A History of the Absence (and Emergent Presence) of Independent Public Universities in Mombasa, Kenya

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Abstract

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(Under the direction of George Noblit and Julius Nyang'oro)

While there is a great deal of literature available about schooling in Kenya
and a good deal of writing about the establishment of Kenya's public university
system there is a significant gap in the literature when it comes to describing and
analyzing why certain areas of the country had long been removed from any on-site
development of independent university opportunities. This study is an attempt to
offer a history of an educational institution – an independent public university at the
coast in Kenya – that does not yet exist. This longstanding absence took several
significant steps toward transforming to a presence in 2007, when several university
colleges were created at the coast. This transformation from absence to presence is
a central theme in this work.

The research for this project, broadly defined, took place over a seventeen
year period and is rooted in both the author's professional experience as an
educator working in Kenya in the early 1990s as well as his academic interests in
comparative and international higher education. More narrowly, core data for the
study was gathered in a series of open-ended interviews conducted during a series

of trips to Kenya made between 2005 and 2007. Additional data were collected from newspaper sources and other published materials available in Kenya.

The data were analyzed using a blend of grounded theory, dialectical and discourse analysis frameworks, in which the author's long, pre-doctoral study, professional engagement with Kenya fed the symbiosis of data collection and the theory development that is a central element of grounded theory. Dialectics provided a framework of major chord discourses (marginalization; a responsive discourse of alternatives; and 'a university of our own') within each of which a Fairclough-ian understanding of discourse is used to reveal the minor chord complexities of each major chord discourse.

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My wife, Sarah Brennan, whose love and support is what I am convinced makes the sun shine. No exaggeration.

My parents, Tom and Joan Brennan. Their love, understanding and encouragement throughout the length of my sometimes troubled connection with my education has proven to be the root out of which this work grows.

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All of the people with whom I spoke over the many years the questions explored here have engaged me. I am especially grateful to all of the people who gave of their time and agreed to be interviewed in the course of my data collection.

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List of Abbreviations

ADEA   Association for the Development of Education in Africa

AAI   African American Institute

AAU   Association of African Universities

CDA   Critical Discourse Analysis

CHE   Commission for Higher Education

CMS   Church Missionary Society

EAC   East African Community

FBC   Fourah Bay College

GATS   General Agreement on Trade in Services

IPAR   Institute of Policy Analysis and Research

JAB   Joint Admissions Board

JKUAT   Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

KATI   Kilifi Agricultural and Training Institute

KCSE   Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education

KESSP   Kenya Education Sector Support Programme

MIU   Mombasa Islamic University

MMUST   Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology

MPUC   Mombasa Polytechnic University College

PROPHE   Program for Research in Private Higher Education

PUC	Pwani University College
RTC	Royal Technical College, Nairobi
SIT	School for International Training
SSP	Self-Sponsored Programs
UCN	University College Nairobi
UEA	University of East Africa
UNCAA	United Nations Centre <u>Against</u> Apartheid
UNETPSA	United Nations Education and Training Programme for Southern Africa
WTO	World Trade Organization

SECTION ONE

Chapter One: Introduction to the Dissertation

This dissertation constitutes a focused analysis of the circumstances and meanings taken from, or ascribed to, the longstanding absence of an independent public university at the coast of Kenya. It is also focused upon the recent realization of two public university college campuses at the coast (one in Mombasa, one in Kilifi),[1] as well as a satellite campus of another Nairobi-based university[2] in Mombasa. My interest in these circumstances and meanings did not originate as a research question, but rather as a matter that impacted my professional engagement as an educator working in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa in the 1980s and 1990s. I have retained my interest in the central issue explored in this work for the more than fifteen years since it first entered my world. Only recently has it been redefined as the question upon which I would focus my research. And only since the second half of 2007 has the focus shifted from that of the absence of such an independent, new public university to the presence of the subsidiary university colleges.

In order then to best present the circumstances and meanings of this shift, I will begin with my own engagement – in Africa, in Kenya, in university-level education. I make no claim of authority in the matters discussed in this work. Rather,

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[1] Neither freestanding universities, each subsidiary to an existing, Nairobi-based institution.

[2] Kenyatta University opened a satellite campus in Mombasa in May 2007.

I see this effort as my personal pursuit of a long-term interest, one engaged upon in hopes of gaining a deeper understanding of the ways and means and place that formal education holds in Kenya. Specifically, this interest is focused upon access to university education within Kenya's formal education system.

I first arrived in Africa in late 1984, working in Lesotho as a volunteer with the United States Peace Corps. I lived and worked on the grounds of a small high school in the northern part of the country, just a few miles from Lesotho's border with South Africa. For two years, I taught high school-level biology, chemistry, mathematics, and physics. It was an expressed desire of many of my students to try and gain good results on their high school-leaving exams so as to leverage admission to either the National Teacher Training College or the National University of Lesotho, the country's only university. It was also a (faint) hope of the teaching staff that one or more of the students at the new school might succeed at gaining entry to the university. Such hopes were rarely met by Lesotho's new schools, which would often struggle for years before having their first successful entrant to university. Given this, I sought to learn what the university and the teacher training college required of its applicants, and how my school might fare in its efforts to prepare its students for further schooling.

While a handful of my students would eventually gain entry to the teacher training college, only one, to my knowledge, ended up at the university[3]. The

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[3] I do not know if some of the lower level secondary school students I taught reached the university. At the time, secondary school and high school were distinct levels, with a national exams process sorting out who finished after secondary school (the lower level) and who continued to high school (the upper level). I also occasionally heard it referred to as upper secondary. It was possible that I taught some students at the secondary level who then went on to attend a separate high school – and perhaps from there went to university.

pyramidal structure of Lesotho's education system – copious numbers of primary schools, a far smaller number of secondary and high schools, and only a single teacher training college and single university – augured poorly for any great number of university entrants from any given secondary school. As I mentioned before, when it came to schools that were new to educating high school students, those on the cusp of applying to university, there was understood to be little chance to gain admittance for our students. At that time, in Lesotho's education system, new, small high schools typically did not attract the best students, and thus did not advance many of their students to the next level, at least not until they had built the kind of track record that by definition turned them into not-new schools.

After returning to the United States later in 1987, I would eventually take up work with the education-focused programs of the United Nations Centre Against Apartheid (UNCAA) and the African-American Institute (AAI) in the late 1980s. In these positions, I worked with individuals from South Africa and Namibia who were pursuing undergraduate and/or graduate higher education while living in exile from their home countries. The political engagement of the sponsored students brought to me an added view of the value ascribed by these exiled students to university education, one that continues to inform my views on higher education.

In 1991 I moved to Kenya to begin work as Director of the School for International Training's (SIT) semester-length undergraduate study abroad program based in Nairobi. The program with which I worked was focused on issues of culture and development, with most lectures delivered by faculty from the either the University of Nairobi or Kenyatta University. The SIT also operated a second Kenya-

based program, one that though focused on coastal Kenyan cultures spent a significant portion of the semester based in Nairobi. When I asked people connected with this program that focused on coastal cultures and peoples why it spent as much time as it did in Nairobi, 300 miles from the coast, I was told it was because there was not a university on Kenya's coast with which the program could affiliate.

At that time, there was, in fact, not a public university campus in Kenya within 300 miles of the coast. There were distance and open learning programs operated by Nairobi-based universities, but these did not have faculty based at the coast[4]. I was told that the decision to offer the substantive academic lectures for this "Coastal Studies" program in Nairobi was also, in part, based on perceptions held by US-based institutions that enrolled their students in SIT programs. The belief was that these US-based institutions would view a study abroad program that was not closely affiliated with a university as less than academically rigorous. So, the "Coastal Studies" program maintained its affiliation with faculty members of the University of Nairobi, which meant that most of its lectures were held 300 miles away from the coast. I am not, in any way, disparaging the study abroad program, its Directors, the lecturers, or SIT here. I believe that the program - then and now - is one of significant quality. However, I would, in the time I remained in Kenya, continue to see and believe that what the program's stated focus on coastal issues was at a serious disjuncture with where the program lectures occurred.

In subsequent years, I would visit various urban and rural locations on the coast and elsewhere in Kenya and East Africa. I learned a good deal about the role

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[4] Administrative staff managed, for example, the Extramural Centre of the University of Nairobi, located in an otherwise non-descript office building, amid many other non-education related businesses.

that schooling plays in the lives of people throughout the region. I spent some time discussing with parents, older school children, university students, academics, community leaders and others what schools and universities, and access to these, provided to the members of a given community, how they experienced curricula, teaching, administration, etc.

I found out that national issues such as the curricula and language of instruction are seen as fundamental elements of schooling, ones that help determine how school is engaged in by students, parents, community leaders, et al. This engagement would include resisting some aspects of the schooling experience (for example, in a country as linguistically diverse as Kenya, medium of instruction issues retain a long-lived contentiousness, and are fodder for resistance platforms). Nevertheless, schooling, up to and including that provided at the university level, is described by many people as a primary means to a "better" life.

The early 1990s in Kenya was also the time during which the impacts were first felt of the government's mid-1980s decision to shift the structure of the public education system from a 7-4-2-3 system to an 8-4-4 system.[5] This structural shift caused a seismic change in how students came to view the opportunities available to them as they succeeded at each level of schooling. By virtue of the reduction in the number of levels of schooling, and the attendant changes to each level of

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[5] The 7-4-2-3 system meant seven years of primary school, followed for a minority of primary school leavers by four years of secondary school, followed for a minority of secondary school leavers by two years of higher secondary school (often glossed as "A-levels"), and followed for a minority of higher secondary school leavers by three years of university schooling. The 8-4-4 system is eight years of primary school, four years of secondary school, and four years of tertiary education, with a minority of successful school leavers finding space at each next higher level. It would not be until the early part of the current decade that Kenya's education officials could report that most successful primary school leavers would find space to continue their studies at the secondary school level.

schooling vis-à-vis educational focus, one entire level of education was redefined out of the system. In an educational system as pyramidal in shape as Kenya's remains, with far more schools at each lower level than the level above, this led to increased competition for limited positions at all post-primary levels.

This redefinition of Kenya's education system coincided with the expansion of public higher education opportunities. The same 1984 government report[6] that broached the changes from 7-4-2-3 to 8-4-4 simultaneously supported the creation of the country's second public university. By 1991, five public universities existed. In addition to the growth in public university capacity in the mid-to-late 1980s, the redefinition of Kenya's education system at this time would also lead to the creation of private markets for higher education. By 2006, Kenya had sixteen private universities[7], and had added two more public universities (making a total, by December 2006, of seven public universities). For all of this growth, however, the closest university campus to Kenya's coast remained the University of Nairobi, located some 300 miles away from Mombasa.

In January 1996, I began work as the SIT's Director of African Programs, assuming responsibility for supervising the full portfolio of study abroad programs in east and southern Africa. In 1998, I began discussing with the Director of the

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[6] The Mackay Report, further discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

[7] While still in Kenya in the early 1990s, I was asked if I would be interested in helping with an effort to create a private Christian university outside of Nairobi. Though I was not in a position to contribute to this latter effort, the offer itself furthered a broad, ongoing interest as to how universities – public and private - established themselves in Kenya. I would later be asked by an academic colleague at an institution in southern Tanzania which sponsored an SIT study abroad program if I could help an effort in which he was engaged to establish a private university in Tanzania. Again, I was unable to engage the offer.

"Coastal Studies" program in Kenya[8] how we might shift the program's focus and location to be more fully integrated into the communities – academic, cultural, social – along the Kenyan coast. We discussed whether we could identify enough academically qualified researchers living and working near the coast. We debated whether the members of this scholarly community would be sufficiently interested in offering lectures for our program such that the program could re-locate to the coast, and reduce the amount of time spent in Nairobi, or elsewhere "upcountry." Through these efforts and the program Director's contacts throughout the coast, we were able to justify to ourselves, as well as to those US-based institutions that enrolled students in our program, the presence of the program on the coast even though there continued to be no university located there. By late 1998, the program was fully shifted, again even though the nearest university campus remained 300 miles away[9].

In subsequent years, I came to learn more about the vibrancy of the research community based on the Kenyan coast. Although I left the SIT in 2000, I have maintained my interests in the role played in Kenya by its universities. I have traveled to East Africa numerous times since 2000, connecting with friends and colleagues in Nairobi, Mombasa, and elsewhere. I have deepened my interest in the way policy, politics, religion, culture, history, and other societal forces have shaped higher education in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa.

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[8] Who is from Mombasa.

[9] The University of Nairobi would eventually begin to offer certain programs at Bandari College in Mombasa. But faculty for these courses were taken from the university's main campus in Nairobi, brought to Mombasa for a week or two, and then returned to Nairobi. They developed neither permanent faculty nor permanent structures in Mombasa. This remains true today.

Amid all of this, I remain particularly interested in why Mombasa, Kenya's second most populous city and one of its primary economic centers, has not yet obtained an independent public university, and only in August 2007 saw one of its local tertiary (non-university) institutions elevated to subsidiary university college status[10]. Mombasa is Kenya's oldest city. Its establishment as a city-state and its history of trade with Arabia and elsewhere along the Indian Ocean littoral date back one thousand years or more, possibly as far back as the time of Ptolemy's *Geographia*. The city sits beside a natural harbor, which led to Mombasa being the principal trading center and port in East Africa for centuries. This history has contributed to Mombasa's becoming a significant population center. In fact, Mombasa continues to be the most populous city in Africa that is without a full public university in its metropolitan boundaries.

This work then is focused on an institution – the independent public university - that is en route to, but not yet present in the day-to-day lives of the people of the Kenyan coast. The subsidiary forms – university colleges - arrived in 2007. So while presence is that yet achieved, absence is giving way.

This long-term absence and the emerging subsidiary presence constitute significant aspects of how certain people on Kenya's coast have constructed their understanding of university education. The absence points to requirements to travel, to be away from one's family, friends, and familiar ways. The ramifications of this absence, of this lack of close access to the kind of cultural, social, economic, and political capital and status that being the site of major universities has brought to

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[10] Two other coast-based tertiary institutions were elevated at the same time, each also as a subsidiary campus to an existing public university.

Nairobi and the many university centers throughout Africa (Mama 2004) is central to the research described here. The emerging subsidiary presence raises issues of independence, what societal elements or forces the university colleges (and the independent universities that are eventually elevated from the university college status) will exist to serve. The emerging presence will also raise issues of how high the quality will be of the university colleges and eventual independent universities, how this quality is measured, by whom and for what purposes. Finally, the emerging presence sparks questions about how national and transnational forces in university education will impact the new institutions' ability to be responsive to the local community.

I have spoken over the years with many people who are engaged with the issue of higher education in Kenya – and lack thereof in Mombasa – e.g. policymakers, academics, politicians, community leaders, and parents. Many of these people have experienced the issue from multiple perspectives. I have interviewed more than thirty of these people, and have asked them all to speak, in an open-ended format, about what the absence of a university in Mombasa has meant, and what the emerging institutions presence might mean. Some have taken a historical tack and reviewed the history of the engagement by coastal residents with higher education from the colonial period to the present. Others have picked up on how the absence of an independent coastal university has long impacted who attends university in Nairobi (or beyond), and how this may change as the new institutions emerge.

This work is divided into two sections, with this Introduction comprising the beginning of Section One. In the next chapter, I present a short general history of education in Kenya, from the pre-colonial era, to the colonial era, and on to the present day. The history begins with forms of schooling seen among local communities from the onset of extant settlement along Kenya's coast more than one thousand years ago, through Portuguese mercantile and imperial efforts from the 16th century, Christian missionary activity from the 1840s onward, and British colonial efforts from the late 19th century. This view is then expanded to focus on efforts elsewhere in the Kenya Colony and independent Kenya through the 20th century. The chapter utilizes primarily the works of prominent Kenyan education scholars. I present what is essentially a dominant discourse, schooling as human development story. At the chapter's end, I come back to the coast, and begin to describe a discourse of distinction, of cultural and religious difference that percolates throughout the remainder of this work.

Chapter Three focuses more directly upon the development of university education in East Africa. The history and development of the University of Nairobi will take center stage here. The creation of Kenya's other public universities will be placed in a policy and political context as well. So, too, briefly, will the private universities that have opened their doors in significant numbers in Kenya over the past 20 years. I will bring into the discussion some perspective on the role played by Western (often US-based) philanthropic foundations in supporting, and through their financial and managerial support, largely defining the way in which university education would develop in East Africa. As in Chapter Two, I will be utilizing

primarily the work of Kenyan scholars of education, and offering a dominant discourse perspective that sees universities as sites of national development. The longstanding absence of independent public university efforts at the coast will be briefly counterposed against the model of university expansion seen in Kenya in the 1980s and since. The establishment of several university colleges at the coast in mid-2007 will be dealt with briefly here, and expanded upon in later chapters.

In Section Two (Chapters Four through Eight), I begin the analysis of material generated during the interviews I conducted in Kenya during my visits there. This section begins with an introduction chapter, Chapter Four, which offers a synopsis of the subsequent chapters. As such, I will not offer the synopses here. The final chapter, Chapter Nine, is focused on key conclusions and limitations determined from this study.

Chapter Two: A History of "Formal" Education in Kenya

<u>Introduction</u>

There is an archipelago just off the Kenyan mainland, perhaps sixty miles to the south of Mombasa. The archipelago sits in the Pemba Channel and is currently a globally popular sports-fishing location. I imagine that many of the people who visit the archipelago for the fishing will never make the short hop from the fishing spots and tourist hotels to Wasini, a small island found one mile or so off the mainland, across the water from the mainland village of Shimoni.

I visited Wasini in 1993, and learned that it has its own prominence. In addition to being the home to fascinating standing coral formations, Wasini is the home of a small mosque thought to be one of the oldest continuously operated mosques to be found in East Africa. Items found in or near the mosque have been dated to the early 14th century.

Other mosques and archaeological ruins along the coast[11] point to the influence played by Islam in the history of East Africa. The presence of such sites lends credence to the notion that Koranic schools were in evidence along the East Africa coast at least as long as Shimoni's mosque has been there. Sifuna (1992)

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[11] Gedi, located on the Kenyan mainland north of Mombasa, as well as Vanga, Kilwa, Faza, Takwa and other locations further north, in the Lamu Archipelago, stand as sites the archaeologists of the National Museums of Kenya have tried to preserve. Otiende (1990) notes that Koranic schools were also found along trade routes into the "hinterland."

asserts that these schools had, as their purpose, the education of the children of traders of Arab and African heritage. Bogonko (1992a) tells us that

> *Indigenous African education developed character building, physical aptitudes, moral qualities and social knowledge in the individual, all of which were necessary for an active role in society. Education was environment-centered, localized and omnipresent. Its complexity increased with age. In all these respects, it was not different from other educational systems the world over. As for its achievements, usefulness of every member to his group was of paramount importance. Participation in the economy was emphasized rather than education for its own sake. The practical nature, the learning by doing aspect was a value of indigenous education.* (9)

For Bogonko, this education held as its core pursuit the establishment of cohesive communities that held on to their understanding of themselves through educating children and elders about expected cultural and social practices and behaviors at all stages of one's life. In other words, education in such settings was seen as a means of creating reproducible, normative standards. Bogonko compares these local forms to Koranic, or Islamic, forms of education, long practiced along the East African coast,

> *There were many resemblances between Koranic education and customary African education. First, in both systems education was/is an (un)ending process in which an individual can remain a learner till death. Second, both systems promoted the creation of unity, cohesion, equality and common identity among learners and the community . . . Third, the education systems were normative in the sense that they were concerned with the development of standard beliefs and patterns of behavior through learning. Fourth, in Koranic education certificates are not emphasized as is the case with Western education. Here, again Islamic education is nearer to indigenous education in which paper qualifications are absent. For this reason both systems discouraged individualism and competitiveness, preferring instead communal loyalty to a group. Fifth, the mastering of the Koran is done in stages and at the end of each stage is a ceremony to mark its completion. The indigenous education did not do less.* (17)

By the mid-16th century, with Portuguese exploration extending to the creation of land settlements near Mombasa harbor, Augustinian friars had established a

monastery. And so the Islamic presence of many centuries was joined to a newer Christian presence in coastal East Africa. The Augustinians would eventually travel as far north as the Lamu Archipelago, interacting with local communities long familiar with Islam, but doing so in a manner more supportive of the mercantile and imperial pursuits of the Portuguese than of proselytizing the heavily Moslem communities[12].

Over the period from the mid-16th century to the early 18th century, Portuguese influence over its Indian Ocean holdings would wane. Omani, Dutch, and eventually British forces would come into play, with each maintaining its relative focus upon mercantile and imperial interests. It would not be until the mid-1840s that the Christian missionary presence along the East African coast would bring a change in focus to the education of the children of the coast, because it was only then that the intention to explore the interior of the region took root. It was only then that a sense that the European presence there could be permanent was perceived. An education system then needed to be constructed that could meet this perception. As Sifuna (1980) puts it,

> *Nineteenth century . . . educational practice provided missionaries with rather an explicit model of the kind of schooling that the upper classes felt to be suitable for the social inferior. The educational 'needs' of the working class or more generally the poor were thought to consist of writing, sometimes arithmetic, but above all, religion. Complimentary to this was industrial or technical education. . . . education for the working classes was designed to expedite or, at least, not to impede their primary function in society, namely, working.* (5)

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[12] Prestholdt (2001:386) describes this, "Islam was the first conceptual category into which Portuguese authors placed Swahili-speakers. . . . Yet it was not religion that Portuguese authors most frequently referred to when they discussed the towns of the Swahili coast. Instead, material culture, the economy, and wealth were the aspects of Swahili life that most occupied Portuguese attention."

I have chosen to begin this chapter with a description of Wasini and Portuguese efforts along the coast north of Mombasa because this perspective produces an opening to both the history of what would become the colony of Kenya, and an examination of how certain aspects of the early period of European colonial expansion regarding schooling in East Africa were, at once, analogous to long-recognized practices, and a harbinger of an enforced future. I am using "schooling" in this context in line with how Ntarangwi's (2003) uses it. He makes a distinction between schooling, education, and development:

> *Schooling as a concept is used here to refer to the intended process of perpetuating and maintaining a society's existing power relations and the institutional structures that support those arrangements. . . . Education is the process through which values, aesthetics, spiritual beliefs, and all the parts of a people's unique cultural orientation are transmitted from generation to the next. . . . Development as a concept is taken to refer to a process through which a community, by using its knowledge and other resources, is able to confront and maintain its world and environment for its own existence.* (222)

By the 19th century, Islam had long been inculcated in local practices, including schooling. Christianity was on the cusp of beginning a similar project.

If one wants to describe the history of schooling in East Africa, one must return, repeatedly, to the coast. And one must engage the role played by religious practice, for it is at the coast where the European, colonial engagement made its first, lasting marks upon the idea of education in East Africa. And it is through Christian missionary activity at the coast that policies and practices first implemented there, in partial response to Islamic and non-Islamic indigenous forms of education, would come to characterize the policies of an independent Kenya.

As noted earlier, the Portuguese established monasteries at a number of sites along the East African coast. However, they would be at constant odds with Arab,

Indian, and African traders operating in the region. Little effort was made by the Portuguese to push into the interior. This would remain the case for centuries, until the Church Missionary Society (CMS) of Britain established its first mission at Rabai Mpia, ten miles to the northwest of Mombasa harbor, in 1846. The German missionaries of the CMS, Ludwig Krapf and Johannes Rebmann, would use the mission at Rabai, and the school that was eventually established there, as the point from which to proselytize the people of the East African interior. It would be part of their proselytizing mission to establish Christian schools to counter whatever indigenous educational practices they found.

It would not be until after publication of Krapf's descriptions of his missionary activities in the 1860s that an expansion of such activities was seen. As Sifuna describes it, on reading about Krapf's life in East Africa, other European missionary societies began to send representatives to proselytize and to establish schools. In the period from 1880 to 1895, the Catholic Holy Ghost Fathers, the United Methodist Free Church, and the Italian Consolata Fathers all built mission schools, some as far inland as Nairobi, the then-tiny settlement located more than 300 miles inland, and site of the British East Africa Company's (BEAC)[13] inland supply station. As the BEAC pushed further inland in its efforts to build a railroad from the coast to Uganda,[14] western areas of what would come to be called 'Kenya' opened to missionary expansion.

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[13] BEAC was, by contract, the Charter Company empowered by the British Crown to develop and manage commercial and other resources in British East Africa. Their political administration of the territory bore the full imprimatur of the British government.

[14] Uganda was for decades the presumed jewel in the East African colonial crown. The British had known for decades that the Nile River spilled out of Lake Victoria near the town of Jinja in what is now Uganda. Given British interests in Sudan and Egypt in the latter decades of the 19th, and well into the

Meanwhile, efforts continued to establish other kinds of secular schools at the coast, ones not so immediately connected with the Christian missionary effort as those found in elsewhere in British East Africa. As Salim (1973), in his work on the peoples of the east African coast, notes,

> *As early as 1895, Sir Ali bin Salim [longtime Liwali[15] of coast] had realized the importance of secular education and planned to build a school at Mambrui* [not far from present day Mombasa] *and to import teachers at his own expense . . . he was behind the agitation for the first Arab school to be built in Mombasa in 1912, where he supported several pupils at a time; and he certainly was the founder of the Malindi School which was named after him.* (203)

Pouwels (1981) details the efforts of Sheikh Al-amin bin Ali Mazrui in the late nineteenth century to create Muslim academies that recognized the role that Arabic and Islamic societies had had in developing scientific and technological concepts (e.g. algebra, geography, and astronomy, for example). For Pouwels, Sheikh Al-amin bin Ali Mazrui was working to recapture a Muslim epistemological understanding and connection to these subjects, and thus <u>not</u> accept Western, capitalist interpretations of these, but resituated conceptions of these linked back to original ideas in Islam.

Such efforts at the coast - the secular as noted by Salim, and the Islamic as noted by Pouwels - occurred alongside continued expansion of both the Christian mission schools. Sperling (1993) tells us that

> *Though established in the coastal towns, the religion of Islam had almost no impact on the Mijikenda peoples of the rural coastal hinterland north and south of Mombasa until the last decades of the nineteenth century. . . .Thus, at the end of the nineteenth century Islam was unevenly spread; the urban*

20[th,] century, Britain did not want to see the Nile's water diverted for use by any other European power.

[15] A chief administrative position in colonial-era coastal governance.

centres of the Kenya coast were Muslim, while the rural hinterland was largely non-Muslim. A few Swahili resided in rural areas, and some Mijikenda lived in urban centres. . . . cultural and religious differences distinguished the urban Swahili from the rural Mijikenda. (198-199)

Sperling writes of the importation of western schooling and its impact upon the coast, noting the tendency of British colonial authorities to focus upon the Muslim population living nearer the coast, rather than the non-Muslims living only a few miles further inland. He notes that it would not be until 1921 that

The colonial government opened the Coast Technical Institute . . . at Wa, south of Mombasa, its declared purpose [being] to "educate young Africans in crafts and trade."(200)

Throughout the remaining decades of the British hegemony in East Africa, even as specific examples of the type cited by Salim and Pouwels are noted, colonial efforts to expand schooling at the coast would continue to lag. Sperling explains that

At the time of independence in (1963), there was only one government school, and no missionary schools (primary or secondary) among the Digo south of Mombasa. (202)

It would not be until after independence that any efforts to expand secular schooling beyond the coastal urban areas would take root. In partial response to the spread of government-run secular schools[16] at the coast, Sperling explains that the Muslim community, rural and urban alike, revisited the concepts Pouwels ascribed to Sheikh Al-amin bin Ali Mazrui, meaning that

Muslim parents began to feel that their children needed a deeper, more comprehensive training in Islam to counteract the secularizing Christian influence of government schools. (203)

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[16] Where, Sperling notes, the absence of western-trained Muslim teachers meant that most children attending these government schools were being taught by "Christian Africans" from elsewhere in the country.

Thus, as other communities within the newly independent Kenya were accepting of the expansion of the state-run school system, at the same time, coastal communities were engaged in protecting what they saw as a threatened social and cultural heritage.

Away from the Coast

I want to move away from the coast and focus on the inland schooling efforts by colonial and Christian missionary efforts over the next decades that would eventually evolve into the public school system as presently constituted in Kenya. For it is this public system that continues to hold hegemonic control over perceptions of schooling in Kenya, and it is out of this system that Kenya's higher education opportunities evolved.

Even as Sir Ali bin Salim and Sheikh Al-amin Ali Mazrui were engaged in their distinct pursuits to improve schooling opportunities for coast students, the British East Africa Company and various mission societies were focusing further inland. In their speed to establish schools and missions, the degree to which the missionary efforts disregarded local schooling practices reads as a significant omission of history. As Eshiwani (1993) notes,

> *Neither the missionaries nor the colonial administration made any real attempt to link African education to African problems and the African cultural heritage. Initially, the missionaries were only interested in making converts and regarded African culture as an obstacle to Christianity. The colonial administration wanted . . . [to make sure that] Africans were educated to form a largely laboring and clerical class. The government's policy of 'trusteeship' and 'indirect rule' seemed in accord with the settlers' paternalistic attitude towards the Africans, and both settlers and officials were in agreement with the policy of rapid advance for the European and gradual advance for the African in education.* (15)

This colonial take on the value of educating locals was met with resistance elsewhere in the colony, similar to the resistance offered by Salim and Mazrui at the coast. In 1910, among the Luo community, centered on the shores of Lake Victoria, some 500 miles from the coast, John Owalo founded the organization, *Nomiya Luo*[17], after being told in a dream that God wanted him to do this work. Owalo sought to use *Nomiya Luo* as a means to utilize his own mission-based teacher training to establish schools where mission societies and the colonial government had opted not to go. In this regard, *Nomiya Luo* may be seen as an example of what Haugerud (1995) points to when she notes that,

> *The "moral economy" for which Kenyan citizens hold the state accountable is not that of an idealized unchanging village life. The rhetoric of governing elites – both colonial and post-colonial – implied protection of a rising subsistence standard, rather than a stable one. "Fire and light, lamps, oil, matches" were material improvements Africans should expect under colonial rule, in the words of a district official's 1925 welcoming speech to the Embu Local Native Council. . . . farmers are likely to resent the state . . . because it constrains . . . (their) ability to accumulate and to diversify their activities, rather than because it threatens to disrupt the stability and autonomy of village life. (10)*

Owalo feared that too many children would be left behind simply because they lived too far out of the way. *Nomiya Luo* schools and staff were supported and controlled locally. Some of these schools would operate up to the cusp of independence before being subsumed into the authority of the central government. Eshiwani (1993) details how the ideas of *Nomiya Luo* – and more broadly, the African Schools movement – would spread to other areas in British East Africa[18].

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[17] Sifuna translates this as "the Luo Mission that was given to me". The Luo are people living in what is now western Kenya, along the shores of Lake Victoria.

[18] The African Schools movement, in particular, was highly influential in Kikuyu areas of Kenya's central highlands. Eisemon (2000) points out that Luo, Kikuyu and other "upcountry" communities made significant financial sacrifices, while " . . . the coast [Local Native] councils opened few new schools, preferring to provide supplementary funding to the missionary schools." (253)

Whether at the coast or upcountry (where local communities faced heavier pressure and experienced greater degrees of alienation from the land), demands within the African community for access to higher levels of education were denied, as it was posed that this would lead to an exodus from rural areas to urban areas by educated youth seeking "white collar" jobs. Essentially, colonial and missionary authorities saw the efforts by Owalo, Salim, Mazrui, and others to be a means to bleed away some of the tension created in such a restrictive atmosphere. It would not be until decades later that independent schools would be seen as a substantial, problematic, and anti-colonial element in local communities.

Anderson (1970), in a work that focused in part on local – especially Kikuyu – efforts to educate children outside of the network of missionary and colonial schools, points out that the independent schools movement of the Luo, and eventually the Kikuyu, arose not because the Luo, Kikuyu, and other groups wanted more education, but because they saw education differently than did the settlers and missionaries. He writes,

> *Missionaries, officials and settlers, tended to concentrate on the school's capacity to socialize, assuming that this would enable them, by manipulating the content and level of teaching, to influence the development of the African peoples' skills and values. The Africans, on the other hand, focusing mainly on the school's function of mobility, hoped that through formal education they would gain an increasing share of the positions of wealth and authority being created around them. (5)*

Where Anderson is writing of the alienated upcountry communities, Eisemon (2000), however, speaks of the coast and notes that,

> *Unlike the African societies of the interior, coastal societies "had long been in contact with alien cultures and a proselytizing religion . . . their familiarity with other cultures made their own more resilient (Spear 1978: 140). Confronted*

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with Christianity and the European plantation economy, Mijikenda[19] remained peasant proprietors and many became Muslims. What is important to emphasize is that these Mijikenda had a choice to make. Although they were subject to land alienation, the Mijikenda were not displaced or coerced into participating in the colonial government's plans . . . The attractiveness of western schooling had not increased despite various attempts to divorce Christianity from secular instruction and to give secular schooling an Islamic, practical orientation. (253)

The reaction to efforts to implement western schooling met differing forms of resistance at the coast than elsewhere in colonial East Africa.

In 1926, the first secondary school for African students was opened in the region. Alliance Secondary School was named in recognition of the agreement between prominent Protestant mission groups - Church Missionary Society, the African Inland Missions, the United Methodists and the Church of Scotland - to establish a medical college for the training of native personnel from throughout East Africa. This effort was enmeshed in bureaucratic efforts to control dissemination of various forms of knowledge, spearheaded by an administrative Medical Officer who objected to the idea of native medical training. After some negotiations, Alliance would become (and remains) one of the premier secondary schools in Kenya. The period from the mid-1920s to the mid 1940s would be characterized by such fights over curriculum matters. Local schools continued to provide one means by which communities maintained influence over how and what their children learned.

By the time Britain began to recover from damages suffered in the second World War, they were faced with an increasingly globally aware subject population in Kenya. Many soldiers who served Britain during the war had been conscripted from East Africa. On their return, these soldiers brought home ideas about what they had

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[19] The most populous ethnic community at the Kenyan coast.

been fighting on behalf of, that is, the overthrow of expansionist, expressly racialist

Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. Thousands of African soldiers would also fight in the

war's Asian theater against Japanese racialist expansionism. It would become

increasingly difficult for British colonial authorities to maintain pre-war conditions

regarding education of its Kenyan subjects. The noted Kenyan author, Ngugi wa

Thiong'o (2004) describes his own schooling in the period immediately after the war,

> *I first went to Kamandura primary, a missionary set-up, in 1947. But we must have been caught up by the new nationalist awareness, because there were rumors that missionary schools were deliberately denying us children real education (*Guthimira ciana ugi*). Such* schools *were alleged not to be teaching* Africans *enough English, and some of us were pulled out of the missionary school and relocated to Manguu, a nationalist school where the emphasis was on the history and culture of* Africans. *In religion, some of the nationalist schools, which called themselves* independent, *aligned themselves with the orthodox church, thus linking themselves to the unbroken Christian tradition of Egypt and Ethiopia, way back in the first and fourth centuries of the Christian era.*" (13)

In 1949, in an attempt to beat back such independent schools as Ngugi is

referencing, the colonial government published the "Beecher Committee Report on

African Education." The report recommended increased central government control

of all schools throughout the colony and the protectorate. It also trumpeted "practical

education" (i.e. agricultural training and industrial training), and proposed setting up

a three-tiered system - four years primary; four years intermediate; four years

secondary - in anticipation of the need to expand educational opportunity to a larger

proportion of the population. This proposal held within it the notion that with such an

expansion, colonial authorities would extend the period during which they effectively

controlled education in the colony. The Beecher Commission further prepared the

way to execute the colonial government's *Ten Year Plan for the Development of*

African Education. The plan focused on the social and economic development of the African community through schooling, while maintaining race-based differences between what education would be made available to whom[20]. It also became the precursor to post-colonial, independent government efforts to control schooling and education policies and practices by promoting a discourse of education as nation-building.

The Postcolonial Period

The period of the immediate run-up to Kenyan independence in 1963 was filled with political activity designed to shape public education in the new country. The leading political party, the Kenyan African National Union (KANU), had gained effective home rule by 1961, at which time they commissioned a wealth of studies on schooling and education. While these reports were in part a rebuke to colonial policies of the maintenance of separate education systems for each 'race' (White, Asian, African), and in part a call for indigenizing the curriculum and teaching staff, they also were a means through which the new government established the discourse of education and schooling as nation-building.

The 1964 Ominde Report can be read as the newly independent government's first attempt to invoke in government practice the idea that schools would build the new nation. The discourse of schooling as nation-building was

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[20] The Beecher Commission report would also be one of the first publications to incorporate an analysis of 'wastage' in the education system. Fifty-eight years after the Beecher Commission report was first promulgated, the concept of 'wastage' continues to hold a place in an education system that remains sharply pyramidal, with far fewer spots available at each higher level of schooling than the lower levels graduate students for. This raises the question as to the degree to which dropouts (that is, 'wastage') are produced in such a system at least in part by planning and policy decisions, as much as they result from children not wishing to continue in school.

grounded in the Ominde Report's support for universal access to primary education. This support came despite the authors' awareness that the economic development needs of the country could not sustain investment in this level of education, especially as the mass of primary school leavers looked to pursue further education.

The Ominde Report went beyond universal primary education, though, as it developed the discourse of schooling as nation-building. Otiende (1990) provides that the Ominde Commission understood its task to be,

> *to survey the existing educational resources of Kenya and to advise the Government on the formulation and implementation of national policies for education which:*
>
> *1) appropriately express the aspirations and cultural values of an independent African country;*
> *2) take account of the need for trained manpower for economic development and for other activities in the life of the nation;*
> *3) take advantage of the initiative and service of regional and local authorities and voluntary bodies;*
> *4) contribute to the unity of Kenya;*
> *5) respect the educational needs and capacities of children;*
> *6) have due regard for the resources, both in money and in personnel, that are likely to become available for educational services; and,*
> *7) provide for the principal educational requirements of adults.* (79)

While local authorities are recognized in this list (item #3), they are subsumed into the over-arching statement of creation of national policies. Local initiative and service also get listed after the idea that aspirations and cultural values of the new nation need find expression.

At the coast, the effort to create a national school system after independence encountered the longstanding resistance to colonial forms of education. I have previously cited Salim (1973), Pouwels (1981), Sperling (1993), and Eisemon (2000) on this point. As one expression of the degree to which these non-government

schools held sway at the coast, Eisemon notes that at one point during the late colonial period, out of 17,000 school-age children in Mombasa, less than 2,500 were attending school, and of this number, nearly 70% were in Koranic schools rather than colonial government-sponsored schools. This resistance at the coast to government schools continued into the post-colonial period.

