation-state's broadcasting platforms. Smaller language groups or dialects enjoy very little airtime, if any, in the broadcasting spaces in the country. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, one of Kenya's eminent literary scholars, has unceasingly confirmed the link between culture and language:

> Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we perceive ourselves and our place in the world ... Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world. (Wa Thiong'o 1986:15)

The gist of Wa Thiong'o's argument is that the exclusion, marginalisation or absence of a language would mean that the culture, discourses and narratives of such a language would also die out. He has since written a number of novels in his native Gikuyu language or in Kiswahili, before translating these into English or having them translated. Novels which were first written in Kikuyu include *Murogi wa Kagogo*, later translated as *Wizard of the crow*, *Caitaani mutharaba-Ini* (*Devil on the cross*) and *Matigari ma Njiruungi* (*Matigari*). In the national broadcasting context, failure to give due airtime to smaller languages could imply that ubiquitous, dominant languages would continue to entrench themselves not only in national discourses but also in the national psyche, while those on the margins would fade into oblivion.

The post-Moi era, however, saw the emergence of radio and television stations broadcasting in a number of Kenya's vernacular languages. Predictably, though, the dominant language groups (tribes) and those whose members occupy key positions among the ruling elite have dominated the vernacular radio and television stations. Kenyan communities on the margins of the political centre or those that do not have the numerical numbers to compete and dominate in the political sphere continue to be excluded from seeing, hearing and representing

themselves, and having their stories and experiences told by both public and commercial broadcasters.

The everyday and banal stories in the *Project 10* documentary series, the *Capture Wales* project and the *UMMU* digital narratives project play a significant role in offering not only relatable narratives, but also archetypes and tropes that many members of a nation can identify with. This contrasts with the grand narratives about national heroes, which appear almost mythical, and, in some instances, removed from the nation-state's citizenry. These grand narratives might generally resonate better with generations that are part of those narratives, but could appeal less to subsequent generations: it is usually comparatively more difficult to reproduce such narratives without them becoming repetitive and bordering on the fictitious. Billig (1995) convincingly argues that for the continued existence of a nation, narratives need to be continually reproduced to sustain the imagined bond between imagined communities.

In the *Project 10* documentary series, for instance, the documentary *Nabantwa' Bam* follows the life of a single mother and her two sons who have very contrasting lives, even though they grew up together. One son is an upwardly mobile man headed for a 'successful' life in post-apartheid South Africa, while the other has no job and seems to live a life with little prospect of a 'successful' future. This narrative offers several archetypes, which many in the South African 'nation' can relate to and directly empathise with. The archetype of a single mother raising her family under difficult circumstances transcends different socio-cultural groupings in the country, allowing ordinary citizens to relate to and empathise with it. The second archetype of two brothers who grew up together but turned out quite differently in life is something many ordinary people can identify with, irrespective of their socio-cultural space and experiences.

Being Pavarotti and *Solly's Story* in the *Project 10* documentary series offer useful narrative tropes that are not only relatable but also offer hope and encourage resilience among ordinary people. Both narratives revolve around the working

class and the poor in South Africa. *Being Pavarotti* is the story of a talented 13-year-old, impoverished Elton Nkanunu who beats the odds to perform solo at open-air festivals and as the opening act for established opera singers in and around the Western Cape province of South Africa. *Solly's Story* chronicles the life of a young man from deep rural Venda, in Limpopo Province, who survives poverty and marginalisation and ends up coaching the under-12 and under-17 South African national soccer teams. The two stories are the classic rags-to-riches archetypal narratives that can be found in any community in South Africa. These are not just immediate and relatable narratives, but people from different strata and backgrounds can re-imagine and reproduce such narratives in their own contexts and communities. These narrative tropes from, and about, ordinary people have the potential to continually reproduce aspirational heroes who are relatable and less mythical than those hailed in the grand narratives produced by the political elite.

These everyday narratives by ordinary people also play a significant nation-building role in that they enable conversations, discourses and discussions on the relatable and immediate narratives on which they are premised. Many of the stories from the *Capture Wales* project offer material/content for everyday conversation and socialisation among families, friends, communities and citizens in general. Thumim (2002) mentions that the stories created by the *Capture Wales* project participants were initially screened to the participants' families, friends and communities, before being aired on BBC channels and websites. These conversations and discourses, therefore, occurred in multiple spaces and among a variety of people. The communal screenings in this project offered material for everyday discussions that potentially encouraged cohesion and an imagined bond, which contributed to the nation-building process.

The reality in any socio-political community – and especially in the context of a nation-state – is that there will be contestations, negotiations and counter-narratives on perspectives, realities, experiences and, importantly, histories. The grand national narratives which are constructed, mediated and advanced by the ruling elite often suppress these very healthy and necessary narratives. In the

Kenyan context, during Jomo Kenyatta's, Moi's, Kibaki's and even Uhuru Kenyatta's administrations, alternative voices were silenced (and continue to be suppressed and stifled) in multiple ways (see chapter 5). Özkirimli (2000:228), building on McClintock's ideas, advances that in addition to the existence of different types of nationalisms within any nation, there are also different (and, in some instances, conflicting) constructions of nationhood advanced by members of a single nation. In certain contexts, "divergent ideologies and movements compete to capture the allegiance of the 'nationals' [and] in that sense, nationalism is rarely the nationalism of the nation, but rather represents the site where very different views of the nation contest and negotiate with each other" (Duara cited in Özkirimli 2000:228). Billig (1995) coined the term "banal nationalism" to capture what he believes are the 'unconscious' and mundane practices that propagate the continued existence of nations. Far from occurring magically, the reproduction of nations requires banal actions instead of deliberate choices or collective acts of imagination (Billig 1995:93). He opines that "small words, rather than grand memorable phrases, offer constant, but barely conscious, reminders of the homeland, making 'our' national identity unforgettable" (Billig 1995:93). He suggests that it is important to define words like 'people', and to become what Özkirimli (2000) calls "linguistically microscopic". Billig explains that the clue to unlocking banal nationalism lies in ordinary, everyday words such as 'we', 'this' and 'here' (Billig 1995:93).

During Jomo Kenyatta's rule in Kenya, the Minister of Information and Communication, Achieng' Oneko, is quoted by Heath (1986:191) as saying the public broadcaster, VOK, "provided the new state with a useful tool for preaching and maintaining nationalism and pride that Kenya needed at the time". The use of words such as 'preaching' implies that these narratives were unidirectional, top-down from the ruling elite to the citizenry, highly controlled and choreographed for public consumption. 'Preaching' could also be construed to imply that the narratives were not open to input from the citizenry, nor could they be questioned or challenged but had to be received passively as gospel truth. There was little room, if any, for counter and competing narratives or alternative perspectives to the grand narratives. Cox (cited in Ligaga 2008:57),

for instance, points out that "the opposition party was not allowed to air its views on VOK because the government felt that they would incite people". This model aptly fits into what Carpentier (2011) calls the minimalist media participatory approach, which focuses on control by so-called media professionals. He argues that this model is unidirectional and generally serves the needs and interests of professional media practitioners and state officials. This is perhaps a demonstration of the incongruence between the state's objectives and the nation's needs as regards nation-building projects in Africa (see Crane 1998).

Moi's regime took this censorship a notch higher, blatantly advancing the regime's propaganda through the public broadcaster. As Ligaga (2008:59) points out, the head of the Presidential Press Unit and Moi's spokesman, Lee Njiru, had the duty "to scrutinize and censor VOK's announcements and messages before they were released to the public". Kibaki's regime used similar tactics to Moi's, but since the airwaves had been liberalised during his time in office, the government arguably (mis)used the Royal Media Services, a privately owned broadcaster, in ways similar to arap Moi's (ab)use of the KBC – and in (re)turn, RMS flourished. Uhuru Kenyatta's regime also used strong-arm tactics in stifling alternative narratives: in January 2016, several media reported that one of Kenya's leading media houses, the Nation Media Group (NMG), had sacked its editor, Denis Galava, for writing an editorial in their leading newspaper *The Daily Nation* that criticised the president's regime. The grapevine had it that the government had twisted the NMG's arm into sacking Galava by threatening to withdraw government advertising from the newspaper.

Bhabha (1994) argues that any nation's continued existence strongly hinges on disparate and multiple representative discourses of everyday lived experiences being turned into a "cohesive national culture". He believes that the narration of a nation should not be a monopoly of any single ideology espoused by those who assume superiority and assign themselves the authority to narrate on behalf of the nation: rather, all groupings in the nation should have the potential to include their lived experiences, stories and discourses in the national narrative.

Williams (cited in Bhabha 1994:212) cautions that if a dominant ideology assigns itself the role of articulating the nation's narrative, "there will be areas of practice and meaning which, almost by definition from its own limited character, or in its profound deformation, the dominant culture is unable in any real terms to recognize".

Everyday and banal narratives by ordinary people, by their very nature, offer an alternative space for counter-narratives. This much is evident in the aforementioned projects, either within a single narrative or overarching several narratives. In the *Project 10* documentary *Umgidi*, for instance, Sipho's and Vuyo's perspectives on Xhosa traditions and culture are contrasted within the same narrative. This idea is also realised in the narrative in *Nabantwa' Bam* in which we see counter-narratives from two perspectives, namely that of Nhlanhla and Miles. The narratives in the *Capture Wales* project also offer myriad perspectives and opinions, both from citizens of the nation and from outsiders living within the nation, as is evident in the different shorts produced by the participants.

> An analysis of the data shows that workshop participants are, on the whole, representative of the population of Wales, more so than in any other archive produced within the mainstream media, real 'Welsh' people of all ages are getting their opportunity to speak. They are however not solely Welsh and English-speaking Welsh people. Both non-UK and English born residents are also well represented. Ethnic minorities actually make up a disproportionately high percentage of participants. (Kidd 2006:8)

These experiences are more reflective of the realities of imagined communities. This correlates with Bhabha's (1994:213) views that the multiplicity of narratives and 'counter-narratives' to dominant ideologies within a nation disrupts its 'totalising boundaries', be they actual or conceptual. He suggests that this often results in a rethink of "essentialist identities" stemming from the monopoly of a dominant ideology. Bhabha (1994:213) believes that "the political unity of the nation consists in a continual displacement of the anxiety of its irredeemably plural modern space".

Perhaps even more significant for this debate is the fact that the endgame should not just involve the inclusion of those on the margins of the political centre in narrating the nation, but that the mode in which this inclusion takes place should receive paramount importance. Bhabha (1990) again weighs in here, proposing as a central tenet of his cultural difference theory that the minority (or broadly those on the periphery of the political centre) should not simply be invited to the centre but should greatly disrupt and restructure existing hegemonic interactions.

This chapter has grappled with several questions arising from the *UMMU* pilot project with the Abakuria. Questions addressed include: How can existing hegemonic broadcasting interactions be radically disrupted and deconstructed in a context such as the Kenya broadcasting-scape in which control by the elite has been pervasive since the country's independence in the 1960s? To what extent is it possible for ordinary people to participate in this space without necessarily being invited by the elite and therefore being in a position to decide and determine how to narrate their Kenyan-ness – without the proverbial 'big brother' watching over how they tell their stories? In what ways can these alternative modes or platforms be independent and sustainable to the ordinary people who use them?

One potential approach is premised on convergence culture, as advocated by Jenkins (1995), who envisages a participatory space that entails both a corporate-driven process which is top-down and a consumer-driven process which is bottom-up, where corporate convergence coexists with grassroots convergence. He argues that "consumers are learning how to use these different media technologies to bring the flow of media more fully under their control and to interact with other consumers" (Jenkins 2006:3). Convergence culture in the digital space potentially opens up the possibilities of unsettling and reshaping existing broadcasting structures and approaches in a country such as Kenya. This premise was a key motivation and aspiration of the pilot *UMMU* digital narratives project with the Abakuria, as it sought an approach that would grant

ordinary people access to the means of production as well as distribution of broadcast content. The AUGC *UMMU* pilot project sought to understand how this could be achieved by working with a community perceived to be excluded from national narratives in Kenya.

The *Project 10* documentary series and the *Capture Wales* project provided models for the implementation of the *UMMU* pilot project with the Abakuria. Both initiatives featured, at their core, ordinary people as key players in the participatory process of making their own content for broadcasting on the broadcasters' different platforms. Both projects directed significant resources towards training participants to produce the narratives. The key challenge, however, was that in both initiatives, power was largely skewed towards the broadcasters, thus arguably maintaining the hegemonic broadcasting interactions that Bhabha (1990) cautions against. The AUGC *UMMU* pilot project attempted to engage and mitigate against certain concerns which, it is argued here, wrestle narrative agency and ownership away from ordinary people and maintain the status quo. This does not imply that the *UMMU* pilot project did not have its challenges or could not be improved on. Rather, it is an attempt to determine the extent to which existing projects can be rethought and redesigned so as to establish an equitable, participatory process between media elites and ordinary people.

