

Chapter 4

Discourses of the 'Civilized Man'

Ethnic hybridity refers to the construction of a plural sense of identity, one that bridges ethnic categories, as a result of specific historical conditions. Sherbros often refer to themselves by the Krio word *civilayzd*. In Chapter 2, I explained how Sherbro populations, since early colonial times, acted as economic and cultural brokers between European traders and local populations on the coast. Prominent families integrated Europeans by way of marriage and embraced early Western influences, such as Christianity and literacy, by which they could achieve a better social position in their own social context. On the Peninsula, people often referred to early colonial history and the role of Sherbros as middlemen to claim a 'civilized' status in the present. They also referred to the history of the Colony more specifically, and to the early contacts that local populations established with the Liberated Africans, as discussed in Chapter 3. In these usages, 'civilized' meant educated and converted.

For many decades, on the Peninsula, local populations were not assimilated into the settlers' communities. The social arrangement between them and the settlers ensured multiple exchanges between the two groups, as well as the possibility of remaining distinct. Sherbros, in this process, acquired an identity that they now define as both Krio and *kɔntri*. In this regard, individuals experience their identity as being inherently dual. The use of *civilayzd* and *civilayzeshɔn*, as contemporary local terms, indicate the combination between Krio and *kɔntri* affiliations: they can be used to claim a high social status and an educated background despite indigenous ancestry or to indicate autochthony despite the ability to assume a Krio identity.¹ Originally, the Krio/native

dichotomy was more of a social distinction. However, as Krios gradually became recognized as an ethnic group in Sierra Leone, it can be said that Sherbro identity has acquired a Krio ethnic component. In this chapter, I explore further the discourses by which Sherbro assert Krio identity.

Krio Identity and the Colonial Project

The emergence of a new patriotism in Britain after the defeat in the American War of Independence in 1775 gave prominence to the imperial project (Colley 2012: 147). The anti-slavery campaign became an emblem of the country's glory and moral superiority over other Western nations. The abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and later of slavery in 1833 became important in the discourse of British supremacy in the Victorian era. Colley (*ibid.*: 367) notes that 'it supplied the British with a powerful legitimation for their claims to be the arbiters of the civilized and the uncivilized world'. Thus, the early settlers of the Province of Freedom were endowed with the mission of spreading Christianity and civilizing their fellow Africans. They were symbols for indigenous populations who had been exposed to civilization. The Liberated Africans, soon after their arrival in the Colony, also acquired the socioeconomic skills that allowed them to move up the social ladder of the colonial society.

For the settlers, education and Christianity became privileged avenues for upward mobility in a context where social success was tied to the achievement of Western standards of civilization. Porter (1963: 88) argues that 'religion and education are almost inseparable, for the school developed, not as an institution in itself, but as a function of the church'. In 1816, Governor MacCarthy asked the Church Missionary Society (CMS), which was linked to the Anglican Church, to act both as a civilizing agent and as an administrative force in rural settlements newly founded by Liberated Africans. The system of parish administration ensured a longlasting Christian influence on Liberated African populations (Peterson 1969). By the mid-nineteenth century, mission churches opened schools that were accessible to children of both settlers and Liberated Africans, thereby unifying these two groups around common values and norms (Porter 1963: 92). Between 1830 and 1870, Liberated Africans gained social recognition and respectability not only through formal education, but also 'by virtue of their success in trade and business' (*ibid.*: 7). In the Colony, social standards learned through education were in line with Christian values. The social qualities pupils acquired, such as discipline, honesty, modesty and moral strength, were perceived to be the result of a strict adherence to Christian dogmas (Colbeck 1956: 119).

From the 1870s onwards, the descendants of the Liberated Africans born in the Colony became increasingly referred to as 'Creoles'. Over time, this term came to apply 'generally to the settlers and their descendants' (Luke 1939: 53). This mix of populations also included people from neighbouring ethnic groups,

particularly Temne and Bullom populations who had intermarried with the settlers. Until the late nineteenth century, settler society was flexible and open enough to allow for the incorporation of many people of indigenous origin (see Porter 1963; White 1987). Nevertheless, the emergence of the Creole – and later Krio – group as a distinct, self-identified and bounded group is a historically contested issue. It is unclear to which extent the ‘Creole’ identifier was in use among local populations of Freetown by the end of the nineteenth century.²

Yet historians, in their attempts at defining the specificity of *Creoledom* (Porter 1963) or *Kriodrom* (Wyse 1989), largely contributed to the portrayal of a homogeneous Krio ‘elite culture’ that emerged in the course of the nineteenth century. Members of Freetown’s intellectual and social elite entered prestigious professions and became civil servants, medical doctors and lawyers. Upward social mobility, along with the prestige of working for imperial glory, created a sense of being part of the elite in Victorian society. They were expected to be examples for autochthonous Africans, adopt Christian values, behave in a European manner and reject African traditions (Spitzer 1974: 39). This became increasingly important as the idea of ‘civilization’ also united Britons around a feeling of superiority over alien cultures and societies that ‘they only imperfectly understood, but usually perceived as inferior in some way’ (Colley 2012: 377).

Upper-class Krio culture also rested on the adoption of a specific ‘European way of life’ that proved belonging in the British social world (Cohen 1981; Porter 1963; Spitzer 1974). Members of this group stigmatized the ‘uncivilized’ and ‘primitive’ habits of populations of the interior, and they forged a rather exclusive identity, based on membership to various restricted social circles, such as Christian churches, school circles and Masonic lodges.

Yet the ‘elite culture’ reflected only a small part of the larger and more socially and culturally heterogeneous group of peoples who inhabited the Colony. The descendants of the settlers were segmented along religious affiliations, occupations and social classes (Goerg 1995: 125–26). Many of them were Muslims, often of Yoruba origins, and this group was also known as the Aku (Cole 2013). Many inhabitants of the Colony lived in rural areas of the Peninsula, as their ancestors had been dispatched in villages of the parish administration system (see Chapter 2). Their professional occupations varied, as they engaged in trading, but also in fishing or gardening (Porter 1963: 111–12). As Dixon-Fyle and Cole (2006: 6) observe, ‘the vast majority of people in the emergent society by the turn of the twentieth century belonged to the working class’.