In subsequent years, these issues of the local counter-posed to the national would be tracked through numerous other commissions and reports[21]. But it would not be until 1976, when the Gachathi Report[22] was published that a seminal review of education in post-colonial Kenya is considered to have occurred. The Gachathi Commission served as an investigation of the need to restructure the educational system, in light of the Ominde Commission report and the subsequent first twelve years of post-colonial experience. From Eshiwani (1993), the objectives of the Gachathi Report were to:

(1)   *foster national unity; remove social and regional inequalities; create a national consciousness; be adaptable; be relevant to the real-life situation of the Kenya environment;*
(2)   *foster cooperative effort and responsibility through self-help projects; make each member of society to contribute according to his ability;*
(3)   *foster social values by fostering traditional practices that are conducive to national unity;*

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[21] The Ndegwa Report (1971) focused on the education system and the fostering of social equality, the meeting of social obligations and responsibilities, and respect for Kenya's cultural diversity within this social network. The Bessey Report (1972) focused more closely on primary education, broadening it, making it more accessible to those living in rural areas through cost reduction (even free primary school), and through the expanded provision of agriculture courses. Regarding these, Eshiwani (1993) points out the irony-over-time that is shown in how Kenyans in the early colonial period fought against a system of education that was vocational, technical, and agricultural in focus because they saw it as shepherding them to second-class lives in a colonial environment, while in the post-colonial world, Kenyan educational planners came to see a need to train students vocationally, technically, and agriculturally to better serve the needs of the country. Similar formula, different time frame, different people in charge – and still a ground upon which local and national interests fought.

[22] The Gachathi Report is formally referred to as "The Report of the National Committee of Educational Objectives and Policies."

(4)   promote cultural values by fostering traditional practices   that are conducive to national unity;

(5)   inculcate economic values (attitudes to work and incentives) among the youths; eradicate negative attitudes towards work, specially manual work. (28)

As these objectives show, the discourse continued to be about building the nation of Kenya. Even as the Gachathi Report was being debated, major change was abounding in Kenya. Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya's first President, died in August 1978, leaving Vice-President Daniel arap Moi as the country's new leader. Moi had been a teacher and political activist in pre-independence days. But unlike Kenyatta, who was a longtime, high profile leader of Kenya's most populous ethnic group, Moi was from a minority ethnic group and was not able, immediately, to influence the major actors in Kenya's political and commercial playing fields[23]. Moi would, however, eventually manage the transition and maintain his Presidency through some serious political machinations, including the imposition of de jure one-party rule in Kenya in mid-1982. Not long after this, Moi faced an Air Force-led coup, which was quickly put down and seemingly never in a position to have truly threatened Moi's control.

Moi used the specific tool of government national commissions to consolidate his power over the discourse of education. This is most expressly viewed through how he utilized the Mackay Report, published in 1981. While this Report was ostensibly focused on assessing the need for Kenya's second national university, it

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[23] Kenyatta had ruled as a patron, someone above his (nominal) political party, KANU, such that KANU grew weak as a political entity even as the chance for any other party to form was severely limited. In such situations, succession could neither presume to come with the patron role locked in, nor could the weakened party structure any longer serve as a guarantee of only token opposition, whether from inside or outside of the party.

eventually morphed into a far fuller mandate for change. The report called for an eight year, compulsory primary school program, to be followed for those who qualified by four years of secondary school, followed again for those qualified by four years of university. The new schooling structure, dubbed "8-4-4," in compacting the former system's four tiers into three, essentially removed a long-established post-secondary, pre-university, stage from students' prospective choices. In other words, the option of taking a two-year post-secondary offering to gain further credentials was weeded out of the system. Students leaving secondary school now faced the stark choice of pursuing university education or going directly into a tight employment market. One immediate impact of this is that applications to university skyrocketed, and universities increased enrollments by an additional 80% of the expanded 1987 levels.

From certain perspectives, the shift to 8-4-4 and expanded offerings at the university level could be viewed as expanding access to higher education with attendant downstream influences on how younger students perceived their chances at getting into secondary school, and eventually university. But concurrent with the shift, the Kenyan government – in attempting to meet the strictures of multinational loan and development assistance programs - created cost-sharing structures that undermined the ability of many to move through the school system. And, still, questions about the equity and equality of educational opportunity, and the appropriateness of the curricula existed. Ngau (1990) noted that,

> *Although there have been several steps to integrate the entire school system by passing and implementing egalitarian policies of access, in reality, the school system is still highly differentiated in terms of quality, and stratified in terms of life chances conferred to those who attend the*

different public schools -- national, provincial, and district/local, with
further differentiation in quality within each group. The students in the
different schools are comparable to a race in which some of the
competitors have gone through a rigorous course of training under
highly qualified coaches, while some have just been warned of the
coming event. At the end of each cycle [in the 8-4-4 system], all
students sit for highly competitive national examinations. In this race
for certificates, some of the students will be as good as non-starters.
(18).

The Kenyan government has undertaken numerous studies in the years since

implementing the shift to the current 8-4-4 system. In line with broader social

implications brought about by Kenya's use of international loans to bolster elements

of its national economy, arguments of efficiency in government spending on

education have taken hold. Debates continuously arise concerning how best to

invest the country's limited financial resources in the full range of educational levels

on offer from pre-primary to university. The shift to the 8-4-4 system, though it

removed a training level that students had long used to gain work credentials,

continued to be centered within a discourse that defines schooling as a national

effort designed to build the country.

King (2006) describes a policy shift by Kenyan education planners that

occurred in 1998, with the release of the Master Plan on Education and Training

1997-2010. In lieu of discussing education as a pathway to employment, the Master

Plan originated a discourse of schooling as a means by which students can move

themselves, and their families, out of poverty. King writes that in turning the

discourse toward poverty reduction,

. . . there was a whole series of measures to reduce the burden of user
charges on parents, as well as expanding provision of bursaries, subsidies
and school feeding programmes. While all of these are an important
indication of what might be required, the long-running Moi Government was

now just a year away from falling, and there was [sic] *doubtless other political preoccupations than making for free primary education.* (27)

Basically, the Moi government, on the cusp of falling out of power, was attempting to use the levers of government to orchestrate a political revival. It did not work, and Moi left office in late 2002.

Amutabi (2003) writes about the ways in which national commissions have long been used as "*. . . responses to certain pressures and crises to wade off public concern.*" (141) Amutabi is highly critical of this practice, especially as used by then-President Moi to justify his government's educational policies. Referring specifically to conclusions found in the 'Koech Report[24]' of 1999, Amutabi notes that

> *Many observers in education have criticized the 8-4-4 system of education pointing out various mistakes especially those to do with implementation. However President Moi identifies with it as his legacy and it appears he is prepared to keep it at all costs. To talk of the failure of the 8-4-4 system increasingly has come to mean talking of the failure of President Moi. The continued insistence on the system by the political establishment despite its many problems is seen by many as a political face-saving gimmick more than a realistic gesture. . . . Many feel that the system was rushed and should have waited until the setting up of the necessary infrastructure.* (136)

Amutabi goes on to note that President Moi would publicly rebuke the Koech Report's conclusions in a political speech in 2000. This is not surprising, given that the Report essentially trashes the 8-4-4 system. As Amutabi notes,

> *To push [the 8-4-4- system] aside after about fifteen years of an admissible chain of errors was to say that Moi had made a mistake, and he would take none of it. . . . One can conclude that the political will has either derailed or "hijacked" the education system in Kenya. Despite all the damages their decisions have caused in the education sector, politicians are still determined to continue 'calling the shots'.* (141)

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[24] The report is the work of the Kenya Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya: Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training, TIQET. Davey Koech was the Chair of this Commission.

How politicians influence or otherwise control the discourse on education and schooling in Kenya is at the center of later chapters in which I focus on what I connote to be the thesis discourse of marginalization, the antithesis reactive discourse of strategizing, and the synthesis discourse of the concept of a 'university of our own.'

<u>Conclusion</u>

I want now to return to a focus on the coast, and the ways in which schooling has developed there in the post-colonial period. Eisemon (2000) points out that

> *The coast remains one of the least educationally developed regions in the country. Gross enrolment rates reported in 1993 obtained from household surveys reveal that Mombasa, whose population has grown through immigration from upcountry, is comparable to major urban centres in primary school participation. However, the rural coastal districts continue to lag behind other regions.* (257)

Alwy and Schech (2004) update Eisemon and bring the discussion to post-secondary levels of schooling, explaining that

> *The GER [Gross Enrolment Rate] by province for 1997 shows that there are fewer school-aged children in* [government] *schools in the ethnic communities in the Coast Province, as compared with other Provinces. Even though lack of disaggregated data by ethnic groups and other relevant information, make it difficult to know the exact nature and extent of the problem, it is reasonable to assume that students of the ethnic groups in this Coast Province are at a disadvantage, as compared to other ethnic communities in other Provinces.* (271)

Alwy and Schech then make the connection between access to and use of government schools at the primary and secondary levels, and the marginalization of higher education at the coast,

> *These ethnoregional inequalities are further compounded in secondary schooling and post-school education. The Secondary and Higher schooling*

gross enrolment for the Coast Province indicates a high dropout rate with a low proportion proceeding to higher levels of education (Government Polytechnics and Universities). This shows that students living in the Rift Valley Province have a higher likelihood of reaching secondary or a higher level of education, and thus have an advantage over students in the Coast Province. (271)

Eisemon points out that this lack of access to higher education opportunities then rebounds back to perceptions and uses of primary and secondary school opportunities at the coast,

> *Lack of educational opportunities at the secondary and tertiary levels limits access and quality in primary education. In 1992, there were less than 150* [government] *secondary schools in Coast Province . . . Educational opportunities at the tertiary level are similarly limited. The tertiary sector comprises Mombasa Polytechnic and teacher training colleges, including two established to train Koranic teachers that were recently registered by the government. Despite its long history of western education, the coast still does not have a college or university."* (258)

In this chapter I have outlined the ways in which Kenya's education policies have been developed over the course of decades of colonial control. I have further outlined the ways in which the government of an independent Kenya has constructed the discourse of education and schooling as being about nation-building. The ways in which the people and communities at the coast have continued to resist the government's policies can be seen in the continuing presence of Koranic schools throughout Coast Province. This resistance may also be detected in the analysis of enrollment data as offered by both Alwy and Schech and Eisemon.

There is also, as the last quote from Eisemon points out, a degree to which local resistance to the government discourse on schooling can occasionally expand that discourse. The government has recently registered Islamic teacher training institutes at the coast. It appears that the government is acknowledging that Islam is not going to be pushed away from the coast. Eisemon concludes that,

Improving the educational indicators for Coast Province will . . . require special measures, including more local autonomy in determining the organization and content of schooling; schemes to reallocate funding from rich to poor communities; and expansion of opportunities at the secondary and tertiary levels. (260)

In subsequent chapters, following on the points made by Eisemon and Alwy and Schech, I explore the ways in which this resistance to the dominating government discourse has led to the construction of a discourse of marginalization that is used to explain the current position of educational opportunities at the coast. I also explore recent moves made by the Kenyan government to expand higher education offerings at the coast, and how this set of moves by the government is discursively engaged by the people there. I see the marginalization as a foundational discourse against which the people with whom I have spoken create counter-discourses in a dialectic that plays into change. I see this change as being significantly broader than the government registering of the Islamic training colleges that Eisemon cites. The recent changes are more inclusive of the full range of educational possibility at the tertiary level within the communities of the coast.

In order to make the points described in later chapters, I follow this chapter with one that is focused upon the development of public university education in Kenya. The combination of these two opening chapters will be the ground upon which I then develop the discursive themes which are the focus of the later chapters.

Chapter Three: A History of University Education in Kenya

A Brief History of Higher Education in Africa

As with the centuries-old indigenous and Koranic forms of learning briefly discussed in the preceding chapter, there have been iterations of higher education in Africa for millennia. Most prominently, and first, among those left to history, is the Library at Alexandria, Egypt, where thousands of scholars are said to have gathered, and hundreds of thousands of volumes stored. Zeleza (2006) notes that, though the

> *Library gradually declined as buildings were destroyed by fire, its holdings looted in times of warfare, and scholars left due to political instability in the twilight years of the Roman empire, [the Library at] Alexandria left a rich legacy of scholarship covering a wide range of fields from mathematics and the sciences to philosophy and religion.* (1)

As Zeleza and Kiluba Nkulu (2006) each describe, catechetical schools existed throughout Egypt in the first centuries of the Common Era (C.E.). Ethiopia would become an additional site in Africa for such contemplative efforts at further, higher education as early as the 4th century C.E. Over the centuries, numerous institutions would come to exist that focused on educating nobles, clergy, and other elites.

Islamic institutions of higher education have similarly existed for centuries. Al-Azhar University was founded in Egypt in the late 10th century C.E. as a means to educate the people of the region about Fatimid Islam. With time, Al-Azhar, which began as a mosque, expanded its offerings beyond religion, transforming into a center of scholarly engagement in cultural and intellectual matters important to the

Muslim world. Leo Africanus, writing in the 13th century, described an Islamic center of higher learning in Fez, Morocco, where Arabs, Berbers, Jews, and Christians could all be found. Ibn Rushd, Ibn Tufayl, and Ibn Khaldun, famed travelers, writers, and historians, are said to have lived and worked in Fez, at Karawiyyin University[25], between the 12th and 14th centuries.

Sankore University (the University of Timbuktu), noted as the oldest center of higher learning south of the Sahara, was founded at the nexus of multiple trade routes, in a location known to Berbers, Soninke, Songhai, Arabs, Malinke, Fulani, Tuareg, and other populations. Founded, per some estimates, as early as 1100 C.E., the university was sponsored by Mansa Musa and other leaders of Ancient Mali with major infusions of capital. Nkulu notes,

> *records [indicate] that "theology, Islamic law, history, grammar, logic, rhetoric, ethics, and astrology" were the basic disciplines taught at Sankore. Saad and Ajayi mention geography. The interpretation of the Koran, mathematics, medicine, science, and traditions are other subjects that were also taught. The nature of the subject matter reflects what may have been an emphasis on the pursuit of liberal education.* (40)

Nkulu describes the university at Timbuktu as a kind of Islamic version of the medieval European "studium generale," attracting students from throughout the Islamic world. The focus at the university was on educating leaders to take up positions in societies throughout West Africa. As for why these Islamic institutions are not as well known in the West as they perhaps merit being, Halstead (2004) speaks to the history of Islam and higher education and asks "*So why the apparent reluctance to develop a distinctive philosophy of education?*" (517).

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[25] Alternative iterations of this name include Zeleza's al-Qarawiyyin mosque university.

Nkulu ascribes the reluctance and the Islamic university's failure to more fully expand into other parts of West Africa to a focus on instruction in Arabic and a lack of interest in incorporating indigenous practice and cultural values into its curricula and pedagogy. This he contrasts to indigenous practices that were responsive to local interests, and which educated for practical application, rather than for leadership.

Zeleza points out that a number of the institutions created in the period from the 10th through the 14th centuries continue to exist, though in much changed ways, most particularly in their introduction of more secular and professional fields of study. Zeleza makes the further point that the early part of the period during which rise of Islamic universities in northern Africa is first seen actually precedes the founding of the University of Bologna, and the development of other universities in medieval Europe. In making this point, Zeleza is turning on its head the notion that today's universities in Africa are fully the creation of European Enlightenment thinking:

> *Europeans inherited from the Muslims a huge corpus of knowledge, rationalism and the investigative approach to knowledge, an elaborate disciplinary architecture of knowledge, the notions of individual scholarship, and the idea of the college, all of which became central features of the European university exported to the rest of the world with the rise of European imperialism.* (2)

The "European University" in Africa

Ndeti (1992) ties the development of sub-Saharan Africa's present universities to the creation of a "new" kind of university[26] in Europe in the early 19th

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[26] Mazrui (1978) takes as his example of this "new" kind of university the 1820s' efforts by Jeremy Bentham to establish University College, London. Mazrui uses this example in his discussion of academic freedom, the contrast between academic democracy and academic freedom, and the role to be played by the state in the provision of higher education. I will say more about this in the next chapter which deals with the role defined for Kenya's universities in the process of nation-building.

century. Ndeti looks to the example of Wilhelm von Humboldt's University of Berlin, created, so he writes, with a focus on the pursuit of pure knowledge, rational inquiry, and a focus on research as well as teaching. Humboldt's idea was that research should take up a primary place in university activities, for research would be what permits the professorate to maintain their awareness, knowledge and understanding of ideas they were charged with teaching.

Ndeti cites T.H. Huxley, speaking to the Cowper Commission of 1882 and saying that "the primary business of the University is with pure knowledge and pure art – independent of all applications to practice; with the progress in culture not increase in wealth." (12). This notion of higher education would come to characterize universities in Africa, as slow as the development of these institutions would be. Ndeti is making the argument that this pursuit of so-called "pure knowledge" unfailingly referred to European Enlightenment ideas about what constituted knowledge. This left the knowledge arising out of the African experience without a home in such institutions[27]. How then would African tradition, broadly characterized as seeing value in teaching everyone because everyone is seen as a learner, fit with such elitist notions of education?

Higher education of a form more closely tied to the Humboldt-ian model would eventually arise in West Africa with the advent of missionary activity. Fourah Bay

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[27] For that matter, African education had little home once missionary activity really got moving in the first decades of the 19th century. The German philosopher Georg Hegel, writing in the 1830s, would have this to say about Africa and the people who lived there: "Africa is not a historical continent; it shows neither change nor development", and its black peoples "are capable of neither development nor education. As we see them today so they have always been." In the face of such sentiment, untouched by actual lived experience of Africa, and given the traction that Hegel's ideas would gain, it should not be surprising that other "learned people" of the day would take Africa to have little need of "pure knowledge."

College was established in Sierra Leone in 1827, by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) of Britain. The purpose of Fourah Bay College (FBC), in the minds of its creators was to educate Africans from the region as a means to gain their help in the missionary effort in West Africa.

The CMS effort did not find immediate support from the British colonial authorities, who habitually saw Africans as incapable of being thoroughly educated[28]. But the College persisted, eventually becoming an affiliate college of the University of Durham in Britain, in 1876. FBC was joined by Liberia College (established in 1862), Stellenbosch Gymnasium (established in 1866 for Afrikaner settlers in South Africa), the University of the Cape of Good Hope (established in South Africa in 1873, and renamed the University of South Africa in 1916), Gordon Memorial College (established in Sudan in 1898), and other institutions[29] opened in British colonial Africa to educate a small African elite to work in service to British authorities.[30] In 1916, in South Africa, the Inter-State Native College was founded.

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[28] Carroll and Samoff note (2004) that certain early graduates of Fourah Bay College (FBC), including Edward Blyden and Africanus Horton, sought from early in FBC's history to bring to FBC a model of education that would more closely pertain the interests of potential local students. Neither the Church Missionary Society nor British colonial authorities ceded much to this perspective, and FBC would remain a fully church-supported institution until its affiliation with the University of Durham in 1876.

[29] These institutions would collectively come to be known as "Asquith Colleges," in the post-WWII, British effort to permit a small number of colonies to open higher education institutions to admit small numbers of students. These Asquith Colleges - named after the Asquith Commission – included: Gordon College (Sudan); University College, Ibadan (Nigeria); Makerere College (Uganda), University College of the Gold Coast; and the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. All of these institutions were affiliated to the University of London. The University of London set curricula, determined pedagogy, approved faculty, and otherwise held tight rein over these affiliates.

[30] Zeleza (2006) mentions French efforts to establish a School of Medicine in Algeria in 1859. This would be expanded in 1879 to include other faculties – law, letters, etc. In Madagascar (Malagasy), a medical training academy would be opened in 1896. France would otherwise not begin a big push to open higher education institutions in its colonies in Africa until somewhat later, though there was limited space in such institutions in France itself in which African colonial subjects could enroll. Nkulu (2005) cites French examples that seem to define a circumstance where the colonial power saw independence on the horizon, and began to create higher learning institutions as both a means for

As Zeleza points out, this institution, to be renamed the University College of Fort Hare in 1951, would be the place at which a number of nationalist leaders from across southern Africa received their education. These would include the first leaders of independent Botswana, South Africa, and Zimbabwe (Seretse Khama, Nelson Mandela, and Robert Mugabe, respectively).

In the post-WWII era, independence movements throughout Africa were spurred on by the view that Britain's conscription and use of African soldiers to fight its war against the racialism and nationalism of Germany and Italy was hypocritical in light of British policies in their colonies. While various reports had been commissioned by British authorities prior to the Second World War[31], the 1945 Asquith Commission Report integrated many of the previously expressed ideas. The report sought to ensure that the state maintained hegemony over higher education in British colonial Africa - not via coercion of force, but rather via mobilization of knowledge, information, and ideas to advance a particular political mindset, and offset counter-mindsets. This would be done by establishing institutions sufficient in number to offer opportunities in Africa to a limited group of colonial subjects, yet few enough in number such that no home-grown educated elite would have an easy time forming in their own colony/country. As per the Asquith Report, the University of

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the soon-to-be independent colonies to educate their own citizens, as well as a means of installing French pedagogy and curricula in these institutions, thereby maintaining a hegemonic influence over what was deemed important enough to learn in the former colonies. Belgium and Portugal, each with far fewer colonies in Africa than either the British or the French, would eventually create universities in Africa, but each well after WWII.

[31] Nkulu (2005) cites several examples, including the Currie Report (1933) which requested that several colleges be upgraded to University College status as a possible precursor to becoming universities (see endnote IV above). In 1943, the Channon Report proposed the broadening out of higher education institutions in the British colonies, with the new institutions to be tied to existing British institutions such that these British institutions actually gave out the degrees.

London would be the lead institution for these new university colleges. It would control syllabi, curricula, testing, and staffing such that the new institutions saw little or no effective local management of what they offered. An elite would be educated, but intellectual hegemony would remain with the British (and American[32]) educators.

Within a year of the release of the Asquith report, British universities would establish the Inter-University Council for Higher Education Overseas. Sifuna (1992) notes that the Council had the following original purposes:

- *strengthen cooperation between the universities of the United Kingdom and universities in the colonial territories;*
- *foster the development of higher colleges in the colonies, and their advance to university status; and,*
- *take such other action as appropriate for the promotion of higher education, learning and research in the colonies* (145)

In the period just after WWII, as Berman (1980a & b), Arnove (1980), Carrol and Samoff (2004), and others note, the prevailing colonial notions of educating Africans toward a circumstance of "segregated betterment" was no longer politically viable. Instead, Western governments (with the help of the major philanthropic organizations) began to concentrate on bringing Africa's potential leaders into their orbit. The ascendancy of the United States in the post-war period, combined with

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[32] Inderjeet (2002) goes on to describe the intellectual hegemony of American pursuits in Africa in the period after the war, the overall effect of which was that a new educated elite arose in Africa that was dialed in, from its inception, to American ideas and interests:

> *The US-based international networks operated across international boundaries to achieve their objective of fostering and consolidating US hegemony. They did this by: financing the creation of new educational and research institutions with a view to generating knowledge, ideas, and trained manpower, favoring particular kinds of economic development; consolidating existing institutions to the same end; sponsoring research programs and projects that favored particular lines of inquiry at the expense of others, thereby setting the agenda of research; establishing scholarships at elite US universities to educate and train students from the Third World; [and,] bringing together academics and practitioners, from the USA and overseas through conferences and seminars, to create networks that would act further to strengthen US hegemony.* (14)

increased resistance to colonialism in Africa, led the major foundations to take up a near-parastatal role in maintaining western control of major functions in colonial territories, especially around education. There came to be, at the beginning of the Cold War period, a burgeoning network of joined government and foundation interests that promoted programs the purpose of which was to steer African (Asian, Latin American, et al) "development" in directions that favored American (and more broadly, Western) economic and strategic interests. As Berman (1980b) explains,

> *Since 1945, the trustees and officials of the Carnegie Corporation and the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations have shared with Washington policymakers and corporate and financial leaders the belief that the future of the American economic and political system required a strong American presence in the nations of the developing world . . . Indeed, the boards of trustees of the Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller foundations represent, according to Nielsen, a "microcosm of what has variously been called the Establishment, the power elite, or the American ruling class.* (204)

By 1951, the Fund for the Advancement of Education would be established with initial support from the Ford Foundation to assist Black education in the United States and Africa. By 1957, the Fund had provided as much as $40 million in grants. From the mid-1950s onward, foundation support for Africa focused on managing the transition from colonialism to what came after. As independence movements picked up steam, and the realization arose that overt colonial forms would soon see their final days, the foundations sought the rational management of social change in the Third World through:

> *(1)   creation of lead universities located in areas considered of geo-strategic and/or economic importance to the United States;*
> *(2)   emphasis within these institutions on social science research and related manpower planning programs;*
> *(3)   programs to train public administrators;*
> *(4)   teaching training and curriculum development projects;*

(5)   [bringing potential leaders to] the United States for advanced training and return[ing] them home to assume positions of leadership within local universities, teacher training institutions, or ministries of education. (Berman, 1980a:208)

As Arnove (1980a) puts it,

American philanthropists . . . pursued new policies in education which would link the emergent indigenous leadership to U.S. values, modus operandi, and institutions. These policies were designed to ensure that U.S. vested economic and strategic interests were not threatened. (11)

This idea of social change through rational management was basically a policy of co-optation. Sir Francis Bacon is credited with being the first to put the words "knowledge is power" together. The Rockefeller Foundation would include Bacon's aphorism in a 1957 report, following it with 'power which cannot escape the calculus of political rivalry'. Inderjeet (2002) continues, saying that the Rockefeller Foundation's

support of US foreign policy objectives and of the ideology of liberal internationalism, during and before the Cold War, cannot legitimately be considered non-political or non-ideological. Neither can the fact that they exported 'the American way of life' and ideas about the role of education in development, be considered non-ideological. The political, intellectual, and ideological effects in Indonesia and Africa, for example, are also very clear. (25).

The "Development" of Kenya's Public Universities

As the brief history of the university in Africa shows, the institution arrives with a strong ideological framework in place. Both the British colonial and the philanthropic neo-colonial perspectives were heavily weighted to addressing the interests of those in power. The British desire to maintain hegemony over higher education in the late colonial period, alongside the American attempt, via government programs and foundation support, to manage 'rational' social change

found purchase in 1956, with the establishment of the Royal Technical College (RTC) in Nairobi. RTC was founded as an affiliate college of the University of London,[33] and as with other affiliated colleges of the era, London maintained external control of pedagogy, curricula, and other policies.

Any critical analysis of this development would need to consider whether institutions that developed out of such a situation were ever expected to become the equal of their progenitor, whether that progenitor was the former colonial power, Britain, or the newly ascendant global power, the United States. Achola (1992), writing about foundation influence on the decision to establish a University College in Nairobi, puts it this way,

> *One strategy used . . . was the creation of lead universities in African countries regarded as strategic to the United States. In line with this strategy, foundation personnel identified viable existing institutions with some competent local staff and with government support and elevated them to the status of universities. Foundation personnel in the field offices and in the United States became heavily involved in the overall planning and implementation of university policies.* (125)

In 1962, a UNESCO-sponsored conference was held in Tananarive, Madagascar, with a focus on higher education matters in post-colonial Africa. As Carrol and Samoff (2004) note,

> *The Tananarive participants – African academics and government officials, observers from other United Nations member states, and representatives of*

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[33] Although the history I have included here speaks to universities as public institutions, Eisemon (1992) notes,

> *In 1947, the Asian community petitioned colonial authorities to charter a college as a memorial to Gandhi offering training in commerce and technical subjects. Although the initiative was rejected, it led to the founding of [what would become] the Royal Technical College of Nairobi in 1952.* (158)

With the effort to open the Gandhi Memorial Academy put aside, colonial authorities began to investigate more public means to expand tertiary education in Kenya. By the early 1950s, a Royal Charter established the Royal Technical College (RTC) in Nairobi. It would, however, take until 1956 for RTC to open its doors and admit its first students.

the U.N. - concluded that in addition to providing a space for teaching and research and maintaining international standards of academic quality, institutions of higher education were to contribute to the social, cultural, and economic development of resources to meet new "manpower" demands (UNESCO and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa 1963:19). This conference thus reflected a broader sense of mission for African universities, focusing on their role in national development and marking the rise of the notion of the "developmental university" in Africa. (8)

This was in line with what the major foundations had already begun pursuing. Kingsbury (1966), writing in his position as "Director, Middle East and Africa" for the Ford Foundation, explains that from 1958 to 1966, the Ford Foundation had given more than $34 million in funding in Africa for support of education. The Ford Foundation's expressed interest was on development of manpower resources – especially teacher training – so as to provide teachers and scholars for existing institutions throughout the countries and regions with which the Foundation dealt. Kenya was a chief recipient of Ford Foundation largesse.

A few years prior to this, the major foundations had supported the establishment of the US-based African Studies Association, at least implicitly to corral some of the efforts of academics focused on Africa, and bring them into the orbit of foundation interests[34]. During this time, and in keeping with the support of manpower development, major foundations, along with the U.S. government, expanded nascent scholarship support programs that brought African students to the United States for undergraduate and graduate education. Programs such as ASPAU (African Scholarship Program in American Universities), AFGRAD (African Graduate

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[34] Joel Samoff (2004), co-writing with Bidemi Carroll, describes a "financial-intellectual complex" in which academics utilize foundation funding to conduct research that belongs to the foundations, thus blurring whatever notions of intellectual independence might survive. Consulting, a financially lucrative engagement for thousands of "development specialists" is a primary variant on this idea.

Fellowship Program), and ATLAS (Advanced Training for Leadership and Skills) were developed[35].

These programs brought students to the United States with the expectation that they would return to their homes and assume positions of leadership in their fields. Program administrators pointed out that these programs met this expectation, and thousands of scholarship recipients did return home and assume significant roles in their countries' development. What went largely unsaid was that these participants did so having been inculcated into western notions of methodology, western ideas about the place and value of intellectual pursuits, western forms of political engagement, etc. And they were enveloped in a formal network of scholarship recipients that continues to be actively worked and managed by those sponsoring the work of such programs[36].

An early variant on this example, one specific to Kenya, can be seen in the way in which Tom Mboya was received during his 1959 visit to the United States. Mboya, a Kenyan labor leader and political figure, was seeking support for what would come to be called the "Kennedy Airlift." The Kennedy Foundation played a key role in seeking funding to transport hundreds of Kenyans who had been promised scholarships to enroll in American universities. Other major U.S.-based foundations similarly engaged Mboya's efforts, as did the U.S. Department of State.

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[35] I offer these particular examples because each was administered by the African-American Institute (AAI), for which I worked from 1990-1991 on yet another such program, the South African Training Program. I would be paid for this work, initially as a consultant, and eventually as a staff member, from a Ford Foundation grant.

[36] I would be remiss if I did not mention that similar programs existed in the Soviet Union during the period from 1960 through the early part of the 1990s. For example, the governments of Congo, Ghana, and Guinea engaged Soviet support in the 1960s, as did Ethiopia's government in the late 1970s.

This example defines the close working relationship between government and foundations. Sawyerr (2004) offers a succinct explanation of the situation when he writes that

> *Though the African universities opened up to the wider world after independence – bringing in experience from the United States, the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China, and Cuba – the British, French and Belgian influence persisted for a long time, especially in what might be called the "first generation" of universities. This ensured substantial continuity in the qualifications, values, and attitudes of staff as well as the curriculum and pedagogy at the new African universities.* (15)

By 1963, RTC had been renamed University College of Nairobi and was on the cusp of becoming a constituent college of the emerging University of East Africa (UEA). Between 1963 and 1973, the Rockefeller Foundation provided $10 million in funding to University College of Nairobi. Regarding the influence, power and control this afforded the Foundation, Inderjeet points out that,

> *Some 66 percent of all [University of East Africa] faculty had held either Rockefeller scholarships or special lectureships; 8 percent of UEA's full professors and deans had held such Rockefeller Foundation awards . . .[and] the presence of Rockefeller-funded Americans also played a key role in institutional and curricular development, most notably at the Institute of Development Studies in Nairobi, under the directorship of James S. Coleman.* (23)

The eventual disintegration of the UEA put great pressures on the University of Nairobi. Over the course of the 1960s, it had become clear that the post-colonial directions taken by the governments of the three East African Community countries were sufficiently at odds[37] such that each government eventually began to move to

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[37] Ali Mazrui (1978) offers a two paragraph example of this, describing how "[o]n October 20, 1972, Kenya should have been celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the 'official' outbreak of the Mau Mau insurrection." (117). Mazrui points out that Kenya's leader, Jomo Kenyatta, had been arrested, convicted, and jailed for years by British colonial authorities for purportedly leading the insurrection. Uganda's then-President, Idi Amin, had been in the King's African Rifles, and played an active role in fighting for the British against the insurrection, and thus ostensibly against what Kenyatta was said to espouse. Finally, Mazrui describes Julius Nyerere, Tanzania's President, as one who "shrank in

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create ever more independent "constituent colleges".[38] It is these colleges that eventually became the flagship universities in each country. Mazrui (1978) describes any disappointment in the eventual disintegration of the federated university as missing the point – the surprise was rather how long such "*a hard-headed and realistic experiment in regional technical cooperation, as well as a dream in the traditions of Pan-East-Africanism*" was permitted to live. (240)

As the impact of the disintegration of the University of East Africa changed how the Kenyan government dealt with higher education, the role played by external agents in support of universities also shifted. Karioki (1990) describes how the Kenyan government saw its development task. He notes that the government pursued a neo-liberal policy in which its public stance was that the economy was to be Africanized, meaning that Kenyans would systematically and purposefully be placed in positions of ever-increasing influence and control so as to become "equal actors" in economic efforts. Also in the plan was that the Kenyan economy would be "mixed" (i.e. free market mixed with some manner of state control), and that public and private efforts would each be pursued. Finally, he describes how the government would encourage foreign economic participation and investment, both

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horror from the violence of both sides in the 1950s, and who decided to encourage a nationalist movement based on non-violence and moderation in contrast to the rebellion in Kenya." (117). By 1977, the East African Community, a three-country customs union, was defunct. By the next year, Kenyatta would be dead, while Amin would have the Ugandan Army invade Tanzania, sparking a response by Nyerere that saw the Tanzanian army push all the way to Kampala, leading to Amin's ouster.

[38] Originally, each of the constituent colleges – Makerere, Nairobi, and Dar es Salaam – maintained distinct degree offerings in line with the colonial idea that there did not exist sufficient need for three full-faculty universities in East Africa. Shortly after independence, each government saw benefits to expanding what was on offer to its own citizens in their own country. Given the political differences between Jomo Kenyatta, Julius Nyerere, and Milton Obote – described at length in any number of academic works – it seems inevitable that the UEA would be pulled apart sooner or later.

bilateral and multilateral, such that Kenya would fully engage in international trade. For all of this, the University of Nairobi, as the new apex of the formal education system, was to be a full participant in this development.

Mazrui (1978) takes this point about the role to be played by universities in national development, and notes further complexity in how this is to be accomplished. Mazrui is connecting not only the difficulty in utilizing African universities to build African nations, but the paradox of the western university's nature as "rational" as well as focused on individual scholars undertaking a universalist effort – the "pursuit of knowledge". How can all of this be done in a single institution? Mazrui writes that

> *The nationalist task consists in indigenizing what is imported and giving it greater congruence with the realities of its environment. But indigenizing the educational institutions of Africa is in some ways more straightforward than de-rationalizing them. That other problem of the western educational ethos being too rationalist poses greater challenges than its foreignness. . . . Academic freedom is sometimes defended in the liberal terms of individual autonomy and sometimes in neo-scientific postulates of universal objectivity. On one side is the individual scholar and on the other the universe of international scholarship. What is often missing is the intermediate category of the particular society within which the scholar operates. The university is therefore either sub-social in its commitment or supra-social – but seldom adequately social. The process of university education is also itself partly a process of individualization and partly a process of universalization.* (210-211)

I take as part, or perhaps an extension, of Mazrui's point that it matters where a university was asked to do its work. In Kenya, Nairobi was the location where the university would be and all other sites were secondary to it. The university, being focused on nation-building, brought Kenyans to it, and would only eventually extend itself to bring its programs (distance and open learning, satellite campuses, etc.) to the broader nation. Ogot (1999) touches upon several aspects of this issue in his

collection of essays, *Building on the Indigenous: Selected Essays, 1981-1998*. In one essay, his topic is the indigenization of universities, that effort in Kenya that sought to bring a more Kenyan face to higher education, through development of a local scholarly community that would take on the role of faculty at Kenya's various tertiary institutions. Ogot notes that as the first several decades of independence wore on, the various national economic development projects came and went. He notes that there seemed to be never as much to show for the efforts as had been promised. He concludes that an

> *[E]xpanded consciousness led to a critique of Western positivist social sciences for their ethnocentrism, their exaggerated claim to universality, their focus on causes of under-development through factors internal to these societies without adequate weight given to the role of colonialism. They were accused of serving the political and economic interest of the West and thus perpetuating intellectual colonialism and dependence. There were calls for intellectual decolonization, liberation and self-reliance, adaptation rather than wholesale thoughtless adoption of Western social sciences; and finally there were loud calls for indigenization.* (152)

For Ogot, this points to an overtly economistic perspective of university development, that denies the broader potential he sees for university education and its purpose in society.

> *We are more than the mere sum of our current economic needs; we are participants in a social and political enterprise which vindicated itself in terms of the values which it has progressively generated during our history. And the purpose of education – particularly university education – is to equip us to confront those values from time to time, to question their contemporary manifestations and to modify their application without destroying their relevance to our capacity for self-development as human beings.* (177. Emphasis added)

This is the interplay, the conflict between the role of the university as a site for economic development, and the role of the university in teaching people not what but how to think, to accept the system into which they are being socialized, or to

question this system. Add to this the layer of the colonial, post-colonial, and neo-colonial connections between Kenya's history and the ways in which Kenya's universities are developed and supported today, and the complexity raised in Mazrui's comments from 1978 about the purpose of university is married to Ogot's thoughts two decades later as to how to realize the university's purpose.

By the mid-1970s, the Kenyan government had begun looking into whether the University of Nairobi and its constituent college, Kenyatta University College, were sufficient to meet the educational and development needs of the country. By the early 1980s, the government convened a Presidential Working Party[39] to study whether Kenya should establish a full second university. The Working Party concluded that a second university was needed as a concession to a level of demand for university education that would not be met by the university the report proposed to open. In what would turn out to be a decision that continues to spark strong reaction, President Moi opted to name the university after himself, and locate it in his home area, near the town of Eldoret.

Oketch (2004) notes how

The establishment of Moi University broke from the tradition in Africa in which universities were an elevation of an existing institution such as a teachers college or a technical institute. (120)

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[39] This is the Mackay Commission described in the previous chapter. Its report was the document that first espoused changing Kenya's education system from a four-tiered (7-4-2-3) system into a three-tiered (8-4-4) system. Mutula (2002) notes that the old 7-4-2-3 system did an effective job of screening university level admissions, with the two year period being upper secondary (or, perhaps, A-level) work. One of the primary criticisms of the 8-4-4 system is that it leaves a direct pipeline between secondary and university, with no A-level filter to bleed off some of the admissions crunch. The present government in Kenya is re-examining the value of the 8-4-4 system, with serious consideration being given to reinstating a fourth level between secondary school and university.

Moi University was established in 1984, with a focus on graduating students in technical and environmental fields. The following year, in a reversion to form, Kenyatta University College was elevated to full university status. In 1987, Egerton College, another of the constituent colleges of the University of Nairobi, with a focus on agriculture, was elevated to become Kenya's fourth university.