In both initiatives, the broadcasters (in this case the SABC and BBC) had to invite ordinary citizens to participate in the storytelling process. In the SABC's initiative, participants had to meet certain criteria in order to be included. For instance, the 13 productions eventually commissioned had to be presented to a panel of media professionals (put forward by the broadcaster) to ensure that they were representative of the diversity of the South African nation-state. The *Project 10* website states:

> The final selection of filmmakers was difficult in that the panel had to ensure that the films chosen were able to sketch a broad canvas of South African experiences in the last 10 years. The filmmakers chosen were predominantly

> women and from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. (www.project10.co.za cited in Ambala 2005:18)

Ambala (2005:18) further informs us that the process of commissioning the film-makers in this initiative "had to conform to the principles of affirmative action so as to provide a fair opportunity to South Africans of all colours and backgrounds". They further had to portray a national outlook which accommodated a wide range of cultures, population groups, faiths, genders and age groups. These rigorous criteria were not only applied to the process of selecting and inviting participants to be part of the project, but also influenced the content of the narratives, which had to be reflected in the subject matter, content and demographic make-up of the stories.

This process may have been deemed necessary or may have appeared justifiable from the broadcaster's point of view, considering it was ten years after the demise of apartheid that the project was initiated. Film-makers also had to take into account the mission, objectives and expectations of the broadcaster. The contention remains that traditional processes of commissioning content were still followed – and perhaps had to be followed, in line with the broadcaster's policy. This resulted in a gate-keeping process that meant that some participants who might not have met the predetermined criteria were not invited to participate, despite the fact that they had relevant and necessary stories to tell.

The *Capture Wales* project was less traditional and less rigid in terms of its process. The brief to the participants was quite broad and generic, which allowed for greater freedom of interpretation. The result was the creation of comparatively less restrictive and less prescriptive stories. Participants had more leeway to narrate the stories they really wanted to tell, in the way they wanted to tell them through specific characters. This less restrictive brief meant that people who were not necessarily part of the Welsh nation, but either lived in Wales or interacted with the Welsh also had a chance to make their stories heard. This not only created a more diverse array of stories, but offered a perspective that was not forthcoming in the *Project 10* documentary series.

The *UMMU* pilot project opted for the latter approach in working with the participants. Their brief was fairly broad and generic, giving them leeway to tell whatever stories they wanted to about themselves, their families or their communities. The brief was carefully considered so as not to prescribe the locations, characters or themes, among others. This approach arguably tilted the power towards the ordinary people, giving them a sense of ownership not only in the process but also in charting and determining the course and focus of the stories. The outcome of the *UMMU* pilot project was that, of the three films made, two focused on participants and their families while the third highlighted the historical narrative of a significant event in the community.

It is important to acknowledge that both the *Project 10* documentary series and the *Capture Wales* project were funded by either the public (through television licences and government taxes) or by advertisers (both private and government linked). This meant that these entities or their custodians had expectations and mandates to be fulfilled and this determined, to an extent, the processes and procedures to be followed. The broadcasters could therefore not cede significant power and authority to the participants, as they had to be accountable to other entities. The *UMMU* pilot project did not face this dilemma, as it did not receive funding from any entities and could therefore operate without a specific, rigid and prescribed mandate. To cede significant power and ownership to ordinary people who participate in AUGC projects, traditional broadcasters would have to come up with different models and consider amending some of their programming policies and procedures.

Both the *Project 10* documentary series and the *Capture Wales* project had interventions in the actual storytelling process that may have significantly altered or shaped the stories which ordinary people narrated. It must be acknowledged that the participatory film-making process could not have been possible without the participants being trained, and the processes facilitated, by media professionals. Under contention, however, is the extent to which this occurred. In both projects, professionals linked to the broadcasters largely did

the postproduction work for the films. Postproduction is an important part of any storytelling process, because the accepted 'truth' in the film-making process is that the final draft of a film narrative is 'written' and shaped in the edit suite. The process of selecting the final shots to be included in the film, the sequencing, ordering and timing of these shots and the location in which this process is effected imply that the agency and ownership of these narratives are arguably no longer in the hands of the ordinary people: power has thus shifted back to the media elites. The *UMMU* pilot project attempted to mitigate this by placing the entire postproduction process in the hands of the participants. Having been trained in the use of Adobe's Premiere edit suite, the entire editing process (including sound design, foleys and soundtracks) was sourced or created by the participants. The intention was to give the participants agency in all aspects of the production workflow that significantly contributed to empowering them: they owned and retained control and determined the direction of the narratives.

This thesis argues that in addition to interventions in the postproduction process, the spaces and locations in which key production pipeline stages take place are significant indicators of power and control. The *UMMU* pilot project made a deliberate choice to locate the entire production pipeline in what, for the participants, were local spaces – that gave them greater agency and a stronger sense of ownership. The argument made here is that locations and spaces in which production processes unfold, can be seen (whether real or perceived) to either retain or cede power, control and ownership of the content and process. The postproduction and broadcasting of the two projects was either fully or partially done at the premises of the broadcasters. This played a significant role in maintaining the hegemonic broadcasting interactions as such dependency tilted power and agency towards the media professionals.

Whereas the *Capture Wales* project model and brief were not as restrictive as that of the *Project 10* documentary series, the initiative also showed evidence of several gate-keeping processes. For instance, for the stories in the project to be considered for broadcasting, they had to be submitted to BBC professionals who subsequently either aired them on BBC2 or uploaded them onto the *Capture*

Wales project website, or both. This meant that stories still had to go through the traditional broadcasting process in which media professionals have the final say about what is broadcast. To circumvent this, the *UMMU* pilot project attempted to empower participants in the process of broadcasting their stories. Some participants were already making use of social and digital media platforms (Facebook, Whatsapp), which were initially used to broadcast the narratives. Next, participants were trained in the use of other broadcasting channels such as blogs and YouTube. These platforms were then linked to the participants' own platforms to give the narratives a bigger footprint and greater access to more potential audiences. Traditional broadcasters could consider some of these approaches in their own AUGC projects, to allow for equitable participation by ordinary people.

Summary

This chapter has engaged with the second overarching research question, which seeks to establish the extent to which, and the ways in which, ordinary citizens of a nation-state can actively participate in the (co)generation, (co)production and (co)distribution of content for aural-visual broadcasting. The aim was to determine the socioeconomic and cultural value that such participation can offer them in the nation-building context. These discussions and theorisations were framed within two broad themes: 'the individual and the community narrating the self' and 'the everyday and the banal in narrating the nation'.

In engaging with the first theme, the chapter unpacked notions of the 'self', the 'personal', the 'individual' and the 'other' in self-representations within the context of nationalism in postcolonial Africa. It discussed the forms, functions and manifestations of self-representations in three participatory UGC projects: the *Project 10* documentary series, *Capture Wales* and the *UMMU* digital narratives project. Here the focus was on the archival function, aspects of catharsis and economic enfranchisement emanating from the projects. The discussions were anchored on several scholars' thoughts, including Bhabha (1990), Hall (1990), Billig (1995) and Özkirimli (2000), who advocate that the

any discourse on nationalism can only be successfully sustained if it is frequently reproduced.

Discussions on the latter theme were premised on the argument that public media in Africa, and elsewhere in the world, have historically been at the core of nationalism and nation-building projects which attempt to coalesce, cajole and unite members of a nation, while acknowledging that the media have also acted, in certain instances, to counteract this process. The chapter acknowledged that the concepts of identity and belonging in African nation-states are at best tenuous, owing partially to overlaps, tensions and dualities between nations and states.

This theme interrogated aspects such as the role of vernacular language in the everyday and banal narratives around nation building, as anchored in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's firm belief that culture resides in, and is transmitted through, a people's language. Other aspects discussed include relatable narratives, archetypes and tropes promoted by everyday and banal narratives, the binary between grand narratives and the banal and everyday narratives in nationalism and the role of the everyday and banal narratives in offering a space/platform for contestations, negotiations and alternative or counter-narratives. Included were the ways and modes in which ordinary people can either actively or meaningfully participate in narrating their nation. Where such participation is curtailed, they can still engage by radically disrupting already existing hegemonic broadcasting interactions.

CHAPTER 7
Discourses from the public digital sphere on the pilot *UMMU* digital narratives project

Introduction

Premised on Jürgen Habermas' (1987, 1898, 1998) thoughts, as reflected in his seminal works, this chapter will engage with discourses in the public digital sphere on the pilot *UMMU* digital narratives project with the Abakuria community of Kenya. It will be responding to the third research question: *What kinds of public digital sphere discourses emerge from an AUGC pilot project in the context of the nation-building conversation in Kenya?* To a significant extent, this chapter will align with Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon's (2014:68) ideas on the phase of PAR that seeks to document and monitor what happens, to

> see if we are now preventing, avoiding or ameliorating the untoward consequences of our previous ways of working, and to check that our new ways of working are not producing new or different untoward consequences.

Data will be drawn primarily from the official *UMMU* digital narratives platforms, which include its blog, Facebook page and YouTube channel, as well as any other public digital sphere platforms that engage with the project. An analysis will be done on the actual texts produced by the participants (short films/narratives and photographs), as well as the comments of the viewers and public, or any other discourse in the digital space pertaining to the project.

The chapter begins by discussing certain key features of the public sphere, as advanced by Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2014). These features offer guiding principles on how the concept of the public sphere is understood in the context of this study. Next, the chapter contextualises the Kenyan digital-scape, outlining recent significant developments in the space and offering pertinent statistical and empirical information. The next section will entail a critical reading of the texts produced by the *UMMU* digital narratives participants, which are now available in the public digital sphere. Theories and conceptual work already

discussed in the study will provide a framework for these readings. The final section will entail an analysis of discourses taken from the feedback and responses received by the participants, as submitted by their families and friends, as well as the general public in the public digital sphere.

Key features of public spheres

Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2014) propose a number of principles, developed from Habermas' theorisations, which they suggest could be considered when constituting public spheres. Certain of these principles provide a framework for understanding the public digital sphere, as applied and elaborated on in this chapter. Their first principle proposes that public spheres "are constituted as actual networks of communication among actual participants" (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon 2014:37). Their argument is that public spheres should not be perceived as abstract conceptual entities, but rather as actual spaces used by actual participants. Rather than conceiving of a single public sphere, multiple public spheres exist at any one time. This is an important point to consider since, in the context of the *UMMU* digital narratives project, it is acknowledged from the outset that a 'primary' public digital sphere has been set up, despite the possibility that discourses on the project could manifest in other public spheres.

The second principle is that public spheres are self-constituted, voluntary and autonomous: voluntary spaces are created by participants who wish to articulate certain issues, while autonomous spaces "are outside (or marginal, or peripheral to) formal systems and outside formal systems of influence that mediate between civil society and state" (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon 2014:37). For them, "[c]ommunicative spaces or networks organized as part of the communicative apparatus of the economic or administrative sub systems of government or business would not normally qualify as public spheres". This second principle will be closely considered in analysing the *UMMU* digital narratives project. 'Secondary' public digital spheres will only be considered for analysis if constituted outside of government or business influences.

The third principle was quite central to the creation of the *UMMU* digital narratives public sphere, in that public spheres are constituted in response to legitimate deficits in communities. They are

> frequently created because potential participants share a view that there are doubts, concerns, problems or unresolved issues about the legitimacy of people's ideas or perspectives, or about the legitimacy of plans, proposals, policies or laws, or about the legitimacy of people's practices, or about the legitimacy of the conditions under which people work. (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon 2014:39).

The *UMMU* public digital sphere was created because of the concerns outlined in chapter 1 of this study, one of which contends that certain voices on the margins of the political centre in Kenya were not granted a platform to tell their own stories, as they wished to tell them.

In the fourth instance, Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2014:40) note that public spheres primarily function to bring about communicative action and stimulate public discourse. Traditionally, public sphere discourse entailed face-to-face communication, but this is not necessarily the case in contemporary times: communication can now occur between participants who are "unknown to one another or anonymous from the perspective of any one individual" (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon 2014:40) and can take place digitally via email or the Internet. In the *UMMU* digital narratives project, the public sphere considered for analysis exclusively existed in the digital sphere, and the participants were not necessarily acquaintances or familiar with one another. A caveat can, however, be added here, namely that "[c]ommunicative spaces organized essentially for instrumental or functional purposes would not ordinarily qualify as public spheres" (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon 2014:40).

The fifth principle is that public spheres should not merely be inclusive, but also permeable: "public spheres are attempts to create communicative spaces that include not only the parties most obviously interested in and affected by

decisions, but also other people who are involved or affected by whatever other decisions are taken" (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon 2014:41). It happens that such groups are on the periphery or are marginal to discussions, which means they are systematically excluded from giving their input on topics or subjects around which public spheres form. The authors point out that "private or privileged groups, organisations and communicative networks do not qualify as public spheres" (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon 2014:41). The primary public spheres of the *UMMU* digital narrative project were open to any participants or 'actors' interested in the discourses emanating from this undertaking. All contributions were considered during the analysis phase of the project, as were other (secondary) public spheres.

