

Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis or dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis or dissertation in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known, including display on the world wide web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis or dissertation. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis or dissertation. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

Signature:

Kara Alexandra Moskowitz

Date

From Possibility to Postcolony
The Politics of Decolonization, Development, and Inequality in Kenya (c. 1950-1980)

By

Kara Alexandra Moskowitz
Doctor of Philosophy

History

Clifton Crais, Ph.D.
Advisor

Kristin Mann, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Peter Little, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Accepted:

Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies

Date

From Possibility to Postcolony

The Politics of Decolonization, Development, and Inequality in Kenya (c. 1950-1980)

By

Kara Alexandra Moskowitz

M.A., History, Emory University, 2012

B.A., History, Grinnell College, 2006

Advisor:

Clifton Crais, Ph.D.

An abstract of

a dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the

James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in History

2014

Abstract

From Possibility to Postcolony The Politics of Decolonization, Development, and Inequality in Kenya (c. 1950-1980)

By

Kara Alexandra Moskowitz

“From Possibility to Postcolony: The Politics of Decolonization, Development, and Inequality in Kenya (c. 1950-1980)” explores how – in the decades after independence – local access to national and international development resources shaped political authority and government obligation, and led to the creation of new forms of inequality. In postcolonial Kenya, development resources became available through complicated negotiations among a diverse set of actors and in a setting increasingly shaped by transnational development institutions. Using archival materials and oral histories, the project foregrounds the lives and political imaginations of rural people. The dissertation uses a series of local case studies from the Rift Valley district of Uasin Gishu to examine the interconnections between development and decolonization. These case studies show that rural residents of Uasin Gishu formed new political relationships with state, non-state, and transnational actors to negotiate the form and distribution of development programs. In doing so, these rural actors also participated in the creation of new patron-client relationships and in the negotiation of fundamental questions about the political and economic order of postcolonial Kenya. Experimentations in the practice of governance were very often carried out in rural spaces in the language of land and development, and through these trials, new political institutions and political subjects came into being. Simultaneously, new forms of exclusion and inequality emerged. The thesis balances a focus on the emergence of new political practices with an emphasis on the – at times, dire, and without exception, unequal – realities of agrarian life just after independence in Kenya.

From Possibility to Postcolony

The Politics of Decolonization, Development, and Inequality in Kenya (c. 1950-1980)

By

Kara Alexandra Moskowitz

M.A., History, Emory University, 2012

B.A., History, Grinnell College, 2006

Advisor:

Clifton Crais, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in History

2014

Acknowledgements

The members of my committee have been invaluable to my development as a scholar. Clifton Crais, my advisor, taught me how to ask bigger, more creative, and more critical questions, and was always available to discuss an idea or read a draft. Kristin Mann taught me how to answer those big questions persuasively with specific, local histories, and continually encouraged me to be both meticulous and clear in my writing. Peter Little pushed me to approach my work through a more social scientific lens, and his immense knowledge of Kenya made my dissertation richer. I always said I had the “perfect committee,” and I believe this to be true more now than ever.

At Emory, I was also lucky to have the support of faculty members and fellow graduate students. Kristin Phillips, Mari Webel, and Pamela Scully provided helpful critiques of my work. Jane Hooper was finishing up her dissertation just as I arrived at Emory, and has since that moment, provided useful advice at every point. Jill Rosenthal has helped me to think about histories of development differently, and has been a caring friend for the entirety of my graduate career. Dinah Hannaford has been a wonderful friend and colleague, and gave me the needed advice to “let the dissertation go.” Elizabeth Stice was my running buddy, social coordinator, and generous critic. Discussions with Husseina Dinani, Molly McCullers, and Jessica Reuther have also influenced my dissertation research, and I am grateful to each of them for their help.

Julia Bailey was the first to hear my ideas as I began my research. She has continued to be both a wonderful friend and colleague until the end. Amanda Lewis and Caleb Owen started out as fellow Swahili students, then archives buddies, and finally, flatmates in Nairobi. All of the staff of the Kenya National Archives provided help, especially Peterson Kithuka and Richard Ambani. Richard’s relentlessness in searching for missing archival documents made my project so immeasurably better, and the joy and energy he brought to the archives made it a more pleasant place to work. It seems a small thing, but it was only once I joined a Nairobi soccer team that I felt I had made a real home there, and it was through my team that I made some of my best friends in Kenya. Dave Zarembka and Gladys Kamonya opened up their Lumakanda home to a stranger, and made me feel welcome immediately. They introduced me to my research assistants, and I both enjoyed, and learned from, our nightly dinner discussions about my research. Oliver Kamave, Richard Kemboi, and Ann Mbuga assisted with my interviews. They found informants, provided translations, and were my first sounding board for ideas about how to interpret interviews. Each made the collection of oral histories a pleasure.

Friends and family greatly contributed to my work. Lesley Watson supported me in every stage of graduate school, and has been my writing and research buddy at Emory, at Atlanta coffee shops, in Cambridge, and even over Skype. Fernando Esquivel got me to the end. When I was burnt out, he helped me remember why I love what I do, and why I think it is so important. My siblings – David, Rachel, and Daniel – were always only a phone call or email away, and Daniel, especially, proofread my work with little notice. It is to my parents who I am most indebted. They have always pushed me to think critically, and they have encouraged me and supported me in everything I have done.

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. ‘The Eye to the Government and the Ears of the Public’: Making Local Governments and Political Imaginations	32
3. ‘Can I Be One of Them?’: The Varied Landscape of Settlement in Kenya	87
4. Cooperation or Corruption?: A Decolonization Tale	149
5. Failure to Feed the Nation: The Politics of Maize and Agricultural Marketing	201
6. A Labor of Love?: Self-Help and the Contradictions of Postcolonial Governance	242
7. ‘The Land Was Ours, But It Was Not Mine’: Exclusion, Political Imagination, and Women’s Mobilization	297
8. ‘Are You Planting Trees or Are You Planting People?’: Defining Kenya’s National Interest (Part I of II)	347
9. ‘Are You Planting Trees or Are You Planting People?’: Squatter Resistance, International Development, and Postcolonial State-Making (Part II)	387
10. Conclusion	428
<i>Glossary</i>	435
<i>Bibliography</i>	437

Maps and Tables

Maps

Map 1.1	Kenya	7
Maps 1.2	Provinces of Kenya	21
Map 2.1	Uasin Gishu District	55
Map 3.1	Uasin Gishu-Kakamega Border	100

Tables

Table 6.1	<i>Harambee</i> Contributions by Province	290
Table 6.2	Per Capita <i>Harambee</i> Contributions	291

1 Introduction

This dissertation is about the making of political culture, political authority, and political identity during Kenyan decolonization. The project centers on the actions and political imaginations of rural people: how they navigated the transition, sought access to development resources, and thought of themselves as citizens of an independent nation-state in a world increasingly shaped by transnational organizations. The dissertation explores how local negotiations over development resources and social services – particularly, land, education, and healthcare – shaped political ideas, political engagements, and the formation of new political relationships in the years after independence.

The dissertation foregrounds the lived realities of rural Kenyans whose lives were unfolding at a series of intersections – spatial, temporal, political, and social. Acknowledging the intersectionality and imbrications of rural lives necessitates bringing together approaches and genres that have conventionally remained divorced in historical writing. The spaces of this dissertation, for example, range from rural Rift Valley villages to Nairobi government buildings to the floors of the British Parliament to the Western-based offices of international development institutions. The historical actors who bring the pages of this work to life include women, men, rural farmers, squatters, youths, elders, Kalenjin, Luhya, Kikuyu, chiefs, local government bureaucrats, national politicians, the Kenyan president, Peace Corps Volunteers, and World Bank Officials, among many others. These actors participated in, shaped, and were shaped by, numerous political, economic, and social institutions and social forces, such as self-help groups,

women's micro-financing organizations, agricultural marketing and cooperative societies, county councils, the central Kenyan state, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). If there is one point of analytical focus that is less expansive, it is the time period of just 30 years covered by the research. This temporal lens sits astride what historians have often characterized as a rupture – independence from colonial rule.

Two main inquiries guided my research. First, I sought to examine how our understanding of decolonization (a national project) and development (an international project) might change if we started in a rural, local setting.¹ I chose this rural, local approach for three reasons in particular. First, the vast majority of the Kenyan population resided in rural areas in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, as was the case in most parts of Africa.² Second, most Kenyan development interventions during decolonization took place in rural areas. Lastly, scholars have largely examined decolonization in urban settings (and the metropole).³ A focus on decolonization and development in rural areas, I hoped, would help bring forth a new, more complicated narrative that took into account the importance of rural actors and rural spaces for decolonization and development.

¹ The anthropological literature provides a rich counterpoint with works too numerous on local development to begin to cite. On local Kenyan development, see, for example: James Howard Smith, *Bewitching Development: Witchcraft and the Reinvention of Development in Neoliberal Kenya* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

² "World Development Indicators 2012," The World Bank, accessed 7 Feb. 2013, <http://databank.worldbank.org>. Similar to other parts of Africa, 92.6 percent of the Kenyan population lived in rural areas in 1960. Today, 75.6 percent of Kenyans reside in rural areas.

³ See, for example: Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Elizabeth Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization in Guinea, 1946-58* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007); Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006). Within Kenyan scholarship, see: John Harbeson, *Nation-Building in Kenya* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973); Gary Wasserman, *The Politics of Decolonization: Kenya, Europeans and the Land Issue 1960–1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

Second, I sought to understand the relationship between decolonization and development. What did it mean that nations gained independence at the same time that international development institutions began playing a growing part in the newly postcolonial world?⁴ Other important questions emerged from this broader question. How did expectations and negotiations for development shape decolonization? Conversely, how did the decolonizing setting shape development processes? Historical works have often separated these two processes and assumed that international development interventions followed decolonization. The two were, in fact, coterminous and imbricated. During decolonization, the everyday struggles and successes of many rural Kenyans revolved around gaining access to development resources. For national politicians and policymakers, too, independence represented the opportunity to pursue progress. It was not just Kenyan citizens and state actors who conceptualized independence through development, but also transnational organizations and foreign nations, both of which played a hands-on role in planning and implementing postcolonial development projects.⁵

To answer these questions, I set out to research a history of rural decolonization and the development programs that accompanied – and were so integral to – this political transition. My study begins with the locally grounded, but understanding the quotidian political and economic practices requires a broader scope as well. To write a local history of rural Africa, I have come to believe, is always to attempt to recover the everyday

⁴ Initial international development work focused on South Korea, India, and South America – nations that became independent before the 1950s. Concerted international development in Africa started in the 1960s when most African countries attained independence.

⁵ In fact, after independence, many colonial officers became employed by new transnational development institutions, such as the World Bank.

political economy of the past, since economic change can so profoundly affect subsistence farmers, the rural poor, and middle income rural Kenyans as well. Changes in local economies, livelihoods, and political institutions have made deep imprints, historically, on rural communities, families, and individuals. Global and national political and economic changes can reverberate immensely in local settings.⁶

My dissertation emphasizes rural spaces and rural actors without losing sight of the importance of understanding the changing role that (local, national, and international) political and economic institutions played in rural decolonization and development. Social historians have tended not to think through institutions in a really systematic way and have, instead, focused on how institutions impinge on rural communities.⁷ My dissertation resists the narrative of state imposition catalyzing local reaction. My research reveals a rather more complicated process of deliberation and negotiation amongst a diverse set of state, non-state, and transnational actors. These actors rarely agreed upon the path to development, or the meaning of independence. I examine how these actors negotiated and implemented development programs. This examination demonstrates how

⁶ For some examples of the deep impacts of economic change on African communities, see: John Lonsdale, "The Emergence of African Nations: A Historiographical Analysis," *African Affairs* 67, no. 266 (1968): 11-28; Sarah Berry, *Cocoa, Custom, and Socio-Economic Change in Rural Western Nigeria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); Sarah Berry, *Fathers Work for Their Sons: Accumulation, Mobility, and Class Formation in an Extended Yoruba Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Jean Allman and Victoria Tashjian, *'I Will Not Eat Stone': A Women's History of Colonial Asante* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000); A.G. Hopkins, "The New Economic History of Africa," *Journal of African History* 50 (2009): 155-177.

⁷ Belinda Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991); Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001); Kenda Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart: Widows, Family, and Community in Kenya* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Derek Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004).

development was eventually distributed and how new political relationships formed around gaining access to these resources.

To pursue development resources was to dive headfirst into an increasingly entangled web of political networks. In negotiating development, actors drew on their existing networks, but they also formed new political relationships. Novel patterns of patronage emerged, as did novel political imaginations. We have long known that the planning and practice of international development represented a profoundly political process.⁸ What we know less about is how the negotiation and distribution of development at the local level shaped the postcolonial political order.

I explore how access to, or exclusion from, development shaped rural ideas about authority and, in turn, shaped new forms of political engagement in the decades after independence. Development project sites became spaces where rural Africans, state representatives, and transnational actors came together and attempted to reconcile dissonant visions of Kenya's economic and political path. These actors negotiated questions about the allocation of resources – who controlled the distribution of resources, who had rights to those resources, and what kind of political connection existed between the two. In working out how development would be distributed, these diverse actors cemented new political alliances and new political imaginaries. They started to possess

⁸ James Ferguson is most famous for making explicit the politics of development intervention. James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: 'Development,' 'Depoliticization,' and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Many other works have followed to further demonstrate the creation of accepted technocratic expertise, and the politics inherent in decision-making about which development projects become prioritized. See, for example: Tania Murray Li, *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Peter Uvin, *Aiding Development: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1998); David Gow, *Countering Development: Indigenous Modernity and the Moral Imagination* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

firmer, and more specific, opinions about what constituted the national interest, about the obligations of the local and national government, about who represented the government, and about the rights of citizens.⁹ These actors also helped concretize new forms of marginalization, playing a role in creating a postcolonial order marked by the unequal allocation of resources, especially land.

These processes of solidifying political relationships in order to access development resources – so essential to shaping the nature of postcolonial political and economic order – began long before independence. This dissertation argues that we must understand decolonization more broadly than independence.¹⁰ Some recent scholarship has creatively explored how to think about the second half of the twentieth century by using new “historical ruptures” and examining early postcolonial disappointment.¹¹ This scholarship provides more original interpretations, but still makes use of the firm periodizations which inhibit the ambiguity Shula Marks has argued enables historians “to write in chords” and “to operate at several levels simultaneously.”¹² Independence led to

⁹ Margaret Somers, *Genealogies of Citizenship: Markets, Statelessness, and the Right to Have Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Somers argues that the rights of citizens were not inalienable, nor were they equivalent. Stephen Ndegwa, “Citizenship and Ethnicity: An Examination of Two Transition Moments in Kenya Politics,” *The American Political Science Review* (1997): 599. Stephen Ndegwa has shown that authority, rights, and obligations can be (and were in mid-twentieth century Kenya) vested in multiple and coexisting citizenships and *forms* of citizenship.

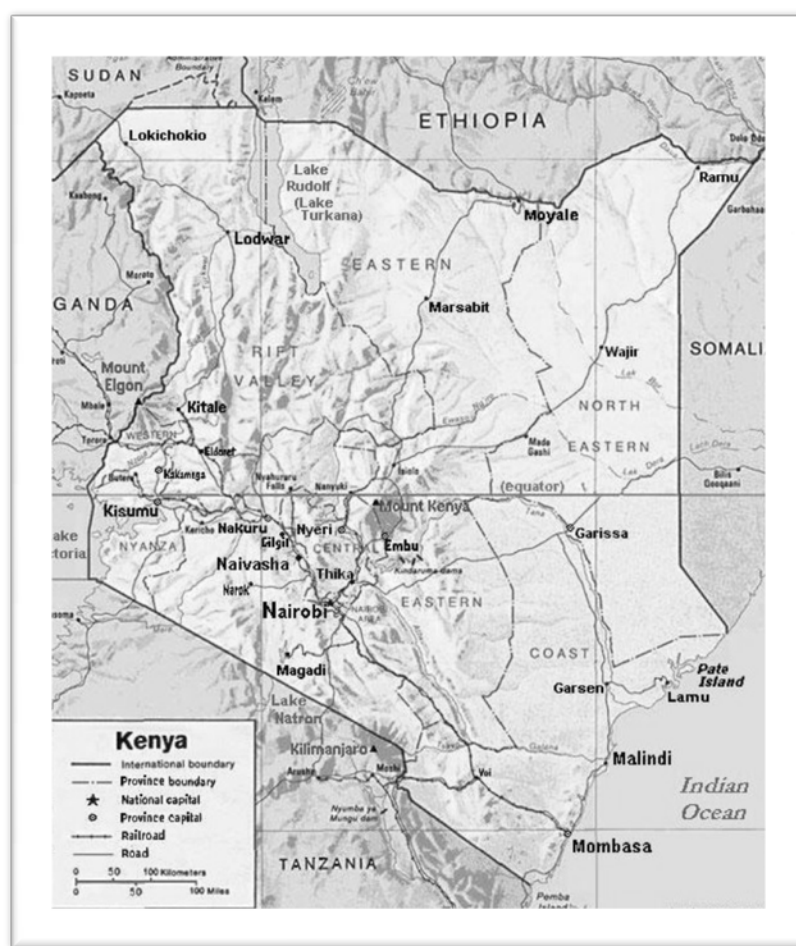
¹⁰ B.A. Ogot, and W.R. Ochieng, *Decolonization and Independence in Kenya, 1940-93* (London: James Currey, 1995), xii.

¹¹ Stephen Ellis, “Writing Histories of Contemporary Africa,” *Journal of African History* 43 (2002): 1-26. Ellis argues that we need to reconsider how we periodize the second half of the 20th century of African history and that the 1970s serve as more of a historical rupture than independence. Ellis believes the 1970s become more important if we discard Western categories of ‘success / development / modernization’ which assume that sovereign nationhood represents a big change in Africa, as elsewhere. Giacomo Macola, “‘It Means As If We Are Excluded From the Good Freedom’: Thwarted Expectations of Independence in the Luapula Province of Zambia, 1964-6,” *Journal of African History* 47 (2006): 43-56. Macola argues that the Zambian state’s non-compliance with expectations for development led to early postcolonial disillusionment before the recession of the 1970s.

¹² Shula Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth Century Natal* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), viii.

the creation of a new, self-governing nation-state, and the transition of Kenyan colonial subjects into Kenyan citizens. For many Kenyans, independence represented, most importantly, the opportunity to gain access to land and development resources.

Independence brought change; it also brought stasis. Independence meant a sovereign, representative government, and it coincided with increasing international development interventions. It also meant, as some rural Kenyans recounted, “nothing changed.”¹³



Map 1.1 Kenya (Source: U.S. Government, Central Intelligence Agency, “Kenya (Shaded Relief)” in the Perry-Castañeda Map Collection, University of Texas Libraries, accessed May 26, 2014, <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/kenya.gif>.)

¹³ Interview with the Mary Kitur, Leseru, November 19, 2012.

To understand decolonization, we can neither end, nor start, at independence. This dissertation takes an incorporative view, bridging the late colonial and early postcolonial years. It attempts to narrate this history by forefronting the divergent “chords” of this period and the many Kenyan experiences of it.

THE ARGUMENT AND SIGNIFICANCE

The argument, in brief, is that, in negotiating development, rural Kenyans, Kenyan state representatives, and transnational actors participated in defining political authority, citizenship, and political culture in the new nation-state. The dissertation tells the story of the making of a postcolonial political order, as rural Kenyans navigated new development practices, encountered uneven and unequal development aid and state assistance, and actively and resourcefully attempted to create channels for themselves and their communities to obtain resources. Rural Kenyans made sense of their political world through their successes and their failures in seeking access to development resources and programs. The unequal allocation of these resources generated conflicting ideas about the meaning of independence and the rights of citizens. These conflicting ideas profoundly shaped complex rural political imaginaries, and in turn, shaped the ways that the rural poor engaged with the state and entered into new political relationships. The unequal allocations of resources also deeply shaped the quality and character of the daily lives of rural Kenyans. These programs profoundly impacted the material well-being of rural Kenyans.

The connection between subaltern ideas of citizenship and the politics of decolonization and development remains largely unexplored in the scholarship. Frederick Cooper argued in *Africa Since 1940* that independent states consolidated their power as

gatekeepers, sitting “astride the interface between a territory and the rest of the world, collecting and distributing resources that derived from the gate itself.”¹⁴ Cooper’s emphasis on the concurrent emergence of international development and independent African states has been an important historiographical intervention.¹⁵ Recent historical work, however, has revealed a more complicated story of decolonization, inviting us to see the postcolonial state as more than a faceless institution with monopolistic control over the flow of resources. Daniel Branch has emphasized the importance of disputes among new African leaders for understanding Kenyan statecraft, and Elizabeth Schmidt has shown the central role grassroots activists played in Guinean decolonization.¹⁶

Many actors played a role in reshaping postcolonial political culture, though our knowledge of how the rural poor participated is more limited. A rich debate on this question has begun to emerge. James Giblin has argued that “the excluded” retreated to spaces outside the state.¹⁷ More recently, Priya Lal has asserted, to the contrary, that the rural poor utilized and appropriated state discourses.¹⁸ While these works have complicated our understanding of African elites and improved our understanding of rural

¹⁴ Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 157.

¹⁵ In the emerging literature on independence and development, scholars have tended to focus more on national development programs. See, for example, Macola, “It Means As If We Are Excluded From the Good Freedom”; Priya Lal, “Militants, Mothers, and the National Family: *Ujamaa*, Gender, and Rural Development in Postcolonial Tanzania,” *Journal of African History*, 51:1 (2010), 1-20; Andrew Bowman, “Mass Production or Production by the Masses? Tractors, Cooperatives, and the Politics of Rural Development in Post-Independence Zambia,” *Journal of African History*, 52: 2 (2011): 201-21.

¹⁶ Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963-2012* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011); Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization*.

¹⁷ James Giblin, *A History of the Excluded: Making Family a Refuge from State in Twentieth Century Tanzania* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹⁸ Lal, “Militants, Mothers,” 1. See also K. Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*. Mutongi’s exploration of Kenyan decolonization through the figure of the increasingly marginalized widow is an important exception to much of the scholarship, but she does not examine how widows participated in state making processes.

actors, none has explored specifically how the rural poor participated in molding political and economic institutions.¹⁹

This dissertation's focus on rural political engagement emphasizes the connection between the creation of complicated postcolonial relationships and the making of political authority. While Sara Berry and Jean-Francois Bayart have both furthered our understanding of authority in Africa by exploring the enduring importance of patronage networks, their analyses have tended to reaffirm a singular, central state.²⁰ More recent literature on the occult has demonstrated the connections between political imagination and postcolonial authority.²¹ These discursive works have unfortunately mostly elided discussion of how political imaginations shaped political action. Achille Mbembe's *On the Postcolony* brought attention to performance and relationships of power, arguing that engagements between the *commandement* (the state) and the *target* (the population) create an institutionalized "world of meanings all of its own, a mastercode."²² But Mbembe's notion of the "mutual zombification" of the *commandement* and the *target*,

¹⁹ Here, Kelly Askew's work is informative, examining 'how some of the least privileged citizens of one emergent African nation hijacked and reconfigured the process of nationalism.' *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002), 12.

²⁰ Sara Berry, *No Condition Is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993); Jean-Francois Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London: Longman, 1993). There is a rich literature on postcolonial patron-client relationships. This literature has often drawn greater attention to the upper echelons of society, and it has tended to focus on the precolonial and colonial foundations of patronage, and then, the post-1970s period. See: Crawford Young, *The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); Richard Joseph, *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Bruce Berman, "Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State: The Politics of Uncivil Nationalism," *African Affairs*, 97 (1998): 305-41; Lynch, *I Say*. Angelique Haugerud's *The Culture of Politics in Modern Kenya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) is an exception to these trends.

²¹ Smith, *Bewitching Development*; Harry West, *Kupilikula: Governance and the Invisible Realm in Mozambique* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005); Adam Ashforth, *Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in South Africa* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005); Peter Geschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997); Clifton Crais, *The Politics of Evil: Magic, State Power, and the Political Imagination in South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

²² Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 2.

like Berry and Bayart, produces too neat an opposition, this time between a discrete state and a discrete citizenry. And similar to the scholarship on the occult, Mbembe's "mutual zombification" simultaneously disempowers these simplified groups from engaging in political action.²³

This dissertation resists binaries between the local and the central, the national and the international. It emphasizes how rural actors – in aspiring to improve their own lives – shaped the decolonizing political and economic order. In focusing on rural Kenya, the dissertation forefronts the ways in which local, national, and international actors, politics, and institutions came together at rural development sites.²⁴ Through negotiations over international development in these interwoven spaces, these actors refashioned political identities, political culture, and political authority in the Kenyan postcolony.

THE HISTORICAL SETTING

The Uasin Gishu plateau has a long history of diverse and contested settlement, followed by significant state-led land reform, particularly in the 1960s. These histories set up the district as a major site for land contestations during decolonization, and as a site where Kenyans debated how citizens were endowed with rights to the resources of the state. The plateau lies on the western side of the Great Rift Valley close to the contemporary Kenya-Uganda border. Rain falls reliably, the soils are fertile and arable,

²³ Mbembe, 104. Here, I echo Ivaska's critique of Mbembe. A. Ivaska, *Cultured States: Youth, Gender, and Modern Style in 1960s Dar es Salaam* (Durham, 2011), 21. Ivaska's emphasis on traveling cosmopolitan forms appropriated in local settings resonates with this work's emphasis on how the local, the national and the international became intertwined in rural spaces.

²⁴ James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta, "Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality," *American Ethnologist*, 29:4 (2002), 981-1002. Ferguson and Gupta emphasize the need to approach analyses of the state with more complicated spatializations than simply "up there." See also J. Ferguson, *Global Shadows: Africans in the Neoliberal World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006). Ferguson calls for an examination of how development ideas are contested on the ground in local settings.

and the high altitude makes for temperate weather well-suited for farming. Only 14 percent of the land in present-day Kenya is so suited for agriculture or intensive grazing. Thus, the Uasin Gishu plateau – and the Kenya Rift Valley highlands, more generally – are exceptional for their immense agricultural potential.²⁵

Long before colonialism, the fertile lands surrounding Uasin Gishu brought newcomers to the plateau. By the late first millennium, a group of Southern Nilotic peoples who would come to be called the Kalenjin – particularly, a sub-group now known as the Nandi – began inhabiting the plateau and assimilating the North Rift Cushites who had preceded them.²⁶ Before 1800, the Uasin Gishu and Siglai Maasai crossed the escarpments into the western highlands and took control over much of the plateau, dividing some of the Kalenjin populations from each other. The Maasai began to decline in the 19th century, however, and the Kalenjin recovered much of the land they had lost. The Kalenjin had for many generations practiced a mixed agro-pastoral livelihood and had a long tradition of cattle-keeping as well as cultivating eleusine millet, sorghum, and other crops.²⁷ This agro-pastoral economy allowed the Kalenjin peoples to rely less on trade with their neighbors than other highland peoples.²⁸ In the nineteenth century, the majority of the Kalenjin populations dwelled in well-watered hills and forest

²⁵ John Lonsdale, “The Conquest State” in *A Modern History of Kenya 1895-1980*, ed. W.R. Ochieng’ (Nairobi: Evans Brothers Limits, 1989), 11.

²⁶ Christopher Ehret, “Aspects of Social and Economic Change in Western Kenya, c. A.D. 500-1800,” in *Kenya Before 1900*, ed. B.A. Ogot (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1976), 4.

²⁷ Sutton, “The Kalenjin” in *Kenya Before 1900*, ed. B.A. Ogot (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1976), 30.

²⁸ John Lonsdale, “The Conquest State, 1895-1904,” 12.

edges to cultivate their crop, while the herders grazed the cattle away from home on the grasslands of the Uasin Gishu plateau.²⁹

At this time, the Nandi lived in scattered homesteads, and the ordinary land-unit, the *koret*, contained between about twenty and one hundred homesteads. It is difficult to recover in much detail how organized political formations and land tenure practices emerged and changed over the precolonial period on the Uasin Gishu plateau. At the turn of the twentieth century, the moment of colonial conquest and early European settlement, Kalenjin practices of farming and pastoralism depended upon mobility and on the presence of surplus, unutilized land.³⁰ Colonial ethnographies emphasized that the Kalenjin-speaking peoples used raiding to expand territorial control, and that they practiced shifting cultivation and grazing. In his 1954 publication, *Nandi Customary Law*, G.S. Snell noted the multiple forms of Nandi land tenure. Snell, a colonial ethnographer, wrote that “occupation of a house normally implied a right to cultivate a small plot alongside it.” He observed that the Nandi maintained, in addition, both communal grazing and group farming lands.³¹ Land was not only central to precolonial Kenyan economies but, similar to much of Africa, it was central to social and political structures and to cosmological beliefs.³²

²⁹ Sutton, 30.

³⁰ Ben Kipkorir, *The Marakwet of Kenya: A Preliminary Study* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1973), 27.

³¹ G.S. Snell, *Nandi Customary Law* (London: Macmillan, 1954), 44-47. Colonial ethnographies are fraught sources. I use these ethnographies as a heuristic tool for trying to gain a partial understanding of what the dynamic Kalenjin systems of land tenure might have looked like before substantive European contact.

³² This was the case amongst many Kenyan communities. Parker Shipton demonstrated that land anchored Luo membership in families, lineages, clans, and tribes. He asserted that the Luo “deemed freehold tenure and a mortgage system unnecessary for their needs and expected these would tear the social fabric.” Parker Shipton, *Mortgaging the Ancestors: Ideologies of Attachment in Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 5. Derek Peterson has argued that the Kikuyu hold two models of social change. One of these models – *mbari* thought – was based upon the lessons of forest clearing. *Mbari* thought links honor to

At the turn of the twentieth century, rinderpest epidemics decimated herds throughout Southern and East Africa, deeply weakening African communities. In the Rift Valley highlands, drought, locust infestations, famine, smallpox, jiggers, and sleeping sickness followed rinderpest.³³ The British arrived during this crisis, making the work of colonial conquest easier. The Nandi suffered less than many and resisted colonial rule more successfully.³⁴ Nandi settlements lay outside the radius of the first phase of British conquest, but with the start of the construction of the Uganda railway line, Nandi contact and conflict with the British increased. Construction of the railway began in the port city of Mombasa in 1896 and ended in Kisumu in western Kenya in 1901. The Nandi resisted the British entrance into the Uasin Gishu fairly successfully up until the turn of the 20th century. During the three British military incursions against the Nandi in 1900, 1903, and 1906, 1,507 Nandi were killed and almost 20,000 cattle were confiscated.

After defeating the Nandi in 1906, the British set about instituting colonial rule in Uasin Gishu.³⁵ Four years earlier, in 1902, the Crown Lands Ordinance had established European rights to “unoccupied” or “uncultivated land.”³⁶ Both the Kalenjin practice of shifting cultivation and their communal land tenure system of occupancy rights relied upon mobility and surplus, unutilized land.³⁷ The Crown Lands Ordinance legalized British claims to fallow land or grazing land, and the colonial state reserved the Uasin

labor. Those who worked hard to transform forests into productive land earned “self mastery.” Further, Peterson asserts, *mbari* thought “scorned any authority not based on land, because clearing land together was the surest foundation for human relationships.” Derek Peterson, *Creative Writing*, 11, 14.

³³ Lonsdale, “The Conquest State,” 16-17.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 19. The Nandi resisted British colonial rule for over 20 years, from 1885 to 1906.

³⁵ E.S. Atieno Odhiambo, “Ethnic Cleansing and Civil Society in Kenya 1969-1992,” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 22, no. 1 (2004): 36.

³⁶ H.W.O. Okoth-Ogendo, *Tenants of the Crown: Evolution of Agrarian Law and Institutions in Kenya* (Nairobi: ACTS Press, 1991), 15.

³⁷ Kipkorir, *The Marakwet of Kenya*, 27; Snell, *Nandi Customary Law*, 47.

Gishu plateau for white settlement. In 1908, Afrikaners, who had left South Africa after the South African War in 1902, became the first European group to settle in Uasin Gishu. The plateau suited these settlers; it lay far from the administrative center of the colony in Nairobi, and the land was ideal for the wheat farming they practiced. Uasin Gishu became part of the ‘White Highlands,’ where Europeans developed an economy based on the large-scale farming of cash crops, such as coffee, tea, wheat, pyrethrum, wattle, and maize.

The Nandi, like other African groups, were forcibly moved to a native reserve. The location of the Nandi reserve, west of Uasin Gishu, in an area less suitable to agro-pastoralism and separated from important grazing land and salt licks, brought hardships. The minimization of available land, the control of African movement, and coercive colonial policies – high taxation and depasturization – drove many Kenyans to search for work on European farms. Many Nandi migrated from the reserve back to Uasin Gishu.³⁸ The European settlers in Uasin Gishu used the Nandi as a labor reserve, establishing a system dependent upon “squatters” – basically, labor-tenants. Squatters worked on European farms in exchange for access to land for cultivation or grazing. Throughout the 20th century, colonial law allowed European landowners to demand increasing days of labor from squatters in exchange for cultivation rights.³⁹ Land shortage had become a problem, forever transforming the area, as the stakes of controlling land access and rights increased dramatically.

³⁸ Diana Ellis, “The Nandi Protest of 1923 in the Context of African Resistance to Colonial Rule in Kenya,” *Journal of African History* 17, no. 4 (1976): 558. The Kenyan government tried to “depasturize” the Nandi by taking large tracts of grazing land in order to encourage the Nandi to become agriculturalists and work on European farms.

³⁹ Berry, *No Condition is Permanent*, 84.

After World War I, the British took an additional 278 square kilometers of the Nandi reserve – which lay adjacent to the White Highlands – to give to British soldiers under the Soldier Settlement Scheme. The land taken in this appropriation represented one-seventh of the reserve area. In addition, 1,500 to 2,250 residents were displaced, and Nandi were again disconnected from important salt licks and grazing grounds.⁴⁰ The period after World War I brought a new influx of European settlers to Uasin Gishu, and the presence of the colonial state increased. The British colonialists further restricted the mobility of laborers, increased hut and poll taxes in 1920, and imposed a cattle quarantine from 1921 to 1923.⁴¹ In 1923, in response to this combination of changes, the Nandi organized another resistance movement, this time of non-cooperation. The British feared the resistance would turn violent, and the colonial government amended some of its policies to quell the unrest.⁴²

Following this second resistance, the Nandi continued to provide labor on European farms. In 1923, about one-third of all Nandi worked as squatters on white farms, farming “the same fields that had been their ancestral homelands a mere generation earlier.”⁴³ The Nandi worked on their former ancestral lands, but both laborers in the White Highlands and those in the reserve continued to think of the lost lands as their own. The European cash crop economy became further entrenched in the inter-war period. Where once the Nandi had grown millet and sorghum and grazed cattle, the

⁴⁰ Jacqueline Klopp, “Can Moral Ethnicity Trump Political Tribalism? The Struggle for Land and Nation in Kenya,” *African Studies* 61, no. 2 (2002): 276-277.

⁴¹ Ellis, 564.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 569.

⁴³ Odhiambo, 36.

British and Afrikaner settlers mostly grew wheat, maize, and barley.⁴⁴ In 1921, colonial officials approved the construction of the Uasin Gishu railway extension, connecting Eldoret and Uasin Gishu to the rest of Kenya and the outside world.⁴⁵ The district also became more diverse, as settlers solicited the labor of Kenyans from other ethnic groups, particularly the Kikuyu of central Kenya and the Luhya of western Kenya. Kikuyu squatters comprised the majority of resident laborers on settler plantations and estates in the White Highlands during the colonial period, but most worked east of Uasin Gishu.⁴⁶

World War II deeply affected Kenyans and coincided with major changes in colonial administration and the labor system on European farms. In Kenya, the British administration published newsheets and produced radio broadcasts in vernacular languages, largely to recruit Africans to fight.⁴⁷ By 1944, 20 percent of able-bodied male Kenyans were enlisted in World War II, and the experience of fighting transformed the political aspirations of many Kenyan *askaris* (soldiers).⁴⁸ These new forms of vernacular communications also played a role in the creation of a more expansive understanding of community, helped unify new collectivities, and promoted more nationalist ambitions.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Earl Case, "The Pastoral and Agricultural Industries of Kenya Colony," *Economic Geography* 6, no. 3 (1930): 255.

⁴⁵ Robert Maxon, "The Years of Revolutionary Advance, 1920-1929," in Ochieng', ed. *A Modern History of Kenya*, 75.

⁴⁶ Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1.

⁴⁷ There are no reliable numbers on literacy rates of the Kenyan population during the mid-20th century, though the numbers were certainly low. Fay Gadsden, "The African Press in Kenya, 1945-1952," *Journal of African History* 21, no. 4 (1980): 515. Necessarily, it seems that the ideas and content in the newsheets often circulated just as much by word of mouth as by print.

⁴⁸ Timothy Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1964* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999), 94.

⁴⁹ "In 1941, twice-weekly Nandi broadcasts were initiated by the information department. These broadcasts gradually increased, and in 1957, 406 Kalenjin talk shows and 63 Kalenjin music pieces were recorded and aired. And, by 1957, the publication, *Kalenjin*, "enjoyed the largest circulation of any African government newsheet." Lynch, *I Say to You*, 38-39. See also: Monone Omosule, "Kalenjin: The Emergence of a

Just a year into the war, in 1940, the British Parliament passed the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, which emphasized African ‘improvement.’⁵⁰ WWII also led to the end of the Great Depression and a new wave of prosperity for white farmers in Kenya. Settler incomes rose, and many used these new profits to mechanize their farms. Numerous African squatters were expelled from the newly mechanized farms since their labor had become unnecessary. Others became disenchanted with their increasingly oppressive legal status and labor obligations. The Uasin Gishu District Council, for example, enforced African stock reductions along with measures which reduced land given to squatters for cultivation and grazing during the war.⁵¹ These changes, coupled with rapidly transforming global politics, created a context in which Kenyans – and Africans more generally – began to imagine a markedly different future.⁵²

Widespread landlessness bred discontent and generated political resistance, most notably in central Kenya. Kikuyu elites in the crowded reserves did not allow the returning squatters to access ancestral land rights, which had previously been inalienable. Disillusioned young men began organizing a rebellion in the late 1940s, which would

Corporate Name for the Nandi-Speaking Tribes of East Africa,” *Geneve-Afrique* 27, no. 1 (1989): 75; Ben Kipkorir, *People of the Rift Valley* (London: Evans, 1978), 2.

⁵⁰ The French passed the Fonds d’Investissement et de Developpement Economique et Social (FIDES) in 1946. In both cases, the economic implications of the policy change were that metropolises no longer required colonies to be self-sufficient. The new imperial developmental conceptualization emerged in a context in which the British were rethinking their colonies after widespread ‘disturbances’ in the colonies, the most important of which took place in Trinidad and Jamaica in 1935, 1937, and 1938. The Moyne Report, which followed from the Moyne Commission investigations of the British Caribbean riots, asserted that the cause of the economic crisis which catalyzed the disturbances lay in the outdated land-tenure structure and the residues of the plantation system. Based on the recommendations of the Moyne Report, the British Parliament passed the CDWA.

⁵¹ Tabitha Kanogo, “Kenya and the Second World War, 1939-1950,” in Ochieng’, ed. *A Modern History of Kenya, 1895-1980*, 159.

⁵² Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, 37. “Developmental colonialism was in part a response to the narrowing grounds on which a convincing case could be made for the exercise of state power over people who were ‘different.’”

come to be known as Mau Mau. The first Kenyan land reform program in 1954 grew out of both the Mau Mau State of Emergency and the new colonialism that stressed African development through state intervention.⁵³ In the Rift Valley, at this same time, Nandi, Kipsigis, Tugen, Keiyo, Marakwet, Pokot, Sabaot, and Terik peoples – most of whom “shared histories of pastoralism but also social systems structured by age-sets, clans, and local councils (from which men could be drawn for military campaigns), and the practice of male and female circumcision” – created an expanded ethnic identity called Kalenjin.⁵⁴ This ethnic expansionism gained popular resonance, in part, because of communal fears about Kikuyu dominance, which intensified during the Mau Mau emergency.⁵⁵

Much of the Kalenjin fear of Kikuyu power related to land. The migration of Kikuyu out of central Kenya and into the western highlands of the Rift Valley put the two groups in competition with one another. The rapid politicization and organizing efforts among both the Kalenjin and the Kikuyu in the 1950s – centered on the politics of land restitution – suggests expectations for a change in the administration of land in Kenya. These expectations proved well-founded. The Million Acre Scheme, the largest resettlement program in Kenyan history, began in 1962.⁵⁶ By independence, in 1963, a great deal of land resettlement had taken place. It had profoundly altered the political

⁵³ Sorrenson, *Land Reform in Kikuyu Country*, 70, 117.

⁵⁴ Lynch, 39.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

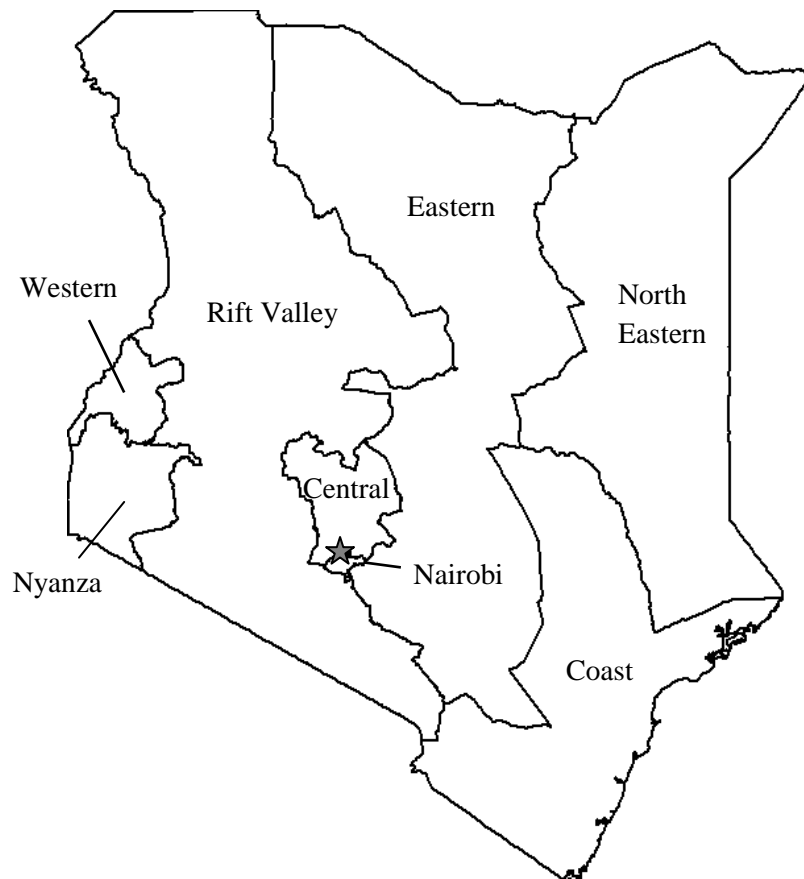
⁵⁶ This scheme planned the transfer of 1.17 million acres of land from European to African ownership. The brainchild of colonial administrators, it was intended for resettlement to occur adjacent to native reserves. Resettlement administrators planned to allow local communities to gain land they had inhabited prior to colonialism or to gain ownership over lands upon which they labored as squatters. David Anderson and Emma Lochery, “Violence and Exodus in Kenya’s Rift Valley, 2008: Predictable and Preventable?” *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 2, no. 2 (July 2008): 335.

dynamics of the time, creating intense competition for access to and control over a limited and valuable resource.

Two years before the start of the Million Acre Scheme, in 1960, Kenyan leaders and the British government began negotiating independence at Lancaster House. The most heated political debates revolved around the organization of the postcolonial government, since the government structure would determine who controlled the Rift Valley highlands. The Kenya African National Union party (KANU), which primarily represented the Kikuyu and Luo, argued for a strong, national government. The Kenya African Democratic Union party (KADU), on the other hand, represented the “minority” ethnic groups. KADU had allied with the European settlers and had British government support. KADU advocated for *majimboism* – a complex federal-style government that allowed for regional autonomy, and vested power in district governments to own land and administer land-resettlement schemes.⁵⁷ At the close of the last Lancaster House conference in 1963, the independence framework remained ambiguous. The alliance with the settlers and the British skewed power dynamics in favor of KADU, but it did not have the backing to win a popular vote. Though the final conference called for *majimboism*, Kenyan elections placed Jomo Kenyatta and KANU, overwhelmingly, in power. By 1964, Kenyatta abolished the federal form of government, KADU dissolved, and Kenya became a de facto one party state.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ David Anderson, “‘Yours in Struggle for Majimbo’: Nationalism and the Party Politics of Decolonization in Kenya, 1955-64,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 3 (2005): 547.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 563.