Krio identity, although fluctuating and multi-dimensional, became more politically pronounced in the first half of the twentieth century, as the British created the conditions for populations of the Protectorate to participate in politics. The expansion of the British sphere of influence led to the declaration of the Protectorate in 1896. This resulted in the Hut Tax War in 1898, as Britain sought to impose taxation on inhabitants of the Protectorate. The populations of the Protectorate

held Krios responsible for the taxation and tensions escalated. More than ever, inhabitants of the Colony felt alien and were perceived as such. After 1898, Britain implemented 'a policy of separate and dual development' (Caulker 1976: 122), which deepened sociocultural and political divergences between Colony and Protectorate. The Krio elite was increasingly sidelined from national politics. In response, Krios claimed their distinctiveness from people of the Protectorate and emphasized their closeness to the British. In 1853, Liberated Africans had become British subjects and two years later, they had been granted British citizenship. Many Krios, in the period leading up to independence, understood Sierra Leonean identity as restricted to the territory of the Colony and as concomitant with a 'Creole nation' whose members would continue to hold British citizenship (Caulker 1976: 22).³ Yet they progressively realized that although they had been the executive force of Britain's 'civilizing mission', they had never been considered as part of the *commandment* (Mbembe 2001: 31). The political dominion of Krio leaders in the Colony eroded significantly, as the 1947 Constitution gave people of the Protectorate a majority in the Legislative Council. Following independence in 1961, Krios became a minority group in the new nation.

Across the postcolonial decades, Krios have remained socially and culturally separate from the rest of the country. They have therefore attracted social antagonism. After independence, urbanization encouraged rural-urban migration, and this facilitated social mixing, but without sufficient upward mobility. The 1970s and 1980s were marked by massive unemployment and social discontent, which provided some of the fodder for the Civil War that started in 1991. Because Krios 'continued to figure prominently among the educated elite', they were among those that the rebels wanted to destroy (Knörr 2010b: 744).

In postwar urban Sierra Leone, 'Krio' has again become a more open category. It is no longer perceived only as a class-based ethnic group, but also as a form of transethnic identification marked by an urban and modern lifestyle (Knörr 2010a, 2010b). As Cole (2013: 128) notes, 'there has been an inexorable *Kriolization* of language and culture in contemporary Sierra Leone' (emphasis in original). Those who claim a Krio identity (without a Krio family background) also associate 'village life' with a lack of opportunities and the violence of the war. Krio identity is also expressed through the widespread use of the Krio language in a highly diverse urban environment.

The sheer exponential population growth in the Western Area makes the use of some common language necessary, and Krio has resumed its historical status in this respect. The figures in the 2004 census on ethnicity and language show that in the Western Area, Krio is now also widely employed as the *lingua franca* by recent migrants.⁴ Young migrants, or people from the first generation born on the Peninsula, feel that they progressively forget their home language, which they tend not to use in their daily activities. Jokes were common among youths in the streets of Freetown, as they teased each other, often in a friendly way, to

be ‘Krio’. Conversely, signs of ‘upcountry’ accents – when Krio is not ‘clear’ grammatically, not fluent and mixed with words of local languages – were easily mocked in a dismissive way, including on social media.

However, my friends in Freetown did not consider themselves Krio. When asked about their own identity, they stated their ethnic background. Nevertheless, they usually admitted that, as they spoke better Krio than their home language and as they lived as young urbanites with no intention to ‘go back to the village’, they could be seen as Krio. They did not mind the ascription of a Krio identity. ‘Krio’ has become a category of performance, which does not necessarily mean that individuals embrace it as an identity. Performing Krio-ness symbolizes a transition between two lifestyles, yet it is a transition that does not require abandoning one’s own ethnic identity (Knörr 2010b).

Civilayzd and Civilayzeshɔn

The terms *civilayzd* and *civilayzeshɔn* implicitly refer to the ambivalence of Krio identity, which blended African and European sociocultural features. They indicated the emergence of hybrid cultural forms and creative identity-making processes at the margins of the colonial power. By the end of the nineteenth century, Krio mimesis of Western habits had become an object of mockery and criticism from colonial authorities. Bhabha (1984: 129) states that mimicry ‘in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority’. As Britain progressed in its efforts to control the interior, Krio mimicry became a ‘menace’ to the colonial regime because of its disruptive character, but also because Krios had key administrative positions and were able to act politically (Caulker 1976: 140–46). Hence, ‘authentic’ African identities became valorized and Krios were dismissed as imperfect copies of Europeans.

The ‘civilized’ under colonial regimes transgressed the lines separating Africanness from European civilization. In Liberia, Tonkin (2010: 123) writes that ‘the civilised faced both ways and their actual relationships meant that simple binary oppositions between aboriginal and settler cannot be made, any more than the variable, frequently shifting boundary between civilised ... and tribal’. She notes that the English word *country* is used pejoratively and in opposition to *Kwii meni* (civilized matters). Yet, when *Kwii meni* is contrasted with *Zo meni* (ritual matters), the terms are not mutually exclusive, but represent ‘different domains of knowledge, power and expertise’ (Tonkin 1981: 322). Thus, people at the margins engaged with two distinct social worlds, crafting their own understanding of what ‘civilized’ meant to them – a combination of cultural assets and social skills that allowed them to navigate the colonial world, while remaining members of their own societies of origins.

The ambiguous meaning of *civilayzd* and *civilayzeshɔn* persists, as these terms contain an ambivalent discourse: they can be used either to praise

educational achievement or to disparage a person who tries to hide his or her ethnic origins by taking up a Krio lifestyle. On the one hand, being *civilayzd* is increasingly associated with modernization⁵ and with a Krio lifestyle, by which one asserts one’s rights to modernity and membership in a globalized world (Ferguson 2002). The word *krionayzd* is also used as a synonym, both as an adjective (somebody who has become Krio) and as a verb (the process of becoming Krio). On the other hand, *civilayzd/krionayzd* means being Krio but not quite, as one remains an indigenous Sierra Leonean – a *kɔntriman*. As in Liberia, the words Krio and *kɔntri* cover experiences that ‘can be shared by the same person’ (Tonkin 2010: 322). For Sherbros, this ambivalence is taken for granted due to their historical interactions with Krios: Sherbro identity ‘is’ *civilayzd*. It possesses an ascribed indigenous (*kɔntri*) component, as well as a Krio component that is achieved through education and socialization.

As a result, Sherbros have turned the contemporary terms *civilayzd* and *civilayzeshɔn* into claim-making concepts for both Krio and autochthonous social statuses, particularly in the context of recent migration: these terms simultaneously express social and cultural distinctiveness, and substantiate an indigenous identity. On the Peninsula, both of these identity claims are important, as Sherbros may want to distinguish themselves from migrants, but also to support their claim to be considered autochthonous. In this sense, most oppositional terms can be alternatively derogatory (towards others) or valorizing (towards oneself): being a *kɔntriman*, belonging to a *trayb* (tribe), having a *tradishɔn* (tradition) or, by contrast, being Krio. By playing on the contrast between Krio and *kɔntri*, people also reappropriate the ideological legacy of British colonialism in current processes of identity making, and re-enact relations of domination/subordination between Freetown/the Peninsula and the Provinces. These concepts continue to frame social reality and discourses: socially and morally loaded dichotomies are reinterpreted on the basis of contemporary political concerns.