Their next principle is similarly very important, especially in the context of the *UMMU* digital narratives project, as it relates to the language of communication in a public sphere. The authors suggest that such communication usually takes place in "ordinary language" (see chapter 6 of this study for more on the topic). For Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2014:42), public spheres seek to "break down the barriers and hierarchies formed by the use of specialist discourses and the modes of address characteristic of bureaucracies that presume ranking of the importance of speakers and what they say in terms of their positional authority (or lack of it)". Furthermore, public spheres do not explicitly distinguish insiders from outsiders, or those who are relatively disinterested from people whose (self)interest is, to a large extent, affected by the topics being discussed. This aspect was acknowledged from the start of the project, when participants were encouraged to use local languages in their short narratives. The three end products were shot in either the local Abakuria language or in Kiswahili, before being translated into and subtitled in English. Thus, given this principle, "[t]he communicative apparatus of many governments and business organisations, relying as they do on the specialist expertise and managerial responsibilities of some participants do not ordinarily qualify as public spheres" (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon 2014:42). Also excluded are communicative spaces and networks, which tend to enforce the compulsion or duty to lead, follow, instruct,

adhere to instructions, maintain silence or remain excluded from the group (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon 2014:43).

Public spheres therefore presuppose communicative freedom in a space and on a platform where participants can freely chose to assume (or decline to assume) the roles of speaker, listener or observer, at will. In a public sphere, such participants must also have the choice of withdrawing from a communicative space or from any discussion, without restrictions or penalties being imposed on them as a result.

Premised on these guidelines, Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2014:44) argue that public spheres should generate communicative power because of the legitimacy they potentially attain as a result of arriving at positions and viewpoints through open discussion and unforced consensus. These processes, they suggest, command the respect of participants, whereas "systems of command or influence, where decisions are formed on the basis of obedience or self-interest would not ordinarily qualify as public spheres" (Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon 2014:44).

The next principle is perhaps the most important in the context of the *UMMU* digital narratives project. It contends that the objective of public spheres is to facilitate alternative or complementary ways of engaging with, and perceiving, issues in social spaces, and demonstrating that these alternative or complementary approaches are both possible and feasible. Public spheres usually have an indirect impact on social systems when related to government and administration, or the economy: it "is more indirect [since it is] mediated through systems of influence" (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon 2014:45). The *UMMU* digital narrative project's core intention was to demonstrate that ordinary Kenyans on the margins of the political and economic centre have stories to tell and that they can use digital platforms to tell those stories sustainably, without necessarily being invited to participate by media elites, or being supervised in the process. Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon's (2014:45) caveat here is that any "groups organized primarily to pursue the particular self-

interest of particular groups like lobby groups, the press and the political parties would not ordinarily qualify as public spheres".

The final principle regarding public spheres is that these are ordinarily associated with social movements: public spheres emerge from the voluntary grouping of participants, usually in response to "a legitimate deficit or a shared sense that a problem has arisen and needs to be addressed" (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon 2014:46). In the case of the *UMMU* digital narratives project, the participants voluntarily chose to participate by engaging with concerns which they felt legitimately affected them.

Insight into the Kenyan digital sphere

In 2013, only about 7.9 per cent of households in Kenya had access to a computer (Nyabuga & Booker 2013:14), which meant that only a small proportion of the population potentially had access to digital technologies and platforms. Internetworldstats.com reports that the number of Internet users in Kenya grew from 200 000 in December 2000 to about 31 985 048 in September 2015 – an Internet penetration rate of 69.6 per cent of the population. The Communications Authority of Kenya (CA 2015:20) reports that the data market in that country has grown significantly, with increased subscription being driven mainly by cell/mobile phone users. The CA reports that in the fourth quarter of 2015, the number of data subscriptions recorded an increase of 10.6 per cent. "Subsequently, the number of data/Internet users grew by 11.1 per cent to stand at 35.5 million during the period under review, up from 31.9 million subscriptions reported as at the end of the previous period. This translated to an Internet/data penetration level of 82.6 per cent, up from 74.2 per cent recorded during the previous quarter" (CA 2015:20). Mobile phone data accounted for more than 66 per cent of data subscriptions in Kenya in the final quarter of 2015. The CA (2015:20) reports that "mobile data held pole position with 23.7 million subscriptions representing an increase of 10.2 per cent from 21.5 million subscriptions recorded [in the previous] quarter".

The CA report (2015:20) attributes this growth in mobile data and subsequent

Internet use to "the increased affordability of Internet bundles offered by the various Internet or data providers as a result of increased fair competition in the data/Internet market". The report also identifies the growth of e-commerce services and social networking sites as factors boosting Internet and data usage. Banking and research online via mobile devices have similarly boosted the uptake of Internet and consequently data services (CA 2015:20).

The report does, however, reveal that despite significant progress in mobile data uptake and fibre-optic subscriptions, Kenyans' terrestrial wireless data subscriptions demonstrate the most significant increase in percentage terms: the number of subscriptions grew during the period under review, up from 13 221 in the third quarter of 2015 to 19 507 in the last quarter of 2015 – an increase of 47.5 per cent (CA 2015:20). Satellite subscriptions, however, declined by 32.1 per cent, dropping from 720 to 489. Compared to terrestrial wireless data subscriptions, fibre-optics showed a more modest growth, registering an 11.1 per cent increase from 100 192 to 111 354 subscriptions (CA 2015:20).

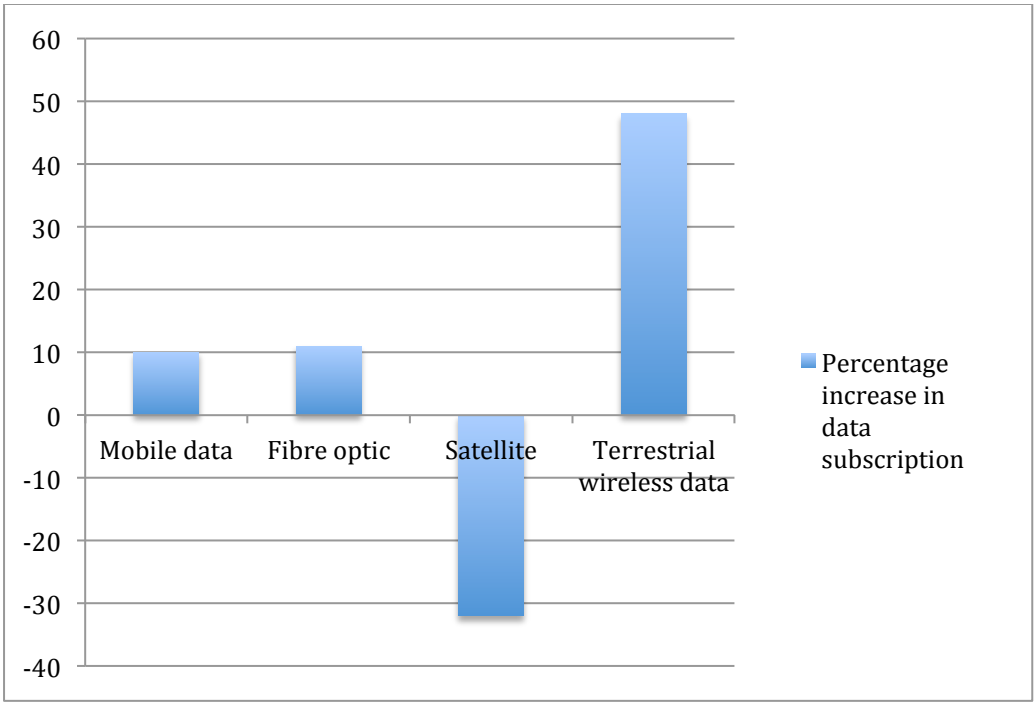

Figure 4: Data subscription increase from Q3 to Q4 in 2015

Source: Data derived from The Consumer Barometer with Google (2016)

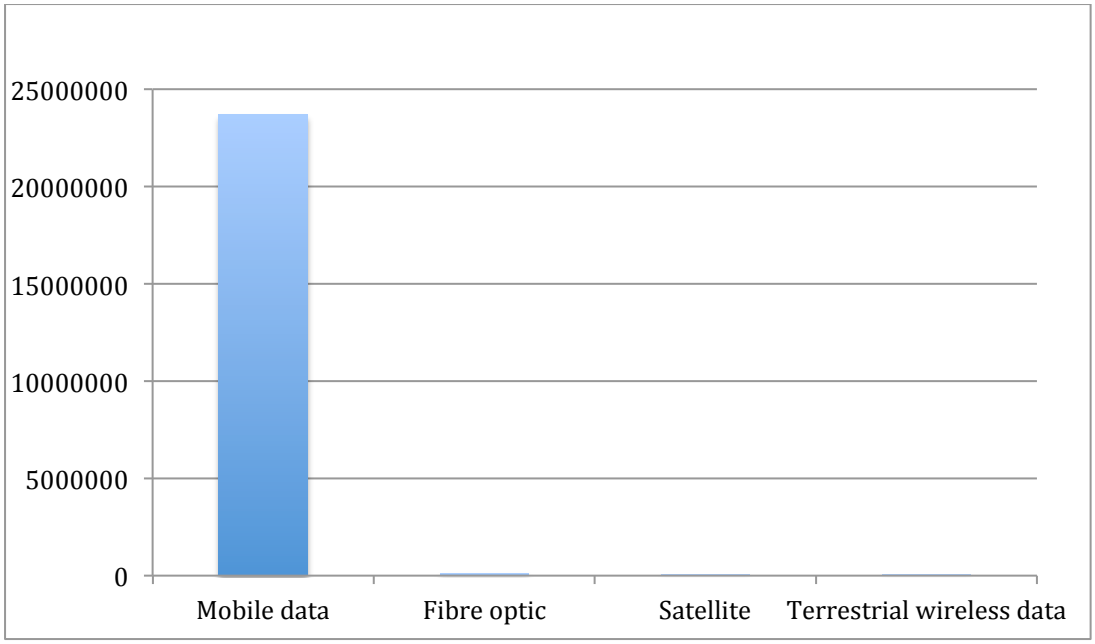

Figure 5: Data subscription numbers in Q4 of 2015

Source: Data derived from The Consumer Barometer with Google (2016)

It does appear, however, that Kenyans are increasingly using their cell phones to access the Internet, rather than using them for traditional verbal communication. The CA (2015:10) reports that the minutes of use (MOU) per month decreased from an average of 95.8 per user in the third quarter of 2015 to 88.9 in the final quarter of the same year. Surveys also show that the smartphone commands the lion's share of devices used to access the Internet. Consumer Barometer with Google (2016) reports that when Kenyans who accessed the Internet were asked which devices they used most often (computer, smartphone or tablet), 61 per cent reported that they used smartphones more, nine per cent claimed they used the devices almost equally, while six per cent said they used the other two devices more frequently than their smartphones.

Consumer Barometer with Google (2016) published a survey conducted by the Connected Consumer, which aimed to poll all non-business or non-work-related Internet use (i.e., for personal purposes) in Kenya, during the preceding month, by age. It concluded that Internet use for personal purposes is pervasive across all age groups in the country: 64 per cent of respondents below 25 years of age accessed the Internet for personal use, demonstrating that this demographic

made most use of that service. The results for other age groups were as follows: 57 per cent of those aged 25–34, 41 per cent of 35–44-year-olds, 31 per cent of 45–54s and about ten per cent of those older than 55. The report suggests that the percentage of those who accessed the Internet in the month before the survey decreased as the age group range increased. The Consumer Barometer with Google (2016) report also shows that in the month preceding the survey, some accessed the Internet daily: 86 per cent of those below 25 years of age, 80 per cent of 25–34-year-olds and 66 per cent of those aged 35–44.