Map 1.2 Provinces of Kenya (Source: Brian Szymanski, “Map of Provinces of Kenya,” January 1, 2008, in Wikimedia Commons, accessed May 26, 2014, <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kenya-provinces.svg>.)

The Million Acre Scheme was just the largest of the late colonial and early postcolonial government programs aimed at restructuring land tenure and redistributing land. These programs formed part of a broader emergence of post-War development policies increasingly shaped by international institutions such as the World Bank. Land reform emphasized plot consolidation, individual ownership, economies of scale, and the importance of Western agricultural knowledge. Despite some expectations for free land, the colonial and postcolonial states and the World Bank ultimately implemented land

redistribution on a “willing buyer-willing seller” basis, at a prevailing market rate and did not institute any large-scale free land transfers.⁵⁹

In large effect, the independence negotiations protected white settler interests.⁶⁰ Europeans remained the owners of large farms and plantations, though a small number of Africans privileged under colonialism were able to make big land purchases. Many Kenyans did not meet the criteria for land programs, given their insufficient “agricultural knowledge” and capital. The land reform schemes aimed at the poor pitted local Kenyan groups, particularly ethnic groups, against one another for valued fertile land. In Uasin Gishu, landholdings remained highly unequal after independence.⁶¹ In 1980, the district still had 525 large farms covering 84 percent of the total land area, implying that little land was redistributed to poor farmers and the landless.⁶²

THE METHODS

The dissertation is based on a year and a half of archival and oral research in Kenya and the United Kingdom. At the British National Archives and special collections at Oxford, Cambridge, and the School of Oriental and African Studies, I examined

⁵⁹ Land reform in Kenya took the shape it did as a result of concessions during independence negotiations and restrictions by the World Bank. There were two main types of plots under the Million Acre Scheme. Low density schemes were made up of larger sized plots, which resulted in fewer families (from about three to five) settled on every hundred acres. The emerging rural bourgeoisie – often first empowered under indirect rule, and further entitled under the Swynnerton Plan – were largely the beneficiaries of these schemes. Their history of privilege under colonialism enabled them to accumulate land, which other Kenyans could not afford. High density schemes, on the other hand, were much smaller holdings intended for the landless and unemployed, and comprised the aspect of this program designed to “defuse rural unrest.” It was a political concession – largely to Mau Mau and its later iterations – which the World Bank, in fact, refused to provide loans for, because the “non-progressive farmers” were seen as “liabilities.”

⁶⁰ The British had wanted to begin implementation of extensive land reform under colonial administration in order to protect settler interests by minimizing their exposure to the policies of the future African government. Harbeson, 86.

⁶¹ Klopp, 278.

⁶² Karuti Kanyinga, “The Legacy of the White Highlands: Land Rights, Ethnicity and the Post-2007 Election Violence in Kenya,” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 27, no. 3 (2009): 213.

sources ranging from meetings between British and Kenyan policymakers to the papers of colonial officers to NGO records. These records provided a largely top-down view of the transnational actors involved in Kenyan development projects.

The vast majority of my research time was spent in Kenya. There, I did what historians do, a tedious form of detective work, where we attempt to solve an as yet fully defined case. I toiled in the Kenya National Archives in downtown Nairobi, slowly piecing together a story from a wide range of sources. I began with monthly and annual reports from Rift Valley Province and Uasin Gishu District, hoping to gain an understanding of Uasin Gishu's local history. From there, I moved on to documents from various ministries – Land and Settlement, Community Development, Local Government, Cooperatives, Industry, Natural Resources, and the Office of the President. Within these broader headings, I uncovered rich materials, such as petitions, County Council minutes, intra- and inter-government correspondence, and a number of commissions of inquiry. About halfway into my archival research period, I left for Uasin Gishu to conduct oral interviews. After I completed the majority of my interviews, I returned to the archives to finish up what had been left undone and to follow up on the new leads and gaps my interviews had made visible. I made a few additional short trips to Uasin Gishu to conduct follow up interviews as well.

Oral histories are central to my research. Rural memories not only complicate the largely state-centric narrative in public records, but they also bring life to the historical narrative and contribute incredible insights into rural political imaginations. I have sought in my writing to balance different accounts, and where these accounts conflict, to try to understand why. I conducted about 120 hours of interviews with 115 informants at six

main sites. These interviews took place mostly on the western border of Uasin Gishu District, but a good number took place in what is now Kakamega District.⁶³ More than half of my interviewees were women, most were farmers, a few were former agricultural officials, some were squatters, some were landowners, some were relatively wealthy, but most lived modest lives. My informants ranged in age from about 60 to 100 years old.

When I began conducting interviews, I used a semi-structured interview guide designed to engage informants in discussions about historical moments of local importance, while allowing them to contextualize with personal narratives. I drew on my archival research – particularly the detailed local histories contained in Uasin Gishu District reports – to create my questions. I always began interviews with life histories to understand the background of my informants and to make them feel more comfortable. From life histories, I moved on to detailed questions about land settlement, agricultural production, and development programs in the 1960s and 1970s. In particular, I tried to reconstruct how my informants came to settle where they did, what types of crops they grew, what successes and failures they had as farmers, what assistance they received – both from the government, from other institutions, and from their communities. I then asked questions about their social lives and local development – how the lives of men and women differed, how my interviewees sought access to development, education, and health services, and how they participated in the development of their villages. Lastly, I asked more general questions about their understandings of development, citizenship, and nation building in the decades after independence. My questions evolved over time, as I

⁶³ This area had historically been part of Uasin Gishu District, but became part of Kakamega District and Western Province during decolonization.

“learned how to ask”⁶⁴ and as I gained a better understanding of the ways in which my informants understood their own histories.

Uasin Gishu presents some challenges for the researcher. In these challenges, however, lie great opportunities for new historical findings. Because the district is ethnically diverse, I used three different research assistants, each of whom spoke different indigenous languages – Kalenjin, Luhya, and Kikuyu. My research assistants all came from the communities in which I was conducting interviews, and they were invaluable for translating interviews, introducing me to informants, and discussing ideas.

THE WRITING

This dissertation examines the making of the postcolonial state in a local, rural setting through an analysis of the relationship between non-elites and the newly independent state. This relationship was almost always partially mediated by a third party – Western donors, international development institutions, churches, or voluntary organizations (today’s nongovernmental organizations). In particular, I examine the ways in which the rural poor negotiated – at times successfully – access to development resources and in what circumstances they chose to work around or with the state. Conversely, I examine how the state asserted itself as both a presence and an absence in the lives of rural Kenyans, choosing both highly regulatory and *laissez faire* approaches to governance. Neither the new state nor the new citizens – *wananchi* – were ever fully successful in achieving their goals, goals which were almost always concerned in some form with “development” or *maendeleo*. At times, the state unsuccessfully tried to

⁶⁴ Charles Briggs, *Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

implement large development programs in “the nation’s interest,” but through their intransigence, rural Kenyans delayed and even derailed state-led and World Bank-funded programs. In other instances, the state ignored desires for state assistance by pushing small, poor communities to provide their own welfare provisions and to assume enormous responsibilities.⁶⁵

In many of these instances, citizens resisted or worked to shape development programs when interacting with representatives of the state and development institutions. It was through these complicated and entangled relationships and the successes and failures of the Kenyan state and Kenyan citizens, though, that new political relationships formed – between the state and citizens, between political elites, between rural communities and local and national leaders. From the beginning, these relationships were marked by their complexity, contradictions, and dynamism.

All of the chapters will reveal different ways that rural Kenyans negotiated with the new postcolonial state in its many guises and forms. More so, each chapter demonstrates that contestations over so-called “parochial matters” had larger implications for the rights of citizens and the obligations of the state. When agricultural cooperative societies threatened not to sell their milk or maize products through the state marketing boards, for example, they did so because they thought the apparatus was corrupt, unfair, and hindered them from improving their lives. In some cases, the state listened and compromised with the people. At other times, however, the state asserted its authority more strongly. Most often, the Kenyatta state punished through absence or neglect – it neglected to fund local governments after it imposed gigantic responsibilities on these

⁶⁵ Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*. This aspect of state neglect supports Mutongi’s findings.

small governing bodies, and it neglected to fund the self-help programs of small communities if these communities did not obey the strict guidelines of the central government.

The relationship between the state and citizens, then, was uncertain and flexible, and it changed depending on the circumstances. But it was only through their encounters, and their subsequent successes and failures in relation to these representatives – be they Peace Corps Volunteers, Kenyan agricultural extension officers, cabinet members, or World Bank officers – that Kenyans had the opportunity to assert their rights, their wants, and their desires. Through the successes and the failures, Kenyans could form some expectation of what the state would (or should) provide and some understanding of what it meant to be a citizen of the newly independent nation of Kenya.

What follows from this introduction is not a chronological history, but a series of case studies with a narrative arc. The case studies mostly piece together how development programs were conceived, contested, and reconfigured on the ground in local settings, and the political and economic implications of the often ambivalent outcome to the implementation of development programs. The chapters also try to recover the processes of everyday negotiation that played a role in the creation of state institutions. Each chapter works to show the breadth of experiences of rural Kenyans during this transition, with a particular focus on the growing inequality emerging largely as a result of uneven access to development.

The dissertation begins with a chapter on the evolution of local government institutions. It analyzes the wrestling for power between local and national government bodies over the provision and funding of social services. It also explores the complicated

ideas about government and authority which developed in rural communities in response to desires, expectations, and experiences of social services, as well as interactions on the ground with local government officials. The local government chapter sets up the rest of the dissertation to examine the interplay of the local, national, and international politics of development. The chapter explores how these various political spaces became enmeshed and how their entanglement affected the implementation of development projects and shaped ideas about independence and citizenship.

The three chapters which follow – on land settlement, cooperative development, and maize marketing – are interrelated and demonstrate how land and agricultural development were a way of gauging the successes and failures of independence. Land resettlement and agricultural development became an alternative script for speaking about state obligation and citizenship, and these programs further produced new forms of inequality. Just before independence, the colonial state began implementing land settlement programs aimed at transferring lands from European to African ownership on a willing buyer-willing seller basis. The land settlement chapter examines the range of colonial and postcolonial experiences of both those who received land during decolonization and those who remained landless in the northwest Rift valley, and how these experiences shaped their understandings of the state and their material well-being. Land resettlement, possibly more than anything else, shows the breadth of experiences of rural Kenyans during the political transition and their successes and failures in improving their lives and transforming their aspirations into realities.

Cooperative marketing was deeply connected to land settlement, since the independent state used cooperatives to regulate agricultural production. The cooperative

marketing chapter examines the history of cooperative farming in Kenya and the state rhetoric on “cooperation,” which both propped up the policy emphasis on cooperatives, but was also used as a way of building the nation. The chapter explores the implications of relying on cooperatives to control agricultural production, as cooperatives became mired in corruption and mismanagement in the face of state regulatory absence. The decline of cooperatives had major consequences for small farmers, who had once relied on them for agricultural and extension services, and for Kenya’s national economy, which depended on cooperatives to collect farmers’ taxes and loan repayments.

The chapter on maize marketing begins where the cooperative chapter ends to explore a maize shortage in the mid-1960s. The shortage resulted from a combination of drought, poor agricultural marketing mechanisms, rural unwillingness to pay back land loans, and an emerging culture of corruption. The chapter analyzes the implications of a state which cannot regulate its staple crop, which cannot provide security to its population (particularly, in terms of famine aid), and which is complicit in corruption that leads to hunger. The chapter argues that this overt marketing corruption was part of the broader emergence of new postcolonial patron-client relationships, which formed around the control of development resources.

The chapter on self-help, which follows the maize chapter, speaks to many of the same themes as the chapters on land and agricultural development. Jomo Kenyatta chose *harambee* – “pull together” in Swahili – as the motto of his presidency. He created this motto in an attempt to move the country away from the political animosities that developed during the independence negotiations and towards the all-important task of nation building. In time, *harambee* came to be synonymous with “self-help,” which, like

the state rhetoric of cooperation, became a central part of the state promoted image of its relationship to citizens. The chapter explores how Kenyan citizens interpreted self-help and then negotiated both the role they wanted to play in their own development and the role they wanted the state and third party development institutions to play in their community development. Similar to many other aspects of postcolonial state formation, *harambee* demonstrates the tenuous and contested nature of state power during decolonization. The state emphasis on “self-help” undermined the image of a monolithic and powerful state. The state asserted its power through its choice to be absent or present and through the distribution of grants-in-aid for self-help. This, too, had its consequences, as individual politicians showed favoritism to specific regions, and the personal donations of the Kenyan elite – especially Kenyatta and the Kikuyu leaders from Central Province – often perpetuated existing regional inequality. The self-help chapter argues that the politics of personal donations to *harambee* played a role in shaping broader postcolonial patrimonial political order.

The sixth chapter connects to the chapter on self-help by analyzing the creation of alternative institutions in response to state absence. The chapter focuses on how women responded to their exclusion from state-sanctioned spaces (particularly, the *baraza*, the government-sponsored public meeting) and state resources (especially, land). The chapter focuses on the alternative spaces women created for themselves through self-help, women’s organizations, and more informal networks of friendship and churches. It argues that women’s experiences varied dramatically depending on various factors within their families and communities, but also oftentimes, the alternative institutions that

women created provided greater support than the frequently negligent and incapacitated postcolonial Kenyan state.

The final two chapters focus on a contested World Bank funded forestry program, ultimately derailed by squatters who uprooted the trees and refused to move. The forestry program opened up a space for public debate of broader questions about development and inequality. These debates exposed a highly fragmented state, forming only through intense contestations, which involved formal and informal state actors as well as non-state transnational actors. The final two chapters explore this story first primarily from the perspective of the government and then primarily from the perspective of the squatters. The chapters seek to examine why and how the outcomes of squatter engagement with the state and the World Bank shaped their ideas about citizenship and independence. Squatters made claims for land but also called on the state to address economic injustices. Their triumph reveals the complexity of postcolonial power and the weaknesses of a state with a divided vision.

2 ‘The Eye to the Government and the Ears of the Public’: Making Local Governments and Political Imaginations

“It is common knowledge that in the past the Government, to the African people, was a distant, disinterested automaton residing in an undefinable place. To rectify this situation, local government machinery should be in the hands of the inhabitants and this is in itself an education of immense value.”

– LKM Sigilai, Chairman Eldoret Branch KANU, July, 1966¹

“To many of us Government is associated with multi-storied office blocks, electronic computers, drawing boards and statistics, but over 80% of the population lives in rural areas. The majority of these people pursue their traditional way of life untouched by the professional institutions and apparatus of modern government. They look to Government for personal protection, and also with a definite hope for a better future for themselves and, more particularly, for their children. Government to them is a simple concept of benevolent authority. It is asking them too much to understand the intricacies of the modern Government machine with its functionally distinct Ministries, its para-statal bodies, its sectoral experts and the rest. To meet the needs of these people effectively Government must be personalized in one individual who is easily accessible, sympathetic, understanding and authoritative. Their greatest need is for someone to listen to and help alleviate their grievances and arbitrate their disputes.”

–Permanent Secretary D.N. Ndegwa, Office of the President, July, 1966²

Both these epigraphs come from testimonies at the 1966 Kenyan Commission of Inquiry into Local Government, which occurred just two and a half years after independence.³ The epigraphs reveal the fundamental tensions within the early postcolonial Kenyan government – between local and central state institutions and actors.

¹ KNA JA/7/7, Local Government Commission of Inquiry, Record of Hearings (1966), from LKM Sigilai, Chairman Eldoret Branch KANU, to the Chairman, The Local Government Electoral Commission, “Re-Organisation of the Local Government System,” 8 July 1966.

² KNA JA/7/7, Local Government Commission of Inquiry, Record of Hearings (1966), PS DN Ndegwa, Office of the President, “Commission on Local Government. Memorandum by the Office of the President,” July 1966.

³ On the political utility of Commissions of Inquiry, see Adam Ashforth, “Reckoning Schemes of Legitimation: On Commissions of Inquiry as Power/Knowledge Forms,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 3, no. 1 (1990):1-22.

In the first testimony, the witness – the chairman to a local branch of the ruling party – argued that local government machinery needed to be in the hands of local inhabitants. In the second epigraph, the witness – the Permanent Secretary to the Office of the President – argued the opposite, that government needed to be centralized and personalized within an individual. These tensions existed broadly amongst government officials, because they remained unresolved in the early postcolonial era and because their resolution would largely determine the nature of Kenya’s postcolonial political order.

Kenya gained independence with a devolved, *majimboist* (regionalist or federalist in Swahili) form of government, which had engendered important debates. On the surface, these debates were about the structure of government – whether it would be centralized or devolved. Barely concealed beneath the surface, though, were questions of what type of power the president would have, how much impact local authorities would have on the lives of citizens, and who would control the distribution of resources (particularly land) and the provision of services. These questions were never fully answered, and *majimboism* was never fully implemented. By November 1964, all of the opposition KADU party had crossed the aisle and Kenya had become a de facto one-party state.

Jomo Kenyatta – the first president of independent Kenya – quickly worked to centralize political power in the Office of the President. This process of centralization became visible in different forms. Most obviously, Kenyatta centralized the state through a constitutional amendment abolishing the federal structure of government. The Constitution of Kenya (Amendment) Act 1964 revested regional land in the Central Government of the Republic and dissolved the *majimboist* constitution. Financial control

over all local authorities was returned to the Ministry of Local Government from the Regional assemblies. Less obviously but with similar importance, Kenyatta gave a series of presidential directives that defunded local government bodies but delegated greater responsibility over social services to these same institutions. In response, local government actors often resisted the central government attempt. The divergent testimonies of the commission of inquiry make clear this struggle over how social services and local development would be provided and funded, and who would control these programs.

Gabrielle Lynch summarized the downfall of *majimboism*, “After KADU’s dissolution allowed for the easy passage of a constitutional amendment, Kenya became a republic with a strong centralized government headed by a powerful president – a constitution that remained largely intact until the constitutional referendum of 2010.”⁴ While Lynch’s narrative is accurate, it obscures the complex outcomes. Micro-political settings differed vastly from the national government framework. Despite the creation of a strong centralized government with the constitutional amendment of 1964, local politics and local government continued to deeply affect the majority of Kenyans who lived in rural areas, often more so than the national Nairobi-centric politics.

The hurried reversal of a not wholly defined structure of government created a lack of clarity about the distinctions between central and local governments. Moving from a colonial to an independent constitution, and then from a federal to a centralized system so quickly produced confusion about the practice of government. It was not only the changing structures of government which produced the confusion. The wrestling for

⁴ Lynch, *I Say to You*, 71-72.

power between the local and national government bodies also created uncertainty. The new framework of government had been defined, but the specific responsibilities of government bodies remained largely ambiguous. The constitutional amendments did not make clear the delegation of specific powers.

The new President attempted to take advantage of this ambiguity. President Kenyatta used his control over the delegation of powers as a way of compounding his own authority, and he experimented to find a balance that gave the Office of the President the greatest authority. Sometimes, Kenyatta conferred responsibilities on local government bodies without providing adequate funding as a way of weakening these bodies in the eyes of citizens. Other times, Kenyatta rescinded responsibilities from local governments, particularly if they seemed to endow these bodies with greater authority. There was a yo-yo like pattern of conferral and revocation, as Kenyatta tested the variables to best consolidate his own power.

In a setting already marked by the newness and financial weaknesses of the government machinery, Kenyatta's protracted yo-yo experimentations further obstructed the provision of state-sponsored social services. The implications, then, were greater than whether the Kenyatta state could successfully circumscribe the powers of local government institutions. These central-local government tensions had implications for "the effectiveness of local government" – one of the points of investigation for the Commission of Inquiry.

Central-local jostling for power had related implications for whether, and in what ways, new Kenyan citizens experienced government intervention. This confusing government system provided services unevenly, inconsistently, and inequitably. The

attempts of Kenyan families and communities to navigate this complex system shaped wide-ranging and contradictory popular conceptions of what independence and self-government meant. Kenyans made sense of their political world through Kenyatta, the central government, the local government, their communities, and through the successes and failures of these people and institutions to provide promised social services and development resources. They made sense of this changing political context through their physical encounters with a government, more often than not, represented by local officials. Though the aura of Kenyatta played a role in their political imaginaries, rural Kenyans could never completely understand government through the personalized image of someone whom many of them had never seen, particularly when they had personal interactions with other state representatives.

In short, there were numerous *serikali* (governments), both within a single individual's mind and amongst the population. Sometimes government was conceptualized as an abstract entity, but often, Kenyans thought about government as a very personal entity – imagined through an MP, an official who wore a badge or a uniform, or Kenyatta himself. At times the government was conceptualized as the close-knit community in which rural Kenyans lived, but sometimes as a faraway monolithic, faceless, and unknown power in Nairobi. The presence of these varying conceptions emerged from incongruous experiences accessing government resources and services.

This chapter argues that an integral part of state making in the early postcolony revolved around negotiations between the central and local government authorities about their different responsibilities to citizens, and about how citizens engaged in these debates. The inconsistent provision of social services, the wrestling for power between

local and central institutions, the evolution of local government, and the development of a cult of personality around Kenyatta were imbricated historical events, constitutive of one another and of a new postcolonial governing order in Kenya. These inextricably connected historical moments deeply shaped Kenyan decolonization and independent state formation. This chapter draws out the connections between these events, and between central state actors, local state actors, and informal political actors to examine the state at various planes – from the most micro to the most macro (even transnational) iterations. Taking apart the complex state apparatus apart allows for an examination of the complex relationships between different tiers of government, and between state actors and citizens. These relationships reveal a mode of governance which endowed power in individual who could provide resources.

This chapter historicizes the constellation of events and forces which played a role in shaping both the local and central states emerging and evolving in 20th century Kenya. The chapter begins with an examination of the development of local government in the colonial era. The colonial structures provided an important foundation for independent local government structures in Kenya. An examination of colonial local government shows, further, that state difficulties providing and financing services were not novel to the independent era. The chapter then charts how Kenyatta reversed regionalism, and attempted to circumscribe local government powers. That section lays out the implications of the piecemeal centralization of authority and finance. The last section looks at how rural Kenyan experiences of colonial and independent government intervention shaped their ideas about independence, and symbols of authority.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COLONIAL RULE

Neither the colonial system nor the independence negotiations clearly defined in theory or practice the responsibilities of local government authorities vis-a-vis the central state. In both the colonial and postcolonial eras, the division of national versus local responsibility for the provision and funding of social services produced tensions. A focus on histories of local colonial government institutions reveals the foundations from which the independent state built its own evolving system of local government. It also reveals the ways in which rural Kenyans encountered and imagined central and local state actors and institutions during decolonization. Local government deeply shaped the lives of rural people, and shaped their political experiences and engagements. Contestations over the role of local government played an important part in the establishment of a broader postcolonial governing practice.

Similar to other colonies, the British established a prefectural administration in Kenya. The Kenya Administration – consisting of a central Secretariat in Nairobi and the Provincial Administration of Provincial and District Commissioners throughout the colony – was the critical element of this apparatus.⁵ The system gave District Commissioners a great degree of autonomy from their supervisors. As Bruce Berman notes, “The looseness of central control, a common feature of British Colonies in Africa, was what made the local prefectural agent the most important figure in establishing and sustaining effective control and the legitimacy of the colonial state.”⁶

⁵ Bruce Berman, *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination* (London: James Currey, 1990), 73.

⁶ Berman, *Control and Crisis*, 81.

Colonial administrators established three African-managed institutions at the local level – chiefs and headmen, Native Tribunals, and later, Local Native Councils. Chiefs and headman worked directly within the provincial administration, while tribunals combined African “customary” law with jural institutions manipulated to serve as an instrument of control.⁷ Local Native Councils (LNCs) were created in the mid-1920s as the final local governing body in response to African resistance to the colonial order in the early 1920s.⁸ The colonial state gradually established LNCs throughout African areas in the 1920s and 1930s.⁹ These councils exercised limited legislative and executive functions.

In 1944, twenty years after the creation of the first LNC, the colonial state appointed a commission to assess LNC financing. The changing political context had generated difficulties funding the councils. Africans were agitating for increased rights, autonomy, and access to resources. The colonial state responded to these claims by delivering an expanding set of services and development programs, which became progressively more financially and administratively burdensome. Questions over the funding and the provision of desired social services would plague the colonial government until its final days.

The state-sponsored commission produced the Troughton Report on Local Native Council Finance, which recommended most broadly that financial responsibility could

⁷ Berman, *Control and Crisis*, 214. There is a rich literature on colonialism and customary law. See especially: Martin Chanock, *Law, Custom, and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Sally Falk Moore, *Social Facts and Fabrications: ‘Customary’ Law on Kilimanjaro, 1880 – 1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Kristin Mann and Richard Roberts, eds., *Law in Colonial Africa* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991).

⁸ KNA JA/37/3, Local Government Constitution and Membership General, From A. Altorfer, for PS, Ministry of Local Government to The Principal, LF Training Centre, Mzumbe, Morogoro, 28th May, 1964.

⁹ Berman, *Control and Crisis*, 216.

not be separated from real and executive responsibility. The Troughton Report also made recommendations about how to divide the financing and control of government services, especially health, education, and agriculture. These recommendations were adopted in great measure, and these amendments to local government financing remained largely unaltered until 1953-54.

The acceptance of the Troughton Report recommendations had real impacts on the provision of services in the African reserves. Their implementation reveals, further, the complex negotiations between various parties – the central state and local authorities, especially – about how to divide financial and executive responsibility for social services. In the health sector, the Troughton Report gave greater responsibility to local authorities. Prior to the report, the central government had built and maintained all dispensaries in “native” areas. After the implementation of the Troughton Report, local authorities took over the field health inspectorate, the dispensaries, and the maternity wards, while the central government retained responsibility for institutional services in the central district hospitals.¹⁰

Similar to the healthcare system, the central state and the local authorities shared responsibility for education in African areas. With African education, however, the central government did not heed the new recommendations. Contrary to the Troughton Report, the central government refused to relinquish African executive responsibility for educational services even though local governments bore the financial burden.¹¹ The

¹⁰ KNA BY/21/67, Ministry of Health, “The Assumption of Local Health Authority Function by County Councils,” 5 March 1960; KNA JA/12/224 “Report of the 1953/54 Committee on Financial Relations Between the Kenya Government and African District Councils.”

¹¹ KNA JA/12/224, “Report of the 1953/54 Committee on Financial Relations Between the Kenya Government and African District Councils.”

colonial state was unwilling to give Africans local control of education, out of a fear that African-led education would lead to indoctrination that would foster resistance to colonial rule.

The Troughton report also recommended that all agricultural services should be paid for by the central government, except the production of seeds, the development of markets, and the inspection of produce, which remained under the domain of the local councils. At this time, the colonial government introduced a system in which LNCs paid for basic agricultural services initially and later received central government reimbursements. The central government created this system to “educate” councillors about controlling agricultural services. This system worked poorly in practice, however, largely due to a lack of coordination between the local and national bodies. When the LNCs created their agricultural development budgets, they often did not know how much money the colony planned to make available. In 1953, for example, the Councils estimated for reimbursable services about £15,000 in excess of the amounts provided in the Colony’s estimates.¹²

The above example demonstrates not only the poor coordination between local and central governments, but also, the deficient central government funding of the local authorities. As early as 1948, the Chief Native Commissioner worried that the Government had already reached the limit of its capacity to contribute to African local government, and that LNCs “might well have to face the prospect of a serious curtailment

¹² KNA JA/12/224, “Report of the 1953/54 Committee on Financial Relations Between the Kenya Government and African District Councils.”

in social services.”¹³ Rather than make cuts, many LNCs took on a “growing financial burden of social services.”¹⁴

In 1950, the colonial government passed the African District Councils Ordinance (No. 12), which replaced Local Native Councils with African District Councils (ADCs) in non-scheduled areas. The Ordinance introduced elections for African councillors. In addition, ADCs were given wider powers than LNCs, particularly in their ability to levy agricultural taxes for Agricultural Betterment Funds.¹⁵ Despite the greater governing responsibilities of ADCs, the provincial administration continued to hold bureaucratic and legal control.¹⁶ District Commissioners – colonial bureaucrats – served as ex-officio chairmen of these new local authorities up until just before independence in 1962.¹⁷ The 1950 ADC ordinance provided few guidelines about the role of District Commissioners and little central state oversight, and District Commissioners often gained increased autonomy and authority in local governance.¹⁸

Africans continued to demand greater educational and health facilities, and local government spending continued to skyrocket. This increased spending, along with strict colonial regulations, created further challenges to financing the services of local government. African District Councils raised much of their money through the taxing of agricultural produce. The central government required that the revenue from agricultural

¹³ KNA JA/15/524, “Record of a Meeting held in Room 74, The Secretariat on 4th August, 1948, to Discuss the Proposals for the Disposal of Future Revenues of Agricultural Betterment Funds in the Light of the Comments of the Provincial Commissioner, Nyanza, Province, in his Letter of 28 July 1948.”

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Both British and French colonial states throughout the continent, expanded the powers of African local governments around this time.

¹⁶ Berman, *Control and Crisis*, 424-425.

¹⁷ KNA, Rift Valley Province Annual Report 1962.

¹⁸ The flexibility and lack of oversight of the colonial system of local government meant that the ability of both LNCs and ADCs to take initiative depended a lot on the individual District Commissioner, and his commitment to the community.

taxes go solely into Agricultural Betterment Funds (ABF), which could be used for agricultural development exclusively. These regulations led to a surplus in the Agricultural Betterment Funds and shortage in the general fund meant for other development projects, such as healthcare, roads, and education.¹⁹ The central government also refused to give grants to the ADCs, other than the free services of government health staff. District Education Boards ran “aided” primary and intermediate schools, though many African schools remained “unaided.” African District Councils had no say in the education board budgets, despite the fact that an ADC subvention, along with schools fees and government grants, paid for educational services.

Increased spending led to an immediate crisis in the funding of the new ADCs, and the colonial government created a committee – the Vasey Committee – to investigate the financial relations between the Kenya Government and the African District Councils in 1953/54, which published its report in 1955/56. The report acknowledged that ADCs objected to the financial structure. Councillors interviewed for the report found the government system for paying grants to be especially egregious. The colonial government paid a block grant to ADCs at the rate of 2 shillings per tax payer, a system designed to peg government assistance roughly to population.²⁰ This grant, however, did not distinguish between different levels of need – the more “advanced” versus the “backwards” areas as they were commonly called by colonial bureaucrats – and did not meet the rapidly increasing expenditures of ADCs.²¹ The block grant system did little to

¹⁹ KNA JA/12/224, “Report of the 1953/54 Committee on Financial Relations Between the Kenya Government and African District Councils.”

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ KNA BY/21/66, “White Paper No. 1 1957/8: Financial Relationships between the Kenya Government and African District Councils.”

address the desire for greater government services. As G.M. Bebb, the District Commissioner of Tambach succinctly described the situation, “To sum it up the cry is improved services all round but of increased revenue to meet the cost, I see little sign.”²²

In the wake of the Vasey committee report in 1956, the colonial state altered the local government financial system. Just six years after first creating a system based upon the Agricultural Betterment Fund, the colonial state closed the fund. Instead, agricultural taxes were credited to the ADCs general account, giving ADCs greater flexibility with their expenditures. This greater flexibility, however, was accompanied by greater responsibility. The colonial government began forcing ADCs to carry out land reform programs. In 1955, the African District Councils in Rift Valley Province started implementing the Swynnerton Plan – a major land reform scheme created to privatize land ownership for African smallholders. The scheme comprised land consolidation, titling, and registration.²³ The Rift Valley ADCs took on large loans in order to fund this program. Samburu District, for example, spent £4,500 in 1951, and £73,000 in 1955, increasing its expenditure by 16-fold in a matter of four years.²⁴ And in 1957, the colonial government strong-armed ADCs into taking over responsibility for health services on top of the land reform.

The colonial state attempted to raise more money from Africans themselves in order to pay for these newer programs and services. The Vasey Committee had generally recommended that Kenya colony move away from agricultural and per capita taxes and

²² KNA JA/12/225, ADCs Implementation of 1953/54 Financial Relations Committee Report, GM Bebb, DC Tambach, “ADC Finance,” 7 September, 1957.

²³ Sorrenson, *Land Reform in Kikuyu Country*; Angeliqve Haugerud, “Land Tenure and Agrarian Change in Kenya,” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 59, no. 1 (1989).

²⁴ KNA, Rift Valley Annual Report 1955.

institute some form of taxing based on property. This, however, was an impossible proposal, given the lack of registered land ownership. The state had long attempted, and failed, to create an efficient and fair system of taxing Africans who had little disposable income, and who strongly disliked paying taxes to the colonial government.

In 1958, the financial relationship between ADCs and the central government changed once again, as the government instituted a Graduated Personal Tax (GPT) to replace the agricultural taxes. Government White Paper, No. 1 1957/58 called for the adjustment of the financial relationship between the Kenya Government and the African District Councils, and ADCs took over health services and education. Government grants increased from £275,000 in 1957 (the year prior to the alterations) to £1,991,000 in 1959. This increase raised the percentage of expenditure borne by central government grants from 13 percent in 1957 to 52 percent in 1959. In addition, in 1959, African courts were transferred from ADC control to the central government.

By 1959, though, it was clear that the recommendations of the Vasey report were not being implemented and that the government was unable to meet its grant commitments. The absence of promised government grants created financial and administrative problems in district councils trying to improve public health and education.²⁵ This complicated and continually changing system, in which the central government provided grants and local governments raised money by taxing the population, left local authorities in a particularly vulnerable position in regards to their planning. ADCs often remained uninformed about additional financial commitments they would be expected to take on.

²⁵ KNA JA/12/225, From Financial Adviser, ADC of Central Nyanza to the PS, Ministry of Local Government, "Review of Vasey Report," 10 June 1959.

The rapid expansion of services, and consequently, of spending, revealed other shortcomings. ADCs had difficulty finding qualified local government workers. The colonial government did not train officers in the technical skills the ADCs desperately needed. There was, in addition, no formal attempt to increase the knowledge of Provincial Administration officers about local government finance and financial administration.²⁶

In the White Highlands, the state created a wholly separate form of local government meant exclusively for European settlers. The colonial state established County Councils based on the English system of local government with second tier urban and rural district councils. The services made available to African laborers living in European areas where County Councils governed were woefully inadequate generally, but were also unequal even in comparison to the weak social services available in the native reserves. The central colonial government began to address this problem more fully in the early 1960s by imposing stricter labor laws on European farmers, requiring them to provide reasonable housing, cooking facilities, a “sufficient supply of wholesome water,” and medicine and medical attention. These laws were almost impossible to enforce, however, since they required regulation of individual European households. Thus, the health and education services for Africans in European areas “lagged seriously behind that in African District Council areas.”²⁷ Additionally, Kenyans living in settled

²⁶ KNA JA/7/7, “Supplementary Memorandum to the Local Government Commission of Inquiry, from Mr. D.C. MacDonald, Lecturer Kenya Institute of Administration. The Relationship between the Provincial Administration and Local Authorities.”

²⁷ KNA BY/4/159, Director of Medical Services, “Relative Responsibility of Central and Local Government Authorities for African Health Services,” 5 June, 1952. Interviews in former European settlement areas confirm that these services remained poor for years into independence, and remained far behind those in the former native reserves. Informants remembered, in particular that there were few schools or health centers when they moved onto former European farms.

areas had less representation than those governed by ADCs, and it was only in 1963, for example, that the first African member joined the Uasin Gishu Agricultural committee.

This system created inequality. By 1961, some of the implications of the colonial government structure had become clear to such an extent that the colonial government created *another* working party to examine the financial relationship between the central government and local authorities.²⁸ The government was providing inconsistent and uneven grants and support to different councils. District Commissioners' ability to act independently of central state control created further imbalances; the more active and well-connected DCs provided greater aid to their councils. The nature of Kenyan colonial local government contributed to the production of regional inequality between different African districts. Inequality also derived from the unequal services available to Africans living in the reserves and those working on European farms governed by County Councils which provide services solely to European farmers.

Kenya became independent with the local government structure established under colonial rule largely intact. This structure provided an unequal foundation for the provision of local government services, and also, a poorly defined division of powers between local and central governments. The local-central government relationship had been developed to quell the unrest of colonial subjects, by funding new development programs and allowing representative governance. The colonial state did not create this relationship to develop connections, and colonial officials never created institutional linkages between local and central tiers of government. In other words, "local government never provided a formal mode of access for Africans to the central political

²⁸ This was the fourth major committee created to investigate the financial relationship between central and local governments in less than two decades.

institutions in Nairobi.”²⁹ This colonial history placed local governing bodies in a poor position at independence for meeting the continued calls for healthcare, education, roads, and development more generally. The development of colonial local government institutions shaped the expectations of citizens in independent Kenya – for the provision of social services and development, and for the role local government would play in their lives. Often, too, these colonial histories of local government interventions served as a point of comparison with the independent political order, a way to measure what had, or had not, changed.

REVERSING REGIONALISM

The local government system that emerged after independence followed closely from that of the colonial system which provided services through the Provincial Administration, African District Councils, and County Councils. As the government reshaped the boundaries of the new regions in preparation for the institution of Kenya’s federal independence constitution, they also restructured Kenyan local authorities to redress some of the problems which had plagued the colonial state. This restructuring had two objectives – to make the memberships of the new local authorities fully democratic, and to provide a uniform code of local government legislation to replace the separate legislation for European County Councils and African District Councils. All new local authorities created in 1963 were called County Councils and they had second tier authorities known as Area Councils in the rural areas and Urban Councils in urban areas. Where there was a need for a smaller, third tier local authority, communities could create local councils as well. Initially, County Councils were given the authority to govern

²⁹ Berman, *Control and Crisis*, 313.

roads, primary education, public health, water supply, agriculture, forestry and veterinary services as well as minor local government functions.

With the *majimboist* independence constitution, the control of local authorities moved to the Regional Assemblies. Under the colonial state, the Ministry of Local Government – a central government ministry – had exercised direct control over local authorities' budgets, auditing of accounts, by-laws, senior appointments, development programs, and capital finance, including loan sanctions.³⁰ The new constitution empowered the Regional Assemblies to take over many of these controls. The Ministry of Local Government would continue to regulate capital development, finance, and certain staff matters. With the new constitution, the Ministry supported, rather than controlled, the functioning of local authorities – it was sanctioned to give advice on local government matters to local authorities, and to provide model by-laws and legislation to the Regions.

Even with the partial inclusion of the Ministry of Local Government, the new constitution signified a complete restructuring of government control. In theory, *majimboism* instituted a form of devolution that had not existed under colonial rule. It seemed that the Provincial Administration, which had been so integral to the running of local government in the colonial era, would be very swiftly excluded from local governance in the independent era.

The complicated colonial system of local government in combination with the vague independence constitution left much open to interpretation, though, and thus, susceptible to rapid amendment. Even with the clear exclusion of the provincial

³⁰ KNA JA/37/3, Local Government Constitution and Membership General, From A. Altorfer, for PS, Ministry of Local Government to The Principal, LF Training Centre, Mzumbe, Morogoro, 28 May 1964.

administration and the central government from many local government matters, the independence constitution left unclear the distribution of responsibilities for financing and controlling a number of other government services. The constitution called for Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament, Regional Assemblies, and Local Government, but the divisions between these political institutions remained poorly defined. The ruling KANU party and President Kenyatta had never been in favor of the devolved form of government. Despite being codified in the constitution, devolution was vulnerable. The lack of specificity and clarity about the division of responsibility between central and local governments opened up these questions to interpretation.

Daniel Branch has persuasively argued that Kenyatta purposefully starved local authorities of funding, forcing KADU to dissolve and form a de facto one-party state with an amended constitution that centralized power.³¹ The actions taken by the central government towards local governments after independence seem to support this premise, and to show, further, that the central government compelled the newly formed and inadequately financed local authorities to take over financially and administratively onerous social services. In 1964, Municipal and County Councils became largely responsible for the control and financing of primary education. Later that same year, the central government gave councils responsibility for maintenance of trunk roads and government buildings, while reducing central government grants to local authorities. The government-sponsored Pratt Report called for higher salaries for government employees in 1964, another burden which fell on local authorities. In short, the central government

³¹ Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair*, 15.

forced local bodies to provide expensive services that these small authorities could not afford without aid from the central government.

Simultaneously, in February of 1964, the Central Government took control over land and land settlement. The Constitution of Kenya (Amendment) Act 1964 re vested regional land in the Central Government of the Republic of Kenya and gave the central government control over the selection of African settlers on land transfer schemes. With the passage of this constitutional amendment, the central government succeeded in reclaiming control over an incredibly important resource in the new nation. The ability to control land and land distribution was the single most valuable political asset, and centralizing land control was essential to centralizing political control.

In September of 1964, financial control over all local authorities was returned to the Ministry of Local Government from the Regional Assemblies, officially bringing an end to the federal-style government which delegated powers to the regions. Kenyatta and KANU's wish had come true; *majimboism* was defunct and the national government had successfully centralized power. This, however, was only part of the story, and to use the end of *majimboism* as a clear marker for a different form of governance and control in postcolonial Kenya is to obscure some of the complexity of the divisions of power and financing in postcolonial Kenya. The specificities of *majimboism* had never been worked out during the short federal constitutional reign. When the amended constitution replaced the *majimboist* one, it represented a very real palimpsest – one half-written constitutional order partially written over by another.³²

³² John Lonsdale and Bruce Berman, "Coping with the Contradictions: The Development of the Colonial State in Kenya, 1895-1914," *Journal of African History* 20, no. 4 (1979): 491.

Primary Education provides a telling example of the implications of this palimpsest. A Ministry of Education bureaucrat described these implications as the “various problems [that] have arisen as a result of the sudden changes that have taken place with the introduction of the republican constitution.”³³ The short year of regionalism had not been enough to negotiate how to make devolved control over primary education work smoothly or uniformly. Some Regions had taken responsibility for primary education, while others had passed that responsibility on to local authorities. The structure of regional control over education remained irresolute into December 1964, when the Ministry of Education seized responsibility for primary education from the Regions. The Ministry of Education made an announcement, during this takeover, that all primary schools would henceforth be financed by local authorities with the help of grants from the Ministry of Education. Local authorities were still creating their budget estimates to submit to the Ministry of Education when the central government made a new announcement. The government instructed that grants to local authorities would be channeled through the Ministry of Local Government (thus, excluding the Ministry of Education from Primary Education grants).

After the government delegated the work of controlling local grants solely to the Ministry of Local Government, that Ministry instructed the Local Authorities not to take on any new commitments in 1965. This statement directly contradicted the Ministry of Education’s earlier announcement that all local authorities would be responsible for primary education in 1965. Since only some local authorities had previously controlled

³³ KNA JA/12/30 Local Government Circulars (1965), from C.G. Maina for PS Ministry of Education and H.C. Seely for PS Ministry of Local Government to Provincial Education Officers, Clerks to all Municipal and County Councils, “Financing Primary Education,” 25th February, 1965.

education, these contradicting announcements created confusion.³⁴ Different ministries often contradicted one another, and policy changes occurred frequently and without warning. This uncertain and rapidly changing context led to widespread confusion and lack of uniformity in the working of both local authorities and the provision of social services after independence.

It was not just constitutional restructuring that led to administrative misunderstandings. A complicated and fraught restructuring of regional, constituency, and administrative boundaries also occurred during decolonization. The 1962 Foster-Sutton Commission on Regional Boundaries and Constituencies Delimitation used population censuses, memoranda from different interest groups (often, ethnic-based), and evidence provided by colonial officials to create new administrative boundaries and constituencies.³⁵ When the regional and constituency boundaries recommended by the commission were instituted in April 1963, a complicated system of dividing local, regional, and central government administrative areas not only already existed, but these constituencies and boundaries had long been ill-defined and contested. The Foster-Sutton boundaries did not resolve the ambiguities and conflict over land and political representation, and contestations over administrative boundaries continue up to this day.

To further complicate matters, colonial policymakers had originally designed settlement schemes for singular ethnic groups, and as a result, planned to have the majority ethnic group of a region control the corresponding ethnic settlement schemes.

³⁴ KNA JA/12/30, From C.G. Maina for PS Ministry of Education and H.C. Seely for PS Ministry of Local Government to Provincial Education Officers, Clerks to all Municipal and County Councils, "Financing Primary Education," 25th February, 1965.