This chapter and the next one focus on performances of Sherbro identity as *civilayzd* – that is, as both Krio and *kɔntri*. Sherbro identity includes the Krio and *kɔntri* registers, namely two repertoires of linguistic and nonlinguistic signs that individuals are able to employ according to social situations and contexts (Agha 2007). People move between the Krio and *kɔntri* registers by using linguistic and behavioural signs, such as speech, gestures, demeanour, clothes and social habits. The identity displayed is based on the ability of the audience (the researcher, members of other groups, institutions etc.) to read those signs.

Adopting signs of the Krio register is certainly not the prerogative of Sherbros only. People of other ethnic origins can also choose to ‘appear’ Krio in certain situations. As in the case of other creole identities, self-identifying as Krio depends on one’s ability to embrace a ‘way of life’ and adopt the local creole language as one’s own (see Eriksen 2007, 2019). However, people of Sherbro origin claim being ethnically Sherbro and socially Krio at the same time, without

necessarily switching. Thus, I am concerned here with the way in which Sherbro identity is constituted by having a claim to being Krio.

Family names are taken to constitute the most obvious evidence of historical links between Sherbro and Krio populations. Most Sherbros have English names, such as Douglas, Johnson, Pratt, Williams or Thompson, among many others. Mission churches in neighbouring Liberated African villages surely played a crucial role in the baptism of local populations.⁶ Moreover, the ward system, by which the settlers brought up children coming from poor local households, was an important aspect of those relations. Children converted to Christianity often ‘achieved a high degree of education ... and adopted the name of the fostering family’ (Cohen 1981: 64). In Sherbro settlements, not many people know the origin of their family name with certainty, but the majority assume that one of their parents had been ‘adopted’ and had taken the name of a foster parent or a missionary. In other words, these family names do not supersede other local family names that are to remain hidden in order to conceal non-Krio origins, as is usual in fosterage. In this respect, people can claim that they are part of the same local Krio/Sherbro extended families, and they used historical account to substantiate those claims, as presented in Chapter 2.

Previously, Krio identity has been described as relatively bounded and based on endogamy. Some of the gatekeepers of Krio identity, such as the Krio urban upper class, may still maintain this perception. Yet, the discourses by which Krios and Sherbros on the Peninsula call on real and fictive kinship questions this assumption.⁷ In their shared residential zone, Sherbros and Krios understand themselves as related based on the model of the Krio ‘grand cousinhood’ – an extended family network in which relations between members are maintained ‘by frequent, extensive and expensive family “ceremonials”’ (Cohen 1981: 62). In Chapter 5, I will explain how these ceremonials, like marriages, funerals and ceremonies for the dead, strengthen Sherbro/Krio networks of kin on the Peninsula. For now, suffice it to say that family names allow people to trace family relatives in several, if not all, settlements, and a similar English name creates fictive kinship between strangers meeting for the first time.

Below, I explore the discourses and practices by which Sherbros on the Peninsula claim Krio identity. In turn, the association of the Krio and *kɔntri* dimensions within a single identity allows individuals of various origins to use those registers not as opposing classificatory categories, but as two sets of emblems that complement each other.

Education and Child-Fostering

How does a person learn to display the relevant signs of a register? Although there are many avenues, including the street relations mentioned above, education is a powerful site for such learning. Certainly, education was central to

personal narratives about how Sherbro became Krio. People commonly stated that 'an educated Sherbro is a Krio' and suggested that, should I study the ethnic background of civil servants in Freetown, I would certainly find most of them to be Sherbro. Such individuals had *krionayzd*, they said, achieving a higher social status through educational and professional achievement. In addition to formal education, fosterage by a Krio family and early socialization according to Krio principles is an important avenue of status change (Cohen 1981: 36).⁸ Such socialization, according to Sherbros, makes them belong to the Krio sociocultural world on a different ground than does a mere 'performance' of Krio-ness (language, habits) by people who have migrated to the Peninsula.

To be *krionayzd*, for a Sherbro, is not a sign of assimilation to the Krio group, but a way to have a complete Sherbro identity – one that is part Krio and enables easy individual mobility between Sherbro and Krio communities. Indeed, Sherbros claim that because they adopted the Krio system 'early on' (in history), Sherbro communities can reproduce Krio norms and Christian-infused educational and socialization practices without the actual presence of Krios. They can reproduce, on their own, both Sherbro and Krio social systems. In other words, Sherbros on the Peninsula consider their identity as inherently dual. They often claim that they have integrated the 'Krio system' as part of their own identity.

Many *kontri* people raised in Krio homes may navigate Krio and *kontri* registers easily, employing a wider range and variety of even subtle signs to mark this identity. The distinction of the Sherbros comes in two ways: first, in the explicit claims they make that Krio identity is constituent of Sherbro identity; and, second, in a history of particular relations related to fosterage and education. Child-fostering, by which poorer families send a child to be educated in a Krio household, has played (and continues to play) an important role in reproducing Krio society. These children, who are not necessarily Sherbro, are referred to by Krio as *men pikin* (a child to mind/raise). Historically, the association of the Sherbro group with the Colony, as well as their geographical proximity with the black settlers on the Peninsula, made its participation in fosterage more frequent and intense than that of other groups.

Practices of child-fostering between Sherbro and Krio therefore differ from the usual pattern. Specifically, fostered Sherbro children continue to circulate between Sherbro and Krio communities, even as they acquire Krio identity. Also important is the fact that the long tradition of fosterage means that even Sherbro on the Peninsula who were never fostered, or only briefly, still consider their own socialization and education, including their mastery of Krio as a native language, sufficient to make them 'Krio'. As we shall see in the last section of this chapter, this inbetween status tends to be recognized by members of other ethnic groups, who readily use their kin ties with Sherbro families in order to claim Krio-ness. The Krio living in neighbouring settlements also accept the close association of local Sherbros with themselves. Although they could distinguish

between individuals who had been fostered in Krio families and those who had not, they usually chose to acknowledge other individual connections and memories for such individuals instead, while maintaining that ‘Sherbros are Krio’ anyway (and mentioning their common origins – see Chapter 2).