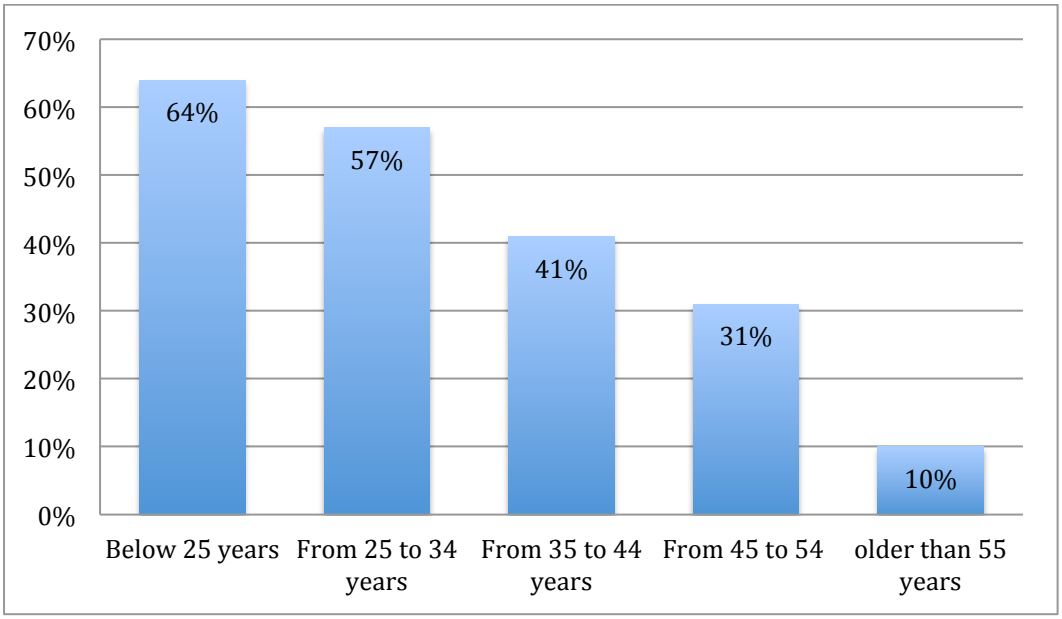

Figure 6: Percentage of Internet use according to age range

Source: Data derived from The Consumer Barometer with Google (2016)

It is important therefore to establish how Kenyans use their data subscriptions, as well as the digital space. Linington (2015), citing Google's Consumer Barometer, reports that about 42 per cent of Kenyans who went online in 2015 did so with the intention of shopping online, while 66 per cent went online to find news, sports and weather updates. About 65 per cent of Kenyans who went online in 2015 used search engines while 49 per cent did it to listen to music. A significant 89 per cent of Kenyan users who went online in 2015 did so to make use of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. A further 71 per cent of respondents specifically went online in the course of 2015 to post

comments on websites or social sites. Nyabuga and Booker (2013:21) inform us that in 2013, the most popular websites in Kenya were google.com, google.co.ke and Facebook (in that order) – as listed on alexa.com, while Facebook, Google.com and Wapdam.com were the favourites on Opera.com. These findings confirm the percentages reported by Google's Consumer Barometer in 2015, demonstrating a sustained trend: social media platforms and search engines were popular amongst Kenyan users. In fourth to seventh position were Yahoo.com, YouTube.com, Twitter and Blogspot.com (according to the alexa.com rankings), while Yahoo.com, Wikipedia.org, Youtube.com and bbc.co.uk were preferred by those using Opera.com. Completing the top ten positions of the most popular website visited by Kenyans in 2013 were Wikipedia.org, LinkedIn and the Nation Media Group's website (according to alexa.com), while My.opera.com, Reference.com and the Nation Media Group's website drew most visits on Opera.com.

Next, this chapter investigates how the Kenyan digital sphere manifests in the spheres of e-commerce; news, sports and weather; music, videos and other aural-visual entertainment; social networking sites and crowd funding.

e-commerce

The Consumer Barometer with Google (2016) reports that about 44 per cent of respondents in the Consumer Barometer Survey of 2014/15 used either a smartphone or a computer to search for information online, when choosing a local business; 40 per cent opted to use a smartphone as their primary device, while about four per cent used computers. International e-commerce is making inroads into the Kenyan business space, with about 17 per cent of those interviewed in the above survey purchasing online products from abroad at least once a year, and another one per cent purchasing such products less than once a year.

The bedrock of e-commerce in Kenya manifests in mobile money transactions. Freedom on the net (2015:2) reports that nearly 60 per cent of Kenya's adult population uses mobile money platforms for financial transactions. The CA

(2015:10) reports that in the final quarter of 2015, "the number of mobile money transfer subscriptions was recorded at 26.7 million subscriptions whereas the number of active mobile money transfer agents stood at 141,542". The report also notes that about 333.2 million transactions (deposits and withdrawals) using mobile money platforms were recorded during the same period, with about 813.7 billion Kenya shillings being transferred among users during the same period. The CA (2015:10) similarly reports that what they call 'mobile commerce' amounted to a total of 138.6 million transactions, in which 275.8 billion Kenya shillings was used to pay for goods and services. Mobile transfers from individually registered accounts to similar accounts amounted to over 393.3 billion Kenya shillings as at the end of the final quarter of 2015.

News, sports and weather

Surveys on Kenyan media content consumption show that news, sports and weather had significantly high consumption rates. As noted in chapter 5, a significant proportion of the four hours of prime-time television viewing in Kenya is dominated by news bulletins in both Kiswahili and English across the four platforms, with the highest audience numbers being drawn by Citizen TV, NTV, KTN and KBC. Across these television stations, news bulletins take up at least 25 per cent of prime-time viewing. October 2014 data from GeoPoll show that KTN and NTV both had their daily peaks in viewership later in the evening, with KTN's highest viewership being measured during the evening news in English at 21:00, with an average of 930 000 viewers. NTV measured its largest daily audiences during its 21:00 news broadcast in English, with an average of 828 000 viewers (Keane 2014).

Freedom on the net (2015:7) points out that the sale of print newspapers has, in recent times, been overtaken by online news sources. This can be attributed to the Kenyan government's shift in policy which requires it to advertise on digital platforms (see also The state of blogging ... 2015:13): "In March 2014, the Kenyan Ministry of ICT and the Office of the Attorney General drafted amendments requiring state organisations to advertise on online platforms as opposed to newspapers, reaching more people and saving money."

Citing Alexa.com and Opera.com (ranked as the most popular websites in Kenya in 2013), Nyabuga and Booker (2013:21) report that the *Daily Nation*'s website was in the top ten in both rankings, while both the BBC's and Standard Media's sites were in the top 15 in both rankings. These sites were eclipsed in popularity only by social media and search engine websites, which demonstrates that news ranked quite highly in popularity among Kenyans using the Internet.

Online video, music and other aural-visual entertainment

The Consumer Barometer with Google (2016) reports that about 62 per cent of Kenyans who went online consumed online videos: 14 per cent did so daily, while about 21 per cent did so at least once a week. The Connected Consumer Survey found that 17 per cent consumed videos at least once a month, while ten per cent did so less than once a month. Only about 38 per cent of those surveyed never consumed online videos. The survey also indicated that the most popular genre among online users was TV shows, which were viewed by about 64 per cent of those surveyed. This was followed by comedies (42%), movies (37%) and sports (27%). According to the survey, music was the genre least favoured by participants in the Connected Consumer Survey, with only 12% of participants going online to view these. This survey, among others, offered important statistics that informed the rationale for choosing short video narratives as part of the *UMMU* digital narratives project.

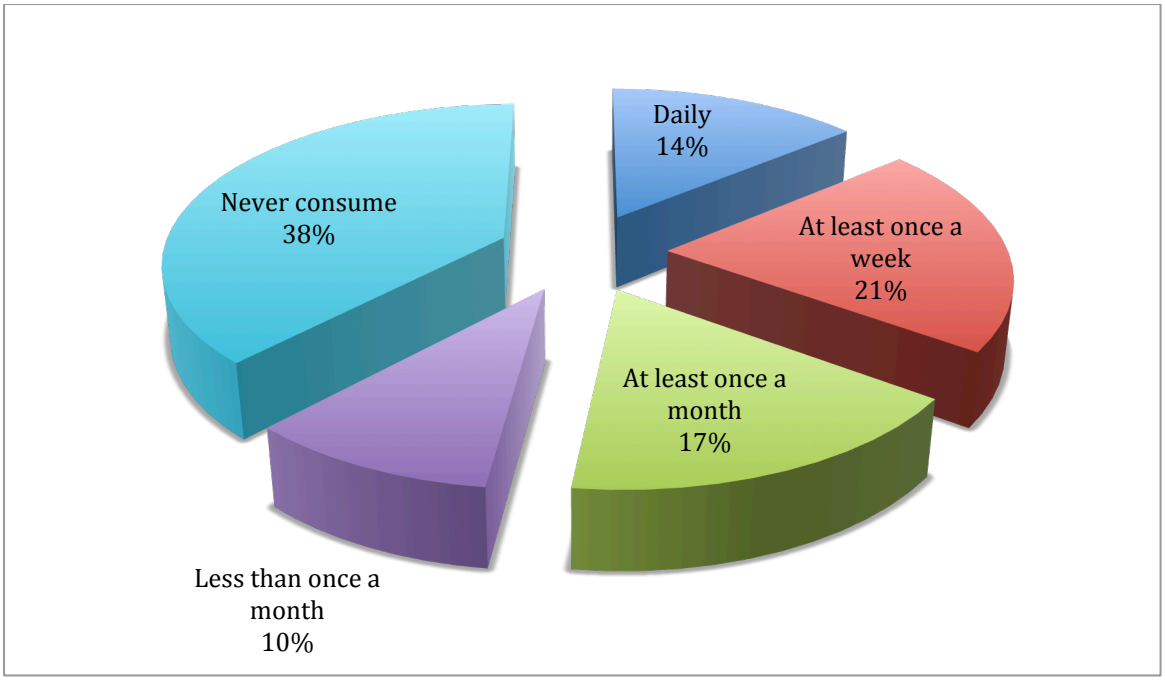

Figure 7: Percentage of online video consumption

Source: Data derived from The Consumer Barometer with Google (2016)

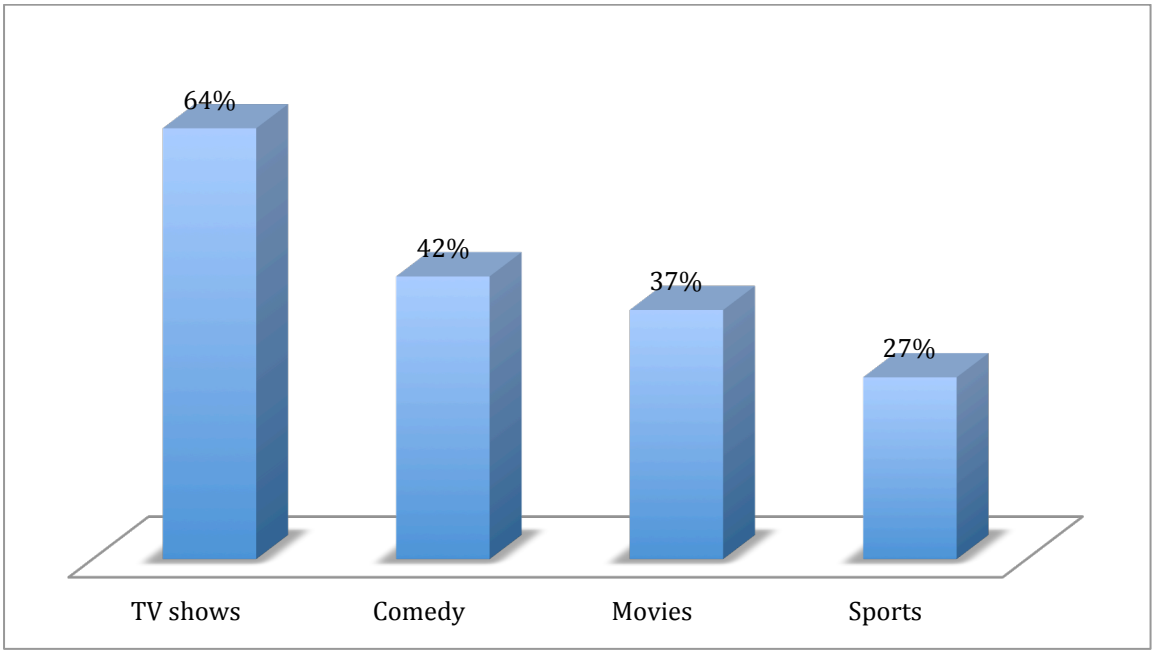

Figure 8: Online video consumption by genre

Source: Data derived from The Consumer Barometer with Google (2016)

Among those who watched online videos, 52 per cent claimed to have watched videos shorter than five minutes in duration and of at number, about 30 per cent accessed the videos on their computers; the remaining 70 per cent used their smartphones. This demonstrates that more than half of Kenyans who went online to watch videos preferred clips that were shorter than five minutes. This, to a large extent, informed the decision to limit the duration of the videos in the *UMMU* digital narratives project. A curious and interesting finding of the survey was that when participants were asked how they would best describe the attention they gave online videos on the different devices, 58 per cent claimed to be highly focused when viewing material on their computers, while 68 per cent claimed the same while watching on their smartphones. This statistic is perhaps the result of the majority of respondents accessing their online video contents via their smartphones.

Social media

In 2014, Africa had over 100 million people actively using Facebook at least once a month. This number has since surged to over 120 million users in the first quarter of 2016, with over 80 per cent of users accessing it via mobile devices (see Strydom 2015; Parke 2016). Fin24.com reports that the number of regular users in Facebook's three largest markets in Africa – Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya – increased by 13 per cent in the nine months ending March 2016 to peak at 35.5 million users. Nigeria leads with about 16 million users, followed by South Africa with 14 million and Kenya with about 5.3 million. Strydom (2015) notes that over 95 per cent of users in Kenya access Facebook via mobile devices, while other popular social media platforms include Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Snapchat.

The state of blogging and social media in Kenya (2015:1) notes that an estimated 15 000 registered blogs existed in that country as of 2015, with 3 000 of these being active blogs posted on the Wordpress, Blogger and Tumblr platforms. The blogs focus on topics such as politics and human rights, fashion, health and the environment. According to the state of blogging and social media in Kenya (2015:3), earlier popular blogs (mentalacrobatics.com, thinkersroom.com,

kenyanpundit.com) were a significant source of news and information during the five-day live broadcast media ban declared by the then information minister, John Michuki, in the aftermath of the December 2007 disputed elections.