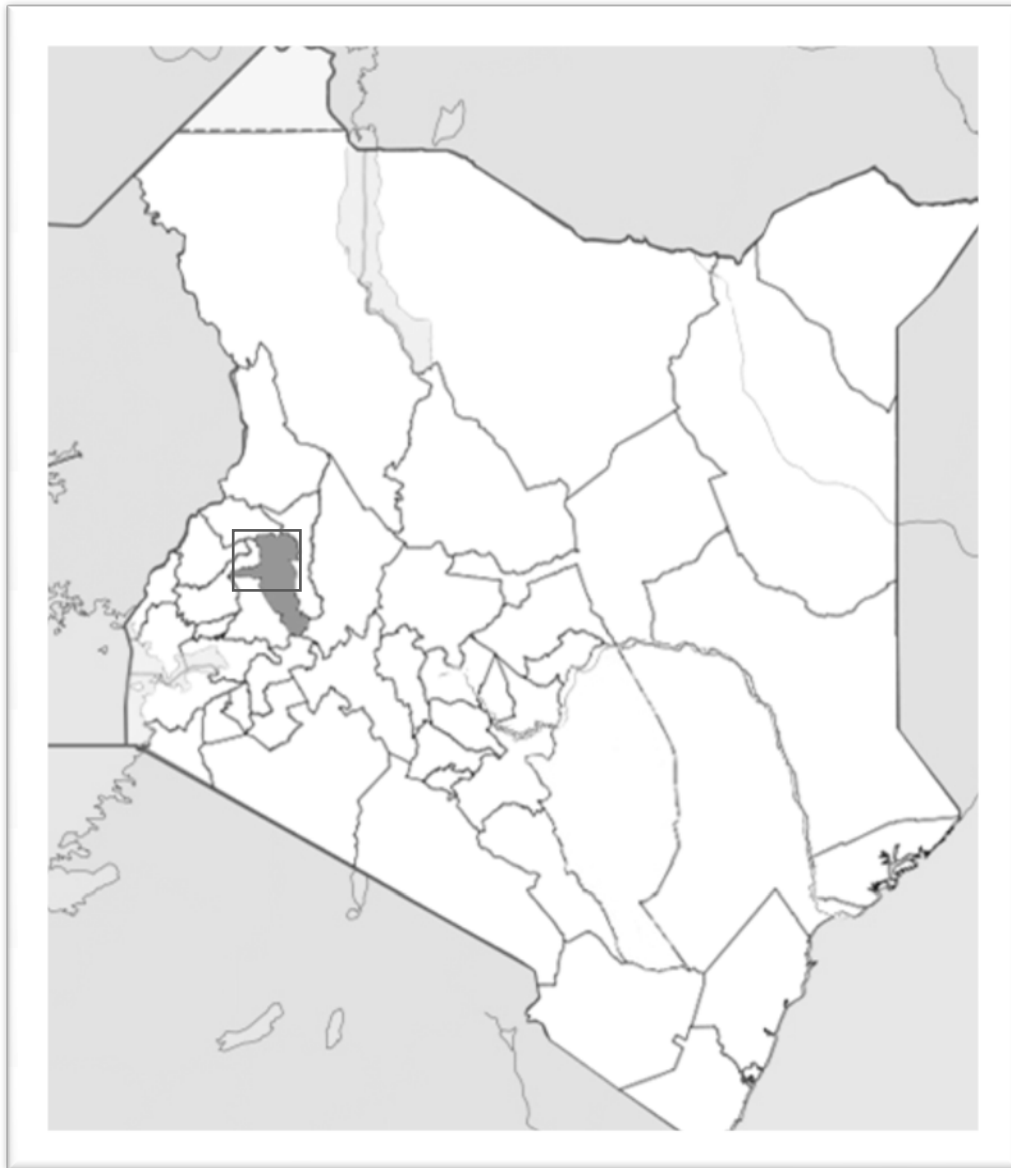
³⁵ The National Archives of the UK, Kew, CO 895, Kenya Constituencies Delimitation Commission: Papers, 1962; The National Archives of the UK, Kew, CO 897, Colonial Office: Kenya Regional Boundaries Commission: Papers, 1962.

For example, Lugari settlement scheme, a scheme created for Luhya settlers, was transferred from the Kalenjin dominated Uasin Gishu district in Rift Valley Region to the Luhya dominated Kakamega district in Western Region in 1963. These transfers to maintain administrative ethnic homogeneity occurred commonly, particularly in ethnically diverse Uasin Gishu. In 1965, somewhere between 2750 and 4000 people lived in the part of former Uasin Gishu which had been transferred to Kakamega District.³⁶

The Foster-Sutton commission excised land and transferred settlement schemes from Uasin Gishu mostly to Kakamega and Nandi districts. This redistricting occurred throughout Kenya, and commonly created confusion. Correspondence between the Director of Settlement and the Civil Secretary of Nyanza Region illustrates the bewilderment these changes caused government officials. In 1964, the Director of Settlement wrote a letter to the Nyanza Region Office inquiring about some settlement schemes the director believed Nyanza had jurisdiction over, but which were actually located in other regions. The Civil Secretary of Nyanza replied with a note of clarification. "Lugari Scheme is situated in Western Region and Kipsangwe and Chekabini [Chekalini] are thought to be located in Rift Valley Region. Nobody in this office has even heard of the Mautuma and Lumakanda Schemes!"³⁷ Chekalini, in fact, was located in Western Region (albeit on the border with Rift Valley), as were Mautuma and Lumakanda. That the national Director was misinformed about the regional location of the settlement schemes he controlled provides a telling illustration of the amount of confusion over boundaries.

³⁶ KNA DC/KMG/2/13/2, From Al Naaz, for DC Kakamega, to the Secretary Electoral Commission, "Review of Constituencies," 25 September 1965.

³⁷ KNA AVS/4/4, From R. St. J. Matthews, Civil Secretary Nyanza Region, to the Director of Settlement, SFT, "Roads and Health Services in Settlement Schemes," 18 April, 1964.



Map 2.1 Uasin Gishu District (Source: Nairobi123, “Location of Uasin-Gishu District,” July 22, 2013 in Wikimedia Commons, accessed May 26, 2014, http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/87/Uasin-Gishu_location_map.png.)

Adding further complexity, the administrative units of the central government did not coincide with the units for administering settlement. Lumakanda settlement and Sosiani settlement schemes both fell under the jurisdiction of Area Settlement Controller North, but Lumakanda – being a Luhya scheme – had been moved to Kakamega district, Western Province. Sosiani, however, remained in Uasin Gishu district and Rift Valley

Province. These inconsistencies were then triply complicated by the fact that the government continually created new districts to appease smaller interest groups, and to give more Kenyans access to local power.

The northwest Rift Valley added another complication to this system with the creation of the Sirikwa County Council on January 1, 1964, an amalgamation of the Nandi, Uasin Gishu, Elgeyo-Marakwet, and West Pokot County Councils, and a truncated Trans-Nzoia County Council. (Eldoret and Kitale municipalities remained outside the County as separate first tier local authorities and local health authorities.) Colonial officials first discussed this amalgamation as early as 1961, as a way to grant local authorities greater control over land policy and settlement, and as a way to ease their financial burdens.³⁸ Once instituted, the amalgamation generated discontent among County Councillors who felt robbed of their local authority, and among constituents who felt disconnected from their local government. The larger administrative area was more difficult to govern, and the county administrative region did not match the national constituencies hindering the Sirikwa County Council's ability to legislate and govern.

With its five administrative districts, the Sirikwa County Council was an anomaly. The only other county council with multiple administrative districts was the Central Rift with two; every other county council in the nation coincided with its administrative district. Sirikwa never functioned as envisioned. In his testimony before the 1966 Commission of Inquiry into Local Government, D.C. MacDonald, lecturer at the Kenya Institute of Administration, remarked on the difficulties caused by the discrepancy between amalgamated county council and administrative district. When asked whether he

³⁸ KNA DC/UG/2/3/52, "Amalgamation of Nandi and Elgeyo-Marakwet African District Councils and the Uasin Gishu County Council: Report of a Meeting between representatives on 24 November, 1961."

thought there was a point in making administrative district and county council boundaries coincide, MacDonald replied, “Yes, I see a lot. I think this is one of the big faults in the two county councils of Sirikwa and Central Rift, that they cover more than one administrative district. This would be alright if there were no government administration, if government didn’t organize most of the services on a district basis, but the fact remains that they do.”³⁹

The Sirikwa County Council was so unpopular that, after less than a year of its existence, the member of the House of Representatives for West Pokot submitted a question to the Minister for Local Government, asking “Will the government consider splitting up the Sirikwa County Council in view of the size, distance and other inconveniences of the area concerned?”⁴⁰ Nzoia district, too, demonstrated the broad disapproval of the Sirikwa Council. Nzoia tried to secede from the Sirikwa County council very early on, alleging “maldistribution of county council income” and that Kalenjin tribesmen dominated the council.⁴¹

Much of the contention of the Sirikwa County Council grew out of competition to control local government finances. Local officials derived authority from distributing the resources of the state to their constituents. The amalgamation of local authorities divested some of these local officials of their control over resources, and thus, of their political authority. For the residents of Sirikwa County, the enlargement of local administrative boundaries meant the diffusion of local authority. Sirikwa County Council also generated

³⁹ KNA JA/7/6, “Local Government Commission of Inquiry, Nairobi Hearings on 7th June, 1966. 2.30 pm – Public Hearing of Evidence on the Memorandum Submitted by Mr. D.C. MacDonald, KIA Lecturer.”

⁴⁰ KNA JA/30/23, Questions and Answers (House of Representatives) (1961-65), Mr. Lorema to the Minister for Local Government, “Question No. 893.”

⁴¹ KNA JA/7/7, “Nzoia Area Council. Memorandum. To the Commission of Inquiry into Local Government,” and D. Wamawa (of the Nzoia area Council) to the Chairman, Commission for Local Government, “Memorandum,” [undated].

greater inequality, as a smaller number of councilors controlled a larger, more diversely populated region, yet tended to favor their own particular communities.

Controlling local authorities came endowed with the power to levy local taxes and to exercise some control over tax revenue. Taxes, however, were an ambivalent resource for local and national government officials, since the state had long encountered difficulties collecting them.⁴² In 1963, tax collection among the male population in the different African District Councils of the Rift Valley ranged from 7 percent to 40 percent, at the highest, and these percentages signified a considerable improvement from 1962. In 1964, searching for a solution to the problem of collecting taxes, the independent Kenyan government instituted a Graduated Personal Tax (GPT) for county councils, and in the Rift Valley Province, local and area councils instituted a poll tax.

Prior to the institution of a GPT, Kenyan lawmakers had discussed various options for improving Kenya's tax policy. They considered taxing Kenyans based upon land ownership, but only a small percentage of land in Kenya had been registered and titled in the 1960s. Previous forms of taxation were also considered, such as the taxing of farm produce. Some policymakers argued, however, that agricultural taxes provided incentives for farmers to avoid formalized markets and to produce less, and in addition, that it unfairly double taxed farmers. The institution of GPT was – in many ways – a decision born out of convenience, and the best of a bad set of choices.

⁴² Historians of colonial Africa have shown that, throughout the continent, the colonial state depended on tax revenue to rule. Africans resisted colonial taxes, but taxation often restructured systems of labor and gender relations. See David Anderson and David Throup, "Africans and Agricultural Production in Colonial Kenya: The Myth of the War as a Watershed," *Journal of African History* 26, no. 4 (1985): 327-345; Berry, *No Condition is Permanent*; Allman and Tashjian, *I Will Not Eat Stone*; Dorothy Hodgson, *Once Intrepid Warriors: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Cultural Politics of Maasai Development*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

GPT had a sliding scale of rates, according to income and ability to pay. Eighty to 90 percent of Kenyans paid the lowest level of tax under GPT, but this rate was equal for a Kenyan with no income and a Kenyan who earned 100 shillings a year. Initially, the GPT collection went directly to local governments, and thus, to their budgeting for education, healthcare, roads, and other development projects.⁴³ This system compounded existing inequalities, as the regions of the country where residents were least capable of paying taxes then received the least amount of funding to compensate for their comparable “underdevelopment.”

Taxation had never provided enough money to local governments, particularly in poorer areas of the country. Local governments relied, in addition, both on central government grants and self-help – or *harambee* in Swahili (see Chapter 6) – schemes were organized, funded, and implemented by local people.⁴⁴ Despite these multiple revenue sources, development plans for education and healthcare, especially, often failed due to lack of financing for recurrent expenditures. In Uasin Gishu at the end of 1964, the County Council was forced to recommend the closure of a number of schools and public health units, and to discharge teachers and staff from other schools and units. The county was unable “to finance these essential services owing principally to the general public failing to respond to repeated appeals to pay their Local Authority Taxes promptly and

⁴³ KNA JA/7/6, Local Govt. Commission of Inquiry, Record of hearings, “Nyeri Hearings in the Urban Council Chambers on 24 and 25 May 1966.”

⁴⁴ It should be noted, and will be further discussed in Chapter 6, that prominent individuals and politicians often made large donations to *harambee* projects.

fully.”⁴⁵ Cuts to educational services took place despite the fact that local government authorities were spending 60 to 65 percent of their budget on primary education.⁴⁶

In response to such failings of local authority tax collection, the central government transferred the collection of Graduated Personal Tax (GPT) to the Provincial Administration in 1965. The Provincial Administration remained a central government institution during decolonization, though it had moved from the colonial central Secretariat to the Office of the President. District Commissioners, as under colonial rule, began to collect taxes once again.⁴⁷

Part of the problem with GPT and taxes lay in this colonial legacy, and the association of taxes with colonial rule. Thus, with independence, many Kenyans expected such colonialist institutions to disappear. Ald Mutua, a representative for the Nairobi hearings for the Local Government Commission of Inquiry testified, “...people are no longer thinking that they should pay tax, they think that with the coming of Independence they should be spared, and that one of the things that they should not be pinched to do is pay tax.”⁴⁸ Oral histories in the northwest Rift Valley support Mutua’s depiction, and informants commonly remembered the *kipande* (identity card) and the collection of taxes as hated institutions brought by colonialists.

The problematic association between taxes and colonialism created widespread reluctance to pay taxes to the independent state. Pierre Bourdieu has argued that, in the

⁴⁵ KNA BY/21/211, (Sirikwa Uasin) Gishu County Council – Eldoret, N. Charlton, County Treasurer (UG) to Chief Education Officer, District Education Officers, School Managers, Chief Officers of the Council, “Proposed Closure of Schools and Public Health Units,” 29 December 1964.

⁴⁶ KNA JA/7/10, “Local Government Commission of Inquiry. Nairobi Hearings in Jumba la Baraza on 2nd June, 1966. Ministry of Education Representatives on Employment of Teachers, etc.”

⁴⁷ KNA JA/12/30, From M.A. Higgs for PS Ministry of Local Government to all Clerks of Municipalities and County Councils, “Graduated Personal Tax,” 5 March 1965.

⁴⁸ KNA JA/7/10, “Local Government Commission of Inquiry. Nairobi Hearings 2nd June 1966 held in ‘Jumba la Baraza.’”

context of an emerging state, questions about the legitimacy of taxes “cannot but be raised.” He writes further, “It is only progressively that we come to conceive taxes as a necessary tribute to the needs of a recipient that transcends the king, i.e., this ‘fictive body’ that is the state.”⁴⁹ In the years after independence, rural Kenyans did not yet see taxes as transcendent. They tended not to worry about the king – or the president – as recipient but, rather, about the distribution of tax revenues. Rift Valley commonly recalled that the Kenyatta state did not distribute equally the services that taxes funded. The view of the Nzoia Area Council, for example, that “much of the country wide dragging of the feet in regard to paying taxes and school fees etc is due to the feeling that some get more in return at the expense of others,” was widespread.

Other informants did not perceive taxes through a lens of inequitable distribution but, simply, as a required payment which did not endow them with rights to state resources. Paul Sitiene had a disillusioned view of early post-independence tax collection. “It was a big burden to us ...I was interested in paying the [land] loan, because I knew it would definitely be mine, but this one, the tax payment, was not working for me. They were just collecting something for nothing. There was no service.”⁵⁰ Jamin Manene Kihinga had similar memories about taxes. “It was a lot of money during those days. And even it was very hard to find a single shilling.” He added, “I can’t tell what the government used to do with the taxes.”⁵¹

⁴⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, “Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field,” in *State/Culture: State Formation After the Cultural Turn*, ed. George Steinmetz (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 59.

⁵⁰ Interview with Paul Sitiene, Sosiani, November 21, 2012.

⁵¹ Interview with Jamin Manene Kihinga, Lumakanda, November 8, 2012.

Despite this widespread conception that taxes did not pay for services, there was a corresponding notion that one still was required to pay taxes. Aaron Juma Wechuli felt that the government did not owe him any services even though he paid taxes. He just understood the tax payment to be something he needed to pay in order to continue living on the land.⁵² John arap Kuto eloquently summed up the feelings of many Kenyans, “I was thinking we were just paying the *serikali*. No one could travel anywhere without paying tax. You needed the receipt, otherwise you could be arrested. We paid tax to make us be free to go on *safari*, to live without any *wasi wasi* [anxiety].”⁵³ In short, Rift Valley residents often paid their taxes out of fear and not out of an expectation that their payment would be redistributed back to them through services provided by the state.

Though mystique surrounded taxes and there was a widely held impression that non-payment could lead to arrest, the different tax collectors – ranging from the provincial administration to the local authorities – actually had few powers. Tax collectors could not arrest defaulters, take property, or advise on the use of the GPT money.⁵⁴ Yet, the collection of taxes was integral to the functioning of the new state, as income tax and customs duties were the main sources of funds for the Treasury. The inability of individual representatives of the state, and the various organs of the state to collect taxes effectively had repercussions for the Kenyan Treasury. This inability at least partially derived from the fact that, even though rural Kenyans were afraid of being imprisoned for not paying taxes, they did not see their tax money as benefitting

⁵² Interview with Aaron Juma Wechuli, Lumakanda, October 31, 2012.

⁵³ Interview with John arap Kuto, Sosiani, November 30, 2012.

⁵⁴ KNA HB/27/8/6, “Minutes of the Meeting of the Provincial Commissioners held on the 29th and 30th November, 1965.”

themselves or the nation. Rather, they thought that taxes financed development for “someone else,” and were not distributed equally.

In spite of the financial woes that both expanding government programs and insufficient tax collection caused, in 1965, President Kenyatta announced the introduction of free out-patient healthcare for all Kenyans, and free in-patient treatment for children under 16 years of age in Government hospitals and Local Authority health centers. Depending on the locality, this announcement led to an increased attendance at government hospitals by three to six times from the previous year; local authorities found it almost impossible to provide these health services to all their community members. Though the announcement had been somewhat expected, many local authorities complained that they were given no instruction on how to manage this new service they were compelled to provide.⁵⁵ In a memorandum, the Provincial Commissioner of Western Province, S.O. Josiah, noted, “Quite a number of Health Centres in several districts have been closed down due to the fact that the Councils have not got adequate funds to run them. Since the Govt. has set itself to provide free medical services, I think it fitting that the burden now shouldered by local authorities should be taken over.”⁵⁶

Social welfare services in independent Kenya, such as free healthcare, belied the inequality that they reproduced. Regardless of a proclamation for free health care, health services remained inadequate. In the former White Highlands and in very rural areas, especially, many communities lacked hospitals or health centers, or these institutions were underfunded. Their residents could not travel easily to receive free care elsewhere.

⁵⁵ KNA JA/31/19, “Summary of Kenya Institute of Administration Meeting on 28th August, 1965” [unauthored].

⁵⁶ KNA JA/7/9, “The Memorandum on Commission of Inquiry into Local Government, submitted by S.O. Josiah, Esq., Provincial Commissioner, Western Province,” 24 May, 1966.

The uniformity and equitability presumed to emerge concurrently with the announcement of free medical services did not occur. Kenyatta's pronouncement for free care had little effect on many Kenyans, largely because the state made no attempt to correct the existing unequal groundwork of health services.

It was not just that "free healthcare" produced more unequal healthcare, but also, that attempts to provide free health services often led to their deterioration, because local governments were incapable of financing these services. The Nandi Hills County Councilor noted, for example, that treatment at the Eldoret District Hospital had become so bad that expectant mothers preferred not to go to the government hospital, or to go to the Mission Hospitals instead. Other County Council members had similar experiences, and received complaints from the public.⁵⁷ Similar stories emerged throughout Sirikwa County. The Clerk to the Sirikwa County Council wrote to the Ministry of Local Government in July 1965:

Councillors found it extremely difficult to explain to the public that they had to recommend that these already inadequate health facilities, should be cut when the Central Government was at the same time promising free health services. It is hoped that the Central Government, appreciating the difficulties faced by the Council will find additional grants to raise the standards of Health Services at least to their former level. The local authority is otherwise placed in the position of having to shoulder the blame over commitments imposed on it by the Central Government without due regard to its financial resources.⁵⁸

The proclamation of free health care contradicted both the inequality and the deterioration of services it created.

⁵⁷ KNA BY/21/212, "Sirikwa County Council Minutes of the 17th Meeting of the Full council," 23rd June, 1967.

⁵⁸ KNA BY/21/211, Letter from Sgd BK arap Tanui, Ag. Clerk to Sirikwa County Council to PS Ministry of Local Government, "Re: Health Services in Sirikwa," 5th July, 1965.

At the same time that the central government burdened local authorities with providing free healthcare, it also forced local county councils to increase their employment levels and pay higher teacher salaries, under the Tripartite Agreement and the Pratt Commission Report respectively. The former led to the Sirikwa County Council increasing its labor force by 15 percent and its annual expenses on wages by about £18,000. The latter increased the cost of teachers' salaries by £9,000 in 1964 and £12,000 in 1965.⁵⁹ This additional financial burden for already faltering local governments meant further cutbacks in services.⁶⁰

The financial woes of Kakamega District in Western Province provides perhaps the most extreme example of the problems encountered by overburdened, poorly financed, and largely inexperienced local authorities. As a result of gigantic deficits, a central government commission forcibly took over the Kakamega County Council in 1965/66. The commission slashed the estimated deficit for 1966 from £200,000 to £50,000 by cutting services. While this action ameliorated some of the budgeting problems, it did not provide a long term solution, and it further depleted the already inadequate social services in the district.⁶¹ Tax collection more broadly in Western Province had long been particularly bad, and the inability of the local and central governments to collect taxes from Western residents resulted in perpetually indebted local governments. Almost ten years after independence, in 1971, this pattern persisted.

⁵⁹ BY/21/211 (Sirikwa Uasin) Gishu County Council – Eldoret (1964-67), From Sirikwa County Council to PS Ministry of Local Government, "Annual Report for 1964," 30 April, 1965.

⁶⁰ Local governments had no way to pay for these services without central government grants, since they were prohibited from taking out loans. Because of this stipulation, the central government controlled all larger development projects.

⁶¹ KNA JA/7/6, "Local Government Commission of Inquiry: Kakamega Hearings held in Kakamega County Council Chamber 23-24 June 1966: 9.30 am. Thursday 23 June: Public Hearing Evidence in Support of Memorandum Submitted by Kakamega County Council."

The Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning estimated in that year that the government would be able to collect only 50 percent of what they had planned for in Western Province.⁶²

Western Province was not only notorious for its record of poor tax payments but, also, for both its poverty and political apathy. Western one of the poorer regions in the Kenya, described by officials as “an area of high unemployment.”⁶³ And, in the elections which followed the central government takeover of Kakamega council affairs, only eight of 22 council seats were contested, and electoral participation ranged from just 4.1 to 14.6 percent.⁶⁴ The Western Province case vividly illustrates the connections between government social services, tax collection, and political participation. Similar to the informants who believed that, with taxes, the government was just “collecting something for nothing,” Western residents did not see either their taxes or their local officials working for them. And, general political apathy in Western appears to be a product of the especially ineffective local authorities in the region. Certain segments of the Kenyan population – particularly those who felt their taxes provided few government services, and those who felt excluded from accessing state resources such as land – chose not to invest themselves in the new nation.

THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The discrepancy between government promises for services and development, and broad experiences of neglect, led to a “crisis of confidence in Local Government

⁶² KNA HB/27/8/4, From Boit, PC Western, to P. Ndegwa, PS Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, “GPT Collection in Western Province,” 15 April, 1971.

⁶³ KNA AE/22/146, “Draft: East African Industrial Promotion Advisory Committee Tariff Protection Pulp & Paper Industries – Memorandum by Kenya.”

⁶⁴ KNA JA/7/9, Local Government Commission of Inquiry Memoranda, Cherry Gertzel of University College, Nairobi, “Rural Local Government in Kenya,” 31 May 1966.

machinery,” which culminated in a commission of inquiry on Local Government in 1966.⁶⁵ The commission was appointed “to inquire into and advise on the reforms necessary to make the local government system in Kenya a more effective instrument for the provision of local services and local development within the framework of national policy and national programmes.”⁶⁶ The commission was assigned to research the composition, constitution, and function of local authorities, as well as the financial conditions of these authorities. The commission was tasked, additionally, with making recommendations about how to improve local authority services, and central government control of local bodies.

A local government expert from the United Kingdom, Walter Hardacre, chaired the Commission. Hardacre had previously carried out a survey of local government in Bechuanaland, and he served as the county treasurer to Berkshire County Council and financial adviser to the County Council Association of England and Wales.⁶⁷ The other members of the commission were Kenyan: John Mwangi, esq. – an accountant, Dr. Bethwell Ogot – a scholar of Kenyan history, and R.S. Matano – a former teacher and Education Officer and a Member of Parliament.⁶⁸

The Commission of Inquiry took testimonies and memorandums from a variety of groups, but focused on central and local government officers. Generally, the central government officers argued that the local authorities were incapable of running local governments efficiently and did not possess the wherewithal to govern without the help

⁶⁵ KNA JA/7/7, From PS DN Ndegwa, Office of the President, “Commission on Local Government. Memorandum by the Office of the President,” July 1966.

⁶⁶ KNA JA/37/2, From GWJ Aston, Secretary to the Commission, “Local Government Commission of Inquiry,” 24 March 1966.

⁶⁷ KNA JA/37/2, *Daily Nation*, “UK Local Govt Expert Here to Head Inquiry,” 21 April 1966.

⁶⁸ Bethwell A. Ogot, *My Footprints on the Sands of Time: An Autobiography* (Victoria, B.C.: Trafford Publishers, 2011), 159.

of the central government. Thus, they advocated for a stronger role for the Provincial Administration, under the leadership of the Ministry of Local Government. The local governments, mostly County Council members, tended to argue that they were more representative of the people. Thus, these local officials argued that they should retain most of their governing responsibilities, but that they needed more financial support from the central government.

Testimonies during the commission revealed two organs of government working simultaneously, but often discordantly, at the local level. The Provincial Administration – with its neat hierarchy from the Office of the President to the Provincial Commissioners all the way down to the Village Elder – was an extension of the central government. The local authorities were the truly local institutions, and they took the form of the county / urban councils and their subsidiary tiers.

Commission testimonies made clear that the powers and purposes of these two forms of local government had remained vague. D.C. MacDonald, a lecturer at the Kenya Institute of Administration (KIA), noted in his statement, for example, that District Commissioners had no scheduled powers or duties. The Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry interrupted to confirm he understood what MacDonald was implying, “He [the District Commissioner] just exists, so to speak, and his powers derive from the fact that he is employed by Central Government.”⁶⁹ Macdonald affirmed this statement. The evidence given during the commission illustrated how the vague division of powers and responsibilities had allowed for the central government to largely control even those services the local governments were responsible for.

⁶⁹ KNA JA/7/6, “Local Government Commission of Inquiry, Nairobi Hearings on 7th June, 1966. 2.30 pm – Public Hearing of Evidence on the Memorandum Submitted by Mr. D.C. MacDonald, KIA Lecturer.”

The central government shrewdly usurped the responsibilities which endowed it with greater political authority and access to resources.⁷⁰ Land was the most important of these resources, and the centralization of government after *majimboism* moved land out of the hands of Regional Assemblies and back into the hands of the national government.⁷¹ Even in the instances where local governments continued to control certain pieces of land, the central government often maintained a close, guiding hand.

For example, after the passage of the constitutional amendments, County Councils had retained control over the administration of Trust Land (the former African Land Units).⁷² But, when J.A. O'Loughlin testified to the Commission of Inquiry about his role as Commissioner of Lands, he revealed the central government role in controlling Trust Land. O'Loughlin remarked:

Well I do administer it [Trust Land] really; I am their land agent and frankly I do administer it. We have our clashes, but we are administering it. The only difference is that all the revenue, rent and rates, rent and stand premium goes to the county council concerned in respect of Trust Land, whereas State Land it goes into the general revenue. And...we do the administration of Trust Land free; the Government gets nothing for it.

O'Loughlin's depiction of a benevolent central government which aided in local administrative tasks conveniently omitted that the central government gained political power and authority through local land administration. O'Loughlin, seemingly aware that this central government intrusion on local sovereignty required a justification, added, "...I don't think that the county council in their present stage of development are competent to administer this land sensibly in the interests of the people...They haven't

⁷⁰ There is a rich literature on political patronage and the importance of the control of state resources for political authority. Joseph, *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria*; Berry, *Fathers Work for Their Sons*; and Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*.

⁷¹ Land will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter (3).

⁷² The central government administered state land through the Ministry of Lands. State land comprised the former European settled areas, where the vast majority of the resettlement programs were located.

got the experience and they seem susceptible, in my view, to local influence.”⁷³ Though there was evidence of local corruption in the administration of land, there was also evidence of central government land corruption. The central government made astute decisions about when to intervene in local authority, always in an attempt to further consolidate and strengthen central government power.

Central state actors did not just astutely intervene into local government affairs, but they also astutely delegated responsibilities to local governments, again in service of consolidating central government powers. The testimonies of the Commission of Inquiry revealed the contestations between central and local government actors over these responsibilities, particularly the provision of health and education services. Local actors wanted to retain, or more accurately regain, control over these services. Local officials often felt, though, that they were expected to carry an unfairly heavy financial burden while, at the same time, their executive powers were being limited.

MacDonald outlined the repercussions of this division of responsibilities, which disempowered local governments but held them financially responsible. He testified to the commission:

But in the case of health and education, which account between them for nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the County Council’s gross expenditure, all I question is – is it a good system, whereby we say the county council is responsible in law for running and financing the service, and yet they have to have a Government officer to run it for them? It’s this division of responsibility... Why have this half and half system of divided responsibility, and of course the Government officers, for example, it’s inevitable, the Government officers get their instructions from their Ministries

⁷³ KNA JA/7/6, “Local Government Commission of Inquiry Nairobi Hearings held in ‘Jumba la Baraza’ on 7 June 1966. Public Hearing of Evidence in Support of Memorandum Submitted by the Commissioner of Lands.”

through the Provincial Medical and Education Officers, not from the county councils in most cases...But the councils have got to find money for this.⁷⁴

This impractical system of dividing the responsibility and financing of local government services was reminiscent of colonial rule. The Troughton Report had recommended just 22 years earlier that financial and executive responsibilities could not be divorced from one another. As in the colonial era, this “half and half system of divided responsibility” led to the poor delivery of services, power struggles between central and local governments, and the indebtedness of local authorities.

Land, education, health, and GPT all served as arenas of negotiation between local and central governments actors. The Commission of Inquiry simply provided a more public platform for these negotiations to occur. Not only did the commission take testimonies publicly throughout the country, but it was also covered daily by the Kenyan press. A headline from the May 29, 1966 *Daily Nation* – “Ambulance – But There’s No Petrol, Shameful says Kanu” – reveals the patterns of these central-local government debates. The *Daily Nation* reported the story from KANU’s viewpoint. The article bemoaned the fact that a local authority received an ambulance from the central government for mobile clinic services but never once used it. KANU and the central government used examples such as this one to accuse local authorities of failing to make use of generous state grants, and for ineffective supervision and control. In response to such accusations, local government officials tended to argue that they did not have the adequate funding to effectively deliver the services the central government mandated they provide. In fact, the *Daily Nation* reported that the local authority never used the

⁷⁴ KNA JA/7/6, “Local Government Commission of Inquiry, Nairobi Hearings on 7th June, 1966. 2.30 pm – Public Hearing of evidence on the memorandum submitted by Mr. D.C. MacDonald, KIA Lecturer.”

ambulance because it had been unable to either register the vehicle or buy petrol. Local authorities – as mentioned earlier – were expected to finance extensive services solely from the revenue of Graduated Personal Tax, poll rates, school fees, produce taxes, small fees, and on occasion, central government grants.

On the surface, these prolonged debates and negotiations appeared to be about specific policy questions – the provision of social services in local settings, financing of local authorities, and the division of responsibilities. These questions were contested so robustly, because they would determine not just the structures of government, but the structures of power and authority in the Kenyan postcolony. Controlling and distributing state resources – particularly, land, but also, the financing and provision of social services and development programs – became the mode through which political actors and institutions acquired legitimacy and authority.

Perhaps more overtly, these contestations contributed to the creation of an increasingly unwieldy and inefficient system of local government. Central and local government actors contested one another to resolve political competitions, not to establish a productive local government system. MacDonald demonstrated the repercussions in his description of the pitfalls of Kenya's education system to the Commission of Inquiry. "Would you agree with me," MacDonald asked, "that whatever you do with financing and administration of primary education, you could not be worse off than you are at present?" He added, "The councils are wholly responsible for finding the money and yet they have no say in the cost and little say in the running..."⁷⁵ An *East African Standard* editorial made a similar observation about the unjustness and

⁷⁵ KNA JA/7/6, "Local Government Commission of Inquiry, Nairobi Hearings on 7th June, 1966. 2.30 pm – Public Hearing of Evidence on the Memorandum Submitted by Mr. D.C. MacDonald, KIA Lecturer."

senselessness of GPT collection. “Its [GPT] collection is costly and erratic. Many thousands who can afford payment escape, while others who are poor are made to pay.”⁷⁶

It is important to remember that the records of the commission captured a specific historical moment, just three years after Kenyan independence. State making is a messy business, and as Bethwell Ogot – one of the members of the 1966 Commission of Inquiry into Local Government – recounted in his autobiography, “we were being asked by the Government to review what was still at the gestation period.”⁷⁷ But, the lasting implications of what occurred during this gestation period must also be emphasized. State actors created local government structures from the outcome of disputes over the control of resources and finances, rather than from debates over how best to provide social services. This state-making process played a part in the creation of a form of political authority that derived from the control of state resources, and in local governments that were rarely able to provide the services they were tasked with.

IMAGINATION, SYMBOLIC AUTHORITY, AND PHYSICALITY

Despite all these problems with the local delivery of social services, rural Kenyans often still felt that local government most affected their lives. Local government was the most visible form of government, and many Kenyans had physical interactions with their local government officers, a much more unlikely occurrence with national politicians and policymakers. MacDonald testified to this fact at the Commission of Inquiry, “These local councils were very much closer to the people: people were very much aware of them and more willing to complain to them, than to the county council, despite the fact that these small local councils were largely ineffective, insofar as they

⁷⁶ KNA JA/37/2, *East African Standard* (editorial), “Administrative and GPT Reforms,” 12 July 1966.

⁷⁷ Ogot, *My Footprints*, 163.

just had not got money nor the man-power to run services.”⁷⁸ Residents of the northwest Rift Valley confirmed MacDonald’s testimony, emphasizing that local level officials knew local political issues and actually engaged with their communities by listening to their problems.

The testimonies from the Commission of Inquiry demonstrated the complexity of local government during decolonization. There were so many different “local” institutions – Provincial Administrations, County Councils, Area Councils, Local Councils, chiefs and village elders (who were not an official part of the Provincial Administration, but informally attached to it) – with ill-defined powers, and which functioned differently in every local setting. The previous sub-section argued that the ambiguities about the powers and functions of these different local institutions opened up opportunities for the central government to usurp control over resources and local finances. These ambiguities also provided openings for local people to refashion meanings for local government and local officials.

Rural Kenyans tended to evaluate their local government based on three inter-related criteria. First, many Kenyans wanted the local government to understand the specificity of their local political world. Second, many rural Kenyans wanted to interact with local officials in person, usually to bring a grievance or a claim. And, thirdly, for the political issues that Kenyans cared most about, they wanted to see a local government response. These criteria produced complicated and conflicting ideas about the meaning of government, or *serikali*.

⁷⁸ KNA JA/7/6, “Local Government Commission of Inquiry, Nairobi Hearings on 7th June, 1966. 2.30 pm – Public Hearing of evidence on the memorandum submitted by Mr. D.C. MacDonald, KIA Lecturer.”

The smaller units, such as local councils, tended to have a better understanding of the more “parochial” issues that their community cared most about. They were also available to meet with their constituents in person, but they lacked the financial wherewithal to respond to grievances, claims, and desires for development. District Commissioners and District Officers often could satisfy all three desired qualities. They were better funded, and thus, better able to respond to local grievances. However, they likely did not know local political issues as well as area councilors.

Rural Kenyans in the northwest Rift Valley recalled that District Commissioners (DCs) and District Officers (Dos) were more important than county councilors. They said they saw DCs and DOs help their communities, whereas County Councils were usually located further away. James Matunda remembered that the County Council did not help much because it covered a very big area.⁷⁹ Frederick Kemboi arap Tum Kiptulus said that the County Council was part of the *serikali*, but mostly the village elders and chiefs were the *serikali* to them.⁸⁰ Simon Limo remembered that councilors did not do much work; they were only in charge of community development and sports. He speculated that this might have been because the councils did not have money, because “people ran away from taxes.”⁸¹ Kibet arap Busianey summed up these ideas, “I think the DC was the final person to go to for development, because MPs are politicians and before we address any issue, we must come through the DC...The DC was the one who was available most of the time...and...therefore the one who knows the development of every community in

⁷⁹ Interview with James Matunda, Lumakanda, July 9, 2013. This was especially the case for the Sirikwa County Council, which covered five administrative districts.

⁸⁰ Interview with Frederick Kemboi arap Tum Kiptulus, Leseru, November 22, 2012.

⁸¹ Interview with Simon Limo, Leseru, July 10, 2013.

the District is the DC.”⁸² The DC was integral to community development, not only because he had more resources than county councilors, but also because he – or his subordinate representatives – could be physically present.

The role of the DC had roots in the colonial administration, founded on a hierarchy which centralized local forms of power and administration under the direct control of the Office of the President.⁸³ Similar to the colonial era, the independent post-*majimbo* Kenyan government relied on District Commissioners, and a number of formal and informal officers below the DC to keep power over local politics centralized. Beneath the DC was the District Officer (DO), then the chief, the sub-chief, and the village elder.

The Office of the President mixed appointments with democratic elections to obtain personnel for the Provincial Administration. DCs and DOs were appointed, and then these officers appointed chiefs and sub-chiefs. The chiefs then nominated three candidates for village elder and villagers would “vote” by standing behind the candidate of their choosing at a *baraza* (government-run public meeting).⁸⁴ A village elder, or a *maguru*, was the only officer that Kenyans voted for, but they were not an official part of the administration, and they did not earn a salary.⁸⁵

The officers of the administration were – on the whole – popular with local communities. There was little criticism of the mostly undemocratic system for the

⁸² Interview with Kibet arap Busianey, Sosiani, November 29, 2012.

⁸³ The Kenyan state vigorously instituted an Africanization program after independence, and it appears that most of the early postcolonial District Commissioners were not Europeans.

⁸⁴ This system varied slightly from community to community and changed over time, and chiefs and sub-chiefs were sometimes elected. People very rarely described this process as “voting,” but rather, as “choosing” through the act of standing behind the leader they liked. Informants might have verbalized this distinction because choosing chiefs and sub-chiefs differed so drastically from contemporary voting practices, or because, they only had the opportunity to choose from the nominated candidates.

⁸⁵ The Kenyan central government depended on their voluntary labor for governance, administrative work, implementation of government programs, security, and relaying government messages to local communities. The contemporary Kenyan government continues to rely on the voluntary service of village elders, a much disputed tactic, which tends to provide incentives for bribe-taking.

selection of local leaders, because the Provincial Administration, more so than the County Councils, satisfied the desires of the rural population. The physical presence of the officers of the Provincial Administration on the ground provided a welcome symbol that a community was represented to the central government. And, because the Provincial Administration came under the Office of the President, it also had funding and access to state resources in order to respond to the grievances of local communities. This was in contrast to the poorly funded county councils.

Unsurprisingly, at times, the duties of being a civil servant of the President and a democratically elected representative of a constituency conflicted. The Office of the President pressured some of the lower level officers in the Provincial Administration – chiefs, sub-chiefs, and village elders, who were democratically elected – to follow the Presidential line or suffer the consequences. The minutes of a meeting of Provincial Commissioners in 1965 demonstrate this. “Election does not change the fact that a chief is a civil servant. If a chief is not loyal he will be sacked.”⁸⁶ These minutes suggest not only the measures the state employed to control local officials, but also, that local officials did not always heed state directives and remain “loyal.” The government justified the requirement for total “loyalty” by arguing that it was a way of avoiding “politics.” With one-party rule, anything anti-KANU was categorized as “political” and anti-Kenya, and thus, unacceptable. In this system, ensuring the so-called apoliticization of civil servants was a way of ensuring loyalty to the government, and accordingly, of consolidating presidential power.

⁸⁶ KNA HB/27/8/6, “Minutes of the Meeting of the Provincial Commissioners held on the 29th and 30th November, 1965.”

Local officials derived a much of their authority by tangibly providing social services, resources, and development programs, but symbolic authority performed by civil servants was also incredibly important. There was a desire for a ceremonial formality for representatives of the government. Village elders, for example, lived within the small sub-locations they represented and knew best the political issues of their communities. Residents could go directly to village elders more easily than any other civil servant, politician, or government officer. Even so, many rural residents recounted that they did not believe village elders were a part of the government, because they did not wear uniforms or possess other symbols of authority. Certainly, these ideas about village elders could also have emerged from their diminished access to state resources, which inhibited village elders' patronage networks, but Kenyans also recognized the connections that existed between possessing the symbols of the state and the resources of the state.

Kenyan desires for symbolic authority – along with a colonial history which sanctified uniforms and badges as an integral part of government – shaped ideas about power in the postcolony. Many residents of the northwest Rift Valley defined members of the *serikali* simply as those who wore badges and uniforms, even excluding Kenyatta at times, because “he didn’t have a badge.”⁸⁷ Badges had become a significant symbol of authority under colonial rule, as demonstrated by the minutes of African local governments. “At a recent meeting, the African District Council of Kipsigis expressed the opinion that councilors should wear badges of office which it was felt tended to enhance

⁸⁷ Interview with Solome Teregin, Leseru, November 26, 2012; Interview with Helen Kirua, Sosiani, December 3, 2012; Interview with Kibet arap Busianey, Sosiani, November 29, 2012.

the dignity and prestige of membership of an African District Council.”⁸⁸ Power in the late colonial and early postcolonial era often derived from a symbolized physicality, in which the form of power needed to be both physically present, but also, to match the symbolic ideals of imagined power. Power was performed first, and then gained or further consolidated through this performance.

Performances of power made use of symbols of authority, but also made government officials visible to the public. Regardless of whether or not a local government official was elected or was wearing a uniform, his/her main job was to be on the ground to observe the needs of a community. Rural Kenyans understood this. The Chairman of a Naivasha Village Committee wrote in a petition in 1972, “Since the DO is the eye to the government and ears of the public, we sent a letter to him.”⁸⁹ This rhetoric of an individual seeing on behalf of the government was not just reserved for local government officers however. Kericho Township Residents also penned a petition in late 1972. These residents wrote Jomo Kenyatta personally using identical language to describe the president’s responsibility. “We have written this letter to you for your assistance if possible as you are the eyes of our government on this side.”⁹⁰

Some of this regard for a personalized leadership derived from a colonial history without such representation. Ruth Malakwen Cheptekeny compared colonial to postcolonial rule, and in doing so, illustrated this desire for a more personalized form of governance. “During the colonial era, we just heard from people that a certain person was

⁸⁸ KNA DC/UG/2/3/50, From the Ministry of Local Government, Health and Housing to Secretaries to All ADCs, “Badges for Councillors,” 4 October, 1956.

⁸⁹ KNA KA/6/20, From the Chairman, Naivasha Village Committee to the Commissioner of Lands, “Ref: Kabati Plots (Naivasha),” 26 October 1972.