Despite their claims that it is no longer necessary, fostering is still practised by many Sherbro. A Sherbro child will be sent to well-to-do Krio relatives, who will pay for their schooling. In the past, such fostering was justified on the rationale that schools were located in Krio settlements. Nowadays, many Sherbro settlements also have primary schools, but the quality of the teaching is still reported to be lower. The schools in Krio settlements enjoy a higher prestige and parents prefer to send their children to York, Sussex, Hamilton or Freetown. These places also offer secondary education, which is not the case in many Sherbro settlements. By placing children with Krio relatives, parents also expect a good Krio ‘training’ and nourish the hope that the guardians will provide access to the benefits of the ‘civilized’ world and to opportunities that they cannot offer (see Bledsoe 1990: 76).

However, actual experiences with child-fostering are described with ambivalence. At a collective level, fosterage has worked as an important mechanism of creolization, both in Sierra Leone (Cohen 1981) and Guinea Bissau (Trajano Filho 1998), and in both cases, it has been used as a way to create alliances and cement patronage relationships between social groups. Fosterage usually reinforces the subordination of the family that gives a child into fosterage and its dependence on the relative who takes responsibility for the child (*ibid.*: 453). Fosterage creates asymmetrical relations: Sherbro are dependent on Krio relatives, who have a higher educational capital, and often more money to pay for school fees and material. Sherbros often mention that foster children are chastised, deprived of food and exploited by being made to do household chores. Still, parents rarely act on their children’s complaints because they do not want to demonstrate ingratitude (Bledsoe 1990). Similarly, parents look at harsh training as the price needed to ‘earn’ Krio education, to reinforce family and social networks with Krios, and to secure access to a social group that has higher status. In this regard, members of the child-giving group owe a social debt to the group that practises fosterage.

Nevertheless, on the Peninsula, due to the proximity of settlements, it appears that parents cannot really force their children to stay in situations in which they might suffer. Individual narratives of child-fostering do not emphasize structures of patronage, but rather flexible relationships in which children also remain in control of their own mobility and may turn back to their own village in the event of problems. The following examples describe the individual trajectories of two residents of Bureh Town, who did part of their schooling in York in the 1980s. At that time, there was no primary school in Bureh Town. These stories illustrate the flexibility in social and geographic mobility produced by fosterage.

Barki was born in Bureh Town. His father used to go fishing regularly in York and introduced his son to one of the fish dealers with whom he worked. She found a sponsor for Barki, who moved to York. The Krio lady who took charge of him baptized him in the Methodist church and changed his first name from Barki (the name of the fourth male child in Sherbro) to Abioseh (a Krio name of Yoruba origin). Yet, she kept his family name unchanged. He started going to school, but the lady never gave him lunch. He also mentioned regular beating, which made him want to run away. The Krio woman, he said, used to give him money to buy cakes, but she soon accused him of hiding the money for other purposes. He used to go back to Bureh Town on weekends and complained to his mother. By then, he was studying for the selective entrance exam of the senior secondary school and felt that he also needed coffee to be able to study more. Hence, every weekend, he used to take food and coffee with him for the whole week in York. Right after his exam, he fell ill and went back to Bureh Town in order to get treated with traditional medicine. As the relationship with his Krio sponsor had already soured, she refused to take him back and, when he was accepted to senior secondary school, he moved to Sherbro relatives in Tokeh while continuing his schooling in York. By then, school pupils living in Tokeh crossed the river every day to go to class in York. Later on, he worked in tourism in Tokeh and eventually settled in Bureh Town. He does not go to York very often, but he considers the son of his Krio foster (with whom he was raised and who still lives in York) to be within his network of close relatives.

The second example is a woman. Gloria was also born in Bureh Town, her father's village. She was raised there, but also knew her mother's place, Mama Beach. A Krio woman who was a teacher at the primary school in York decided to take her for schooling in York when she was seven. The woman used to buy fish in Bureh Town to do some business. She baptized Gloria at the Brown Methodist Church in York. She changed the girl's birth name to Gloria, but allowed her to keep her family name. After a few years, Gloria returned to Bureh Town to take care of her grandmother and did not complete secondary school. Meanwhile, she was sent at the age of fifteen to become initiated into the female initiation society in Mama Beach. Her Krio sponsor agreed to this because Gloria would receive a different type of training there that would be equally useful: looking after a house, taking care of a husband and so on. Later in life, she married a Krio man and settled with him in York for several years, then moved back to Bureh Town to stay with her new husband. The three children of her first marriage were raised both in Bureh Town and York. Yet, Gloria says that she still feels emotionally closest to her relatives in Mama Beach.

Social mobility characterizes all points of the fosterage cycle. Krio sponsors can be extended relatives, but they might also be friends, business partners or other interested parties (like a schoolteacher) who accept to 'train' the children of poorer families. Often – although it does not show up in these two narratives –

the fosterer benefits from the child's free labour. These stories clearly show how the fostering relationship does not usually lead to the child's permanent assimilation into the Krio group. Child-fostering in Krio families is a way by which Sherbro children learn the attributes of Krio identity and the practices of Krio socialization, while remaining *kɔntri*. Children move back and forth between locations, and can experience social and emotional attachment to both.⁹ Later in life, they may continue to attend the church into which they were baptized, but they are also likely to continue 'traditional' initiations – even with the support of their sponsors (in this regard, it is not unusual to meet older Krio women who are also senior ritual leaders of Bondo, as will be seen in Chapter 6).

Mobility is central to Sherbro educational strategies: one has to seize the opportunity to get the best education possible, but remain attached to one's 'home' – often the mother's place, as Gloria's story illustrates. As one Sherbro man stated, children raised in Krio settlements do not forget their ethnic origins:

[Krios] used to look down on us. The only thing that made them consider us was education. A Krio would adopt a child and put him in school. But the child would not turn Krio. He would know where he belongs and would be able to say: 'These are my people.'

Geographical proximity of their home settlement allows children to maintain a certain amount of autonomy and mobility. They have regular contacts with their family, can travel back to their home village on weekends, discuss things with their parents and complain about possible ill treatment they have received. Parental influence maintains the children's familiarity with the social and cultural sides of Sherbro settlements – for instance, in Barki's and Gloria's stories, the fishing livelihood, initiation societies, and/or traditional healing.