More influential blogs in Kenya in the recent past include Ushahidi (which means 'testimony') and Mzalendo ('patriot' in Kiswahili). Both are linked to the social activist Ory Okolloh. The Ushahidi platform was used to map trouble spots, and post messages or pictures submitted by ordinary citizens during the post-2007 election violence in Kenya. The app has since been used in countries such as Haiti, South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo (see Nyabuga & Booker 2013; Freedom on the net 2015; The state of blogging ... 2015). Mzalendo is a Kenyan parliamentary watchdog blog that keeps record of bills, speeches and MPs' attendance in parliament. Nyabuga and Booker (2013:38) note that Mzalendo became a respected blog and an authority on parliamentary matters, to the extent that respected organisations such as Transparency International were "tapping into the Mzalendo website when analysing the work of parliamentarians as part of their mandate to track and document corruption in Kenya".

Social media are also used as spaces for digital activism and crowd funding in Kenya. Freedom on the net (2015:8) cites an instance where digital activism was key in influencing the government's itinerary. In May 2015, social media users expressed outrage when information was leaked that President Uhuru Kenyatta's trip to attend the inauguration of Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari, would entail 84 delegates and cost the Kenyan taxpayer Kshs 20 million (US$ 200,000). The social media backlash reportedly compelled the president to cancel the trip and instead send his deputy to represent him. There have been several crowd-funding campaigns on social and digital platforms for diverse social causes. One such notable campaign was the #1MilliforJadudi campaign, initiated by blogger Jackson Biko's story titled *The thing in my head*, which sought to raise Kshs 1 million (US$ 10,000) for a cancer patient to receive treatment in India. The campaign reportedly raised close to Kshs 7.5 million (US$ 75 000) within 48 hours of its launch (see tuko.co.ke; Parke 2016).

Reading the *UMMU* digital narratives texts

This section seeks to critically analyse the textual narratives on the *UMMU* digital narratives platforms, which include its blog, its YouTube channel and Facebook page. The analysis is based on the three shorts already mentioned, and photographic narratives. The intention here is to engage with the *UMMU* digital narratives by focusing on the following aspects: participation and self-representation, the themes explored in the stories, the characters featured and types of stories told, the use of language and space, and technical aspects. The argument here is that these factors offer alternative and counter approaches to the dominant broadcasting and storytelling modes and trends in Kenya's contemporary mediascape. These alternative discourses in the public digital sphere, the study argues, have the potential to enrich and/or counter the reproduction of what Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2014:68) view as the untoward consequences of existing ways of working in the mediascape.

Participation and self-representation

One of the core objectives of this study was to determine the extent to which ordinary citizens – especially those on the margins of the political centre – could actively participate in the (co)generation, (co)production and (co)distribution of broadcast content, and to determine what value such participation could possibly offer them, both culturally and socioeconomically. The argument put forward in this thesis is that the narrative texts stemming from the *UMMU* project demonstrate that, to a significant extent, ordinary citizens, when offered assistance in the initial stages, can actively participate in the entire broadcasting production pipeline, including the distribution of broadcast content. Of greater significance, however, in the nation-building context is the symbolic relevance of such a participatory self-representational process.

Nation building, it is argued, requires an active, tangible engagement that has real and perceptible outcomes that can ignite the process of stimulating the imagination of citizens. Bloom (1990) argues quite convincingly that the nation-building process goes beyond merely imagining oneself as belonging to a nation,

as Anderson (1991) famously suggested, but rather that meaningful and real experiences are necessary to evoke shared group identification. Murdock (1999:11) notes that "in addition to guaranteeing basic material conditions for participation, full citizenship also required access to relevant symbolic resources and the competences to use them effectively". Perhaps this symbolic process of representing oneself and one's community on a digital platform – which has the potential to be accessed by a broader national audience – is even more important than the actual texts produced in the process. Individuals and communities which produce these actual, tangible texts participate in narrating their nation and, at both a 'real' and a symbolic level, share in the process of building and sustaining their nation's and their national identity. Also of significance in this process, as Murdock (1999) contends, is the symbolic access of relevant resources and the competencies needed to produce and broadcast these actual, tangible texts. In turn, the texts symbolically reflect citizens' active participation in the nation-building process. This latter argument is particularly critical in a context such as that of the Abakuria, who are perceived (whether rightly or otherwise) as having been deprived of national resources and therefore denied the competencies needed to fully benefit, enjoy and participate in building the nation.

Participation in the creation of these narratives, on the part of non-professionals who told their own stories, fulfils the important role of countering dominant power structures within the mediascape. It does so by putting the power to narrate and the power of narration into the hands of ordinary people. Thumim (2012:19) asserts that "representations tell stories, and who tells stories is a question of power". Fortunati (2014:174) collates several theorists' notions of what empowerment is:

> Empowerment is a process by which the empowered gain mastery over their personal affairs, influence over the political problems that affect them, ability to articulate their own stories, capacity for self-action and the transformation of self-definition, capacity to access information and resources, confidence and autonomy to make meaningful and free choices and to translate their choices

> into desired actions and outcomes, capacity to increase agency for shaping their lives and the community in which they live.

The narrative texts in the *UMMU* digital narratives suggest that certain of these opportunities for empowerment (see Fortunati 2014) were available and accessible to the participants during the processes of constructing the narratives. The platform and opportunity to conceptualise, develop and narrate stories that were important and urgent to the participants and their community – without necessarily having to wait for professionals to do this for them – suggest that they, to some extent, gained a degree of mastery over their personal and communal affairs. As argued in previous chapters, the Abakuria can be said to demonstrate elements of disempowerment, since very little material exists which captures or narrates them as a people or a community – certainly it is not available in the public sphere. As mentioned before, a visit to their major towns (Kehancha, Sirare, and surrounding villages) revealed that they were ceding many of their socio-cultural texts and traditions to their neighbours (the Abagusi and the Luo). Most of their social spaces, for instance, predominantly featured music made by their neighbouring tribes. Very little literature depicted their way of life, even within their own communities. The *UMMU* digital narratives therefore gave the participants agency to master their own affairs.

Although the participants chose not to directly confront political themes in their narratives (see the 'themes' section), the *UMMU* project arguably empowered them to articulate their own stories by providing them with the capacity for self-action and self-reflection that could potentially help them transform or define themselves or their community. The narratives did, however, result in political emancipation for both the participants and their communities – as Perkin (cited in Thumim 2012:8) asserts, self-representations by their very nature "do political work". The proposition here is that by choosing to represent themselves in a public sphere, in the way they wanted to, individuals or communities (especially those on the periphery or margins, or those who are absent from the national discourse) are either consciously or inadvertently making a political statement.

By choosing to articulate their own narratives and self-representing in the *UMMU* digital narratives texts, the participants' actions reflect principles of Bhabha's (1994:213) cultural difference theory. One of these principles asserts that alternative and counter-narratives to dominant ideologies within the nation disrupt "totalising boundaries" (whether these be actual or perceived) and cause a rethink of "essentialist identities" which have been created through the monopoly of the dominant ideology. Bhabha (1994:213) explains that "the political unity of the nation consists in a continual displacement of the anxiety of its irredeemably plural modern space", which is perhaps one of the most valuable outcomes that participation in an AUGC project offers participants.

Another manifestation of empowerment that is discernible in the *UMMU* narrative texts, as per Fortunati's (2014) summary above, is the ability to have confidence and the autonomy to make meaningful and free choices, and to translate these choices into desired actions and outcomes. This ties in well with Bhabha's (1994) proposition regarding the narration of a nation, namely that in a national context, the minority (or marginalised) should have the space and opportunity to narrate their nation without necessarily having to be invited to do so by those who assume a gate-keeping role (i.e., by deciding who should narrate what). Digital narratives such as the *UMMU* project grant participants not only a platform to make meaningful and free choices about how to narrate their Kenyan-ness, but also the space to translate their choices into desired actions and outcomes.

An important narrative choice made by the *UMMU* participants related to the use of the vernacular in the three short videos. Two of the stories are told in the Abakuria language, the third in Kiswahili. The narratives are, however, subtitled in English to achieve a wider audience reach. This choice is quite significant, for several reasons: first, the participants are, from the outset, establishing who their primary target audience is and ensuring that they have linguistic access to the narratives. Narrating the stories in the vernacular ensures that idioms, expressions, subtleties, nuances and the richness of these languages are easily captured, thus unambiguously and emphatically privileging speakers of those

languages – something which arguably encourages the speakers to participate in the narrative process. This is a strong proposition to Abakuria-speaking communities, which have been on the margins of Kenyan national discourse, to fully engage and participate in these spaces.

Second, through the use of the vernacular, the *UMMU* participants positioned the Abakuria language as an acceptable and legitimate means of communication within Kenya's national sphere of discourse. Burgess (2006) argues that the use of the vernacular has the potential to remediate creativity and "legitimate it as a relatively autonomous and worthwhile contribution to public culture". This is an especially strong argument to recognise the Abakuria language in a space which has excluded it for a long time.

Third, to a limited extent and in conjunction with other contexts in which the Abakuria language is used in public spheres, this arguably helps keep the language and culture alive. Eminent African scholar, Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986:15), argues that language sustains culture, and "culture carries [...] the entire body of values by which we perceive ourselves and our place in the world". It is thus impossible to separate a language from a community of people with their own unique character, past and relationship to the world (Wa Thiong'o 1986:15). The use of the vernacular therefore supports and complements the visuals, themes, characters and locations used in sustaining Abakuria culture.

Themes

A discernible thematic trend that emerged from the pilot *UMMU* digital narratives is that the stories predominantly focused on socio-cultural issues relevant to the lives of the inhabitants of the Komotobo area. The shorts either captured the everyday lives of members of that community or were narrated by ordinary people within the community. Burgess (2006:206) emphasises that this approach to narratives preserves the distinction between the everyday lived experiences of a community as a signifier of a particular form of mundaneness, viewed from a position of elite or dominant voices, and the specific dignity of

those everyday lives. It also situates itself within Bhabha's (1994) cultural difference theory and Billig's (1995) banal nationalism paradigm.

As mentioned before, one of the short videos, *Oogotoraa Amatwi*, is about an Abakuria traditional ear procedure performed for cultural and aesthetic reasons. An elderly and well-respected woman in the village, Mama Machera Mwita, who has undergone the procedure, recounts what this entails and the cultural reasons for performing it. This practice seems to be waning in the community, since very few Abakuria in the generations after Mama Machera Mwita's (whose age is in the 70s) still practise it. The storytellers possibly chose this story not only to record a fading cultural practice, but also to capture one of the few people in the community who could authoritatively narrate it. Another story that focuses on a socio-cultural aspect of the Abakuria is *Amabeere.* This short video chronicles the process of making traditional Abakuria sour milk, which is still a noted delicacy in the Komotobo area. Unlike the practice of *Oogotoraa Amatwi*, which is on a dramatic decline among the Abakuria, *amabeere* remains popular. The third story, *A history of Komotobo Maranatha Mission*, also has a social theme. The Komotobo area has been significantly impacted and shaped by the Maranatha Mission which not only introduced Christianity to many, but also initiated and built several amenities in the area (a church, primary and secondary schools, health centres, an orphanage, centres for the disabled), and the narrative possibly intended to capture this aspect. Many of the photographic narratives contributed by the participants exhibited cultural spaces and artifacts used by the Abakuria, focusing on social discourses and activities in the community.

The choice of the themes and stories told by the participants suggests that, for them, capturing and documenting the cultural practices in their community from their own perspective is a matter of urgency. This is quite logical for a community that has been largely sidelined from Kenya's socio-cultural and political discourse. Several objectives may have informed this decision. Perhaps the participants felt there was an urgent need to create a bounded text about Abakuria culture, since certain practices were in danger of being lost in the mists of time. Capturing these narratives guarantees that future generations will have

access to accounts of ancient cultural traditions. Another reason could be that they felt that the rest of the Kenyan nation-state was possibly not privy to the Abakuria way of life and traditions, since these are hardly ever presented in the media. The project therefore afforded them an opportunity to educate and inform their fellow citizens – and perhaps even some within their own community – about these practices. Many of the pervasive narratives in Kenya about the Abakuria focus on the practice of female genital mutilation or inter-clan wars (see Oloo *et al*. 2011). Perhaps this explains their sense of urgency in narrating unrelated cultural aspects that do not necessarily have negative connotations. Yet another reason could be that this project provided the ideal platform, space and time for participants, as members of the Abakuria community, to tell stories from their own perspective, featuring characters and personalities who could be considered authoritative and trustworthy.