⁹⁰ KNA KA/6/20, From Kericho Township Residents to Jomo Kenyatta, 13 December 1972.

the governor or the leader, but we did not have a chance to know who that person was.”⁹¹ In response to this, Kenyans desired to know their leadership after independence. These desires were fulfilled, through the lowest levels of government such as chiefs, and the highest representation of government, the *Mzee* (President Jomo Kenyatta) himself. They were fulfilled, specifically, when these leaders distributed development resources. Both local and national officers played an important part in allocating these resources. Rural Kenyans gained opportunities to collect such resources when they formed new patronage relationships, since state officials controlled much of the distribution of development programs and resources.⁹²

The chiefs satisfied the rural yearning for “knowing” their leadership in their quotidian physical presence. Kenyatta, though, satisfied this yearning in a metaphorical way. The aura that surrounded Kenyatta, and his imagined presence in daily lives, provided Kenyans with the intimate leadership they wanted to believe in.⁹³ Even those living in KADU dominated areas of the Rift Valley, who did not vote for Kenyatta came to like him in the early years of post-independence Kenya. Pauline Tum said, “Kenyatta was active. Whatever he was promising people they believed in.”⁹⁴ Frederick Kemboi arap Tum Kiptulus echoed these sentiments, “I liked Kenyatta...because I saw this person had a vision, so I had to follow him.”⁹⁵ William Serem’s recounting of “meeting” the president best sums up the idealized presence of Kenyatta in rural lives. “When the president was coming, we were invited and we could only go to a place like Kapkong

⁹¹ Interview with Ruth Malakwen Cheptekeny, Leseru, January 9, 2013.

⁹² Patron-client relationships will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters.

⁹³ Kenyatta’s photo appeared in all government offices, schools, and many businesses. This pictorial presence likely contributed to the sense of Kenyatta’s omniscience.

⁹⁴ Interview with Pauline Tum, Leseru, November 22, 2012.

⁹⁵ Interview with Frederick Kemboi arap Tum Kiptulus, Leseru, November 22, 2012.

Primary School. We waited for him there. Even though we could not see him, it was our pleasure to see the president. We would go, we had met the president. Even if the president could go by air, it was our pleasure to look and clap.”⁹⁶

These complicated imaginings of authority, in combination with diverse encounters with government officials and of access to government services, meant that Kenyans formed varying understandings of the *serikali* (government). These perceptions were often shaped by experiences interacting with the local government officials on the ground, and ranged from agricultural officers to village elders to District Commissioners. Karen Misavo, a Lumakanda settler, asked, “Where could you get a village elder? I never went to see the village elder in case of any problem.”⁹⁷ But, Misavo’s memories differed dramatically from her male counterparts who often thought that the village elder was the lowest on the chain of command and the first person to go to if they needed help. Another Lumakanda settler, Rastas Omamo, had very different memories. He believed that the government included village elders, settlement officers, District Commissioners, chiefs, anyone that “could give you an eviction notice.”⁹⁸ Omamo’s fears of eviction for not paying his land loan, and his experiences of government officers coming to collect that loan, shaped his conception of who was a part of the *serikali*.

Those who had been largely excluded from the government imagined *serikali* differently from those lucky enough to gain access to state resources, particularly land.⁹⁹ Joseph arap Bir’geng, a squatter, said eloquently, “For a chief to be, it is the community.

⁹⁶ Interview with William Serem, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

⁹⁷ Interview with Karen Misavo, Lumakanda, October 31, 2012.

⁹⁸ Interview with Rastas Omamo, Lumakanda, November 9, 2012.

⁹⁹ The following chapters provide a more in-depth discussion of how access to state resources was determined, but gender, class, ethnicity, region, education, generation, and political networks were the broad channels along which marginalization occurred.

For the government to be, it is the community. The community is the pillar, and that should be the *serikali*.”¹⁰⁰ His emphasis on the community, rather than the formal members of government, grew out of his experiences of government neglect as a squatter excluded from access to land, social services, and development resources. Disappointment in the government played a role in fostering Bir’geng’s understanding of the community as government.

Often, though, individuals held complicated, and even irreconcilable, ideas about government. Most Kenyans were disappointed about certain aspects of government, but still positive about the government generally. Kimeli arap Chepkwony’s life history, and his complex ideas about the post-*uhuru* Kenyan government, demonstrate this. At one point, in the early 1970s, Chepkwony owned about 60 cattle and 80 acres of land in Kitale, Kenya. Today, he is a squatter in Kiptaruk sub-location, Sosiani. As Chepkwony remembers it, in 1973, on the veterinary officer’s advice, the Kalenjin members of his land purchasing company built a cattle dip, and they refused to allow the Sabaot to use the dip. In response, the Sabaot destroyed the dip, and all the cattle of the land buying company died of East Coast Fever. The Kalenjin responded violently, and then the police arrested them. Chepkwony left the area and the land, because of the conflict and because he had lost his cattle. In the meantime, others settled on the then vacant land, and Chepkwony has been going to court for over 30 years to win his land back.¹⁰¹

Kimeli arap Chepkwony said he was extremely disappointed in the government, because he lost his property and the government was “too slow” and “not ready to assist Kenyans.” He believed the *serikali*’s responsibility was to protect property, but it had

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Joseph arap Bir’geng, Sosiani, November 20, 2012.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Kimeli arap Chepkwony, Sosiani, November 30, 2012.

failed. Despite these feelings of disappointment and of being abandoned by the government, Chepkwony still felt a loyalty to the Ministry of Agriculture, because they gave him seeds and fertilizer. Thus, he took his maize to the cereals board, even though he could sell higher to black market traders. In addition, when asked generally about the government, he said that it had helped him, because – even as a squatter – he can plow his land without a lease, and he was grateful that the government had not overlooked the squatters. Chepkwony held, simultaneously, feelings of disillusionment with a government that neglected him and did not protect him, coupled with feelings of loyalty and gratefulness. These contradictory feelings grew out of a complicated life history, complicated expectations for government services, and complicated encounters with different government departments and officials. Chepkwony experienced certain forms of government assistance as well as government failings, and in his mind, as in the mind of many other Kenyans, there were multiple *serikali*.

CONCLUSION

Frederick Cooper has argued that “the "imagined communities" of Africans were both smaller and larger than the nation.”¹⁰² This was true in Kenya, as much as in any other part of Africa. These complicated imaginings extend to government and political authority, and emerged in a setting in which most Kenyans had little experience of the state provision of social services, in which central-local government wrestling for power led to the deterioration of already poor services, and in which people longed for a personalized symbol of the state in their lives.

¹⁰² Frederick Cooper, “Conflict and Connection: Rethinking African Colonial History,” *American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (1994): 1519.

The state and the president understood the complex conceptions of the government, but also, believed that the central government shaped the lives of rural Kenyans more so than it did in reality. Permanent Secretary to the President's Office, Mr. D.N. Ndegwa testified during the commission of inquiry that "more than 80 per cent of the people lived in rural areas where the Central Government was an important, but remote and almost intangible, element in their lives." He added, "They looked to the Government as a benevolent authority and to meet their needs the Government must be apparent on the personal level, as an individual who was easily accessible, sympathetic, understanding and authoritative."¹⁰³ This was true, but only to an extent. The Kenyan state entered the lives of rural residents in paradoxical and uneven ways, and Kenyatta – a single man – could only partially satisfy a desire for personalized governance.

Just as the postcolonial experiences of rural Kenyans did more to perpetuate than to resolve these complicated ideas, the commission of inquiry did little to resolve the ambiguities and contestations over the control and financing of government services in local settings. These continued ambiguities become clear by examining some of the major changes to local government in the decade following the commission of inquiry. In 1968, Local Government Regulations (Amendment) Act (No.9) abolished local councils, and the GPT rate moved from 48 to 24 Kenyan shillings. Government grants to county councils also changed, and the distribution of the total grant money was based upon a formula that took account of the relative fiscal need and ability of each Council to balance the different levels of need among the county councils. The Local Government (Transfer of Functions) Act 1969 No. 20 gave the president powers to reassign to the

¹⁰³ KNA JA/37/2, *East African Standard*, "Local Government Role in Nation Building," 23 July 1966.

Government any functions exercised by county councils and their urban and area councils in relation to education, public health, roads and graduated personal tax. Additionally in 1970, all self-help dispensaries were to be taken over by the government. County councils were no longer responsible for primary education, public health or roads. Then, in 1974, 10 years after independence, Kenyatta announced four free years of primary education for all Kenyan children.

These key changes in such a short period of time illustrate the continued contestations between the central and local governments. But, as had always been the case, these policies worked differently in practice than in theory, and local experiences of government policy varied dramatically. The lengthy central-local state contestations continued to inhibit the provision of services. The long-lasting ambiguities in the governmental framework perpetuated unequal access to development, and also, the production of complicated ideas about power and authority in the postcolony. Ten years after independence, it was not that the convoluted and ambiguous ideas about power and how it should be organized remained unresolved, but rather, that the state had coalesced specifically to maintain this complexity and ambiguity.

Kenyatta's contradictory position in the imagination of rural Kenyans possibly demonstrates the complexity of postcolonial politics and government more than anything else. Nora Kasigene's ideas about government reveal this. "We never saw them [Kenyatta and MPs]," she remembered. "So, they were not part of the government. We just heard of Kenyatta. Though he gave us the *shamba* [small farm], we never saw him. He used to give orders just from Nairobi, but we never saw him."¹⁰⁴ For some, Kenyatta embodied

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Nora Kasigene, Lumakanda, November 7, 2012.

the government, and thus, he personally gave them the *shamba*. The understanding of Kenyatta as the giver of land endowed him with a great deal of power in the years after independence, particularly among those who lived in areas of land resettlement. The power vested in the ability to be seen as the distributor of land and other government resources had a flip side, though, as those neglected by the government often felt personally spurned by Kenyatta. Kenyatta's power was centralized, but fragile and tenuous, particularly as the years passed and the disappointments of independence became apparent to larger sections of the Kenyan population.

This chapter has attempted to provide a foundation for understanding local level politics in Kenya, and for understanding the imbrications of central state, local state, and non-state rural actors. The next chapter looks at one of the most important sites of Kenyan decolonization, and of the production of Kenyatta's authority – land settlement.

3 “Can I Be One of Them?”: The Varied Landscape of Settlement in Kenya

*I beg to submit this my application and forward my cries to you that, it is not so long since I heard you are giving some people 50 acres in Highland Farm, can I be one of them?*¹

*Kenya now faces the tenth-year anniversary of its independence. Surely, some have milked and enjoyed the fruits of uhuru. I am hungry and thirsty[.] I am seeking for your help.*²

At independence, colonial experiences of migration, displacement, and dispossession colored ideas of belonging, historical injustice, and land rights. Social and political networks that emerged under colonial rule, additionally, created unequal avenues for accessing resources. For many Kenyans, access to or exclusion from land in the years surrounding independence profoundly shaped their ideas about state obligation and the rights of citizens. Land access impacted rural political engagement, but it also intensified existing inequalities. Using oral histories and archival research, this chapter offers a social history of colonial and postcolonial land resettlement programs in the northwest Kenyan highlands. It draws connections between the diverse experiences of aspiring African settlers and the emergence of vastly different notions of the state and political justice, and of the emergence of broader unequal socio-economic realities.³ This chapter

¹ KNA DC/ELD/1/10/9, From Ndugu Kariuki to The Ministry of Agriculture, The DC, Eldoret, 11 June 1960.

² KNA KA/6/20, From James K. Siteney, Eldoret, to the PS, Office of the President, “Re: Gen. 116/016/86 Plot No. 676 Kondoo Squatters Scheme,” 21 February 1973.

³ It should be noted that European migrants who lived and farmed in Kenya were referred to as “settlers” by the colonial administration. During decolonization, Kenyans given land through resettlement programs were also called “settlers.” In order to distinguish between the two, Europeans farmers in Kenya will always be referred to fully as “European settlers.”

highlights the connections between rural land access, the production of postcolonial inequality, and rural political imaginaries and engagements.

The Kenyan colonial economy had been based on plantation agriculture, most of which came out of the White Highlands, also known as the Scheduled Areas and Settled Areas. In 1959, the scheduled areas produced 46 percent of total agriculture, and 80 percent of exportable surplus.⁴ During decolonization, the new Kenyan state, the British government, the World Bank, and the other institutional actors involved in land settlement and reform, assumed that the Kenyan economy would continue to rely on agricultural exports, such as coffee, tea, sisal, and wattle.⁵ What these actors could not agree upon was whether it was more important to maintain large European estates thought to be more economically efficient, or to settle the many poor Kenyans believed to produce “rural unrest.”

The state’s ambivalence about what constituted development conflicted with citizen’s more fully formed convictions about development. Peter Muchai, a Lumakanda farmer who did not get land immediately after independence, emphasized some of the common ideals connected to development, “Development was if you have something that belongs to you. Development was something that you were doing in your land. During those days...I didn’t see any *maendeleo* (development), because I didn’t have my own piece of land.”⁶ Muchai’s connection between land and development was a common one. Similarly, there was a widespread perception of the necessity to possess land in order to

⁴ KNA BN/81/144, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Water Resources (Subject: Land Policy in the Scheduled Areas).

⁵ At the time, the World Bank was called the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). For ease of understanding, I will generally refer to the IBRD as the World Bank.

⁶ Interview with Peter Muchai, Lumakanda, November 6, 2012.

contribute to nation building and to be a citizen. Rural Kenyans often thought of development not as progress, or change, or the improvement of one's life, but as a certain standard of living, a well-being that could be achieved through specific livelihoods, often farming. And, profitable farming could be achieved only if one had enough fertile land, most easily accessed through national resettlement programs.

In many communities, land helped give shape to complicated ideas about the meaning of independence and the obligations of the state. Many rural Kenyans did not blame the government for the dearth of other services *if* they received land. They often said that they got their land and were very happy because it improved their lives so much. Karen Misavo, a Lumakanda settler, illustrated this view. She recounted, "The government could not assist again because it had given us land and it transported us to this place. So, it was our responsibility to work hard."⁷ There was a common feeling that *land was enough*.

Many settlers felt they simply needed to work the land in order to prosper and develop. When settlers recounted their life histories, particularly their engagements with different state officials and their experiences of state programs, they revealed their disappointments and their anger with the government in some instances. When they spoke in generalities, however, almost all settlers said that they were content with the government because they received land. In this way, Jomo Kenyatta received what can almost be characterized as a free pass among African settlers. Even if they did not *expect* land, they *aspired* to have it, and Kenyatta, as the father of the nation and the first president, symbolized the distribution of this land. Kenyatta *was*, all else aside, the giver

⁷ Interview with Karen Misavo, Lumakanda, October 31, 2012.

of land. Aston Matifali, another Lumakanda settler, recounted, for example, that Kenyatta personally negotiated with the British and the European settlers for the loans to pay for the land in order to get the British to leave.

Rural Kenyans principally imagined independence through land redistribution, but rural experiences acquiring land after independence differed drastically. These divergent experiences produced wide-ranging understandings of the meanings of independence, and the successes and failures of the new government. Those who did not receive land through settlement thought of independence quite differently. Daniel Kibeney Bitok, who was a forest squatter for a long time before he was able to buy a small piece of land, said, “I was disappointed. It was as if there was no independence.”⁸ He added later, “Before I settled anywhere, I didn’t recognize myself as a *mwananchi* (citizen), but after getting this land, I called myself a *mwananchi*. I thought I belonged to somewhere else, not Kenya, before getting land.”⁹ William Serem, who had originally purchased land through a mismanaged land buying company, which eventually collapsed, recounted, “After independence, we thought that we were just to live like that. We were not actually thinking of getting anything from the government, so we didn’t expect anything from the government. So long as we got land and *uhuru* (freedom or independence), that was final.”¹⁰

Land also deeply affected the resources accessible to settlers, or that those who remained landless, land poor, or squatters were excluded from. Land resettlement schemes gave settlers access to a whole constellation of agricultural development

⁸ Interview with Daniel Kibeney Bitok, Leseru, November 26, 2012.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Interview with William Serem, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

programs. Settlers often gained access to agricultural and veterinary extension services, as well as cooperative marketing. Land settlement was not the only factor which determined upward mobility and socio-economic status, however. Even within and amongst schemes, there were a whole range of factors that shaped the success of farmers, such as the land fertility, or the acreage.

Land access or exclusion, as well as the specific successes of a land settlement scheme, then, deeply shaped postcolonial disappointment, since it shaped one's ability to make a livelihood and to care for families. For settlers (on settlement schemes), their indebtedness was of little concern at the beginning and settlers often received a fairly fertile, good-sized piece of land. For those who remained landless, disappointment began soon after independence. There were few expectations for government assistance at that time. Rather, there was a longing for self-sufficiency, for being provided with the resources – almost exclusively, in the Rift Valley, conceptualized as land – to be able to take care of oneself.

There is certainly no paucity of scholarship on land, land reform, and land resettlement in Africa, or in Kenya more particularly.¹¹ However, few works examine the social and economic lives connected to land resettlement, or differentiate between the lives of settlers versus non settlers, or among the lives of settlers on different schemes.

¹¹ MPK Sorrenson, *Land Reform in Kikuyu Country*; P.D. Abrams, *Kenya's Land Re-settlement Story: How 66,000 African Families were Settled on 1325 Large Scale European Owned Farms* (Nairobi: Challenge Publishers and Distributors, 1979); C.P.R. Nottidge, *The Million-Acre Settlement Scheme, 1962 – 1966* (Nairobi: Dept. of Settlement, 1966); Christopher Leo, "The Failure of the 'Progressive Farmer' in Kenya's Million-Acre Settlement Scheme," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 16, no. 4 (1978); Sara Berry, *No Condition is Permanent*; Parker Shipton, *Mortgaging the Ancestors: Ideologies of Attachment in Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Gregory Maddox, James L. Giblin, and Isaria N. Kimambo eds., *Custodians of the Land: Ecology and Culture in the History of Tanzania* (James Currey: London, 1996); Pauline Peters, "Inequality and Social Conflict Over Land in Africa," *Journal of Agrarian Change* 4, no. 3 (2004): 269-314.

There were a whole assemblage of government and World Bank-sponsored programs connected to settlement, such as cooperatives, agricultural marketing, extension services (agricultural and veterinary), agricultural education, loan financing, among many others. Non-settlers often did not have access to, or had greater difficulty, accessing these programs.

The uneven provision of services produced real wealth inequalities after independence. Unequal access not just to land but to development programs and resources had real implications for the socio-economic realities of rural Kenyans. This uneven development, though, was more complicated than it appeared on the surface. Oftentimes, these early agricultural development programs met many challenges and failed dramatically, as evidenced by future chapters that examine the prominence of black marketing of maize, the corruption of cooperative leaders, and the great difficulties in short term and long term loan repayment.

At the same time, the scholarship has also mostly elided social histories of land settlement during decolonization.¹² Resettlement was as much a social engineering project as it was a development or welfare. It entailed a great deal of upheaval and hardship for many of the families who moved onto these schemes. It entailed the formation of new communities and villages, which almost always lacked schools, health facilities, and roads. All of these resources constituted the conventional forms of development that Kenyans imagined or identified with development and progress.

¹² Tanzanian scholarship on *ujamaa* has provided richer social histories of villagization. Lal, "Militants, Mothers, and the National Family"; Jennings, *NGOs, Development, and Ujamaa in Tanzania* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2008); Yusufu Qwaray Lawi, "Tanzania's Operation Vijiji and Local Ecological Consciousness: The Case of Eastern Iraqwland, 1974-1976," *The Journal of African History* 48, no. 1 (2007):69-93.

Resettlement, then, was anything but a straightforward policy endeavor, or a direct avenue to prosperity.

Land resettlement and agricultural development in Kenya in the 1960s and 1970s was a complicated story. This chapter examines the range of colonial and postcolonial experiences for both settlers and non-settlers in the northwest Rift valley, and analyses how these experiences shaped their understandings of the state and their material well-being. Land resettlement, possibly more than anything else, shows the breadth of experiences of rural Kenyans during this transition, their successes and failures in improving their lives and transforming their aspirations into realities.

DISPOSSESSION AND DISPLACEMENT

From 1932 to 1934, the Kenyan colonial state formally investigated the widespread land grievances Africans had expressed since the beginnings of European settlement at the turn of the 20th century. The British appointment, in 1931, of Sir William Morris Carter as chairman of this investigation marked a precedent in the colonial history of Kenya. In organizing this investigation, the British colonial state implicitly admitted the existence of a widespread “land problem” in Kenya, though it did not assume the burden rectifying this problem at the time. The acknowledgement of the necessity of a Land Commission – which took the testimony of civil servants and African Kenyans – belied the previous policies of a colonial state initially founded upon the continual alienation of African lands for European use. While this acknowledgment represented the possibility of assuaging some African grievances, it did very little in practice.

Policy regarding land began to change with the emergence of the colonial developmental state, which most scholars trace to the 1940s.¹³ In 1940, the British passed the Colonial Development and Welfare Act (CDWA), and in 1946, the French passed the Fonds d'Investissement et de Developement Economique et Social (FIDES). In both cases, the economic implications of the policy change were that the colonies were no longer required to be self-sufficient. Just as the British began creating a developmental state, former squatters on white settler farms began returning to the native reserves. They had become disenchanted with their increasingly oppressive legal status and labor obligations, and many had been expelled from newly mechanized farms. Kikuyu squatters returned to the reserves of Central Kenya. The Kikuyu elites empowered under colonial indirect rule did not allow the former-squatters to exercise ancestral land rights, which had previously been inalienable.

The plight of the landless bred discontent and led to a rapid politicization in central Kenya. Disaffected Kikuyu began a mass oath-taking campaign to secure support for an anti-colonial rebellion – Mau Mau – focused on the recovery of land.¹⁴ Amid the escalating violence of the rebellion, the British declared a State of Emergency in 1952. Under the Emergency, the colonial administration enacted villagization – the forced relocation of almost the entire Kikuyu population to guarded, consolidated villages. Villagization paved the way for future land reform measures.

¹³ Anderson and Throup, “Africans and Agricultural Production”; Hodgson, *Once Intrepid Warriors*; Monica Van Beusekom, *Negotiating Development: African Farmers and Colonial Experts at the Office Du Niger, 1920-1960* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002) have questioned the acceptance of this periodization. But, for the purposes of land policy in Kenya, the mid-1940s and onwards represented a period of change in policy.

¹⁴ Though Mau Mau was dominated by Kikuyu, members of other ethnic groups participated, most notably, the closely related Meru and Embu.

In 1954, the Kenyan colonial state began the implementation of the Swynnerton Plan, the first large-scale, land reform scheme in Kenya. Though the Swynnerton Plan grew out of some of the repressive policies the British used to combat the Mau Mau rebellion – namely villagization – it attempted to restructure land ownership and land access in central Kenya. The architects of the Swynnerton Plan emphasized plot consolidation, and they attempted to end what the colonial regime saw as the uncertainty of customary tenure, by providing a system of registered land titles guaranteed by the state. The less overt, but equally important, goal was to create a new class of landed, “progressive” farmers who would form a conservative, African middle class with the same interests as the settlers who would curb political agitation.¹⁵

The Mau Mau State of Emergency and a rapidly changing global setting pushed the British to quickly transition Kenya into independence. This came quite unexpectedly, because Kenya’s large white settler population possessed considerable political clout in the U.K. In 1960, though, the colony opened up the previously exclusive White Highlands to all races. In 1961, forthcoming independence was announced. In the same year, the colonial state began planning settlement schemes. By 1962, The Million Acre Scheme, the largest resettlement program in Kenyan history, had begun. This scheme planned the transfer of 1.17 million acres of land from European to African ownership. The brainchild of colonial administrators, the Million Acre Scheme designed resettlement to occur adjacent to native reserves.¹⁶ Resettlement administrators intended to allow local

¹⁵ Sorrenson, *Land Reform in Kikuyu Country*, 201.

¹⁶ The location of resettlement schemes next to former native reserves created confusion over which local bodies possessed the authority to control and govern these schemes.

communities to gain land they had inhabited prior to colonialism, or to gain ownership over lands upon which they labored as squatters.¹⁷

By independence in 1963, a great deal of land resettlement had taken place. It had profoundly altered the political dynamics of the time, creating intense competition for access to and control over a limited and valuable resource. In the highlands of the Rift Valley, specifically, the Kikuyu largely substantiated their claims by drawing on their immense landlessness and the agricultural history of the past half century, during which Kikuyu farmers developed the area. Antagonistically, it was the Kalenjin and Maasai, particularly, who made their land claims on the basis of their historical occupation of the same region during the precolonial era.

There were two main types of plots under the Million Acre Scheme. Low density schemes were made up of larger sized plots, which resulted in fewer families (from about three to five) settled on every hundred acres. The emerging rural bourgeoisie – often first empowered under colonial indirect rule, and further entitled under the Swynnerton Plan – was largely the beneficiary of these schemes. Their history of privilege under colonialism enabled them to accumulate land, which other Kenyans could not afford. High density schemes, on the other hand, were much smaller holdings intended for the landless and unemployed, and they comprised the aspect of this program designed to “defuse rural unrest.” The distribution of these smallholdings was a political concession – largely to Mau Mau and its later iterations – which the World Bank, in fact, refused to provide loans for, because the “non-progressive farmers” were seen as “liabilities.”¹⁸

¹⁷ David Anderson and Emma Lochery, “Violence and Exodus in Kenya’s Rift Valley, 2008: Predictable and Preventable?” *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 2, no. 2 (2008): 335.

¹⁸ Abrams, *Kenya’s Land Resettlement Story*.

The Million Acre Scheme was just the largest of the late colonial and early postcolonial government programs aimed at restructuring land tenure and redistributing land. Land reform emphasized plot consolidation, individual ownership, economies of scale, and Western agricultural knowledge. The colonial and postcolonial states and the World Bank ultimately implemented land redistribution on a “willing buyer-willing seller” basis, at a prevailing market rate and did not institute any large-scale free land transfers.

Political resistance in the 1960s suggests that land reform generated different forms of early disappointment with the postcolonial state from diverse groups of Kenyans. At independence, the Nandi hoped the government would return the Uasin Gishu plateau to them.¹⁹ When the Kenyatta government settled some Kikuyu on the Uasin Gishu, the leading MP in the region, John Seroney, issued the Nandi Hills Declaration in response, laying claims to the area of Tinderet for the Nandi in 1969.²⁰ In addition, the Kenya People’s Union (KPU), an explicitly populist party, formed in 1966 largely to counter the exclusion of the poor from development.²¹ The formation of these political opposition movements reflected new possibilities for non-elite Kenyans in the early postcolony, but these possibilities quickly narrowed when the postcolonial state asserted its power: Seroney was convicted of sedition, and the KPU was banned in 1969,

¹⁹ Odhiambo, “Ethnic Cleansing,” 36-37. Odhiambo writes, “The Nandi as well as their Kalenjin cousins, the Kony and the Saboot, had regarded this territory as their backyard, and anticipated their prior settlement in these lands before the more distant ethnic groups.” Oral interviews conducted by the author confirm this.

²⁰ Odhiambo, “Ethnic Cleansing,” 37.

²¹ Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*, 165. The KPU was formed by Oginga Odinga, just a year after Sessional Paper No. 10 on African Socialism “asserted that ‘the government would ensure equal opportunities to all *citizens*, eliminate exploitation and discrimination, and provide needed social services such as education, medical care and social security.’”

transforming Kenya once more into a one-party state.²² Although the Kenyan state overpowered these local and national resistances, these examples suggest that the 1960s was a critical juncture for the postcolonial state, and a time in which Kenyans actively participated in negotiating its formation, often around the question of land.

A RANGE OF SETTLEMENT EXPERIENCES

A comparison of the settlement schemes dotted on both sides of what had been, up until recently, the Rift Valley Province–Western Province border provides a telling illustration of the breadth of Kenyan experiences of land resettlement.²³ Today, this area would be almost unrecognizable in contrast to its appearance in the 1960s, when the majority of resettlement took place. The population and population density has skyrocketed for one. Where once large tracts of land remained uncleared and African smallholders maintained farms of 15 to 50 acres, now the land has been divided into small plots. Kenyan landowners have split their farms among multiple heirs or sold off pieces of their *shamba* to pay off debts. The ethnic makeup, too, has been transformed. Post-election violence in 1992, and in 1997, and again in 2007-2008, has served as a haunting epilogue to colonial histories of violent dispossession. This violence has remade the ethnic landscape, and in this part of the country, many Kikuyu have fled to Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps or back to a Central Province homeland many have never known. This violence also forced Luhya and Kalenjin families on the “wrong” side of the

²² Colin Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neocolonialism, 1964-71* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 230. “The government reasserted the availability of all European-owned land for purchase by Africans with capital, a large proportion of whom would be likely to be Kikuyu, while attacking Seroney’s ‘tribalism.’”

²³ This provincial boundary was in place from 1963 until March 2013. After the 2013 elections, a new constitution went into effect, which replaced the eight provinces with 47 semi-autonomous counties. The road continues to run along the new county boundary, separating Uasin Gishu County from Kakamega County.

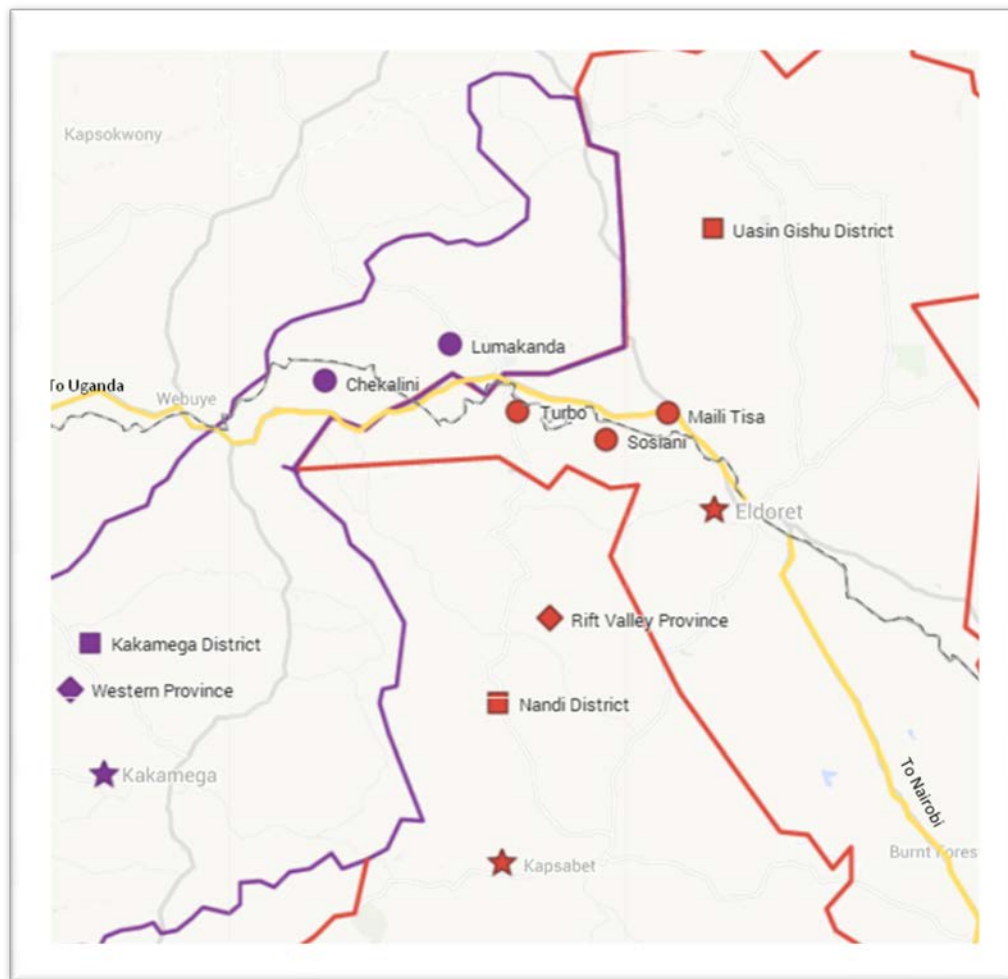
border to trade places, to recreate the ethnically homogenous niches colonial bureaucrats imagined and first carved into Kenya's countryside.

The infrastructure is a part of these dramatic changes. Where the Uganda railway once provided long distance transport, now a highway – the A 104 – has become the major thoroughfare for transporting goods and people. It cuts through the Rift Valley escarpment connecting to Kampala in the West and to Nairobi the Southeast. In Nairobi, the Kenya-Uganda highway intersects with the Mombasa highway, which continues on to the port at the coast. In the rural, western Rift Valley today, eighteen-wheeler trucks are just as familiar a sight as overloaded matatus – the name of the privately-owned minibuses most commonly used by Kenyans for public transportation. The trucks and matatus whiz along the highway at dizzying speeds, dangerously overtaking one another. The highway itself is a public archive of the rapid infrastructural change. The innumerable dents that depress the road's surface showcase the dramatic increase in road traffic over the years.

For about a twenty kilometer stretch of this highway, from Turbo to Chekalini, this road serves as a geopolitical boundary, separating Rift Valley Province from Western Province and Uasin Gishu District from Kakamega District. The road also separates the now mostly mono-Kalenjin settlements from the mono-Luhya settlements. It was during decolonization that this contemporary, and now visible, border was first drawn.²⁴ In the colonial era, the provincial border lay further to the west, and both sides of today's border formed part of Uasin Gishu District, which was located on the western end of both the White Highlands and the colonial Rift Valley Province. During the independence

²⁴ The highway does not follow the geopolitical border exactly, but residents of the area use it as such.

negotiations, the Regional Boundaries and Constituencies Delimitation Commission hived off part of the western edge of this district to Kakamega District in Western Province.



Map 3.1 Uasin Gishu-Kakamega Border (Source: Created by the Author, *Google Maps*, https://mapsengine.google.com/map/edit?mid=zg4Z4erbpnwA.k_t9CQ5139mA, May 26, 2014.)

On both sides of this now 50-year old border, the Kenyan state created settlement schemes, also now reaching their 50-year anniversaries. From Nairobi to this part of Kenya is about 215 miles. As one ascends the eastern escarpment of the Rift Valley, suddenly, the dramatic landscape of the valley below comes into view, with Mount Longonot visible in the distance on a clear day. One continues on the highway past small

towns and agricultural land until coming to Nakuru, an old White Highlands trading town which is now the fourth largest urban center in Kenya. After Nakuru, it is still 100 miles before reaching Eldoret, the capital of Uasin Gishu and the fifth largest urban center in Kenya.

From Eldoret to the most eastern of the dissertation case study sites is just another nine miles, and the matatu stop is fittingly called *maili tisa* (mile 9) for this relative distance. *Maili tisa* is an important transit point, since here the Kenya-Uganda highway meets the northward Eldoret-Kitale road. Trucks, matatus, and motorbikes park on the sides of the highway, a string of kiosks sits on the northern side of the road, and hawkers run up to the parked vehicles to sell biscuits, peanuts, cold drinks, and seasonal produce.

To the south of the highway junction is Sosiani, a former settlement scheme. This part of Kenya is dotted with these former settlement schemes. Lumakanda, another settlement scheme, is located on the northern side of the road, just 15 miles to the west. But, Lumakanda and Sosiani feel much further apart. They are separated by the road, by provincial and district borders, by ethnicity, and consequently, by their orientation. While the matatu stop for Sosiani residents is named for its distance from Eldoret, no such marker exists for Lumakanda. Lumakanda residents look towards Kakamega town in the west as their urban center, their capital. Most of their families live in Western Province. Sosiani residents, however, are oriented to the east and the south, to Uasin Gishu, Nandi district, and to Eldoret – where their families and friends live. Sosiani and Lumakanda are separated not just by their short distance, their borders, and the identities of their populace, but also, by the different life histories of their residents.

Though almost all Kenyan communities deeply valued land, they responded to decolonizing land resettlement programs in different ways. Some actively and persistently sought land through the state-sponsored resettlement programs, while others were more reluctant or even uninterested. These ranging responses to land availability emerged from diverse colonial experiences. The communities that had been most dispossessed by European settlers had long anticipated restitution. Labor migrants on colonial farms, too, expected land at independence. Other communities, though, particularly those who had remained in the reserves further away from the highlands, did not envision future settlement for themselves and many had never traveled far from their homes or their communities. These diverse colonial experiences shaped, in some, a fervent desire to migrate and an industriousness in seeking land, and in others, an aversion to migration. Colonial histories did not just affect Kenyan sentiments towards settlement and migration, but they also influenced access to, or exclusion from, settlement programs. Government policy privileged some groups and marginalized others – broadly along the lines of gender, ethnicity, class, and geography. And, on a more micro-political level, the networks of individual prospective settlers also profoundly affected access to land.

The land in the Lumakanda settlement scheme in Kakamega District, Western Province had formerly been part of Uasin Gishu district. Almost all Lumakanda settlers came from Vihiga District originally and identified themselves as Maragoli, a sub-group of the broader Luhya ethnic group.²⁵ Most of these Maragoli settlers had never traveled

²⁵ Aidan Southall, “The Illusion of Tribe,” in *The Passing of Tribal Man in Africa*, ed. Peter Gutkind (Leiden: Brill, 1970). Southall argues that the creation of a Luhya “super tribe” in the 1930s and 1940s was connected to the creation of the colonial administrative framework.

previously and had always lived close to their family.²⁶ Very few had worked as laborers on European farms. These experiences growing up in Vihiga gave rise to a broad Maragoli reluctance to move to the settlement scheme. It was born out of Maragoli fears of leaving the only home they had ever known – what they considered to be their “ancestral land,”²⁷ and the uncertainties about the meanings of independence and the goodwill of the colonial government.

This reluctance to move existed even though Vihiga was an exceptionally overcrowded district. Most families had about one to two acres in Vihiga, and the colonial and independent state created the scheme for the Maragoli to address this problem. Vihiga’s high population density, in a setting where the population was growing rapidly all over Kenya, meant that it was becoming increasingly difficult to make a living from agriculture there.²⁸ Even so, there remained a general disinclination to move. Those Maragoli willing to move to the settlement scheme had an easy time getting a plot in Lumakanda, and many described themselves as “brave” for moving away from their home.

Aside from fears of leaving home, Maragoli heard news about the scheme that deterred them from coming. Alfred Machayo recounted that sometimes the Maragoli chiefs would try to get the village troublemakers to go to the schemes. Chiefs recruited “troublemakers” – such as those who did not pay their taxes – to reduce their administrative problems. But, this recruitment dissuaded the more “suitable” prospective

²⁶ In the neighboring former settlement schemes in Kakamega district, such as Chekalini and Mautuma, other sub-groups of the Luhya – as well as Kikuyu – were settled.

²⁷ Interview with Alfred Machayo, Chekalini, November 1, 2012.

²⁸ Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*, 82. By 1932, the Maragoli population had almost doubled since the start of colonial rule to 590 people per square mile, “making Maragoli one of the most densely populated regions in Africa.” In 1948, the population was estimated to be 750 people per square mile, and it had nearly doubled an additional time to 1271 by 1969.

settlers from accepting these offers of land. When chiefs sent troublemakers, rumors started that schemes were meant for criminals.²⁹ Wilberforce Oyalo, a Settlement Officer in the area, supported this depiction of settlement selection in Vihiga. “We had some people who were picked by chiefs who were not interested in farming, who were not poor, who were not landless. Some were just told this man has been troubling me. Let him go that way and perish there.”³⁰ Machayo, a university-educated Maragoli, recounted that people from his village were very surprised when he bought a settlement plot, since they did not expect successful people to move. He recounted, “People said, ‘How does someone from university go to settlement?’”³¹

Both Machayo and Oyalo remembered that Maragoli had other concerns. They worried they would be closely supervised by the government on settlement farms. This rumor began because communities were organizing new primary education programs at the time, and they were discussing teacher’s work “schemes” (or, schedules). Settlement programs were also called schemes, so prospective settlers became convinced that the government would control their schedule, and they would be told when to wake up, when to milk their cows, when to plant their maize, etc. Maragoli also worried about the land, which they heard was “so bushy,” full of “wild animals,” and difficult to clear.³² Machayo recalled that some settlers even ran away after they arrived for settlement and saw the amount of work it would take to clear the land.³³

²⁹ Interview with Alfred Machayo, Chekalini, November 1, 2012.

³⁰ Interview with Wilberforce Oyalo, Chekalini, January 11, 2013.

³¹ Interview with Alfred Machayo, Chekalini, November 1, 2012.

³² Interview with Deina Iboso, Lumakanda, November 12, 2012; Interview with Muzole Shioani, Lumakanda, November 13, 2012; Interview with Ismael Kagode, Lumakanda, November 12, 2012; Interview with Veronica Masiza, Lumakanda, November 12, 2012; Interview with Fanike Chanzu, Lumakanda, November 9, 2012; Interview with Florence Konyonyi, Lumakanda, November 7, 2012.

³³ Interview with Alfred Machayo, November 1, 2012.

Despite these inhibiting factors, Maragoli did eventually fully settle the scheme in Lumakanda. Machayo noted that, because of the discouragements, there was an initial shortage of applicants and a bit of “persuasion” used to fill the schemes.³⁴ Those interested in settlement interviewed with a committee, which asked prospective settlers about their health, their farming knowledge, and whether they had a wife and family. Most were successful, and on Lumakanda, they received a loan to buy 15 acres, two dairy cattle, maize seeds, and sisal plants.

The Sosiani settlement scheme in Uasin Gishu District, on the Rift Valley Province side of the border, had a very different population of settlers, and a different process for selecting their settlers. Almost all of the settlers in Sosiani had been squatters (resident laborers) on European farms, or their parents had worked for European settlers for at least a few years during colonial rule. Many also had lived in Nandi district. Most had moved around fairly frequently from European farm to European farm, and then sometimes back to Nandi, to other parts of Kenya, or to Uganda or Tanzania when the colonial state restricted squatter cattle ownership. These cattle restrictions coincided with the subdivision and demarcation of communal land in Nandi district, and it left many of those outside of the district dispossessed or without much land. Land poverty amongst the former resident laborers in their “district of origin” prompted these Nandi to seek settlement land. And, former laborers’ experience living in, and traveling around, the White Highlands meant that – unlike the Maragoli – few were reluctant to move.

The process for getting land in Sosiani was also slightly different from that in Lumakanda. Rather than interviewing with a committee, prospective settlers registered

³⁴ Interview with Wilberforce Oyalo, Chekalini, January 11, 2013.

their names with the District Commissioner. Those laborers whose European employer wrote into the Settlement Officer or District Commissioner on behalf of their former employees tended to be privileged. Generally, settlers were chosen through a raffle of the registered names, since there were always far too many applicants. Many people recalled hearing about schemes by word of mouth, but also sometimes through chiefs and *baraza*. The size of land given to individuals in the Sosiani settlement varied much more than in Lumakanda, because of the prevalence of rocky or swampy land. Settlers received a loan to purchase this land along with four dairy cattle. The scheme was originally planned exclusively for dairy, but later, maize was added.

In the years after the introduction of settlement, settlers on the two schemes thought about the significance of receiving land in vastly different terms. The Nandi in Sosiani emphasized a desired “equality” in terms of land distribution much more than the Maragoli. This rhetoric largely derived from feelings of historical injustices and ethnic claims to the land of Uasin Gishu. Nandi, in addition, did not believe that settlement or land ownership in Uasin Gishu had made their lives much better than those of their relatives in Nandi district; those who remained in the former Nandi Native Reserve did not depend on their relatives in Uasin Gishu. This was not the case for settlers in Lumakanda. Almost every Lumakanda settler asserted that they were better off than their families that remained in Vihiga District. The reluctance they had once felt had wholly disappeared with the ownership of their 15 acres and the ability to produce agricultural surpluses. Wilberforce Oyalo summed up this feeling when he said, “Those who came this way [to settlement schemes] are better off than those who remained there [in Vihiga].

If we were here longer, you could see even many people coming from Vihiga for maize. Now we are the feeder of those who remained in Vihiga.”³⁵

One of the main differences between the two sets of settlers was their experience under colonial rule. The majority of the Nandi settlers in Sosiani had worked on European farms, while few Maragoli settlers of Lumakanda had ever left the colonial reserve. These experiences not only shaped families’ willingness to move to a new community, but also the type connection to one’s “home” community – referred to as the Native Reserve, or district of origin depending on the time period and parlance of favor. There had always been more Nandi than Maragoli working in the northwest Rift Valley area of the White Highlands where European settlers grew cereals and kept cattle, simply on account of their proximity. European settlers often sought out the pastoral Kalenjin laborers specifically to take care of cattle, since the majority Kikuyu laborers were thought to be only competent as agriculturalists.

For the Nandi, their colonial history of migration created cleavages within the community. With such a large population of Nandi living outside of the reserve for extended periods of time, distrust and divisions emerged between those who remained and those who worked in the settled areas. In the early 1950s, Nandi in the reserve started transforming communal lands to “individual holdings,” effectively excluding Nandi laborers living elsewhere from land ownership. Nandi in the reserve also created a new inheritance law in 1960 which gave male heads of household sole control over land and inheritance.

³⁵ Interview with Wilberforce Oyalo, Chekalini, January 11, 2013.