Individuals often looked at their experience as foster children in terms of agency, stating that they decided to go back to their home or to move when they did not feel satisfied with their situation. Child agency may be retrospectively overstated, yet these narratives interestingly reflect the adult experiences of mobility between settlements described in Chapter 3. The following story was narrated by a Sherbro man, whose parents were from Tokeh:

I used to live with my grandmother [father's mother] in Tokeh. She sent me at an early age to town. But I was very stubborn so she decided to send me *na dems*¹⁰ to the Banana Islands. We walked and passed by Bureh Town. There, we met my grandmother's sister. She said: 'Leave him to me before you send him *na dems*.' So I stayed in Bureh Town for two years. By then, my father had come *alen* to Bureh Town and had taken another woman there. Since I was not going to school, he sent me to one

lady in York. She put me in school but treated me badly. She employed me to sweep, to do a lot of housework, and she did not give me enough food. At that time, our house in Tokeh was empty. Because of this Krio mammie, I did not feel well in York, so I decided to go back to Tokeh. My father told me that if I would leave York, he would not pay for my school fees anymore. I had done four classes ... I told [my friend from Tokeh], who studied in York with me, that I wanted to go back to my village and live on my own. So, one day, I ran away. I went to my friend's grandmother and told her that I had come to live with her ... So, the three of us started living together in Tokeh. The Krio mammie told my father that I had ran away, so my father stopped paying for my fees.

The movements described are typical of Sherbro strategies of education. At first, the grandmother had planned to hand her grandson over to a Krio friend in the Banana Islands, a place associated with punishment and discipline. Then, his father decided to place him in York. Residence with a Krio family is a token of proper socialization and may involve strict discipline. Nevertheless, children's knowledge of the area and of their relatives in many other settlements allows them to easily challenge their parents' decisions, thereby contesting the dominant narrative of patronage. Geographical proximity implies that sponsors have less authority and control over children. Once enrolled in school, and provided that they find somebody to pay for schooling, children know that they can continue studying regardless of their residence and therefore avoid 'socialization by hardship' (Bledsoe 1990). In Barki's case, the child succeeded: although the Krio lady broke her sponsorship, he went to live in Tokeh and continued his schooling in York, until his parents ran out of money to fund his secondary school. However, in the story told by the man from Tokeh, the father stopped paying his school fees because the child had broken the family's loyalty towards the Krio sponsor.

These stories and others show further nuance in the relations between Sherbro *men pikin* and their Krio fosters. In these cases, residence with a Krio foster parent does not necessarily imply economic support because foster parents do not always pay school fees. In such cases, the contracted 'debt' is not economic, but moral. In the past, placing a child in a family living in a Krio settlement was instead a question of location and access to better schooling. This may explain why individual narratives do not focus on relations of dependency and debt, but rather on flexible 'arrangements' between families. Moreover, the 'real' Krio identity of those relatives is often questioned and reframed within the logics of *krionayzeshon* between the two groups. For instance, the 'Krio lady' who had sponsored Barki's education was a Sherbro woman born in Tokeh, who had married a man living in York and had lived most of her life there. Similarly, one woman living in Tokeh explained that she had sent her elder daughter for schooling in York to a Sherbro relative on the mother's side. She concluded 'You

see, she's not even a Krio' in order to downplay the social and status differences that this type of relation might have implied. To her, as to many others, fostering resulted from a family arrangement with *krionayzd* Sherbro relatives.

Many parents also send their children to Krio settlements or to Freetown in order to prevent them from becoming attracted to fishing and tourism, which are considered less socially prestigious occupations. Nowadays, as tourism develops on the Peninsula and offers quick financial returns, parents often express the concern that it may cause a higher number of dropouts. As early as the 1980s, many people had decided to leave school to seek employment in the tourism sector. At the same time, tourism allows people to diversify their livelihood choices later in life. Many youths are unable to complete secondary school due to financial constraints. They often come back to their hometown and start fishing. Stories of incomplete schooling were common and often aimed at demonstrating that pursuing a livelihood by fishing was a matter of survival even for many who had received an education.

The cases of Barki and Gloria also point to the specificity in the use of names by Krio sponsors. Sherbros on the Peninsula have English surnames in large part because of historical relations of fosterage. Nowadays, Krio sponsors tend to leave the child's family name unchanged, and to change only his or her first name as a sign of a new religious and social affiliation. This practice supports the possibility for Sherbro children to keep their first identification alongside the Krio one, and to selectively expand and develop kin networks on both sides later in life. A once-fostered child is not obligated to use his or her baptismal (Krio) name. Although she moved back to Bureh Town, Gloria liked to use the name she acquired in York. In contrast, Barki took back his Sherbro birth name and was addressed by most people by his initiation name or by the foreign name he used with tourists. Baptismal names do not erase previous identifications, but add a new point of reference in a larger identification spectrum. A baptismal name, which is usually an English and/or biblical name, combined with an English surname classifies a person as Krio and marks a higher social status. By contrast, the use of a birth name or initiation name follows the more common practice in Sherbro settlements. Thus, Gloria might appear to perform a Krio identity slightly more than Barki, but both have maintained close emotional relations (and some social ones) with their Krio foster relatives.

Different names also may be used for different audiences. At first, my presence encouraged people to present themselves with the polished combination of a baptismal name and English surname. People gave vague explanations about the origins of their family names, such as 'I'm English' (and even once 'I'm Scottish' as the person had the surname Walker), either referring to distant white or settler ancestors, or assuming that one of their forefathers had been 'adopted' a long time ago. Only when they knew more about my research did they mention their Sherbro birth name and/or initiation name. Initiation names in particular

were used as emblems of a *kɔntri* identity. When used in everyday life, initiation names tie an individual to a locality. In the 1980s, so I was told, Sherbro authorities even tried to systematize the use of society names as official middle names on administrative documents. Although their initiative was not conclusive, it demonstrates a wish to register *kɔntri* names alongside their Krio baptismal names and surnames.

Practices of Socialization

While having benefited from 'Krio training' in a Krio family is a source of pride, Sherbros insist that they have adopted those practices of child socialization as their own. Individuals emphasize the intergenerational transmission of the 'Krio system' within Sherbro settlements. In the above-mentioned examples, Barki spent just over a year in York, but still insisted to me that he was trained as a Krio. He referred both to his own time in York and to the fact that his own mother had been raised by a Krio family. Both Gloria and Barki found their education relevant in explaining their behavioural and moral traits, and said that they had raised their children the same way. Being Krio means knowing how to behave properly, as a Krio. The early adoption of Krio behaviours based on discipline and obedience is contrasted with habits seen as *kɔntri*. Those narratives re-enact the Krio/*kɔntri* dichotomy in the context of migration and position Sherbros as *civilayzd* in contrast to *kɔntri* populations.