What was quite intriguing, thematically, when reading the narrative texts produced, is that although the participants were highly politically conscious and active, and discussed or debated both local and national politics during the *UMMU* project, they seemed to almost consciously and deliberately steer clear of narratives with a political theme. This choice was particularly interesting since the project took place a year before Kenya's next general elections (scheduled for 2017), and because political decisions have played a notable role in socially and economically marginalising the area. Kenya as a country is affected significantly by its politics, which shape and influence all aspects of life. Politics in Kenya generally determine which communities access basic services and how they do this, and, perhaps more importantly, how communities access economic opportunities facilitated by the government (see Ogot & Ochieng 1995). Some of the questions which arose pertained to whether the brief given to the participants perhaps inadvertently insinuated that the focus of the narratives should be on their culture. Perhaps the facilitator should have intervened in the participants' choice of themes? The latter dilemma was something he constantly grappled with throughout the project. The researcher decided never to intervene in any choices made by the participants, but rather to let them lead the process and decide on the direction they wanted to move in. The brief was revisited, but

this was confirmed to have been quite broad and non-prescriptive.

Information in the public domain, however, illuminated why the *UMMU* participants possibly had reservations about using narratives with a political slant. Some of the political and economic elites were still attempting to use government instruments to control and moderate discourses in the digital space. Freedom on the net (2015) reports that several social media users and bloggers in Kenya were either arrested or questioned by the authorities for online commentary which was perceived as critical of government officials. Some of those arrested were prosecuted for the "misuse of licensed telecommunications equipment under section 29(a) of the 2013 Kenya Information and Communications Act (KICA)" (Freedom on the net 2015:9). Reports indicated that blogger and social activist, Robert Alai, was arrested several times between 2012 and 2015 for stories on his blog and messages on his Twitter account (see Freedom on the net 2015).

Freedom on the net (2015) reports that one such arrest occurred in December 2014, when Alai was arrested for calling President Uhuru Kenyatta an "adolescent president" on Twitter. This happened on the day Al-Shabaab launched an attack in Mandera County, killing 28 people as Kenyatta was in Abu Dhabi watching a Formula One race. Freedom on the net (2015) reports that Alai was again arrested in February 2015 for discussing, on his Facebook wall, the grabbing of public land for personal use and benefit by politically connected individuals. The state of blogging and social media in Kenya (2015) and Freedom on the net (2015) report that several other Kenyans have been arrested or harassed by government officials in the recent past, for perceived criticisms of government officials. An example is that of investigative blogger, Abraham Mutai, who was arrested for posting a blog about government corruption. Another is that of web developer, Geoffrey Andare, who was charged with the improper use of ICTs for his Facebook posts, among several other allegations. These crackdowns may have dissuaded the *UMMU* participants from tackling political themes.

Technical aspects

An analysis of the three *UMMU* short videos and photographic narratives demonstrates that the participants had the potential to develop sufficient technical skills to use the digital space in producing and broadcasting their own narratives. The project's intention was not for the participants to produce content at a professional level – not only because this was not feasible given the time available for the project, but more importantly because this was not the objective. Only two days were set aside for technical training, which entailed conceptualising and crafting the narratives; introducing participants to the basics of photography, cinematography, video and image editing; and other basic postproduction skills such as titling and subtitling. It was hoped, however, that the participants would demonstrate some understanding of these core technical functions.

Elements of reasonably acceptable composition and *mise-en-scène* were discernible in both the photographic narratives and the short videos. The photographic narratives, however, showcased some of these technical elements better than the videos did, perhaps because the participants did not have to grapple with the added element of the moving image, camera and subjects' motion in the former. The four examples below, for instance, demonstrate to a reasonable extent the participants' understanding of elements such as symmetry, balance, depth of field, the role of the setting, space, the props and the relationship between the elements within the frame in telling their stories.

Photographic narrative A, in figure 9, for example, shows balance in the framing of the shot. The main subject is positioned off-centre but along the vertical lines of the rule-of-thirds grid, making for good shot composition. This positioning also creates sufficient talking space for the character, while there is enough headroom in the long shot. A similar compositional approach is seen in figure 11 – photographic narrative C. Although the subjects are inanimate, they are all placed on important focal points on the rule-of-thirds grid, with a plant positioned in the top left-hand corner of the frame to balance the visual weight of the objects and cover the empty space on the left of the frame. There is also a

significant depth of field in each of the four narratives (figures 9–12), created by using the natural elements in the frame to isolate the foreground from the background in each shot.

The contrasting viewpoints between figures 10 (photographic narrative B) and 12 (photographic narrative D) created by the choice of angles, make for interesting sub-textual readings – especially in a patriarchal society such as that of the Abakuria (see Oloo *et al*. 2011). Although the demeanor of the male subject in photographic narrative B exudes self-assurance and flamboyance, while that of the female subject in photographic narrative D is calmer and less showy, the photographers chose to give more power to the latter through the low-angle shot and, conversely, to take away some of that power from the former through the high-angle shot. Whether this was intentional or done purely inadvertently, it makes a profound narrative statement about social relations among the genders in the community.

Figure 12 (photographic narrative D) shows interesting use of lines, framing and symmetry in its composition. The shot creates symmetry and perspective using the set, space and location. The positioning of the subject on the permanently built bench, with its backdrop of both natural and manmade structures and shapes, creates an aesthetically engaging shot. The lines created by the shades and shadows and the natural fence (on the right-hand side of the frame) form both visually engaging straight and curvy leading lines as well as natural frames that isolate the subject and direct the eye to focus on her.

The choice of *mise-en-scène* elements such as the props (mostly Abakuria traditional artefacts) offers not only several visual narrative possibilities, but also brings texture to the shots. Other *mise-en-scène* elements such as the natural settings capture 'real' Abakuria spaces and landscapes, which make for compelling visual stories. Capturing the chicken walking in the background in photographic narrative A, for instance, reflects elements of authentic village life among the Abakuria. Although the photographs used natural lighting rather than reflectors or any other light enhancers, the images work with the light to create

some contrast, casting light and shade on both subjects and elements of the *mise-en-scène.*



Figure 9: Photographic narrative A

Picture by *UMMU* participant



Figure 10: Photographic narrative B

Picture by *UMMU* participant



Figure 11: Photographic narrative C

Picture by *UMMU* participant



Figure 12: Photographic narrative D

Picture by *UMMU* participant

The participants were also able to demonstrate reasonable competence in video editing. Although many of the shots selected for the narratives could have shown better composition and camera movement, the editors were able to structure these shots reasonably well, to create flowing narratives. In *Oogotoraa Amatwi*, for instance, the editors were able to select shots from three different cameras thanks to the basic three-camera interview set-up. This creates a competent story that captures action and reaction from the two subjects. The editors in *A history of Komotobo Maranatha Mission* were able to use cutaways to complement, support and create variety in the interview. *Amabeere* was somewhat experimental in structure, showing the process of making the traditional sour milk first, followed by a documentary-style interview with the story's protagonist. The videos also featured reasonably competent titles, subtitles and credits.

Insights from discourses on the *UMMU* project in the public digital sphere

Having argued that *UMMU*'s narratives in the public digital sphere potentially enrich or counter the reproduction of the untoward consequences of our previous ways of working in the Kenyan mediascape, this section seeks to theorise on insights gleaned from discourses stemming from this project. This is premised on a trend discernible in the *UMMU* pilot project, which shows that the discourse in the digital sphere was more active and vibrant on the participants' personal social media platforms than on the platforms which had officially been set up for the projects. As mentioned previously, during the project, participants were introduced to several social and digital media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube channels, different types of blogs).

It was agreed that the participants would set up three main platforms for distributing the project's narratives: a Facebook page, a YouTube channel and a blog. The Facebook page was selected as it allows users to upload both photographs and videos, in addition to granting other users access to the material, allowing them to comment on it, tag the narratives, distribute material, and like that specific page. Facebook was also chosen because some participants

were already familiar with it. The YouTube channel, it was reasoned, would provide an accessible digital broadcasting channel that would not cost the participants money to set up and operate, in addition to being easily accessible. YouTube was arguably gaining popularity among users in Kenya, as is evident from the literature (see data from earlier sections of this chapter). A blog was suggested because it provides a platform for more in-depth discourse, discussion and analysis than the aforementioned two platforms. The participants easily set up the former two platforms, but the researcher assisted them in setting up a blog, as they were experiencing some difficulty with this. During the project, a conscious decision was made, on the part of the researcher/facilitator not to actively participate in the distribution of the content (on his own networks/platforms), but rather to allow the participants do take complete ownership of this process.

What emerged, however, was that the discourse on the *UMMU* narratives shifted from the 'official' platforms to the participants' personal social media platforms, especially their Facebook pages. Many of their 'friends' on Facebook tagged the narratives, liked them, shared and commented on them. A significant number of comments congratulated the participants for producing the narratives, in addition to asking them how they were able to do this. There were also questions about what the experience of making the narratives was like, how much it cost, where they had sourced the equipment and whether the participants would teach them how to produce similar narratives. Many comments expressed excitement at seeing familiar characters in the narratives and finding out how they were doing. Some comments – especially in the narrative *Amabeere* – offered opinions on alternative ways of making the sour milk, or pointed out processes or steps that were missing from the narrative.

What was more interesting to the researcher, however, was why the discourse in the pilot *UMMU* digital narratives shifted from the 'official' platforms to the participants' personal social media platforms, and what lessons and insights that could be taken from this. This section attempts a theorisation of what possibly

led to this phenomenon, and how several of these challenges can be mitigated in subsequent or similar projects.

Ownership, familiarity and usability

Although it is important to introduce participants to the variety of digital and social media platforms available to them, it is equally important to do this in phases or stages, in order to maximise the use and benefits of these platforms. The process used in the *UMMU* project saw several platforms being introduced simultaneously. In any project, select platforms may already be familiar to the participants, but it is vital to inculcate a sense of ownership of these platforms and to consider their 'usability'. These three crucial aspects – familiarity, ownership and usability – should have received more attention when the participants in the project were introduced to the blog, for instance.

The participants were obviously unfamiliar with blogs as they struggled to set it up, even though this had been discussed and time was spent teaching them how to do it. This should have been an indication that the platform was unfamiliar to the participants and that they would, therefore, struggle to use it. More time could have been spent discussing this particular platform and teaching the participants how to create and manage it, rather than opting to do it for them. What this resulted in was a situation where the participants had little or no sense of ownership, which may have caused them to prefer to use those personal social media spaces where they did have ownership. The notion that a blog would provide more space for discourse, analysis and engagement with the *UMMU* project's narratives should have been secondary to considerations of the participants' ability to effectively use the platform. Usability should have been the primary concern, since the content's main audience was the participants' community in Komotobo. The participants and their primary audience were unlikely (or did not desire) to engage in extended and critical discourse and analysis of the narratives, since they had not been exposed to this level of critical engagement before. Only one participant had a tertiary-level education (first year of college), while the rest did not have post-secondary school education at the time of the project. Perhaps the low usability level of the blog contributed to

the unfamiliarity of the platform and the fact that it lacked a sense of ownership. YouTube also had low usability levels because of what the participants perceived as its high Internet data consumption, coupled with low Internet speeds in the area. This meant that some of the videos took a long time to download and view. To mitigate these concerns, a similar project should consider initially introducing platforms participants are more familiar with, and those which their primary audiences and social media friends/followers use more regularly, before gradually introducing new and unfamiliar platforms.

Collaborations and partnerships

A project such as the *UMMU* digital narratives, which targets communities that may not necessarily be experienced users of the digital space, could significantly benefit from creating, enabling and facilitating collaborations and partnerships with personalities and entities that have more experience and are more familiar with the public digital sphere. This would serve several functions, amongst others providing a stable launch-pad for the project and its participants. Such entities or personalities could use their wealth of experience to provide continuous training and support in the use of the platforms, until such time as the participants have a good grasp of their use. This aspect was not feasible in the *UMMU* digital narratives project, owing to its short duration.

Such collaborations would also facilitate the continuous mentoring of participants beyond the training period of the project. Sadly, this aspect was not executable in the context of the *UMMU* digital narratives, as the researcher had to leave the community and the country. Sustained mentorship is necessary to keep the momentum of the project going and to continuously inspire creativity among participants. In the *UMMU* project, for instance, the participants could have been introduced to one of the bloggers' associations in the country, or to specific bloggers who could either mentor them or feature aspects of their work on existing blogs.

Conclusion

Reimagining Kenya's contemporary broadcasting-scape does not necessarily mean completely severing ties with traditional broadcasters and media entities. On the contrary, collaborating with such entities could potentially create a new equilibrium that will be beneficial to those voices that have been on the margins of the broadcasting space, while providing a new stream of content that was not previously available to traditional broadcasters. Projects such as the *UMMU* digital narratives could still tap into the resources and networks of traditional broadcasters and government departments, in an attempt to reach more of these entities' prosumers. The Kenyan government, in its efforts to decentralise and equitably distribute national resources, recently set up county development funds, which are distributed and administered from the 48 counties in the country. Although there are teething problems in administering these funds, collaborating with government departments would be useful for sustaining such a project financially.