This pattern of public university development highlights one of the bedrock driving forces behind the discourses on public higher education I found at the Kenyan coast. Each of these newly created or elevated public universities is located at a further distance from Mombasa and the Kenyan coast than is the University of Nairobi. None of the decisions taken during this time led to a university being built in or near Mombasa, the country's second largest city. Rather, as Oketch notes specifically about Moi University, Kenya saw itself with ". . . *a university in the middle of nowhere*," the grounds upon which it was built having previously been a forest that was cut down to create the university, located more than 400 miles from the coast. (120).

This avoidance of the coastal region continued as Kenya developed more of its public university constituent colleges into full universities. Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), located near Nairobi and formed as a constituent college to Kenyatta University in 1988, was elevated to full university status in 1994. Maseno University,[40] located near Lake Victoria and founded as a constituent college of Moi University in 1990 with a focus on teacher training, was elevated to full university status in 2000.

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[40] Originally the site of a mission centre of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in the early years of the 20th century. It later became Siriba Teacher Training College.

The latest institution to make the step up to full university status in Kenya is Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST). MMUST, which began as the unaccredited Western College in the early 1970s, grew eventually to become a constituent college of Moi University, from which it was elevated, in December 2006, to full university status. As its previous name, Western College, implies, MMUST is located in western Kenya, in the town of Kakamega.

Alternative Forms of Public Higher Education

While the coast has long been a site of absence in regard to an independent public university, the region has been home to a high profile post-secondary institution for nearly six decades. In the course of my research for this work, I have come upon numerous tellings (in written work as well as through interviews) of the history of what began as the Mombasa Institute of Muslim Education (MIOME). MIOME stands as a ready example of how local, national, and even international forces have influenced post-secondary education at the coast. MIOME would eventually morph into the Mombasa Polytechnic, one of several national polytechnics in Kenya. In August 2007, it was elevated to the status of university college of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT). It is now known as Mombasa Polytechnic University College.

This 'morphing' is a central theme in the discourse on 'a university of our own' that I analyze in Chapter Seven. Here, I offer several snapshots of MIOME's history.

I will start with a set of quotations from Salim[41] (1973), as a means of laying out one version of the history, against which the others may be placed and compared:

> *For some time, [Governor Philip] Mitchell had been studying the needs of these* [coastal] *communities. Governmental investigations coincided with others along similar lines which were being conducted by the Aga Khan in which the Sultan of Zanzibar, Seyyid Khalifa, had shown keen interest. The three dovetailed their plans and the result was the launching, in June 1948, of a £250,000 scheme to build the Mombasa Institute of Muslim Education (MIOME) . . . the Institute was to lay emphasis on technical and vocational training, a prominent feature of the curriculum being marine and electrical engineering, navigation, seamanship, and courses in agriculture, veterinary studies, carpentry, and masonry. Muslim religion and culture were also to be studied."* (209-210)

Salim continues his history, shifting from the establishing impetus to the specific communities and groups the institution was expected to serve. Salim introduces a by then-longstanding distinction in the ethnic and racial composition of coastal Muslims. These distinctions – between 'Arabs[42],' and 'African' Muslims, and 'Indian' Muslims were not new constructs. The distinctions were due, in part, to global patterns of distinct threads within the practice of Islam. They were due, in part, to the influence of more than half a century of colonial racializing policies that saw as different from Africans, as different from Arabs, as different from Indians, etc. And they were due, in part, to local iterations and practices around these, as well as around wealth and class distinctions.

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[41] Ahmad Idha Salim is a former member of the History faculty at the University of Nairobi. He served as Kenya's Ambassador to Sweden in the 1990s. He was, as of mid-2007, a member of the Advisory Board of Mombasa Islamic University.

[42] Those holding historical and familial connections more with Oman and other parts of the Arabian peninsula than with the African hinterland. An alternate take might see this distinction as being made in the breach , where 'African' is a label based on skin color and a likelihood of being from a hinterland community, and 'Arab' is a label applied to those who are of the littoral, and who do not 'look African.' In either case, it also has long possessed economic and social distinctions in lived practice.

As Salim describes it, MIOME was to have something of a quota system, an enrollment metric wherein certain local communities were to be privileged as one means of restoring something of what had been taken from them. He says,

About half of the places in MIOME were to be reserved for the Arabs and the coastal people, no doubt in recognition of the fact that in the past they had suffered more than others in the educational field. (210)

This enrollment metric did not, in the end, get realized. Salim discusses the important turn the institute undertook even as its doors opened. He tells us,

It was [on] *9 May 1951, that MIOME proper opened with 108 boys – fifty-seven from Kenya, sixteen from Tanganyika, three from Uganda, thirty from Zanzibar and two from Somalia. The fact that there were only three Arabs among the Kenyans (the rest were Indians) and twelve among the Zanzibaris (the others were fourteen Africans and four Indians) reflected the subsequent intake in the Institute. (210-211)*

Salim is describing an institution that was trumpeted as a means to educate Muslim boys, trumpeted such that an expectation was raised that local communities would be central to the Institute's planning. However, before too long, a different perspective emerged. As Salim describes it,

There is no doubt that the Institute fell lamentably short of the high hopes of its sponsors. Gradually these misty ideals evaporated in the harsh light of reality and circumstances. The Institute came to be referred to as a 'pink [its colour] elephant' by cynics who regarded the scheme as too grandiose – its buildings more impressive than their content. (211)

I spoke with several people during my interviewing period who were conversant in the history of MIOME (and the iterations of the Institute that were to follow). Respondent, ER, offers a partial explanation/clarification of the final point I made via Salim. He contextualizes some of the local reaction to how MIOME would be distanced over time from the community it had ostensibly be created to support.

You probably know the history of Mombasa Polytechnic, I think it is a good starting point to understand the dynamics of higher education at the coast. Because here you have a Muslim initiated project, MIOME, I mean it is the Mombasa Institute of Muslim Education . . . This is an initiative coming out of the Aga Khan group, the Ismailis, indeed finances coming out of the Ismailis. So, in a sense, it is not a Mombasa indigenous effort, where the population is by and large Sunni, and possibly less oriented toward secular education than the Aga Khan group. But then in 1964, immediately after independence, what happens is the new Kenya government nationalizes this institute. Now that incident, I think, can give us a little bit to reflect on in the whole question of higher education at the coast. (ER, September 15, 2007)

Where Salim is speaking to the differentiated, complex Muslim population attending MIOME, and distinguishing these differentiated groups using some scale of indigenousness (referring to Arabs and Swahilis and Indians), ER makes specific reference to the Ismailis (quite likely Salim's "Indians") to tell a history of an outside, non-indigenous group with a large representation at MIOME even in its earliest days. In this way, it seems that even MIOME was challenged as to the extent to which it would an institution "for the coast."

Ali Mazrui, who was employed at MIOME in its first days,[43] offers further detail about the establishment of MIOME:

The idea of a technical institute for East African Muslims originated in a discussion between the Aga Khan and Kenya's British governor at the time, Sir Philip Mitchell. The Aga Khan had been quoted as favouring the establishment of a Muslim university at the Kenya coast for the whole of Eastern Africa. Sir Philip Mitchell reacted by contacting the Aga Khan and recommending a technical institute for Muslims rather than a university. Mitchell argued that Muslims were being left behind in science and technology, and needed help to catch up. The Aga Khan contributed generously to the initial budget, as did the Sultan of Zanzibar, the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund, and the Bohora Community (Indian Shia Muslims). A Mombasa Arab (Sheikh Khamis) contributed the land on which the institute was built. After Kenya's independence the Institute ceased to be reserved for Muslim students, and has now become the Mombasa Polytechnic. (18)

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[43] Mazrui writes about this in his annual Mazrui Newsletter for 2005.

In a separate forum[44], Mazrui offers an additional perspective on the purpose of MIOME, and the cross-characteristics of its staff and students:

In the early years all the academic staff of MIOME were Europeans (primarily Christians). All the students were Muslims (Africans, Indians, and Arabs of East Africa). The mission was to produce technologically skilled East African Muslims. The whole concept was rooted in Africa's triple heritage-- indigenous, Islamic and Western considerations. But the educational goals were technological rather than legal. (10)

Here Mazrui offers a differentiated sense of the student population of MIOME at its beginnings, one akin to Salim's. MIOME was seen as an institution that served the Muslim population, but a place where the Muslim population was "East African" more than simply coastal. There was broader geographic accounting being done in the service to Muslim students than simply helping those from nearby areas. I return to Mazrui's perspective on MIOME (and Mombasa Polytechnic) in later chapters, as he continues to play an integral role in the changes that have been wrought in the provision of university education at the coast, and specifically at Mombasa Polytechnic.

At this point, however, I want simply to mention that Mombasa Polytechnic has offered a range of technical certificates and diplomas over the decades, the oldest programs of which are found in the Applied Sciences, electrical and electronics engineering, mechanical engineering, and building sciences. Mombasa Polytechnic has also long offered a non-degree program in Business Studies. In more recent times, Mombasa Polytechnic began offering a program in computer and information technology. Even more recently, programs in media design, medical engineering, and enterprise development have been added.

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[44] Mazrui Newsletter for 2002.

For all that MIOME and Mombasa Polytechnic offered a wide range of post-secondary options, the national guidelines under which polytechnics operated for many years made transferring credits (or full certificates or diplomas) from the polytechnics to the public universities nearly impossible. As a result, the polytechnics served as a fully separated option for students seeking post-secondary opportunities. The story of Mombasa Polytechnic has taken a significant recent turn, however, one I touch upon briefly later in this chapter, as well as more deeply contextualize in Chapter Seven.

In addition to the high profile Mombasa Polytechnic, there are a wide range of other, generally unaccredited institutes and colleges at the coast toward which students leaving secondary school turn for opportunity. Many of these students have not achieved results on the school leaving exam that are good enough to get them into the public universities. Many of these institutes and colleges also cater to an older community of returning students, people in tight economic circumstances who see a credential as a potential stepping stone to a better life. The institutes and colleges are a response to the kind of belief expressed by Rakodi, et al (2000) writing about poverty and conflict in Mombasa and describing how,

> *The lack of opportunities for young people was of particular concern to poor people, who consider that the youth "...see no real chance for participation in the development of this country. In spite of their education and energy, they are helpless, frustrated and dangerous."(17) Rates of unemployment are high amongst young people because they lack practical training, exposure to the world of work and business, and access to credit, as well as information on employment, markets for their products, training opportunities and where to go for assistance.* (156)

It is the lack of practical training to which Rakodi is referring that one of the people I interviewed, IN, believes is available at the best of the institutes and schools

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to which I am referring.

> *Essentially, in my view, most of the coast students, have to also have opportunities for those who cannot make it to the university. To* [have access to] *institutions, medium level institutions of higher learning . . . Vocational learning opportunities . . . That has been the core of our human manpower training, you know, in Coast Province.* (July 29, 2007)

These institutes and colleges are examples that offer a potential path beyond the frustration Rakodi mentions, and that meet the manpower needs to which IN refers. In this, they come to be seen by some as a means out of the feeling of helplessness to which Rakodi refers. There are, to be sure, some who believe that many of these institutions are poorly staffed, low quality, possibly even fly-by-night, operations bent on taking money from people in tenuous economic and/or professional situations. The large number of such institutions present indicates, though, that there is at minimum a perception, widely enough held, that the education offered, or at least the credential one receives upon finishing, is worth taking a chance on as a means to improving one's lot in life. As interview respondent BA tells it,

> *You finish your secondary school, or you are halfway through secondary school, you can't go to university. You want a job.* [It is] *very difficult to get a job. So, you've got computer, you've got business administration, you go to whatever. All kinds of commercial colleges, secretarial . . . and all these. What is the term for them? People go to these places just to get a certificate in order to get a job.* (August 30, 2007)

Enrollment and Emergent Public University Forms

I have outlined the growth of independent public universities in Kenya, and pointed out how this growth continues to leave Mombasa and the coast without a public university of its own. In Section Two of this work, I deal with specific discourses related to this absence in Mombasa, and the emergent presence of

university colleges there. Prior to moving on to those discourses, however, and as a means to better situate them, I will mention specific public universities processes and program iterations that do reach to the coast, and thus do form an element of the discourses to be described.

As Mwiria[45] and Ng'ethe (2007) point out in their chapter entitled, "Motivation for & Management of Reform," the chief route via which students are admitted into any and all public universities in Kenya is the Joint Admission Board (JAB). The JAB was established – "*on a goodwill basis*" (92) by the Vice-Chancellors of Kenya's universities in the 1980s, as Kenya was on the cusp of expanding its public universities. Essentially, then and now, the Vice-Chancellors[46], along with registrars and deans, meet to establish the level at which each year's secondary school leavers must pass the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) exams in order to be admitted to a public university[47]. The JAB reviews its selection criteria each year, and then establishes each year's gender specific levels for admission of students[48], while also attempting to manage regional disparities in admissions.

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[45] Dr. Kilemi Mwiria is presently the Deputy Minister for Education in charge of higher education in Kenya. Dr. Njuguna Ng'ethe is a long time member of the faculty of the University of Nairobi, former Director of the Institute for Development Studies there, as well as former Chairman of the Commission for Higher Education. I was in communication with both of these individuals during the course of my research.

[46] Until 2004, the President of Kenya was the Chancellor of all Kenyan public universities. The Vice-Chancellors were the on-site senior manager. Kenya's public universities each now have their own Chancellor and Vice-Chancellors, with the Chancellors managing external relations – political, etc. – and the Vice-Chancellors maintaining their prior role as on-site managers.

[47] As of 2007, students must pass these high school leaving exams with an aggregate grade of B+ or risk not gaining admission.

[48] In many years, the effort to better balance enrollments by gender has led the JAB to establish criteria for girls that are one or several point slower than that established for boys.

The JAB is repeatedly criticized, however, for the slowness with which it undertakes its work. It is often more than a year[49] after students have taken the KCSE that they are told whether they have been admitted to university, and where. And, even planning based on prior years' results is not a sure path. As Mwiria and Ng'ethe note,

Parents whose children meet the previous year's cut-off points are often shattered to learn that the cut-off points have been raised [in the interim]. Some critics have agreed that it is 'outrageous' that it takes two years after secondary school for students to begin at the university. (93)

Beyond the aforementioned responsibilities and problems, the JAB is also responsible for determining what individual students go to which university to engage what field of study. Here is where much concern is expressed about being admitted into a university in Kenya, in a timely manner, in a field of one's choosing. As Mwiria and Ng'ethe note,

In order to strike a balance between the universities and the courses available, the board ends up admitting students to university and degree programmes they never requested. (93)

As a result of the "sluggishness" of the JAB, and in partial response to this, at least one of the public universities (Kenyatta University) has begun admitting students on a semester basis (counter to the JAB admissions process, which assumes that students are accepted into and enrolled in programs are operated on a year-to-year basis). Kenyatta University began this practice outside of the JAB process in what some see either positively, as an attempt to either reduce the amount of time students spend waiting for admissions decisions from JAB, or less positively, as an attempt by Kenyatta University to skirt the agreed upon processes

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[49] I spoke with some parents whose children had waited 18 months for JAB's decisions.

by which Kenya's public universities handle student intake and distribution. Mwiria and Ng'ethe write, in a section entitled, "Challenging the Relevance of the Joint Admissions Board," about the JAB and Kenyatta University, noting that

> *On-going reforms in the public university sector raise questions about the relevance of the institution* [of the JAB]. *In particular, the slowness with which the JAB conducts the admission exercise is increasingly viewed as an impediment to reform . . . The University* [Kenyatta] *has potentially reduced the length of time KCSE graduates have to wait to join the university from two years to one.* (105)

But this attempt by Kenyatta University also lays bare the fact that public universities are reacting to declining support (on a per-student basis) from the central government, and doing so by creating means to skirt established practice while simultaneously having students pay a good deal more for their university education. Until the higher education reforms of the late 1980s and early 1990s, university students did not pay a large percentage of the cost of their education. There was a loan program in place from the mid-1970s that students were channeled to, but it existed with little enforcement of its payback requirements, and as such many students (and their parents) continued to see public higher education as largely free. However,

> *In June 1991, the government introduced the current cost-sharing scheme that requires students to pay in full or in part through a direct charge depending on the perceived need for tuition, food and accommodation. The introduction of direct charges acknowledged that, in the context of growing enrollments and diminished funding, the government could no longer finance university education without compromising education standards. The introduction of a direct charge was also influenced by the general policy of introducing cost-sharing measures as part of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) prescribed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund* (Mwiria and Ng'ethe, 66)

Expanding on the measures propounded by the World Bank, Chachage (2001) tells us that,

> *The World Bank published a number of studies since the mid-1980s, which became the 'philosophical' basis for the so-called transformations of universities, which are being imposed by many African governments. Fundamentally, these studies called for a restructuring of education, so that there can be a public cost recovery and reallocation of government spending towards levels with highest social returns. This, according to these studies, would promote higher efficiency and egalitarian distribution of education resources. They were of the view that higher education system should be made to operate at the lowest possible public cost. Accordingly, these institutions should exist by virtue of their being 'viable' and 'efficient'. By viability, it meant that they must be made to produce for the 'market' and pay for themselves. Thus, the introduction of cost-sharing. By efficiency, it simply meant that these institutions must be made to revise their syllabi to suit the 'products' for the market.* (4)

In the face of this policy shift, the public universities have become quite creative about bringing in income, and have begun using the slowness of the admissions process as both an excuse and a means to do so. As one person told me,

> [R]*ight now . . . it seems like the universities are just thinking about the money, because now they are not being supported fully by the government. They are just being given a certain percentage. Like University of Nairobi* [where this person is on the faculty]*, I think, right now, we are getting about 30% of our budget* [directly from the central government]*. So the 70% has to come from somewhere else. And that's why the drive now of Model-Two and Model-Three.* [Model Two is] *evenings and weekends. And I think Kenyatta is also doing that. Model-Three are these programs where the students come during holidays. This one here we call it* [Model Three] *External Studies, and is the one whose students come during school holidays.* (SS, August 31, 2007)

The students enrolled in "regular programs" (i.e. those whose enrollment continues to be managed through JAB-led admissions) at the University of Nairobi, or Kenyatta University, or any other of Kenya's public universities are now paying an average of Ksh 120,000 (approximately $1,700) per year for tuition and

accommodation. Loan programs exist to support those students who qualify. Any students who wish to quicken the pace of their higher education, or who are not accepted into the university during the JAB-led admissions process, and so are left to enroll in these Model-Two or Model-Three programs can expect to pay five to six times the average price of the "regular program." Mwiria and Nge'the (2007) note that as of 2005, there were 77,000 students enrolled in Kenya's public universities, in all programs combined – regular and alternative. Of these, 33,000 (or more than 40%) are enrolled in the privately sponsored alternative programs.

These alternative programs are not the first iteration of "non-regular" educational offerings from Kenya's public universities. The distance and open learning programs offered by Kenya's existing public universities take in students who have passed their secondary school leaving exams but have not done so at levels sufficiently high to be admitted by the JAB to one of the public universities[50]. This option also is seen as an opportunity for people who are in the work force to attend classes and try to enhance their chances to improve their circumstances.

There are several such opportunities to be found in Mombasa and elsewhere at the coast. For example, The University of Nairobi operates the Mombasa Extramural Centre. The centre occupies a suite of rooms on a single level of the

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[50] As one interview respondent told me, for the institution concerned, a Nairobi-based university with a suite of offices rented in Mombasa for external program offerings, the admission criteria are, "*A "C". It is C-minus for a student who wants to do a certificate. Then a diploma is a C. A degree is a C+. But a student who comes in with a C and does a diploma then can qualify to do a degree after they have done the one-year diploma.*" (September 11, 2007)

Jubilee Building in Mombasa[51]. As one person with whom I spoke during my research said in describing the offerings at the Extramural Centre,

> *Those people who were* [enrolled in the program are] *already teachers. They were teachers who did not already have a degree. Actually, this center was opened more or less in the early 1970s here. And the idea behind this center was basically to cater for adult education, the adult learners, and the outreach program in Bachelor of Education . . . Basically that was the essence of starting the center here. To cater for the adult learners, to try and give them some form of certificate or qualification. And until from that particular time until 2000, 1999-2000 is when now we started off delivering diploma courses which are more or less market driven.* (KJ, September 11, 2007)

This respondent went on to say that

> *Every college that comes down* [to Mombasa] *always comes to start off with a business-related course. Kenyatta University – the same thing. Methodist University – the same thing. Bandari College came in – the same thing.* (KJ, September 11, 2007)

When asked to explain the reasons why commerce and business studies opportunities prevailed, and to offer an example about how this might play into the opening of full university at the coast, the respondent said that,

> *Very few universities actually come up and offer science-related courses . . . It has to do with the cost of launching and . . . sustaining a science-based course. When . . . the first group of professors from the university were looking for collaboration . . . we went to Kilifi Institute and Mombasa Polytechnic. We were out there. We found that the cost of running a science-based program was very high. It was too high.* (KJ, September 11, 2007)

And so, coast-based open learning and satellite campus students are confined to those subjects the existing public universities see their way clear to offering. Figure 1 below shows the extensive network of sites at which the existing public universities offer programs. I have bolded those sites that are located in Coast

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[51] Other tenants of this building include: The British Council library; DALC, a multi-site tertiary/professional institute catering to students who are in mid-career, or who had exam results weak enough to leave them under-qualified to gain direct access to the Extramural Centre's programs; and numerous commercial and/or professional businesses.

Province. While there is limited opportunity to pursue full degree programs at a couple of these "satellite" campuses, concern is nevertheless raised among those with whom I spoke due to the limited range of subject areas on offer.

Regional University Centres	Programmes Offered
JKUAT has 18 centres: JKUAT-MMS Juja; Loreto Msongari (Nairobi); Kenya School of Professional Studies (Nairobi); Diamond Systems (Nairobi); Gitwe Technical College (Murang'a); Nyandarua Adventist Technical College (Kisii); **Lamu Polytechnic (Lamu)**; Kenya College of Accountancy (Nairobi & Kisumu); Strathmore College of Accountancy (Nairobi); **Jaffrey Institute of Professional Studies (Mombasa); Bandari College (Mombasa)**; Kenya Air Force Technical College (Nairobi); Kenya College of Communications Technology (Nairobi); Holy Rosary and Tala (Machakos); Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (Nairobi); Institute of Advanced Technology – Symphony Ltd. (Nairobi)	B.Sc. in Information Technology; Diploma in Information Technology; Certificate in Information Technology; Bridging course in Mathematics; Bachelor in Commerce; Bachelor of Business Management; B.Sc. in Computer Technology; M.Sc. in Entrepreneurship; B.Sc. in Electrical & Electronic Engineering; B.Sc. in Telecommunications Engineering
Kenyatta University Regional Centres: St. Ann's Junior Academy (Nairobi); Nakuru High (Nakuru); Kakamega High (Kakamega); Kimathi Institute (Nyeri); **Todor Day Secondary School (Mombasa)**; Kangaru High School (Embu); Kisumu Day Secondary School (Kisumu)	Certificate Diploma and Bachelor's degree courses in: computing; laboratory techniques, forest management, disaster management, participatory project planning, health and environment, foods and nutrition, HIV and family education, early childhood education, public relations, tourism, commerce, human resource development, marketing, ICT. Postgraduate Diploma and Master's and Ph.D. programmes in: education, journalism, distance education in school management
University of Nairobi has 7 regional centres: **Bandari College** (Mombasa), **Mombasa Extramural Centre** (Mombasa), Nairobi, Nakuru, Nyeri, Kisumu, Kakamega, Embu	B.Ed. Arts; B.Ed. Sciences; M.Ed.
Moi University has 3 centres: Town Campus (Eldoret); Kenya Ports Authority Depot (Eldoret); **Kenya Ports Authority Depot (Mombasa)**	B.Ed. Arts; B.Ed.; B. Comm. Science; M.Ed.; M.B.A.; Bachelor of Business Mgmt; M.B.A. in ICT; B.S. Medicine
Egerton University has one centre in Nakuru	B.Comm.; Business Mgmt; Information Technology; B.Ed. Arts; B.Ed. Science
Maseno University has one centre in Kisumu	B.Comm. and Business Management

Figure 1: Regional centers operated by Kenya's public universities: adapted from Mwiria, Ng'ethe, et al (2007; pp. 31-32)

So, while the opportunity to pursue a university education is available to Mombasa (and coast) residents, the offerings are particular to fields of study that characteristically have a low financial overhead. I explore this point more fully in a later chapter on reactive discourses of strategizing given the absence of an independent comprehensive public university at the coast. However, I believe the comments included here begin to point to the ways in which a partial presence of university programming is seen by some at the coast as evidence of how they marginalized, and as a reason to pursue other options elsewhere. As some of the people with whom I spoke asked, where are the other engineering options open to students from the coast who did not have the exam results necessary to gain entrance to one of the existing public universities? Where are the medical training options? Where - by way of one often cited example - are the marine sciences programs? If all the university efforts at the coast seemingly fall into these easily offered, low overhead cost types of programs, how else should what the government provides to the people of the coast be viewed, except as evidence of marginalization?

I posed the question to a number of the people I interviewed as to whether the external programs of the University of Nairobi that are on offer at Bandari College[52] in Mombasa served any kind of modeling purpose, or heightened any perceptions of the value of university education. More or less across the board, people said that the programs offered at Bandari College are of real value. However,

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[52] Primarily business and commerce related programs. As one respondent said the University of Nairobi, "*offer*[s] *some things at Bandari College. Masters and B.Comm. Bachelor of Commerce . . . You know they offer it as evening classes.*" (SS, August 31, 2007)

the College's somewhat isolated location near the port – outside the bounds of Mombasa's main commercial and residential areas - and the fact that the University of Nairobi's presence there is not advertised with much, if any, fanfare, meant that comparatively few people were even aware of the university offerings there. And as was explained to me, the faculty who teach the University of Nairobi courses at Bandari do not, generally, stay in Mombasa and live there. Instead,

> *There is an arrangement here where a lecturer goes for a week, two weeks, teaches then comes back. Then another one goes. They have even rented a house for the people from B.Comm. They have a good arrangement.* (SS, August 31, 2007)

In other words, the university-level teaching being done at Bandari College is being undertaken by people not living at the coast. Yes, the students are able to remain in Mombasa, free of the cost burden of travelling and living in Nairobi or elsewhere to pursue their higher educations. But if the lecturers are flying in, staying for a couple of weeks and flying out, the full benefits of having university offerings available will not accrue to the broader community. It is not simply that a full public university is absent, but that the faculty at this satellite campus is also, usually, absent.

For some of the people with whom I spoke, the effort undertaken by Kenyatta University to establish a branch campus in central Mombasa was a significant step toward providing the kind of campus-based environment in which such role modeling and perceptions of higher education could be tested. I spoke with a number of people specifically about this, learning some of the history of the Kenyatta University effort, which culminated in the unofficial opening – first classes starting in May 2007 - of the campus on Nkrumah Road in the heart of Mombasa.

Kenyatta University had engaged in long discussions among its administrators and faculty, identified a suitable site to purchase,[53] and spent months negotiating. Interestingly, I was told by several people connected with the University of Nairobi that there had been initially interest there in the same idea on the same plot of land. The stories told by these people then diverged on the matter of how serious the University of Nairobi had ever been in this effort. As it was explained to me by people associated with Kenyatta University, the decision to open a campus was an outcome of their examination of the success (and future success path) of their open learning efforts at the coast. I was told,

> [The] *government* [was] *being asked to establish a* [public, independent] *university, and it had not done so. Here we are saying we can increase our open learning. So, using our open learning arm, and in an attempt to increase accessibility, we said let us buy it.*
>
> *For an institution like Kenyatta University to purchase, the government must give approval. So, we wrote to the government. The government said we have no money. We approve in principle, that you can purchase, but we have no money.*
> *Now, we thought, how do we get it? So, we said, we could easily get a commercial loan from the banks, purchase the facility, and the facility now can be able to pay [for] itself.*
>
> *So we wrote a proposal about the purchase of this place. It went through the Council. It went through the government, and got approval. And we were given a commercial loan from a commercial bank. We purchased the facility using the loan – as a university, not as a government. With the plan that once we increased the numbers, they will be able to pay for that loan – the students' fees and so on, would be able to pay. And that is exactly what we are doing.* (FV, August 8, 2007)

This description opens up an issue with satellite campuses, open learning and parallel programs that was expressed by a few of the interview respondents:

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[53] The site of Kenyatta University's Mombasa campus is the former Aga Khan Academy site. The Aga Khan Academy now sits on a newly built campus approximately two miles to the south, not far from the ferry to Likoni and the South Coast region.

quality of the education available at such sites and in such programs. By way of closing a small circle, here, I want to offer a quote from "SS," the person whom I quote above in regard to University of Nairobi programs at Bandari College and how they engage their lecturers. I offer this further quote as a means to show a kind of competition that exists between the various universities looking to expand to the coast. SS says,

> *We need to find out who will be the type of people teaching at those campuses* [like the brand new Kenyatta University campus in Mombasa]. *Because, will they get qualified people who are at the centers here in Kenyatta, or are they going to employ some part-time people who are in other lines, or teaching in some secretarial or business colleges? You know there are so many secretarial and business colleges in town in Mombasa. So, who will be the lecturers? I will really like to know. Will they be bringing the professors from Kenyatta University? Or will they be taking anyone to go and teach for them? Because that will be the issue.* (August 31, 2007)

Most of the people with whom I spoke expressed appreciation for the programs offered at the coast by the existing public universities. But the existence of such programs are not seen in an unbridled positive light, whether they be the commerce studies programs at Kenyatta University's new campus in downtown Mombasa, or the programs offered in the suite of rooms of the Extramural Centre or Bandari College. As I have noted previously, for many people these programs serve as prima facie evidence of the marginalization of the coast via incomplete investment. It also serves as the ground upon which people begin discussing how they might possibly achieve their desires for higher education. And, finally, it is the filter through which efforts to create an independent, full public university at the coast are viewed.

<u>Emergent Private University Forms</u>

As enrollments in Kenya's public universities increased, and the public system's response to this lagged, a market for private university education in Kenya developed. I do not wish to go into great detail on the wholesale development of this market, but rather to focus on the minimal degree to which this market penetrated Mombasa and the coast. As such, I offer only a synopsis of the private university market in Kenya, and then focus upon the more specific market in Mombasa. Similarly, while recognizing that access to higher education (public and private) is an issue about which much has been written,[54] it is not a specific focus of my work here. I am offering only a brief description of the governmental mechanisms in place that coordinate higher education efforts.

In 1985, the Kenyan government established the Commission for Higher Education (CHE). The CHE was given the task of coordinating university education and rationalizing the provision of academic efforts across the multiple university campuses. However, as Murunga (2001) tells us, upon its establishment, the

> *CHE quickly received applications to set up PUs* [private universities]. *Consequently, due to this rise in PUs and politicisation of planning and development of university education, CHE only concentrated on one of its statutory functions, that of developing accreditation instruments to regulate and permit the award of charters to PUs. Thus, in 1989, CHE established the rules for establishing PUs and immediately, three institutions were granted official recognition while 13 others were allowed to operate on interim basis. By 1999,CHE had 27 applications seeking to provide PU education.* (12)

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[54] See the work of the Program for Research on Private Higher Education (PROPHE) at SUNY Albany, as well as much of the work of Daniel Levy (PROPHE's Director). Similarly, the work of Philip Altbach and the Center for International Education at Boston College would be informative. In a more Kenya-focused sense, the work of the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR) would be useful, as would the individual works of Moses Oketch and Wycliffe Otieno. The Association of African Universities (AAU) and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) each hold a focus on access and quality issues in higher education, as do the individual works of Akilagpa Sawyerr, Kingsley Banya and others.

Murunga goes on to point out that it would not be until some years later that the CHE would begin to focus on the other elements of its charge, especially those concerned with the public universities.

The CHE remains the accrediting body for universities – public and private - in Kenya. It further sets admission requirements for students seeking entry into university, whether they are coming from Kenyan schools, or from outside the country. The CHE maintains a multi-tiered accreditation system, wherein institutions may be "fully chartered" (registered and accredited), "registered but unchartered" (awaiting approval by the Commission), or "unregistered" (but on having applied, able to operate on a Letter of Interim Approval). When each of these accreditation categories is considered, Kenya has, as of 2006, fourteen private institutions. Of these fourteen variably accredited institutions, thirteen are directly affiliated with Christian churches, many of them based in the United States[55].

However, despite the variably accredited private universities outnumbering the public universities by a wide margin, enrollments at private universities constitute

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[55] Murunga (2001), Mutula (2002) and Oketch (2004) all describe (and categorize the registration type of) these private institutions, with the latter two each providing a list of institution names and affiliations. Here, I offer Oketch's version:

Registered and Fully Chartered institutions: University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (Seventh Day Adventist) – affiliated to Andrews University (Texas); Catholic University of Eastern Africa (owned by the Congregation for Catholic Education); Daystar University – affiliated with Messiah College (Pennsylvania) for undergraduate programs, and Wheaton College (Illinois) for graduate programs.; Scott Theological College; United States International University (affiliated with the Alliant University system, specifically its San Diego USIU campus).

Registered but unchartered institutions: East African School of Theology; Kenya Highlands Bible College; Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology; Pan African Christian College; St. Paul's United Theological College.

Finally, unregistered institutions using a Letter of Authority and awaiting approval: African Nazarene University; Kenya Methodist University; Aga Khan University; Kabarak University (Africa Inland Church; former president Moi serves as Chairman of the Board).

only 16% of all university-level students. By 2000, public universities enrolled 41,000 students, while private institutions of varying accreditations enrolled fewer than 7,000 students (Oketch, 2004). This is the case even as Kenya's secondary schools graduate, on average, four times as many students whose school-leaving exam results qualify them to enter university as are enrolled at these public universities[56].

As Murunga (2001) points out,

> *In the year 2000, these PUs* [private universities] *enrolled 6,920 students. They accounted for 14% of the total students (48,745) enrolled in universities. However, the difference that these universities make to the overall demand for PUs is minimal for they enroll only about 5% of those who qualify for university education while public universities take about 30% . Thus, in spite of their contribution, the number of students who qualify for university education but have no access remains significantly large.* (13)

For all that the number of private universities in Kenya is expanding relatively rapidly, this is not the case at the coast. In fact, it was only in January, 2007 that Methodist University opened a branch in Mombasa. At the time of my last research trip to Kenya, from July-September 2007, Methodist University's branch in Mombasa had enrolled 150 students. This can be compared to nearly one thousand in Nairobi, and about 800 at the university's home campus in Meru, established in 1997.

The university offers Bachelors degree programs in Education and Business Administration, a diploma program in Business Administration, and a series of bridging courses at its Mombasa 'campus' - a suite of rooms and a set of larger lecture halls on two floors of Ambalal House in downtown Mombasa. The bridging program, which enrolls one-third or so of the current student body, is for students

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[56] Oketch (2004) – again – notes that, "In 2002, for example, only 10,966 of the 42,158 high school graduates who qualified for university education [26%] were admitted to the state universities." (129)

whose high school leaving exams results were not high enough to qualify for direct admission to a degree program.

While the university is said to have some ideas about purchasing land and raising its profile in Mombasa, that is not expected to occur very soon. There is a hope that enrollments will be maintained and that a stable presence established in Mombasa from which growth can be managed. Given the degree to which Methodist has expanded beyond Meru in the ten years of its existence it seems likely that further expansion in Mombasa will actually occur.

Beyond Methodist University, there are currently no private universities in Mombasa or elsewhere at the coast of which any of the individuals with whom I spoke was aware. In Chapter Six I revisit this issue, and speak of some of the other private university initiatives at the coast that have not yet been realized (and which may never).

The New University Colleges at the Coast

As noted earlier, this work has engaged me for more than fifteen years. A great deal of change – social, political, economic within Kenya; academic and professional for myself - has taken place in this time, change that has impacted my ideas and feelings about the subject. C. Wright Mills (1959) writes of social scientists' understanding and account-taking of the "accidents" occurring in the research setting, saying that

> *There is no necessity for working social scientists to allow the political meaning of their work to be shaped by the 'accidents' of its setting, or its use to be determined by the purposes of other men. It is quite within their powers to discuss its meanings and decide upon its uses as matters of their own policy.* (177)

I take the Kenyan presidential elections of December 2007, and the campaign that preceded the election, as a fine example of how an accident of timing – my doing final fieldwork in Kenya in mid-2007 – has impacted this study. Writing more than a decade prior, but in the wake of Kenya's multi-party elections of late 1992, Haugerud (1995) tells us that

Ruse, disguise, feint, and counter-feint are so much a part of Kenyan political life as to suggest that nothing should be taken at face value. (p. 52)

The themes expressed by those whom I interviewed for this project – the discourses they engaged - especially as regards feelings of economic and political marginalization, and political ineffectiveness, not to say powerlessness - appeared to play out throughout much of Kenya during the presidential campaign. The multiple ways in which each of the two primary candidates for President focused their campaigns, the overt nature of the stacking of the Electoral Commissions to benefit the incumbent, the lengthy vote-counting troubles, and the months of violence before a power-sharing agreement was reached, all pointed to a picture of Kenya as a disparate agglomeration of variously empowered communities.

Of a piece with this presidential political campaigning, and a fully embedded aspect of my work here, was the explosion in university education opportunities created by Presidential fiat in August 2007, in the very midst of the election campaign. The long-time absence of an independent full public university at the coast was changing. I believe the politics of presidential elections played a significant role in this.

I will start with the January visit of President Mwai Kibaki to the coast in January 2007. As one function of the President's visit to the coast, he traditionally meets with VIP members of various local communities. As Kithi (2007) reported in the Daily Nation newspaper,

Mijikenda elders yesterday placed a list of demands before President Mwai Kibaki and asked him to urgently act on them. In a memorandum on the development of Coast Province, the leaders asked for the establishment of a public university in the region and the setting up of an Utalii College campus in Mombasa.

Kithi goes on to note that

. . . a paper on the university would be presented to the Cabinet for discussion. The document proposes that Mombasa Polytechnic be turned into a university.

Foreshadowing what many people with whom I would eventually speak thought of this, President Kibaki is then quoted as warning that

You have seen the development projects that the Government has implemented in your areas. The important thing is not politicking all the time but the development implemented in the last four years.

He also warned that confrontational politics had no place in Kenya.

That is why we have concentrated on development instead of politics of empty words because what is important to us as leaders is to serve wananchi[57] by implementing projects that will benefit them. (52)

That Kibaki placed a time frame of four years around what "the important thing is" only served to define how politicized the decisions being made were, again at least for many of the people with whom I would speak. I was more inclined to accept Haugerud's sense of politics to be a closer expression of the Kenyan experience than were Kibaki's comments. Kibaki seemed to be doing little more than

[57] Translates as "citizens".

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playing politics, setting his eventual Presidential campaign on more solid footing in Coast Province by offering government services and investment eleven months in advance of the election, in lieu of having done so at any previous time.