The role of early socialization is particularly important in achieving Krianness. Both Krios and Sherbros describe an ideal child-rearing that establishes strict parental authority and rigorous child obedience (Steady 2001: 128). Children must learn the values that have become features of the Krio elite status; they must be hardworking, obedient, humble and expect little praise. Satisfaction is opposed to envy and greed, which are traits attributed to uneducated populations. Barki described it as follows:

You should content yourself with whatever [your parents] give you. They teach you humbleness. You should be satisfied with the food that they give you. They will only give you little food. It is important to get something to eat, but the quantity will always be small. I am used to that system. You know, many children are envious, they steal food, but I did not do that.

In Barki's statement, food deprivation, common in child-fostering practices (Bledsoe 1990), is associated with a moral training and is used as a way to force values of discipline and honesty upon children. Undergoing hardship is perceived as building character and moral resistance.

Obedience includes understanding nonverbal communication from parents, eye communication in particular. As Steady notes (2001: 129), a ‘well-trained child is supposed to *fɔ no yai* (read eye signals from his or her parents)’. Parents use nonverbal signs in the presence of strangers to signal to their children that they need to leave, or to decline food or a gift politely. As one Krio man stated: ‘Eye-communication is very important for parents because it is the way by which they can avoid embarrassing situations towards strangers.’ It implies that parents are in a position of sufficient authority to control their children’s behaviours.

Rigorous education is associated with a social focus on the individual and the family that contrasts with community values. Krios are described and describe themselves as ‘conservative’, in that they prefer remaining apart from other families; they ‘mind their own business’, as people commonly said, meaning that Krios neither interfere in the lives of others nor become involved in issues that do not concern them. Discourses about ‘Krio training’ stress the role of the household in socializing children, as correct behaviours are learned at home, not in the community. This separates children from the public arena: meals are taken at home, and playing outside or going out into the neighbourhood is considered a distraction that keeps children from their studies. This type of home training centred on family values is perceived to lead to success in education, whereas its lack is usually associated with educational failure.

Nevertheless, Sherbros were quick to distance themselves from what they saw as the negative outcomes of Krio training – mainly that it produces individuals who are less tied to community obligations. Sherbros often commented on Krio individualism. They criticized their tendency to remain within the limits of their own compound and to refuse free lodging to anyone. They also disapproved of the attitude of their Krio relatives who refused to discuss personal matters or enter into mutually beneficial relationships. In other words, they considered that Krios were not always eager to assume the relations of mutuality that would have otherwise characterized customary social practice in Sherbro settlements.

As a result, the word *civilayzd* points to a hyphenated position that presupposes the ability of Sherbros to meet social expectations on both sides: getting educated the ‘Krio way’, while maintaining *kɔntri* values that revolve around the notion of sharing. Metaphors about the sharing of food illustrate this ambivalence. The description of Krio eating habits aligns with a Western conception of individualism and social etiquette. The following statement emerged from a discussion I had with three elderly men in York about the Krio lifestyle:

[We differ in] the way we educate our children, the way we live, the way we prepare our food, the way we organize our homes ... We – the

Krio – do not gather with other people. [*Kɔntri* people] like to bunch with other people. In one room, they put sixteen of them, whereas Krios would put only one or two people, the wife and the husband. The children have their own room. The living room is free. You have your dining room, for your pots and pans. You do not put these in the living room as [*kɔntri* people] do. The children should go to school ... They should know how to behave when they see strangers. They know how to greet and when to keep quiet. They stay away from their parents unless the parents call on them. They know how to talk and when to eat. We do not eat like [*kɔntri* people] who go to the street and buy [street food]. You have times to eat. You eat separately, not together. Everyone has one's own plate. We do not place the food in the same bowl for everybody to take. [*Kɔntri* people] eat together ... At home, you know your plate. You will take your own, not anyone else's plate. If you take another one, they will beat you.

While the three men agreed on this statement, one of them (a man born in Bureh Town, who had married a woman from York and had lived there for forty years) concluded that the Sherbro people behaved the same way as the Krio people did and that they were 'one people'.

This description stresses the similarity between Krio and Western lifestyles with regard to food practices and the organization of family houses. Order appears as a core value, which is supposed to reflect individual qualities such as moral rectitude and rigour. This includes knowing how to eat properly, and at regular times, and knowing how to delimit spaces within houses (bedrooms, a living room, a separate kitchen), furnished with precise objects, as opposed to *kɔntri* houses (see also Porter (1963: 95–98) on Krio house styles and furnishing). As discussed by Kohl (2018) in the case of Guinea-Bissau, those practices become emblematic of the separation between creole upper classes and other ethnic groups.

In the case of Liberia, Moran (1990: 64) observes that the discourse on civilization emphasizes cleanliness and housekeeping standards. Similarly, statements about food practices in relation to hygiene and the prevention of disease can be used as tokens of proper civilized behaviour.¹¹ In Bureh Town, a Sherbro elder presented the use of the spoon in an evolutionary tale from primitiveness to civilization. He said that, at first, Sherbros were purely 'natives'. Inter marriages made them embrace the Krio system. He explained that before, when Sherbros prepared food, they used to put everything in a bowl and call other people in their surroundings to eat together. They all came, sat down and put their hands in that bowl. But when Krios (i.e. the settlers) brought civilization, they thought that sharing food with another person from the same bowl was unsanitary if not

potentially dangerous; everybody should have his or her own individual share. They shared the food proportionally and everyone was given a spoon. Sherbros realized that using a common plate was unhygienic because not everybody washes their hands properly; hence, they adopted the habit of dividing food into individual portions.¹² He concluded that this is the reason why most Sherbros are Krios: they copied the Krios and *krionayzd*.

Sherbros commonly equate the arrival of Krios with the coming of ‘civilization’. Although contacts with Europeans occurred earlier, Krios are considered the socially relevant group, whose presence influenced local practices and from whom the system of socialization was adopted. The story implies that Sherbros appropriated Krio habits as their own because they understood the reasons that justified them – like hygiene in the case of the spoon. The spoon stands as a material improvement, but also an educational and moral improvement. Finally, it contrasts Krio socialization with *kontri* habits that are considered improper.

In other cases, statements about sharing food supported a conception of personhood based on relatedness, in which the nurturing of affective and kin ties requires commensality. During my stay in Bureh Town, it happened once that I refused food served on a common plate. As I watched others eating, my host jokingly told me that I was a Krio and that Krios did not share with others. He implied that by not eating, I refused social association with him. Commensality



Figure 4.1. Krio house (*bodos*) with kitchen utensils drying outside, York, 2011.