Partnerships and collaborations with NGOs and NPOs that focus on similar programmes and activities in the area would also boost the project, as these entities could provide technical and other forms of support, as well as mentorship spaces for project participants. During the researcher's stay in Komotobo, he met with several NGOs in the area (World Vision, Unicef): approaching them to collaborate on the *UMMU* digital narratives project may have helped to sustain it. It is important, however, to clearly articulate and define the nature of such partnerships and collaborations, to avoid any one entity exerting its dominance over the other.

CHAPTER 8
Summary and conclusion: Towards a re-imagination of public service media in Kenya

Summary

This study sought to probe the extent to which active user-generated content in the digital media space could intervene in, and disrupt, what it argues are existing, exclusionary practices within the televisual-scape. This probe intended to inspire a re-imagining of public service media for nation building in Kenya. To achieve this, the work was premised on a participatory action research approach which (its proponents argue) is an effective methodology for research as it brings together the researcher/academic on the one hand, and practitioners/users/animators/actors on the other.

Participatory action research is significant for its reliance on theory, therefore the study drew extensively on theoretical discourse pertaining to nationalism and nation building as the field from which the study's key problems stemmed. Bhabha's (1994) cultural difference theory and Billig's (1995) views on banal nationalism proved vital for interrogating the identified themes. The study also extensively engaged with theoretical and conceptual discourses on digital media and participation, given that digital media potentially offer strong emancipatory platforms for those on the margins of the political centre. Theoretical and conceptual work by Henry Jenkins (2006) and his ideas on convergence culture, Carpentier's (2011) theories on democratic media participation and Thumim's (2012) thoughts on self-representation in the digital space, among others, were explored in the context of this study.

Drawing on findings from several bodies of work and texts analysed in this research, the study can conclude that broadcast content – not just in Kenya but also in the rest of Africa – predominantly focuses on passive forms of user-generated content, rather than content that is actively generated by users. The latter is deemed a far more meaningful form of participation for those who are traditionally perceived as consumers of broadcast content.

This study has also argued that the television broadcasting space in Kenya has been (and continues to be) in the firm grip of the political, economic and media elites. This scenario manifests itself as tribal hegemony in terms of representation, ownership, decision making and, consequently, socioeconomic benefit. A critical reading of the Kenyan broadcasting space showed a cyclical trend in which the political and economic elites repeatedly wield a stranglehold over broadcasting platforms and instruments, and maintain exclusionary policies for their own benefit. This group, it is argued, has usurped the role of not only agenda setting, but also ownership as regards the national narrative, thereby relegating the majority of Kenyan citizens to the role of spectators in their own nation's story.

It can be asserted that the overwhelming dominance of the 'big' tribes in broadcasting, at the exclusion of 'smaller' communities, deprives the latter of an equitable 'voice' and representation in the national television broadcasting space. These three aspects have meant that significant sections of the Kenyan citizenry have largely remained, at best passive participants in the narration of their Kenyan-ness and, generally, victims of policies which exclude their perspectives and interests, thus depriving them of an opportunity to enjoy hearing their voices articulated within the local broadcasting sector. In this thesis, the argument has been put forward that the broadcasting sector should constitutionally, morally and normatively function as a national resource that benefits the majority of Kenyans.

Also noted has been the fact that certain media platforms focus on grand narratives about African nation-states, thus establishing 'constructed' state heroes at the expense of ordinary people's experiences, aspirations and everyday heroes. In the Kenyan context, there has been a glaring absence of narratives in the media that tell the stories of ordinary heroes. This thesis therefore advocates the promotion of self-representative narratives among those whose voices and narratives have been on the margins of the broadcasting centre, as a means to include their voices in Kenya's national narrative.

Contributions

Some contributions stemming from this study are briefly highlighted in this section, to offer insight into discussions explored more critically in the thesis. It is by no means exhaustive, nor does it cover all the contributions in each chapter.

The argument made here is that broadcast content – not just in Kenya but also in Africa – on UGC for broadcasting predominantly focuses on passive forms of UGC rather than AUGC (a term coined in this study to refer to user-generated content that entails a more meaningful, emancipatory and empowering form of participation amongst those traditionally referred to as consumers of broadcast content). The television broadcasting space in Kenya has been (and continues to be) in the grip of the political, economic and media elites. It therefore manifests tribal hegemony in respect of representation, ownership, decision-making and consequently socioeconomic benefits. This wielding of control in the broadcasting-scape for the benefit of the elite began during the colonial era, when that government controlled the airwaves by denying the resource to indigenous people, initially opting to broadcast only to the colonial settlers. Subsequent postcolonial political leaders in the country have sustained this motif in various permutations and to different degrees, from Jomo Kenyatta's government through to that of Toroitich arap Moi, Mwai Kibaki and Uhuru Kenyatta.

Although many contemporary television broadcasters around the world continue to create a perception of increasing and robust audience participation in televised content, the argument made in this study is that in Kenya this is certainly not the case. Premised on a critical analysis of several television shows sampled from four leading television broadcasters based on audience ratings, the point made here is that significant forms of current participation on television are illusionary, minimalist and futile, as they largely entrench television's balance of power among the media elites. Ordinary people are often 'invited' to participate in broadcasting, but their entry point into these narratives tends to be limited to accessing already-completed narratives and engaging in

what constitutes token participation, with minimal (and in most cases no) impact on the story. Ordinary people are mainly invited to participate in broadcasting so that their ordinariness can be paraded before the public, to add to the splendour of the media elites. It is not simply that ordinary people are silenced, it is that their very status as ordinary people is exploited in certain media spaces, to make the elites (appear) even more powerful.

One of the study's key contributions is its practice-informed participatory action research (PAR) pilot project *UMMU*, featuring digital narratives the author procuced with the Abakuria. This is a community marginally represented in the PSB space in Kenya, and a people whose narrative discourse is seldom present in the public sphere. The project entailed working with a focus group of eight participants drawn from 'ordinary people' in the community, in a digital video and photography production workflow. The project provided a platform, material and information that enabled an appreciation, interrogation and theorisation of participatory PSM in Kenya.

While working on the *UMMU* digital narratives pilot project, it was apparent that the Abakuria easily and involuntarily accepted and normalised their absence from the national broadcasting discourse. What emerged from the study was that many of the narratives within this community were transferred orally from one generation to the next, or from one individual to another, which meant that no bounded texts were available. A means of sustainably and continuously producing self-representational bounded texts in audio-visual and other cultural spaces can offer a solution to this challenge. Another concern that emerged was that many of the narratives about the Abakuria in the broadcasting space were told by people from outside the community, and mostly focused on stories that presented only select practices within the community (e.g., female genital mutilation [FGM]) at the expense of more rounded representations. Thumim (2012:38) argues that self-representations inherently promise "a more truthful account in order to address perceived absences in representation, misrepresentation and the idea that it is the representations that are made by others that are mediated, consequently indirect and intrinsically less truthful".

The narratives in the *UMMU* project attempted to represent several *selves* in multiple ways in each of the short videos and photographs produced. The proposal is that the short self-representational films and photographs performed the dual function of archiving not just the personal, individual and communal narratives of the Abakuria, but also the identities of the people who told the stories.

Some media platforms in Africa predominantly focus on narrating grand narratives about nation-states and, in some instances, on what can be referred to as 'constructed' state heroes who are forced on citizens at the expense of ordinary people's experiences, aspirations and everyday heroes. These 'state heroes' are referred to as constructed since, in many instances, the political elite and other hegemonic structures create grand narratives about heroes (usually either themselves or those from their circles) and 'impose' these on their nations. These constructions usually follow a top-down approach in which ordinary citizens do not participate in either the construction of the narratives nor do they necessarily relate to such 'constructed' state heroes.

In the Kenyan context, there has been a glaring absence of narratives in the media that tell the stories of ordinary people as heroes. This has alienated numerous ordinary Kenyans from these grand 'national' narratives, since they encounter heroes in their daily lives, yet they do not see or hear stories about them in the media. The author of this thesis contends that during the formative stages of building the nation-state, media narratives of Kenyan heroes were hugely problematic, since most of these lauded individuals hailed from the dominant communities in Kenya and lacked equitable representation (women, the disabled and other marginalised individuals or communities were not included). The proposal made here, is that the everyday and banal stories captured in the *Project 10* documentary series, the *Capture Wales* project and the *UMMU* project play the important role of offering not only relatable narratives, but also archetypes and tropes which many ordinary citizens within the respective nations can identify with.[35] This is contrary to the grand narratives

[35] The *Project 10* documentary series and the *Capture Wales* project are two case studies critically analysed in the thesis and used as references for the *UMMU* digital narratives project.

about national heroes that could appear almost mythical and, in some instances, distant and detached from a nation-state's citizenry.

Re-imagining public service media in Kenya

Nation building and re-instilling a sense of nationalism in contemporary nation-states is an ongoing quest. In Africa, this quest is doubly complex not only because of the comparatively late formation of its nation-states, but also because most of these entities already comprised multiple nations, which had to coalesce into the bigger nation-states. Bloom (1990) convincingly argues that the nation-building process entails more than Anderson's (1991) imagined community. For Bloom (1990:51), only meaningful and real experiences that are positive and psychologically beneficial to individuals within a nation can evoke and trigger shared group identification.

The public service mediascape has been, and continues to be, an important space in which to pursue the nation-building quest, as it potentially offers a platform for meaningful and real experiences that are positive and psychologically beneficial to individuals within a nation (see Foster 1992). The challenge and setback, over the years, in Kenya (as in many other nation-states) has been that the public service mediascape is monopolised by a small clique of media elites, including politicians. Instead of uniting the people of Kenya, the public service media in the nation-state have been accused of driving a wedge between the different nations, as was evident in events that culminated in Kenya's 2007 post-election violence.

It is vital that the public service mediascape be re-imagined if it is to achieve its nation-building potential. This re-imagination must start with a mindset shift on the part of both the media elites/professionals and ordinary citizens. Both parties must see the public service mediascape as a national resource – much like national roads and ports that are owned, maintained, used and of benefit to all members of that nation-state, not (as is the pervasive trend) as a resource that is owned, used and beneficial to a minority elite. This study, by way of

conclusion, identifies a number of misconceptions or fallacies that should arguably be debunked if the public service mediascape is to be re-imagined.

Where to from here?: debunking public service media fallacies in Kenya

A recurring comment received during this study from both participants in the pilot *UMMU* digital narratives project and during presentations of parts of the work to scholars and researchers, was whether this project, by relying on digital platforms, would make tangible inroads into disrupting or rearranging the contemporary broadcasting-scape in Kenya. This query was usually premised on the perception that the broadcasting mediascape in Kenya was in the tight grip of media elites, who were unlikely to relinquish their stranglehold on resources that have been invaluable in maintaining their hold on political and economic power.

The comment '*ina wenyewe*' often met any attempts to argue that these platforms could be re-imagined to include divergent voices. *Ina wenyewe* is a Kiswahili phrase that loosely translates as 'it has its owners'. A number of academics and researchers who had listened to presentations of parts of the study shared similar sentiments: their argument was that the political and media elite, especially in Africa, had over the years tightened their grip on resources in the mediascape and systematically excluded or failed to encourage active and meaningful participation on the part of ordinary people. Some pointed out that public service media are owned and operated by these elites, and that even public broadcasters such as KBC and the SABC have been turned into state mouthpieces used for disseminating government propaganda. Would these elites allow new participants into the (their) space? Not likely. Such comments highlighted significant aspects which this study used to interrogate, debate, challenge and, more importantly, propose a potential re-imagination of the space.

The first fallacy that demands a re-imagination is the perception that the broadcasting-scape specifically, and the mediascape generally, are resources that

are wholly owned, controlled and (where it suits the current beneficiaries) shared by a select group of people, at the owners' discretion. This notion has to be debunked if the voices on the margins of the broadcasting-scape are to find what should be their rightful place in this space. This process, it is argued here, has to start with a mindshift on the part of not only ordinary, marginalised people, but also those who significantly monopolise the resources. A disruption and rethink of the notion of '*ina wenyewe*' in relation to media has to be addressed as a matter of urgency, to ensure equitable access in the broadcasting space. Perhaps this means retracing the broadcasting journey back to the vision of the BBC's first director general, John Reith, who argued that broadcasting should be developed in the interests of the nation and assigned through state intervention (Teer-Tomaselli 2008:75). Reith, who played a pivotal role in setting up and steering the policy and vision of not only the BBC but also other broadcasters around the world, is an authority who is often cited in related matters. He argued that broadcasting resources and bandwidth should be treated as national resources, available for use by and to the benefit of *all* members of a nation, rather than being commoditised. This study concurs with Reith's premise and proposes that the broadcasting space in Kenya become equitably accessible and beneficial to all citizens, not just a few exploitative beneficiaries.