Kibaki was engaging in the well-established (in the Kenyan context) discourse around the provision of a social good (university education) in an overtly politicized way. He engaged socially acknowledged leaders in the most populous coastal community (Mijikenda) in a shadow play wherein they voiced a longstanding need and he beneficently arranged to meet that need. That this happened to coincide with the start of his reelection campaign - and that Coast Province was understood to be one of the five (out of eight) Kenyan provinces where he needed to get at least 25% of the vote in order to meet a necessary threshold to retaining the presidency[58] - is incidental, or so the pretense would have it be.

It was in and around discourses such as this that I have attempted to focus my discussion of absence – both longstanding and, finally, partially at least, met. Gee (1992) speaks to the ways in which such discourses of the politics and practices of power are played – and played to – everywhere.

> *If we define "politics" as relationships and interactions among people where power and status are at stake, then practices within and across Discourses are always and everywhere political. If we define "ideology" as beliefs about the appropriate distribution of social goods, such as power, prestige, status, distinction, or wealth, then Discourses are always and everywhere ideological. Each Discourse necessitates that members, at least while they are playing roles within the Discourse, act as if they hold particular beliefs and values about what counts as the "right sort" of person and the "right" way to be in the world, and thus too, what counts as the "wrong" sort and the "wrong"*

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[58] In Kenyan presidential elections, the winning candidate has not only to receive the highest vote total, but to have a particular spread of the vote across provincial lines. The winning candidate must receive at least 25% of the overall provincial vote in five of eight of Kenya's provinces. Kibaki was seen to be strong enough in Central Province, Nairobi Province, and Eastern Province. He was seen to be battling to reach the 25% threshold in Rift Valley Province and Coast Province.

way. And "right" here means "worthy of respect and status," <u>both social goods</u>. (141. <u>Emphasis added</u>)

In the context offered above, Mijikenda elders are "worthy of respect," as is President Kibaki himself. Each side has acted in the "right way."

By the end of March 2007, the Government of Kenya announced that it had received a gift from Saudi Arabia of 750 million Kenya shillings (approximately $11 million at then-current rates of exchange) to construct a new public university at the coast (and to improve the road system in Coast and Northeast Provinces). Following the announcement of the gift from Saudi Arabia, on April 16, 2007, the Government of Kenya established a committee of local educators and politicians at the coast. As Namlola (2007) writes, in the Daily Nation newspaper,

The task force comprising scholars from the region, has been given a fortnight to come up with proposals on location of the university, infrastructure and curriculum.

In other words, the Government publicly gave the team two weeks to figure out how to locate, structure, pay for, and staff a university. Per Muiruri and Bulemi (2007), it would be only seventeen days from the establishment of this task force until the government announced that it would soon be elevating eight institutions to university college status, including the Mombasa Polytechnic and the Kilifi Agricultural Training Institute (KATI). I would end up speaking with several people involved in this task force's work. None had found the timeframe particularly do-able. The perception was that much had been pre-arranged, and their work was meant simply to rubber-stamp the process already completed by the government, to give the impression of coastal engagement in the decision-making process. In any case, by late August 2007,

Kibaki had kept his pledge to the Mijikenda elders, when the establishment of three university colleges in Coast Province was published in the Kenya Gazette.

Kibaki's political supporters spoke of the hard work he had undertaken to improve things after the ruinous years of the Moi presidency (for the first ten years of which Kibaki had served as Vice President before breaking with Moi). Kibaki was said to be seeking five more years to complete his mandate. His challenger, Raila Odinga, on the other hand, energized his supporters by speaking of his plans to end the ways in which Kenya's less populous ethnic communities were repeatedly marginalized by government policy and practice. He sought votes by promising to bring change and aid to those less developed areas of Kenya (generally explained as anywhere outside of Nairobi, Kibaki's Kikuyu home territory, and former President Moi's Kalenjin home territory) that had long been neglected. Importantly, in terms of this dissertation's focus, Kibaki had also appointed Ali Mazrui, a longtime critic of the Moi government[59], Chancellor of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology.

Odinga's campaign brought to the fore of political discussion a powerful sense of people and communities as marginalized. While his campaign was not a focus of my work, I would be remiss if I did not note how his campaign engaged the Kenyan public in ways that are markedly similar to how the people with whom I

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[59] Mazrui writes of the impact his political views had on his ability to work as a scholar in Kenya:

> *During the Kenyatta years I could not be hired in Kenya, but I was free to give public lectures in the country from time to time. But, during most of the years of President Daniel arap Moi, even the public lectures dried up. Kenya's universities were increasingly reluctant to risk government disapproval by inviting me to lecture. From Kenyatta's death in 1978 until the year 2000 I had lectured on Kenya's campuses less than about five times in all.* (2005, 16)

spoke understood the circumstance of the coast vis-à-vis marginalization, politics, development, education, and other issues.

I mention this, and close this chapter by noting that while I have attempted to do much to specify what I was told about the longstanding absence of higher education opportunities at the coast, and the newly emergent presence of such opportunities, the themes expressed are part of a larger discourse that impacts people throughout Kenya.

As Gee notes, when we engage issues such as this in a scholarly manner,

All we can do is structure a story combining these elements in certain ways, assemble our documents to support it (if that is part of our historiographical practice), relate it to other "historical events" in sequence, and hope our story is at least accepted as a "historical" one, if not as the "right" one . . . If it is not accepted as a historical narrative, then we will have to change our way of telling such stories. Our stories and what's in our head don't take precedence, the social practice does (which is not to say we can't change the social practice). (77)

In the following chapters, I will begin to more formally connect the discursive dots. I will attempt what Gee describes, an integration through historiographical practice, of events, memories and thoughts about these, that tell the story of why it took so long to bring public universities to the coast of Kenya.

SECTION TWO

Chapter Four: Grounded Theory, Dialectics of Change, and Discourse Analysis

In undertaking this research, I sought to bring together multiple streams of information. I am interested in the history of education and schooling in Mombasa. I am similarly interested in education and schooling in colonial and post-colonial Kenya. I want to focus on the social and political differences and similarities between Mombasa (and the coast of Kenya) and the rest of Kenya vis-à-vis education and schooling. And, I want to do this within the framework of the question of why it has taken so long to bring a public university to Mombasa.

As noted earlier, my engagement of the specific issues presented in this work began more than a dozen years before I undertook the doctoral coursework that has led me to this dissertation. My interest in these matters deepened in personal and professional environments and ways long before I undertook the more scholarly examination that is seen here. This renders important methodological and theoretical elements of this study quite complex, and somewhat difficult to contextualize in any single method and any single theoretical approach to the data.

One result of this is that I take somewhat of a hindsight perspective on the ways in which my methodology and theoretical analysis developed. In this hindsighted light, I have utilized a variation of grounded theory in uncovering the

stories, over the years my work was in and about Kenya in the 1990s and after, that have gone into the analysis in this work. In the first decade or so of my interest in the ideas expressed in this work, I was not engaged as a scholar. I was not theorizing the meaning of what I was being told. I was gathering information, data. Glaser (1998) has it that,

> *The first step in grounded theory is to enter the substantive field for research without knowing the problem. This requires suspending your knowledge, especially of the literature, and your experience. The researcher must take a 'no preconceived interest' approach and not ask questions that might be on his mind.* (p. 122)

At the time I first began developing my interest in the questions I analyze in this work, I had only sufficient awareness of the circumstance of the absence of a university at the coast to ask the first question - why was the situation as it was. I had no knowledge of the literature on the matter, and my experience in Kenya was largely limited to upcountry. I had no theoretical stake in play. I knew of an absence, but was still a long way from knowing what the 'problem' was.

Thus, I believe this early, non-scholarly period of engagement constitutes the openness of mind to which Glaser refers. As I closed in on the decision to pursue doctoral studies, these issues formed the basis of my plan for a dissertation project. In a sense, then, to the extent that Duchscher and Morgan (2004) are correct when they note that grounded theory necessitates, a "symbiotic relationship between data acquisition and theorizing" (607), the long initial, non-scholarly period of data acquisition permitted a gradual, and yes symbiotic, connection between gathering the data and figuring out (theorizing) its meaning.

My initial experience of the data was something I saw as filling out a story. For many years, it seemed that this would be a story about absence and the ways people fought against, and worked around it. In order to understand this story in a formally constructed sense, it was necessary to identify a sample population with whom to engage in the telling of the story.

As I described previously, my connection with Kenya included ongoing professional relationships with Kenyans working in higher education, the people with whom I have discussed this issue over the course of the past 17 years. All but a few of these individuals are professionals in the field of education, with most of these working in support of university and other higher education, whether as university faculty, university administrators, or as secondary school senior administrators. It is from this group that a snowballed, purposive sample of more than 30 interview respondents was developed. I developed an open-ended interview questionnaire, and undertook my first interviews during a short visit to Kenya in December 2005 – January 2006. Most of the interviews I eventually conducted were done during a second research trip, from July-September 2007. The interviews were conducted in a variety of environments – from the offices of those being interviewed, to a meeting room at the Swahili Resource Center in Mombasa, to the hotels at which I was staying in Mombasa, Lamu, and Nairobi, to public restaurants in two cases.

The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. In most instances, audiotaping was accompanied by note-taking, generally of key words and terms, as well as any themes that were being consistently raised. Coding was done from the initial interview onward, with prior interview coding in mind as each new interview

was coded. I began organizing the material around specific themes from early in the interview process, creating a spreadsheet file in which themes were separately identified and matched with interviews that held quotes/material pertinent to the theme. This is the memoing stage of grounded theory development. Figure 2 (Dick, 2005) is a simple Gantt chart-like rendering of the constant comparative process I engaged.
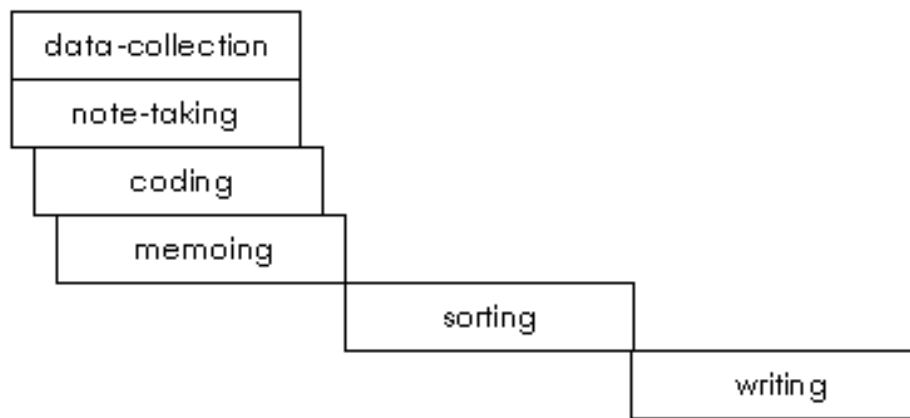
Figure 2: Depiction of the time framing of data analysis in grounded theory

As the interviews continued, a core category developed around which I began to arrange the coding. This core category I took to be 'transformation,' and was one that could not have been arrived at without being present in Kenya and speaking with people there at the precise moment I was there. Much was occurring around the issue of university absence (and presence) at the coast in this time. The situation was changing and the interviews revealed this change. The data were being jumbled.

By this, I mean that the other categories that I had been developing as possible core categories (marginalization, working together, working in disunity, constructing alternatives), were being subsumed into the broader idea of

change/transformation. Each of the other categories were, in a sense, pieces of the transformation. Due to the complex nature of some of the categories (especially marginalization), it took me some time to sort out the subsumed categories into a coherent frame.

To help with this, and in keeping both with the core category of transformation and the idea that grounded theory helped tell a story, I adapted a dialectic framework. The structure of dialectic – thesis, antithesis, synthesis – can be understood as the telling of a story in three acts, with the transformative conclusion wrapping around to become a new beginning. But the complexity of the subsumed categories still troubled me.

As a means to respond to this difficulty, I reverted back to another theoretical approach I had been considering. I saw Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a means with which to break out what I now constituted as subsumed categories (in CDA terms, discourses) within the core category of transformation. I engaged with a comment made by Gee (1992) about 'access,'

> *Only people who get access can do this and only people able and willing to live with the initial cognitive dissonance and conflicts. Such people are one of the leading edges of resistance and change.* (111)

'Access' was an appropriate term for my work on several levels. Regarding the interview group, it was a purposive sample – beginning with people I already could be in touch with, and expanding to people the initial interview respondents could suggest I contact. 'Access' defined these people's connection to the institutional system at the center of the story – Kenya's public universities. And lack

of 'access' was a succinct way to parse the sense of marginalization that was revealed in many of the interviews I conducted.

In allowing that his discourse theory has "*room for both individual creativity and for social resistance to domination and hegemony (111)*," Gee's ideas also seemed to connect with my decision to adopt a dialectic approach to analyzing the data. Gee's work led me quickly to that of Fairclough (1992), a major proponent of CDA, who speaks to the place of dialectic when he states that his

> *Position on discourse. . . is a dialectical one, which sees social subjects as shaped by discursive practices, yet also capable of reshaping and restructuring those practices.* (45)

As the chapters to come show, the dialectic between the discourses (grounded theory categories[60]) and the social and professional positions of the individuals with whom I spoke led to a renewed focus on what Wodak (2002) calls "societal conventions." In the case of Mombasa and higher education in Kenya, this means the normalized, prima facie reasons most often given for policy decisions that long left the coast without full access to a comprehensive, at-hand range of higher education offerings (e.g. cost is too high; coast communities are not interested; etc.). The hows and the whys of the long-time absence of any independent public university in Mombasa or along the coast has led to engaged responses from those with whom I spoke, a desire to explore the absence and come out the other side of it changed.

As Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) would have it,

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[60] From this point onward, my use of 'discourse' will incorporate the grounded theory conception of 'category,' including references to both core category as well as what I have labeled the 'subsumed categories.'

Discursive practice can be seen as an aspect of a hegemonic struggle that contributes to the reproduction and transformation of the order of discourse of which it is part (and consequently of the existing power relations). (76)

Although I understood that both grounded theory and CDA see benefits in a focus on small samples, I came to experience a frequent feeling that any "next person" with whom I might speak might possibly explode the "plot" of a given discourse. I did not know whether the discourses would be disturbed, deepened, reconceptualized, or otherwise altered if I spoke with each next person. This feeling was in part, I believe, a realization that elements of my research had begun more than fifteen years earlier. It was already lengthy and complex. Yet maybe the next person would have something to add.

In addressing this concern, I was struck by a point made by Fairclough (1992)

One can interview those involved as participants in corpus samples, not only to elicit their interpretations of those samples, but also as an opportunity for the researcher to probe into issues which go beyond the sample as such . . . (227)

"*Going beyond the sample as such*" reads to me as analogous to the foundational notion in Glaser's (1998) grounded theory that has it that the researcher should strive "*to enter the substantive field for research without knowing the problem.*" (122) Each had me thinking that I should continue seeking interview respondents as a means to deepen the story that was unfolding.

From the perspective of CDA, in processing this material and constructing the analytical space in the upcoming chapters, I will be attempting to meet one description of what competent discourse analysis might look like, as expressed by Antaki, et al (2003) when they write that,

Compiling quotations into a profile can be part of a discourse analysis. For instance, an analyst might be seeking to investigate whether speakers, in framing their individual utterances, are using commonly shared discursive resources . . . some discourse analysts will consider it a matter of theoretical and methodological importance to show how particular utterances are themselves formed out of wider, socially shared 'repertoires', 'ideologies', 'discourses' etc. The analyst might present a profile of quotes in order to show how different speakers might be drawing upon common repertoires etc."

This approach, I realize, is not without dangers. The duration of my engagement with these issues, and my feeling that I should try and speak with as many people as I could, has left me with a great deal of data to be distilled and utilized in - or to be left out of - this analysis. Given the amount of data I have gathered, a "compilation of quotes" approach, leaves me at risk of an error of analysis that Antaki, et al goes on to describe as "Under Analysis through Over Quotation." They describe this as likely to happen,

when the analyst is piecing together responses from different speakers . . . There can be analytic and theoretical reasons for presenting profiles based on piecing together such quotations. However, this profiling is not normally of itself discourse analysis, for again it does not of itself get down to the business of actually analysing in detail the discourse that is used.

In order to mitigate the risk of over-indulging in the use of quotations from interviews, I will make frequent use of published historical materials and other texts. I take such materials to be part of the milieu within which the discourses are situated. Here I follow on Antaki, et al and their statement that such evidence can be useful

to show the origins and development of various cultural patterns of talk. The particular analysis would aim to show how these wider patterns of talk are mobilized by the speaker in the particular context of the interview or conversation that is being studied.

I am helped in this use of historical evidence to contextual discourses through use of a construct that Fairclough (1989) calls a "moment of crisis" and what he

refs to in a later work (1992) as "exceptional disfluencies . . . in the production of a text," or "cruces.[61]" As Fairclough utilizes these terms, they represent instances when crisis

> make[s] visible aspects of practices which might normally be naturalized, and therefore difficult to notice; but they also show change in process, the actual ways in which people deal with the problematization of practices." (230)

As I focus upon each of the discourses, and where I raise 'moment of crisis' examples in the narrative, I am invoking a transformational turn in the discourse. I explain the connection between the interviews in which the 'moment of crisis' example is raised, and the impact that example has on present-day discussions about establishing a fuller range of public university opportunities at the coast. In adapting Fairclough's conception in this way, I point to the ways in which the disfluency, the crisis and conflict exhibited in the discourses, can end up working to access a space for change in society and social practice.

In light of this, it is necessary that I point out that I will be using the term 'dialectic' in two distinct senses in the upcoming chapters. First, <u>within</u> each chapter, I will use 'dialectic' in the sense that Fairclough has described it, that is, as social subjects both shaping and being shaped by discursive practices. In using 'dialectic' this way, I will be analyzing the way in which a small number of specific ideas are expressed in the interview texts I have included. This analysis will look at how the terms and ideas shift focus and/or are countered within the discourse that is the focus of each particular chapter.

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[61] Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) use "crisis point" in describing similar, though less societal, more micro-level turning points in conversation.

For example, Chapter Five focuses on the ways in which 'marginalization' is utilized in describing the longstanding absence and emergent presence of an independent public university at the coast. I begin the chapter by invoking and analyzing uses of the concept of marginalization from published materials and interviews I conducted. I then shift the focus to perspectives that were expressed to me that run counter to the initially described and analyzed invocations. Analysis of this shift is given in the dialectic sense that Fairclough is defining: the term is used by some; it is countered by other uses in ways that complexify and shift the initial use; this subsequent iteration is then brought through similar analysis through use of particular foci; etc.

The second sense in which I am using the term 'dialectic' has a longer arc, and a more societal focus, and is revealed in the segues that connect chapters. In this second use of 'dialectic,' I am referencing the transformational stages that I see as having occurred as the absence that was the initial focus of my work has given way to an emergent presence. For example, in Chapters Five and Six, I see the discourse of marginalization as being opposed to a responsive discourse of alternatives in a thesis-antithesis manner wherein the development of a public university college presence at the coast can be seen as a synthesis. This synthesis, in turn, sparks realizations that work into a new discourse, which becomes the emergent thesis. This emergent thesis is constituted, in the discourses my work has revealed, as questions about the purpose of the new universities, who the new universities will serve, what the quality level of these will be, etc.

To avoid the possible confusion that this dual use of 'dialectic' may engender, I will endeavor to keep clear the ways in which I mean to use the term. I will restrict my use of what I have described as the broader arc use of the term to the beginnings and endings of the chapters – these being, in my mind, the bridges upon which the transformational turn is being made.

In the next chapter, Chapter Five, I examine the discourse and dialectic of "marginalization." Marginalization is seen as a complex view of the interplay between the people of Kenya's Coast Province and "upcountry" Kenyans. The perception of both conflict and confluence between local and national politicians is explored. So, too, is a resonance still felt by many of the different pathways taken by individuals and communities to endure the colonial experience. This represents a far more nuanced picture of marginalization than I had initially expected to hear about. It is one that saw the longstanding absence of an independent public university as the fault and responsibility of numerous sectors of society, both national and local. It was the most frequently mentioned and most fully contextualized discourse – in historical, political, religious, and other terms.

Marginalization, in the broader conception of 'dialectic' that I am also using, is conceptualized as thesis, a foreground point in the transformation where absence has not yet begun the shift to emergent presence. In this conception, the discourse focused upon in Chapter Six is a responsive discourse of alternatives as adopted by the individuals and communities at the coast who seek opportunities in higher education, but must do so without the option of studying close to home. In what I am calling the more Fairclough-ian conception of dialectic, I will explore the ways in

which specific alternatives, whether local, national, or international, are constituted as subsumed categories or discourses. I will analyze the terms employed by the various individuals quoted, with focus given to the particular circumstances and subjectivities of these individuals.

Returning to the broader arc conception of dialectic, I situate Chapter Seven, as synthesis to the thesis of marginalization and the antithesis of alternatives. It is within this discourse on the term "a university of our own" that absence begins the transformative turn toward emergent presence. From the perspective of the narrow filter of the particular discourse's dialectic, Chapter Seven is perhaps the most complicated in this work. The recent elevation of several coast-based institutions to university college status is thematically developed. I move through a set of Fairclough-ian crisis points, with the discourse illuminating the administrative and bureaucratic practices that characterize Kenya's current practices around identifying the need for and situating its public universities and subsidiary institutions. Here, importantly, I will use not only the interviews I conducted, but several written pieces that serve as examples of the complexity in this idea of a "university of [one's] own" anywhere in Kenya.

Chapter Eight is an exploration of the broad arc dialectic's new thesis point which, as it is in its emergent state, is still in the process of being worked out. The emergent presence of public universities at the coast is not seen as an unbridled positive development. At the level of the Fairclough-ian dialectic, a new set of questions are being pondered as a means toward understanding how the newly elevated institutions will do their work, who will be beneficiaries of this work be, and

how well will this work be done. I explore these questions, though I do so at an analytical depth that is less fully developed than previous chapters, owing largely to the newly emergent nature of the issues at hand in the discourse.

In the final chapter, Chapter Nine, I offer a brief summary of the conclusions made in each discourse-focused chapter. The bulk of this short chapter will then focus upon the broader arc dialectic of the transformation from absence to presence, and what this may mean for Mombasa and the coast of Kenya. By this end, perhaps all I will have done, as Gee (1992) would have it be, is begun to

> *structure a story combining these elements in certain ways, assemble* [my] *documents to support it . . . relate it to other "historical events" in sequence, and hope* [the resultant] *story is at least accepted as a "historical" one, if not as the "right" one. . . .* (77)

Chapter Five: THESIS –Discourses of Marginalization

<u>Introduction</u>

Before I get into the analysis of the particular discourse of marginalization, I want to remind readers that I am analyzing the material at two distinct dialectic levels. At a broader-arc, first-order level I take marginalization as used by the people with whom I spoke to occupy a foundational space in how they position themselves in Kenyan society. I identify this foundational space as holding the position of thesis in a dialectical analysis of the situation that is the focus of this work. I am not developing this level of perspective at the sub-chapter level, but rather as a string of chapters, wherein each following chapter constitutes the next point in the dialectic turn. By the conclusion of this work, I will offer commentary and analysis on this broader dialectic arc.

Marginalization is a term that has been in use to describe coastal affairs in Kenya for some time. Whether in political, economic, social, cultural, religious or other realms, I have been able to identify large numbers of instantiations of the term. In its numerous uses, it revealed itself as a discourse, or as Fairclough (2001) describes it, "an inherently positioned representation of social life."

My experience with this material leads me to concur with this interpretation. The people of the coast with whom I spoke did not describe a perspective that is wholly marginal. The marginalization narrative is both hegemonically and counter-hegemonically described. It is constantly contested. It is challenged in both mundane

and creative ways, and within itself, as a discourse, it is constantly changing. In some ways of being expressed it is a passive circumstance, 'we are being marginalized.' In other expressions of it, it is active, 'we are marginalizing ourselves.' In its discursive forms, marginalization is, in fact, a representation bound up with where people feel themselves to be.

I want to begin the analysis of marginalization as discourse by quoting from a book entitled, *Kenya Coast Handbook: Culture, Resources, Development in the East Africa Littoral*. The book, published in 2000, is a compendium of short articles detailing the circumstances in which the people of the coast find themselves vis-à-vis various social, economic, and cultural realms. The Preface to the Handbook was written by Ali Mazrui. The first paragraph of the Preface reads,

> *Many have regarded globalization and marginalization as twin-processes in Africa on the eve of the new millennium. Nowhere is this better illustrated than at the coast of Kenya. The coast links Kenya with the wider global forces of economic interdependence, international tourism, and wider communications. But at the same time the coastal people have been relatively marginal to these forces, and sectors of the coastal population have sunk deeper into immiseration.* (xxi)

I choose to start with this selection because it offers access to several of the points of inquiry I will be following in this chapter. First, Mazrui is a titan it terms of scholarly positioning among people of the coast, and as such his work must be considered. Second, well after this Preface was written, Mazrui became Chancellor of Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology (JKUAT), so he is intimately connected with higher education matters in Kenya. Third, it took Mazrui only five words before utilizing the term 'marginalization,' an indication of how deeply rooted the conception of the marginalization of the Kenyan coast is. Fourth, and finally,

Mazrui lays out several of the levels at which the discourse of marginalization played out in the interviews I conducted.

Beyond the first paragraph, Mazrui invokes 'marginalization' numerous times. In fact, two full pages of the six-page Preface are given over to Mazrui's concept of a "matrix of marginalization.' The first heading in this matrix is 'the paradox of retarded education.' The major point expressed in this heading is that

> *The Government has been encouraging the establishment of universities in the hinterlands, but never in Kenya's second city, Mombasa.* (xxiv)

Here Mazrui plants the absence of a university at the coast squarely in the center of a discussion about marginalization of the people of his home area. And Mazrui's words are the filter through which the remainder of the book – all of its 26 essays – is to be read. At root, Mazrui is saying is that the academic study of the issues facing the coast of Kenya is about marginalization because that is the condition in which its interactions with the Kenyan government leaves it.

Even prior to additional aspects of Mazrui's preface, though, the Handbook has already engaged the discourse of marginalization. The use of the term littoral in the subtitle identifies the coast as being a space associated with edges (whether of the sea or the land), and not of the 'center.' In certain connotations, 'littoral' is either synonymous with or linked directly with 'margin.' Viewed through such a filter, the people of the coast of Kenya are a people of the margin.

Mazrui develops this connection himself in two of the headings within his "matrix of marginalization." In the first, "*the paradox of autocolonization,*" Mazrui describes how the coast endured colonization from the sea (the littoral) for more than one thousand years, and has endured colonization from the interior since 1963,

when Kenya was granted independence. This is his use of "autocolonization," wherein Kenya's government, "fellow Africans," have colonized the coast.

In his second connection to the idea of the littoral, Mazrui writes of "*the paradox of ex-sularity,*" wherein he extends the connection between the coast and being an outward-looking people. Because of its long history of mercantile and other interaction with outsiders, the coast is "*the least insular region of Kenya historically*." Mazrui takes this lack of insularity and turns it toward "ex-sularity," his term for a determination by the people at the coast to avoid being swallowed up in hinterland politics. This pursuit of "internal separatism" is a pathway to becoming and seeing oneself as marginalized.

During the fifteen year rule (1963-1978) of Kenya's first Prime Minister and President, Jomo Kenyatta, the country's political leadership (which included only two Cabinet members with connections to the coast[62]) elaborated a broader discourse of the building of a new country, focused on drawing people into the capital city of Nairobi for all manner of societal effort. In this development paradigm, the political and social practices of building the country mandated that attention focus on building Nairobi. This had the ancillary effect of drawing Kenya's multi-ethnic population towards Nairobi, especially that portion of the population either deemed to be helpful to this paradigm of national development, or individuals who felt their chief opportunities were to be found in Nairobi. The city had been created in the early 20th century as Britain's colonial capital, and was thus already home to much of the administrative and bureaucratic structure for governance. As such, perhaps it was

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[62] Ronald Ngala and Robert Matano

an easy acquiescence to maintain these structures in the post-colonial period, and to build upon them in place.

This decision (or acquiescence) had the particular effect of localizing the eventual discourse of national development. It created the "story" of national development. Gee (1992) writes of history as

An open and generative system. . . New versions of historical episodes arise, versions which reflect later happenings, and not just the historical events themselves. The historiographical practices of a group determine whether these new versions "fit" within the practice (or whether the practice will be changed to accommodate them). If they don't fit, and the practice doesn't change to accommodate them, then they aren't history, aren't part of historical memory. (75)

The focus upon building up Nairobi – in a time of limited resources – necessarily meant leaving other areas less focused upon, and less privileged, as time wore on. Even as those people whose territory included Nairobi and its environs benefited from the public services and investments made in the name of building the nation[63], many people from other parts of the country - especially those areas in which people felt a profound sense of their own history, a history they felt no necessary need to give up so as to "fit" into the shared history of Kenya – were left having to react to the new discourse of the new country. For many such people, this left them outsiders in the discourse of "Kenyan" history.

This notion that Nairobi came first was raised by many of the individuals with whom I spoke. One interviewee, HR, told me of the impact of the early 1960s turn toward independence, and the inclusion of the nominally separate "ten mile coastal strip" into Kenya. This turn was described as a shift from the long prevailing view

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[63] The people in this circumstance, or their parents and older relatives, also bore a significant burden during the colonial era. No one with whom I spoke disputed this.

held by most coastal people (outward to the Indian Ocean, to Zanzibar and Arabia, where cultural connections lay; to a mercantile past[64]). This shift required the people of the coast to look inland, toward Nairobi, something they'd done little of prior to independence. As HR conveyed it to me, and as others more generally supported, this shift is something the people of the coast have yet to wholly embrace. More emphatically, this is a shift that the people of the coast simply haven't done well – politically or economically. As a second interviewee, IN, stated,

> *This was an area that . . . enjoyed some relative privilege within the systems of government before independence. After that, they have had to compete nationally, and found themselves literally usurped by the successive regimes.* (July 29, 2007)

IN's perspective on privilege giving way to usurpation is one explicit expression of Mazrui's theme of autocolonization. The local metrics of status, achievement, etc. were toppled when the move to independence was made. The dynamics of power and control had shifted. Britain had held the coast at a colonial remove relative to the tight control exhibited over hinterland peoples living in the Central Highlands (near Nairobi). For some of the residents of the Center Highlands, along with other people from even further inland, the coast became a place of opportunity – at least once they were free to move around the independent country. And so the people of the coast began experiencing a competition for political, economic, and social resources for which they had not prepared.

Depicting Marginalization as Absence

> *Why did the government - independent government - not build a university at the coast? . . . There are all kinds of explanations, most of which have one*

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[64] See De Silva (1999) for some explication of this.

thing in common – they felt that the central government was biased against the coast. (August 30, 2007)

This quote succinctly connects the general theme of government marginalization of the coast with the particular issue of the absence of a public university there, through the more than four decades since independence. Government policy decision-making is brought into question. The statement of bias points to the distance BA feels as someone raised at the coast, but who does not recognize an open, positive connection to those in power. BA speaks of a decision, building a university at the coast, that <u>could have been made long ago</u>, but wasn't. His use of the term "independent government" is a marker that situates his comment in history. He is aware that the 40+ years of "independent government" is marked by not just the absence of a public university at the coast, but the absence of a government interested in providing that public with a university.

In the process of conducting this research and undertaking the writing of this dissertation, I have struggled to find a succinct means to 'show' the absence of a university at the coast. I have searched for a means to visually depict the way in which "absence" plays a role in how universities are seen in coastal Kenya. In the end, the point of entry into the complexity of this issue that I found most helpful is a map (Figure 2, below). This map is taken and adapted from page 17 of Mwiria and Ng'ethe's (2007) *Public and Private Universities in Kenya.*[65]

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[65] The volume was co-edited by Charles Ngome, Douglas Ouma-Odero, Violet Wawire, and Daniel Wesonga, and published as part of the Joint Partnership for Higher Education in Africa. Mwiria, in addition to being a prolific writer on education issues in Kenya, is currently Assistant Minister for Education, with a focus on higher education. Njuguna Ng'ethe is a long-time member of the faculty of the University of Nairobi, former Chair of the Commission on High Education, and former Director of the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Nairobi.

The map identifies the provinces of Kenya. It makes abundantly clear the geographic skew that characterizes the distribution of public (and private)

Figure 3: Distribution of public and private universities in Kenya, as of 2003

————— Provincial boundaries   - - - - - - - - International boundaries
Public universities: (1) Egerton University; (2) Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology; (3) Kenyatta University; (4) Moi University; (5) Maseno University; (6) University of Nairobi; *Private universities* (7) University of Eastern Africa; (8) Catholic University of Eastern Africa; (9) Daystar University; (10) United States International University; (11) St. Paul's Theological Seminary; (12) Pan African Christian College; (13) Kenya Highlands Bible College; (14) Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology; (15) Scott Theological College; (16) East African School of Theology; (17) Nairobi International School of Theology; (18) Africa Nazarene University; (19) Kenya Methodist University; (20) Kabarak University; (21) Aga Khan University; (22) Kiriri Women's University of Science and Technology; (23) Strathmore University

universities in Kenya. Taken from the perspective of people at the coast, the map supports the notion that seemingly "everyone else" in Kenya is nearer to one of the public universities while the coast suffers at a distance without one. The map depicts the distribution of these universities as of 2003. By late 2006, the six public universities identified on the map would be joined by Masinde Muliro University (MMU - formerly Western College) in Kakamega, Western Province. MMU is even further from the coast than any of the previously existing public universities. Finally, more pointedly, and as a means of cracking the visual representation of this discourse, the map shows, in stark terms, the heavy concentration of public and private universities in Nairobi Province. This concentration represents the results of a paradigm of national development that focused on the capital city, a geographic center point within the nation-state.

I believe that the map may well come to be <u>the</u> visual representation of the discourse about absence and marginalization. It speaks to absence in a kind of mute relief of blank space. As Ninnes and Burnett (2003) explain it, the critical analysis of discourse(s) goes not solely or simply to what people say, but as much to

> *What is not said, and what cannot be said; [as well as to] the particular social conditions under which discourses arise; and their effects. (282)*

The map speaks to what cannot be said, because there is <u>nothing</u> there. The map provides anyone who suspects bias with a powerful image.

Generalized Discourses of Marginalization

The quote discussed above by interview respondent, BA, incorporates a sense of the history of this perception. There are a number of written histories on the

coast of Kenya that offer additional insights and explanations as to how and why the political economies of Nairobi and Mombasa have remained disjointed such that discourses of marginalization remain central elements in the perceptions of many coast residents.

Interview respondents shared with me their memories and impressions of various moments and elements of coastal and Kenyan history. I return to BA for the first quote, in which he makes reference to the colonial arrangement vis-à-vis the coast.

> *When the British came, they looked at the coast as being a different part from Kenya, a Protectorate. They initiated a settlement, settler economy, with the railway all the way to Uganda. So, the new economy under the colonial regime was based inland, not at the coast. The coast was only convenient in terms of the port, not in terms of anything else. So, the colonial state itself was not so much interested in the coast, except for the port of Mombasa.* (August 30, 2007)

BA is describing the importance the British placed on development the port at Mombasa. He does so in a way that points to how Mombasa itself was a secondary concern. A second respondent, BZ, describes the history of this use of coast-based resources – human resources in this case – this way,

> *The British used the people of the coast . . . to run the local administration, the colonial administration. And yet . . . they never shifted any resources, government resources, back to this area.* (August 7, 2007)

The natural geography of the island of Mvita, on which Mombasa is located, was of interest to the British. There is a natural, deep harbor there. The train was used to bring supplies up from the coast to support the further building of the railroad. This interaction would be what led to the creation of a supply depot at a watering hole used by Maasai herdsmen. This supply depot is what would grow to

become Nairobi. Mombasa, a city that can claim a written history going back a thousand years or more, was being used to support a place that was being creating out of nothing.

This comparison in history between Mombasa and Nairobi is stark on its face. But perhaps more powerful, and certainly more directly connected with the issue of public university development in Kenya, it is deeply reminiscent of the way Moi University was, as Oketch (2004) describes it, created as a ". . . *a university in the middle of nowhere.*" It stands as both an evocative and provocative analogue, a bedrock connection in the marginalization discourse that weds history to the longtime absence of a university at the coast. That the coast would eventually see several existing institutions get elevated to university college status in August 2007 will not be enough, for some, to dismiss this analogue.

At this point, I want to develop additional historical context surrounding the impact of the British colonial presence on economic life at the coast. In his study of the influence of Swahili educator and intellectual, Sheikh al-Amin bin Ali Mazrui, Pouwels (1973) describes the impact on coastal life that was made by the East African railway construction project. He writes that,

> *In Kenya, the most profound changes involved the shifting emphases given to upcountry development under Governor Sir Charles Eliot and his successors . . . Eventually, for example, Nairobi replaced Mombasa as the administrative capital of the protectorate, thus taking the focus of development away from Mombasa and the coast. The Uganda railway opened the interior and made it more accessible from the coast. The last is important for two reasons: it made Mombasa the principal port of Kenya and it brought thousands of upcountry peoples to the coast to work as wage-laborers . . . In these circumstances, townsmen soon found themselves being left behind by developments. Above all, they were losing in the competition for influential jobs in the new colonial order. Consequently, Sheikh al-Amin was keenly aware that townsmen were*

slowly losing control over their town's future political, social, and cultural direction. (pp. 338-339)

This text captures the feeling captured by interview respondent, BA, above, in his description of the way in which the coast was seen as convenient only because of the harbor, and the access to the greater world and international markets that this provided. The marginalization of employable people from the coast in favor of people from upcountry remains an issue to this day. It was, for example, difficult not to note references made to places along the coast that have become densely populated by Kikuyu (e.g. Mpeketoni, a mainland town located not far from Lamu Island), or Luo (e.g. little Kisumu, a neighborhood in Mombasa) or other upcountry ethnic communities. These 'outsiders' take up jobs. They use scarce resources. Their children take up precious space in local schools. These issues resonate among those with whom I spoke. The issues mark people's understandings and center themselves in the ways many people at the coast discuss their place in, the connection they feel towards, Kenya.

There were attempts to bring economic change to the coast during the colonial period. Salim (1973) notes this, but also puts a late-colonial spin on the current events of that period, which coincided with the so-called Mau Mau rebellion, and resultant State of Emergency, in central Kenya. Salim writes that,

> *Malindi[66] also witnessed notable development. One remarkable feature of the development was that by 1954, almost certainly because of the state of emergency, interest in land in and around Malindi had caused prices to appreciate abnormally, and astonishingly high prices were obtained for sea-front patches. Enough upcountry Europeans sought economic refuge in the*

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[66] Malindi is a town on the coast, approximately 75 miles north of Mombasa. It is the second most populous center at the coast, and remains a bastion of Kenya's tourist industry.

coast and purchased land to form an Upcountry European Association at Malindi. (215)

Thus, it would come to be that British colonials, who had not previously had a presence at the coast to anywhere near the degree they infiltrated the Central Highlands, would join the Kikuyu, Kavirondo, Luo, et al in snapping off pieces of the coastal landscape for their own use. Even as the British were beginning to see the need to rethink their presence in colonial Africa,[67] the people at the coast were being squeezed, and their land - an abiding measure of place and wealth - was being taken. To this day, the area around Malindi, and other nearby seashore locations, is affordable to only the barest minority of local people.