When the Nandi in the reserve denied Nandi laborers in the highlands land rights the tension that had recently begun to surface escalated.³⁶ This tension became even more pronounced during decolonization, when land resettlement programs in Uasin Gishu began. Those who had lived in the White Highlands were given preference over those in the reserves, since there were too many applicants. Lessos Settlement Scheme, one of the earliest schemes in the area, for example, had five times more applicants than available plots. The Selection Committee for Lessos thus had agreed that priority should be given to applicants from the Settled Areas. The committee favored these former laborers by skewing the selection point system. All those living in the Settled Areas who obtained 24 or more points out of a maximum of 30 were recommended (10 points each were given for: need for land, farming ability and financial resources). Meanwhile, the Nandi candidates from the reserve were not recommended unless they had 27 points or more.³⁷

A 1961 monthly report on the Lessos scheme illustrates the antagonism developing between the two Nandi groups. The Settlement Officer noted, “Great diplomacy will have to be exercised over the selection of the Nandi from both the Reserve and the settled areas; both sides appear to be watching each other with a wary eye; those in the Reserve feel that if they are not careful, all the plots of the local European settlers will be found plots at their expense, while the latter feel that they have

³⁶ Christopher P. Youe, “Settler Capital and the Assault on the Squatter Peasantry in Kenya’s Uasin Gishu District, 1942-63,” *African Affairs* 87, no. 348 (1988): 401. Youe argues that cattle loaning between friends and relatives, mostly from the reserves to the excess land of the white farms “reinforced ties of friendship” and “established a strong link between the squatters and the reserve political economy.” As will be discussed below, cattle restrictions in the post-WWII era had already begun to damage these bonds.

³⁷ KNA DC/ELD/1/10/9, From Symes-Thompson to the E.O. LDSB, “Lessos Settlement Selection Committee,” 13 November 1961.

very little hope if all the selection is done through the Reserve Location Councils.”³⁸ The two groups had not only grown apart from one another, but they believed they were in competition with one another for resources as a result of living in separate spaces and within separate communities. Additionally, they had access to different nodes of colonial power. Laborers in the highlands often accessed resources through their European employer, while residents of the Nandi reserve accessed resources through local government. The policy about how and where to apply for settlement and about settler selection, then, took on great importance almost everywhere, because it tended to dictate which groups were privileged and which groups were marginalized.

The colonial and independent states, though, never created a uniform policy to clarify these questions. The presence of some Nandi in the settled areas and some in the reserves created confusion about where and to whom to apply. Hopeful settlers were often unsure whether they should send their applications to the District Commissioner of Uasin Gishu, or to the Chief of their location in the reserve. Similarly, both Nandi groups became worried about how the composition of the selection committee would affect their respective chances of being chosen for settlement. Nandi in the reserves unsurprisingly wanted the committee to come from the local government officials in the reserves whereas, conversely, Nandi living in the Settled Areas preferred the selection committee come from the Uasin Gishu officials. A group of farmers in Uasin Gishu wrote to the District Commissioner in 1963 about this concern. “Why the people who need land in the

³⁸ KNA DC/ELD/1/10/9, From Settlement Officer to DCs – Eldoret and Nandi, “Monthly Report on Lessors Peasant Resettlement Schemes,” 2 July 1961.

settlement schemes prepared by the Government are to ask the Chiefs in the reserve instead of the chiefs in the areas concerned?”³⁹

The reason for this concern over where to apply becomes clearer in a letter from the District Commissioner of Kitale to the Provincial Commissioner, Rift Valley Province. “Officers of the Administration are constantly being approached by unemployed, and they complain that it is useless to apply to the District Commissioners of their District of origin, as they are not known there, and no one will speak for them when their applications come before the selection boards. They claim that only applicants in reserves, who are known to local officials have chances of being selected for a plot.”⁴⁰ Though the government had created a points system based upon a specific set of requirements, prospective settlers still depended upon personal relationships to get themselves selected for a scheme. This was particularly the case in areas where there was a continual overabundance of applicants, such as the area bordering Nandi and Uasin Gishu districts.

This setting was further complicated by the multiple historical migrations of many Nandi families. Portions of Nandi laborers had begun moving off European farms to other parts of Kenya, to Uganda, and to Tanzania after the local governments of the Scheduled Areas instituted squatter cattle-holding restrictions. Prior to these restrictions, Nandi squatters were grazing at least 150,000 cattle or 40 percent of all cattle in Uasin Gishu. After the Great Depression, however, low cereal prices prompted white farmers to

³⁹ KNA DC/ELD/1/10/9, From Peter Nabichenje (Hoey’s Bridge) to the DC UG, “Questions,” 19 February 1963.

⁴⁰ KNA DC/ELD/1/10/9, From P. Shiyukah, DC Kitale to PC RVP, “Settlement Schemes for Tribes other than Kikuyu,” 22 February 1963.

shift to stock-farming and, consequently, to regulate Nandi cattle-holding.⁴¹ Nandi were unwilling to abide by these laws, and many left European farms after the cattle restrictions were enacted. In Uasin Gishu, as in other parts of the White Highlands, the County Council Resident Labourers Order of 1953 limited the number of squatter stock and required all stock to be kept within a fenced enclosure. Many Nandi continued to illegally hold excess squatter stock but, in 1957, “an intensive drive was launched to enforce the law,” and the Resident Labour Inspectorate impounded 5,374 cattle and 4,282 sheep.⁴²

Under these circumstances, many Nandi families made the decision to move elsewhere rather than continue working on European farms.⁴³ Former laborers in Uasin Gishu recounted moving to Uganda, Tanzania, and to other parts of Kenya outside the White Highlands – sometimes back to Nandi Reserve, sometimes further West to present-day Kakamega District, and sometimes to Maasai areas to the southeast where there was more land available for grazing – to avoid these cattle restrictions. Eunice Tele Maiyo, a Leseru resident whose family had migrated to Uganda when she was a small girl, remembered, “Uganda was a good place, a nice place to live. People acquired more wealth there. They had many cattle. Were it not for the Karamojong people who were fighting us, we would have stayed even to date in Uganda.”⁴⁴ Many had similar

⁴¹ Youe, “Settler Capital,” 400, 402.

⁴² KNA AB/12/15, “Uasin Gishu County Council. Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Uasin Gishu District Council 1957.”

⁴³ Youe, “Settler Capital,” 401. Cattle were “a source of wealth and status” for the Nandi. Myrtle S. Langley, *The Nandi of Kenya: Life Crisis Rituals in a Period of Change* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1979), 5. Langley argued that, into 1979, Nandi life continued to center “in their cattle which remain a major form of wealth. Consequently cattle and related objects have strong ritual value.”

⁴⁴ Interview with Eunice Tele Maiyo, Leseru, January 9, 2013.

memories, both of leaving on account of restrictive colonial laws, and also, of the advantages of living in Uganda rather than Kenya.

Ruth Malakwen Cheptekeney's life history provides an example of the multiple migrations taken by some Nandi families during the early and mid 20th century. Cheptekeney's parents left Uasin Gishu for Uganda when she was a young girl, about eight years old, because of the cattle restrictions. They stayed in Uganda until she was "grown." In the late 1950s, she accompanied her uncles to the Masinde border in Uganda. In 1960, Cheptekeney and her family migrated again within Uganda to Kasese, because their home had flooded. They stayed in Kasese until about 1969, and then they moved back to Kenya, because of the "fight between Amin and Obote."⁴⁵ Cheptekeney's family then moved to Toro, Trans Nzoia District, in the Rift Valley Province, because they had relatives who told them about a rumor that a European farmer would be leaving soon.⁴⁶ While Cheptekeney's specific life history is singular, it paralleled many Nandi informants' stories of multiple migrations.

These experiences of constant migration produced feelings of displacement, and a detachment from the Nandi reserve and the communities there.⁴⁷ The divergent experiences of Nandi communities in the reserve and Nandi outside of the reserve, in combination with anxieties over competition for the land after independence, produced ill will between the two communities. This particular social tension did not exist among the much more sedentary Maragoli, who had less experience migrating outside their district

⁴⁵ Kenyans in Uganda were increasingly treated as threats in the early years of independence. They were removed en masse from Uganda in 1969.

⁴⁶ Interview with Ruth Malakwen Cheptekeney, Leseru, January 9, 2013.

⁴⁷ Berry, *Cocoa, Custom, and Socio-Economic Change in Rural Western Nigeria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); Berry, *Fathers Work for Their Sons*. This finding departs from Berry's argument that group ties to hometown remained important.

in the colonial era. The different colonial histories of the Nandi and the Maragoli, then, meant that the Nandi eyed Uasin Gishu anxiously and worried about competition for gaining access to the land while simultaneously believing in their rights to that land. The Maragoli also had anxieties, but of a different sort. They worried about leaving their homes and communities and traveling to a bushy place full of animals that they “did not know.” As a result, there were too many Nandi applicants for resettlement and not enough Maragolis or Luhyas, and both thought about settlement differently.⁴⁸

The Maragoli and Nandi experience in settlement still varied dramatically. Because the Maragolis had so few expectations for land and resettlement at independence, they were extremely grateful for the land they received, and when they compared themselves to their relatives who had remained in Vihiga District, they could clearly see the improvements to their lives. The Nandi, on the other hand, like many within the Rift Valley, had long deeply connected independence to land redistribution, and thus, expected to get land. Further, they made historical claims to the land in Uasin Gishu, and those who had labored on European farms in the district felt a greater justification for being chosen as settlers in that area.

FROM SUBJECT TO SETTLER

The Region and District governments originally had responsibility for the selection of African settlers, since the independence negotiations had codified a federal structure where regions largely controlled land. Local committees first approved

⁴⁸ This is not to suggest that there were not feelings of competition between Maragoli and Nandi, but rather, to emphasize that intra-group dynamics differed between the Maragoli and the Nandi.

settlement, and then the president of the Regional Assembly had to approve the choices of the local committees.⁴⁹

The Million Acre scheme created two broad classes of applicants, those with “farming experience” and managerial capacity, and those in need of land. The first were called yeoman farmers and the second were called peasant settlers. There were two primary qualifications for Yeoman settlers: farming experience or capacity, and capital. Yeoman farmers were required to demonstrate managerial experience and the ability to run a large farm. They also needed about £500 in capital for the down payment.⁵⁰ The peasant settlers were required to be landless or to have “inadequate” land. The word landless could, however, be construed to “cover persons with an uneconomic sized holding.”⁵¹ In addition, a government report noted, “Peasant settlers will be expected to be able to provide their own working capital, and, in practice, it would be desirable for them to have at least £50 available.”⁵² Policymakers planned for the yeoman holdings to be, on average, about 50 acres, and for the peasant holdings to be about 15 acres.

Originally, the colonial state was reluctant to resettle laborers on the farm on which they resided, because it might “create an impression that each European farm is to be divided amongst the employees of that farm, and would lead to a deterioration in labour relationships on farms not being acquired for settlement.”⁵³ By 1964, though, the selection of settlers had become a Central Government responsibility and the policy on the selection of settlers had been reversed so that it was compulsorily “non-tribal.”

⁴⁹ KNA BN/81/168, From T.W. Morgan, Ag. S.A.O., “Selection of Settlers,” 27 June 1963.

⁵⁰ KNA JA/31/7, “A Project for Agricultural Settlement Schemes in Scheduled Areas of Kenya.”

⁵¹ KNA DC/ELD/1/10/9, From TA Watts, Chief Executive Officer to DC, Nandi, “Smallholder Settlement Scheme – Lessos,” 9 August 1961.

⁵² KNA JA/31/7, “A Project for Agricultural Settlement Schemes in Scheduled Areas of Kenya.”

⁵³ Ibid.

Rather, squatters and resident laborers were given priority. In the years which had passed, however, much of the Million Acre Scheme resettlement had already been completed and many settlers had been chosen.

The capital required of settlers, and thus the selection of settlers, varied dramatically based on the funding source for the settlement scheme. The two largest funders – the British Government and the World Bank – had different requirements. The World Bank required that peasants have £100-150 cash (which could include the 10 percent deposit on land and legal fees), and they required that yeoman farmers have £500-700 cash.⁵⁴ This large deposit excluded most rural Kenyans from applying to World Bank funded schemes. These requirements made the prospect of a true “peasant” scheme funded by the World Bank impossible, since almost no poor farmers possessed the required capital.

Since some of the required deposits were so high, networks of support became extremely important for the landless to access settlement. Many settlers recounted spending time living with relatives who gave them an acre to plant, space to graze their cattle, and a home for years at a time, while they waited either to be chosen for settlement or to save a down payment for settlement. Some had relatives who informed them about available land or sellers in their area. Others gained access to land if they had a relative who was a chief.⁵⁵ Alfred Machayo, an agricultural official in the independent Kenyan government, remembered that settlers often had to be sponsored by their relatives in order

⁵⁴ KNA DC/ELD/1/10/9, From J.S. Rowlands for Director of Settlement to SSO's, "Selection of Smallholders," 23 January 1963.

⁵⁵ Berry, *No Condition Is Permanent*. Berry has shown the continuing importance of patron-client relationships in land access in Africa.

to come up with enough money.⁵⁶ Members of the Kenyan government realized the difficulty settlers had in accumulating the down payment. At a Ministry of Lands and Settlement meeting in 1963, “The Minister for Justice said that he did not see how the proposals in the memorandum would assist towards the alleviation of unemployment, since no landless and unemployed person could possibly find a sum as large as £25.”⁵⁷

Former European farm laborers’ ability to be chosen as a settler also depended a great deal on their employer. Laborers’ chances for land depended upon, first, whether or not their employer was leaving Kenya and selling their land. If so, laborers’ likelihood of being selected for settlement was shaped by whether their former employer was selling his/her land to an individual buyer or to the Kenyan government. If a European farmer sold their farm privately, it often displaced the labor. Conversely, if a European farmer was bought out by the government, the labour was often privileged first for settlement. Farm laborers’ probability of selection also depended on whether their European employers recommended them to the settlement officers and district officials who chose the settlers. The kindness of European farmers affected access to land settlement; departing Europeans often had the ability to give their laborers a better chance at settlement. For example, the District Commissioner of Kiambu replied to a letter from a European Settler, “Mrs. Barrow”: “I thank you for your letter of the 12th August in which you wrote about land for your two employees. I have made a note of their names, and I

⁵⁶ Interview with Alfred Machayo, Chekalini, November 1, 2012.

⁵⁷ KNA BN/81/168, From The Secretary to the Cabinet to the Permanent Secretary for Lands and the Permanent Secretary for Labour, “Selection of Settlers on High Density Schemes - Action Extract from the Minutes of the 4th Meeting,” 3 July 1963.

will try and fix them up on a suitable settlement scheme in due course.”⁵⁸ These recommendations helped a great deal, though they did not guarantee settlement.

The policy process for selecting settlers and advertising schemes contained further discriminatory practices. Each settlement scheme was separately advertised, often in pamphlets, on the radio, and in the newspaper. Most Kenyans did not have access to these sources of news, though, and the majority of informants remembered hearing about settlement through *baraza*, from their chiefs, or from “advocates” (lawyers).⁵⁹ After a scheme had been advertised, aspiring settlers had to apply, either in person or through a written application form. Those who applied incorrectly were not considered. After the closing date, a selection committee (the composition changed over time, and depending on the region), would choose the settlers for the scheme.⁶⁰

Yeoman Farmer Scheme (funded by the World Bank) applicants often applied to Senior Settlement Officers who examined candidates’ financial resources with agricultural officers. Then, these officers passed the names of successful candidates on to the District Commissioners for ratification. For peasant schemes, Kenyans often applied to District Commissioners who then submitted their names with the help of Selection Committees. Those applicants residing in Scheduled Areas (European Highlands) applied to their District Commissioner and District Agricultural Officer, while those applicants in the Non-Scheduled Areas applied through their Divisional District Officer to the District Agricultural Committee, and their applications were then channeled to the Selection Committee through the Executive of the Provincial Agricultural Committee of the

⁵⁸ KNA DC/ELD/1/10/3, From WBG Raynor, DC Kiambu to Mrs. Barrow, “Applications for Land “ 15 August 1962.

⁵⁹ KNA DC/ELD/1/10/9, Land: Land Tenure: Small Farm Settlement in Highlands (Lessos).

⁶⁰ KNA DC/ELD/1/10/9, Land: Land Tenure: Small Farm Settlement in Highlands (Lessos).

province in which the scheme was located.⁶¹ All the way into 1965, four years after the start of settlement, this procedure was not fully standardized.⁶²

This complicated process became more standardized over time, often through trial and error. Nandi District officials required, for example, that letters of application include: the name, address, and occupation of the applicant as well as the father's name, location, and *kokwet* (neighborhood in Nandi), age, marital status, number of children, full details of previous career and farming experience, details of all land, cattle and money in possession of applicant, and if the applicant was unable to live on the scheme, information about what arrangements he would make for managing the holding.⁶³

This process privileged those who were educated and who possessed good familial and political networks that gave them access to power. Kenyans who did not know how to read or write met challenges, as did Kenyans without brokers who could help them navigate this complicated process. Further, the lack of uniformity in the selection of settlers opened up avenues for corruption and favoritism amongst selection committees.

The selection process was not only prone to "corruption" on an individual basis, but also subject to ethnic favoritism. P.J. Gachati, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Lands and Settlement, noted in 1964 that some Region Presidents allocated settlement scheme plots "on a completely tribal basis in areas where the existing resident labour force is composed of people of varying tribes, so that members of those tribes not eligible

⁶¹ KNA JA/31/7, "A Project for Agricultural Settlement Schemes in the Scheduled Areas of Kenya."

⁶² KNA AVS/3/69, From P. Shiyukah, PS Ministry of Lands and Settlement to PCs, "Selection of Settlers," 2 February 1965.

⁶³ KNA DC/ELD/1/10/9, From RH Symes-Thompson, DC Nandi, "Lessos Settlement Scheme," 11 November, 1961.

for settlement scheme plots under the Regional Selection Policy have been forced into the position of illegal squatters.” It was supposedly on account of the problems caused by this “tribal favoritism,” that the government reversed its policy on settling existing laborers “in the interests of the economy and the security of the country.”⁶⁴ Squatters and laborers were given priority for settlement in 1964, as mentioned above. This change did not, however, end corruption, dissatisfaction with the selection process, or the unequal distribution of land through settlement.

In fact, less than a month after the Permanent Secretary’s circular about the change in prioritization of settlers, the Regional Government Agent in Western Province noted that this new policy would mean “in some settlement schemes, that no local people can obtain plots.” He added, further, “It is a well known fact that the majority of farm labour displaced by settlement schemes are aliens within the Region in which the farm is situated. If such aliens are to be given priority for plots this will virtually exclude indigenous inhabitants of the Region from obtaining plots. One can imagine the feelings, say of the Abaluhya if all the land for Western Region settlement schemes had to be allocated to Nandi and Kikuyu.”⁶⁵ The new prioritization of laborers still raised questions about ethnic preferential treatment, particularly of the Kikuyu, who formed the majority of former laborers on European farms. The Regional Government Agent went on to accuse the government explicitly of this unjustness. “I should like to take this opportunity to point out that as far as settlement schemes in Central Region are concerned, settlement selection has so far been entirely on a tribal basis, contrary to Section 219 of the

⁶⁴ KNA DX/21/10/10, From P.J. Gachati, PS Ministry of Lands and Settlement to Civil Secretaries, Nyeri, Nakuru, Kakamega, Kisumu, Embu, “Selection of Settlers for Land Purchase for Settlement,” 8 May 1964.

⁶⁵ KNA DX/21/10/10, From Regional Government Agent, Kakamega to the CS Western Region, “Selection of Settlers – Land Purchased for Settlement,” 16 June 1964.

Constitution. It would seem that there is to be one law for the Kikuyu and another one for the rest of the country...”⁶⁶ There was a widespread feeling in the Rift Valley that outsiders – particularly Kikuyu – were favored to the detriment of groups claiming autochthony, and that Kikuyu additionally monopolized settlement in their own “home area” of Central Province.⁶⁷

The selection process was further complicated by the fact that it was carried out differently in different regions and for different ethnic groups. Sometimes selection was made by ballot, sometimes by drawing names out of a hat, and sometimes simply through a selection committee (this was the main form of choosing candidates in the Rift Valley). In this complex setting, different ethnic groups had varying amounts of landed poverty, and made varying types of claims to land. The Kikuyu had the greatest amount of landed poverty, the greatest number applying for land-holdings, and the greatest number who qualified to be privileged under the four year rule.⁶⁸ In some instances, however, the government made exceptions to broader policy in order to balance out perceived inequalities emerging from the privileging of certain ethnic groups, or of laborers. A Memo from the Permanent Secretary for Lands and Settlement noted, for example, “Four year qualifiers previously employed on farms bought for the settlement of their own tribe will continue to be given priority in settlement except in the case of Kalenjin...”⁶⁹

⁶⁶ KNA DX/21/10/10, From Regional Government Agent, Kakamega to the CS Western Region, “Selection of Settlers – Land Purchased for Settlement,” 16 June 1964.

⁶⁷ These feelings were further inflamed by the Kikuyu dominance in government. With Jomo Kenyatta as president, many Kenyans felt that their ethnic groups and communities were underrepresented, and they worried about the implications.

⁶⁸ KNA BN/81/168, From R.E. Wainwright, Chief Commissioner of Ministry of Home Affairs to Office of the Prime Minister and Ministry of Lands and Settlement, “Selection of Settlers on High Density Schemes,” 1 July 1963.

⁶⁹ KNA BN/81/168, Memo from N.S. Carey Jones, Permanent Secretary for Lands and Settlement, “Selection of Settlers for Central Land Board Schemes.”

The original selection of settlers on an ethnic basis contributed to a context in which traditional and historical claims for land by whole “tribes” occurred frequently. The Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Water Resources wrote in 1960 that “In general the tribes are not hard pressed for land but Nandi and Elgeyo would undoubtedly press traditional claims. Quite a big area of farms could be considered in the Turbo-Kipkarren-Kaimosi area and would be better used for resettlement of North Nyanza tribes than Nandi.”⁷⁰ Even if the “North Nyanza tribes” (Luhyas) needed the land in the area more, the Nandi believed they had better justification for making claims to this land – as an ethnic group – based upon their history. The colonial and independent states worried about the political and security implications if these claims were not acceded to, and created “political gestures” to give these groups symbolic pieces of land, and to appease their historical claim-making.⁷¹ This messy context, in which individuals and groups gained access to resources through a range of factors – ethnicity, labor history, and networks – did little to produce confidence in the system, or to create an atmosphere of fairness.

The land resettlement policy was not only complicated and changing, but it was also unprecedented and being carried out in a context with a poor communication infrastructure. This led to “rumours of all sorts” about the ways in which families could secure settlement. The monthly report from the Settlement Officer of Lessos recounted

⁷⁰ KNA BN/81/144, Secret file from Ag. P.S./A.W.R., Subject: Land Policy in the Scheduled Areas, 14 June 1960.

⁷¹ KNA BN/81/106, (Sgd) W.F. Coutts, Acting Governor to MAWR, “Kalenjin Land,” 23 December 1960.

that the newest rumor was that squatters on settlement land believed that if they did not leave their homes when the selected settlers arrived, they would get to keep the land.⁷² The District Commissioner of Uasin Gishu wrote to the Settlement Officer in early 1963 about the opposite problem, that “a number of Tugen who reported to the scheme and were accepted have since disappeared and done nothing to their holdings.”⁷³ The government’s response was to attempt to “hustle” these rogue settlers back, or to replace them.⁷⁴ Either way, the absence of selected settlers further burdened an already overburdened set of government officials. At other times, no applicants showed up for selection. The Settlement Officer for the Lessos scheme reported that “only two Nandi, claiming to be from the MacGregor farm, turned up to go before the Selection Committees. Neither of these men had any means of identification on them. They were accordingly, not considered for selection and no Nandi from the MacGregor farm has been seen on the Settlement since then.”⁷⁵ Settlement officials had to contend with a whole constellation of complicating, and unforeseen, challenges.

The confusion growing out of different policies for settled areas and reserves, the change in policy over how settlers were chosen, the lack of uniformity, the lack of clear communication, and the rumors were further compounded by the lack of supervision over officials and the elite. These people, ranging from officers in the Ministry of Agriculture, to members of the Regional and Provincial Assemblies, to officers in Lands and Settlement, to European settlers, to elite Kenyans, were all able to shape the selection of

⁷² KNA DC/ELD/1/10/9, From Bevan (SO Lessos) to CEO LDSB, “Monthly Report for the Lessos Small Holders Settlement Schemes,” 2 August 1961.

⁷³ KNA BN/81/46, From J.G. Mackley DC UG to the Settlement Officer, “Tugen Settlers,” 12 January 1963.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ KNA BN/81/46, From SO Lessos to The Field Agent, Nakuru Agricultural Committee, “Nandi; MacGregor Farm; Timboroa,” 13 February 1963.

settlers and the ways in which settlement policies were instituted on the ground without much oversight. A letter from A.W. Butti, Acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Land and Settlement to the President of Nyanza Region in 1964, demonstrates the amount of autonomy these individuals had. He wrote:

You will remember that when we visited Mariam Mitinda's 3 acre farm in Nyabondo, the Minister undertook with your agreement to find a place on one of the settlement schemes in your Region for Johana Mitinda and Joseph Ojera. I need not go into the details of how you and the Minister were impressed about these two and also how everyone else during the tour felt they really deserved a holding and that Mariam Mitinda and her three sons were an excellent example to everyone. The Minister kindly requests that they be selected for the Muhoroni High Density Scheme, and included on your list of settlers on the scheme.⁷⁶

While it is difficult to know the context surrounding this correspondence, it is clear that the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Land and Settlement expected his request to result in land. The entire request could have been highly orchestrated – the visit to an impressive farm, the sons in need of land, the availability of land on a scheme they were eligible for. Whether or not this was the case in this instance, it demonstrates the ways in which settlement could so easily be remade on the ground, even if there had been a clear and uniform policy for selecting settlers. This case was not an exception and was actually a more subtle type of corruption than that which often occurred.

That officials and elites could get around government guidelines and use their own “discretion” became clear early on and subsets of the Kenyan population who were supposed to be excluded from settlement schemes were being settled frequently. This was demonstrated particularly through absentee land ownership, through the settlement of individuals with other landholdings on schemes meant for peasants who were landless,

⁷⁶ KNA BN/81/168, Letter from A.W. Butti, Ag. Permanent Secretary Ministry of Land and Settlement, to the President, Nyanza Region, “Selection of Settlers,” 30 January 1964.

and most broadly, through the settlement of African elites. Phillip Ndegwa wrote for the Permanent Secretary for Lands and Settlement that “it has become evident to me that there are many individuals in the Settlement Schemes still owning their former holdings in their home areas.”⁷⁷ This was consequential as the major priority of peasant schemes was to ameliorate land poverty and defuse the tensions arising out of it. Ndegwa added, “If the practice is widespread (as I suppose it is) it will tend to defeat one of the purposes of Settlement Schemes, i.e. the alleviation of population pressure in the small farm areas.”⁷⁸

There were a range of practices of corruption in the selection of settlers. Familial, ethnic, and political networks, especially, gave some Kenyans better access to land, whether or not they qualified under the complicated and changing legislation. Government correspondence in 1965 noted that “persons who do not qualify, in accordance with the Government’s ruling, to be considered for the schemes, have already been allocated plots, e.g. Chiefs, Sub-Chiefs, Teachers, County Councillors etc.”⁷⁹ The District Commissioner of Kakamega noted, similarly, that “selection of Settlers up to the moment has not been free of Political and Parochial interests, and as a result, the Administration has been put into a very difficult situation in its endeavour to execute some of the decisions reached by the Selection Committees.”⁸⁰

The Selection Committees were not the only group guilty of making unfair decisions with political and parochial interests in mind. Central government officials

⁷⁷ KNA BN/81/168, From Philip Ndegwa (for Permanent Secretary) to P. Shiyuka, Ministry of Land and Settlement, “Land Holdings of Settlement Farmers in their Former Areas,” 6 January 1966.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ KNA DX/21/10/10, From P. Shiyukah, PS Ministry of Lands and Settlement to PCs, “Selection of Farmers to Settlement Schemes,” 4th February, 1965.

⁸⁰ KNA DX/21/10/10, From Daniel G. Kimani, DC Kakamega to PC Kakamega, “Selection of Settlers,” 10 February 1965.

often called in individual favors to local government bodies. The District Commissioner of Kakamega reported the occurrence of “the allocation of plots to prominent persons” in the Lugari Settlement Scheme. He noted that “not only had we got instructions from Nairobi asking us to allocate plots to individuals, but some prominent persons make their way to the Settlement Offices in Lugari and Nzoia and indicate plots that they want allocated to themselves.”⁸¹

Committees mishandled settler selection, and the political elite pressured local government and settlement officers, at times. There were also occasions when a single member of the Selection Committee co-opted the entire process of selection and allocation. In Western Province, the Provincial Commissioner noted in correspondence, “It would appear that instead of a properly constituted selection committee doing the job, Mr. Peter Sifuma is doing it single handed.”⁸² According to the Provincial Commissioner, Mr. Sifuma selected settlers improperly, and he also allocated the plots corruptly. The Western Provincial Commissioner noted in the same letter that, though allocation was supposed to be done through a drawing, that a single individual was “picking chosen plots for his favoured applicants.”⁸³

Individual greed and corruption in selection of settlers and allocation of plots tended to marginalize the already marginalized and favor the already favored. The legislation itself was also flawed. The requirements of financiers – particularly, the World Bank and the UK government – for a prohibitively high down payment precluded many of the poor and the landless from qualifying for settlement. In absence of the down

⁸¹ KNA DX/21/10/10, From DC Kakamega to PC Western, “Lugari Settlement Scheme,” 26th July, 1966.

⁸² KNA DX/21/10/10, From SK Karimi, for PC Western, to the Chairman, Western Provincial Advisory Council, 12 May 1965.

⁸³ Ibid.

payment, poor Kenyans attempted to purchase farms through illegal partnerships. Settlement officers wrote about the prevalence of “shadow partners.” These partnerships came together when wealthier applicants wanted to purchase large-scale farms, but did not have the 50 percent down-payment. As a Central Agricultural Board paper noted, “This, in turn, attracts persons wishing to buy such farms to collect contributions from ‘shadow’ partners, although, in effect, only the true purchaser is eventually registered as the proprietor of the farm.”⁸⁴ The wealthier owners often deceived their poorer shadow partners, eventually expelling these partners from land they thought they owned. The shadow partners had no legal right to the land they contributed money towards purchasing, since they were not listed on the title deed. The settlement policy which disqualified many poor Kenyans played a role in pushing them to seek other opportunities for land, and thus, into this position of further dispossession.

Additionally, the original government policy organized settlement schemes around ethnicity. This policy summarily barred the large population of Kikuyu laborers in the Rift Valley from settlement there. Kikuyu had a long history of leaving their small and overcrowded Native Reserves in Central Province both to work in Nairobi and to work on European farms, many of which were located in Rift Valley Province. Many Kikuyu families had not lived in Central Province for generations. But, the architects of Kenyan settlement initially assumed the maintenance of native reserves. Resettlement schemes were directed towards specific ethnic groups and placed on the edges of the former Native Reserves, as “tribal overspill areas.”⁸⁵ Under this policy, Kikuyu –

⁸⁴ KNA AVS/3/69, “C.A.B. Paper No. 133: AFC Loan Deposits,” 31 March 1970.

⁸⁵ Hans Ruthenberg, *African Agricultural Production Development Policy in Kenya, 1952-1965* (Berlin: Springer, 1966), 72.

especially those in the Upper Rift, the northwest portion of Rift Valley Province which lay furthest away from their own native reserve – did not have access to settlement in that area. This quickly became a problem of great proportion, and the state created “Emergency Settlements,” or “Transit Farms” to house Kikuyu agricultural laborers. The “Emergency Settlements” or “Transit Farms” were intended to provide short-term homes for laborers whose employers had been bought out by the Central Land Board but were not eligible for settlement. Kikuyu started being routed to transit schemes as early as 1962, and the government also attempted to persuade some of them to settle in Tanzania, particularly on the Mpanda Settlement Scheme.⁸⁶

These transit schemes often served as homes for periods longer than intended. Transit schemes did not provide a direct pipeline to settlement schemes, and for those lucky enough to eventually get settlement allocations, those allocations often did not come quickly. Many Kikuyu families in transit schemes were unwilling to go to Tanzania; they preferred to wait for the settlement they expected to receive. Oftentimes, three years later, rather than a few months later, they found themselves still living in terrible conditions in the transit schemes. The Provincial Commissioner of the Rift Valley noted about the notorious Bahati Transit Farm in 1965, “The original idea was that either employment or settlement plots would be found for them, but so far nothing has been done and they are very unhappy...They are so frustrated that they do nothing but hold meetings each day...”⁸⁷ Perhaps not a great deal of emphasis can be put on a matter of semantics, but those living on transit farms were referred to as “inmates.” These

⁸⁶ KNA DC/ELD/1/10/3, From JAH Wolff, PC RVP to the DC, Nandi, “Kikuyu in Nandi District,” 4 June 1962.

⁸⁷ KNA BN/81/46, Letter from Ag. PC RVP to the Permanent Secretary, MLS, “Bahati Transit Farm,” 8 February 1965.

“inmates” were frequently displaced for years at a time in camps, while others were forced back to a native reserve that had never been their home. It was the ethnic strictures of the initial settlement policy that necessitated the creation of these transit schemes and that displaced large portions of agricultural laborers in the highlands.

The conclusion of the first funding period gave the Kenyan state greater flexibility with the creation of settlement schemes and the selection of settlers. It was not just that the earliest land resettlement policy carried strict guidelines about the ethnicity and background of the prospective settlers, but it was also founded upon very specific agricultural economic principles stipulated by funders. After the end of the Million Acre Scheme, however, many of the funding institutions and bilateral donors either ended their funding or curtailed it dramatically.

As the Million Acre Scheme was coming to a close, in January 1965, then U.K. Minister for Overseas Development, Barbara Castle, M.P. appointed a mission to advise on Kenyan proposals for a further transfer of European farms in Kenya. The Stamp Mission’s findings signaled a changed British attitude on settlement policy. The Mission found that the transfer of land ownership did not in and of itself make a positive contribution to economic development, and the Kenyan economy was mired in major economic problems that could not be solved by land transfer.⁸⁸ The mission recommended the continuation of a program of land purchase, “but at a much reduced level.”⁸⁹ The mission also recommended a pause in settlement for two years, since the high density settlement schemes had not been profitable enough to be self-sustaining for

⁸⁸ KNA BN/81/24, Statement by Rt. Hon. Barbara Castle, MP, Minister of Overseas Development, “For the Record,” British Information Services, 19 November 1965.

⁸⁹ KNA BN/81/24, British Information Services, Statement by Rt. Hon. Barbara Castle, MP, Minister of Overseas Development, “For the Record: The Stamp Mission,” 19 November, 1965.

the Kenyan economy. The British offered further assistance, but this assistance was of a very different sort than that first offered by the British before independence under the Million Acre Scheme. Colin Leys summed up the Stamp mission: “The basic position of the mission was that the Kenya government’s proposals (which in their final form called for nearly £35 million of British aid to be spent on land transfer over fifteen years) would ‘saddle Kenya with a heavy debt burden and the UK with a heavy aid commitment for little economic advantage, in order to relieve political pressures which should be tackled in other ways.’”⁹⁰

Kenya continued to receive British aid then, but on very different terms. The British no longer wanted to support the high density settlement schemes, but rather, specified that their aid would support low-density schemes, technical assistance, and development projects. The British also emphasized that more land transfer should take place as direct transfers outside of schemes to African farmers who already had money, or who could obtain a loan as an individual to purchase land. The Kenyan government, for its part, was unwilling to wholly accept the Stamp Mission Report as it was. They had very little bargaining power, however, and generally had to agree to the recommendations in the absence of other sources for funding.

In some ways, these changes to settlement financing gave the Kenyan government more autonomy to create different types of programs, geared towards populations that had been excluded by UK and World Bank-funded schemes. In 1971, the Kenyan government began the Shirika settlement program to create large scale cooperative farms. The British were unenthusiastic about the Shirika program on account of its “socialist”

⁹⁰ Colin Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-colonialism, 1964-1971* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 86.

principles. This program signified the amendment of the broader ideas upon which settlement was founded, since cooperative marketing had always been an important aspect of settlement (see Chapter 4), but not necessarily cooperative ownership. The Shirika farms were to be managed by Africans, who would be paid by cooperative members as part of their dues, and the members were to be “drawn from the large number of landless, unemployed and destitute *wananchi* (citizens).”⁹¹ The program was largely unsuccessful, as the cooperatives were plagued by corruption and mismanagement, much like the marketing cooperatives (see Chapter 4).

The Kenyan government also created Haraka Settlement Schemes in the early 1970s, another indicator of changing policy on land settlement. The Haraka schemes settled 14,000 landless people on 37 schemes, composed of very small farms – about 1 hectare or 2 ½ acres – and were meant specifically for squatters. The Haraka scheme was conceptualized as a way of quickly resettling ex-European farm labour. Both the Shirika and Haraka settlement schemes demonstrated the ways in which the Kenyan state attempted to balance the demands placed upon them by the landless, with their financial constrictions emerging from their indebtedness and the unwillingness of most donors to fund these less conventional settlement programs.

NOT JUST LAND: BUREAUCRACY AND EXTENSION SERVICES

The creation of land settlement schemes required intensive planning, not simply within the agricultural sector. It required the production of a not wholly new, but certainly greatly enlarged, bureaucratic structure to execute this program. This bureaucratic structure entailed the creation of various institutions to, first, value, negotiate

⁹¹ KNA TR/29/5, Settlement Fund Trustees, “The Shirika Settlement Programme” [undated].

and purchase land. Then, to survey and subdivide the land. Then, to choose settlers, and settle them. But, settlement was only the beginning of this program. From there, the government provided support to settlers in building new villages and infrastructure, in agricultural and veterinary extension services, and in settlers' marketing and financial stability.

Land resettlement set in motion major social changes, as tens of thousands of people were moved to different parts of the country to form new communities. These new communities had few or no resources for their settlement villages. There were few roads, few bore holes. There were frequently no schools or health centers. Often these services did not arrive for years on end. Settlers had to clear their land, build their homes, build their villages and markets, their roads, schools, and health centers, all with new neighbors that they had just recently met. This type of settlement experience was largely inescapable, since most schemes involved the sub-dividing of European farms, which only possessed the accompanying resources for a single family, not an entire community. The planning for settlement required a whole constellation of policies, some of which has been discussed above – the selection of settlers and the general creation of schemes of different sizes to suit farmers with different abilities, experiences, and capital.

Planning for settlement involved a great deal more than this, however. It was both a social engineering project, and a whole series of programs aimed at maximum output and economic efficiency, balanced by political motivations. The Kenyan government created these programs with the World Bank and the British government to further expand Kenya's agricultural economy and to quell the rural unrest of the landless, but they also created these programs with the belief that the success of these programs

depended not just on the settlement of African farmers on fertile land, but also on a whole series of other factors. The planning and budgeting encompassed a sub-series of “development” programs and services to create these new villages and to aid new farmers. These programs varied from public health sanitation planning through the placement of pit latrines to compulsory cattle dipping through veterinary extension services. The success of new settlement programs also depended on debt collections (mostly, for land and development loans), sometimes handled by Settlement Officers but more often handled by cooperative marketing societies on settlement schemes. In many cases, land purchase represented the least expensive aspect of resettlement. The administrative costs of implementing the series of development programs that went along with settlement were extremely high. Settlement, in short, involved much more than the transferring of land from Europeans to Africans.

These connected policies were integral to achieving the goals of settlement, but their conceptualization was often misguided. Just as the land transfer was founded upon a specific set of European economic principles, so too were the coinciding policies of settlement development programs based on a similar set of assumptions. And, just as the selection of settlers and the land allocations met with unpredicted challenges, so too did the extensions services of settlement rarely work as envisioned by planners.

The first step of government planning for settlement involved the subdividing of European farms, which required surveying, budgeting, and town planning. The government generally planned one village per 10,000 acres (about 15 square miles). This planning assumed average sized plots of about 20 acres and an estimated population of 4,000 per village. The village itself was usually about 30 acres and planners demarcated

spaces for markets, shops, a school, housing, police, and the town layout also included planning for water supplies and drainage.⁹² The village site was set apart during the planning but, frequently, years passed before a community or the government built even the most fundamental institutions of a village – the schools or health centers, for example.

Budgeting for individual agricultural holdings was another essential part of settlement planning. Policymakers made decisions about how to plan each settlement scheme by calculating the production of specific crops and their estimated outputs. Budgeting was incredibly important to settlement planning, because the success and profitability of the settlement farmers depended on its accuracy. The vast majority of settlers became indebted when they purchased their land. In addition, most settlers also took out development loans to invest in their farms. The settlements tended to be overly optimistic. Agriculture and agricultural marketing are, of course, highly unpredictable and prone to weather and international markets. Both factors greatly affected settlement schemes in the first decade, as the world agricultural market changed markedly in the 1960s, and as Kenya suffered from two major droughts in the 1960s.

Most schemes were planned around “cash crops” – such as coffee, tea, wattle, sisal, pyrethrum, and dairy. The northwest Rift Valley of Uasin Gishu, the site focus of this case study, is an area not well suited to most of the major cash crops. The coffee, tea, and wattle that thrived in the Central and Eastern Rift Valley of Kenya could not be grown in the northwest Rift Valley. The land was still very fertile, and many of the settlement schemes in the area were planned for sisal and pyrethrum. The world market for both crops dropped dramatically just after settlement was planned. Sisal is an agave

⁹² KNA AVS/1/13, Ministry of Lands and Settlement, “Settlement Schemes Town Planning Standards.”

plant that produces a strong fiber often used for making rope or twine. In the 1960s, international consumption of sisal dropped, which led to a build up of stocks and a sharp decline in prices. In response, the FAO enforced an international quota system in 1967 to keep the prices from dropping any further. The introduction of synthetics (polypropylene) put the final nail in the coffin, so to speak, basically displacing hard fibers from the global market.⁹³ These changes had real repercussions for Kenyan farmers. The Lumakanda settlement scheme was originally planned for sisal. But, in the time between when the scheme was planned and the farmers arrived, the price for sisal had already dropped so much that the crop could not support their farms. Many Lumakanda settlers had taken out loans to buy sisal plants, and had planted the sisal plants which are difficult to remove. Instead of sisal, the farmers were forced to depend upon a combination of maize (see Chapter 5) and dairy, but the combination of these two crops was never as profitable as policymakers had once expected sisal to be.

Like sisal, the demand for pyrethrum decreased with the rise of synthetics. Pyrethrum is a flower that, when dried, produces an insecticide. In the late 1960s, a new group of potent yet safe synthetic compounds came onto the market and led to the decline of pyrethrum marketing.⁹⁴ In addition to international market forces, pyrethrum required processing. Settlement schemes growing pyrethrum needed to dry the flowers before sending them to market. This additional processing step created challenges. Farmers and cooperatives had to learn to use new machinery brand and coordinate production. This learning curve hindered production and profit-making.

⁹³ Hanan Sabea, "Mastering the Landscape? Sisal Plantations, Land, and Labor in Tanga Region, 1893-1980s," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 41, no. 3 (2008): 430.

⁹⁴ John E. Casida, ed., *Pyrethrum: The Natural Insecticide* (New York: Academic Press, 1973).

Kenyan farmers faced more than just a burgeoning synthetics market. They also faced global and national marketing restrictions. Many agricultural products were placed under quotas. The Kenyan government put in place marketing quotas for certain products, such as milk and pyrethrum. The Kenyan government continually amended these quotas, and they ranged in their stringency, but quotas deeply shaped production. In 1968, for instance, the Kenyan government announced that it would not purchase pyrethrum flowers over the quota and would penalize low content flowers.⁹⁵ Conversely, the Kenyan government loosened its restrictions on milk production, eliminating milk quotas in 1970 as milk prices increased.⁹⁶ The lifting of this quota transformed Kenyan milk production, as dairy farmers could – if they had access to coolers – sell all the milk their dairy cattle produced.⁹⁷ World marketing organizations also shaped production, and put in place quotas for coffee in the 1960s.⁹⁸

Other market factors placed strictures not on how much a farmer was allowed to produce or sell, but rather, on their access to, and the price of, important agricultural inputs. In the 1960s, for example, there was a long dairy / grade cattle. Dairy cattle produce much more milk than indigenous cattle, and many of the scheme budgets were created around the assumption that farmers would be able to sell a certain amount of milk.⁹⁹ However, if farmers could not get dairy cattle, they could not produce as much

⁹⁵ KNA AVS/13/21, S.S.O. Sotik Area: Monthly Report for February, “Re: Department of Settlement,” 1969.

⁹⁶ KNA TR/1/75, “The Dairy Industry in Kenya,” [unauthored, undated].

⁹⁷ KNA AVS 1/30, “Proposed Milk Cooling Centres in Settlement Schemes in Area North (Eldoret),” 1970.