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produces shared substance and kinship, for by consuming food, one associates oneself with the people who prepared it. Offering food is a sign of nurture and care: it shows one's generosity and wish to incorporate the other person in one's social network. Accepting food is a sign of trust and it allows somebody to acquire social substance. In a social context where people are fearful of intentionally being poisoned – strangers in a Sherbro settlement, for instance, would not consume food anywhere, and if offered it, would accept it and leave it untouched – sharing food signifies one's incorporation into a specific network of relatives.

Hence, descriptions of Krio eating habits became particularly relevant when people criticized the unwillingness of Krios to relate to Sherbro kin. One man from Tokeh, who had close relatives in York, said:

[Krios] come [to Tokeh] the same way they would come to York. They see us as brothers. They call us brother, uncle, and we have the same family names. But they will not give you food. You will not see them eating. If you get access to food, then you will get access to something in the family ... If I visit a Krio and he is inside his room eating, he will continue eating and talk to me politely from afar. Then, when he finishes eating, he will put his bowl aside, come and start the real discussion. He will only apologize by saying that he was putting some bowls in order. That's what they are like.

This statement mostly referred to Krios' unwillingness to grant land rights to their Sherbro relatives, but also presented a Krio model in which kin and social ties are consciously overlooked in favour of personal interests. The sharing of food materializes generosity and openness; by extension, it implies sharing one's belongings and helping others who may face material or financial problems. In Sherbro discourses, the perceived selfishness of Krios is contrasted with a *kɔntri* lifestyle, upheld by Sherbros and built on values of togetherness and mutual aid. These examples show that practices of socialization such as those related to eating and sharing food can be used to express Sherbro social identity either as Krio or *kɔntri*.

Narratives of Social Transformation

The position of Sherbros as *civilayzd* and their ability to bridge between Krio and *kɔntri* identities is also acknowledged by members of other ethnic groups. Individuals with other ethnic origins consider 'Sherbro' to be *kɔntri*, yet such identity can also be asserted through the adoption of Krio attributes. 'Sherbro' appears as an identity to which various groups can relate and through which people can employ the signs of Krio identity.

Historically, Krios were seen as forming an exclusive group, since they refused to marry local African populations. Although this has changed, it is often stated by other groups as a reason for the persistence of Krio social exclusivity. For instance, it was common for people in Sherbro and Krio settlements to highlight the difficulties that migrants might encounter when marrying Krios on the Peninsula, as adapting to their lifestyle might be challenging. In contrast, Sherbros consider themselves, and are considered by others, as a population that can rapidly absorb Krio habits and standards as their own. Marriage to a Sherbro is considered to lead to the same kind of social transformation as marriage to a Krio, though it allows for the preservation of *kontri* traditions and values. The fact that Sherbros have a historical social capital to access, invoke and use the Krio register allows for further processes of integration with other groups. Sherbros continue to cohabit and marry with members of other ethnic groups, who can identify as Sherbros rather flexibly, integrate into Sherbro community and learn how to use Krio emblems as part of Sherbro identity.

Many Sherbros have varied ethnic origins resulting from migrations. These origins are concealed easily by mentioning Sherbro matrification (see Chapter 7 on the logics of assimilation). Nevertheless, people can easily discuss the way in which their ancestors ‘became’ Sherbro, which usually includes the adoption of the fishing livelihood and Poro membership. Personal narratives reflect a double identity change: an ethnic transformation (as one has become Sherbro) and a social transformation (as one has acquired the capacity to use the Krio register as part of Sherbro identity). It is possible to claim Sherbro identity not only through ‘traditional’ mechanisms, such as matrification and Poro membership, but also by the acquisition of the attributes of Krio-ness, often involving education and socialization along the lines of Sherbro/Krio connectedness. The example of Mr Smith illustrates the general pattern of personal narratives: he mentions a parent who migrated and integrated into a Sherbro community, and describes how he himself later *krionayzd* through education:

My great-grandfather was a Lokko and he married my great-grandmother who was a Sherbro. They gave birth to my grandfather in Mama Beach and my father after him became pure Sherbro ... I can be proud [of being Lokko]. I usually say that my grandfather was a Lokko and even a part of the village is called ‘Lokko *ɔng*’ for our sake.¹³

He then explained that his grandfather’s brother worked in Waterloo and had placed him with a Krio family when he was a child. He had stayed fifteen years in town with them:

That’s why if you look at me, if you have never seen me before, you will say that I am a Krio. And if I tell you my surname Smith, you will believe

that I am a Krio. ... You are the one choosing what I am and you will probably think that I am a Krio. I can say that I am a Lokko because of my roots. I can say that I am a Sherbro because I speak it. But if I don't want to talk, if I don't want you to know me, I will say that I am a Krio because I behave the correct Krio way.

This narrative distinguishes three identities that attach Mr Smith to different ethnic and social registers. Lokko is presented as an avowed identity defined by blood. It also positions him as a member of a founding family of Mama Beach. Sherbro appears as an inbetween identity: it is both an ascribed and an achieved status that bridges between his Lokko ethnic origins and his Krio identity. Krio identity is the result of training and education.

Mr Smith plays on his Sherbro identity as both an ascribed and an achieved status. Signs of identity ascription are related to the *kɔntri* register, such as place of birth (Mama Beach), ancestry, Poro membership and the Sherbro language. Nonetheless, Mr Smith considers that attributes that others in the community may perceive as ascribed are actually the outcome of the social achievement of previous generations on his father's side, whose members gradually acquired Sherbro identity. His own representation of the family's history is one of ethnic transformation. He describes this process by defining his great-grandfather as Lokko, his grandfather as Lokko/Sherbro as he was born in Mama Beach, and then his father as 'pure' Sherbro because – as he explained to me – he was a fisherman and a Poro member. It is a process that involves only men, which separates this branch of the family from his Sherbro relatives on his mother's side – the side on which his Sherbro identity is traced through female ancestorship, and therefore considered as ascribed by blood (see Chapter 3).

This narrative, like some others presented in Chapter 7, presents heterogeneity as a main component of the 'pure' Sherbro identity – purity becomes constituted through the incorporation of male strangers in the social body and their shift to a new ethnic status. These discourses build 'Sherbro' as a fundamentally open category able to contain difference.

Mr Smith also states his ability to use the Krio register. His ability to use Krio emblems, such as the Krio language and social behaviour, are part of his Sherbro achieved identity. It is a social identity that he achieved during his lifetime, for his skills were acquired through education in a Krio family. This process, as we have seen earlier, is also facilitated by family connections between Sherbros and Krios. Mr Smith is able to play on the confusion induced by similar family names. He defines his strategic use of the Krio register as a social 'front' displayed to outsiders when he wants to appear as a well-learned and accomplished individual. Thereby, he states that he is able to conceal his *kɔntri* identity on purpose in certain social contexts: social navigability – the ability of being Krio and *kɔntri* – thus becomes a symbol of the inherent duality of Sherbro identity.