Tracking this story of economic alienation from their own land, as well as the more specific alienation from the kind of employment opportunities offered by transportation industry (as exemplified by the railroad), one interview respondent, XL, said,

> *The coast has heavy investments, so you wonder why is it, with all those assets, the coast is not being targeted, for a university for decades.* (XL, August 21, 2007)

As others have said, and as I have shown above, one possible reason for why the coast did not see a public university until the university colleges were announced in 2007 was because much of what was developed at the coast was developed for (and by) others, whether in Nairobi or elsewhere beyond the seaside-end of the railway.

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[67] For example, by the time cited in this quote (1954), Kwame Nkrumah had already served for two years as the prime Minister of a self-ruled Gold Coast (eventually Ghana). Jomo Kenyatta was in prison for his suspected (and possibly non-existent) role in the Mau Mau rebellion.

Returning back to the period around independence, I want to bring into the focus on economic life a representation of the changes to political life that were manifested, and which continue to claim space in the discourses of marginalization at the coast. As interview respondent, BK, describes it,

Somebody was brought in to survey the area here and to find out what the people wanted . . . At the end of the day, the decision was made between Kenyatta, Britain and the Sultan [of Zanzibar] *. . . The British took that idea to give the coast to the rest of Kenya because they had already built the railway. . . . And the settlers were still here . . . That railhead would have to continue working. So, they had to amalgamate, and ignored all of the local desires.* [BK, December 25, 2006]

As it was related to me, this story is reminiscent of efforts made in two separate British controlled areas of East Africa that were seeking self-rule in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In the Kenya colony's Northern Frontier District [now Northeast Province], as well as in the British-controlled Ogaden area of Ethiopia, British authorities conducted a poll asking the ethnic Somalis (who constituted the majority population in each area) whether they wished to be part of an independent Somalia. The alternatives were, respectively, to become part of an independent Kenya or a self-ruling Ethiopia (Bujra, 2002). In each case, an overwhelming majority of Somalis stated a preference to be united into a greater Somalia. In each case, independence leaders (Haile Selassie in Ethiopia and Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya) acted to quell any action that would diminish their territories. That is, in concert with colonial authorities, they negated the results of the polls, and retained the boundaries and borders as had been determined by the colonial authorities. Thus for some, as with the alienation from economic power that feeds the discourse

of being marginalized from economic development, so, too, comes a discourse of alienation from political power.

I was told alternate histories regarding the integration of the Coast Protectorate and the Kenyan colony, and what paths could, and justifiably should be taken, at the time of independence. And here is perhaps where I should make explicit that my interest in this matter is focused on the coast broadly, and its multi-ethnic, multilingual population, in their own area, as well as within the construct of the Kenyan nation. I am not focused simply on histories of the Swahili. With this in mind, as Hyder Kindy[68] (1972) describes it,

> *That the ten-mile strip was really a possession of the Sultan of Zanzibar was a legal fiction created by the British. This legal fiction was continued right up to Uhuru* [Independence]*, when Kenya finally ceased to be known as the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya . . . Before Uhuru, this legal fiction had to be resolved. Hence in the early 1960s we had the Mwambao episode. Although the Mwambao movement had many different strands, the most consistent demand was for some kind of political autonomy for a coastal state.* (185)

Both the Somali vote in the Northern Frontier District, and the mwambao episode can be understood as examples of a notion that was much discussed in Kenya at independence, and which is frequently revisited in present-day national politics. That notion is federalism, or *majimboism* – devolution of power from the central government to provincial and local levels.

Majimboism is a live issue in Kenya. In fact, it would find its way into many discussions relating to the 2007 Presidential campaign. How governance is taken up in each of Kenya's eight provinces, and who has political power among Kenya's 40+

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[68] Hyder Kindy's son, Professor Mohammed Hyder, was a long-time faculty member of the University of Nairobi, as well as a participant in many administrative and other efforts to do with higher education in Kenya. He is currently Chairman of the effort to establish Mombasa Islamic University.

ethnic groups, has many ramifications for economic, social, political and other matters. As one interview respondent, XL (who is not a coast resident), put it,

> *In terms of politics, and in the context of Kenya politics, you come up with one word, and that word is marginalization. That is within the Kenyan politics, right after independence, there are certain communities that are marginalized. There are certain areas that are marginalized – economically, socially, politically and culturally. And there might be many reasons for that, whether it is because the coast was fighting for autonomy, you know - Mwambao. Or whether it is the whole issue of majimbo that the coast was also involved in – devolution of power.* (XL, August 21, 2007)

The repeated rise and fall of the *majimbo* concept in the decades since independence points to a tension between local populations, local governments, and the national government that informs issues in higher education. Godfrey and Mutiso (1974), in their article on the rise of *harambee* (community self-help) institutes of technology describe how these institutions were built largely through local initiative. They note the way in which *majimboism* shifted the way in which politics was engaged during the period immediately after independence,

> *During the first ten years of independence, in the absence of a strong political party with a systematic ideology, politics in Kenya moved from the centre to the periphery and became increasingly tribal . . . Thus the institutes presented themselves as ideal vehicles for determining local leadership at a time when "non-politician" members of the elite were beginning to challenge the generation of politicians which inherited leadership on independence.* (131)

Haugerud (1995) speaks to issues of education, discourse, *harambee*, politics and marginalization in Kenya. She is clear that the efforts of politicians and communities was largely <u>not</u> about national development or upliftment,

> *Rural political mobilization in Kenya, through such activities as harambee or self-help projects, was oriented toward "gaining a foothold" (Thomas-Slayter 1991: 308), rather than toward fundamentally restructuring the political and economic systems. Thus one of the most popular types of rural harambee projects is the building of local secondary schools, since many citizens view*

education as the principal means of upward mobility and make enormous sacrifices to educate their children. (48)

The rhetoric may have included discursive flourishes toward nation-building, and community togetherness in support of development of the country, but the practice revealed a participation in these community projects that teemed with self-aware, self-involved individuals who were out to better the circumstances of their own family. This recalls Anderson's (1970) explanation of how Luo and Kikuyu families viewed schooling (cited in Chapter Two), that is, as a pathway toward gaining "*an increasing share of the positions of wealth and authority being created around them.*" (5)

As I will discuss later, and by means of closing this section of the chapter of discourses of marginalization, the Coast Institute of Technology proved unsuccessful. The community at the coast was unable to come together in support of the idea. It was eventually shelved as a Mombasa-based institution, and later moved inland, to Voi, about 75 miles from the sea. It remained in Coast Province, but barely.

A Brief Review on Marginalization, Religion and Education

Marginalization is discursively tied to issues beyond the economic and immediately political. While the analysis provided thus far has linked the geographic factors (coastline, harbor, etc.), many people spoke of the place that religion holds in the processes through which coastal peoples and communities have been marginalized. Returning to interview respondent, BA,

> *The people that came out of that educational system and that British ideology, colonial ideology, and settler economy . . . looked down at the coast, and*

looked down at Muslims . . . That was the reality. Power was economic power, political power was upcountry. Meanwhile, at the coast, no development was taking place outside of the harbor and the railway head. (August 30, 2007)

As I have noted previously, Islam and schooling have been nearly inextricably linked for many centuries at the coast. This remains part of people's expressed understanding of what schooling can mean. As interview respondent, BG, explains,

And then the other part was the religious educational system in the coastal strip. You would start with your local madrasa here. You would be graduated to your local mosque. Then you would be graduated to other leading mosques within Mombasa. The system was you were supposed to go to this mosque because "KB" is the specialist on the knowledge of "dependency". My scholar will attach me to you to learn that particular knowledge. Then you had teachers from Zanzibar, then you'll push me because you realize that this kid is good. You'll be inspired to. . . You need to be referred to this scholar in Zanzibar. Now this scholar in Zanzibar says, you know what, after you've completed one or two years, you need to go to the Comoros Islands for specialized training. So, the flow was actually . . . (BG, December 25, 2006)

The initial decades of the colonial and Christian missionary engagement with the coast in the mid- to late-1800s, was in many ways an attempt to separate coast people from their rich, historical connections to education practice. The schools opened by the colonial and missionary forces imposed an overtly Christian structure. Once it was determined that the colonial effort would be focused on the interior, mission schools followed to the interior, and has been laid out above, investment by both set of forces shifted away from the coast.

It may reasonably be seen that the colonial effort shifted inland because it saw relative economic advantage to extracting the resources of the interior. The interior was a kind of tabula rasa, whereas the coast held too long a history of engagement with outsiders. The coast had the harbor and the railhead, but these were tools to be used. The greater resources were deemed to be inland, and so they

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were pursued. To a significant degree, however, the missionary shift was undertaken as much because the coast had shown itself disinterested in converting (in any great numbers) to Christianity.

As has been pointed out several times, the coast of Kenya has long been a cosmopolitan place. It is a base for Islam in East Africa. It was where Christian missionaries first set up shop in the 1840s, at the beginning of the first high age of Christian proselytizing. While never coming close to usurping the place of Islam, Christianity nevertheless remains a force at the coast, if only because the vast majority of the Kenyan power elite are, if they espouse any religious faith at all, Christian.

This continues to leave some at the coast believing that it is religion that is at the center of their marginalization. Mazrui (2000) refers to the post-independence Muslims of the coast as "Harijans – an underprivileged caste." (xxvi) But, as I noted earlier in this chapter, Mazrui offers a set of circumstances that extend beyond religion in explaining the marginalization. Religion is important, true. But the marginalization discourse taps broader sources than this.

This, importantly, includes the transformation of MIOME into the Mombasa Polytechnic. MIOME was launched as a local institution for Muslim students. Almost immediately upon opening, it began enrolling more students from regions beyond the Kenyan coast than from the coast itself. Eventually, as Kenya moved through its first decade of independence, MIOME was transformed from the (at least rhetorically) local Mombasa Institute of Muslim Education into the nationalized Mombasa Polytechnic. As one interview respondent, NG told it, MIOME was

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A fantastic thing, and then it was taken, and made into Mombasa Polytechnic. From being a 100% Muslim, it went immediately to be 0% Muslim. And now even today, it hasn't got more than 3 to 5%. (July 31, 2007)

Placing MIOME and Mombasa Polytechnic in a somewhat broader arc of social change at the coast, BA had this to say,

As Mombasa itself became more populated with people coming from upcountry and so on, so the Mombasa Polytechnic became less a coastal institution, and more of a Kenyan institution. And yet the state tended to think Mombasa and the coast has an institution . . . it is prevalent within the ideology of the state regarding the coastal people. (BA, August 30, 2007)

The connection between the local Muslim community in Mombasa and MIOME has continued to evolve over the decades. The institution that stands on the grounds where MIOME was founded nearly 60 years ago is a several-times transformed institution. It remains a fundamental element in the provision of higher education at the Kenyan coast. I discuss the institution's most recent transformation into Mombasa Polytechnic University College in Chapter Seven.

Marginalization, Politics, and a "Disunity of Purpose"

Well, it is all part, is it not, of the broad marginalization of, <u>not just Muslims</u>, but of the Kenya coast . . . I have a feeling that it is just a question of amount of political muscle the coast can muster relative to what other people can do. (NG, July 31, 2007)

In this quote, NG points to the connections between the Muslim community, the coast more broadly, and the nature of political influence in Kenya. This is an issue that was expressed almost universally by those with whom I spoke. This aspect of the marginalization discourse is quite complex. While some expressed their perception that the national government straightforwardly has little interest in the coast or its people, others saw a more active disinterest on the national

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government's part. In this view, the government pursues policies that benefit upcountry communities, and this has been the case for so long that it has become normalized.

There are those I spoke with who bring agency back to the discourse, who ask whether the coast people bear some of the responsibility for their estrangement from national influence. For such people, the marginalization discourse is as much local as national. It is as much about poorly structured engagement as anything else, as much about which politicians the people of the coast elect and what expectations they have, or do not have, about the ability of these politicians to effect change. As one person, PB, put it,

> *No, the biggest problem is our politicians and our leaders. You know they are just focusing on themselves.* (BP, January 1, 2007)

BP goes far enough to acknowledge that the politicians being referenced are 'our' politicians, "our" leaders. The perceived selfishness of these elected officials is plainly expressed. But there were a series of more complexly rendered marginalization discourses revealed in the interviews I conducted than that which BP offers. It is toward these more complex discourses that I'd like to turn now. The following quote, from ER, seems good starting point.

> *Marginalization of the coast I think has a political counterpart. It's not just that the central government is neglecting the coast in education. You can do a study of education development there – secondary. They haven't got the schools. They haven't got the finance. They haven't got the teachers, etc. . . . But there's a corresponding political dimension, it seems to me. It's obvious. The coast isn't really important for them politically. It's not important. It's not that it's a backwater culturally. It doesn't give you the votes. It's not going to determine the outcome of any national election…..If they can keep the politicians in their pocket, and keep the politicians happy, they don't have to worry about the people. . . . It's not just driven by educational needs. It's very cleverly done.* (Sept. 15, 2007)

"It's not that it's a backwater culturally." It is more blunt than that, it is because "It doesn't give you the votes." ER is getting at a feeling expressed by many that they do not feel they are inferior in terms of how they could and would use government resources in education to improve their schools. It is that they do not play the political game well enough to access the resources and send them home so that schools could be built, teachers hired, and children better educated to the point where more of them would seek university education. As one person, IN, said,

> *You're able to elect one or two Members of Parliament in a sea of two hundred ten of them . . . Then* [you] *demand so much, whether of a man or two,* [who are then] *unable to deliver because the character and structure of the system has remained the same, because Moi has been re-elected . . . And so, on the basis of your one Member of Parliament not able to deliver, you go into, you backtrack into disillusionment. And then, number two, the representation is so negligible for it also to effect change. So, your mass expectations are not met. So there's mass disillusionment, mass resentment, and then the movement starts to disintegrate, infighting and then it fizzles.* (July 29, 2007)

There seems to be nothing particularly 'Kenyan" or 'coastal' about what IN is pointing out. High expectations of change in a representative political system run up against obstacles as soon as the change one constituency is seeking runs up against the interests of other constituencies. What permits the perception IN is describing to resonate, to reach the point of becoming a discourse of marginalization is how the local politicians, in this representative system, then use their skills and their political positions, and on whose behalf they do so. Change remains possible, but it must be engaged with the difficulty of navigating the system in mind.

Quite a few of the people with whom I spoke expressed their belief that this issue of ineffective political leadership at the coast has existed since independence,

if not well before then. Many mentioned Ronald Ngala and the role he played in first pushing for local autonomy (within the *majimbo*-federalism construct) and then defeating such efforts once he assumed a favorable position in Kenyatta's government. However, following Ronald Ngala, for whom some did, to be fair, also have positive feeling, there seems to be an absence of locally elected politicians who showcased a national profile <u>alongside</u> effective local political leadership. Among those cited as being seemingly more concerned with their national profile than with how much they were aiding their home region were three of the leading coastal politicians of the past three decades: Katana Ngala (son of Ronald), Ronald Matanu (cited as the General-Secretary of KANU in the 1970s), and Sharif Nassir, long a man who held the ear of President Daniel arap Moi. As OM put it,

> *The leaders* [from the coast] *displayed a kind of sycophancy, historically. And they never developed into political persons in their own right. Except the first one [Ronald Ngala], the others have been pale imitations.* (September 17, 2007)

In a more fully revealed exposition of this point, LM had this to say about Sharif Nassir,

> [Nassir] *was a national politician, but really a sycophant of Moi. He was not powerful. He couldn't come up with new ideas. But apparently his calling was to protect Moi at all costs. He would not hesitate to be at loggerheads with the Kenyan population so long as he protected Moi. So, he wasn't looking out for – you know – development, education, other benefits that would accrue from his position, but really to say, 'this is my friend.'* (LM, July 23, 2007)

Rather than trade in his political influence with the president so as to benefit his home constituency, as many remembered Ronald Ngala as having been a forceful enough political figure to do, LM sees Nassir as simply sycophantic. This view of

Nassir as sycophant seems not far from the generalized point made earlier by BP about local politicians just being 'in it for themselves.'

Others painted a more complex picture of Nassir and others like him. In this picture, Nassir and his ilk do make political moves that are of benefit to their home constituency. It is just that the constituency is the focus, rather than a more broadly constituted coastal community. As XL portrays it,

> *If it is Sharif [Nassir] – he would say if it is not in Mvita[69], my constituency, it is not going be in Taita[70], where Taita has more land. Or Kilifi[71], because the people who are in Kilifi are not "KANU Damu" as we used to say.* (August 21, 2007)

Nassir comes to be the poster child for self-involved politicians. He is remembered as being willing to sacrifice bringing benefits to his home community if it meant being able to say the President listens to him. He is also remembered as being willing to prevent neighboring constituencies from bringing resources into their area, if such resources were not also going to spread to Mvita.

In this regard, Nassir stands as the exemplar of a particular sub-discourse of marginalization, the discourse of disunity of purpose. As this discourse is utilized, it sees local politicians as being important players, alongside local civil society, educators, etc., as well as the national government. In the discourse of disunity of purpose, these influential actors are repeatedly unable to come together in support of the kinds of positive change that they, as individuals, offer rhetorical support for.

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[69] Mvita is the name of the island on which is located much of the city of Mombasa. The city has over-slid the island, along with the various causeways and bridges that link it with the mainland.

[70] Taita is another part of Coast province, located inland from Mombasa. It is a separate political constituency from Mvita.

[71] Kilifi is a town located at the coast, approximately 40 miles north of Mombasa.

On July 28, 2007, I had the opportunity to attend a conference presented by the Swahili Resource Center, an organization established in Old Town, Mombasa, and dedicated to improving educational opportunities for the people of Old Town, and Mombasa and the coast more broadly.[72] The focus of the conference was "Enhancing Excellence in Higher Education" for people of the coast – especially school children and their parents. The conference brought together about 45-50 people, including influential members of the academic and civil society communities in Mombasa, students, and parents.

The keynote speaker at the conference was Professor Abdulrazak Shaukat, a native of Mombasa. Professor Shaukat is deputy vice-chancellor of Egerton University, in Rift Valley Province. In April 2007, he had been named chairman of the task force established by President Kibaki and charged with developing location, infrastructure and curriculum plans for a proposed public university at the coast. Shaukat is widely known to, and highly regarded by, the other people with whom I spoke for this work.

A primary theme of Professor Shaukat's presentation was "Disunity of Purpose." He spoke of his own experiences as a child living and going to school in various sections of Mombasa (Mvita) and the city's outlying communities (Mariakani and Changamwe). He spoke to his own rise to high school and university and his desire to – in some way – improve circumstances at the coast. He detailed his engagement as an academic and administrator with higher education issues and

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[72] I should mention that the Swahili Resource Center was established in 2005 largely through the work of Athman Lali Omar, an old friend, and with some support from the School for International Training, for which both Athman and I worked. The SRC is an idea Athman and I had first discussed as early as 1998.

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institutions elsewhere in Kenya (Egerton and Kisii are each several hundreds of miles from the coast).

In his speech, Shaukat spoke of the visit he had recently made to Meru, a town in Central Province, on the slopes of Mount Kenya, approximately 100 miles north of Nairobi. Shaukat had gone to Meru to investigate local efforts there to create a public university. He spoke of his reaction on seeing the people of Meru and all they had done to establish the groundwork upon which the university they sought could be built.[73]

> *I was really touched . . . When we arrived in that place, the whole place was full. Parents, teachers, youth groups, women, religious leaders, counselors, you name it. . . . They were holding to an agenda. The unity . . . and this in my opinion, is at the heart of the problem in . . . unity of purpose, unity as far as the child is concerned, the teacher is concerned, the staff is concerned.*

He continued, turning the talk, eventually, back to Mombasa,

> *In [Meru] . . . they are mobilizing their resources. They are building their own houses. They are building their own schools. They have built their own university now. They have built their own university. We have our own resources. . . . It's a process, we just have to wake up . . .*

Shaukat also directly addressed the parents at the forum, and urged them to speak to the parents of other school children in their community. He said,

> *How do you engage in your child's education if you never go and visit the school? You'll never know even the teacher of your child. You have never been to a single PTA meeting. You have never attended any forum . . . this is the difference between us and the people in Meru . . . when I compare the difference, if there is a parent teacher conference, believe it or not, 80% of the parents are involved that side* [i.e. in Meru]*, and 20% of the parents come this side* [i.e. in Mombasa]*. They* [students] *will push the teachers, they will push the parents. We don't take our responsibility. . . . It is not only that our children are missing their education. It is that they are getting bad knowledge. . . .So this is a problem we must try and address.*

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[73] Meru is already home to Methodist University - a private, Christian university.

And eventually, Shaukat turned the discussion around to the stories that get told so often that they become themes (or discourses). He pointed toward those – politician, civil society organizers, parents – whose work it should be to spearhead the pursuit of the resources needed to build schools.

> *But look at the way we have taken the agenda of the education. We have become beggars when it comes to the issue of education resources . . . Where do our resources go? . . . [we say] we have no resources to give to [the local] education fund, no resources to improve our schools, no resources to build new centers, no resources to give our children . . . We have resources. If we want to have higher education, a center of excellence. . . we have communities in this region that have resources.*

But, he concludes, the communities do not work together sufficiently. They do not see the issues in education and higher education as regional issues. For Shaukat, many people sufficiently powerful to influence change have not yet come together. He concluded,

> *We pull in different directions . . . Disunity of purpose. We must forget our differences. When it comes to educational matters, we should not politicize education matters. We should not accept people to come in and politicize education matters. What we want is excellence . . . Unity of purpose is the most important thing.*

Shaukat was speaking specifically about efforts to bring a public university to the coast. His perspective on disunity of purpose, the inability of politicians, parents, civil society organizers, et al to work together in support of a common goal resonates with the story I mentioned briefly earlier in this chapter about attempts to create the Coast Institute of Technology (CIT).

Godfrey and Mutiso (1974) describe the efforts to establish the CIT in Mombasa in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This effort, different from that which had produced MIOME/Mombasa Polytechnic, arose out of the nationwide, local,

community-supported *harambee* movement to expand educational opportunities in all levels of schooling. Relating the issue to the politics of independence and *majimboism*, Godfrey and Mutiso break the technical institute efforts of this period into three types. Coast Institute of Technology was classified amongst "those competing on an inter-ethnic basis." What Godfrey and Mutiso are speaking to with this classification is seen in their subsequent description, and more or less speaks in unison with Shaukat's point about "disunity of purpose:"

> *Lack of agreement on site at the coast, which probably includes the largest number of ethnic groups, ultimately allowed the Provincial Commissioner to step in. There is still anxiety lest location in Mombasa would lead to its being taken over by "interior people" as is the case with other educational institutions in the town.* (119)

Godfrey and Mutiso are writing about the generalized *harambee* movement and the institutes of technology that spring up all over Kenya. They spend a good deal of space and time describing the nature of the groups that sought to establish these institutes, outside of, and at times in direct conflict with, the government's own efforts.

> *[T]he organizers and initiators of the institutes of technology have been primarily "non-politicians" and in many cases conscious efforts have been made to exclude professional politicians or to allot them a subordinate or symbolic role.* (125)

As this quote from my interview with ER makes clear, the failure of the CIT to be established in Mombasa is remembered in ways that resonate with the call for a public university at the coast:

> *If you're looking at the absence of a university, first of all, one is the grassroots desire for that just isn't there, I don't think. Second, the capacity isn't there either, even if the grassroots desire to create the university existed. And I'll go back to my example of Coast Institute of Technology which I think would be a very interesting institute to study, for you to look at, well how did*

this evolve . . . My sense is that Coast Institute of Technology is more a replication than a grassroots movement that is being driven by what is needed at the coast. It's the politicians saying 'everyone else has one of the institutes, let's start one.' You can look at that, it doesn't succeed. They eventually put it in Voi, which is the most like the upcountry you can get and still be at the coast. It's not in Mombasa. (ER, September 15, 2007)

This lack of grassroots desire, this pursuit of an option as a replication rather than an expression of grounded need, does point to the lack of cohesion in the perspectives that impacted the attempt to build the CIT. And, if Shaukat's point is accepted, and most of the people I spoke with voiced similar thoughts, the disunity of purpose, the lack of cohesion continues to impact, if not cripple, what eventually does arise at the coast.

At this point, the lack of cohesion no longer involves working to end the absence of a public university at the coast. The university has arrived, or a university college has arrived, one that will eventually be elevated to full university status. What is involved, if this lack of cohesion, Shaukat's 'disunity of purpose,' does continue will impact the ways in which the new university colleges define and meet their purposes. I will talk more about this issue in Chapter Eight.

Discourse: The Contributions of Elder Coast Academics

While the greater part of the expression of the discourse of marginalization focused on religion and politicians, Shaukat's theme of 'disunity of purpose' did expand the discursive field of players somewhat. Civil society, as a link between the state and the local, can now be seen as partially responsible for the marginalization, though ineffective advocacy. Parents are now involved in the marginalizing, though their inaction and inattention. So, too, for Shaukat, are educators.

But there was, among a sub-group of those with whom I spoke, another more particular group who were taken to task for contributing to the disunity. I can characterize this sub-group of interviewees as younger and mid-career scholars, or those who would have liked to reach such positions. The people about whom they were somewhat critical is the group of well-known elder scholars from the coast. The younger people expressed disappointment that their elders seemed disinterested in working to create opportunities to help them – opportunities in the form of positions at a new coast-based university.

> *When you talk about Kenyan scholars, you start with Mazrui. You have Abdullah Bujra, you have Mwaidin. You have Alamin Mazrui. You have Mohamed Bakari . . . The interesting thing about the coast scholars is that they are famous, those who have taught in the university, they are well known not just in Kenya, but elsewhere.* (XL, August 21, 2007)

The exchange below, from December 25, 2006, goes deeper into showing the extent to which the careers of the older scholars have been tracked by those proposing to follow them. I say "older" here rather than "elder" because the people to whom BG and BK refer below are younger than those to whom XL was referring above. In other words, BG and BK are speaking about a kind of next generation, second generation scholarly elite. In this exchange, I am "KB":

> BG: *[Y]ou find this gap between Professor Hyder's group and where we are now.*
>
> BK: *You know that is almost like a fourth layer. So, you'll have Alamin and who else in that age?*
>
> BG: *Alamin. You'll get, I think, Mohamed Bakari in the same group.*
>
> BK: *Bakari we have mentioned.*
>
> BG: *You will probably get, what is his name . . . Professor Aboud Abdulahi (sp)???*

BK: Abdulahi, yes.

BG: This is in Egerton University. You will get people like Dr. Ali Islam who is in Egerton University also. He is in Biostatistics Department. These are the people who, you know, had to patch their way through to be able to go to reach where they are now.

BK: It is like they never thought that they would go to university anywhere.

KB: So what would you say the ages of those are? Are those the sixty year olds? The ones who are now sixty?

BK: Sixty, sixty-five now.

BG: Will be, most likely, in their early sixties. I would put Dr. Ali Islam in the late fifties. Probably getting close . . .

BK: Plus-minus

BG: Sort of like the same group. And Professor Mohamed Rajab (sp??) who is the Deputy Vice Chancellor of - is it Kenyatta now or Moi - Kenyatta.

BK: Kenyatta

BG: This is the same group now. In fact, Mohamed Rajab I would put him after Dr. Mohamed Bakari, because Dr. Mohamed Bakari was teaching already at the University of Nairobi. Professor Mohamed Rajab was a master student completing his Masters degree. So, I would put Mohamed Rajab ahead of us. Not actually in that league.

BK: Yeah.

BG: Yes. So, he is like older than us, but not in the same league as Dr. Mohamed Bakari.

BK: But you know, the thing is, the whole difference comes – these are the people who are already within the system. Like, Mohamed Bakari was already a Professor before he even did his PhD program and all this.

KB: So, he was a lecturer.

BK: Yes, so he was already in the system. Not like some of us who are kind of struggling - in, out, in, out. Because of, you know, looking for financial support and all. They were in the system.

This conversational snippet depicts the degree to which both Kenyan participants are aware of the career arc of the prominent scholars of the generation that preceded their own. Neither BK nor BG lack professional cache. Rather, they have never felt that working within the public university system has been a realistic option for them. There remains an aura about the public universities – especially the University of Nairobi – that makes working there the goal to be pursued, yet for them this has not been an accessible goal.

In later comments, both BK and BG offered further perspective on the people who had preceded Alamin, Bakari, Rajab, et al. In these comments, they are somewhat sharper in their critique.

> *So, I think then there was this gap between the so-called intellectuals who got it and the community. We never saw them in town. We never knew about them. We never heard about them.* (BG, December 25, 2006)

> *So, there was quite a big number of people of that age who went to universities in England – Oxford, the University of London. Abdulaziz went to SOAS actually. So did Salim, who wrote the Swahili Speaking People of East Africa . . . And now, the question is why they did not, you know, come into starting a university in Mombasa, these guys? What made them feel that they could not pursue that education and relate it to work together and give that education to the locals, to their own brothers and sisters who were in Mombasa? And this is a big blame from all coastal people to the people like, people of that age. They think that they just got their education and they did not do anything for their community.*

> *And the majority of them are retiring now, you know, from their professions, so it is like it is now that they want to come back and do something. So, is it because they were overwhelmed by work? Is it because of the impacts of, you know, independence? That is really a very important question for a thesis like yours to help answer – why they could not contribute towards, you know, university education?* (BK, December 25, 2006)

Often though, even as this type of perspective was being broached, most who mentioned it would provide added context that posited how these senior academics

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may have simply been going about their careers, supporting higher education as they were able. More complex iterations of these contexts may also have taken into account the question of whether the fame held by the elder scholars isn't precisely a result of their having spent decades working in higher education environments, albeit in places other than the coast. Many were working in Nairobi, in support of the national university – this at a time, for the elder scholars, the 1960s – when there was only a single university in the country. How much should such people be faulted for working in the one place in their country that offered them a teaching opportunity at the university level?

And, too, the global politics of the 1960s, the 1970s, and the 1980s would come into the picture for some people. There was acknowledgement that part of the fame certain of the elder scholars had achieved was due to their willingness to speak their piece, and to deal with the ramifications of this on their personal and professional lives. Staying with comments from BK on this issue,

> *I think if you look at the radicalism of Mazrui, he could not teach in Kenya . . . After the collapse of the Soviet Union, we have begun to see a lot of these people. Like, we began to see Ali* [Mazrui] *coming back. You know, we began to see Abdul Lateef Abdullah, who . . . after detention in Kenyatta's time, he went to Tanzania. And then he comes back . . . Professor Idha* [Salim]*, who was appointed as a diplomat to Scandinavian countries. He is back.* (BK, December 25, 2006)

XL offers another perspective, specifically about Ali Mazrui, that supports the latter comment made by BK.

> *That question really bugs him, because Ali Mazrui doesn't want to see himself as a regional . . . in the Kenyan politics there are people who resist that, they don't want to be pigeon-holed, they are bigger than that. So if you go to him and say what have you done for the coast, obviously he gets very offended, because he has done a lot for Africa, he has done a lot for Islam, he has done a lot – there are other things where he thinks he has a legacy.*

What is occurring when people see scholars working where work is available to them or forced to work where they will not be bullied by regimes that do not appreciate their viewpoints? Mazrui, quoted in an interview with Ellis (2004) in which he talks about being named Chancellor of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), allows that, for much of his scholarly career,

I would not even be invited to give a public lecture. I was taboo for the public . . . This marks a major change in my relationship with the political establishment in Kenya.

JKUAT is now the overseer of Mombasa Polytechnic University College. It seems, thus, that Mazrui at least has met head on with some of the criticism of the lack of initiative around a university at the coast.

Conclusion

There has been extensive change in the environment of higher education at the coast since I began this research in earnest in 2005. Since mid-2007 alone, there has been an explosion of higher education opportunities at the coast, an explosion due, in part, to the agitations of the younger scholars making the criticisms above, and of the selfsame senior scholars they are criticizing.

This conflict, though, seems to illustrate a point made by Gee (1992),

If we define "politics" as relationships and interactions among people where power and status are at stake, then practices within and across Discourses are always and everywhere political . . . Each Discourse necessitates that members, at least while they are playing roles within the Discourse, act as if they hold particular beliefs and values about what counts as the "right sort" of person and the "right" way to be in the world, and thus too, what counts as the "wrong" sort and the "wrong" way. And "right" here means "worthy of respect and status," both social goods. (141)

It seems that the younger scholars making their points about the elders can be considered as seeing a "right way" for the elders to have acted – that is, on behalf of those who would come later.

As for the broader discourse about coastal politicians, and the lack of faith and lack of trust felt by those with whom I spoke toward those politicians, it is, in my view, a discursive turn that renders more complex the whole issue of what 'marginalized' means in the coastal context. The discursive focus on politicians and politics, because it speaks to a public role that one gets voted into, opens up responsibility and agency to the people of the coast themselves.

This is a central part of Shaukat's theme of 'disunity of purpose'. People – whether parents, teachers, school children, politicians – need to see that they are responsible forces in the creation of their own experience. They must see that working together will bring them a more remunerative reality than will working as separate forces. As such, I see the discourse of marginalization as being engaged on a number of fields, in a number of frames.

Again, Gee (1992) connects with this point,

We have seen . . . that any Discourse is defined in terms of who is and who is not a member, and sometimes in terms of who are "higher" and "lower," more "central" and "less central" members. Discourses can even have "colonized" members. Furthermore, any Discourse is ultimately defined in relationship to and, often, in opposition to, other Discourses in the society. (141)

Yes, the people with whom I spoke saw a decided bias in the way the central government, located in Nairobi, deals with issues related to the coast and its people. But the same people spoke nearly as readily of their own elected officials. By extension, I take them to be speaking about themselves, and assigning responsibility

for the ongoing lack of economic, social investment in education at the coast across a broader range of coastal society.

This sense of responsibility is the link to Chapter Six, in which I focus on what I describe as a responsive discourse of alternatives. In shifting to the ways in which people have responded to the longtime lack of a public university at the coast and pursued engagements with other forms of university education, I am seeking to extend my identification of a broader dialectic arc. I see marginalization as a thesis point, against which the alternative responses engage as antithesis. Chapters Seven and Eight then speak to the synthesis and emergent thesis, respectively, of this broad dialectic.

Chapter Six: ANTITHESIS: A Responsive Discourse of Alternatives

<u>Introduction</u>

In this chapter, I speak to what I call a responsive discourse of alternatives, wherein the people for whom the absence of a university is an issue create alternatives and strategies in response to their perceived needs for a university. As I have explained elsewhere, I see these discourses arranged in a thesis-antithesis relationship, one that has led to the synthesis – the presence of new public university forms in Mombasa – in 2007. In this way, I am using a conception of dialectic at the chapter level that I need to distinguish from the sense in which dialectic is engaged within the theme of each particular chapter.

This latter use of dialectic is in keeping with that of Fairclough (1992), when he notes that the relationship of

> *discourse and subjectivity . . . is a dialectical one, which sees social subjects as shaped by discursive practices, yet also capable of reshaping and restructuring those practices.* (45)

This construct of dialectic is focused on the transformation within each discourse, that is, the changes wrought to/by the social subjects and users of the discourse.

The focus of this chapter will fall largely upon a set of three notions, which I am treating as 'crux points' (or 'crisis points'). I am borrowing the term from Fairclough (1992) and Jorgensen and Phillips (2002), and will use it to mean points in the history of a discourse at which meaning is altered, and transformation is

engaged. Each of these crux points takes the absence of a public university at the coast and shifts it towards an alternative form of university education that meets some, though far from all, of the characteristics of a public university.

The relative "strength" or "weakness" of the degree to which the alternatives approximate a public university is somewhat a part of the analysis here. My intention is more to identify how the alternatives arose, what elements of the absence they engage, and to what degree they meet an expressed need for a public university. I believe that the combination of alternative forms of university access at the coast that I speak to here has gone a long way toward preparing the ground for the eventual creation of a public university. I treat this last point in Chapter Seven.

Crux point: Mombasa Islamic University

In Chapter Five, I laid out aspects of the discourses of marginalization that focus upon religious differences and access to power in Kenya. In Chapter Three, I briefly reviewed both alternative public university forms and emergent private university forms at the coast. At the time of my research in 2007, the only university in this latter category that was offering courses in Mombasa was Methodist University. However, there is an ongoing effort, iterations of which reach back decades, to establish a private university at the coast, Mombasa Islamic University. The longstanding absence of a public university at the coast, home to a significant percentage of Kenya's Muslim population, is understood by many as an exemplar of marginalization.

In this section, I will begin by offering a series of quotes from written materials in order to establish a history with and against which interview quotes will then be

posed. This history will be contrasted with the present lack of access to university education experienced by many people from the coast. Jamalilyl (2006) points to the longstanding practice of young scholars and students from the coast moving from place to place to find and work with mentors in a wide range of academic fields. Some of this movement, as he notes, includes travel overseas:

It was a very common phenomenon to see students . . . traveling to different towns to study under a particular alim [authority/mentor] *who was an expert in a particular field . . . From thirteenth century up to post-colonial era, the exchange program between ulamaa [scholars] within East African cities as well as ulamaa from Arab world was at its peak form, in a manner unprecedented in the academic history of East, Central and South Africa, in the past and even in our present time. The local ulamaa had the tendency of visiting and settling in various towns within East Africa, and there were others who went overseas for higher education, in what is termed at our present time as post graduate studies. To site [sic] a few examples, Sheikh Muhyiddin bin Sheikh bin Abd Al Kahtany[37], Sheikh Ali bin Abdalla bin Nafi Al Mazrui[38] Sheikh Muhammad bin Saleh Al Farsy[39], Sheikh Muhammad bin Ali bin Mselem Al Amry[40], Sheikh Muhammad bin Fadhil Al Bakry (1865)[41], Sayyid Ahmad bin Abubakar bin Sumeit, Sayyid Alwy bin Abubakar Al Shatry[42], Sayyid Abubakar bin Abdulrahman Al Husseiny (1828 – 1922)[43], Sheikh Abdalla Bakathir (1860 – 1925) and Sheikh Abdalla bin Muhammad Khatyb (3/7/1954) are among ulamaa who traveled overseas for studies and also taught in various towns in East Africa.* (pp. 14-15)

Hyder (1994) makes the general point – made many times by numerous others - that the coast was long a place of literate, intellectual people:

Steeped in the fabric of these lands are a thousand years of Islamic intellectual ferment written in virtually every page of the history of the East Coast of Africa. It is written in the history of the peoples of these countries, in their worship, in their architecture, in their culture, in their music, in their dances, in their poetry, in their legends, in their political systems, in their weddings, in their funerals, in their mirthful laughter and in their woeful cries.

As previously noted in Chapter Two, Salim (1973) and Pouwels (1981) both write of the British colonial imposition of schools in East Africa. Both Sir Ali bin Salim

(on whom my citation from Salim is focused) and Alamin bin Ali Mazrui[74] (about whom Pouwels' piece focuses) actively engaged the notion that the local Muslim community in Mombasa and along the coast could and should control the education of their communities.