⁹⁸ KNA BN/81/158, JS Mburu, Director of Settlement to the PS, Ministry of Lands and Settlement, “Measures to Increase Employment,” 22 May 1970. See also: W.G. Clarence-Smith and Steven Topik, *The Global Coffee Economy in Africa, Asia and Latin America, 1500-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁹⁹ KNA DC/ELD/1/10/9, From TA Watts, Chief Executive Officer to DC, Nandi, “Smallholder Settlement Scheme – Lessos,” 9 August 1961.

milk as scheme planners had counted on. The availability and price of agricultural inputs deeply affected farmers' profits. In 1968, the CEO of the Central Agricultural Board of Kenya, L.V. Bhandari, noted his concern about the simultaneous falling prices of most agricultural goods and increasing price of agricultural inputs, such as fertilizers. This increase in cost partially resulted from the discontinuation of government subsidies on fertilizers.¹⁰⁰ Another agricultural official noted that there were "practical difficulties faced, when trying to develop a centralized, effective distribution system of farm inputs through co-operatives."¹⁰¹ Often small-scale cooperatives had the greatest difficulty purchasing these agricultural inputs from the Kenya Farmers' Association (KFA). Gaining access to dairy cattle, fertilizers, and other resources affordably had a very real impact on farmers' profits.

These types of challenges, some of which could not have been foreseen, upset the delicate budgets prepared for the schemes. Kenya's national settlement planning dictated that agricultural officers prepared budgets for each scheme, and that these budgets ensured smallholders could meet their subsistence needs and also generate a specific net income. Each type of scheme was also created keeping in mind the importance of farmer repayment of settlement charges and loans. Settlement officers encouraged farmers to make their loan payments through cooperative marketing societies, largely created as an easy way of deducting these loans. Though membership in cooperative societies could not legally be made compulsory, settlement and agricultural officers pressured farmers to join cooperatives. Once farmers became cooperative members, they were required to

¹⁰⁰ KNA TR/17/11, L.V. Bhandari, CEO, Central Agricultural Board, "Costs of Agricultural Input," 4 July 1968.

¹⁰¹ KNA TR/1/129, J. Laban Murungi, for Commissioner for Co-operative Development, "Co-operatives and the Distribution of Agricultural Inputs," 1 December 1970.

bring their agricultural produce to the cooperative society, which was supposed to make loan deductions before making payments to the farmers for their produce. (This almost never worked as well in practice as in theory; see Chapters 4 and 5.) Settlement scheme planning and budgeting obliged that even after the deduction of these payments, farmers should still be able meet their families' subsistence needs and generate a net income, which might be used to purchase important household items or to pay for services such as healthcare or education.

Agricultural Officers meticulously prepared draft budgets to meet these requirements, and they submitted their budgets to the District Agricultural and Provincial Agricultural Committees for consideration.¹⁰² The broader national policy on settlement budgeting guided the creation of budgets at the district and provincial level, but these budgets were still being created by low-level, and fairly inexperienced, officers. The guidelines themselves represented just one aspect of the general settlement experiment, and even in a more stable global market context, budgets were bound to require a good deal of modification in response to the first few trial years of settlement. In addition, officials had to try to anticipate the set of factors which would shaped farm production in a very new setting. This was an impossible task, and farmers very rarely were able to achieve the net output expected in the settlement budgets.

The planning for settlement entailed more than just budgeting and the supervision of farm production. It also entailed surveying, marking out of roads, subdividing of

¹⁰² KNA DC/ELD/1/10/9, From TA Watts to the Chairman of Provincial Agricultural Committees (Non Scheduled Areas), "Planning Smallholder Settlement Schemes," 29 August 1961.

plantations, and building of fences.¹⁰³ All of these processes excepting the fence building had to be completed prior to the arrival of settlers. These interconnected steps revealed an important challenge to the planning and implementation of settlement – the progression of the program often depended on the collaboration of a number of different departments, but also, on the successful and timely completion of early stages of settlement. Often, settlement worked sequentially, and later stages of the program depended first on the completion of the more initial stages. Land registration, for example, had to occur before subdivision. Before land could be registered, though, it had to be surveyed and consolidated into continuous plots. All of these steps had to occur before settlement planning could begin. Individual ownership was a major goal of land resettlement, and land could not be purchased and the new owner could not receive a land title, until land was consolidated, then subdivided, and then registered. Very frequently, these initial steps met obstacles which delayed, or completely prevented, their implementation. These initial obstacles then delayed or derailed the implementation of the steps which were to follow. The Commissioner of Lands complained in 1966, for example, that “no new Land Registries were opened mainly because of lack of adequate funds for buildings and money to pay additional staff.”¹⁰⁴ Without the creation of new land registries, there could be no progress on any of the steps of settlement which followed. The pause, or even poor functioning, of one aspect of the program had implications for the rest of the program, as stoppages and delays compounded themselves.

¹⁰³ KNA DC/ELD/1/10/9, From Settlement Officer to DCs – Eldoret and Nandi, “Monthly Report on Lessos Peasant Resettlement Schemes,” 2 July 1961.

¹⁰⁴ KNA BN/85/12, From Commissioner of Lands, Department of Lands to the PS, Ministry of Lands and Settlement, “Implementation of Revised Development Plan 1966-70: Progress Report,” 3 February 1967.

Some of these delays and stoppages occurred as a result of poor planning, but some were the natural kinks of a nationally unprecedented large-scale program.

Regardless of whether the causes of poor planning were to be expected or resulted from human error, they had major consequences. A Chief Technical Officer from the Ministry of Agriculture noted in 1970 that:

...a good deal of the apparent failure of the One Million Acre Settlement Programme consists in the nature of the initial planning; the endless false assumptions on which budgeting was based and above all the inadequate infrastructure that was assumed to serve the heavily capitalized Settlement holdings in the Programme. Watering points within ½ mile which in practice worked out to be a distance of 2 miles daily to water. At the very most, it could only be done once a day. At this rate, the animals got a day's helping of 4-5 gallons as against 12-15 gallons they are each capable of taking if watered ad-lib or 3 times a day. As milk contains 75-80% of water, we could not tap the full potential of the high grade dairy cows in Settlement. The most that could be expected under the circumstances was a yield of 1-2 gallons of milk from potential 5-6 gallon animals.¹⁰⁵

This example demonstrates that the smallest surveying and planning details had major ramifications for the labor and livelihoods of Kenyan settlers on individual schemes.

The misjudgments and miscalculations of settlement planners affected agricultural production, which also affected other aspects of settlement programming. The Department of Cooperative Development, a department within the Ministry of Land Settlement, reported that in the 1964-65 financial year the proportion of farms reaching target incomes was only 10.7 percent, and in 1966-67 it was 17.0 percent.¹⁰⁶ These low incomes were part of the reason that settlers had such low loan repayments. Low loan repayments, in turn, created further indebtedness of the farmers and the Kenyan

¹⁰⁵ KNA AVS/1/15, P.M. Vuyiya, Chief Technical Officer, to the PS, Ministry of Lands and Settlement, "Transfer of Settlement Schemes from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Lands and Settlement," 3 December 1970.

¹⁰⁶ KNA AVS/1/150, "Land Transfer and Land Settlement 1974/78."

government. The problem of low loan repayments continued into the 1970s.¹⁰⁷ The policy stipulated that farmers who failed to repay their loans were to be evicted from their plots, but the practice of dealing with serial loan defaulters was much more complicated in practice (see Chapter 4 for more on loans and evictions).

It was not just the physical settlement of rural farmers that required complicated preparations and economic investment. Settlement planning was based upon a series of interconnected agricultural and veterinary extension programs. These programs, similar to the planning of settlement, were interdependent and the functioning of each relied on mutual successes. Settlement was created with the belief that the provision of these extension services to settlers was necessary to achieve agricultural production goals. There were three prongs to extension services: 1) agricultural education, 2) the provision of agricultural and veterinary services to aid in successful farming, and 3) community development. The government provided agricultural instructors, assistant agricultural instructors, veterinary assistants, and veterinary scouts to provide agricultural education and extension services, and a settlement officer and clerk supervised each scheme.¹⁰⁸ The architects of settlement originally planned for this staffing to maintain a presence on schemes for a period of two and a half years. This turned out to be a considerable underestimation, and in July 1965, the Kenyan government applied to the British for assistance to extend the period of supervision. In the application, the Kenyan government noted that a reduction in the number of extension staff after two and a half years would

¹⁰⁷ KNA AVS/1/150, "Land Transfer and Land Settlement 1974/78."

¹⁰⁸ KNA AVS/1/18, Peace Corps Volunteers. The rate of staffing per scheme depended on the type of scheme. The Yeoman schemes, which were usually about 5,000 acres, received two agricultural instructors, two assistant agricultural instructors, one veterinary assistant, and one veterinary scout. The high density schemes, generally 10,000 acres, received two agricultural instructors, two assistant agricultural instructors, one veterinary assistant, and three veterinary scouts. American Peace Corps Volunteers also assisted Settlement Officers on schemes.

be “dangerous and possibly disastrous,” and such a course of action “would run the risk of a fall in agricultural output, the collapse of the schemes, and widespread failure on the part of the settlers to repay their loans.”¹⁰⁹ This application demonstrates the great faith that settlement planners put in the extension services and officers. Settlers, however, had much more ambivalent memories of the utility of extension.

The first prong of extension programs – agricultural education – was composed mainly of two types of programming – farmers’ training centers and experimental plots. Agricultural instructors and settlement officers encouraged settlers to attend farmers’ training programs. These programs varied in length from a day to about a week. There were various training centers built in the areas of greatest land settlement, and there was usually a training center located not too great a distance from any one scheme. Training center instructors taught farmers who attended courses about various agricultural methods, such as planting techniques, fertilizer use, compost making, artificial insemination, and tick control methods. Farmers’ training centers also held courses on nutrition, hygiene, farm planning, and keeping farm records.¹¹⁰ Agricultural instructors conducted trainings on the same topics on experimental plots in each scheme. Experimental plots were usually located on the land of a “progressive farmer,” or set aside by a scheme as communal land. The agricultural instructors then used demonstrations on experimental plots to show farmers “good” agricultural techniques.

¹⁰⁹ KNA TR/1/351, From The Treasury, “Application to HM Government for Assistance towards Extending the Period of Supervision on Settlement Schemes,” 21 July 1965.

¹¹⁰ School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Special Collections, CA2/A/9/9, Principal Warren Short, “Lugari Farmers’ Training Centre Annual Report for 1966.”

Some evidence suggests that these plots were more successfully used to impress settlement visitors than to educate farmers.¹¹¹

Bureaucrats tended to give much greater weight to the educational aspect of extension than the settlers themselves. The archival record is full of manifestoes on the importance of farmers' training centers and experimental plots. The agricultural officers interviewed spoke in great length and detail about this aspect of the settlement program. They very much connected these educational extension services to the success of settlement. Manasi Esipeya, a former settlement officer in Area Settlement Control – North,¹¹² said that through the farmers' training and experimental plots “we reformed those people who had never seen a grade cow, who had never seen a certified seed.”¹¹³ Esipeya believed settlement was a success, and that agricultural education played an important part in this success. Settlers, on the other hand, were more dubious of the importance of agricultural education. They very rarely spoke about agricultural education, and when asked about it, even those who attended trainings, had very little to say about these programs. Most often, they mentioned the fees for attending courses at the training centers, or spoke about where they stayed during the program.

Settlers held much stronger opinions on the provision agricultural extension services. These services were also broken down into two parts, those that fell under

¹¹¹ KNA AVS 1/15, From W.E. Adero, for Director of Settlement to the Settlement Officer I, “Extension Tour: Turbo Schemes,” 15 May 1973. “...it is apparent that we are still sort of following the system of having one or two good farms within a Settlement scheme which are visited every time there are visitors to be taken around. I do not advocate that you stop visiting progressive farmers but that you spread your time and cover more farmers.”

¹¹² The government divided settlement into administrative regions, headed by Area Settlement Controllers. One of these regions, which encompassed all the settlement schemes in this case study, was Area Settlement North. These settlement administrative regions did not match governmental administrative regions; for more on this, see Chapter 2.

¹¹³ Interview with Manasi Esipeya, Chekalini, 11 January, 2013.

agriculture and those under veterinary services. Agricultural instructors were directed to give settlers standardized recommendations about the exact acreage of each crop to plant, what type of seeds to use, when to plant, and when to harvest. Despite the universal recommendations, settlement officers sometimes gave conflicting advice to settlers, contrary to these standard recommendations from the Department of Agriculture.¹¹⁴ Aside from these recommendations, agricultural extension services largely entailed the subsidized provision of certified seeds and fertilizers.

Veterinary extension services depended on much more intensive and hands-on programming. Most of these services revolved around disease prevention and the reproduction of grade cattle. Veterinary officers managed dips and spray races, used to prevent tick-borne illnesses. They also provided artificial insemination, to maintain the grade stock, and avoid the mixing of the milk producing grade cattle with the indigenous cattle. All of these services required the physical presence of veterinary officers, though these officers often trained cooperative officers to manage dips and spray races. Settlers could call for veterinary officers if their cows became sick, or for artificial insemination.

Settlers remembered losing cattle to diseases which were supposed to be prevented by veterinary services. Many settlers remembered times when they lost cattle to diseases, such as East Coast Fever, after the spraying or dipping in their settlement scheme was mismanaged, particularly by cooperative societies. Often, the chemicals in these dips and sprays were not kept at the correct strength, and cattle became susceptible to disease. At other times, settlers were reluctant to use these veterinary services (even though they were mandatory), because they cost money. It only took a single person to

¹¹⁴ KNA AVS/1/15, H.M. Bridgman, Deputy Area Settlement Controller, North Division, "S.A.A.O.'s and A.A.O.'s Agricultural Policy," 18 October 1965.

ruin the balance of disease control by not dipping their cattle and spreading disease to other cattle.

Some of these problems also derived from the absence of veterinary officers, resulting either from individual negligence, or from the inadequacy of staff on settlement schemes. EJM Rabu, Assistant Director of Agriculture noted in October 1971:

... there are about 3,940 farmers per every Senior Assistant Agricultural Officer, 3,152 farmers or plots per every Assistant Agricultural Officer and 139 plots per every Technical Assistant...[A settler] must get the maximum attention from his extension officers. In other words, because of his inability to read and write and inadequacy of extension media such as television and radio, he has got to rely upon the Extension Officer for all the education that he requires in order to develop his plot. This means that the Extension Officer has to visit him much more frequently than the available resources permit. For instance, the figures indicates that there is one TA [Technical Assistant] per every 139 farmers; if the TA has to visit every farm, which he must, and if he is to spend a reasonable amount of time on every plot say 2-3 hours per plot, he would on a average working day, visit only about 3-4 plots per day, all things being equal, that is the weather, his bicycle, and no interruption at all from outside visitors. Visiting his farmers at this rate, he will take over 1 ½ month before he goes back to the first plot he visited. In fact, in practice, he takes more than three months, before he has completed visiting every plot in his area...¹¹⁵

The Assistant Director's memorandum demonstrates the limitations to extension services.

These limitations were multiplied exponentially in non-settlement areas, where the presence of extension officers was only a third of what it was on settlement schemes.¹¹⁶

Settlers had wide-ranging views on agricultural extension services and extension officers, though most remembered these services as inadequate. Some settlers recounted that these services were well-run and useful. More often, settlers said they could never "find" their extension officers when they needed them, or that these officers did not do their jobs properly. Kiptoo arap Maina, a Leseru resident, remembered that agricultural

¹¹⁵ KNA AVS 1/15, EJM Rabu, Assist. Dir. Of Agric. (S), "Extension Services in Settlement Schemes," October 1971.

¹¹⁶ KNA AVS/3/22, A. Storrar, Director of Settlement to the PS, 29 March 1965.

extension services “went with the *wazungu* (Europeans or whites). I didn’t even see their services. Because, those people were there, but they were very reluctant to do work.”¹¹⁷

William Serem remembered similarly, “Those people [agricultural extension officers] were there, but they were not actively working.”¹¹⁸ Some women remembered that they could not speak to these extension officers, and that only men had access to them.¹¹⁹

Access to, or conversely, exclusion from extension services and officers could deeply affect the agricultural success of a settlement community.

The third tier of extension services departed from the agricultural emphasis of the previous two. Because settlement schemes were created out of the subdivision of the large farms of the white highlands, they lacked much of the infrastructure present in other communities. These schemes often had no health centers, no schools, and insufficient roads. Settlement planners attempted to make accommodations for the underdevelopment of these communities by planning towns with plots for schools and health centers, and by supervising the building of homesteads in a way that protected sanitation and public health. The building of schools and health centers, though, often became the responsibility of individual communities to provide for themselves through *harambee*, or self-help (see Chapter 6). The government also generally sited these schemes on the periphery of the former Scheduled Areas and adjacent to former Native Reserves in an attempt to have the local government bodies of these areas meet the needs of the new communities.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Interview with Kiptoo arap Maina, Leseru, November 23, 2012.

¹¹⁸ Interview with William Serem, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Rebecca Aliviza Maneno, Lumakanda, November 6, 2012; Interview with Selena Serem, Leseru, November 28, 2012. Women’s access to development resources and representatives of the government is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

¹²⁰ KNA JA/31/7, “A Project for Agricultural Settlement Schemes in the Scheduled Areas of Kenya.”

This did not turn out to be the “relatively simple exercise” that the settlement scheme planners anticipated.¹²¹ The government recognized the danger of creating new communities without any health or educational infrastructure, and recommended the stationing of a health assistant in settlement schemes. Like so many other aspect of government policy, though, there was wrestling over which government body would provide the funding for this staffing, and these services were chronically underfunded, and thus, incapacitated.¹²² The British government had specifically prohibited Kenya from using settlement grant monies for educational, public health, or road services.¹²³ The settlement board possessed no funds to provide these services normally provided by Local Government Authorities.¹²⁴ Settlement schemes became a huge drain on local governments, which did not have the capacity to handle the large migration of people, and some health authorities contended that they could trace the outbreak of infectious diseases in their area to the settlement schemes, which were not providing adequate medical services to the population.¹²⁵ Some settlers, for example, had to walk 10 to 14 miles to see a doctor.¹²⁶

Education on settlement schemes met with the same problems. Inadequate funding, insufficient staffing, and incapacitated local governments in the wake of the mass migration of settlers, left educational development in settlement schemes

¹²¹ KNA JA/31/7, “A Project for Agricultural Settlement Schemes in the Scheduled Areas of Kenya.”

¹²² KNA JA/27/52, From Uasin Gishu County Council, Clerk to Council to PS, Ministry of Local Government and Lands, “Smallholders Settlement Schemes,” 7 March 1962.

¹²³ KNA JA/27/52, From TA Watts, Ag. Director of Settlement to the PS, Ministry of Health and Housing, “Public Health Services Smallholder Settlement Schemes,” 17 May 1962.

¹²⁴ KNA JA/31/29, From T.A. Watts Chief Executive Officer, LDSB to the UG County Council Clerk, 23 May 1962.

¹²⁵ KNA BY/21/212, M.A. Faxal, Medical Officer of Health Sirikwa County Council to Assistant Director of Medical Services, Ministry of Health, “Re: Settlement Schemes,” 14 February 1968.

¹²⁶ KNA DC/UG/2/3/16, SMN Rattray, Health Visitor, Eldoret, “Uasin Gishu County Council. Health Visitor’s Report for the Month of April, 1963,” 2 May 1963.

floundering for many years. When the architects of settlement planned settlement towns, they intended for there to be one primary school site of four to five acres for every 2,000 people. There was also to be one secondary school plot of about 15 acres for every 16,000 people (in other words, one secondary school to serve eight primary schools).¹²⁷ Similar to healthcare on settlement schemes, these plans often held few similarities with the reality on the ground. The case was the same with the provision of water, and the creation of new road networks.

CONCLUSION

The success of Kenyan land resettlement, like so many other decolonizing programs, was marked by its ambivalence. For those who gained access to land, their lives likely improved, and compared to their family who remained in the reserves or who did not gain access to land resettlement, they had better access to a sustainable development resource. On the surface, land settlement was this simple. In reality, it was – of course – more complicated. The selection of settlers was conducted unfairly and perpetuated inequality. Even for those who were settled on schemes, their experiences differed dramatically depending on a whole range of factors – the fertility of their land, the support of their communities, the presence of extension services, the aid of their cooperative societies. Though settlers generally were better off than non-settlers, their new homes contained almost no other services; there were no schools, no hospitals, and few roads.

Possibly more than anything else, cooperatives shaped the experience of those on settlement, and shaped the literal landscape of settlement schemes, as malpractice and

¹²⁷ KNA AVS/1/13, “Settlement Schemes Town Planning Standards.”

corruption led to loan defaults and a lack of services. The next chapter continues this story by examining cooperative societies in early postcolonial Kenya.

4 Cooperation or Corruption?: A Decolonization Tale

Cooperatives were central to Kenyan agricultural and land resettlement policy, and were widespread throughout Kenya in the years after independence. Because they were so prevalent, cooperatives not only impacted innumerable Kenyan lives, but they also provide unique insight into the making of the postcolonial political economy in Kenya. The history of Kenyan cooperatives shows how this political economy unfolded in a tactile way, and it reveals, additionally, the everydayness of social, economic, and political life. Cooperative organizations were made up of kith and kin – people who were in daily contact with one another. Yet, simultaneously, they were a part of huge transnational and national processes. Cooperatives reveal one nexus of these relationships, and they allow for a hyper-localized understanding of national and transnational historical processes – decolonization and development. They show how the quotidian economic decisions rural Kenyan actors made could reverberate in macro settings.

The history of agricultural cooperatives in Kenya exposes a complex picture of how the policies and interventions of the Kenyan state and transnational organizations became transformed in rural settings. The Kenyan state sponsored cooperatives, largely, to aid in the marketing of agricultural products, and in the repayment of land and development loans. The state encouraged the creation of these local agricultural governing organizations to control the sale of produce and to ensure the repayment of internationally-financed loans. But, these organizations became micro-states of a sort in local settings. Cooperatives operated as autonomous subsidiaries of the central state,

fulfilling local bureaucratic and administrative tasks. These organizations were quasi-democratic, but they were often co-opted by rural elites motivated by their own individual interests. As corrupt cooperative leaders acted against the interests of the rural poor, many farmers attempted to remove themselves from this (micro-)state sphere. At the same time, to its dismay, the central state could not control the many micro cooperative states which emerged. This eventually resulted in the complete collapse of agricultural cooperatives – a foundational aspect of Kenyan agricultural policy – and thus, to loan repayments.

This chapter begins with the dramatic tale of a cooperative in Kenya, which vividly demonstrates the decline of one of these agricultural societies in the years after independence. On 30 April 1968, the “Turbo Munyaka Co-op Society” wrote to the Commissioner for Cooperative Development about a man “engaged in causing untold harm to this society.”¹ In the letter, the Co-operative Society listed Makumi Muiru’s offences, asking permission to evict him from the cooperative society.

1. March 1967 Mr. Makumi Muiru, with the help of his two sons, attacked with a *panga* (machete), clubs and a spear member called Mr. Kamamu Mabi and caused grievous injuries to the body of this victim. This matter was taken to the Police and Mr. Makumi was arrested and taken to the Police cell Kitale. Hence he was charged for causing bodily harm to his victim and was fined.
2. April 1967 Mr. Makumi Muiru planted in his plot opium (*bangi*), he was arrested and charged for this offence by the Police.
3. April 1967 Mr. Makumi Muiru was found to be in possession of witch craft. The Co-operative Officer was called in and witnessed this.
4. April 1967 Mr. Makumi threatened to cut to pieces the farm elders with a *panga*.
5. February, 1967 Mr. Makumi sold his maize privately and not through the society so that the society could deduct society’s commission.

¹ KNA TR/8/885, From Turbo Munyaka Co-op Society to the Commissioner for Cooperative Development (Nairobi), The Co-operative Officer, Eldoret, “Most Urgent, Re: Expulsion of Mr. Makumi Muiru,” 30th April, 1968.

6. January, 1968 Mr. Makumi was busy cutting down the Government forest next to his plot to extend the plot as he considers best.
7. March 1968 Mr. Makumi was busy engaged in brewing liquor illegally on the farm.
8. March 1968 Mr. Makumi Muiru was selling his maize privately and not through the society as the law states.²

The cooperative society alleged further that:

This man attacked the Committee men at their meeting place with a *panga* and a club. Helped by his two sons they chased anybody they charced [sic] to see on their way, intending to kill. They vowed that before they kill a person on this farm they will never rest... There was so much confussion [sic] on the farm that no body [sic] could dare coming out of his house to work on the farm. Since then up to now (about 4 days) no body [sic] is working on the farm for fear that they can be killed by Mr. Makumi... We are therefore asking you kindly to consider our most embarrassing situation and allow us to send this devilman [sic] out of this farm as quickly as possible, before this man kills some of us, as he has vowed!³

For his part, Makumi Muiru denied all of the charges. When he wrote to the Co-operative Officer in Eldoret, he alleged, rather, that the society discriminated against him and treated him unfairly.

On 27th April 1968 I came to you because of my accusation that I had cut people into pieces, this was untrue and I was found guiltless [sic] in the Police Station.

On March this year they came to you claiming that the Govt. forest is burned, I went to the office and asked where there was fire they said that they do not know. And did you send this accusation to the Co-op Officer?

Last year they destroyed my five houses and three stores saying that I am a wizard but in the general meeting they said that they thought I was a wizard.

They gave me pas [sic] for *pombe* (locally brewed beer) after which they bring police in my *shamba* (small farm). What does this mean?

Apart from this, we have things of our own that, we bought cash, they are Motor Car, *Posho* Mill (maize grinding mill), Tractor [sic], I not allowed to use any of this and I am a member is it lawful that the society's property should be used by some people while others do not?

If I take my maize to poshomill [sic], they scatter away my maize.

² KNA TR/8/885, From Turbo Munyaka Co-op Society to the Commissioner for Cooperative Development (Nairobi), The Co-operative Officer, Eldoret, "Most Urgent, Re: Expulsion of Mr. Makumi Muiru," 30th April, 1968.

³ Ibid.

Please Sir if there is a law that I should not use this [sic] things, you may tell me when replying.⁴

The archival record contains nothing further on the dispute between Makumi Muiru and the Turbo Munyaka Cooperative Society. The archival obfuscation of the guilt and innocence of the involved parties may, in fact, be a stroke of luck, because it directs our attention to the larger issues that emerge from this case. The Makumi Muiru case raises productive questions about Kenyan cooperative societies after independence: what type of disharmonious relationships existed within cooperative societies, why did they emerge, and how were they resolved?

The extreme accusations of both parties make this particular story jump off the pages of the archival records, but when one moves past the more dramatic elements the story that emerges is actually one which is fairly representative of the challenges cooperative societies encountered at this time. Rural farmers throughout Kenya often had some type of negative experience with their agricultural cooperatives – largely, with mismanagement, fraud, and corruption. These cooperatives, however, were supposed to provide farmers with security, access to agricultural markets and, in some cases, help to purchase farms.

Though we know nothing more about the Makumi Muiru case, the archival file on Turbo Munyaka Co-op Society does contain a great deal more evidence of the many other problems plaguing this particular cooperative society. The file on the Turbo Munyaka Co-operative Society reads like a soap opera. Just as with the Makumi Muiru case, it is often difficult to decipher which party in the many disputes within the society was actually at fault. Deception and fraud were rampant; stories conflicted and

⁴ KNA TR/8/885, From Makumi Muiru to Co-operative Officer, Eldoret, May 1968.

contradicted each other; disputes often remained unresolved. While it is frequently impossible to determine guilty parties, it is almost just as impossible to ignore the chronic dysfunction of the society and the many others formed in early postcolonial Kenya.

Turbo Munyaka Co-operative Society Ltd. was formed in 1964 as a farm buying cooperative. It was one of many cooperatives created in the years after independence, primarily to aid in the communal purchase of large-scale farms and to market agricultural produce. The broader emergence of agricultural cooperative societies in independent Kenya was entangled with state-making processes, national agricultural policy, and land settlement. The new government encouraged the formation of cooperatives as a way of inculcating a national identity revolving around “Africa’s communal past.” This was the official claim, at least. State records from the time were peppered with manifestoes on the importance of “cooperation” for nation-building. The state upheld the ideal of “cooperation” for settings other than cooperative development, but the connection between the “cooperative movement” and “cooperation” was the most obvious and easiest way to emphasize this dictum.

More pragmatically, the state relied on cooperatives to help poor farmers purchase farms, to provide communal services, to market agricultural produce, and to aid in the collection of individual farmers’ loan repayments. The Kenyan state may have endorsed the cooperative movement for its role in generating cooperation and in building the nation, but the state encouraged the formation of cooperatives just as much in response to its own incapacity, and as a way of abdicating some of its responsibilities. Soon, however, the story of cooperative societies became one about the emergence of

corruption in a largely unregulated setting, where more often than not, wealthier, better educated Kenyans could very easily take advantage of the rural poor.

Seen in these terms, Turbo Munyaka Cooperative society is almost unexceptional. It provides a telling example of the challenges of the cooperative movement in Kenya, and the multitude of problems which emerged from within these societies. These problems – inter-personal, financial, governance-related – eventually led to a total breakdown of the system of cooperative societies in Kenya. What the early postcolonial Kenyan government had once held up as a “movement” integral to the continued development of Kenya’s agricultural economy, quickly became more of a hindrance than a help, and soon after that, ceased to exist. While the Kenyan state’s plans, hopes, and intentions with cooperatives may have been misplaced, their recognition of the necessity of some sort of entity to aid farmers was founded upon more correct intuitions. The collapse of cooperative societies made deep imprints on the lives of rural farmers, particularly with loan repayments and their financial stability more generally.

The inter-personal conflicts illustrated through the Makumi Muiru case were just the beginning of the Turbo Munyaka Co-operative’s issues. The society was also wracked with innumerable other problems. In April of 1971, the Co-operative Bank of Kenya Limited denied Turbo Munyaka’s loan application for 176,200 Kenyan Shillings. They refused to approve the loan because the Co-operative society had applied for the loan to repay another loan from the Agricultural Finance Corporation of Kenya.⁵ While this amount of indebtedness and the attempt to use one loan to repay another ranks as almost measured negligence when compared to the financial mismanagement of other

⁵ KNA TR/8/885, Turbo Munyaka Coop Society Ltd, From P.A. Gwada, for Commissioner for Co-operative Development to the District Co-operative Officer, Kitale, 1st April 1971.

cooperative societies, it demonstrates the general mismanagement problems within the society.

Many of these financial problems derived from corruption and the misuse of funds by Turbo Munyaka office bearers. There were allegations that cooperative officers misled the society by selling cattle owned by the cooperative to pay loans, but then only used a small portion of the money to actually pay for the loan. There were other allegations that the cooperative leaders used society credit to purchase individual goods. Then, there were allegations that cooperative board members were elected illegally without making other members aware that an election meeting had been called. Lastly, archival evidence shows that some cooperative members charged that the leaders collected taxes from members but never brought the tax proceeds to the County Council governments. These were just some of many allegations about leaders mismanaging the society and misusing cooperative funds.⁶

Turbo Munyaka leaders were not the only corrupt and duplicitous actors within the society, though. In January 1969, George Kioi, and other members of Turbo Munyaka, wrote to the Secretary of the Turbo Munyaka Cooperative Society asking how the “Kihoto Society came to exist within Turbo Munyaka Society Farm, how it was formed and who are the members.”⁷ The letter writers added a few more questions about what they clearly saw as a suspicious episode. “We would then like to know from you how these [sic] Cheque No BB/BD 854897 having Shs. 8,692/80 drawn from Turbo Munyaka Co. Society Ltd. Account. Where did this Kihoto Society gets its *Shamba*

⁶ KNA TR/8/885, From Turbo Munyaka Society to Commissioner for Co-operative, “Re Election Against the Law,” 14th February 1973.

⁷ KNA TR/8/885, From Mr. George Kioi (and other members of Turbo Munyaka) to The Secretary, Turbo Munyaka Co-operative Society, January 8, 1969.

from? Where are they cultivating now because we as members of Turbo we don't know them. When was it formed and what are the registration No. and when did they buy a *Shamba?*”⁸ George Kioi and the other members who wrote this letter believed that it was only through questionable means that the members of Kihoto Society – a splinter society – received land and money from the larger society. The cooperative society replied to George Kioi with claims of ignorance about this new society within a society.⁹

The Kihoto Society case was not to be the last time that Turbo Munyaka experienced the formation of a cooperative within their larger cooperative. Just four years later, the Mugumo Dairy F.C. Ltd formed within the Turbo Munyaka Society. Mugumo formed illegally and took advantage of the society's property and services, but they convinced the Kenya Cooperative Creameries (KCC)¹⁰ to make payments for their milk to their sub-society rather than to Turbo Munyaka. Mugumo succeeded in convincing the KCC on this course of action despite the fact that the “assets of any registered society cannot be liquidated or taken over save under an order of the Commissioner for Cooperative Development.”¹¹ The “dissident members” of the Turbo Munyaka society were able to form a company within a cooperative society, to continue using the former society's resources, but also, to convince the nationalized dairy cooperative to stop milk payments to their former society and pay to the new society, even though the Mugumo group was not properly registered as a cooperative society. The members of Mugumo

⁸ KNA TR/8/885, From Mr. George Kioi (and other members of Turbo Munyaka) to The Secretary, Turbo Munyaka Co-operative Society, January 8, 1969.

⁹ KNA TR/8/885, Turbo Munyaka Coop Society Ltd, From Turbo Munyaka to George Kioi, 18 January 1969.

¹⁰ Kenya Cooperative Creameries was the marketing board for dairy produce.

¹¹ KNA TR/8/885, From R.M. Patel for Commissioner for Co-operative Development to the District Cooperative Officer, Kitale, 9th August 1973.

refused to deliver their agricultural products through the cooperative society, did not pay the levy for maize, and did not pay the grazing fee for cattle.¹²

In September 1974, an inquiry into this dispute claimed that the Mugumo Dairy Farmers Company had voluntarily dissolved, after the investigation revealed their illegal actions. Just eight months later, though, in May of 1975, new allegations emerged that Mugumo still existed. The cooperative officer, seeming to have tired of the saga, suggested that since the co-operative society had no further debts, “members should be issued with 18 acres-plot; and individual farm and hence the question of Co-operative farming comes to a halt...”¹³ The conclusion to this episode, like that of the case of Makumi Muiri at the beginning of this chapter, also remains unclear in the archival record. The file ends with the continued existence of Mugumo until July 1975, when the Commissioner for Co-operative Development asks to have the members evicted. It is not apparent, though, whether evictions actually took place. This archival dead end matters little for understanding the implications of the above evidence about the Turbo Munyaka Co-operative Society. What emerges from the Makumi Muiri case, the failed loan application, the misappropriation of cooperative finances, the corruption, and the multiple splinter societies, is a portrait of cooperative failure, and the exploitation of the rural poor.

What is not as clear from the archival record is either the reaction of cooperative members or the broader implications of this failure. The chapter explores how the Kenyan state used cooperatives to put agricultural governance and loan repayment in the

¹² KNA TR/8/885, “Re: Dispute Concerning the Business of Turbo Munyaka Farmers Co-operative Society Limited and Mugumo Dairy Farmers Company,” 27th September, 1974.

¹³ KNA TR/8/885, From Joseph B. Kiihoh, District Co-operative Officer Kitale to The Commissioner for Co-op Development, 2nd May 1975.

hands of rural communities. This chapter explores the implications of the failings of the cooperative movement, particularly to the Kenyan state, and to the rural farmers who were often cheated and further indebted as a result of cooperative corruption.

The first section of this chapter provides background to the initial emergence of Kenyan agricultural cooperatives in the colonial era. This section also examines the rhetorical importance of cooperatives to the colonial state, and it shows the continuity of this state rhetoric on cooperatives in the postcolonial era. The second section examines the transformations to cooperative policy in the independent period, and why rampant corruption emerged within cooperatives. The final section looks at both the national and more local implications of the fall of the cooperative movement for loan repayments.

BACKGROUND TO THE COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT

Kenya's cooperative movement began soon after colonial conquest during the initial phase of European settlement in Kenya's highlands. European farmers founded the first agricultural society as early as 1908 to market agricultural products. It was not until 1931, however, that Kenya passed its first Co-operative Society Ordinance. This was followed by a process of registering national cooperatives. The most significant of which – the Kenya Farmers Association (Cooperative) Limited (KFA) – formed in 1923 and registered as a cooperative in 1931. The original KFA members, large-scale European farmers, mostly produced cereals, milk, and coffee.

A government survey on cooperative development in 1944 produced a report which promoted the expansion of cooperatives to Africans and encouraged the colonial government to appoint a Registrar of Cooperatives. As a result, the colonial government established the Cooperative Department in 1945. Not long afterwards, over 200

cooperatives societies had formed and registered to market produce. Many of these cooperatives were created for African producers, but many of the African cooperatives were initially unsuccessful, particularly because they marketed crops falling traditionally in the “subsistence” category. The colonial state allowed Africans to grow only some “cash crops,” and these were under strict regulation. As the colonial state began to lift some of these controls and African farmers began growing more “cash crops,” such as coffee and pyrethrum, they also began forming cooperatives to process and market these products. Cooperative membership became compulsory for farmers growing these highly regulated crops, as only members were issued with growers’ licenses. Dairy cooperative societies also began forming in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and by 1952, the 57 dairy farmers’ societies represented the largest of the registered African societies; coffee stood as the second largest group with 29 registered societies. As the cooperatives developed, particularly in the sector the colonial government defined as “cash crop,” colonial agricultural planners discussed making membership in cooperative marketing societies compulsory for the marketing of *all* produce.¹⁴

This trend of a growing number of cooperative societies, their increasing importance in agricultural production, and mounting pressure from the colonial state officials to join cooperatives continued all the way up until independence. Cooperatives grew even more in the second half of the 1950s. From 1956 to 1961, there was nearly a six-fold increase in the valued agricultural production of cooperatives, and a growth rate

¹⁴ KNA TR/10/114, From the Registrar of Co-operative Societies to the Hon. Chief Secretary, “Co-operation,” 3rd July, 1947.

averaging more than 40 percent per year.¹⁵ African cooperatives produced coffee valued at £409,000 in 1956, and by 1961, they produced £3,005,000 worth of coffee. Cereals moved from £110,000 to £168,000.¹⁶

Foreshadowing the problems the postcolonial state would encounter regulating cooperatives, the growth of cooperative societies was not matched by the growth of a government administration to direct these new societies. In July 1947, the Registrar of Cooperative Societies had only two trained inspectors to work with the twenty nine newly formed cooperatives.¹⁷ By September 1947, sixty African cooperative societies had formed and registered, and the Cooperative Department staff had increased to three inspectors and six sub-inspectors.¹⁸ Five years later, E.J.A. Leslie, the Registrar of Cooperative Societies, wrote to the Secretary for Agriculture that smaller African societies “are incapable of managing their affairs in anything approaching a businesslike manner and have to be wound up.”¹⁹ Leslie said that the cooperative profits proved to be inadequate to cover the cost of clerical staff. In addition, because so few members were educated, they had a difficult time “keeping a check on the financial affairs of the society, being incapable of interpreting the books kept by the secretary. The democratic control disappears and the secretary, to all intents and purposes, becomes a dictator over whom

¹⁵ KNA TR/1/118, Michael Chege Kuria (Ministry of Cooperative Development 1963/1983), “Special Focus on Co-operative Movement in Independent Kenya,” [undated].

¹⁶ KNA TR/1/118, Michael Chege Kuria (Ministry of Cooperative Development 1963/1983), “Special Focus on Co-operative Movement in Independent Kenya,” [undated].

¹⁷ KNA TR/10/114, From the Registrar of Co-operative Societies to the Hon. Chief Secretary, “Co-operation,” 3rd July, 1947.

¹⁸ KNA TR/10/114, From Registrar of Co-operative Societies to the Hon. Chief Secretary, “Legislative Council: Communication from the Chair,” 24th September, 1947.

¹⁹ KNA TR/10/114, From EJA Leslie, Registrar of Cooperative Societies to The Secretary for Agriculture, “The Co-operative Movement in Kenya,” 29th May, 1952.

the only control is the occasional visit by an Inspector on the Registrar's staff."²⁰ These same patterns would emerge in the postcolonial setting as well.

Despite these early failures, and despite a general African reluctance to willingly participate in group farming, the colonial state continued to push for cooperatives, particularly, by asserting the suitability of cooperatives for an African setting. Officials argued that cooperatives would put a "brake on moral deterioration" and that cooperatives would provide "the practical environment wherein to practice the virtues of unselfishness, mutual help, honest and trustworthiness."²¹ Simultaneously, colonial officers discussed the utility of cooperatives "in preparing the people for more democratic forms of government."²²

For the colonial state, cooperatives represented a transitional panacea, bridging the "communal past" with the democratic future. In March 1955, the Registrar of Cooperatives published a paper about the place of cooperative societies in economic and social development. The paper spelled out the cooperative merits for democratic training. The Registrar argued that the elector must be taught:

to discriminate between the merits of rival candidates rather than to devise the machinery of election. The members of a small co-operative society very soon acquire this power of discrimination, as they watch the day to day management of their affairs by the Committee which they have elected, and they are not slow to learn that the loudest speaker is not necessarily the most able representative. Without this experience at the lowest level it can scarcely be expected that electors will escape the many pitfalls laid in their way by demagogues seeking election to some important body.²³

²⁰ KNA TR/10/114, From EJA Leslie, Registrar of Cooperative Societies to The Secretary for Agriculture, "The Co-operative Movement in Kenya," 29th May, 1952.

²¹ KNA TR/10/114, MX Rodrigue, for Registrar of Cooperative Societies, "Co-operative Societies and Their Place in Economic and Social Development," 21st March, 1955.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

This argument for cooperatives as a tool for democracy went directly against what the Registrar of Cooperatives had written about in 1952, noting the opposite trend in which a secretary became dictatorial and democratic controls disappeared. Despite the early failures of cooperative development and the fairly dubious justifications for its continuation, the Ministry of Settlement began “considering the widespread extension of the Co-operative movement in farming” in May of 1962.²⁴

Government enthusiasm for cooperative societies did not equate with any sort of enthusiasm to create clear-cut policy. Perhaps this lack of clarity derived from the hollowness of the policy justification itself, and the risk this empty justification posed to cooperatives’ longevity. Given the overwhelming failure in the early policy experimentations with African cooperative marketing, one might expect policy modification. Instead, few changes were made, and few staff were added to the Department of Cooperatives. The import of the cooperatives for the colonial state derived largely from its utility as a rhetorical stepping stone towards democracy and self-government. Cooperatives provided the British government with an emblematic example of how the colonial state prepared Kenyans for self-government.

For the independent state, cooperatives would continue to play an important rhetorical role, and a much more significant practical role. The independent government drew on a slightly different set of rhetorical devices to construct cooperatives as occupying an integral place within Kenyan society. The emphasis on cooperative development allowed the independent state to continue to stress Africa’s communal past.

²⁴ KNA BN/81/165, From PM Gordon, MAAH to Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Land Settlement and Water Development, Department of the Registrar-General, “Co-operative Development,” 18th May, 1962. This contemplated expansion was similar to that of Israeli cooperatives in their own settlement schemes.

Cooperative development also served to place rhetorical weight behind the importance of “cooperating” to build the new nation, since the transition to democracy had already occurred. African farmers – as members of these societies – would build the nation by working together, just as they had built their communities in this way historically. The independent state constructed cooperatives as a natural form of organization given “their direct roots in African tradition.”²⁵ As a 1964 report noted, “It is said that African farmers had been practicing co-operative farming long before co-operation with a capital ‘C’ was even thought of; that is to say they worked in groups on each other’s fields.”²⁶ Building the nation on a foundation of African tradition allowed the state to create a context in which officials could naturalize Kenyan cooperatives.

Tying cooperatives to nation building and cooperation also made it difficult to question these societies without seeming antagonistic to African tradition, and to the new Kenyan nation. This was part of the utility of cooperation as rhetoric – it became a way of silencing dissent. Particularly, it served as a way of trying to bury the ethnic contestations which had accompanied independence negotiations and decolonization. A 1971 speech by the Permanent Secretary for Co-operatives and Social Services illustrated this purpose, “Co-operatives by their very democratic nature should know and recognize no tribal bonds, sectionalism, or interscene rivalry among its officialdom. It is our responsibility to encourage these principles which are in tempo with the national mood of unity in

²⁵ KNA TR/27/24, “Co-operative Farming within the Context of African Socialism” [unauthored, undated]. African Socialism, and its discursive and material utility, will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters.

²⁶ KNA TR/1/350, “Report on Cooperative Development within Settlement for the Year ended 30th June, 1964.”