Linked to the previous misconception is a second fallacy that needs debunking: it manifests in the pervasive traditional broadcasting model. Over the years broadcasting models have created motifs that have, through repetitive and continued practice, entrenched the perception that ordinary people and marginalised voices have to wait for elites and media professionals to 'invite' them into their own country's broadcasting spaces. These invitations have, almost always, been on the terms of the media elites and professionals, and are therefore largely beneficial to them. Where there has been a sense of public participation in the broadcasting space, the models limited the form of participation to passive and token involvement. The exponential growth of the Internet and developments in the digital world have created enabling environments which allow for the disruption of existing models and motifs, and a

deconstruction of the notion of '*ina wenyewe*'. Ordinary people and marginalised voices can now participate in this space and make themselves heard, without necessarily being called on to do so by the media elite, and without their participation necessarily being prescribed or controlled by those same powers.

Another important consideration in this debate relates to instances where the state is incapable of intervening (or unwilling to do so) in developing broadcasting in the interests of the nation (as Reith proposed). In some instances the state may be complicit in perpetuating the inequitable use of resources for selfish reasons, as is the case in a number of African nation-states (see chapters 2 and 5 of this study). Although the state is ordinarily expected to steer this process, and provide infrastructure and resources to enable it to grow and flourish, the third notion that needs to be revisited is the fallacy that the state is compelled to perform this role. Several events around the continent have demonstrated that technological developments in the digital space now mean that public service media can take functions outside of the traditional broadcasting enclave, which is highly regulated and 'policed'. Recent political uprisings in North Africa, commonly referred to as the Arab Spring (see Howard & Hussain 2010) or developments in Kenya (on platforms such as Ushahidi and Mzalendo), or the 'This Flag' movement in Zimbabwe demonstrate that it is indeed possible to initiate and sustain projects without the assistance or permission of the state.

A fourth misconception that needs rethinking is the notion that broadcasting is an expensive endeavour that requires huge sums of capital to launch and operate. This may have been true about a decade or so ago, but it is no longer entirely true in the present. Developments in the digital domain now mean that several platforms are available to users; that hardware, equipment and devices can be obtained by ordinary people at reasonably affordable costs. The cost of equipment such as digital cameras, smartphones and editing suites has dropped dramatically over the past decade. Open-source platforms and applications are now also accessible to the ordinary person in the street, either free of charge or at comparatively lower rates than they were a decade ago. Broadcasting is also

possible on digital and social media platforms such as YouTube channels, blogs and Instagram, which potentially allow a wide audience reach at fairly reasonable and affordable cost. Anyone can potentially access the broadcasting space. Research has shown that more ordinary people now have access to the digital space, which further facilitates access to the means of broadcasting. In Kenya, for instance, Internet user penetration has grown from less than one per cent of the population in December 2000 to over 82 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2015 (see CA 2015; Internetworldstats.com). In Kenya, the number of Internet users has thus grown by a massive 4 050 per cent in just 15 years.

The *UMMU* digital narratives pilot project has demonstrated, to a significant extent, that the financial outlay needed for broadcasting content in or to rural Kenya, by communities that were once on the margins of the broadcasting space, is quite affordable. In addition, this pilot project has demonstrated that such an endeavour is feasible and achievable with minimal resources (see chapters 6 and 7). Perhaps all stakeholders should now focus on making Internet access, and the devices used to access it, even more affordable. Where possible, set-up and access should be highly subsidised or even free, to further push the Internet penetration rate as close to 100 per cent of the population as possible. This will mean that even more voices will have access to this space, and thus a chance to be heard.

A perception exists that the broadcasting space is extremely complex, that it is highly technical and can only be operated and sustained by highly trained media professionals and technicians. Although there is a measure of validity in these claims, and trained media professionals still have a significant role to play in this field, the digital domain has, again, smoothed over many of these challenges. Upskilling has allowed ordinary people to participate in this space, even if only to a limited extent (if that is what their capacity allows). Initiatives discussed in this study, such as the *Capture Wales* project and the *UMMU* pilot project, have demonstrated that ordinary people can enrich this space. Both projects worked with ordinary people who – although they had never created narratives for broadcasting in the digital sphere – worked within a turnaround time of fewer

than ten days. Both projects trained participants in the use of digital hardware, software and platforms, and produced digital narratives of reasonable quality. The participants in the *UMMU* pilot project were able to come up with their own themes for their stories, they produced both shorts and photographic narratives, and posted or broadcast these narratives on digital media platforms (see chapters 6 and 7). Perhaps a number of lessons and experiences from these digital storytelling projects can be used to demystify the perception that the field is highly complex and technical. In conjunction with media professionals, all stakeholders can be guided to rethink the possibility of facilitating collaborative and inclusive, participatory work.

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Filmography/ Videography

A history of Komotobo Maranatha Mission. Dir: *UMMU* digital narratives participants, perf. David Mairo. Kenya 2016.

Amabeere. Dir: *UMMU* digital narratives participants, perf. Catherine Matinde. Kenya 2016.

Being Pavarotti. Dir. Odette Geldenhuys, perf. Nelson Nkanunu. South Africa 2004.

Belonging. Dir. Kethiwe Ngcobo and Minky Schlessinger, perf. Kethiwe Ngcobo. South Africa 2004.

Cinderella of the Cape Flats. Dir. Jane Kennedy. South Africa 2004.

Hot Wax. Dir. Andrea Spitz, perf Ivy Lakaje. South Africa 2004.

Ikhaya. Dir. Omelga Hlengiwe Mthiyane, perf. Zimbili Kamanga. South Africa 2004.

Meaning of the Buffalo. Dir. Karin Slater. South Africa 2004.

Mix. Dir. Rudzani Dzuguda. South Africa 2004.

My Yeoville. Dir. Sello Molefe. South Africa 2004.

Nabantwa Bam (With My Children). Dir. Khulile Nxumalo, perf Beatrice Kubheka, Nhlanhla Kubheka and Miles Kubheka. South Africa 2004.

Nanook of the North. Dir. Robert Flaherty, perf. Nanook, Nyla, Cunayou. U.S.A. 1922.

Oogotoraa Amatwi. Dir. *UMMU* digital narratives participants, perf. Machera Mwita and Everlyn Gati Chacha. Kenya 2016.

Solly's Story. Dir. Asivhanzhi 'Asi' Mathaba, perf Solly Luvhengo. South Africa 2004.

The Devil Breaks My Heart - 10 Years Later. Dir. Lederle Bosch, perf. Tshepo Mmola, Heino Benard, Donovan Rhode, Bolla Conradie. South Africa 2004.

Through the Eyes of My Daughter. Dir. Zulfah Otto Sallies, perf. Muneera Sallies. South Africa 2004.

*Umgidi (*The Celebration). Dir. Gillian Schutte and Sipho Singiswa. South Africa 2004.

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

University of the Witwatersrand, Jorissen St, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2001.

Participant Information Sheet

Study title: Mediating the nation building agenda in public service broadcasting: Convergence of Active User Generated Content (AUGC) in Kenya

Locality: Kuria East, Migori County, Kenya

Researcher: Anthony Ambala

Email:

Contact phone number:

You are invited to take part in a digital video storytelling participatory research project ***Utaifa Mashinani: Masimulizi ya uKenya.*** The participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw from participation at any point during the research without any penalty. This Participant Information Sheet will help you decide if you would like to take part. It sets out why I am doing the study, what your participation would involve, and what would happen after the study ends. I will go through this information with you and answer any questions you may have. If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign the Consent Form. You will be given a copy of both the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form to keep.

Purpose of the study

- It seeks to establish the extent to which ordinary Kenyans can actively participate in the creation, (co)production and distribution/broadcasting of their narratives digitally.
- It seeks to train and facilitate participants in the digital video and photography production workflow, which includes scripting and/or conceptualizing narratives, videography and photography and basic postproduction.
- It seeks to familiarize participants with several digital distribution platforms and to broadcast the short digital narratives made by participants on the *Utaifa Mashinani: Masimulizi ya uKenya* Vlog (Video Blog) and website, television stations and their websites, and on digital and social media platforms.
- This project forms part of a PhD work in Media Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg by Anthony T. Ambala who will be responsible for facilitating the workshops and training participants in the project.

Your involvement

The researcher/facilitator will ensure that all data is used only for the purpose agreed herewith. The material will be processed according to the following agreement about data collection and analysis

- If you agree to participate, the data collected in the participatory research project can be used in the study.
- If you agree to participate, the digital videos can be posted and broadcast on the *Utaifa Mashinani: Masimulizi ya uKenya* Vlog, You Tube channel, website, television stations and their websites, and on digital and social network platforms.
- If you agree to participate, parts of the participatory research project will be captured/recorded digitally and used as research data.
- Only the researcher/facilitator and the members of the project team will have access to the recordings for analysis of data (excluding the digital videos and participant blurbs which will be in the public domain).
- The copyright for the digital videos will be owned jointly by the participant(s) making the specific video, together with the facilitator/researcher while copyright for other data generated during the participatory project will be owned by the researcher/ facilitator.

- The participant is requested to make her/himself available for the duration of the participatory research project which will run for between 10 to 18 days for different participating groups and projects.
- If participants wish to remain anonymous, pseudonyms and pen names will be used in the short videos.

Projected Outcomes

- Participants will be trained in film/video/photography workflows, which will include scripting and/or storyboarding and/or conceptualizing narratives, videography and photography and basic postproduction.
- Participants will have an opportunity to tell their stories through films/videos and photography.
- Participants will be trained on the use of the digital and social media platforms for broadcasting their digital stories.
- Participants will workshop and make short digital narratives.
- Participants will have their films/videos/photography work broadcast on the digital space.

Cost of your involvement

You are **not required** to make any payments at any point towards this research study. You may be required to use your smart phone if you have one, but if you do not have a smartphone, the researcher will supply necessary equipment.

Further information

PhD Supervisor:

Dr. Cobus van Staden

Lecturer, Department of Media Studies,

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

Email: CobusvanStaden@wits.ac.za

Phone: +27 11 717 4241

Appendix B: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Participation in this digital video storytelling participatory research project ***Utaifa Mashinani: Masimulizi ya uKenya*** (banal/everyday nationalisms: narrations of Kenyannness) is voluntary.

This project forms part of a PhD work in Media Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg by Anthony T. Ambala.

The researcher/facilitator will ensure that all data is used only for the purpose agreed herewith. The material will be processed according to the following agreement about data collection and analysis

If participants wish to remain anonymous, pseudonyms and pen names will be used in the short videos.

Please tick to indicate you consent to the following

I have read, or have had read to me in my first language, and I understand the Participant Information Sheet.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I have been given sufficient time to consider whether or not to participate in this study.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I am satisfied with the answers I have been given regarding the study and I have a copy of this consent form and information sheet.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time	Yes ☐	No ☐
If I decide to withdraw from the study, I agree that my participation up to the point of withdrawal may continue to be processed.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I know who to contact if I have any questions about the study in general.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I understand my responsibilities as a study participant.	Yes ☐	No ☐

Declaration by participant:

I hereby consent to take part in this study.

Location: _____ Date _____

Participant Names: _____ Signature _____

Participants email/cell: _____

Declaration by researcher:

I have given a verbal explanation of the research project to the participant, and have answered the participant's questions about it.

I believe that the participant understands the study and has given informed consent to participate.

Appendix C: Photographs by *UMMU* participants



A serving of *ugali*

Picture by *UMMU* participants



The bottle and the cables

Picture by *UMMU* participants



Mmmmhh

Picture by *UMMU* participants



The cow and the calf

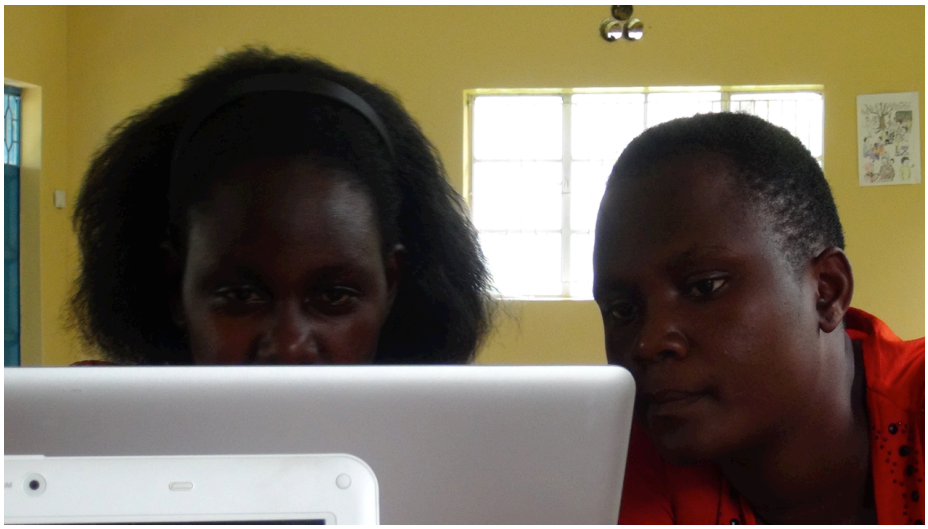
Picture by *UMMU* participants

Appendix D: Participants in the *UMMU* project



Participants' camera training

Picture by *UMMU* participants



Participants practicing Adobe Premier

Picture by *UMMU* participants



Setting up for a shoot

Picture by *UMMU* participants



The workshops

Picture by *UMMU* participants