Thus, for people at the coast today there are examples, remembered and shared, of people who fought for the maintenance - through education and schooling - of Islamic culture. As BP put it during our interview,

The Western education, straight away, it came with missionaries and, colonialism. Education and missionaries together. So, it was a big threat to the set up of the community. (December 25, 2006)

Another interview respondent, BG, describes the educational system as he experienced it in his youth, during which he pursued both the westernized education available in Kenya's 1960s and 1970s era schools. In this quote, previously cited in Chapter Five, BG says

You would start with your local madrasa here. You would be graduated to your local mosque. Then you would be graduated to other leading mosques within Mombasa . . . Then, now you had teachers from Zanzibar . . . you need to be referred to this scholar in Zanzibar. Now this scholar in Zanzibar says, you know what, after you've completed one or two years, you need to go to the Comoros Islands for specialized training. (December 25, 2006)

Picking up on present-day expectations of education held by Muslim parents and their children along the coast, with a particular emphasis on how girls move through their local educational experience, ER, focusing specifically on Islamic education, speaks to its role as an elemental aspect of community life for a large proportion of the coast population. In this lengthy quote, ER offers that

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[74] Father of the noted scholar Professor Ali A. Mazrui.

I would bring in another dimension, which I'm actually studying myself at the moment and . . . this is what is happening to Islamic education. Because the parents whose students – let's look at this at primary level.

The parents whose [children] finish standard eight – eighth grade - the kids who don't get into secondary school – they're not pushing for a high school. Why not? **Because there are institutes around them, institutions around them providing Islamic religious education, and those Islamic religious education institutes are taking up the pressures for education** *. . .*

So a girl who finishes eighth grade – she doesn't get into high school – her parents aren't really pushing to get her into a secular, government secondary school. Because she can go for three years, she can do three years of Islamic religious education studies – I'm thinking of Gedi. I'm giving you the example of Gedi.

There in Gedi I visited a family when I was just there at the coast last week – this is first hand information from the daughter who finished her standard eight. She is now doing a three year course in the madrasa which is attached to the mosque at Gedi . . . which is right there as you go in opposite the post office. She proudly told me, and I thought this is wonderful – 'I'm just about to get my certificate.'

So after three years she gets her certificate from the mosque college and she's done in three years. That's something. **You can almost see the family and this young girl attributing more worth to that certificate than to the KCSE** *- you know a "D" in the KCSE which gets you nowhere.*

I think underlying this is a feeling among parents, quite a strong feeling among parents, that the government system of education alienates their children - not just from Islam, but it alienates their children from coastal society. So I perceive this, this is a bit of an intangible . . . intuition I have. It's clear that secular education alienates them from, let's say, rural life. It alienates them from their religion of Islam. But I have a sense of the feeling that is also, the parents have a sense that it alienates them from coastal society. (ER, September 15, 2007. **Emphasis added**)

This sense of alienation exemplifies an important element of the differences and tension between the coast's Muslim views on education and learning and the predominantly colonial and Christian missionary-influenced education system from which Kenya's present public education system arose.

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One place where this tension can be seen in regard to higher education is in the longstanding effort to establish an Islamic university in Mombasa. Hyder (1994), a well-known scholar from the coast, contextualizes the issue by pointing out that it is

> *interesting to note that the majority of the private Kenyan universities have been motivated by religion.* [Most] *of the private universities in Kenya are supported by religious organizations. The Deputy Principal of Daystar University recently described it on KBC TV as a "Christian Liberal Arts University" . . . To date, for sure, the only private university in Kenya which is not directly underwritten by a religious organization is the United States International University.* (p. 12)

Hyder continues, noting the ways in which Western intellectual and educational institutions have tended to rely upon the research of Western scholars on Islam and Africa. This tendency, Hyder points out, seems too frequently to preclude the possibility that the people from areas like coastal East Africa, where Islam has long existed, have scholarship of their own. While Hyder is not impugning the work of these Western scholars, he is left to ask an important question as he posits that the pursuit of education and knowledge in the Islamic community

> *suffuses and permeates the entire way of life of the peoples that are generally known as the Swahilis. Do we have to wait for the Nevill Chitticks, the James Kirkmans, the John Middletons and the James Allens of this world to come and study these historical and intellectual riches for them to attain credibility?* (p. 13)

Hyder connects the history of Islamic education and scholarship in East Africa (as the citation above from Jamalilyl describes) with the long centuries of Islamic higher education as exemplified by such institutions as the universities in Fez (Karawiyyin University) and Cairo (Al-Azhar University).[75] With such history and

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[75] These institutions are briefly treated in Chapter Three of this work.

connection to the pursuit of education and knowledge, Hyder asks, "*So why not a private Islamic university?"* (12)

This question was addressed by a number of the people with whom I spoke. What I found intriguing was the different directions from which the interview respondents approached the issue of Mombasa Islamic University. OM looks at the history of the public schooling system in Kenya, with its long reliance upon Christian denominational efforts, and says,

> *Islam has never been sufficiently integrated into the educational system of this country. I think there was always the unstated fear that a coast university would take on an Islamic character. In other words, the policy makers didn't know what to make of a university without Muslim character. It's a foolish, unfounded fear, because we have all kinds of Muslim universities in the continent. In Uganda we have a Muslim university. In Tanzania there is one. So they are there.* (September 17, 2007)

But this fear – unfounded, unstated, or not - does impact the government's practice of siting its schools and universities. This matter has been written about by numerous scholars, including Hyder, cited above. Ahmed (2006) takes this point about what is not available in Kenya, and looks – as has OM – toward neighboring countries. What has been created there, not by the government, but rather by the Muslim community, he notes as coming from the work of the Muslim financial elite. He says,

> *I am sorry to say that the Christians have already more than ten registered universities in Kenya whose degrees are recognised by the government. The Muslims are yet to build just one. Recently, in Tanzania, ten Muslim elite have each contributed one hundred Million Tanzanian shillings and others contributed a vast land for the foundation of a Muslim University to be in the making. In Kenya we are yet to see the same.*

This links several threads of the discourse of marginalization directly to efforts to establish a private Islamic university in Mombasa. I read what Ahmed is saying

here as an engagement of the generalized marginalization of Muslims in Kenya. He combines this, and so makes the discursive connection, with a lack of involvement among Mombasa's financially elite Muslims. This resonates with Shaukat's discourse of a disunity of purpose. Later in this chapter, I offer the crux point example of the Universal Education Trust Fund, which has undertaken elements of what Ahmed sees as needed.

Other common questions people have – and are asked by others – about a Mombasa Islamic University include: Who constitutes the university's community? For whom is the university meant? What will the curriculum be? One respondent, LM, touched upon a point made by both OM and Ahmed about what is happening in regard to similar initiatives in neighboring countries,

> *I went to Morogoro recently in Tanzania, and they do actually have an Islamic University in Morogoro and they do not shut out non-Muslim students. And this is important for us, so that the Muslim student does not grow from primary, secondary, university without interacting with other members of the community.* (July 23, 2007)

On this specific point of how and whether non-Muslim students would attend a Mombasa Islamic University, Abdulrazak Shaukat, whose discourse of a disunity of purpose is discussed in Chapter Five, had this to say in his speech to the Forum on Enhancing Excellence in Higher Education,

> *The problem, the challenge of Mombasa Islamic University, is our own . . . We have money. We have our land. [But] we are moving with a snail's pace . . . We will teach not only Islamic students . . . It is not a university for Muslims only . . . our students are Muslim, they are non-Muslim.* (July 28, 2007)

There was a feeling expressed by several people I spoke with that it is the predominance of Christian-connected private universities, and the dominant role held by Christian adherents in Kenya's national government that tends to keep alive

these questions about who an Islamic university would be for. Thus, the question and the need to pose it, as well as the need to proactively engage it seen in Shaukat's speech, point to the positioning of the Mombasa Islamic University in discursive opposition to a marginalization of Muslim interests. The Mombasa Islamic University is not a public university, but it is positioned as an informative analogue in matters germane to this work.

<u>Crux Point: The Alternative of International Opportunity</u>

The longstanding absence of public university options at the coast plays into an ongoing trend in Kenyan higher education, one that opens opportunity out beyond the country's border. In this section, I analyze the connection between this current response to the longtime absence of local university options and the historical practice at the coast to seek further education abroad. I will also connect this current response to the burgeoning market in advertised enrollment possibilities at foreign universities. This marketing effort is an appeal to those seeking to join the 7-10,000 Kenyans studying overseas at any given time (from Mwiria and Nge'the, 2007, page 80). This recruiting market has recently expanded into the Mombasa area. I will profile one recruiting agency that has recently opened an office at the coast in the belief that the new office will attract enough students to the foreign universities for which it works to make the investment worthwhile[76].

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[76] One direction in which I have opted to <u>not</u> take my research at this point is toward "brain drain." Manuh (2002) mentions "brain drain" in the context of the *". . . estimated 100,000 African academics who are located in institutions in the North, while the same number of expatriate experts is imported to advise African governments each year at annual costs of 4 billion dollars in foreign exchange reserves. The author wonders aloud what this vast expense, if spent differently, would have contributed to retaining or returning desperately- needed African faculty, some of whom might have provided sounder advice than all those expatriate experts.*" (47)

Beyond the private university option exemplified by the Mombasa Islamic University, and the alternative academic options offered by the existing upcountry universities described in Chapter Three, there exists a small, but growing alternative path to university education – pursue higher education outside Kenya's borders. In one sense, this could be looked at as a continuation of an old practice, wherein some coastal students took their studies of Islam to other centers of learning in the Muslim world. In a related sense, this can be looked at as continuing the practice undertaken by the first generation of coastal students to attend university, who did so, by necessity, outside the Kenyan colony[77]. As one interview respondent, BA, told me,

> *Mohammed Hyder went to Makerere[78]. Mazrui went to England. I went to England. Abdulaziz went to England. Almost all the people of that generation had fellowships from the colonial government to go to England.* (August 30, 2007)

These first students to go abroad – Hyder, Mazrui, Abdulaziz, BA himself – did so because not only was there no university at the coast at the time, there was not a full university anywhere in Kenya. Yet, even as Kenya's public university system grew from the 1960s through the 1990s, it continued to be outpaced by the

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"Brain drain" is not an untroubled concept. Kinuthia Macharia, in a presentation at the African Studies Association conference in Washington, DC in 2005, worked to destabilize staid assumptions about the circumstance that defines "brain drain" – i.e. Kenyans (in his case) living and working outside of Kenya and sending money "back home." He acknowledged that there was a loss to Kenya of some potential economic and social value due to his absence from Kenya. But he was arguing for a more complex examination of the situation. He sought to trouble the presumptive notion that people in this circumstance are doing less to support the development of their nation than would be the case if they returned "home" and contributed more "directly" to developments there. One of his points was that if he and others did return to Kenya, their access to money would be reduced – and thus less money would be available to do what they are already doing.

[77] I go into this issue at greater length in a subsequent chapter on a "university of our own."

[78] Makerere University is in Kampala, Uganda. As outlined in Chapter Two, Makerere University was initially a constituent college of the University of London. It eventually became the core campus of the University of East Africa – at which time the University of Nairobi was its constituent college.

number of students whose performance in secondary school qualified them to attend university. The response to this insufficiency in enrolling qualified students has been to retain international opportunities among one's options. As BA describes it today,

> *A lot of students from Kenya are going out. There are large numbers now going to India. Europe and America has become more difficult. They used to go to America. U.S., Canada, Europe. But it has become very expensive, very difficult situation in the last ten years or so. So, it is cheaper for students to go to India, Malaysia, and these places . . . Philippines, and so on.* (BA, August 30, 2007)

BA connects with a primary consideration impacting the capacity of individuals to respond to the international opportunity – cost. Yet he notes the degree to which this issue has seen transformation. For many individuals, the initial international options of 50 years ago have shifted away from the West, which had provided scholarships, bursaries, travel grants, etc. in support of the kind of national development described in Chapter Three. With such support at far lower levels today, the cost of a university education in the west is far greater than what is available in countries like India, Russia, and China.

I offer the following vignette as a means of detailing how one mother investigated these kinds of options, why she thought it necessary to do so, and what she encountered. I treat the story told here as an exemplar of the responsive discourse that plays against the longtime absence of a university near where this woman and her daughter live. This woman, GA, who is a longtime educator at the coast, and who described how she had previously assisted some of her students as well as her niece to get into university, had this to say,

> *My daughter . . . managed to get a B+, a very strong one. And now we are looking forward to going to university . . . I was looking for scholarships: in America, in Poland. I was looking in Malaysia. I was looking in Russia, I was*

looking even in Uganda. Anywhere. I even checked in India. Everywhere. I was looking for scholarships or donors to send my daughter to school. I am up and down looking at internets, newspapers, searching here and there. Filling in applications. I have filled about eight applications. I have applied to Sudan University, Poland University, Rhodes South Africa University. I have even applied in Dar es Salaam, and one in Uganda. In Uganda, they say they want an "A Level" – she has to go for "A Levels" first, before they take her for university. (GA, August 17, 2007)

The daughter has performed well. In fact, she was the number one ranked student at her school. Yet she was unable to gain admission to one of Kenya's public universities. Her family does not have the financial resources necessary to pursue the kind of alternative entry options (Model Two; Model Three; private university) that are available within Kenya. Her mother, whose professional life contacts her with people who have been educated internationally, saw international options as her one opportunity. The family is able to access internet resources, and as a result has become quite efficient in researching its options, and savvy enough to balance the wide range of different cost forces at play among these options – e.g. tuition; transportation; room and board; texts and materials; other supplies; and the ability to return home periodically. When I left Kenya, the family was still pursuing options.

What this family was fortunate enough to have knowledge of, and skills at, however, many others do not. In this vein, it seems necessary to note how information is dispersed in the present day. Similarly, how this information might be consumed by people responding to local absence, but without the savvy the family in the vignette has, is crucial to understanding how international opportunities are experienced.

This last point is no small matter, as the following quote, taken from a short article in the East African Standard newspaper on September 14, 2005, notes,

Degrees awarded to 231 university graduates were declared bogus when the government announced their former university is illegal. The Commission for Higher Education's decision that Newport International University has no authority to offer degrees means Newport's graduates will not be able to use their transcripts to apply for further education or jobs.

Newport International University had not recruited the 231 Kenyan students to come to the United States. The students remained in Kenya, and went through an online program. As such, it is not directly analogous to the vignetted family's story. As a cautionary tale, however, it resonates. Newport International University's website, which can be found at http://www.newportinternational-edu.com/ does indicate that there are only three staff administrators working at the home 'campus.' And the website's Profile page does state that while the university is licensed by the State of Wyoming,

Neither The Department of Education nor the Wyoming State Board of Education has accredited or endorsed any course of study being offered by Newport International University.

So, the university may be able to walk away from any charges that they were defrauding their students. But, basically, 231 Kenyan students spent money pursuing a degree that has been deemed value-less in Kenya. This is an important example for anyone in a position of responding to lack of local opportunity, and needing to look elsewhere to find a chance at university education.

Crux Point: Local Recruiting by Non-Kenyan Universities

In examining what I am calling the responsive discourse of alternatives, I met with representatives of some of the recruiting agencies and international universities

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that operate within Kenya. While on my final research trip to Kenya in July-September 2007, I learned that one such agency had recently opened a small office in Nyali, just a few miles north of downtown Mombasa. The recruiting agency maintains its main office in Nairobi, where it is joined by a number of similar agencies[79]. I went to the agency office and met with the single agency representative working there.

The agency recruiter was holding an open house the afternoon that I visited (September 10, 2007). In addition to speaking with the recruiter who works out of that office, I also had a chance to speak to a British university representative who was on a recruiting trip and was in Mombasa that day to speak with any interested students, and to begin ascertaining how viable a recruiting market the coast constituted.

I asked the recruiting agency representative what the rationale was for opening the office in Mombasa. I was told,

> *There was a demand for students from here, and it wasn't feasible for them to go all the way to Nairobi. So they do everything here and we forward their application and visa application.*

The feasibility to which the recruiting agent was referring was cost-based. It is expensive to travel to and from Mombasa and Nairobi. The Mombasa office of the recruiting agency had only been open for six months when I visited, and had ended up processing materials for six students who ended up going overseas for their

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[79] A partial list of the organizations that do operate in this manner would include: Australian Education Consultants; AUSI – Australian University Services International; British-Canadian International Education; Canadian Education Consultants Network; Dovec Education Consultants – East Africa; Education Malaysia Limited (for Malaysia only); Global Education Counseling; KenRuss Ltd. (for Russia only); Lawrie-Green Education Associates; Millennium Global Education Services; Overseas Education Advisory Centre; Pan Africa Focus; Uniserv LTD.; and Wisemen Trainers & Consultants.

studies within that period. When asked about the services the recruiting agency provides, I was told,

> *We help students with career counseling, university admission, visa guidance. But this is mainly done for the universities that we represent, which are about 40 in the UK, one in Malaysia, one in Dubai.*

The timing of the recruiting agency's decision to open an office at the coast interested me. It coincided with the arrival in Mombasa of satellite campuses of both Methodist University and Kenyatta University. It seemed to be that the recruiting business was another example of recognition that there existed a need for a university presence at the coast. When I asked the university recruiting agent how long it took to establish whether a market would be viable for them, I was told,

> *I would say it takes at least six months to a year to get familiar with the market and be able to develop strategies and an understanding of the business, and the process.*

I asked what steps the university took to gauge the market, how did they approach it. I learned that that they engage

> *Local partners, and if there were* [an opportunity for us]*, then we would come and see what the potential was, and to meet them, and see what the end results are. And if it didn't produce then we would decide to move away.*

When asked what the current view – after six months of operation at the coast – of the coast market was, the recruiting agency representation and the university recruiter concurred that

> *To the U.K. from Mombasa, you are probably talking a hundred to two hundred students, as a ballpark figure, you know, maybe a bit generous, but that would be the maximum, I would say.*

I followed up on this, asking what the limiting factor(s) were. Unsurprisingly, the recruiting agency representative said that it came down to,

Money. Money. They have the grades. It's just the funding.

There are plenty of students from the coast who "have the grades." The daughter of the woman I profile in the vignette above had the grades. Tens of thousands of others around Kenya have the grades. Nearly as many do not have the funds. And so many of those who might otherwise qualify for international opportunities will be closed out for financial reasons.

Nevertheless, I believe that these international opportunities will continue to be pursued, as the vignette I offered earlier shows. This is because the lack of available spaces at public universities in Kenya continues to necessitate the creation of individual responses. And so each year students work through what their possibilities are, and each year recruiters work with those Kenyans who want to see if it is possible to join those already studying overseas.

This constitutes an active response to the limited possibilities that exist at the coast (and elsewhere in Kenya). It is, in my view, evidence of the engagement between absence at the coast and possible presence elsewhere. It is a response that will be transformed as a fuller range of university possibility takes up space at the coast. It may not eliminate the outward look for opportunity, but this is, after all, a historically well-rooted practice.

Crux Point: The Universal Education Trust Fund

The final crux point I wish to examine in this chapter is one that I believe exists as a response to a range of discourses discussed up to this point. While in Mombasa, I began asking whether there were any organizations and individuals who financially supported coastal students' pursuits of higher education. Within my

conception of a responsive discourse of alternatives, and given the relative paucity of university options available locally, I see such support as directly engaging the marginalization of successful students whose lack of opportunity could be mitigated if funding assistance were identified. What I ended up finding stands as perhaps the strongest response to marginalization that I encountered.

I had the opportunity both to meet and to interview the founder of the Universal Education Trust Fund (UETF), Amir Swaleh, and to attend the ceremony in honor of 63 Kenyan students who are presently in Russia, where the UETF is sponsoring the entirety of their five year medical studies. The UETF is devoting approximately $3 million to this particular effort, which is but one of the ways they are working to support education in and for Kenyans. I want to take time and space here to describe the work and the history of the UETF within the context of higher education – as I have previously described it – at the coast. I will cite at length directly from my interview with Swaleh.

After I had briefly described what I was in Mombasa to research, I asked Swaleh about the origins of the UETF, and about what he saw happening that spurred his interest and effort? He replied that,

> *I started this program because I personally went through a bursary. I was sponsored by the Catholic Church until I finished my "O" Levels. And then "A" levels, I was sponsored by the school, Ali Dinar Visram[80]. So I never paid any school fees. Then I went to the University of Nairobi.*

Swaleh began his response by speaking from his personal experience. As a poor child (he was an orphan), he had few options. He then continues, explaining

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[80] Still one of the best schools in Coast Province. In fact, in results from the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education exams for 2007, Ali Dinar Visram was the top district level school in Coast Province.

how the sponsorship support enabled him to attend law school, after which he established his practice in Mombasa. Once his practice began, in 1989, he explained that

> *Because I [had been] sponsored by the Catholic Church, I wanted to give an opportunity to people like me, who, if given the opportunity, maybe tomorrow they will come and assist others. So I started this program by giving bursaries to about five students. And, I continued slowly. In 1993, I had about 50 students – primary and secondary school. [By] 1996, I had 150 students. At that time, I had a budget of about KSh100,000 a month[81].*

By this point, and as may be inferred from the level of giving, Swaleh's law practice had grown quite successful. And, as more students were sponsored, even more learned of the opportunity. And so, in 1998, Swaleh told me,

> *I talked to a friend of mine . . . I am an orphan. He is also an orphan . . . He had finished at Kenyatta University. He was doing economics. So, I told him, this is what I have. He said, 'fine, let's make it big, you know' . . . So we registered an organization, in 1999, called Universal Education Trust Fund. Yeah. So, and I became the chairman of the Fund. And within one year, with the grace of God, this man started doing very good business, and we were able to sponsor - in the year 2000 - six hundred students.*

By this point, the UETF was still sponsoring only primary and secondary school students. However, within a couple of years, by 2003, the Kenyan government had more fully implemented a free primary school system. UETF's efforts then turned toward the possibility of sponsoring some students for university. Swaleh said,

> *In 2002, we expanded the program to cover universities. So, we started paying school fees for university students who do specific fields like medicine, law, engineering, architecture . . . Then, [by] 2005 the program expanded. In 2005, we had 6,000 students countrywide . . . Today, we have 7,800 students, with a monthly budget of $150,000 a month.*

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[81] This amounted to an approximately $1,400 per month, out-of-pocket expense for Swaleh.

The UETF's effort, again, can be seen as a direct response to the broader marginalization discourses around education in coastal Kenya. Swaleh, et al's energies went into identifying students who would have encountered financial difficulty if it had been left to their own family resources to fund their further education. These students had to be academically strong enough to be admitted to university in Kenya. UETF gave the sponsored students mobility, the sponsorship went to the institution the student enrolled in. Thus, the UETF was aiding the students in their response to the political, societal, and financial forces that might otherwise have kept them from transforming their circumstances.

I asked what kind of review the UETF did of its sponsorships, and how it measured whatever impact it felt it made. Swaleh told me that,

> *In 2005, we sat down, and we tried to look back on how much we have achieved. And we realized that even our goals have not been achieved.* [But] *in what sense? We still don't have many professionals within our communities. We still don't have people very educated up to university level from our community. So, we said something must be wrong somewhere. Why is it that our students drop at "O" levels? Even students who get B, B+, A-* [in secondary school leaving exams] *are not able to go to the university, because we don't sponsor students who go to do geography, or history, or Kiswahili.*

Here Swaleh admits that UETF prioritized the fields of study it would sponsor, which were the very fields of study that were the most sought after at Kenya's public universities (medicine, engineering, etc.), and had fairly small cohorts on entry. In response to this realization that his efforts were not helping his community as much as he wanted, he told me that,

> *We decided to undertake a study to see how the program can achieve its goals. And we realized that unless we branch out, and sponsor students to do medicine abroad, we will not be able to, you know, get benefit or add value from this program. So, I went to China. I went to India, Malaysia, and Russia, to see . . . . . because these are the places where you can get cheap*

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education. So, when I went to India, I realized most of the Indians now go to Russia to study medicine. When I went to Malaysia, I realized the government of Malaysia sponsors 1000 Malaysians every year to go and study medicine in Russia. In English, not in Russian. In English, because Russian universities – the government subsidizes the cost of education, even for foreigners.

This point makes the explicit connection between what opportunities are available for university education in Mombasa (few), what is available elsewhere in Kenya (limited spaces), and what might be available if one could search in the wider world. Swaleh was able to search. He engaged and responded to the forces that marginalize the people of his community. And because the UETF had itself become such a sizable force, he was able to negotiate.

So, we realized that to send a student to America to study medicine, we will need $20,000 a year. In UK, we will need 15,000 pounds. In Russia, we will need $5,000 - inclusive of accommodation per year. So, with the help of the Russian embassy, and our embassy in Moscow, we got in touch with several universities and we came up with a program which started this year. And I am glad to tell you that this year we are sending 60 students to study medicine in Russia.

UETF, though overtly engaged in efforts to strengthen Mombasa's Muslim community, is not devoted solely to supporting Muslim students. The Fund will assist non-Muslim students whose circumstances meet the Fund's stated goals of support. Swaleh said,

[Our fund] *is supposed to be used to uplift the standard of living of Muslims . . . because Muslim areas are the most marginalized, like Northeast Province and Coast* [Province] *. . . Our fund assists 95% Muslims and 5% non-Muslims . . . So, we try as much as possible to cater for Muslims students all over the country, plus we also go for Christian students who are very bright, and who cannot have access to their own . . . we have six, seven, eight students, out of the sixty, we have eight Christian students going to Russia.*

The UETF's move into Russia led me to ask Swaleh if the fund will be continuing only in Russia, or if it saw expansion possibilities in other countries –

even given the initial investigation's finding that costs in Russia were significantly lower than other possibilities like China or Malaysia. Swaleh said,

> *We have been invited by the Chinese embassy. And, you know, they told us they have a number of universities doing it in English . . . We are just taking them to Russia* [now] *because we have an arrangement. We are paying a very subsidized amount of fees per student. And, the good thing about this is that 98% of these students scored very, very high marks, but with zero chances of being taken to do medicine at the University of Nairobi. So this is an opportunity to them.*

Referring to the possibility of sponsoring students to go to China, Swaleh was quite straightforward, saying,

> *Well, if they give us good rates, then the airlift will be to China.*

Swaleh's energy and UETF's money have created a powerful counter-force to overwhelming marginalizing pressures. Certainly, 63 students is not a large number, but this was a single year's intake. And the UETF does sponsor some students for medicine, engineering, and other highly competitive fields within Kenya's public universities. In fact, Swaleh and the UETF have already begun trying to leverage their financial strength and 20-year history of sponsorship into agreements with Kenyan universities. One such effort that Swaleh described showcased the ways in which the existing public universities in Kenya are limited in what they have the resources to even attempt, never mind accomplish. Swaleh told of how he went

> *personally to Nairobi University, and I met the Dean of Faculty of Medicine. And we told them what we do, and we told them, 'Listen – if you can reduce the cost – not for everybody, but for us. Because we are trying to help – and you make it about $3,000 a year – we are prepared to bring 200 students.' He said, we are even thinking of increasing the fees. Currently, it's about $8,000 per year.*

As the story relates, the current circumstance within Kenyan higher education is toward further reliance on students to pay a fuller portion of the overall costs. This

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is supplemented by a broadening of entrepreneurial undertakings by the universities in response to the reduction of government subsidy of the universities. One result of this, and another sign of the influence UETF is able to have because of its size, its focus, and its history, is an increase in the number of countries in East and Central where UETF now sponsors students. As of 2007, Swaleh says,

> *In Uganda now we are sponsoring 51 students, Ugandan students going to Makerere* [University], *Busoga University, Islamic University of Uganda [at Mbale], Kampala International* [University's] *western campus for medicine and pharmacy. A total of 51 students. We are going to increase the number by 100 students for next year.*

> *We are opening in Tanzania in October . . . In Dar es Salaam.* [In] *Zanzibar, we are* [already] *there. We have ten students at the university.*

> *We have ten students in Congo . . . at Kinshasa. We have six students in Rwanda. And we have offered 20 scholarships to southern Sudan . . . these are all Christians - what they requested* [from] *us is to bring students to Uganda to do "A" levels. So, we're still trying to see which school we are going to take these students. And then after "A" levels we can proceed with them.*

With this tremendous outlay of capital, and the ability to negotiate agreements with institutions in a multitude of countries (if not its own, yet) I wondered if UETF had ever considered the idea of developing its own university at the coast, or of becoming a primary sponsor of another effort to create a coastal university. Swaleh acknowledged that there had been some investigation of that idea, but that,

> *We realized it was going to be too expensive to have a university in Mombasa.* [There would be] *a lot of overhead. Because in Nairobi, the same lecturer who teaches in* [the University of] *Nairobi teaches at Daystar* [University]*, at USIU* [United States International University] *. . . it is cheaper [that way]. To have professors and doctors and lecturers based in Mombasa, in one university – we cannot afford to pay them. We cannot afford it.*

Conclusion

As I have shown in this chapter, there are a number of significant and high profile responses to the limited access to university opportunity at the coast. The three crux points examined here each have engaged elements of the forces that have long marginalized coast pursuits of university education. Whether as a means to counter religious imbalance in university level by opening Kenya's first explicitly Islamic university (as against the multitude of overtly Christian universities already operating in Kenya), or looking to the broader world for opportunities not available at home, the coast region has pursued ways to fight against the marginalization it experiences.

None of the efforts profiled here face a future without potential difficulties. The Mombasa Islamic University will be a private university, which means it will face the financial difficulties private institutions often face. It will have to find ways to balance its costs against its desire to offer any kind of comprehensive (and expensive) set of course offerings. If there is any question as to how such costs can cripple, see the last quote from Amir Swaleh – even the UETF with all its financial resources and philanthropic spirit does not see a private university as a sustainable endeavor at this point.

International opportunities in higher education have long been part of life at the coast of Kenya. This is true whether from the historical perspective of pursuit of ongoing Koranic studies in Zanzibar, Seychelles, etc., or from a more recent past, wherein well-known academics from the Kenyan coast have had successful careers as internationally-based scholars. It remains true even as a thread connected to the more common path that sees thousands of Kenyans studying outside the country in

any given year. Yet any next individual student who enters the international market faces unknowns – personal, cultural, social, political, academic – that could upend their idea. While group programs like that sponsored in Russia by UETF may mitigate this because the students travel together, this kind of difficulty remains possible.

There are higher education options available at the coast, whether the new campuses of Kenyatta University and Methodist University, the long-offered certificate and diploma programs of Mombasa Polytechnic, the programs offered by the local institutes and colleges, or even the new degree programs on offer at an emergent Mombasa Polytechnic University College. But for all of this opportunity (and remember, much of it – Kenyatta; Methodist, MPUC – is only emergent), I assert that the existence of the programs I have described in this chapter show that there is space for further moves, further options. Mombasa Islamic University has been pursued for too long, there are too many Kenyans going abroad for university education, UETF has too long a philanthropic history and too much money to be disappearing anytime soon.

In the next chapter, I focus on the discourse of 'a university of our own.' I see this discourse and the recent changes that have brought public university colleges to the coast as being the synthesis, the broad arc discursive transformation that results from the longstanding responsive discourse of alternatives and the moves made against the discourses of marginalization. The notion of 'a university of our own' is not a new one, nor is it an untroubled one. I will spend some time at the narrow,

Fairclough-ian level, working through the complications that have defined this discourse over the decades.

Chapter Seven: SYNTHESIS - A 'University of Our Own'

Also vital is a strategy of geographical balance. This has to be one of the seven strategies of potential transformation of our universities in Africa. This geo-strategy is a quest for rational geographical balance. This is needed within each country, including the different locations of universities. In Kenya, the coast was the first to be literate historically, but seems to be the last to have a university of its own. Mombasa was literate a thousand years before Nairobi as a city was born. Yet Kenya's second city still does not have a university of its own. It is a case of blatant geographical discrimination. We need to redress the issue and try to approximate rational geographical balance. Mombasa and Lamu initiated literate intellectualism a thousand years before most of the country could read and write.[82]

In the history of Kenya as a whole the coast was the first to be literate by hundreds of years and yet the coast was allowed to be almost the last to host a university in postcolonial Kenya. I have lectured and written about this anomaly, and I continue to hope that it would be corrected in the near future . . . But the coast has since been relegated to marginal cultivation. Mombasa is Kenya's second city in size, but it is Kenya's first city in age and recorded history. Nairobi is a product of the twentieth century, but Mombasa is older by a thousand years. Should it still lack a university long after six public universities had been established elsewhere in the country? In trying to correct this academic anomaly, I have become more active than ever[83]. (p. 16)

Are we going to have a coast university? Inshallah, yes. . . . I quoted from a senior respected scholar, Ali Mazrui. I use his phrase to describe my article . . . First to Go to School, Last to Graduate. . . . That means we are the first ones who started schools in this area. But there is not a university at the coast. And that's why we say "last to graduate."[84]

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[82] Quote from Professor Ali Mazrui, Lecture at Taifa Hall, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya, 2003. Published in "Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations," v.2, no. 3&4, Fall & Winter 2003, p. 161.

[83] Quote is from *Mazrui Newsletter 2005*, written by Professor Ali Mazrui.

[84] Quote is from Dr. Abdulrazak Shaukat, at the Forum on Enhancing Excellence in Higher Education, held at Koblenz Hall in Mombasa, July 28, 2007

<u>Introduction</u>

The concept of a 'university of our own' is not a new one. It is also not necessarily a coast-based one. It is, however, with the changes brought in August 2007, in many ways closer to becoming a realized one. In this regard, the discourse of a university of our own is the synthesis point in a transformative dialectic that begins with the discourses of marginalization that permeate the coast's relationship with the remainder of Kenya. In opposition to this marginalization come the responsive discourse of alternatives, as I described in the previous chapter. It is owing to the long time engagement with these responses that the situation at the coast is being transformed, with several university colleges now located in Coast Province, one of them in Mombasa itself.

Within a more narrow construct of discourse however (Fairclough, 1992), there are questions both about the conception of 'a university of our own' and about the form its realization is taking, and what may arise from this. During the course of conducting the interviews and gathering the additional resource material with which I have put together this study, it quickly became clear that this concept, this discourse, was one of the more frequently invoked: coastal Kenya should have a "university of our own." As I heard and saw the phrase or its variants used[85], it is a concept for which each of three words "university," "our," and "own" merits investigation for meaning. It is here where I will start my analysis.

Whether the people who mentioned this notion felt that the coast region was "merited" or "had earned" or "deserved" a university, this notion that a university - a

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[85] "University for the coast people" being one such variant; the idea that each province should have at least one university, at minimum, being another, perhaps less Coast-specific, variant.

public university - should be developed or built was and is strongly felt. Yet there was no necessary agreement about the path such development of the eventual university would take. Would, for example, it arise as first a constituent college of an existing university, eventually to become an independent university – as is the case with most of the public universities in Kenya? Or would it – should it – be established as an independent university from the beginning – as with Moi University, the singular, very contentious example in the history of the development of higher education in Kenya of such a university?

And, too, given that there was no uniformly held idea of who constitutes the "our" of the coast – at least among those with whom I spoke – it remains an open question as to which people, or which communities, such a university would be for, or, whose "own" university it would be. Given Kenyan government policy on enrollment and support for public universities, there are bureaucratic and administrative politics that cloud any easy understanding that location of a university would make it something of any community's "own."

All of this can be seen as reflecting or responding to the dominant discourse of universities as sites of national development. Yet if this dominant discourse initially sought to bring the intellectual and academic wealth of the country into the capital city of Nairobi, it accordingly had the impact of concentrating those universities in the particular ethnic and linguistic communities in which specific populations resided. Making this connection between the establishment of universities with the communities in which they were located, Mwiria and Ng'ethe (2007) are quite straightforward when they write that,

[T]he University of Nairobi is situated in the heartland of the Kikuyu community, and the community is, comparatively speaking, economically advantaged, hence its big numerical student presence at the university. (33)

Mwiria and Ng'ethe also note that those ethnic communities that do not reside in proximity to Nairobi, especially those that constitute a smaller demographic slice of the overall population, have seen their enrollment in Kenya's public universities fall well below their percentage of the overall population. Figure 3 below[86] indicates the university enrollment side of this mismatch.
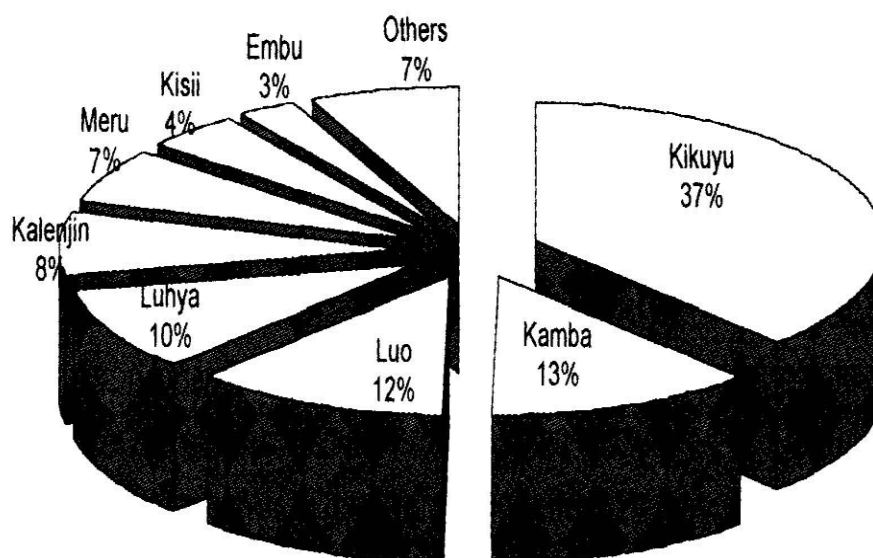
While each of these ethnic communities can be found in many of Kenya's provinces, each of them retains demographically central locations in specific provinces and regions – see map on page 94 for the locations of Kenya's provinces. In general, the Kikuyu make up a large portion of Nairobi Province's population, and an overwhelming proportion of the population of Central Province. The Meru and Embu are largely in the western portion of Eastern Province (contiguous with Central Province). The Kamba are primarily in the southern portion of Eastern Province. The Luo make up the majority of the population in Nyanza Province. The Luhya are concentrated in Western Province. The Kalenjin are primarily located in Rift Valley Province. And the Kisii are found between eastern Nyanza Province and southwestern Rift Valley Province.