Harambee (to pull together); a spirit that is the inspiration behind the great agrarian change now taking place in our country.”²⁷

While archival evidence suggests that most government officials took up this optimistic cooperative rhetoric, some recognized the problematic nature of both the rhetoric and practice of the cooperative movement. The Commissioner for Cooperative Development criticized the use of discourse at the expense of attention to policy. He wrote, “There is at present a tendency in some circles to pay lip service to a co-operative ideal in matters of land settlement, without any real appreciation of the difficulties involved.”²⁸ But, herein lay the new utility of cooperative rhetoric to the independent state; it not only suppressed dissent, but it also brushed over policy challenges.

The imposed cooperation of so many different groups – often with antagonistic interests – proved to produce conflict rather than unity. The Executive Officer of the Kenya Dairy Board wrote to all dairy cooperative societies about how “co-operation between my Board and the co-operatives is essential.” In this case, when the officer used the word “cooperation,” he was referring to cooperation in the policing of illegal milk sales. He concluded his letter in a threatening manner, “Finally, I wish to know from each one of you whether you are prepared to impose fines on your members who might be arrested by my Board, taken to a court of law and convicted.”²⁹ Fines and arrests seem to go directly against the cooperation and unity officials lauded cooperatives for bolstering. The rhetoric, though, proved to be hollow and incongruous. It was easy to construct

²⁷ KNA TR/1/129, “Speech by the Permanent Secretary for Cooperatives and Social Services, Mr. J.N. Oluoch, at the Kenya Institute of Administration on 5th May, 1971.”

²⁸ KNA BN/81/165, Ag. Commissioner for Co-operative Development, “Memorandum: An Appreciation of Settlement Problems and the Role of Co-operative Societies,” [undated].

²⁹ KNA TR/1/75, From J.M. Wanyoike, E.O. of Kenya Dairy Board to All Dairy Farmers Co-operative Societies, 14th July, 1967.

almost any action as upholding “cooperation,” and in this case the spirit of a broader form of cooperation between dairy societies and the dairy board superseded the maintenance of a cooperative atmosphere within individual dairy societies.

There was a coercive aspect of this rhetoric, then. It was coercive not only in silencing discussion of ethnic conflict but, also, in pressuring certain groups and individuals to behave, or to risk accusation of being uncooperative. This coercion even moved outside the realm of rhetoric as farmers were pressured to join cooperatives, and once they were members, they were required to sell their produce to their cooperatives. Farmers in cooperatives could be forced to participate in projects like water reticulation, whether or not they wanted the water and the added cost it represented. This coercion was masked by couching the co-operative movement in language which constructed cooperatives as “voluntary” and “popular.”³⁰

The state concealed the coercive nature of cooperatives through an emphasis on the constructive role cooperative societies played in the redistribution of wealth, and in improving the standards of living of the rural poor. The coercion and silencing of cooperative policy was masked by government officials who purported that the Cooperative Movement was “renowned for its noble ideals of equality, economic and social justice, ideals which are based on and guided by well defined and tested Co-operative Principles.”³¹ For this aspect of state discourse, the Kenyan state connected these ideals to cooperatives more to represent itself to the world than to its citizens. The

³⁰ KNA TR/1/129, “Speech by the Permanent Secretary for Cooperatives and Social Services, Mr. J.N. Oluoch, at the Kenya Institute of Administration on 5th May, 1971.”

³¹ Ibid.

Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs wrote to the Commissioner of Cooperatives about this in 1975:

As you are aware there has been some misrepresentation from some of our neighbours and some of the foreign countries about Kenya's policy regarding the sharing of wealth. Quite often Kenya has been accused of being outright capitalist. This view as you are aware is completely unfounded as there is in Kenya wide participation by *wananchi* in all spheres of our economic development. The role played by your co-operatives in distributing the fruits of *Uhuru* to the small farmers and businessmen is a great contribution. It is the view of my Ministry and the envoys that a better understanding of the working of the cooperatives and its projection in the activities of the envoys overseas will greatly assist in eliminating the unfounded accusation of capitalist leveled at our beloved republic.³²

Cooperatives could serve many discursive purposes for many audiences, and they did so for both the colonial and independent Kenyan states.

Where the independent state's utilization of cooperatives differed dramatically from that of the colonial state was in the use of cooperatives not only as an imaginative device to build the nation, but as a material tool to (re)build Kenya's economy. In postcolonial Kenya much more so than in colonial Kenya, cooperatives served a significant programmatic role in development. The independent Kenyan state relied heavily on cooperatives to support and regulate Kenya's agricultural economy – which was rapidly transitioning in composition, from European large-scale farmers to African smallholders. Kenyan policymakers formulated agricultural plans which used cooperatives both to provide marketing and extension support to farmers (see Chapter 3), and also, as a way of transferring land from European to African farmers. Cooperatives aided in the latter objective in the form of farm buying groups, which purchased large-

³² KNA TR/1/208, From L.O. Kibinge, PS Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Mr. Joshua Muthami, Commissioner of Co-operatives, "Heads of Missions of Meeting," 19th July, 1975.

scale holdings independently of government programs. In all of these ways, cooperatives provided the government with a way of abdicating some of its responsibilities.

With this repurposing of cooperatives, the independent state returned to the cooperative program with a renewed vigor and renewed encouragement. This new vigor often took the form of what can be more aptly characterized as intense pressure on small-scale African farmers to “cooperate” and join cooperatives. This pressure produced outcomes, and from 1963 to 1964 the number of registered cooperative societies more than doubled and the number of members increased by more than five-fold.³³ The value of turnover increased by more than six times.³⁴ This growth continued throughout the 1960s. By 1967, there were 1030 registered cooperative societies, and by 1969, 1850 registered societies.³⁵ These numbers obscured much of what was occurring, however, as the same report which noted these dramatic increases, also noted that of the 1850 registered societies, less than half (900) were active.³⁶ These numbers are revealing, and they illustrate the continued questionable place of cooperatives in independent Kenyan “nation-building” and agricultural economic development. What they do not reveal as clearly, but what will come through below, is that the inactiveness of so many cooperatives emerged not only from a setting where the government pressured reluctant farmers to participate in cooperative development, but also, one in which the cooperatives

³³ KNA TR/1/350, “Report on Cooperative Development within Settlement for the Year ended 30th June, 1964.”

³⁴ KNA TR/1/350, “Report on Cooperative Development within Settlement for the Year ended 30th June, 1964.”

³⁵ KNA TR/1/208, “Co-operative Development Policy for Kenya.”

³⁶ KNA TR/1/208, “Co-operative Development Policy for Kenya.” Perhaps, for this reason, another report on the growth of the cooperative movement uses different rates of growth. “A Brief Report on the Kenya Co-operative Movement in the Last Decade” reported that there were 1632 cooperatives in 1973, for example. KNA TR/1/208, “A Brief Report on the Kenya Co-operative Movement in the Last Decade: Progress, Achievement, and Problems,” 1973 [unauthored].

had often contributed more to the detriment than the prosperity of its members due to their dysfunction.

The importance of cooperatives for rhetorical use continued from the colonial era into the postcolonial era, though the nature of this discourse evolved with the historical context, as the new state sought to represent postcolonial Kenya as a nation founded upon its traditional past, full of cooperation and unity, and committed to equality. This construction required compulsion and coercion.

The Kenyan state's material dependence on cooperative societies for its economic development plans entailed obfuscation as well. These plans signaled state incapacity and abandonment of responsibility. Despite the rhetoric that cooperatives would "mitigate the evils of exploitation and therefore... enhance economic and social justice," they did just the opposite. They became corrupt and allowed the more educated, well-connected members to exploit the less, just as the colonial state noted had occurred in its experiments with cooperatives. This time, however, with such widespread extension of cooperative societies, the implications were to be much greater.

COOPERATIVES AND CORRUPTION

In independent Kenya's agricultural policy, cooperative societies were created to serve four main purposes: they helped farmers to market crops, they helped provided agricultural and veterinary extension services, and they brought together prospective purchasers of European farms. In fulfilling these intentions, cooperatives, most broadly, were supposed to allow the state a more laissez-faire approach to its agricultural policy. Members of cooperative societies were required to sell their crops to their societies, which then sold them to government-regulated marketing boards, deducted various fees,

and paid the farmers (see Chapter 5 for more on this complex system, for maize). Cooperatives also played a part in extension work, often managing cattle dips or selling fertilizer to members. Farm-buying cooperatives allowed members to communally purchase large farms. All of these roles provided a weak, understaffed, underfunded state, with an underdeveloped bureaucratic machinery, an alternative institution to help regulate agriculture. Cooperatives became micro-sub-states, supposedly democratic. They were tasked with some of the bureaucratic and authoritative functions often attributed to states – such as collecting taxes, regulating the economy, and making agricultural policy decisions. Cooperatives produced new forms of local governance, but they also produced new problems for the central government to control local governance. And, similar to the contestations between the formal local and central government discussed in chapter 2, cooperatives both brought the central state and transnational institutions to local settings and they simultaneously operated partially outside the sphere of the state.

The state had an established system for registering and regulating cooperative societies, which evolved over time. This system, however, gave cooperatives a great deal of freedom, largely because the state simply did not have the qualified manpower to staff its cooperative department. In 1963, about a month and a half before independence, Merlyn Davies, Commissioner for Cooperative development, noted in a meeting that out of 33 Co-operative Officers, there were 10 vacancies “which he could not find suitable applicants to fill, in spite of lowering the standards required.”³⁷ Not much had changed almost a decade later in 1972, when the Nordic Education Adviser to the Commissioner for Co-operative Development noted that “proper supervision and control has not been

³⁷ KNA TR/1/210, “Record of Meeting of the Committee set up by the Minister to Consider the Half Million Acre Scheme on the 25th October, 1963.”

done,” and a “lack of qualified staff, only 1/3 of the societies have qualified farm managers, and only a few have qualified book-keepers/records/clerks.”³⁸

The cooperative movement expanded incredibly fast in the post independence period. The government facilitated this expansion by registering the Kenya National Federation of Co-operatives in 1964 to advise the government on cooperative societies; by amending the Co-operative Societies Act in 1996 to give the Commissioner for Co-operative development increased power to deal with the misappropriation of funds and to intervene; by requesting for aid from bilateral donors, which led to the establishment of the Nordic Project for Co-operative Assistance to Kenya in 1967 and provided help with staff, accounting systems, credit and banking services, and education; and by establishing the co-operative bank in 1968, which acted as the banking and financing institution of co-operative organizations.³⁹

The cooperative societies in the northwest Rift Valley mostly marketed maize and milk for their members, and provided services so that the cooperative members could better produce these crops. Milk marketing, in particular, provides a telling example of the consequences of poorly run cooperative agriculture since dairy farming requires not only a good deal of agricultural inputs, but the product itself is much more prone to adulteration. Milk can spoil if the travel to market is slowed, and when cooperative members combined their milk products together, one member’s poor milk could spoil the entire society’s product.

³⁸ KNA TR/1/231, Per Tau Strand, Nordic Education Adviser, to the Commissioner for Co-operative Development, “Notes on Uasin Gishu/Trans Nzoya [sic]. Mainly Large Scale Co-operative Farms,” 16th October, 1972.

³⁹ KNA TR/1/118, Michael Chege Kuria (Ministry of Cooperative Development 1963/1983), “Special Focus on Co-operative Movement in Independent Kenya,” [undated].

For milk cooperatives, the state instituted a similar system of marketing regulations to those created for other crops. The Dairy Industry Act Cap. 336 of 1958 set up the Kenya Dairy Board (KDB) with statutory control, and the responsibility of “organizing, regulation and development of efficient production, marketing distribution and supply of dairy produce.”⁴⁰ The Kenya Dairy Board made it illegal to sell milk without a KDB license. The policy aimed to avoid competition, and most milk producers sold to the KDB-licensed Kenya Cooperative Creameries (KCC), which then retailed the milk to the KDB.⁴¹ The Kenya Dairy Board and the Kenya Cooperative Creameries created a contract and quota system, which fixed the amount of milk individual producers could sell. This system was intended to ensure a regular supply of milk, but had the effect of disincentivizing farmers or cooperative societies with small quotas from producing up to their full potential. There was, in addition, an inequitable distribution of these quotas, leading to discontent among farmers and cooperatives with low production quotas. Cooperative Societies, for their part, were empowered under the Co-operative Societies Act, 1966, to bind their members to supply all produce through the cooperative, and allowed societies to fine members for the infringement of these by-laws.⁴² Most societies included these stipulations in their by-laws.

Eventually, in 1970, the Kenya Cooperative Creameries and the Kenya Dairy Board dismantled this system of milk quotas, and the price of milk simultaneously increased. With this change, many cooperative societies wanted to buy coolers, so that

⁴⁰ KNA TR/1/75, From J.M. Wanyoike, E.O. of Kenya Dairy Board to All Dairy Farmers Co-operative Societies, 14th July, 1967.

⁴¹ KNA TR/1/75, From J.M. Wanyoike, E.O. of Kenya “The Dairy Industry in Kenya.”

⁴² KNA TR/1/75, From J.M. Wanyoike, E.O. of Kenya Dairy Board to All Dairy Farmers Co-operative Societies, 14th July, 1967.

members could keep their products from evening milking until morning deliveries went out. By 1975, cooperative farmers supplied 40 percent of the total production of milk.⁴³

It was not just that farmers and cooperative societies wanted coolers to aid in greater milk production. Transport was also extremely important. Given the daily nature of dairy production, it could become expensive for cooperatives to hire a vehicle. Moreover, some of the companies providing transportation proved to be unreliable, leading to the adulteration of milk products farmers were trying to sell. The Sosiani cooperative society demonstrated this problem in their application to purchase a tractor in 1972, writing, “The means of transport that we have at the moment is not all reliable as we have some 3,000 kg. of milk downgraded monthly due to lateness in transportation. Most of the members however have complained about this loss of milk and some have started to apply for their own licence at KCC.”⁴⁴ The Kenya Cooperatives Creameries graded the milk brought to them, and lower grade milk received less money. Spoiled milk received no money at all. Unreliable transport, then, could affect farmers’ income.

This set of factors encouraged many farmers to work around their cooperative societies and deliver milk on their own. H.E. Agimba, the Assistant Commissioner for Co-operative Development, commented in a letter to a co-operative officer of Turbo “that there are quite a number of people from societies under you who deliver their milk direct to KCC. This as you realize, has put such societies in a very embarrassing situation whereby they cannot afford to repay their loans, maintain their cattle dips, etc. yet such

⁴³ KNA TR/1/208, Ministry of Co-operative Development Nairobi, “Sessional Paper No. of 1975, Co-operative Development Policy for Kenya,” January, 1975.

⁴⁴ KNA TR/8/1184, Sosiani Farmers Co-op Society Ltd to The Commissioner for Co-operative Development, “Application for Purchase of Tractor 1972,” 21st July, 1972.

members keep on receiving services from the societies.”⁴⁵ The problem, then, ended up compounding itself.

When transportation failed, milk production decreased, loan repayments decreased, and cooperative services decreased. Members of the Lumakanda extension scheme wrote to the Commissioner of Cooperatives about the deteriorating services, claiming that “Dip Chemical to the dip No. 5 was since it was put there when this dip was opened in June 1972 has never been refilled, and the old water drained... Water in the dip these days is nothing but mud.”⁴⁶ The Lumakanda complaint was not an exception, though the mismanaged dips did not always emerge from a situation connected to transport.

The mismanagement of dips, of course, could lead to further complications for cooperative societies and cooperative members. When dips were not managed properly, not kept up to proper strength, or when farmers were not compelled to use them, there were disease outbreaks amongst cattle. Many farmers – and some ethnic groups in particular – held their wealth in cattle. So, to lose a herd, or even a single dairy cattle, could be devastating.

It was not only transport that could lead to these problems. The success of cooperatives depended upon the hard work of each member. Many farmers remembered that certain cooperative members led to the depreciation in value of their milk. Ainea Alulu, for example, said the “*shida ya KCC* (the problem of the KCC)” was that farmers might deliver 20 buckets of milk, but if the KCC found that only one was not up to

⁴⁵ KNA TR/8/1617, HE Agimba, Asst Commissioner for Co-operative Development (S) to Co-operative Officer (S), Turbo, “Milk Delivery to KCC,” 11th July, 1973.

⁴⁶ KNA TR/8/1617 Members of Lumakanda extension Block D to The Commissioner of Co-operatives, 14th June, 1974.

standard, they do not pay the money.⁴⁷ Jairo Murunga Libapu had similar memories. He said that sharing a bucket was a problem in the cooperative, “because someone might have low quality, dirty, watered down milk, and it brought down the standard for everyone.”⁴⁸

Kenyan policy more generally on agriculture and cooperative marketing societies, particularly in the Rift Valley and former European highlands, was intertwined with the policy to implement land settlement schemes in the years surrounding independence. The encouragement to create cooperatives on land settlement schemes served as a way for the state to monitor and control the production and marketing of agricultural outputs in Kenya. From the start, the state required cooperatives to submit budgets and production plans. In registration applications, cooperative societies outlined the total acreage of the cooperative, the number of settlers and the average size plot per person. They also listed the crops on which the economy was based as well as the net target income. They broke this target down even further, by listing how many acres each farmer would devote to each crop and the estimated expenditure (transport, dip expenses, salary and wages for cooperative officers) and income from the produce.⁴⁹

Cooperative policy also required education and training, often paid for by international donors. This education and training differed from that offered to average farmers on settlement schemes through extension services, and was geared, rather, towards the employees and office bearers of these societies. In 1968, for example, Harry

⁴⁷ Interview with Ainea Alulu, Lumakanda, November 5, 2012.

⁴⁸ Interview with Jairo Murunga Libapu, Lumakanda, November 3, 2012.

⁴⁹ KNA TR/8/779, From E.V. Powell, Asst. Commissioner for Co-operative Development (S) to Commissioner for Co-operative Development, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, “Application for Registration: Lugari Farmers Cooperative Society Limited,” 6th September, 1963.

Pederson, the Nordic Adviser wrote to the Commissioner of Cooperatives in Area South of Settlement that there were 106 societies registered in the region employing secretaries, managers, recorders, office bearers (chairmen, treasurers, honorary secretaries), and other committee members.⁵⁰ Many of these people were starting jobs for which they had little to no training. Because of the dearth of experience among this group, the government created training programs to educate employees and office-bearers how to complete their cooperative duties. Much of these training programs took place at Farmer's Training Centres, first established in the 1950s and 1960s by the colonial state to educate African farmers about "scientific agriculture." These Farmer's Training Centres began to serve the Cooperative Development department which also taught a number of courses, often using the mobile film unit.⁵¹

Despite the registration of these institutional bodies, these training programs, and the outside assistance, the cooperative office-bearers were very soon working almost wholly independently. On the settlement schemes, in particular, cooperative societies were expected to take over many of the functions of the state and the extension services with little time to learn some of these jobs. A report on Co-operative Farming in the Former Scheduled Areas noted that this would produce difficulties. "A by far greater problem presents itself in that the small-holder settlement schemes through their co-operative organizations, which at present are primarily concerned with marketing, are

⁵⁰ KNA TR/11/168, Harry Pederson, Nordic Adviser, to the Commissioner for Co-operative Development (S), "Education and Training Within Settlement," August, 1968.

⁵¹ KNA TR/11/168, Harry Pederson, Nordic Adviser (ED), "Summary and Evaluation of Education Activities within the Department of Settlement in the Last Half of 1968 – from 1st July to 31st December, 1968."

expected to assume the overall responsibility of the Settlement Schemes when Settlement authority is withdrawn within about five years.”⁵²

Even before these cooperatives were expected to assume overall responsibility, state and international officers providing training and support were inadequate. One of the Nordic Advisers noted in 1970 that there were 130 settlement cooperative societies which were controlled by 10 cooperative officers.⁵³ That meant one cooperative officer for every 13 schemes, many of which had hundreds of people and thousands of acres of land. These officers often did not have cars, but traveled on foot or bicycle, and it was impossible for them to visit every scheme.

Even when the state did recognize the need to intervene, particularly in societies where there were interpersonal problems, corruption, financial failings, etc, they were slow to arrive and they remained incapable of effecting much change. When the government did try to intervene it often was too little or too late. In June of 1965, the Assistant Commissioner for Cooperative Development (S) said of the Lugari Farmers Cooperative, “this society is heading for trouble and I strongly recommend that you direct an inquiry to be held immediately to discipline the management.”⁵⁴ The Assistant Commissioner went on to note that the cooperative committee went to his office explaining that they wanted to buy a lorry, because their milk had not been collected by their transporter. The Assistant Commissioner arranged for the society to submit a loan application to purchase a tractor and trailer in order to save money by not purchasing the

⁵² KNA TR/27/24, Nikolaus Newiger, Nakuru – Kenya, “Co-operative Farming in the Former Scheduled Areas of Kenya,” 14 October 1965.

⁵³ KNA TR/11/168, From M. Teravainen, Nordic Adviser (Ed)(S) for Asst. Commissioner for Cooperative Development (S) to The Principal, Dairy Training School, Naivasha, 1st September, 1970.

⁵⁴ KNA TR/8/779, From AK Ndeti, Ag. Asst. Commissioner for Co-operative Development (S) to The Commissioner for Co-operative Development (S), “Lugari Farmers Cooperative Society Ltd,” 14th June, 1965.

more expensive lorry. Despite this advice and these arrangements, the Assistant Commissioner continued to recount in his letter, “But I now understand that these people bought a lorry before they left Nairobi and took it back with them against our advice.”⁵⁵ Even when state officers were actively monitoring cooperative societies, they had little success intervening in cooperative affairs.

Some of this lack of success grew out of the differing conceptions of how cooperatives should run and what they should provide to their members. In the same case of the Lugari cooperative society mentioned above, it emerged through the inquiry that the leaders had been pressured by members to purchase a lorry soon, or “their houses would be burned down.”⁵⁶ The society had an unreliable milk transporter and had lost some of its milk quota on account of this, so cooperative members pressured the office-bearers to get a lorry. Even after the lorry was purchased and the government tried to explain to the office bearers and the cooperative members that it was a financially impractical move, the cooperative still wanted to keep the lorry. The report on the inquiry noted that, at the *baraza*, “most of the members there insisted for the retention of this vehicle, and agreed to contribute for this vehicle.”⁵⁷

The state and cooperative societies approached loans and the running of cooperative societies in dissimilar ways. In this instance, the lorry not only provided the cooperative with a more reliable form of transport for their agricultural produce, but it also provided them with independence and with a symbol of their prosperity. Ownership

⁵⁵ KNA TR/8/779, From AK Ndeti, Ag. Asst. Commissioner for Co-operative Development (S) to The Commissioner for Co-operative Development (S), “Lugari Farmers Cooperative Society Ltd,” 14th June, 1965.

⁵⁶ KNA TR/8/77, From Roop Lal Chadha, Inquiry Officer of SFT to Commissioner for Co-operative Development, 2nd July, 1965.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

of a lorry, even if communally, symbolized the progress and development that many rural farmers aspired to and wanted to perform. The state did not recognize this, though, and did not realize the significance of the will of the cooperative members. The inquiry into the Lugari purchase of a lorry concluded with an assessment that the committee members “did not exercise the prudence and diligence required of them in accordance with their By-laws” and that “appropriate action should be instituted against the persons concerned for the purchase of this vehicle, as it had involved the society in financial difficulties.”⁵⁸

State regulation of cooperative societies was uneven and unpredictable, as it was for many other aspects of social services and development. Despite the commission of inquiry and the noting of the problematic nature of cooperative decision making and finances, a letter from the Commissioner of Cooperative Development of July 1970 noted that the society had not submitted an audited account to the appropriate office since 1965. Even with this five year lapse, the budget of the society was approved.⁵⁹ In other cases, societies with similar issues about misuse of funds *wanted* investigations to be carried out into their cooperatives, but they could not get cooperative officers to come. Three members of the “Progressive Farmers Co-op Society” in Uasin Gishu district wrote in August 1967, “We are to ask you if the society being above named is different or a part from the others? Because no any investigations done since it was made a society in the time of three years. And the sum was passed to be taken to the auditor and not taken since

⁵⁸ KNA TR/8/77, From Roop Lal Chadha, Inquiry Officer of SFT to Commissioner for Co-operative Development, 2nd July, 1965.

⁵⁹ KNA TR/8/779, From P.A. Gwada, Commissioner for Co-operative Development to The Asst. Commissioner for Co-operative Development (S), “Re: Lugari Farmers Cooperative Society Limited,” 27th July, 1970.

1965 up to now 1967. Why?”⁶⁰ The petitioners added that despite a resolution, the cooperative was not holding its annual general meeting, and a cooperative officer was not acting to force the cooperative manager to call this meeting. Noting the financial indiscretions of the manager, the letter writers asked, “Why don’t the co-op officer of Eldoret ask this? And he was chosen to look for it?”⁶¹ It is impossible to know if the letter writers intentionally used a question mark at the end of this last sentence, since the letter contains a number of grammatical errors, but it signals the sort of uncertainty that grew out of the rhetorical emphasis on the importance of absence of cooperatives in educating and training the new generation of farmers that could not be reconciled with a very different experience of cooperatives in farmers’ daily lives.

Despite the intention of using cooperative societies as a way of delegating some government responsibility in the regulation of agriculture and agricultural marketing, government policymakers still recognized the need for some state control of these societies. The minutes of a staff meeting on developing some settlement schemes in the northwest Rift Valley noted that “Development schemes now reached the stage where they are largely a Cooperative management problem. Very few Cooperatives are ready, without assistance, to deal with full burden of management. Most Schemes will benefit greatly from presence of resident ‘aide.’”⁶² The minutes continue on to reveal that the attendees believed that Settlement Officers and Peace Corps Volunteers working on the scheme could be “of great value in this way” by helping with budgets, plot schedules, and

⁶⁰ KNA TR/1/100, From David Ndegwa Karanja, Ngene Nganga, and Mwangi Maina to the PS, Co-op Society, “Ref: Claims,” 6 August, 1967.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² KNA AVS/3/45, “Minutes of the staff meeting held in the office of the Area Settlement Controller (West) on Wednesday, 24th February, 1965.”

planned targets, by tracing the reasons for production shortfalls, by examining loan repayment patterns, by educating the cooperatives, and more.⁶³ There was an understanding, then, of the role government officers could play in managing cooperatives, and further, there was an apparatus – even if nominal in size and scope – created to play this role.

By 1965, it was becoming clear that the advantages of this nominal size and scope – frugality and adapting the government structure to government capacity – were often outweighed by the disadvantages – dysfunction, corruption, indebtedness. Various institutions began discussing the changes that needed to be made in response. The Settlement Fund Trustees agreed at a meeting in May 1965 that they would “support action to secure the amendment of regulations so that the Department of Settlement should have reasonable powers of management within the Co-operatives on Settlement Schemes.”⁶⁴ Under these changes, the government became more actively involved in regulating cooperatives, particularly in regulating cooperative finances. The Kenyan government also began pushing for the amalgamation of individual cooperatives into cooperative unions and larger cooperatives, under the belief that these bigger cooperatives would have greater capacity to regulate themselves, or that the state could more easily regulate cooperatives if they were fewer and larger.

The trend, despite this government push for larger cooperatives, was actually in the opposite direction and many cooperatives refused to join unions, or broke away from unions, on account of the fact that they felt these unions had little accountability to them.

⁶³ KNA AVS/3/45, “Minutes of the staff meeting held in the office of the Area Settlement Controller (West) on Wednesday, 24th February, 1965.”

⁶⁴ KNA BN/81/165, “Extract from the Minutes of the Settlement Fund Trustees Meeting held on Tuesday 25th May, 1965.”

The rampant problems of corruption and misappropriation of funds were exacerbated in these unions, because the individual members had even less say over the use of their money, and less capability for providing oversight. This trend is exemplified through Sosiani cooperative, which split off from the Ndalat cooperative. Ndalat settlement scheme started off with 97 farmers and 97 plots, but later, some of these farmers split off to form their own cooperative. The reasons informants gave for this split ranged from wanting to have more ownership over their cooperative to recounting that the Ndalat cooperative leaders secretly sold the farms of cooperative members on occasion.⁶⁵ Archival records document this split, and reveal that it occurred in 1968, and that the original Ndalat cooperative and settlement scheme spanned the Nandi and Uasin Gishu districts, and they split along the district boundaries. The archival record explains the split on account of “social problems.”⁶⁶ Most importantly, the Ndalat-Sosiani split, and other splits occurring at the time, represent rural resistance to state intervention over local governance issues. These splits similarly represented rural desire for a localized and visible form of governance, with some accountability.

Though the most intrusive state intervention within cooperative development occurred in cooperative marketing societies on settlement schemes, a range of cooperative formations existed. Farm buying cooperatives – also called land buying companies – in fact, represented the most common type of cooperative in independent Kenya. Many Kenyans formed these cooperatives as a way of enabling themselves to buy

⁶⁵ Interview with Steven Kiplemai Ngetich, Sosiani, December 4, 2012; Interview with Selena Chelimo Barno, Leseru, November 28, 2012.

⁶⁶ KNA TR/8/1849, From D. Onyango Arende, for Ag. Asst. Commissioner for Coop. Development (S) to the Area Settlement Controller (N), “Sosiani Farmers Co-operative Society Ltd (Proposed),” 16th November, 1967. This could have been a coded term for clan / neighborhood differences, but it might also have had to do with the split in the Nandi community between those who had stayed in the colonial native reserve and those who had left to labor on European farms in the white highlands.

farms they would otherwise not be able to afford. Similar to marketing cooperatives, farm buying cooperatives represented a way for the state to encourage Africans to participate in state programs with very little state bureaucratic regulation. Also similar to agricultural marketing cooperative societies, farm-buying societies seemed to provide the poor a new way of gaining access to land, particularly if the government was not willing to subdivide large estates to create new settlement schemes.

Farm purchasing cooperatives, thus, were not cooperatives in the same sense of the word as the agricultural marketing cooperatives. Poor Kenyan farmers put their money together to buy large scale farms in these cooperatives. After they purchased the farm, they sometimes farmed on separate plots, and they sometimes farmed as a cooperative. (Usually the latter was the case if the cooperative had only put in a down-payment rather than paying for the entire farm at the start.) In addition, farm purchasing cooperatives bucked an economic development program centered on large-scale farming, and which assumed that small-scale peasant farming would not lead to growth, but only to political acquiescence. Farm Purchasing Cooperatives were, by far, the majority of the cooperatives in Uasin Gishu district. By forming these cooperatives, rural Kenyans were able to gain access to land, particularly, after most of the opportunities for land resettlement had closed down. By allowing for the emergence of Farm Purchasing Cooperatives, the government was also, in short, taking a very hands-off approach to resettlement and the transfer of land to farmers. The government refused to subdivide the farms, and in many instances, government policy did not regulate the ways in which people started farming the land. If the cooperative was registered and had the money for the down payment and the loan, it could take over a European farm. This served as a deep

contrast to state policy on settlement schemes, which had initially attempted to monitor and regulate the production and marketing of Kenyan agriculture.

This contrast was an intentional government policy. A report on cooperative farming in the former scheduled areas noted that “From 1963 to 1965[,] 349 farm purchasing societies were registered. Political instructions received under the then Ministry of Commerce and Industry encourage registration with a minimum of formalities.”⁶⁷ The report went on, “The majority of these newly registered societies have never been contacted by the departmental staff, simply because there was not sufficient staff to cope with the new development. But what is even more significant, there was a complete absence of any policy or regulations regarding the direction of this new type of co-operative society.”⁶⁸ Farmers in Uasin Gishu district recounted stories that support this system, and many remembered being told about farm buying cooperatives by “leaders,” such as chiefs or elders, in their community. This complete absence led to complications, both for the government and for the members of cooperative farm purchasing societies. In fact, the government had so much difficulty with these societies that the Commissioner of Cooperative Development placed an embargo of farm-buying cooperative registration in 1965.⁶⁹

The government was forced to place this embargo on farm-buying cooperatives because they presented a number of unforeseen problems. Alfred Machayo recounted that many people were persuaded by friends and relatives to go into farm buying. Many

⁶⁷ KNA TR/27/24, Nikolaus Newiger, Nakuru – Kenya, “Co-operative Farming in the Former Scheduled Areas of Kenya,” 14 October 1965.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ KNA TR/1/351, From D. Thiongo for Special Commissioner, Squatters, to the Deputy Commissioner, Department of Cooperative Development, 22nd May, 1967.

farmers, however, were what the government called “hidden partners.” Machayo said, “Maybe I was told to produce 20,000 shillings, and I went around to my friends and collected 15,000 shillings and put in that money as my share.” But, then “when it came to selling the farm they had trouble. If they are dividing shares, they didn’t go to hidden partners.”⁷⁰ In short, many rural farmers would contribute money to buy a farm, but the government limited the number of partners allowed to pay for and work on these farms, and thus, those not listed on the title deed were “hidden partners,” who might – for a time – work the land, but could very easily be pushed out, since they had no legal rights to the land. Government documents are peppered with discussions of how to stem “illegal partnerships” and “hidden partners,” since these conflicts caused great amounts of conflict and led to the dispossession and defrauding of many rural farmers.

Specific cases documented in the archives, and also gathered through oral histories, further demonstrate the larger problem that these hidden partnerships created. A member of the “Yamumbi Uasin Gishu Farmer’s Co-operative Society” complained in October 1966:

We were informed that we had collected sufficient capital to buy land, namely Shs.250,000/- (two hundred and fifty thousand shillings) a year and a half have elapsed and nothing so far has been done by the office bearers, in that they have neither bought a farm nor convened a General Meeting. There is mounting indignation and worry among the members of the said Society as we are not informed of what progress has been made. We are of the view that our money is lying idle, if not wrongly spent...⁷¹

The case of the Punda Milk Farm represents all of the dangers and vulnerabilities of being a hidden partner. The following summary and explanation of what occurred at

⁷⁰ Interview with Alfred Machayo, Chekalini, November 1, 2012.

⁷¹ KNA TR/1/100, From Mwaniki Mwangi to the Minister of Co-operative Societies, “Re: Yamumbi Uasin Gishu Farmer’s Co-operative Society Ltd. Registration No.C.S./1339,” 31st October, 1966.

Punda Milk farm was written by the Area Settlement Controller of Central Province to the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Lands and Settlement in 1972.

...Two rather prominent members M/S/ Simon Njuguna and Mutungi Wamuhu...told me that their Advocates were M/S Gatuguta M.P. for Kikuyu and Kanti J. Patel of Nakuru. They had negotiated for the sale of that farm through their lawyers and had the total sale price of shs. 235,000/-. There were 267 members in all.

On 4th October, 1972 it was reported that nineteen people including two Policemen came to the farm in a Toyota pickup No. KBC 690. They looked round the farm and then went away. The members learnt later that their property had been sold to Mumui Company Ltd. whose representatives came to view the farm. They (Kirungui people) thought that the best thing was to see their MP Eric Bomet and they hired a bus to go to the Parliamentary Buildings on 11th October, 1972. Sixty four people went by that bus and were joined by another 50 from Nairobi or nearby. In all there were 114 people in this delegation. They met the Hon. Eric Bomet MP and were advised to leave four officials with him (two Tugens and two Kikuyus) so that they might see all the people concerned and reach a decision in their favour.

Then I went to see the Mumui Company Ltd. near Subukia town. I could not find the office bearers because they had gone to Nairobi on a Court case. But I saw the District Officer Bahati who gave me some information about this Company.

There were 365 members in all who had settled on a farm to the north of Subukia township. Apparently they had negotiated for it including obtaining a consent from the Nakuru Land Control Board. But about a month ago another group bought this property and was able to get a title deed for it. A Court Order was issued to evict these people with their property and GSU did carry out this order. This new Company now took the Mumui Company to the High Court for damages.

My recommendation is the same as that of the Estates Manager that we have nothing to do with it. In addition to that things are more confounded than ever and we may be asked to be the dumping ground for such squabbles. But it seems that the Kirungii people should not be disturbed and they should be encouraged so that they can settle properly. The Mumui Company which seems to be a thorn in sides of Administration should look for another property to buy but we should not and should never be drawn in as it seems we are being asked to do.⁷²

Farm buying cooperatives, and their owners, were often particularly vulnerable to these types of dispossessions both because of the absence of government control and,

⁷² KNA BN/81/52, From ASC (C), T. Kiragu, to the PS, Ministry of Lands and Settlement, "Punda Milk Farm," 13th October, 1972.

simultaneously, because government regulation inhibited numerous partners on the title deed.

Oral histories support this narrative. Sally Kogo, for example, remembered that her family joined a farm buying cooperative. They had been told that the farm had been a sisal plantation previously. At the time, Kogo had only ever seen scattered sisal, so it did not concern her. When she arrived, she was surprised to see that all the land was planted with sisal, incredibly difficult to uproot, making it impossible to plant maize. Her family was disappointed and felt they had been cheated.⁷³ Kiptoo arap Maina told a similar story about poor land quality in his farm buying cooperative. His family purchased land through a farm purchasing cooperative, but the land was already exhausted, and they sold the land after seven years.⁷⁴

Others told stories about corruption and exploitation in the farm purchasing societies. William Serem remembered that when his family bought land in a farm-buying cooperative, the land was not subdivided. The chairman pressured the members to pay loans, but they were paying for plots “they didn’t know.” There were no boundaries, so they just all paid equally, and found out later that the chairman had just been stealing their money and taking more land for himself.⁷⁵ Helen Kirua also remembered difficulties with the other members and the leadership of her farm purchasing cooperative. She said that because the land was not divided into individual holdings, they were working as a community, and some took it that whatever they produced was not theirs. “People were not serious with farm work.” She added that, later, when the land

⁷³ Interview with Sally Kogo, Leseru, November 23, 2012.

⁷⁴ Interview with Kiptoo arap Maina, Leseru, November 23, 2012.

⁷⁵ Interview with William Serem, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

was finally divided after society members demanded their own plots, her family only received 20 acres, though they were expecting 50 acres. The leaders had taken extra money and land, just as in the case of William Serem.⁷⁶

Likely on account of all the problems within early postcolonial cooperative societies, and on account of the fact that the state did not have the finances to continue large scale land resettlement with the same amount of oversight as initially envisioned, the government began supporting programs for cooperative, communal farming. The government first tried to bolster cooperative farming – not just cooperative marketing or cooperative purchasing – only in the 1970s, with its Shirika Settlement Programme. The Shirika program planned for large scale cooperative farmers initially managed by trained government employees and later would be transferred to “the cooperators.”⁷⁷ Shirika settlement programs were specifically targeted at cereal-producing regions, which the government thought could not be developed in small blocks.⁷⁸ The land under Shirika was planned in allocations as a single unit to an approved and registered farming cooperative society on a 99 year lease renewable every 33 years. The majority of the land was farmed together, with each family also receiving subsistence plots, though all of the land was the property of the Settlement Fund Trustees.⁷⁹

Another differentiating characteristic of the Shirika Settlement program was that the management of the farms was in the early stages to be by trained managers appointed by the Director of Settlement. Later on, the government planned for the management to be transferred to the cooperative members when they were “sufficiently trained to take

⁷⁶ Interview with Helen Kirua, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

⁷⁷ KNA TR/1/201, JR Njenga, Director of Settlement, “Land Transfer and Land Settlement 1974/78.”

⁷⁸ Uasin Gishu district was one of these cereal regions, producing maize, wheat, and barley.

⁷⁹ KNA TR/1/100, Uasin Gishu District Co-operative Societies, “The Shirika Settlement Programme.”

over.”⁸⁰ The Shirika farms, though, were also plagued by management problems, and additionally, Kenyan farmers were not enthusiastic to lease their land or to be managed in their farming. The dream at independence was individual ownership.

All of these forms of post-independence cooperative farming point to the rampant corruption, mismanagement, and the exploitation of rural farmers that occurred on a widespread basis within these cooperatives. These societies were prone to these problems largely because of the complicated government regulations coupled with an incapacitated government staff. Similarly, the accounting processes for these societies became incredibly complicated with cooperative organizations withdrawing farmers’ loans, as well as agricultural taxes. This accounting allowed for easy corrupt practices, and additionally, members had their own ideas – which differed greatly from the government – about how their proceeds should be used. In short, it was a question of good governance, and how it worked in practice. Cooperative leaders were often not good governors and their members contested this poor leadership by withdrawing from cooperatives, refusing to sell their produce through the cooperative societies, or selling their portion of the land in farm purchasing cooperatives. There were also contestations over governance and ownership vis a vis the state, and cooperatives asserted that they had different ideas about how they should organize themselves and spend their money. When they bought vans with their proceeds, or when cooperatives split off from unions despite government policy, the members asserted that they had different ideas of how cooperative farming should work in practice. Unfortunately, the aftermath of the government creation of an agricultural marketing system around cooperative societies,

⁸⁰ KNA TR/1/201, JR Njenga, Director of Settlement, “Land Transfer and Land Settlement 1974/78.”

and of the government allowing the landless access to land through cooperative societies was not a positive one. The unforeseen consequences had little to do with cooperative resistance to government intervention, and much more to do with a broader faulty system that extended all the way to bilateral and transnational donors.

LAND LOANS AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF INDEBTEDNESS

When farmers bought land through settlement programs, and in some cases through farm purchasing cooperatives, they did so through a loan. The rural poor, the central characters in this dissertation as well as the majority of the Kenyan population, settled on what were called “high density” settlement schemes. These land purchase and settlement programs were mostly financed by loans from the British Government (see Chapter 3). After 1961, the British Government made a free grant to the Kenyan Government for one third the cost of the land. The remaining two thirds were met through a loan. The Kenyan government, for its part, used the grant and loan money to buy out European farmers. The Kenyan government paid half the purchase price in cash, and the remaining half through three equal installments carrying a five percent interest rate. The Kenya farmers who purchased land in settlement schemes made a down payment to the Kenyan government and took out a loan to pay for the remainder of the land. The Kenyan government planned to use the repayment of these settler land loans in order to repay its own loans.⁸¹

Land loans represented the largest of the range of agricultural loans that farmers gained access to when they entered a settlement scheme, or became land owners. There were also development loans for the purchase of livestock, machinery, fencing, water and

⁸¹ KNA BN/81/35, A. Davies, for Director of Land Adjudication, “Five Year Development Progress Review. Land Adjudication, Consolidation and Registration,” 27th May, 1968.

other supplies; there were cooperative loans for small scale farmers in cooperative societies; cereal crops loans in the event of crop failure from causes outside the growers' control; and there existed advances against cereals loans. This assemblage of loans became complicated for the farmers to keep track of, and for the loan granting institutions to manage. The fact that these loans were given out by different government ministries and departments, made it easy for farmers to become highly indebted very quickly.⁸² Some of this indebtedness occurred on account of farmers taking out numerous loans at once, and some of it occurred on account of the impossible terms under which these loans were created. Certain loans had very high interest rates. The cereals loans, for example, had an interest rate of eight percent charged each year the loan remained outstanding.⁸³ In some circumstances, farmers were expected to begin repaying their land loans six months after settling on their farm, but before they had harvested a single crop.⁸⁴ Other loans grossly miscalculated the farmers' expected income, and consequently, these loan repayment plans miscalculated farmers' ability to repay the loan.⁸⁵ Sometimes, farmers

⁸² KNA BV/6/877, Crops – GMR Policy (1962-64), "Information to all Farmers."

⁸³ KNA BV/6/877, Memorandum by the Minister of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, McKenzie, "Draft: The Cabinet: The Wheat Industry."

⁸⁴ KNA BN/81/34, C. Kahara, "Summary of Van Arkadie Report, 15th February, 1967." Another factor which played a role in the creation of rural indebtedness resulted from Kenyan farmers' different conceptions of loans, and a misunderstanding of the repercussions of late loan repayments. This will be further explained later.