Narratives of social transformation emphasize ‘Sherbro’ as a pivotal identity between Krios and other populations. The use of the Sherbro category, because it is also recognized by other groups as including both registers, enables people’s passing across Krio and *kɔntri* identifications. Thereby, individuals also preserve their other *kɔntri* identity (Lokko, Mende, Temne, etc.), which they can mobilize in certain situations. This process builds both on the possibility to draw on different ancestry and on the essentialization of Krio and *kɔntri* identities as substantiated by specific attributes (names, behaviours, education). In this regard, discourses and practices related to Krio and *kɔntri* produce stereotypical effects. However, within this framework, Sherbro identity offers a category of identification that integrates various influences and to which many other groups can relate, which foregrounds the fluidity of social practices. These types of discourses also reinforce the idea that Sherbro identity can be claimed through Krio-ness.

Conclusion

The Krio component of Sherbro identity results historically from the social arrangement between local populations and the settlers of the Colony, who maintained separate settlements and identities, but interacted on the basis of social and economic relations. In this process, what might have been only a Sherbro *kɔntri* identity acquired a Krio dimension.

With a close observation of local discourses and practices regarding the Krio dimension of Sherbro identity, it is possible to draw two patterns concerning the relation of Sherbro identity with regard to social stratification in Sierra Leone. On the one hand, in Sherbro discourses, Krio behaviours and lifestyle continue to be considered superior to the practices of other ethnic groups (or *kɔntri* habits). In line with practices of fostering, Sherbros give particular importance to education and early socialization. This lifestyle becomes a normative criterion that attaches individuals to a social register of *civilayzeshɔn* and that becomes relevant in specific situations, as I will detail in Chapter 5.

On the other hand, because of its ambivalence, Sherbro identity constitutes a bridging category in the Krio/*kɔntri* dichotomy that continues to frame social positioning. Personal narratives show that acquiring Sherbro identity is considered to have an effect of social transformation similar to acquiring a Krio identity through adoption or fostering. As part of Sherbro identity, the Krio category appears less disconnected from the social reality of other ethnic groups; in other words, it makes Krio identity more familiar, reachable and practicable in a rural and diverse Peninsula environment. ‘Sherbro’ appears as a hybrid identity in the sense that it combines socioethnic registers that are relevant in producing social practice and understanding. From this perspective, it bridges the differences between various groups and allows the performance of integration.

Notes

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1. *Civilayzd* and *civilayzeshon* are derived from the English 'civilized' and 'civilization', but I use the Krio variants because their meanings differ slightly from those in English usage.
2. Skinner and Harrell-Bond (1977) refuted the idea that the 'Krio' constituted a group before the 1940s and 1950s, but they have been criticized by historians, such as Wyse (1989) and Fyfe (1980). Building on Skinner and Harrell-Bond's findings, Bangura (2017) also refutes the existence of an encompassing, shared and bounded Creole/Krio identity in the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century in Sierra Leone. See Goerg (1995) for a critical analysis of this debate based on the use of 'Creoles' and 'Krio' in colonial archives.
3. See Torrent (2009) on the political strategies of the Krio elite before independence.
4. In Freetown, 7% of people identify themselves as Krio, but 42% claim Krio to be their first language, and 51% their second language. In the Western Area Rural District, Krio and Temne rank similarly as first languages and Krio dominates as a second language.
5. Murphy (1981: 674) makes the same observation by noting that for people in rural Liberia, civilized matters are 'matters associated with modernisation'.
6. Under the parish administration system, new Christian converts were baptized as a symbol of their individual path to civilization. The Liberated Africans took up the Christian names of education sponsors or personalities they liked (Porter 1963: 81). See Peterson (1969) for more details on the policy of baptism during the MacCarthy governorship.
7. This specificity again raises the question of whether the 'Krio' constitute a uniform group. The expression of Krio identity on the Peninsula, due to people's rural (fishing) livelihood and family connections across coastal villages, surely differs from that of 'urban' Krios who have a different history of interrelations with indigenous groups. Both the content and the boundary-maintenance principles of the two groups surely differ, even though both are distinguishable as higher status. In this regard, Krios living on the coast may also differ from those installed in the Peninsula hills, in which the missionaries were more present and agriculture was more developed, and where the settlers established relations with other groups, not necessarily Sherbros. Indeed, on the Peninsula, different groups of Krios are recognized (depending on the networks of which they are part), although not so far as to disrupt the apparent cohesiveness of the group identity. As will be detailed in Chapter 6, Sherbros make a difference between those local Krios who join Poro out of friendship and kin connections (in other words, those who are part of the 'cousinhood' referred to above) and those from Freetown who may join in order to achieve a status as political 'patrons', but with no emotional connection to people in the village where they undergo initiation.
8. For a similar argument, see Moran (1990) on Liberia and Kohl (2018) on Guinea-Bissau.
9. In this respect, it seemed that family and friendship relations were more intense between specific (and geographically nearer) locations, such as York and Tokeh, York and Bureh Town, Kent and Mama Beach, or Sussex and Baw-Baw. This also explains certain patterns of membership to initiation societies across ethnic boundaries, as will be explained in Chapter 6.

10. 'Na dems' (lit. to place in an enclosure) means to restrict a person's movements. In this context, he meant that he would spend a period of isolation on the Banana Islands (with a Krio relative) as a form of punishment for his disobedience. Across the Peninsula, the Banana Islands are also perceived as the place where the 'deep' Krio language and culture (and surely, in this story, the Krio training) are best preserved.
11. In Liberia, Moran notes (1990: 64–65): 'Civilized people also say that they keep their pots and dishes covered to keep the flies off their food. The implication is that civilized people, by virtue of their greater education and sophistication, understand the relationship between flies and disease, although flies are present at all stages of food preparation and cooking.'
12. In reality, daily eating practices may vary. However, during ritual events, the differences between Krios and Sherbros are marked and displayed. At funerals, families in Krio settlements distribute individual portions, while in Sherbro settlements, sharing food from a common plate is more common. During public ceremonies of the Poro society in Sherbro communities, food is often cooked together and is always consumed from common plates. Food sharing thus becomes part of the display of *kɔntri* identity (see Chapter 5).
13. Lokko Town is a section of Mama Beach. Oral traditions in Mama Beach, including the foundation of the settlement by Pa Gbanka, Pa Smith and Pa Thompson, are analysed in Chapter 2.