Figure 4: Ethnic distribution of Kenya's public university enrollment

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[86] The pie chart is adapted from the one shown on page 33 of Mwiria, et al (2007)

Mwiria and Ng'ethe tell us that,

. . . the large presence of the Kikuyu group in the public university system reflects their numerical strength in the country . . . there are geographical, regional and developmental factors that selectively promote higher education among the Kikuyu community, so that they are over-represented in the university system compared with other large ethnic groups such as the Kamba, Luo, Luhya, and Kalenjin, who are under-represented in relation to their demographic numbers. (33)

Toward the low end of the distribution of university population, Mwiria and Ng'ethe note that,

Only 6.7 percent of all students originate from the remaining ethnic groups in Kenya such as Teso, Mijikenda[87], Maasai, Samburu, Turkana, Boran and Somali. These other groups individually account for no more than 1.4 percent of the students in the public universities. (33)

What Mwiria and Ng'ethe reveal about the population of Kenya's universities is in line with what other researchers have seen regarding the education system that feeds the universities. Concerning Mwiria and Ng'ethe's earlier noted point about the comparative economic advantage of the Kikuyu population vis-à-vis advances in access to education, Alwy and Schech (2004) note that,

Nairobi, the Central Province and presently the Rift Valley Province[88], have the highest enrolment rates in all education sectors, primary, secondary and higher. Inequalities also exist in the number of schools and higher institutions, where schools in the three better resourced provinces are more numerous than in the other provinces, and these inequities are compounded by the fact that students from other regions, like the North Eastern Province and Coast Province, are more likely to have poor parents, a poor road network, and poorly qualified teachers. (273)

Amutabi (2003), in his article focusing on the politicization of the education system throughout Kenya's post-colonial history, notes that,

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[87] Mijikenda are the most populous ethnic group in Coast Province.

[88] These three provinces are the home to Kenya's first three Presidents, as well as the country's most populous ethnic group, the Kikuyu.

[D]uring Kenyatta's time in 1977, of the eleven secondary schools that took most students to university, five, namely Kagumo (92), Thika (76), Alliance Boys (72), Alliance Girls (60) and Nyeri (48), were in Central Province. Kagumo with 92 had more qualifiers to university that year than the whole number of qualifiers from the whole of Western Province schools that had a combined total of 87. (135)

Amutabi goes on to describe the actions of the Moi government, which came in upon the death of Jomo Kenyatta in August 1978. Over the next twenty-five years, President Moi would build richly endowed secondary school upon richly endowed secondary school, each designed to increase access to high quality secondary education, and thereby increase opportunities in higher education for its graduates. Many of these schools were built in Moi's own Kalenjin community. Amutabi comments that,

*After a few years of President Moi's rule, the fortunes of other provinces had changed vis-à-vis Central Province as the President had helped in building the best schools in the country **especially among his ethnic group**. Kabarak, Sacho, Moi Girls-Eldoret, Kapsabet Boys, Kipsigis Girls, Kabarnet Boys, Kapkenda Girls, were emergent giants and yet the positions in these schools were being shared equitably by students from areas that were previously privileged like Central Province hence perpetuating the imbalance.* (135; **Emphasis added**)

In this way, Moi brought high quality secondary education opportunities to his own community. Yet not all of the spaces at these new schools could be taken by local students, since their primary schools were not as numerous, nor as strong as those in other locations. Hence, as Amutabi points out, the results were a continuation of advantage toward already privileged communities. In any case, it is clear that the building, staffing and supporting of high quality schools during the Moi presidency was not focused on Coast Province.

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This demographic distribution and imbalance was something about which the people with whom I spoke were well aware. And most of these people were able to compare Nairobi, and the benefits accruing to its nearby communities, with Kenya's next two most populous cities: Mombasa, and Kisumu.[89] In Kisumu, the predominantly Luo community long fought for access to the benefits of education, at primary, secondary and higher education levels. They would only really begin to realize the benefits of a full range of local higher education opportunities within the last decade, when Maseno University[90] was elevated to full university status[91] in the early 1990s.

In order to better understand the idea of a "university of our own" as situated in Mombasa, it became clear to me that the "our" in the discourse needs to be better defined. As some of the quotes in a previous chapter on the perceived marginalization of the coast pointed out, Mombasa (and the coast more broadly) is a cosmopolitan place, and has long been so. Strobel and Mirza (1989) extend the point to include the impacts of the British colonial period, writing that

> *As part of a British colony, Mombasa experienced tremendous expansion, becoming the largest seaport in East Africa. It grew from a Muslim community, with a population of about 25,000 at the turn of the [19th/20th] century, to a cosmopolitan city of 100,000 by about 1950, and over 340,000 by the time of the 1979 census. The migration of Africans from upcountry transformed the culturally Muslim community into an even more diverse city,*

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[89] Kisumu is located on the shores of Lake Victoria, in western Kenya, some 250 miles west of Nairobi.

[90] From Mwiria and Ng'ethe (2007), Maseno University began as a Church Missionary Society mission center in the first years of the 20th century, eventually becoming Siriba Teacher Training College. In 1990, it was established as a constituent college of Moi University, and finally elevated to full university status in 2000.

[91] Kisumu is now also home to Great Lakes University, a private institution established in just the past few years.

in which Muslims by the 1960s were the minority[92]. Old Town, the area of original settlement, remains a Muslim Swahili community[93], but the newer settlements on the island and those spread onto the surrounding mainland were more eclectic. (7)

So who constitutes the population of Mombasa? Who is the "our" of this discourse? Salim (1973) describes the political atmosphere surrounding the run-up to independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He cites a 1961 colonial report in noting that,

Arabs, Swahili and Bajunis on the coastal strip totaled 37,000 only as opposed to 300,000 Africans, 48,000 Asians, and 7,000 Europeans. (240)

This point can be taken in a number of directions. Looking at it from a particularly technocratic perspective, one interview respondent noted that the Kenyan government last sought to identify the ethnicity of Mombasa's residents in the census of 1989, ceasing to ask the question since then. One way to interpret this, it seems, is as an acknowledgement that the question had come to be too politically hot to continue to be asked. This person noted that the 1989 census determined that as much as 34% of Mombasa's population was of "upcountry" ethnic origin.

In a different direction entirely, Benjamin (2005) writes of the Mijikenda[94], who are far more populous along Kenya's coast than are the Swahili. And if only to further complexify this point, the histories of both the Swahili and the Mijikenda each identify numerous distinct sub-groups. While the Mijikenda, as noted, are more

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[92] Per Lodhi (1994), approximately 25% of Kenya's population is Muslim, with far more outside of Mombasa and the Coast region than within. Chande (2000) allows that between 20% and 30% of Kenya's population is Muslim.

[93] Old Town , while a sizable place, is but one of many sections of the island, Mvita, that is frequently equated with the name "Mombasa."

[94] In the cited work, Benjamin focuses on Katana Mkangi, the late Mijikenda sociologist, and his "seemingly common-sense orientation to Mijikenda history."

populous, the Swahili continue to constitute a distinct, important, concentrated minority of the coast's population.

The following quote by BK, one of the interview respondents, gets at some of the complexity of this issue of what a university at the coast may face,

> *So, now, if I advocate for a university, it will be a university for whom? It will be just a university for the same upcountry people who already have the universities anyway. So, now it is like we are just building branches for them, you know, to the coast. So what I say is like, with a few Swahilis or coastal people we have, if now we do not give them the university, and then the ones, even the upcountry people who came this way, if they don't go to school, we will have a very difficult community to handle.* (December 25, 2006)

BK is acknowledging the heterogeneity of the present admixture of ethnicities living at the coast, while including "Swahili" and "coastal people" as constituencies to be served by such a university. Thus, the "our" in the phrase "university of our own" remains a nebulous idea, useful in any number of directions due to its lack of specificity, yet weakened by virtue of possessing that very characteristic. Again, though, however nebulous the definition of "our" is, its use in the local discourse around universities at the coast reveals just how complex the issue is, and how many threads there are to be parsed.

Beyond the example of MIOME which I describe in Chapter Three and mention elsewhere, there was another example of an education that might have been "of the coast" – had it ever been built there. But Utalii College,[95] though initially set to be built at the coast, where a majority of Kenya's tourism revenue is generated, was constructed in Nairobi. It continues to serve as a further example of

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[95] The word "Utalii" translates to English as "Tourism," and Utalii College is the premier higher education institution in Kenya with programs focusing on hotel management and tourism studies.

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how the economic and development interests of the coast are seen as marginal to

the interests of the Kenyan government. As is said in these two interview quotes,

> *But again, it really does go back to this question of political clout. An Utalii College ought to have been established at the coast. I do not know how it happened, because I was out of the country when Utalii was established. But I will not be surprised if that* [planned at and for the coast, but moved and implemented in Nairobi] *is how it happened . . .* (OM, September 17, 2007)

> *Utalii College - the decision was made to set it up in the coast, and* [then] *they set up in Nairobi. I don't think they would have documented that. Any documents* [in] *which an appraisal was done which had suggested that this Utalii College should be in Malindi or Mombasa - they would have disappeared. You see, all this, the funding was external, so before funding was approved, a document had to be prepared to get an approval for that funding. But at the end of the day . . .* (BG, December 25, 2006)

Crux Point: Moi University as a University of Its Own

I will return to discussion of Mombasa Polytechnic later in this chapter. Before

doing so, however, I want to further contextualize the discourse of a "university of

our own" by offering some perspectives on how Kenya's universities have generally

arisen, and the specific way in which Moi University is very different. This difference

opens up a discursive space for people anywhere in Kenya to question why Moi

University remains the only example of its kind. It frames a frequently posed

question as to why any community that is without a university should not, in fact,

push to follow the example of Moi University, rather than the more common

examples of constituent colleges being elevated. Where the University of Nairobi

was gradually elevated, first from a constituent college of the University of London to

a constituent college of the University of East Africa, Moi University was not an

offspring of any other institution. Neither was it located in a particularly populous

area. As the following quote states,

There are two ways of establishing a university. Two ways, I know of. One, you establish a university from scratch. For example, Moi University was constructed from scratch. . . . the other way is to build on the existing institution. (BR, July 28, 2007)

Many other people with whom I spoke had related ideas about the history and impact of Moi University. I offer a couple of the more straightforward quotes on this below:

[I]t was only when Moi came and tried to diversify in terms of decentralization but he also targeted areas that were predominantly of his ethnic or original background, that's why the second university in the country, Moi University, was established in Eldoret. And that was the only university, as you heard the professor say that was built from scratch, using the Mackay plan. (IN, July 29, 2007)

Okay, now, if we are talking about the ways, in fact, you can say, the ways of universities in Kenya, some of them, or most of them, they have come up as this constituent college of another. For example, when I was at, when I was learning, I was taking my degree, my first degree at Kenyatta University. At that time it was Kenyatta University College. It was under Nairobi. Then, after completing, then it became KU. The same with JKU - Jomo Kenyatta College of Agriculture. The only college, the only university that came up on its own was only Moi University. But the rest, they have started as . . . constituent college[s]. (KL, August 3, 2007)

As often as not, though, the details I heard about the impact of the "built from scratch" Moi University were more sharply rendered, and/or more nuanced. As one person simply stated, in sharp tones,

Moi did it [built Moi University] *for his* [Kalenjin] *people so that they could get education so they can have a piece of the cake from national resources.* (GL, August 17, 2007)

There is certainly something to be said for the economic impact of the establishment of a university - Moi University - near the town of Eldoret, in Rift Valley Province. Among the fuller descriptions of this impact, there is this,

Currently, I cannot cite any study that has been done on the economic impact of Moi University. But my look at what is happening in Eldoret, I can tell you

that there is a lot more. For example, the staff of the university have been able to get plots around, and build their own houses. That is development. The staff of the university are housed in the estates in Eldoret. If you check in Eldoret now - the rents - Eldoret has the highest rate of payment of rents. Why is it very high? Because of the factories and the university. Because there were not many houses in the university, so a lot of people stay in town. There were no matatus [local taxis] *from Eldoret town to where Moi University is. Now, you have regular matatus there, really, many of them.*

Now, this is coming from nowhere . . . There is now a town that has developed there. Tarmac has moved from Moi University to Eldoret. So, there is development, as far as I am concerned. And the university has now put up a campus in Eldoret town. It is one big building, and that is mainly for the self-sponsored programs [SSP]. *So, SSP is bringing in a lot of students. They have enough students for SSP. They have two campuses by the way, now. There is one that is built, and one inside town. So, that is development. So, here, as well, I can add that, definitely from what I can see, there is employment.* (FV, August 8, 2007)

An example of a more nuanced telling of the story might go as follows,

I don't know whether you've been to Moi, but there was an attempt to weave it, the university into the local culture and practices, into the library. Well, they're dedicated to Kalenjin culture and cultural artifacts. So they are feeding into the notion of a university of [one's own]. . . And once you have opened that route, then it is very difficult to control it. (OM, September 17, 2007)

Whether the stories of the establishment of Moi University speak to its creation out of whole cloth, or its economic impact on the area, or its strong connection with and straightforward focus upon the social, economic, and political interests of the people of Eldoret and the surrounding area (and their connections to the former President Moi), one thing seems clear given the strength with which the image of Moi University as a place "built from scratch" is retained in people's memories. It seems almost an iconic understanding of Moi University – it is the "only one" established in this way. But that is why, as the final sentence in the last quote cited above says, once a route is opened up, it becomes very difficult to control.

Politically, people have been fighting to have a university in each region. People have been fighting to have institutions in their respective regions. Depending on their political authority, they have been able to establish institutions based on their wishes. So, Moi University came up from nowhere, but it was established straight from scratch. Jomo Kenyatta came up. Egerton came up, and so on. Now, from the coast region there was nothing. Northeastern, there was nothing. Western – they were crying. Maseno came up. They said we want an institution. So, they were given. Now Coast Province did not come up with anything. (FV, August 8, 2007)

The people with whom I spoke at the coast, and others with whom I spoke in Nairobi and elsewhere remember how Moi University got its start. Even as change is arriving in the provision of university opportunities at the coast, they question why the coast had to wait as long as it has, and why the coast, like Eldoret, was not been provided with a university of its own. As one person said,

If we had someone in political leadership, let's say the President hailed from this region, I would support the establishment of the university in September. He . . . could commit the entire nation-state into building that university. He would make sure his Minister of Finance budgeted for it. He would make sure his Minister for Planning planned for it. He would make sure his Minister of Education did a charter for it. He would make sure . . . he would call donor governments and donor agencies. He would go Saudi Arabia ten times. He would go to Libya fifteen times. He would go to China. He would do anything to get it done. But we do not have the capacity. (IN, July 29, 2007)

Yet, the coast has not had such a political leader show up to lead this effort. As I described in Chapter Five, there have not been any politicians from the coast who have both managed to gain a foothold on power at the national level, and worked to bring resources to areas at the coast not bound by narrow constituency borders. As that discourse goes, the coast's politicians act in terms of a 'disunity of purpose.'

It seems clear that these questions are an important aspect of many people's views about higher education provision. Why Eldoret but not Mombasa? Why them but not us? Why some political leaders, but not "our" political leaders? These

questions point to why I take Moi University's creation to be a crux point, a turning point in how people understand the issue of getting a university.

Crux Point: The Joint Admissions Board

In Chapter Three, I described the workings of the Joint Admissions Board (JAB) and the influence it had on enrollments to Kenya's public universities. The JAB constitutes a technocratic, bureaucratic aspect to the way in which Kenya's existing public universities enroll their students that must be brought into this discourse of "a university of our own." JAB decisions constitute, for a number of the people I interviewed, a significant barrier to <u>any</u> university in Kenya ever truly being a university for "its own" people, the people living in and coming from the communities neighboring the university.

While I realize that I have offered a description of JAB's work in previous chapters, I want to provide additional context here as a means of showing why I feel it to be a "crux point" in the discourse. Mwiria and Ng'ethe (2007) note that,

> *The Joint Admissions Board was established in the 1980s for the purpose of regulating entry to Kenya's public universities. It comprises the six Vice-Chancellors from the public universities, their deputies, registrars and deans of faculties and schools. It was established on a goodwill basis by the Vice-Chancellors: as such, it is not recognized under any legislation. It is, however, recognized by the Commission for Higher Education and the Higher Education Loans Board. The JAB is charged with selecting students for admission to the Kenyan public universities and distributing them to various faculties. Its chairmanship rotates on an annual basis among the Vice-Chancellors of the six public universities.*
>
> *Every year members of the board hold a number of meetings to determine the cut-off points for admission which vary from year to year. Based on capacities within individual universities and faculties/schools and in the light of students' [stated] preferences, selected students are allocated to various courses. Since some courses are more competitive or have smaller capacities, individual faculties/schools and/or departments may have specific admission*

criteria and different cut-off points. Thus, the main criteria for admission to the public universities and specific courses are the available space, performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) Examinations and the level of demand for [university] courses. Recent disclosures by the JAB show that the number of students applying for public university places has been declining. Even so, on average only 30 per cent of applicants are able to secure a place. (pp. 92-93)

So, the JAB determines the baseline exam results that will open up the possibility to secure a place at university. Mwiria and Ng'ethe offer further detail on some of the issues that have tended to make the JAB a contentious body within the higher educational sphere in Kenya, and one whose influence (or perhaps whose impact) is felt by students, parents, teachers, et al. In particular, they note that,

The JAB has also been accused of sluggishness in selecting students for admission to the universities. Thus, when the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education is completed, these results are announced almost a year before the JAB publishes its admissions cut-off points. Parents whose children meet the previous year's cut-off points are often shattered to learn that the cut-off points have been raised. Some critics have agreed that it is 'outrageous' that it takes two years after secondary school for students to begin at the university. (93)

But waiting more than a year for the JAB's decision – having already waited the better part of a year for the KCSEs to be graded – is only one aspect of the problem that has led many people to express that they note an air of capriciousness to the JAB's actions. Mwiria and Ng'ethe, again, offer some detail,

In order to strike a balance between the universities and the courses available, the board ends up admitting students to universities and degree programmes they never requested. To address the problem of qualified students being denied university admission as a result of restrictions on the number to be admitted, some universities have gone ahead with admitting more students to parallel degree programmes. Some administrators have contended that it is dishonest for the universities to admit regular students through the criteria set by the board, and then admit others separately for parallel programmes. Viewed in this way, it may appear that the JAB has reduced the whole admissions process to a gamble. Aware of these

weaknesses, the Vice-Chancellors of the public universities issued a directive to the JAB to admit only those students who meet the board's criteria. (94)

In short, the JAB is at the center of a logjam of fundamentally important information – test scores, available spaces, etc. – that leave it unable to work quickly to meet the desires of young students (and their parents) to move ahead with their studies. As I noted in Chapter Six, I spoke with the mother of a female student who sought to enroll in medicine. The daughter had done quite well – first in her school – at the KCSE. Even prior to knowing what the JAB decision would be as to whether and where her daughter would attend university, whether she would be accepted for medical studies, whether she would be selected for a university that her parents felt was right for her, the mother was anxious as to what her daughter would do in the intervening time, nearly a year. The daughter did not want to waste her time not studying; she did not want to study something that would not match a course or program potentially offered to her at university; and she did not want to study at a place or level that would not advance her interests. She felt stuck.

In a second example, I spoke to a woman who had

applied for medical sciences or biological sciences – but was shunted. [I was] accepted for "wood science" at Moi University – [but] missed out completely on my chance to attend university in Kenya in the subject of my choice. (BZ, August 7, 2007)

This woman ended up being community funded to study statistics in India at the undergraduate level. Her husband, also from Mombasa, did not work via the JAB system but instead went directly to Canada for his undergraduate studies.

A third person with whom I spoke about this particular issue, also a woman, had applied to study medicine at the University of Nairobi. After waiting a year for

her KCSE results, and while waiting for the JAB's decision, she opted to enroll in a parallel program in medicine at the University of Nairobi. She was eventually told she had been accepted for the textile studies program at Moi University, by which point her medical studies were well underway. When I met with her, she was already in the third year of her medical studies, and doing well.

The confusion that arises when people are made unsure as to whether they will be offered the course they desire, when writ large across whole communities, begins to define why I see the JAB as a "crux point" in the discourse of a "university of our own." In short, the universities do not presently have a fully free hand in enrolling the students who will be attending there. Admission to a public university in Kenya is a matter that is handled at the national level effort. The impact that this nationalized approach would have on whether a new university developed at the coast – and whether such a university could be, in the present discourse, a "university of our own" – is noted in the following interview quotes:

> *I think there are some who are for having a university and there are some who are against. There are some who . . . I have talked to some few people, and there were some who were saying even if we have a university it will not be the local people who will benefit. They have a feeling still that the students who will be brought down, the majority will be from upcountry. I think that is the feeling. The coast people want a university where they could take more of their students. Because if you go through the JAB admissions, not many of our students . . . And even now, with these campuses, because most of what they have is the fee-paying . . . . Parallel; Model-2; Self-sponsored. I doubt if when we say there is a campus at the coast, if the number of people who go there are really coast people.* (SS, August 31, 2007)

> [P]*lacing a university at any one location does not make it the property of that location, the admission criteria being centralized through JAB. The curriculum has to be overseen by the Commission for Higher Education. And if it is a public university then the curriculum has to be in line with other public universities. So, the extent to which a university can be localized is, that's an argument - you can have some locally relevant courses, like marine sciences*

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in the case of Mombasa. But the institution admits from every corner of the republic. (OM, September 17, 2007)

Yes, each university, as SS notes above, and as Mwiria and Ng'ethe detail, has a series of alternative enrollment programs (parallel; self-sponsored; Model two; Model three) that allow them to accept additional students beyond those dictated to them by the JAB. But that choice often brushes up against the limited access many students and parents have to the resources necessary to pay for the more costly alternative programs. Kinyanjui, et al (2006) in the report[96] for the Public Universities Inspection Board (PUIB), note that,

> *Another constraint is that the current position with respect to admission of students to public universities through JAB is that the candidates are in limbo for a period of about two years between the time they sit for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examinations (KCSE) and their admission to universities. This time span leads to idleness and parents pointed out that it could lead to formation of anti-social behavior. **The system also creates non-equity as the children of the rich enter university early on self-sponsored basis whilst the poor have to wait for two years with anxiety, not knowing their fate**. The Board notes that earlier on the government had tried to fill this period with the three months of compulsory national youth service; however, due to its militaristic nature, it was so unpopular that it was finally discontinued. In developing countries, the year before admission to universities, popularly known as the 'gap' year is used by some students to travel or pursue other interests while they make up their minds about what exactly they want to study.* (pp. 132-133. **Emphasis added**)

Related to these perspectives on the JAB are others that speak to the belief some people have that the opaque processes through which the JAB make decisions are deemed to leave an excessive number of coast-based students out of the hunt for positions at university that they express a desire to pursue. A couple of these perspectives tracked alongside the following concern about the JAB elucidated by Kinyanjui, et al (2006). These map on to the perspective of the student

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[96] *Transformation of Higher Education and Training in Kenya to Secure Kenya's Development in the Knowledge Economy*, published in December 2006 by the Government of the Republic of Kenya.

mentioned above, who had been offered a position in the textile studies program, rather than in any program more closely related to her interest in studying medicine. She is hardly alone, as the following indicates,

> *Currently, some of the students are admitted to unpopular programmes, which they consider neither competitive nor strategic, and hence a drain on public resources. Basically, JAB allocates students to these programmes in order to utilize the available facilities and keep the permanent and full-time lecturers attached to the programmes gainfully occupied. Such courses are poorly subscribed since they are not demand-driven. Retention of unpopular programmes in the roll of academic programmes available in public universities should be reexamined.* (p. 84)

Kinyanjui takes the point further, though, in pointing out the impact on the universities themselves from this kind of admissions policy,

> *The policy of channeling qualified students to unpopular courses can lead to lowering of standards, since the universities do not need to compete for students on the basis of quality of their programmes. In such cases, universities are not compelled to design and implement quality assurance systems and enhancement schemes. There is, therefore, no incentive for the universities to enhance quality in order to attract talented students, since such programmes are guaranteed government supported students whether their programmes are fully subscribed or not. The rigorous, though inflexible admissions process into public universities often directs a large number of candidates into academic programmes which they did not choose. Admission procedures also peg admission levels of government-sponsored students to bed capacity available in the universities, instead of pegging them on available academic facilities.* (pp. 84-85)

In the end, the PUIB report offers the following, somewhat watered-down recommendation,

> *To the extent possible, students should be admitted to the degree programmes of their choice subject to the availability of teaching resources.* (pp. 85)

In addition to the focus of the PUIB on improving admissions processes to all higher education institutions in Kenya, the group focused on the geographical spread of such offerings within Kenya. The board travelled to seven towns and cities

throughout Kenya, both to visit existing institutions, and to speak with representatives of other communities – including Mombasa – that were pursuing the elevation of existing institutions, or advocating for the creation of new institutions. In the end, the PUIB recommended that,

- o *On the basis of the above criteria, a public university in Coast Province should be established focusing on fisheries, oceanography, tourism and marine studies. Another university should be established in the Eastern Region focusing on dry land farming, environmental and water studies; and another one at North Eastern focusing on livestock development, renewable energy (solar and wind) and environmental studies.*
- o *New public universities should be established on the basis of proper planning, availability of resources, opening new frontiers of knowledge and research and be a catalyst for human capital and infrastructure for national and regional development.*
- o *New universities should be well-planned, appropriate and where possible utilize available facilities.* (Kinyanjui, 2006: 41)

Although the PUIB is a government body, it is unclear to me how closely the Kinyanjui-led group was working in concert with specific elements of the national government, that is, with the Ministry of Education, and, as will be seen shortly, the Chancellors of the existing universities. What is clear is that having published their report at the end of 2006, very little time was left for the national government to act on the recommendations had they not already been of a mind to do so well before the report's publication.

Returning to a point made earlier about the shift away from an admissions policy keyed to the number of available dormitory beds, the policy shift to separate available dorm-based, on campus bed space from admissions levels permitted the JAB to announce, in August 2007, that they would be able to offer space at university to an additional 6,000 students each year. This would represent a 60%

increase from the 10,000 students who had been admitted per year prior to this change. Given that there are approximately 260,000 students who take the KCSE exams each year, and approximately 70,000 who receive "passing" marks on the exams, this still leaves more than 50,000 "qualified students" without a place in the regular intake at public universities.

Against the stated feeling of several of the people I interviewed, others made clear that they felt there was no real discrimination by the JAB against coastal students, but rather other reasons – some revealing a different take on discrimination – as to why coast students have been less than fully fortunate at reaching universities. As one person put it, in this somewhat lengthy quote,

> *That one I don't believe. I am from coast. And I am in the university. But I know there is no bias. There is no bias. Because those students from Sheikh Khalifa[97] – why were they top on the list of medicine students if there is bias? We would have seen other students on top. It is just that we need to work more harder at coast. And I think the biggest problem is we don't have our own teachers. Most of the teachers in the schools are from upcountry. And I don't think they do their job properly. At Sheikh Khalifa, a majority of the teachers are Muslims and you will see the students are doing very well. Because they care. They care. These are our students. They push them. But in these other schools - I go around during teacher practice. And sometimes the things I see, I pity the people at the coast, when you hear the teachers in the staff room – they talk. . . .*
>
> *I think first for the coast people, we need to become more serious, and know our priorities . . . Most of our students, the ones at the coast, in their minds, they want engineering, medicine. And that is where the problem is. Some don't qualify for those types of courses. So they lose their chances because they never, they are not advised, I think, properly. The schools need to really advise properly, because you know the type of students you have. You know that this is medicine material, this is not medicine, this is material for something else. And so they don't normally advise them properly, and students normally try to choose these courses which are more marketable, and then in the end they lose out, because they are not choosing, they don't come to change. Like now, the university, the JAB has advertised for people to come and change. I doubt if you go to the Provincial Education office in*

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[97] A top school at the Coast, and frequently one of the top secondary schools in Kenya.

Mombasa that many coast people take advantage of that. (SS, August 31, 2007)

Another interview respondent, IN, offers the perspective that the existing bureaucracy around university admissions is unlikely to change very quickly, thus,

One thing I must also point out is, even if we were to build a Coast University, there is an assumption that most of us despite our competitiveness or lack of it in education will have gotten an opportunity to advance to higher education. I want to argue to the contrary, because these universities will still have to be competitive. They will still have to have a certain standard of regulation as stipulated by the [Joint Admissions Board]*, and they will not have been allowed to simply to admit people from the coast with lower grades on the basis that the university is centrally placed at the coast. They will have to have had an entry kind of formula that maybe ups your lack of attaining those grades to allow, [or] to give you an opportunity to advance to your higher education.* (July 29, 2007)

The Synthesis: A University of Their Own?

There has been a great deal of change in the higher education circumstance at the Kenyan coast in the time I have been conducting this research. Where for decades there were only small efforts to offer limited university-level programs at satellite offices in Mombasa, in the months since the beginning of 2007, there are now two university colleges formally established at the coast, as well as one satellite campus of a Nairobi-based university and a small satellite campus of a private university.

However, these changes have only partially engaged the 'university of our own' discourse. As I hope to show in this section, there are aspects of the establishment of the university colleges that mitigate some of the concerns embedded in this discourse. Yet there are a number of issues that remain to be addressed and undoubtedly changes to come in the tenor and engagement with this discourse.

I have used the first portions of this chapter to move through a set of related discourses – perspectives on the idea of a "university of our own" for the coast; the establishment of Moi University as a project specifically designed to bring large-scale economic develop to particular areas in Rift Valley Province; and perspectives on the nationalized university admissions operated by the JAB. At this point, I want to begin to tie these discourses together.

On August 26, 2007, The Standard, one of Kenya's leading daily newspapers, published an editorial written by Professor Ali Mazrui[98]. Mazrui has been, for more than five decades, one of the coast's premier scholars. Several years ago, he was appointed Chancellor of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), a position he continues to hold. As the two quotes that open this chapter evidence, Mazrui is a man long engaged in the effort to establish a university at the coast. Mazrui is also a senior member of the faculty of the State University of New York at Binghamton, a fact that constitutes a fundamental point at the core of the suggestion in his editorial regarding how Kenya's universities could work toward being more responsive to their students, their communities, and to the needs of the country[99].

In the editorial, Mazrui poses the following question:

But how will a coastal university of the future be really coastal if 90 percent of the students and staff are from Nyanza and Central province?

With this question and the potential answers he offers, Mazrui has brought together several of the various discourses mapped out in this chapter. His

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[98] Mazrui is a regular editorialist for The Standard, his column appearing each Sunday.

[99] In his editorial, Mazrui also references Nigeria, where he lived for many years, and "the federal character of Nigeria," as another useful analogue in his pitch for regionally-focused universities.

suggestion of a Kenyan analogue to the "in-state" system in operation in New York (a manner of quota system) would permit students from areas near to a university to be admitted on a platform separate from general admissions such that each university retains a regional appeal. This would offer a means to address some of the concerns about the JAB and its nationalized admissions process that I have outlined above.

The regional appeal that would develop toward the universities that now admit a larger number of local/regional students would also open up the possibility for a fuller engagement of the universities by local populations. For example, as several of my interview respondents noted, there is already a movement among professionals (especially teachers) to pursue additional degree studies when such studies can be done with some convenience. Mazrui's idea has the potential to enhance such professional development efforts.

Mazrui has written about such a possibility before. In this quote, from his Mazrui Newsletter of 2005, Mazrui had this to say about Mombasa Polytechnic and a university at the coast,

> *It is now under consideration as a future university college and potentially a full-scale university. The old Aga Khan's dream of a coastal university may attain fulfillment at long last, but no longer designed to help Muslims specifically to catch up with their compatriots. I have been involved in these recent secular negotiations. Over the years, I have often complained that while the coast was the first region of Kenya to become literate, it seemed destined to be the last to have a university in postcolonial Kenya. Will my old technical institute of the early 1950s [MIOME] now mature into the fulfillment of our own dream for a coastal university at long last?* (18)

One interview respondent, a faculty member at one of the Nairobi-based universities, had this to say about Mazrui's efforts to establish a university at the

coast during approximately the same time period from which the above quotation was taken,

> *I remember there was some effort about two, three years back. Some of us lecturers came together . . . and we met about three, four times. The first meeting we had with Professor Mazrui, Ali Mazrui. And I think that's one of the steps he took towards making Polytechnic a constituent college . . . He suggested that we could start by having constituent colleges before asking for a full university.* (SS, August 31, 2007)

Mazrui had made it clear in a number of fora in the past few years that he was working to bring a university to Mombasa. It seems clear that he was focusing on elevating Mombasa Polytechnic to university status. It thus seems safe to that Mazrui, as Chancellor of JKUAT, has been long and fully engaged in the negotiations to elevate Mombasa Polytechnic to a university college. And it seems equally clear that Mazrui's editorial was written with full foreknowledge of the announcement that would be made the following day by the Government of Kenya.

On August 27, The Mombasa Polytechnic University College Order, 2007 (under the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology Act, 1994) was published in the Kenya Gazette Supplement No. 82[100]. The Act formalized what the government has previously stated, in early May 2007, would likely occur. The Order announced the establishment of a University College at the coast, in Mombasa. Perhaps the most pertinent section of this Act, for the purposes of this work, is Section 3(1), which announces that

> *There is hereby established a university college to be known as the Mombasa*

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[100] The Kenya Gazette is published by the Government of Kenya Printers. This particular issue of the gazette also announced the creation of several other University Colleges, including: Kenya Polytechnic University College, under the University of Nairobi; Chuka University College, under Egerton University; Kimathi University College of Technology, under JKUAT; and Kisii University College, under Egerton University.

Polytechnic University College which shall be a constituent college of the Jomo Kenyatta University. (pp. 1432-1433)

Section 25 may also be understood as holding some pertinence. It reads, *The status accorded to the University College by this order as a constituent college of the university shall be transitional only and the University shall initiate the necessary administrative and legal measures to ensure that the University College becomes a fully fledged university.* (p. 1454)

The same issue of the Kenya Gazette also announced the creation of Pwani[101] University College[102] (PUC) in the coastal town of Kilifi. PUC will be a constituent college of Kenyatta University. While the various sections for the two orders have largely identical wording, there is some differences between the Sections 25. Section 25 of the Pwani University College Order reads,

The University shall initiate the necessary administrative and legal measures to ensure that the University College becomes a fully fledged university within a period of three years from the date of commencement of this Order. (p. 1538)

I find it interesting that Pwani University College, the former Kilifi Agricultural and Technical Institute (KATI), with its previous focus on those areas its name mentions, has been put on a three year timetable toward achieving full university status. Mombasa Polytechnic, on the other hand, while in a 'transitional" state as a university college, is in a more open-ended situation. I will be interested in watching to see what occurs around this issue over the coming years.

The elevation, or potential elevation, of Mombasa Polytechnic (the former MIOME), in particular, was something that several interview respondents spoke to. Here is one perspective on the issue of the 'transitional' period,

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[101] "Pwani" translates from Swahili to English as "coast" or "shore."

[102] Pwani University College Order, 2007.

MIOME was nationalized by the central people up there in Nairobi. Now we're going through the same syndrome again. The Mombasa Polytechnic which was beginning to be our own somehow, though not really our own is now taken over by a national university which is run by the people up there. So, although you're saying this is going to evolve and eventually . . . in a three year period of time it won't happen. It's not going to happen. So JKUAT is going to controlling Mombasa Polytechnic as a constituent college for ten years, twelve years, I don't know. They will give it up eventually though. (ER, September 15, 2007)

In a comment that described a longstanding perspective among many at the coast, rather than necessarily a currently held perspective (albeit newly engaged by recent changes), respondent, OM, had this to say,

Coast people were not prepared to accept the elevation of the Mombasa Polytechnic into a degree institution. That was not enough, because it did not fit into their image of what a university ought to be. And being relatively non-technical in character, I think they would feel more at home not with a polytechnic that is offering technical degrees, but with an institution that also studies culture and civilization. (September 17, 2007)

This perspective that OM elucidates concerns a belief among some that were MIOME/Mombasa Polytechnic elevated, the coast would not simply gain the university so many have been seeking, it would also be losing a nationally recognized technical training institution. This was something that few people wanted. In fact, even as Mazrui is a primary actor in the current changes, for some people, these changes amount to an example of the very "autocolonization" Mazrui has decried.

But the elevation of Mombasa Polytechnic and the former KATI brought other perspectives to the fore. Interview respondent, IN, had this to say about any thought that because the coast now had a couple of university colleges that it would automatically be easier to be admitted to university, or thought that coast-based academics might be the ones teaching at these institutions,

You might find a university that has more American professors than it does have local professors, because maybe you do not have the professors locally. And we might have more students [from] *outside Coast Province getting admission by their competitive grades, and maybe the affordability of the University. And we could ascribe or say or allude to some kind of a new form of marginalization.* (July 29, 2007)

OM also spoke to the issue of increased chance for coast-based students to be admitted to university now by agreeing with Ali Mazrui's take on regional enrollment in universities, and the fact that, as Mazrui himself writes, "*these adjustments need to be negotiated and worked out in the future.*" OM notes,

That is the next level of argument, but it will take years before it becomes part of the policy discourse. It will probably work then as a question after we have established a critical number of universities. Then we shall afford to ask ourselves that question: what are all these institutions doing in the context of local development. That is not part of the discourse at the moment. And as you know, even in secondary schools, secondary education in this country, there is a great deal of resistance to the notion of a quota system. It would take a lot of political will to create two levels of universities: provincial universities and national universities. There just isn't a sufficient concentration of intellectual energy going into the thinking about this. (September 17, 2007)

Conclusion

By way of wrapping up this chapter on the discourse of 'a university of our own,' I want to highlight two Letters to the Editor, each printed in the final week of my time in Kenya. The two letters, placed side-by-side, show the power of this discourse. The two authors, one whose name indicates that he may originally have come from the coast, and the second, who is from Nairobi, each invoke the idea of possession of the university, though they do it from opposed points of view.

Here is the first letter, published in Coast Week, on September 14, 2007:

"University Status is a Reason to Celebrate": Presidential political goodies or not, coast people have every reason to be elated for being given three public university colleges by the government of president Mwai Kibaki. After more

than forty years of independence and two successful governments of Mzee Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi that span for all those years but five, the region had been marginalized in all aspects of developments particularly in education. Other than the sparsely and least populated North eastern Province, all the country's other six provinces have public and private institutes of higher learning, or universities. That is until when the head of state was visiting Coast Province the last week of August.

In that Tuesday's Kenya Gazette, President Kibaki upgraded six institutions in the country to university status, two of them located at the coast. This is a good reason to celebrate. Although plans for Pwani University were already in the high gear after the government received the much needed financial boost from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, but the Kibaki government still went ahead and upgraded Mombasa Polytechnic (or MIOME) to a university college status. In addition, Jomo Kenyatta University – Taita Taveta Campus, a constituent college of JKUAT, will soon open its doors for students.

Coast people should not allow this educational development and or advancement [to] be played down or trivialized by anyone. When other provinces were being given 'political goodies' by the founding President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta and his successor Daniel arap Moi, no one played down or trivialized the 'goodies.'

Why should the coastal people allow that to happen now? With three university colleges in the province, the region now wants a constituent college or satellite campus of Utalii College to be set up in Mombasa or Malindi. As the backbone of the tourism industry, the coast region deserves at least a satellite campus of Utalii College if not a fully fledged Utalii-like College.

Education is the key to any and all developments. (Omar Ahmed Ali, writing from Philadelphia, USA)

Here is the second letter, published in the Daily Nation, September 17, 2007:

"University in Coast Province is a national institution": When President Kibaki recently signed a gazette notice for the establishment of a university in Coast Province, some politicians from the region misconstrued his good intentions. One prominent leader was quoted saying that the president had given the coastal people "what was rightfully theirs."

He further hoped that all subordinate staff for the institution would be recruited from within the province, instead of being imported from other parts of the country. An assistant minister saw the university as a gift to coast people.

. . . I would suggest that the institution be named Oceanic University of Kenya rather than Pwani or Coast University, a title that is prone to abuse by

proponents of regionalism. Alternatively, it can be named the University of Fort Jesus, in recognition of one of the greatest historical features at our Coast. (Mabuto Chebweche, writing from Nairobi)

I find the contrast between these two letters to be fascinating. The first letter, written by someone who appears to be originally from the coast, extols the decision to bring the university colleges to Mombasa and Kilifi. He speaks to the perceived long-term marginalization of the coast by Kenya's previous governments and leaders. He explicitly mentions the perception that other regions and peoples in Kenya had long been recipients of "political goodies." And he warns others not to think that the people of the coast are finished with their requests. For him, there remain a lot of efforts to pursue.

The second letter, from someone whose family name indicates that he may be, by heritage, from Rift Valley Province, warns the people of the coast away from just the kind of thoughts the first letter writer expresses. He reiterates a point made in the JAB, the PUIB and other technocratic, bureaucratic pronouncements that all institutions of higher education are, in fact, national institutions. Many of the interview respondents spoke to this very point.

But I do think this second writer has taken the point a bit far when making the suggestion that the newly announced university change its name from Coast University (a.k.a. Pwani[103] University). This suggestion immediately raises at least a few questions for me. What would this writer do, then, with "Moi University?" Does the writer believe that no one outside of Rift Valley Province is troubled by how much largesse the former president bestowed upon his own people? And what does the writer have to say about the name bestowed upon the newest of Kenya's public

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[103] As noted previously, "Pwani" is a Swahili word that translates as "coast" or "shore."

universities, Masinde Muliro University? Muliro was one of the heroes of independence, as well as a hero of the early 1990s push for multi-party democracy. Muliro was also Luhya, and as such, the name of the university speaks directly to a specific ethnic group. What would the writer of the letter to the editor think about someone requesting that the names of these institutions be changed?

One interview respondent spoke directly to this set of questions in commenting about friends employed at Maseno University, in Western Kenya. LM noted, in our discussion about a university at the coast, that

> *Maseno would be a very interesting place to study . . . I have friends at the university who say it is 80% Luo in terms of faculty. And that is absolutely shocking because it suggests that when you locate a university in one place, there are certain benefits that accrue, that go to the home crowd. The gentleman who told me this is from Western Kenya. He told me I am a foreigner in this university. He is from Kakamega . . . I think that if there is any community that has shown tolerance, in this country, in terms of tolerance difference, it is the coast community. They have seen difference forever.* (July 23, 2007)

In a sense, the Kalenjin have "their" university – Moi University. The Luo have "their" university, Maseno University. The Luhya have "their" university – Masinde Muliro University. And now the people at the coast are on a path toward having "their" universities: Pwani University and Mombasa Polytechnic University (once they are elevated to independent status).

In the end, for me, Ali Mazrui's question, offered in an interview conducted by the Standard and published on December 22, 2007, remains a good one, though, and stands as a fair point with which to end this chapter. Mazrui asked,

> *And why did we have to wait until 2007 before allowing Kenya's second city (Mombasa) to have a public university – when far smaller towns had been given campuses of their own?*

The coast now has public university colleges. There is transformation here. There is presence where there had been absence. What I had originally planned on writing about has become something more.

But this is not the end of the cycle. For what arose as the synthesis of the establishing dialectic as I have constructed this history can now be established as the thesis of an emergent dialectic. The coast has several subsidiary variations on a public university. Next up is to examine the questions that arise as this instantiation of the pursuit is embraced, questioned, changed.

In the next chapter, the conclusion to this work, I will examine the events that have led to the present circumstance. I will also pose some of the questions and challenges that face the university colleges as they crystallize into their future form. There won't be an 'end' to this story, per se, merely a place to stop, temporarily, until the questions and challenges are clarified, and the field of further study is revealed.

Chapter Eight: EMERGENT THESIS – What Comes Next?

<u>Introduction</u>

In the structure of discourses that I have adopted throughout this work, the recent gazetting of the university colleges at the coast described in the previous chapter completes one dialectic cycle. I saw marginalization around local access to university education as an establishing discourse against which the responsive discourse of alternatives was engaged. I see the creation of the university colleges as adapting aspects of the marginalization as well as the response to it and building a new circumstance vis-à-vis university education at the coast. This new circumstance, though, is not an end game move, but a turn toward a new dialectic position.

The present circumstance is the emergent thesis. Many of the people with whom I have spoken have already begun discussing and debating the relative aspects of how the new institutions will be perceived. Although it was an infrequently focused upon aspect of the interviews I conducted, the issue of the quality of Kenya's newest university colleges, and how such quality will be retained and improved upon, did come up. Related to this are the comments made by several interview respondents as to the impact of the entrepreneurial push ignited at the existing public universities as the national government reduced – in ever larger proportions – its share of the financial support to the universities. Also of interest will be the ways in which the presence of these elevated institutions changes (or does

not change) the perceptions of higher education – and schooling more broadly – held by the residents of the coast, especially as regards access to university education for girls and women of the coast.

Finally, the issue of how these new university colleges (and eventual new universities) fare in the global marketplace for Kenya's university students will be something to keep an eye on. Though globalization was not explicitly mentioned by many of the people I spoke with, it did play out in one particularly interesting way – how the coast, as a bastion of Islam within Kenya, is viewed by foreign powers such as the United States and Britain, and what ways Kenya's foreign policy vis-à-vis the global powers impacts opportunities for coastal residents.

As I have already alluded, none of these points were a primary focus of the interviews I undertook. As such, I do not treat them in depth here. Rather they should be taken as, and so this chapter should largely be read as, a statement about what issues serve as substance for further research.

Discourse: Quality and Entrepreneurship

In my introductory chapter, I wrote of the expectations created in Lesotho when new schools opened. In the case of the school at which I taught, Emmanuel High School, the opening was met with interest by a sufficient number of students such that under-enrollment was not going to be an issue. What was likely to occur, and what appeared to be understood (as I eventually learned) was that the school itself was not expected to produce strong results (as shown by student performance on national exams), at least not until it had been around for a while. There was a good deal of surprise, then, when after the school's first year producing high school

graduates (coinciding with my first year teaching there), we actually had one student pass the national school leaving exam sufficiently well to qualify for the national university.

I raise this point here because it resonates with some of the questions and comments raised by a few of the people I interviewed. There is already a discursive engagement with the new university colleges around the expressed belief, or lack thereof, that the new university colleges will be (or at least become) "quality" institutions in the eyes of the people of the coast. In order to do this, it is necessary to ask whose definition of "quality" will be operative? It is also important to understand what time frame will be granted to these new institutions to become "quality" universities. And beyond these points, the circumstances under which 'quality' will be gauged needs to be known:

> *I sometimes wonder whether the government really understands the problem of quality. The private sector understands it. But then I don't think they focus very seriously. They have a strange idea of what quality means, it is just specific gains for themselves. I don't think they care about question of quality. They focus not on educational terms, but on fiscal terms. Maybe resource development terms, except for maybe teachers and special groups, engineers, perhaps . . . but I don't think they understand the issue of quality.*
> (OM, September 17, 2007)

This notion of quality being measurable in financial terms was voiced by several of the people with whom I spoke. This was raised, in part, I believe, because the existing universities – the ones controlling the coast's new university colleges – are based elsewhere and are thought by some to be pursuing increased enrollments as much to satisfy bottom-line financial interests than to expand access to university education. As interview respondent, NG, stated it,

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One of the side consequences of this [university expansion] *is that most of the universities have gone down enormously in quality . . . Essentially, they are after recruiting, using the students from here to be able to increase their funds from fees and other things. It is not because they've got a deeply entrenched interest in the academic development either of the people or the area, or what it is offering in terms of research, and pursuits of that kind . . . The essential thing is that they try to grab whatever funds so that they will be able to get fees from teaching students.* (July 31, 2007)

NG continued,

Egerton, Kenyatta, Nairobi . . . all have been trying to establish campuses here, with a view to expand their studentship in order to generate more fees. None of them - either through the mouthpieces of the Chancellors or Vice Chancellors – despite the fact that Ali Mazrui is Chancellor of JKUAT - has a long term interest in stimulating or promoting research . . . In other words, it is going to be one of the same. And they are going to be suffering from the same illnesses.

Ali Mazrui's long-term interest in research and his presence as Chancellor of

JKUAT (the university charged with administering the Mombasa Polytechnic

University College) notwithstanding, another interview respondent, ER, had this to

say:

I've seen the monetary side of JKUAT driving them to the point where – you might say it is the primary institutional factor at the level of the administration. There are teachers there who say, fine, this is great . . . JKUAT is, now I think has something like 16 affiliated institutions . . . now I don't want to be too much against them, because it's a fantastic university. But this dimension of the university - I think they've gone the wrong way. (September 15, 2007)

This respondent continued,

At a certain point, the universities are told you've got to define income generating projects. The leader in this, by far the leader, is JKUAT. And JKUAT begins to establish affiliations with other institutes, bringing them under its wing, charging very high amounts of money to those institutes – for internal examining and processing exams, because those exams have to be processed by the Senate of JKUAT. These are . . . you can argue it both ways . . . they are taking higher level education out to many parts of the country, many institutes that would never have it. They don't even have the educational integrity or system to do it . . . But I've seen JKUAT over-expand beyond their capacity to monitor this properly.

Now, the JKUAT model provoked interest from other universities, because, who knows what's driving it, and I hesitate to judge. Is it being driven commercially? To a large extent it is. Is it driven academically? You can justify it academically, and no doubt it is bringing opportunities to people for education in areas where they wouldn't otherwise have it . . . So, they're spreading opportunity . . . Other universities start following suit. Whether it's KMU [Kenya Methodist University], or . . . (September 15, 2007)

Mwiria and Ng'ethe (2007) engage this point of expansion leading to over-expansion leading eventually, if not inevitably, to reduced quality. They then connect these with the expressed need to increase revenues for the existing public universities. They write,

Critics have questioned the standards of newer programmes, especially those mounted in centres outside the universities. For example, JKUAT's courses are offered in other centres, including commercial colleges. Since the major objective of these commercial colleges is to make a profit, there is a strong likelihood that quality will be compromised. In addition, the entry criteria to these self-sponsored programmes are less competitive than those for the regular programmes, which also raised doubts with regard to the quality of some of the graduates. (100)

The Mwiria and Ng'ethe quote above continues, mentioning medical training courses and the self-sponsored programs being offered by Egerton University, Maseno University and Kenyatta University specifically. The current standards by which students are accepted into "regular" medical studies programs means only students with aggregate scores of "A+" or "A" on their Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) exams are getting in. This leaves hundreds, if not thousands, of students at the "A-" and "B+" levels with only self-sponsored opportunities left to them if they want to pursue medical studies at a public university. But the question of how these self-sponsored programs are perceived led

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one interview respondent, SS, to skip over these otherwise quite solid "A-" and "B+"

students and move right on to pose the following question,

> *How do you advertise for medicine and you are asking for students of "C+"? Yet at the University of Nairobi, even there are some students of "A-" who have been rejected? Not only through regular, even Model Two. Because of facilities, the issue of facilities, they don't want to compromise on standards. So, if you have an "A-" sometimes if there are more people in front of you with a better grade, those are taken and you are left out. And how do you start medicine surely with a "C," "C+"? What type of doctors are we going to produce? Expanding is [one] issue, but we should also look at what we are going to produce. Because I wouldn't want to put my life in the hands in someone who got a "C" in biology.* (August 31, 2007)

Clearly, then, the ways in which existing public universities are expanding

leave open the question of how they are going to maintain quality levels. For years,

expansion was the province of open learning, self-sponsored and distance learning-

type programs, where students who had not received the exam results necessary to

enter university directly had the chance to work toward their degree – provided they

had the funds to do so. But with university college expansion, and eventual

university expansion, more slots open in so-called "regular" programs, and questions

about quality arise.

Yet the public universities are doing more than simply expanding the number

of locations at which they offer their academic programs. As one interview

respondent put it,

> *The resources which are coming from the state are becoming fewer and fewer. So now we have been told, we are being told to look at the resources. You see the university role was initially . . . the amount of land, the amount of buildings, human resource capacities. Since you see, we cannot keep on teaching people to be strategic, if ourselves we are not strategic. It was ironic that for all those years the University of Nairobi has been in existence it is only about two or three years back that we started having strategic plans. Yet we teach strategic planning . . . I have seen in Nairobi [the university is] trying to have a very nice bookshop . . . and moving toward hostels [with] some*

boarding facilities. Putting up hostels to rent to outside students or other people who are interested. Catering facilities, outside catering. That's what the university is going into. I mean those are things we teach our students, but we actually don't go ahead and implement them. That's where we are heading. (KJ, September 11, 2007)

Interview respondent, IN, put this together with the political environment – the run-up to a tightly contested, and ultimately seriously troubled election – in which the Government of Kenya announced the new university colleges, noting that,

This quick fix is a reaction to a political, a popular sentiment, what some times drains the energy out of our country. And [it] gets us to a lot of disillusionment after that . . . So if you need change, let it be done properly. If you need a new constitution, let it be done properly. If you need a university, let it be done properly. All of these universities that have been established have been established – even if they are organic – they had a period in which they were constituent colleges. So, they were getting used to be a university . . . I would hope that we exercise a little more patience. I am not trying to be critical of the process that is there. If it works, I will support it to its fullest. I support this effort entirely. But the critical point is it must be done right. (July 29, 2007)

The feeling that the new university colleges announced in Coast Province in August 2007 were keyed to the political needs of President Kibaki's reelection drive was expressed by several of the people with whom I spoke. In general, though, this was not taken in a negative light, as people were simply glad to learn that Coast Province would finally be graced by the presence of public universities. That these institutions will take years to rise to the position of being seen no longer as new, but as being of high quality, was understood by some. As IN put it,

I keep telling some of my friends that I don't think the solution might necessarily or solely just lie in establishing a university. It might just be symbolic in advancing the cause of education in this country, in this region. But it will not mean that you lower your rate to allow entry of coastals. That will not work. That's not going to be practical. It's not going to be a high-ranked university globally, and it's not going to be a high-ranked university nationally, and there are certain competitive standards that we must adhere to. (July 29, 2007)

And so, one question to keep an eye on is how much of what has begun to happen at the coast is entrepreneurial activity that will recede if economic or political tides turn? What might be done to the schedule announcing PUC's elevation to full university status in three years, if the political tides that brought the decision turn in other directions? And how much, too, will the new university colleges be beholden to enhance revenues such that their longstanding programs – offered in the coastal institutions' status as Kilifi Agricultural and Training Institute (now PUC) and Mombasa Polytechnic – were placed at risk of being changed or eliminated? Will they be given over to quick turn-around programs, rather than substantive, coast-related academic programs (such as marine sciences or marine engineering)? These are the kinds of questions that I see as worthy of the benefits of further examination and additional research.

Discourse: The Higher Education of Women and Girls

One problem that has been at the coast is the issue of girls. Many local people here do not want their girls to go into the interior, away from their families to that. And therefore, to be able to help enable girls to learn, we need to bring education closer to the people. So, that you remove the ideas of traveling. You remove the fears. You remove the expenses. (FV, August 8, 2008)

I think that it would be very significant. First it would open up possibilities for the girl child on the coast to access higher education. The fact that universities are located outside of the coast makes it very difficult for parents to release their daughters to long distances. No extended family. Their cultural practices are different. They are still quite committed to the religiosity of their children. And that could be disrupted with movement. So I think it would open up a tremendous opportunity for the girl child. And if you look at the figures, the national figures in terms of the transition rates for higher education, the girl child at the coast is quite disadvantaged. And consequently, there are a lot of other issues, like early marriage, which we know for a fact are delayed for higher education, early onset of child bearing,

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heavy mortality rates, which go side by side with lack of access education. So all these things would be addressed. (LM, July 23, 2007)

I have a niece who did very well in "O levels." She is going to [Mombasa] *Polytechnic, doing a diploma in pharmaceutical technology. She qualified to go do pharmacy at the University of Nairobi . . . The last thing I was told, was if you were living and working in Nairobi, we would have allowed* [her to go to university there]. (BG, December 25, 2006)

These three quotes exemplify a perspective on the education of girls and young women that appeared to be common. I have previously cited a couple of examples of coastal parents who have worked to find higher education opportunities for their daughters, opportunities that, until 2007, would have taken them by necessity far from their family at the coast. And I have spoken with and been made aware of a number of women from the coast who have already pursued university education, some of whom are now teaching at the university level. Yet, the perception remains that girls will (and perhaps, in the minds of some, should) stay close to home, and if this means not pursuing higher education, then so be it. For many, then, the presence of newly minted university colleges augurs well for the higher education of women and girls.

Others, though, took the issue a bit further. Here I cite IN, who is speaking about the impact that having more women and girls enter higher education institutions could have on Kenyan society, especially Kenyan coastal society:

Would the situation for girls improve in education, or does improvement for girls have to be happening at earlier levels in the system? - I think both. It will serve as a catalyst, yes. It's happening at the very earlier stages of the girl-child education. It will definitely have an impact on the higher education level. But when we have more girls in institutions of higher learning, then they are able to serve as the role models and trickle the benefits downwards. I think it is an up-down kind of process.

And I think if we are able to have a coast university and enroll a sizable

number [of girls] . . . then those girls are able to serve in such a professional circles in society. They will definitely have a massive impact . . . There are young women, my age and slightly below who have had an active role in students' organizations or were at the universities. Muslim women. coastal women . . . We need avenues also of sustainability . . . I keep telling my friends, the women, who were in university together, schools together, and tell them unless they start coming out, and taking some of the issues head-on, we really won't be doing any of it . . . Unless they are also able to take on these challenges, I don't see anybody doing it on their own. (July 29, 2007)

Others took up this perspective of role modeling, and the benefits from which coastal society in general, but girls most particularly, could benefit. As LM saw the issue, it may well start with

The way people learn is if they can see reflections of themselves in the community. To the extent that we don't have high visibility of seeing coastal professors, coastal women engineers, coastal doctors, and so on teaching in the university, and so forth, makes it quite difficult for the younger people to see the potential in themselves.

LM continues,

I know for a fact that if such a university were set up, it would, within about five years, transform, in a sense, how education is perceived at the coast . . . I think the idea is to have a presence, create opportunities for those people, for students, and also create an opportunity for people with Masters degrees who are from the coast who would like to teach in that university as a matter of choice to do so. (July 23, 2007)

I believe that this kind of transformation will be fascinating to observe and investigate. And so, as with the issue of quality, this matter of how coastal society will be impacted by the presence of the new university colleges now that the national government has seen fit to invest in establishing university colleges at the coast, makes for worthy ground upon which to develop further research.

In earlier chapters, I have described the historical pattern of exploration of international opportunities in education that has long connected the coast to the broader world. In Chapter Six, I specifically focused upon some the international university education options available to coastal students. Here, I will briefly situate the more locally-driven perspectives on this (individual students; UETF – the Mombasa-based foundation; university recruiters in Mombasa) in a more macro-level discourse of globalization. In this brief segment, I will take this discourse in several directions, as a means to establish a baseline for further study rather than to treat the issue exhaustively here.

In the specific regional context of East Africa and students <u>from</u> the region pursuing higher education <u>in</u> the region, there is an Inter-University Council on Higher Education (IUCHE) operating in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Funding for the IUCHE comes, in part, from the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, SIDA-SAREC (the Swedish international development agency), DAAD (the German international development agency), the East African Development Bank, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. One issue the IUCHE is focused upon is easier student and staff transfer of credits between accredited regional institutions. As Sabaya (2004) focuses on, once regional bodies like the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) establish full accreditation and regulatory standards within their regions, other cross-regional efforts will see the advantage to adhering to these. Eventually, Sabaya says, as these regional efforts solidify, they will help in the durable construction of a continent-wide approach to these issues. As this giving way from region-based to

continent-wide agreements proceeds, a more empowered group of collaborating

African states will have engaged the General Agreement of Trade in Services

(GATS) principles for education, thus presumably strengthening the hand of the

African states.

But, as Mthembu tells us, this must be done carefully:

We need to critically review why regional integration seems to work at some levels and not others. What have the lessons of the SADC Protocol, specifically on Education and Training, been? What are the merits and demerits of unilateral actions of our sovereign governments when they deal with global bodies like the WTO [World Trade Organization]*? Are our governments united enough? Are all the signatories to NEPAD* [New Economic Program for African Development] *for instance, equally committing to its progress? . . . Will an organically evolving set of relationships within certain regions suit our continent better than starting with a continent wide agreement?* (152)

This focus on regional strengthening prior to fuller engagement at the

continental and inter-continental levels shows a desire to attend to the questions

about globalization asked by many scholars. As Ibrahim (2003) puts it,

The main effect of the transformation engendered by globalisation is that certain parts of the world, the developing world in general and Africa in particular, are being increasingly marginalised and subjected to the hegemonic control of the major actors on the world scene. According to Joseph Stiglitz, the former Vice President and Chief Economist of the World Bank, the West has driven the globalisation agenda in a way to gain disproportionate share of the benefits at the expense of the developing world. (3)

Schugurensky (1999) concurs, noting that,

Globalization, a dynamic that has economic, political, social, and cultural ramifications, implies the intensification of transnational flows of information, commodities, and capital around the globe (eroding technical, political, or legal barriers), the development of new trading blocs, and the strengthening of supranational governing bodies and military powers. This increasingly globalized economy is largely controlled by a transnational elite composed of the G-7 countries, international financial institutions and multinational corporations. (28)

The question here thus becomes how will a country like Kenya make sure that its education-focused needs and desires stay in line with local circumstances and perspectives, and avoid giving way wholly to transnational pressures? Chachage (2001), speaking of the emphasis placed on certain views of higher education as pushed by the World Bank and IMF, initially in the 1980s, notes how the pressure by transnational actors can push out – to the point of denying – local perspectives. He tells us that

> *Those who formulated the programmes took what is popularly known as a 'human capital investment approach' à la World Bank, uncritically. This approach assumes that students enrol in courses that are in demand and are rewarded by the market. Therefore, students' choices should be the strategy for establishing programmes. At the same time, no research was conducted to determine what students wanted, or what the market needed or wanted . . .*

> *Production of graduates who are employable is certainly important, as one of the fundamental roles of any university in the world. Universities must impart skills, which are usable in the labour market. However, unlike in the vocational training schools or polytechnic tradition, which produce operatives, universities are primarily charged with the task of cultivating analytic skills and developing critical faculties/thinking in the students . . .*

> *Any formulation of programmes that responds to the so-called global dictates while ignoring issues of societal relevance signals academic exterminism. Transformation of programmes in this regard, must start from conceptualization of problems facing Africa . . . without any account losing sight of their global context.* (pp. 6-7)

Kenya's universities are trying to manage this tension between transnational pressures and local concerns. One example of this balancing act might be found in the origins of Kenyatta University's open learning program. The university, as I was told, undertook an investigation into ways in which to expand its open learning style programs, and found their examples in a multitude of places – not all of them in G-7 countries. As interview respondent, FV, noted,

One idea that attracted us was from Indira Gandhi University in India . . . we asked ourselves, if Indira Gandhi University can have 200,000 [students], how can it manage? We were also attracted by the idea from the Open University of London. And combining these two, we said, there is a possibility. So, we went further and looked at the Open University of Zimbabwe. Similarly, there was an idea from Tanzania, the Open University of Tanzania, which was doing quite well. (August 8, 2007)

Officials at Kenyatta University pursued higher education models in a global environment, but did so not solely by chasing down G-7 "transnational elite" perspectives, but also via a South-South route, believing that universities in socio-economic, socio-political circumstances akin to Kenya's might provide worthwhile analogues to pursue.

It is, in part, out of the multiple perspectives that Kenyatta University sought in delivering expanded open learning services that the university identified places in which to expand their operations. Only a few years after the university's open learning options were expanded, and in response to the success of their coast-based open learning programs, Kenyatta University began looking for a site to locate a coast-based branch campus, which they opened in Mombasa in May of 2007. In this way, Kenyatta University used global models in a way akin to how the Universal Education Trust Fund (UETF) has negotiated with universities in a number of non-Western countries to educate Kenyan students who were unable to gain entry to one of Kenya's public universities in an academic field of their choosing.

There is a more pointed way in which globalized interests impact the provision of higher education in Kenya, and potentially influence, not to say limit, such provision at the coast. Several interview respondents saw coercive possibilities embedded in the foreign policy pronouncements of the United States and British,

and the reactions to same evinced by the Kenyan government. For a few of the people with whom I spoke, there is a solid resonance (though, interestingly, not necessarily agreement) between how these governments view Islam and how the coast is dealt with, and both what public investment is made there, and what kinds of private development are allowed to move forward. As interview respondent, BZ, notes,

> *I think I should mention he* [President Kibaki of Kenya] *is with the US, and they are very close with maybe the Saudi government and the security within the Horn of Africa. They are giving him, they are aiding him with a lot of money and resources. So they could afford to either stop this so-called Islamic University by supporting him immediately with this so-called public or Pwani University. With maybe being scared that it could be something Islamic when - it shouldn't be so. And I think or believe that maybe they shouldn't call it Mombasa Islamic University. They can just call it Mombasa University. In order to remove the notion, especially now with what the media is spreading about Islam and Muslims and whatever, then anybody who is within the community can benefit.* (August 7, 2007)

Engaging with the latter aspect of the comment by BZ, one other respondent questioned whether the troubles faced in the registration process by Mombasa Islamic University, or the long period by those pushing for a public university at the coast. BA says,

> *The idea of a university was strictly something that was under the control of the state. So, even if coastal people wanted their own university it would be seen as dangerous. I think at one point it was thought any university at the coast would be considered an Islamic, even if it was secular. And to have a Muslim university, with all the biases of upcountry . . .* (August 30, 2007)

In reference to the Kenyan government's regulation of higher education, the preponderance of private, registered Christian institutions, and the near-complete absence of registered, but non-Christian, private institutions, OM says,

> *Islam has never been sufficiently integrated into the educational system of this country. I think there was always the unstated fear that a coast university*

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would take on an Islamic character. In other words, the policy makers didn't know what to make of a university without Muslim character. It's a foolish, unfounded fear, because we have all kinds of Muslim universities in the continent. (September 17, 2007)

OM continues,

I myself would strongly lobby for a university at the coast. For heaven sake, the place was the first entry of external civilization into this country. And I would lose no sleep if the university had a very, very strong faculty of Islamic Studies. Because Islamic civilization is to be found. It is a very rich civilization. But that is not the same as saying that the US would not be worried if, for example, such a university displayed a radical . . . So, the international aspect of this issue is an interesting one that you should examine. I think this government is sufficiently relaxed enough and it's not following the US. It's a difficult government for the US to deal with. It has not provided the [military] *bases that the US would have liked. It has not passed the Anti-Terrorism law. And it's not going to pass the original . . .* [and] *the UK does not even like the current government.* (September 17, 2007)

I discussed the nature of this idea in Chapter Five, in the context of the marginalization of the coast, and the perception that some of this marginalization is keyed by some to issues of religion. In the quotes cited here, the discourse expands into the territory of global political debate. I have not explored this issue in greater depth here because it is not my intention to focus upon Islam at the coast, but the complex, cosmopolitan nature of the coast's people. Other interview respondents described this complexity and how the discourses of marginalization and response engaged domestic forces and pressures. As interview respondent, BS notes,

Most of the communities you will find here, you can find a church, next to a church there is a mosque, and next to the church is a bar. You know, nobody really bothers about who does what. There's a temple maybe next to a mosque. There's a church next to a mosque. So, it's purely cosmopolitan, and its non-sectarian. And it's a very, very peaceful town. That is why, by virtue of the fact that it's cosmopolitan, it's peaceful, different administrations of Kenya totally ignored this, though it is the second biggest city. And its . . .they ignored it because it was a peaceful place. There is no problem at all.

Mombasa is a city of nearly one million people. Hundreds of thousands of them are Muslim. And hundreds of thousands are non-Muslim. People have been moving into and out of the coastal region for centuries. More specifically, people from upcountry Kenya have been moving to Mombasa and the coast in sizable numbers for decades.

The contestation around education generally, and university education in particular, is richly enough engaged domestically, on enough discursive fields (religious, political, etc.) to merit being the focus of this work. That the contestation also is extended out in the broad global debate occurring around U.S. hegemony and U.S. efforts at controlling 'terror' is important, and worthy of further research.

Conclusion

The establishment of university colleges at the coast of Kenya is an event that can be read as the closing of one dialectical cycle of engagement and change. The marginalization of the coast that had realized itself in the absence of a public university at the coast has transformed into a presence that generates its own questions and concerns. I have outlined a few of those concerns in this chapter.

The discourse of quality in university education, and the focus on entrepreneurial efforts to expand opportunities in higher education – or at least to expand cash flows toward the bottom lines of existing universities – will be a vital part of emergent discourse about university education in Kenya as elsewhere. And these will certainly impact how the new university colleges at the coast in Kenya are perceived. And in a similar way, the societal changes wrought on how the higher

education of girls and women may come to be seen is a rich topic for future study and discussion.

Regarding the globalization of higher education, when taken to the impacts felt at the local and regional level, this issue is far more than a matter of a GATS-based function of the international trade in knowledge. As briefly outlined here, religion and politics – and the interplay between the two – are high impact concerns not only at the international level, but, as the discourses revealed in previous chapters show, they are very important issues at the local, regional and national levels within Kenya.

These all play into the context within which questions about the new institutions at the coast will be examined. The ongoing examination and discursive turns will continue to involve the social, economic, and political elements that spoke to the absence of these institutions. By way of an attempt to encapsulate the sense in which I believe these forces continue to influence each other, I close with a pair of quotes from Schugurensky (1999), who is writing about the concept of the "heteronomous university," a kind of one-size-fits-all model for the market-driven university. He writes that,

> [U]niversities are experiencing a transition (sometimes voluntarily, usually forced) toward a heteronomous model. Following Weber, an institution can be considered heteronomous when its mission, its agenda, and its outcomes are defined more by external controls and impositions than by its internal governing bodies. Thus, a heteronomous university is one increasingly unable to proactively design its itinerary, and whose success derives from its effective and rapid responses to external demands. Whereas autonomy implies self-government, heteronomy, by contrast, implies a subordination to the law or domination of another. The available evidence indicates that a significant number of universities throughout the world are increasingly forced to reduce their margin of autonomy by reacting both to market demands and state imperatives. (296)

A few pages later, Schugurensky continues,

> *The heteronomous university is a Pandora's box. In the best-case scenario, government regulations can help monitor standards, avoid duplications, and improve efficiency and social responsibility; market practices and values can promote the adoption of better managerial procedures and a closer relationship with business in which both partners benefit equally. However, in a different scenario, the heteronomous model can also lead to the erosion of important values and traditions such as the social mission of the university, its institutional autonomy and academic freedom, its pursuit of equity and accessibility, or its disinterested search for the truth.* (299)

Kenya's public universities are certainly being impacted by the push to raise sufficient revenue to keep themselves financially solvent while state support is reduced. Thus, they are implicated in the bind Schugurensky outlines. And there is little certainty that any new university in Kenya will be able to avoid this bind – state sanctioned, market-influenced, cash-poor.

So, the new university colleges at the coast begin the latest iterations of their existences in a tight political and economic space. In the end, though, if they are to avoid the bind of the heteronomous university that Schugurensky describes, it may because the perceptions of the coast as something of a "place apart" within Kenya are what help keep alive the notion that a coast-based public university can be a "university of its own." As with each of the ideas I have outlined in this chapter, and in view of what I have presented elsewhere in this work, this final point would make for a topic worthy of ongoing study.

Chapter Nine: Conclusions from the Study

The purpose of this work has been to explore the circumstances under which the coast of Kenya dealt with a longstanding absence of an independent public university, and how recent decisions to elevate existing tertiary (non-university) institutions to public university college status have changed the engagement with university education at the coast. I have utilized a grounded theory approach to reveal a dialectic arc in the discourses that exist around these matters. I have shown that the discourses of marginalization of the coast support a perception that the people of the coast have been left out of major decisions about university education in their region. I have shown how people constitute responses and create personal, institutional, and programmatic alternatives that permit some access to university education, both within and against this perception of being marginalized. And I have shown how this engagement, in the form of the push for 'a university of our own,' has coincided with the elevation of existing institutions at the coast to university college status. Finally, I have shown how this elevation is seen as a partial realization of the 'university of our own' conception, one that brings with it new questions about how these elevated institutions will work for coast people.

One of the primary conclusions to be drawn from the study is the degree to which the determination of where public university institutions will be located remains connected in a primary way to discourses situated in a national political environment.

Several factors lead me to this conclusion. While I have offered some evidence that negotiations to elevate the coastal institutions to university or university college status had been going on for some time (see pages 164-165), it was not until the Presidential election campaign of 2007 that the incumbent government made the decision to elevate. At the same time as it elevated the coast institutions, a handful of other institutions around the country were similarly elevated.

It seems clear that national level political and electoral machinations played a quite significant role in the decisions about all of these institutions. How the existing power-sharing agreement between President Kibaki and Prime Minister Odinga, neither of whom has a particularly firm base in Coast Province, will play out will say much about what resources are provided to Pwani University College and Mombasa Polytechnic University College. It will be a question worth posing whether the programs that had long been on offer at these institutions before there elevation will be continued. So, too, will be the question of how more profound changes to these institutions will be perceived by the people of the coast.

As Kenya stretches out its higher education system, these questions will be asked not only at the coast, but in the other communities where university colleges have been legislated. This will introduce yet another level for potential analysis – the comparison between efforts taking place in these various communities. How will they be seen as comparable? And will they in some way come to be seen as sufficiently different so as to engender a perception of ongoing bias toward one community or away from another?

While the potential for some at the coast to believe that this political power play is another example of the marginalization of the coast – Mazrui's autocolonization – I believe that it also offers the potential for universities to become tied to the local community such that they hold a more-than-notional sense of belonging to the host community. I believe there will be an opportunity for the emerging university colleges to connect in substantive ways with their local communities, whether at the coast or elsewhere. Moi University is connected to the community of Eldoret in substantive programmatic and cultural ways, even as it enrolls students from all over Kenya. Maseno University is perceived as being a place at which faculty are overwhelmingly Luo, matching the ethnic composition of the university' location. Masinde Muliro University is named after a leading national political figure who hailed from the region where the eponymous university stands, and its links to the local community in Kakamega will grow.

So, too, will the connection between Mombasa Polytechnic University College, Pwani University College, and their local communities. Mombasa and Kilifi (site of PUC) will each be changed by their engagement with the national universities (temporary?) management of the new university colleges. In what ways this change will occur is an open question. How the people in these two communities perceive the change is also an open question. But I feel that the local communities will have some influence over the university colleges. I believe that the sheer number of institutions now existing in Kenya will eventually spur a shift in the discourse on university education toward the kind of options that Mazrui defines in his editorial of August 26, 2007.

More pertinent to the coast's interest in influence in this regard, the connection between Mombasa Polytechnic University College and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology is one that has been in development for a number of years. Yes, JKUAT is an upcountry university, but when the positioning of Ali Mazrui (Chancellor of JKUAT) is combined with the energy devoted to the longstanding efforts described in Chapter Six, I believe the chance that local communities will have some influence over the new institutions at the coast is greatly increased.

Given this, I believe that one significant limitation of my study will be addressable with further research. It will be informative to pursue a comparative investigation of other communities throughout Kenya that will be dealing with the same issues as the communities of Mombasa and Kilifi. This kind of comparative study will uncover what the people of these other communities see as their motivating factors in pursuing university options. It will also permit a test of the validity of my grounded theory approach and dialectic use of discourses in a second environment.

I do think that my approach has real rigor, but the opportunity to test it in what seems to be analogous circumstances will be useful. To offer an example: as I note in footnote 102 on page 165, Kisii University College was elevated to its current status at the same time as Mombasa Polytechnic and Pwani University College were elevated. Kisii is the name of both a district and a town located in Nyanza Province, the town being approximately 150 miles west of Nairobi. The town and district are both densely populated, a characteristic shared with Mombasa. Until the elevation of

Kisii University College, the town was at some distance from the nearest public university or university college (Egerton to the east; Maseno to the west), as was Mombasa.

What I do not know at all is whether Kisii possesses anything like Mombasa's thousand year history as an international and multicultural crossroads. My suspicion is that it does not. Thus, the senses in which Mombasa's long history plays through the discourses of marginalization, and the responsive discourse of alternatives is a construct that may or may not apply in Kisii. While I believe the dialectic form would continue to be a useful way of structuring the data, I do not know if the data a grounded theory study would unveil could be analyzed as I have analyzed the data from Mombasa.

This kind of comparative study will also be an addition to the literature on expansion of higher education opportunities in other countries in Africa. Kenya is hardly alone in the degree to which its pyramidal education system leaves many students without further education options as they move through the system. The pressures that these individual students face, and the financial and administrative pressures that are felt by those whose task is to manage higher education institutions in a crowded environment, combine to define the space within which much of my future research will take place.

Appendix A

Interview protocol

The research study will utilize open-ended interviews. As such, the protocol provided here will serve as an outline of questions that may be asked.

(1) What is your connection with Mombasa (or Kenya's coastal region, more broadly)?

(2) Can you share with me your understanding of the history of public university development in Kenya?

(3) In what ways have you been involved in public university education or in the development of public universities in Kenya?

    (3a) Follow-up: How did you become involved in this work?

    (3b) Follow-up: In what places have you undertaken this work in Kenya?

(4)   In your view, who are the people most responsible for developing universities in Kenya?

    (4a) Follow-up: what connection(s), if any, do these people have to Mombasa?

(5)   In your memory, when did you become aware that there were individuals working to establish a public university in Mombasa (or Kenya's coastal region, more broadly)?

(6)   In your view, what are the reasons for why Mombasa (and the coastal region, more broadly) does not yet have a public university?

(7)   What meaning(s) do you ascribe to the reasons Mombasa (and the coastal region, more broadly) remains without a public university?

(8)   In what ways do you believe the absence of a public university in the coastal region has impacted (positively or negatively) the people and communities of Mombasa (and the coastal region, more broadly)?

    (8a) Follow-up: In what ways would the establishment of a public university in Mombasa (or Kenya's coastal region, more broadly) impact economic, political, and social development(s) in the region?

(8b) Follow-up: In what ways do you think the relationship Mombasa (and the coastal region, more broadly) maintains with the rest of Kenya (and Kenya's government) has affected decisions about when and whether to establish a public university here?

(9)   What do you feel will need to occur in order for a university to be established in Mombasa?

(10)   Who do you believe will be the most important constituencies in the effort that eventually brings a university to Mombasa?

(11)   In what ways would the establishment of a public university in Mombasa (or Kenya's coastal region, more broadly) bring change to the region?

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