⁸⁵ KNA TR/1/201, JR Njenga, Director of Settlement, "Land Transfer and Land Settlement 1974/78," "Experience has shown that the level of production on small plots in the Million Acre programme cannot service the high rate of interest, namely 6 ½ % so far charged on land and development loans. It is, therefore, proposed to discontinue charging interest on arrears..." KNA AVS/1/150, Department of Co-operative Development (Settlement) Land Settlement Programme (1972-77), "The last surveys conducted by the Statistics Division of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning indicated that the proportion of farms reaching target incomes increased from 10.7% in 1964/65 to 17.0% in 1966/67. The percentage of loan repayment during the same period increased from 47.08% to 57.91% respectively, but this decreased to 53.42% by the end of 1970. These figures are indicative of the seriousness of the problems both in farm output and loan repayments."

did not repay loans, because school fees and taxes were due ahead of loan repayments, and families could not afford to pay all three.⁸⁶

Loan arrears began occurring from the beginning of settlement programs in Kenya. In the nine months prior to April 1962 (a year and a half before independence), the aggregate loan arrears almost doubled exactly.⁸⁷ At the time, no Agrarian Loans Officer existed, and the government looked to appoint one in the immediate future. This pattern continued, even after the Kenyan government created a greater bureaucratic apparatus to monitor loan repayments. By the end of 1970, only 54.2 percent of the total outstanding amount billed to settlers had been paid.⁸⁸

One of the biggest reasons for low loan repayments was connected to the mismanagement and failures of cooperative societies. These societies, as mentioned above, were created largely to market the agricultural produce of settlers, and in so doing, were meant to deduct loan repayments from the farmers. This did not work smoothly in practice. The corruption of so many cooperatives led members to sell their produce outside of their cooperatives, in effect, avoiding loan repayments. Sometimes, such as when farmers could not afford to make payments, they avoided loan repayments intentionally. Other times, it seems that it was less that farmers were intentionally avoiding repaying their loans, but rather, they were avoiding marketing their produce through their cooperative societies. On other occasions, the cooperative societies either

⁸⁶ KNA AVS/13/20, From SSO Sirikwa (Standa) to The Director of Settlement, "Monthly Report for January 1970. Sirikwa Area," 31st March, 1970.

⁸⁷ KNA BV/1/538, From JMB Butter, for GM Bebb, EO to Chief Agriculturalist, Loan to African Farmers – Legco Question No. 229 (Hon. J.L. Porter MLC), "Loans to African Farmers," 19th April, 1962.

⁸⁸ KNA TR/1/201, Co-operative Settlement (1962-79). Settlers had paid £4.07 million out of £7.5 million due at that time.

did not properly deduct the loan repayments of individual farmers, or they were so corrupt that the leaders took the money for themselves.

Low loan repayments in settlement schemes represented a nationwide problem. The settlement schemes in Uasin Gishu District (Rift Valley Province) and Kakamega District (Western Province), however, were especially notorious for their terrible loan repayment rates. In 1966 and 1967, for example, Turbo, Uasin Gishu (the subject of the final two chapters of this dissertation) had the lowest loan repayment in all of Kenya. In June 1966, Turbo area settlers had only repaid 27.65 percent of their loans that month. By June 1967, Turbo settlers showed some improvement, though their loan repayments had only moved up to 37.65 percent that month.⁸⁹ Meanwhile, in Western Province, in 1969, 98 percent of farmers remained in arrears for their cereal advances.⁹⁰

Incredibly low loan repayment percentages put the Kenyan government in a very difficult economic position, since they depended on loan repayments in order to repay their own loans. As government correspondence in 1965 noted, “Since so much international finances (World Bank, West German and British) are involved in settlement, repayment will, more than any other single item, affect the countries credit ability for new loans.”⁹¹ In 1965, the Kenyan Government approached the British government asking for a moratorium on repayment of land loans, but the British refused. In 1966, Minister of Finance James Gichuru again approached the British government about loan terms. In this same year, the Van Arkadie Mission had recommended the

⁸⁹ KNA BN/84/20, T.K. Patei, Senior Investigations Officer, “Yearly General Report on Progress Loan Repayments – Investigations and Legal Matters,” 5 September 1967.

⁹⁰ KNA AVS/3/69, “Minutes of the 35th Full Board Meeting of the Central Agricultural Board held on Tuesday, 29th April, 1969...”

⁹¹ KNA AVS/3/22, From GRH to DS, “Re: Agricultural Amendment Bill,” 29 January, 1965.

postponement of Kenyan government payments. In response, the British gave the Kenyan Government an interest-free loan of £18 million for the period between 1966 and 1970. Despite this new cash inflow, in 1966, the Kenyan government evicted its first set of settlement loan defaulters.

As a result of all their problems getting farmers to repay their loans, the Director of Settlement created an Investigations Section in 1966 as an attempt to increase the rate of loan repayments. One of the policies that grew out of the creation of the Investigations Section in 1966 was the eviction of defaulters. The Ministry of Settlement created the eviction policy as a way of “making an example” of “chronic defaulters” in order to stem this practice. In other words, the Department of Settlement created this policy to teach settlers that they had to pay, or they would be evicted. The Department of Settlement evicted squatters inconsistently and in a disorganized manner, however. The program’s disorganization produced circumstances in which even settlers who had been evicted reapplied “to be selected as replacements for re-settlement on the very same plots from which they have been evicted,” clearly defeating the objective of the evictions.⁹² Even so, the evictions seemed to scare settlers enough to lead to skyrocketing rates of loan payments in the months following.⁹³

This improvement in loan repayments would not last, though. In response to complaints and dissatisfaction, the Office of the President instituted a two-year

⁹² KNA BN/84/8, From JS Mburu, Director of Settlement to PCs Nyeri, Western, Rift Valley, Eastern, Nyanza, “Eviction of Settlers from Settlement Scheme Plots and Selection of Replacement of Settlers,” 4th May, 1967.

⁹³ KNA BN/84/20, “Record of Meeting...on Friday 4th August, 1967 to discuss a Two Year Moratorium for Settlers.”

moratorium on loan repayments, and a reconsideration of those already evicted.⁹⁴ This quick policy turnabout was confusing in and of itself. In addition, the moratorium, like the initial eviction policy, was riddled with its own inconsistencies. *The Daily Nation*, one of Kenya's two popular daily newspapers, reported on its front page in May of 1967 that "the decision to give settlers two years before they need to start repaying would apply to all who occupied not more than 100 acres of land."⁹⁵ The Permanent Secretary to the Treasury believed this reporting was wrong, and that they had actually decided on a two year moratorium to new settlers, not to settlers already settled.⁹⁶ Meanwhile, *The East African Standard*, the other major daily, reported that – in contrast to the intentions of the policy – that those who had more than 100 acres would be considered for loan moratorium.⁹⁷ In response to this confusion, some Members of Parliament even urged those who had been evicted to go back to their farms, despite the fact that the Department of Settlement had already allocated the new settlers those plots.⁹⁸ Eventually, the government clarified its position, articulating that the moratorium was only created for new settlers, and that evictees could not return to their formers plots, but they could have their cases reviewed.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ KNA BN/84/20, TK Patei, Senior Investigations Officer, "Yearly General Report on Progress Loan Repayments – Investigations and Legal Matters," 5 September, 1967. After Jomo Kenyatta's statement about the moratorium, the rate of repayment dropped by 50 percent in each area. It should be noted that Kenyatta made a number of presidential decrees which contradicted policy. Kenyatta often reversed policy in order to further solidify his cult of "benevolent rule." For more on this phenomenon, see Chapter 2 and Chapter 9.

⁹⁵ KNA BN/84/20, From JN Michuki, PS The Treasury to GK Karithi, PS, Office of the President, and P. Shiyukah, PS, Ministry of Land and Settlement, "Moratorium to Settlers," 30th May, 1967.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ KNA BN/84/20, from P. Shiyukah, PS to GK Kariithi, PS Office of the President, "Moratorium to Settlers," 5th May, 1967.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ KNA BN/84/20, From P. Shiyukah to All ASCs, "Re: Evictions of Settlers v/s Two Year Moratorium," 6th June, 1967.

Perhaps the most worrying implications of the moratorium policy were the hazy financial ones. The new policy did not clearly set out exactly how the moratoria affected repayments. Some believed that the moratoria meant a deferment of payments for two years, in which case, a loan repayable over ten years would become payable over twelve years, with a two year gap in repayments. Others believed that moratorium policy meant the recalculation of the loan repayments so that the period of the loan remained the same, but the repayments increased in the years in which repayments were actually made.¹⁰⁰ Once it became clear that the former was the case, the Financial Adviser to Settlement estimated that it would cost the treasury an additional £2.7 million by the end of 1968-69.¹⁰¹ These numbers were revised to £0.5m eventually, and it was also realized that it would cost the settler more money in the end as well.¹⁰²

Despite all of the troubles Kenyan farmers had in repaying their loans, the interest rate on land purchase loans was raised to 7 ½ percent in 1967. This was done in a setting where the Kenyan government was increasingly crippled by its lack of financial liquidity. World Bank development loans, for example, closed in 1969, and the British government was becoming increasingly reluctant to grant the Kenyan government new loans. But, the evictions, the loan moratoriums, and then the interest rate increase reveal, more so, the type of ad hoc and contradictory policymaking that not only kept the government from setting forth a clear message, but also inhibited any of these policies from achieving their goals.

¹⁰⁰ KNA BN/84/20, From MA Collings, Financial Secretary (Settlement) to OASF, 24th May, 1967.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² KNA BN/84/20, "Land Settlement: Loan Repayments: Overall financial effect of a moratorium for new settlers and for cases of hardship among existing settlers," 10th July, 1967.

Some settlers remembered the evictions that occurred for a short period of time under Kenyatta's rule, and some did not. Oral interviews in different settlement schemes made clear which schemes experienced evictions, and additionally, the effect that visible evictions had on families and communities on settlement schemes. The Lumakanda Settlement Scheme, just on the Western side of the Western-Rift Valley Province border had experienced the total breakdown of its cooperative society within a few years of the creation of the society. Settlers began selling their agricultural produce outside the cooperative society, and as a result, deductions were not made for these individuals to repay their loans. Lumakanda settlers had very strong memories of evictions occurring in 1966, and remember the feelings of fear and insecurity that these evictions brought to their community.¹⁰³ They did not take these evictions idly, however, since they represented an attack on their livelihoods. Instead, Lumakanda settlers sought help from their Member of Parliament, Masinde Warengai. According to informants, Warengai came to visit and help them, and then went to Kenyatta to convince him not to evict the settlers.¹⁰⁴

Patrick Zieze, a Lumakanda settler, remembered the evictions vividly, "Some people were given eviction notices because they were not able to pay for their loan. On my side, they could come and find me at home and tell me that they wanted their loan, and I tell them that I don't have money. And they tell me if you don't have money we are

¹⁰³ The memories of eviction in Lumakanda are in contrast to the memories of settlers on schemes where evictions did not occur. In Sosiani, for example, informants did not have memories of either evictions, or of fearing eviction. This was likely as a result of the cattle ownership of the Nandi settlers in Sosiani, which gave them fairly easy access to cash if they needed it. In addition, dairy farming provided frequent financial returns than maize. This made it easier for settlers to make loan repayments more often.

¹⁰⁴ Because of these actions, Warengai is one of the few Members of Parliament that informants had positive memories of. More often, informants recalled that MP's only came around ahead of elections when they wanted votes.

going, but when we come back we are going to sell your land. And, then they could add other fees to the loan. I was frightened because I was wondering if I was evicted where could I go?”¹⁰⁵ Joseph arap Bir’geng, a Sosiani settler who never experienced evictions, had a very different take on loans. He said, “We thought nothing good was for free.” When asked further about whether or not the evictions were fair, he said, “If you don’t pay the dowry, the wife’s family will take her away, just like with the *shamba*. It is the responsibility of the owner to pay back the loan, or otherwise it will be reclaimed by the *serikali*.”¹⁰⁶ These very opposing understandings of the fairness of evictions likely grew out of different experiences. Despite arap Bir’geng’s more hard-line ideas about loan repayment, archival record suggests that there was a lot of sympathy towards farmers who were in arrears with their loans, and particularly, for those farmers who were evicted.

Very few settlers borrowing money from the Kenyan government in the 1960s had ever been given a loan, and these personal financial histories absent of bank-backed loans shaped the way farmers approached their repayment. The loans farmers took out were in large part, anathema, to any sort of financial arrangement or relationship in Kenyan economic history.¹⁰⁷ This economic history was not without indebtedness, but borrowing and lending had worked more flexibly in the past.

Rural farmers tended to conceptualize their obligations to repay their loans in different ways than the financial institutions involved. Most former settlers whom I spoke with understood their thirty year loan as providing them with thirty years to pay for the

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Patrick Zieze, Lumakanda, November 7, 2012.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Joseph arap Bir’geng, Sosiani, November 20, 2012.

¹⁰⁷ For more on loans and indebtedness in Western Kenya among the Luo, see Parker Shipton, *Mortgaging the Ancestors*.

farm. They did not conceptualize the loan as something that had to be paid continually and promptly. Settlers had no experience, for example, with increased interest rates when they fell behind their loans. It was often a surprise to farmers to find out just how indebted they were, to realize how problematic it was to not make loan repayments regularly, or to avoid selling their produce through the farm cooperatives which deducted loan payments.

Most farmers understood the loan as something they could pay gradually, when they could. If their school fees were high one year, or if they had an expensive medical bill or, perhaps, if a cow had died that year, farmers might make a decision not to repay their loans. It seems that very few farmers thought of each installment as a bill they *had* to pay. Rather, they would pay what they could, and by the end of the 30 years, they would try to finish. Patrick Zieze summed up this understanding of loan repayments. “We were paying what we felt we had... They didn’t have specific amounts for you to pay a year. If you had money and you wanted to pay at once, the Settlement Officer didn’t want it that way. They used to tell you *pesa hizi zinakuuma* (does this money itch you)? This is something to pay slowly.”¹⁰⁸

For rural Kenyans, loan arrears had gigantic repercussions, ones that many did not foresee. Under the original settlement legislation, farmers were prohibited from subdividing their land and selling off plots. After Daniel Arap Moi became president, and the loan arrears continued to pose a financial problem, and Moi again threatened farmers with eviction. At the same time, Moi lifted the ban on the subdivision of settlement land. These policies forced many farmers to sell off pieces of their land in order to repay their

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Patrick Zieze, Lumakanda, November 7, 2012.

loans. The Kenyan elite often swooped in to buy land from indebted rural farmers, accumulating land as rural Kenyans became dispossessed of their most valuable resource.

Where once settlement schemes of 15 acre farms existed, there are now tiny plots of three to five acres. Subdivision also occurred when families divided inheritances among children. This subdivision is visible today in the crowded landscape, and in the restless, unemployed youth who wile away their days hoping for economic opportunities to arise. These smaller pieces of land do not provide families with the livelihoods the optimistic land resettlement programs once envisioned.

The cooperatives, too, have long since passed their days of glory, if those ever existed outside the minds of development planners. Independence had brought with it a sense of optimism and a desire to cooperate within communities to strive for development. The cooperative movement and cooperative development programs were a part of that history. They very rarely lasted long into independence before corruption, infighting, and mismanagement led to their downfall, and in turn, often led to the downfall of the cooperative members since they often did not repay their loans if they were not deducted through cooperative marketing mechanisms.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has drawn out the local patterns of economic change connected to the state's cooperative agricultural policies during decolonization. It provides a hyper-localized history of the making of Kenya's political economy in the late colonial and post-colonial eras. The chapter shows, in particular, how cooperative societies operated as subsidiaries of the state and reshaped local governance. It also shows how rural farmers made autonomous economic decisions to engage or disengage with this local

authority, and how the many failures of this new form of local governance has had implications for the financial well-being of both the Kenyan state and rural Kenyan citizens.

The next chapter continues to examine many of the same themes – how the financial policies of the new state impacted rural Kenyans, how rural Kenyans responded to these policies, and how postcolonial corruption emerged and affected political culture. Chapter Five hones in on a single commodity – maize – and on one instance where a shortage of this commodity not only exposed important unresolved questions about the nature of Kenya’s postcolonial political economy, but also, played a role in providing answers to these questions.

5 Failure to Feed the Nation: The Politics of Maize and Agricultural Marketing

“This is the essence of African Socialism – mutual dependence of individual and society for mutual social, political and economic security... African socialism also provides for those frailties that are so human such as differences in mental and physical abilities of different members of the society. It provides for those who have ability to acquire wealth quickly to distribute part of it for the benefit of his less fortunate brethren. Thus broadly speaking, African Socialism provides for equitable distribution of national wealth to the society members in a manner which ensures that it does not concentrate in the hands of the unscrupulous few while the less endowed millions starve...”¹

– Paul Ngei, Minister for Cooperative Development and Marketing, 21 May, 1966

In the above epigraph, the Minister for Cooperative Development and Marketing made an explicit promise that an “unscrupulous few” would not benefit while the “less endowed millions starve[d].” Yet, Minister Ngei’s pronouncements guaranteeing a welfare-oriented state came just as the government was failing to protect Kenyan citizens who were literally starving. In the mid-1960s, Kenya experienced a drought which catalyzed a major maize shortage – the basis of the staple food, ugali. The drought quickly turned into a crisis of greater proportions than the drier-than-usual weather warranted. It came to light that it was not just the drought which affected the availability of maize but, also, the complications of maintaining agricultural production during the transfer of farms from Europeans to Africans and early postcolonial breakdowns in regulated agricultural production and marketing. The consequent distribution of famine relief then became marred by a corruption scandal. The inefficiencies and inadequacies of government importation and distribution of famine relief proved to be the result not only

¹ KNA, TR/1/333, Paul Ngei, “The Application of African Socialism to Co-operatives and Marketing in Kenya,” 21 May 1966.

of government disorganization, but also, of politicians attempting to profit off of famine. Minister Ngei himself would become implicated as one of the unscrupulous and corrupt individuals who benefited from the maize crisis. With daily newspaper coverage and a high profile commission of inquiry, the maize crisis of 1965/66 brought questions about state obligation, social safety nets, and the rights of citizens to the forefront of public debate. The public debate of these issues, the many ways diverse actors worked within (or without) the new political economic structures, and the outcome of the crisis, all contributed to the making of the state and of political culture in postcolonial Kenya.

Starting in the second half of 1963 – just ahead of independence – irregularities in the marketing of maize began to emerge. In 1964, demonstrating a lack of foresight, Kenya exported 400,000 bags of maize to Japan.² Then, from 1964 to 1966, drought, subsequent crop failure, and a maize shortage led to famine conditions in some regions of the country. The drought set off the maize crisis, but corruption, mismanagement, and malpractice in the industry made the crisis much more deleterious to Kenyans. As a result of all these issues, Kenyans experienced a shortage of their staple food beginning in 1964, difficulties which would continue until 1967. The government proved incapable of getting maize to the hungry, and there were widespread reports of Kenyans selling maize on the black market, or smuggling the commodity into Uganda and Tanzania. The Kenyan government bought 50,000 tons of maize from the U.S., but even then could not efficiently import the maize into the country or distribute the maize to those affected by the shortage. As a result of popular dissatisfaction and the reporting of the *East African*

² KNA TR/17/6, “Marketing Board alleged to have flouted directive,” *East African Standard*, 13 January 1966.

Standard and Daily Nation, the government began a commission of inquiry into the maize industry in early 1966.

The maize crisis demonstrates the interconnections between contested economic policies, the everyday actions of rural farmers, and the emergence of a contract between the state and its citizens. The mid-1960s maize shortage serves as a reminder of the complicated nature of the transfer of power, and the ways in which the successes and failures of the early independent nation deeply shaped governance and citizenship. The maize shortage became a way in which the public debated questions about the role and obligations of the state, forms of power and authority, and the meanings of independence. The negotiation of this and other crises constituted the state, gave it meaning. These crises played a part in constituting the nature of new political relationships and the ways in which Kenyans acquired wealth.

The maize crisis was a constitutive moment not just for the state, then, but for Kenyan postcolonial political culture and political economy. Agriculture and agricultural marketing held a central place in the constitution of authority in the postcolony. Though Frederick Cooper's gatekeeper state may hold explanatory power in certain African settings, it does not provide the analytical tools for understanding the maize crisis and Kenyan postcolonial authority.³ In Kenya, the most valuable resources came out of the center of the country – cash crops, mostly produced in the Rift Valley and Central highlands – and the maize crisis shows the state's inability to control the movement of these resources or their distribution.

³ Cooper, *Africa since 1940*, 157.

Instead, the Kenyan maize crisis of 1965/66 demonstrates the complicated web of power and authority and how different actors – from the rural poor (significantly, the majority of maize producers) to small business owners, all the way up to the national elites – derived different forms of power from their ability to control how agricultural products were produced, processed, sold, and distributed both inside and outside Kenyan borders. Though these forms of power were not equal or exercised identically, they show that there never existed a state monopoly on the movement of resources.

The maize crisis also complicates the terms of an old debate within African economic historiography. Anthony Hopkins and Edward Alpers debated whether or not the market helped African producers,⁴ while Cooper smartly interjected that, “The issue is not whether markets are good or bad but whether the market mechanism explains very much of what actually happened in Africa, at the hands of European states or corporations as much as African peasants.”⁵ There is a connection, which has yet to be fully teased out, between these economic histories of markets and micro-political and social histories. Markets *were* important. However, markets were much more complicated than those conceived of in academic economic theories or in the economic policies of different government and international institutions. Integration, exclusion, or a state of being “uncaptured”⁶ are just some of the most extreme – and thus, un-nuanced – ways of engaging in the market, commodifying goods, of shaping, or being shaped by, the market. The macroeconomic policies of the government in the early postcolonial era

⁴ A.G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973); Edward A. Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves: Changing Pattern of International Trade in East Central Africa to the Later Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

⁵ Frederick Cooper, “Africa and the World Economy,” *African Studies Review* 24, no. 2/3 (1981):8.

⁶ Goran Hyden, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

do little to explain the actual economic outcomes in Africa and the economic decision-making of small-scale farmers. The maize crisis in Kenya demonstrates that market forces and decisions about marketing by governments had large impacts on rural farmers, consumers, and traders. It demonstrates that individuals made decisions about marketing and buying produce based upon their own needs.

Many Kenyan farmers chose not to plant maize for more than subsistence during the 1964/65 growing season in order to avoid the tedious marketing mechanisms of the Kenyan state and the poor prices being offered for maize. Others planted maize, but sold outside the regulated market in order to make a higher profit. These decisions would have consequences for the independent nation, and we cannot understand the successes and failures of the economy of the heavily agriculturally-oriented Kenyan postcolonial state without understanding the economic decision-making of households and its affect on the working of macroeconomic policies on the ground.

The ability of rural Kenyans to make decisions about their agricultural livelihoods without regard for the state deeply shaped the development of power in the postcolony, a form of power marked by its diffuseness and its intrinsically destabilizing nature. From the maize crisis, a complex picture of power in the postcolony emerges, illustrating corruption among elites and the influence – albeit circumscribed – of the rural poor. Both had repercussions for the financial stability of the new nation, but also for the formation of Kenya's political culture. This form of power developed in the specific historical context – Kenya had just gained independence, a new, disorganized, understaffed, and financially vulnerable state had just come to power, and average Kenyans had few expectations about their relationship with this state.

Rural Kenyans gained much of their power from the food they produced and how they marketed it. When Kenyan farmers chose not to sell their maize through appointed M.M.B. agents, they were avoiding state-sanctioned marketing channels. Kenyan farmers remained “uncaptured” by the state’s formal markets, but actively within the international market economy. The state (both colonial and postcolonial) could never fully circumscribe the decision-making of African farmers. Achille Mbembe has shown the vulnerability of postcolonial leaders, exposed through the seemingly mundane actions of postcolonial citizens.⁷ Mbembe analyzes, for example, the quotidian act of laughter as a form of subverting the state at public rallies in Cameroon. In Kenya in the 1960s, the 90 percent of the population farming in rural areas held the power to expose the weaknesses of the postcolonial state through decisions they made every day about their livelihoods. This demonstrates a different kind of quotidian power that scholars have yet to fully explore.

Rural power had much in common with elite power, in that both often derived their power from a circumvention of the state. Both rural farmers and those in formal positions of power destabilized the power of the central government through their actions. Government actors and elites, such as MPs and Maize Marketing Board members derived their power from the positions they occupied, which allowed them to control the resources of the state. During the maize crisis, Minister Ngei, the M.M.B. General Manager Andere, MPs, local government administrators, and traders acted illegally for their own benefit. This malfeasance was not without consequences, intensifying the financial difficulties of the new government and catalyzing the development of a culture

⁷ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*.

of corruption. The Commission of Inquiry revealed that politicians and elites received imported famine aid maize directly from the Maize Marketing Board. This maize was supposed to be distributed through specific channels that would get food to the needy at set prices. Instead, the corrupt elites and politicians sold famine maize to a trader, who then sold to Kenyans at exorbitant prices. In short, elites enriched themselves to the detriment of Kenyans experiencing a food shortage. At the time, famine aid constituted one of the most important functions of the state, protecting the welfare – and, literally, lives – of Kenyan citizens.

Both the actions of the elites and of rural farmers undermined the state. The corrupt actions of the elite demonstrate the paradoxes of power in the early postcolony. The MP's position allowed him to accumulate wealth, but in the act of so doing, he destabilized the state from which he first gained his power. Politicians and government officials enriched themselves at the cost of the welfare of citizens. Through their actions, corrupt elites inhibited the government from performing a vital role, thus, delegitimizing the state just after independence.

Rural farmers also weakened the power of the state, because Kenyan development depended upon agriculture, and thus, on the state regulation of agriculture. Both Kenyan farmers and Kenyan politicians, then, committed legal transgressions, motivated by personal interest. These acts occurred in a decolonizing setting, where the state was still new. Elites and the rural poor circumvented the state in attempts to accumulate personal wealth, partially because a relationship between citizens and the state, in which state obligations and citizens' rights were clearly defined, had yet to be formed. That personal

interest came before national interests at a crucial moment of “nation-building” had a lasting legacy for the nascent citizen-state relationship and Kenyan political culture.

MAIZE, *POSHO*, AND *UGALI* IN KENYA

Uasin Gishu and the wider northwestern Rift Valley, make up a part of the breadbasket of Kenya, producing a large portion of the maize on which the country subsists. Both cash crop and subsistence crop, maize has long held a strange position in between the crop production divide – a divide created by years of colonial and postcolonial agricultural policies, which distinguished between European plantation crops and African subsistence crops. While the majority of Kenyans in the early postcolonial era farmed maize mostly for their own subsistence, urban Kenyans, Kenyans residing in arid areas, and the national economy all depended on those maize farmers who produced a surplus and sold some portion of their maize on the national market.

Though corn *ugali* – prepared by boiling maize meal, or *posho* – has occupied a central place in the Kenyan diet for close to a century, its position as the staple Kenyan food occurred following the establishment of a European settler cash crop economy. Afrikaners were the first farmers of European descent to settle in Uasin Gishu, which they chose because it lay far from the Nairobi administrative center of the colony and the land was ideal for the wheat and maize farming they had practiced in South Africa. It was with the settlement of Afrikaner and British farmers on the Uasin Gishu plateau that Kenyans in this region began replacing finger millet with maize when they prepared *ugali*. This had become a widespread culinary practice in the region by 1930.⁸ The

⁸ Interview with Steven Kiplemai Ngetich, Sosiani, December 3, 2012; Interview with Joseph arap Bir’geng, Sosiani, November 20, 2012; Interview with Stanley arap Songok, Sosiani, November 20, 2012. The time at which use and acceptance of maize *ugali*, as opposed to millet *ugali*, became widespread varied

success of the colonial state in converting finger millet and sorghum producers to maize producers throughout the country would increase African food insecurity, since many of the less fertile areas of the country were poorly suited to maize production.⁹

Two different systems governed agricultural production in colonial Kenya: one for the European farmers in the White Highlands and one for Africans living in the reserves or working on white farms. The first system governed the farming of what the colonial state defined as “cash crops” – crops produced for export, like coffee, tea, pyrethrum, wattle, sisal, wheat, and maize. The latter system for African farmers was intended for a subsistence basis only. Colonial legislation prior to World War II prohibited Africans from producing certain of these crops, and in fact, African laborers on European farms – given small plots for their own farming use – were required by law to first offer to sell any of their maize in excess of consumption to their employer.¹⁰ These two sets of policies were created to control the agricultural industry through the regulation of production, movement, processing, and sale of farm produce, and to exclude African farmers from producing the most profitable crops. As the below will show, however, the clear distinction between cash crop and subsistence crop, between the African reserves and the White Highlands never existed as in the conceptualizations of colonial policymakers. And furthermore, African farmers successfully worked around these discriminatory policies. In short, agricultural practice on the ground never fit into the dichotomies colonial policy created.

slightly depending on the region of the country. Oral interviews suggest that in the Western Rift Valley, Kenyans had almost fully replaced millet *ugali* with maize *ugali* by the early 1930s. Little suggests the same timing in Baringo, Kenya. Little, *The Elusive Granary*.

⁹ Little, *The Elusive Granary*.

¹⁰ KNA DC/ELD/1/24/21, From PG Tait, DC UG to Mrs. L.A. Cooke, “Re: Posho Prices,” 5th May, 1959.

Many of the agricultural policies that the postcolonial state would inherit remained largely unchanged from those created during World War II. Maize production did not meet local needs in 1941, and in 1942, the government established a Cereals Control, which European growers had been requesting for years. Then, again, in 1942/43 a drought reduced the maize crop. In these circumstances, the government created the 1943 Commission on Food Shortage, which ended the policy that had encouraged the production of maize for export.¹¹ The commission's recommendation, along with the food shortages of the previous three years, began changes which culminated in the government offering credit facilities, publishing guaranteed prices before each planting season, and allowing certain "essential crops," such as maize, to qualify for a guaranteed minimum return per acre.¹² These guarantees were only offered in the scheduled areas – or White Highlands – and the Agricultural Ordinance of 1955 eventually required the Minister to pay fixed prices to farmers.¹³

Each crop had its own statutory board with distinct ordinances on production and marketing, and these statutory boards advised the Ministry of Agriculture on the industry. The combined statutory board for cereals, mostly maize and wheat, created during WWII, brought those cereal crops into the system of organized marketing in Kenya. Because cereals did not have special ordinances for each crop, but were scheduled under the

¹¹ Government of Kenya, *Report of the Maize Commission of Inquiry* (Nairobi: Republic of Kenya, 1966), 3.

¹² KNA BV/1/368, Council of Ministers, "The Agricultural Economy of Kenya," 1961-1962. In 1962, there were seven statutory marketing boards: Central Province Marketing Board, Coffee Marketing Board, Cotton Lint and Seed Marketing Board, Kenya Meat Commission, Machakos Sisal Board, Maize Marketing Board, Nyanza Province Marketing Board, and the Pyrethrum Board. Only the Cotton Lint and Seed Marketing Board operated a price stabilization fund. Most of the other marketing boards bought the products at a fixed price throughout a season. For coffee and pyrethrum, however, there was no price fixing.

¹³ KNA BV/6/837, From ML Dunlap, Ag. Legal Draftsman to the PS, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Water Resources, "The Agricultural Ordinance, 1955 Payment of Fixed Prices for Scheduled Crops," 24th June, 1959.

Agricultural Ordinance, the Minister of Agriculture appointed agents to whom growers were required to sell their crops. The Maize and Produce Control was the main agent up until July 31, 1959.¹⁴ Beginning in 1949, though, an Interim Management Committee took over the management of the Maize and Produce Control while a government committee worked out a new structure for the future marketing of maize. In 1952, the committee recommended a statutory Maize Marketing Board, but the Mau Mau State of Emergency delayed this recommendation, and the “interim” committee controlled maize marketing for close to a decade.¹⁵

At the same time that the Kenyan colonial state was working out the logistics of regulating the maize market, and in 1948, the government began raising the restrictions on the growing of cash crops by Africans.¹⁶ Africans could officially enter into state-sanctioned commodity production, but again, under a highly regulated and complicated system. Attempts to control agricultural production were closely connected to the colonial state’s efforts to increase revenue.¹⁷ When farmers sold their maize to the statutory board governing maize, for example, the government deducted various fees for the processing of maize, but also, taxes to pay for government services. Beginning in 1950, the colonial state allowed African District Councils (ADCs) to levy taxes on

¹⁴ KNA TR/27/1, “Mr. Blundell’s Speech on ‘The Foundation of Kenya’s Prosperity’” [unauthored, undated].

¹⁵ KNA TR/3/96, “Minutes of the 110th Meeting of the Interim Management Committee of the Joint Maize and Produce Controls, 10th July, 1959.”

¹⁶ Michael Cowen, “The Commercialization of Food Production in Kenya after 1945,” in *Imperialism, Colonialism, and Hunger: East and Central Africa*, ed. R. Rotberg, (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1983), 199.

¹⁷ Anderson and Throup, “Africans and Agricultural Production.”

African produce, and these produce taxes formed a considerable portion of the local authority revenue.¹⁸

The unique position of maize within this elaborate system of regulated marketing further complicated the government's attempts to control its production. Since maize had become the staple food, farmers produced a huge quantity of the crop. The position of maize as a staple meant that some farmers grew it with the intention of selling, but also, that many other farmers grew small amounts mostly for subsistence purposes. The sheer quantity of production and of producers made it more difficult for the government to regulate and track. But, the central position of maize in Kenyan diets meant that the government needed to control maize production in order to guarantee the well-being and nourishment of the population. This was not an easy task given the unpredictability of the weather. It was difficult to produce the intended amount with the erratic and cyclical weather patterns of the Kenyan highlands, but as the 1943 Commission on Food Shortages suggested, Kenyan maize policy in the post-WWII era depended on self-sufficiency and nothing more. The government worked to avoid overproduction of maize, because it was expensive to store and export prices were low. Underproduction was more dangerous, though, since it caused so much hardship for the population, and because it was expensive to import maize. Despite the risks, at independence, the Kenyan government did not maintain any big storage facilities and did not have plans to create a maize storage in preparation for a shortage.

When the Maize Marketing Board (M.M.B.) finally replaced the Interim Management Committee of the Maize and Produce Control on August 1, 1959, it was

¹⁸ KNA BV/1/376, "Draft speech for Assistant Minister for Local Government the Hon. K.K. Njiiri who will be moving the second reading of the Agriculture (Amendment) Bill 1967," 11th September, 1967.

established “to regulate, control and improve the collection, storage, marketing and distribution and supply of maize and maize products.”¹⁹ Almost 90 percent of maize was never sold on the formal market, however, and thus, did not come under the jurisdiction of the M.M.B.²⁰ In the mid-1960s, for example, the Kenya government estimated that the country produced 15 million bags of maize each year, but sold only 2 million bags.²¹ In other words, 13 of the 15 million bags of maize produced each year were not going on the formal market. Many Kenyan families produced just enough maize for their own consumption, but those living in urban or arid areas often needed to purchase their maize, likely from Nyanza Province or from the Highlands. The state assumed that the vast majority of maize produced in the country did not go on the market because farmers were consuming it themselves but, as the remainder of the chapter will show, maize was also being sold outside the regulated market.

The M.M.B. sought to control maize by purchasing all marketable maize,²² about 1,659,051 bags and £3.12 million in average sales between 1958 and 1960.²³ The MMB, along with the government, regulated maize to generate revenue, but unlike other crops, they also regulated maize to ensure that farmers grew enough maize to feed the populace. The government provided incentives to grow maize and other essential crops through guarantees of an annual producer price. The set price was supposed to ensure self-sufficiency within the colony. Government also set prices to avoid creating surpluses which had to be exported, since the export market was weak at the time (though, export

¹⁹ KNA TR/17/4, “Draft: Maize Distribution,” 1965.

²⁰ Kenya, *Report of the Maize Commission of Inquiry*, 6.

²¹ KNA TR/17/5, “We Say: Look at the Great Maize Muddle,” *Sunday Daily Nation*, 7 November 1965.

²² Either the Maize Marketing Board or one its agents purchased the maize. The agents continually changed, but were usually divided by region and/or between scheduled versus non-scheduled areas.

²³ KNA BV/1/368, “The Agricultural Economy of Kenya,” 1961-62.

losses were born by producers). Kenyan maize production was incredibly delicate, given that the aim was to produce the exact amount of maize needed to feed the population – neither surplus nor shortage. An already difficult task, the regulation of maize became more difficult to control in the post-WWII era as the number of farmers producing maize for the formal market began to increase.²⁴

The difficulties of this task became especially apparent just four years prior to the maize crisis and less than a year after the announcement of forthcoming independence. In 1961, the Kenyan colony experienced one of the worst farming years in recorded history. A foot and mouth disease outbreak was followed by a drought, which was followed by flooding, then followed by army worm infestations devastating farm and dairy production, and leading the Uasin Gishu District Commissioner to describe 1961 as “a disastrous year.”²⁵ In Rift Valley Province alone, four different districts received famine aid.²⁶

The 1961 food shortage is important for understanding the 1964/65 maize crisis because Kenyans had recent experience receiving food aid to which they could compare the early post-colonial food shortage and actions of the newly independent government. The colonial government was no welfare state, yet it did provide famine relief and there was an understanding that the colonial state had “an obligation in these matters which, in the simplest terms, is to see that life is maintained but only in the severest conditions should this be a Government responsibility as distinct from a family, clan or tribal

²⁴ KNA TR/17/7, “Maize Commission of Inquiry 21st Day: 9th February, 1966.”

²⁵ KNA, District Commissioner, “Uasin Gishu District Annual Report,” 1961.

²⁶ KNA, Provincial Commissioner, “Rift Valley Province Annual Report,” 1961.

responsibility.”²⁷ One imagines that colonial famine relief might have prepared Kenyans in some ways for what they could expect from the independent state during tough years. Local communities were obligated to provide for one another as much as they could, and when their abilities were exceeded, it was then the responsibility of the government “to chip in” – a phrasing commonly used to describe government responsibility.

Systematic government regulation of maize included the additional steps of controlling the milling process and all sales of maize, since most Kenyan consumers purchased *posho* – ground maize meal – rather than the maize itself. The control of milling and of maize sales was vital to government policy on maize, because the close regulation of the vending and price of maize helped to ensure the sought after self-sufficiency. After the Maize Marketing Act, only government-certified millers could buy maize from the Maize Marketing Board or its agents at specified prices.²⁸ The government also began fixing the retail price for maize meal, and the margins of profits for millers and traders were subject to statutory control.

The government responded to the difficult task of producing the exact quantity of maize necessary for subsistence by making the administrative apparatus to regulate maize increasingly unwieldy. One of the more unpopular outcomes of this complex regulatory program was the creation of a large differential between guaranteed price paid to farmers and the price at which *posho* was sold to consumers. During the 1960 growing season, the producer’s guaranteed price was 35.30 Kenyan shillings per a 200 lb bag of maize. This price represented 74 percent of the overall “basic” cost of *posho* to the consumer.

²⁷ KNA DC/KPT/2/3/2, From T. Neil, PS Office of the Minister of State for Constitutional Affairs and Administration to all PCs, “Note on the Provision of Famine Relief,” 1st August 1962.

²⁸ Kenya, *Report of the Maize Commission of Inquiry*.

Then, the M.M.B. added 2.47 shillings for the cost of the gunny bag, storage and distribution, 4.03 shillings for the full internal marketing costs, 3.50 shillings for the milling costs, 2.35 shillings for the traders' commission for *posho* sales to consumers, all of which added up to an overall cost of 47.65 shillings for *posho*.²⁹

The differential between the price at which the government bought maize and at which the millers and traders sold maize had long brought critiques from the public. Throughout the history of regulated maize marketing in Kenya, the statutory boards, committees, and government came under attack. Both farmers and consumers believed that the controls led to unnecessary inflation in the price of maize and deflation of farmers' profits. These guaranteed prices were part of the larger system of risk management in years of shortage, as in 1961, when the Board had to import maize for the first time to meet the shortfall caused by drought. Though the cost of imported maize was substantially higher than locally grown maize, the board was able to maintain the price of *posho* throughout the season. The 1961 drought, in effect, showed one of the essential purposes of the regulation of maize – to serve as an insurance policy in the case of underproduction. Despite the fact that the 1961 drought demonstrated the utility of the price differential during times of shortage, most of the Kenya public was not aware of the connection between government policy and their ability to purchase maize at a steady price. Those who did purchase imported maize remember doing so only because the

²⁹ KNA TR/17/9, AA Haller, "Factors in Maize Prices," *East African Standard*, 29 October, 1960. What was seen as a 17 shilling differential between the guaranteed price to farmers and the controlled sale price to consumers was slightly more complicated, since the producers actually received 32 shillings per bag rather than the guaranteed 35.30 shillings. 3.30 shillings were set aside in a separate account to meet the losses on the sale of the surplus stock of maize to the export market. This money, though, was not at all connected to the costs of marketing the crop.

yellow maize from the United States differed so much from the white maize they were accustomed to.³⁰

As the colonial state handed over powers to the independent state, the regulatory system for maize production remained almost completely unchanged. The movement of maize continued to be strictly controlled, and farmers were still required to sell their maize to the M.M.B. or one of its agents. Policies which discriminated between farmers based upon race were dispensed with during the decolonization process, and the government replaced the former distinction between scheduled and unscheduled areas – European and African farming areas – with distinctions by region and farm size.³¹ With independence, the agents of the M.M.B. proliferated, largely as a result of the desires for regional autonomy to control production and marketing. In the mid-1960s, a number of different agents bought maize for the Maize Marketing Board: the M.M.B. itself, the Kenya Agriculture and Produce Marketing Board (K.A.P.M.B.) for Central, Coast, Eastern and parts of the Rift Valley Province, the Kenya Farmers' Association (the KFA, formerly an exclusively European cooperative) for the former scheduled areas, and the West Kenya Marketing Board for Western Province, Nyanza Province and parts of Rift Valley Province (this last replaced the Nyanza Province Marketing Board – the first African marketing board in Kenyan history).³² The M.M.B. also had storage agents in Mombasa, Machakos, Thika, Kibwezi and Konza. Each of these agents to the M.M.B.

³⁰ Interview with Frederick Kemboi arap Tum Kiptulus, Leseru, November 22, 2012; Interview with Theresa Ngososei, Leseru, November 27, 2012.

³¹ In short, the distinction between white and black, scheduled and unscheduled, became a distinction of class, between large farm owners and smallholders. This perpetuated unequal access to loans and development resources (discussed in Chapters 3 and 4).

³² The Marketing of African Produce (Amendment) Ordinance 1955, section 20 gave African Crop Marketing Boards a wide range of powers, including the ability to impose a levy. It also led to the creation of the Nyanza African Marketing Board and the Central Province African Tea Board.

had sub-agents who bought maize for them, often farmers' cooperatives or registered traders. The K.A.P.M.B. had, for example, about 600 agents and sub-agents in 1966, 100 of which were cooperative societies and unions.³³ The contrast between the centralized M.M.B. and the decentralized marketing board agents and storage agents was a part of the broader struggle at independence over *majimboism* – over how centralized or devolved the state would be (see Chapters 1 and 2). More particularly, this was a struggle over who would control Kenya's most valuable resources, the land and the agricultural commodities produced on that land.

The postcolonial maize marketing regulatory system continued to be plagued by many of the same problems that had plagued marketing of produce under the colonial era, with the added challenges faced by the transitioning government. Politicians and newspaper editors continued to criticize the Board and its policies. Bruce McKenzie, Minister of Agriculture in the Kenyatta regime, admitted to contributing to this criticism, despite the almost impossible job of the M.M.B.³⁴ McKenzie said, "Maize and Produce Control has been an 'Aunt Sally' for members of the Legislative Council and the general public since its inception. I have myself on occasion hurled the odd brickbat at it!"³⁵ Farmers, too, both European and African, and both in the colonial and postcolonial eras, often complained about the policies of the M.M.B. Many farmers felt dissatisfied with the high fees the M.M.B. deducted (and the consequent lower profits), the late payments they

³³ KNA TR/27/1, "Evidence Submitted by the Kenya Agricultural Produce Marketing Board to the Maize Commission of Inquiry," 13th January, 1966.

³⁴ Branch, *Kenya*, 40. "Born in Durban and a war hero after his exploits as a pilot in the Mediterranean theatre, McKenzie moved to Kenya in 1946. He took up farming in Nakuru and made an ideal agricultural minister in the KANU government as Kenyatta sought to calm the fears of both settler farmers and the British government."

³⁵ KNA TR/3/96, Bruce McKenzie, Minister for Agriculture, "Minister's Address," at the Inaugural Meeting of the Maize Marketing Board, 10 July, 1959.

received from the board, and the strict regulations implemented regarding the moisture content of the maize.³⁶

African maize producers were not completely constrained by this highly controlled system. They had long made decisions about marketing their agricultural products without regard for the regulatory system and had little trouble selling outside the formal market when they found government marketing controls to be disadvantageous. Alfred Machayo, a farmer in Chekalini settlement and a District Agricultural Officer in the mid-1960s recounted, “You send maize to Cereals board; they want to ask if it is dry, if it is dirty. So many questions, then so many deductions, and you don’t know how long you will wait, and they don’t want to pay on the spot. That sort of arrangement can’t make me sell maize.”³⁷ When Machayo made that statement, he did not of course mean that he was not selling his maize at all, but rather, he was – like many others – refusing to sell to the marketing board on the state-regulated market. The colonial state had been highly aware of, and resigned to, this situation.³⁸ Soon after independence, the postcolonial state would also become all too aware of their inability to control African growers, when black marketing and smuggling became rampant during the maize crisis in the mid-1960s.

The system of agricultural marketing that the independent state inherited was a cumbersome and impracticable one, but one which was only slowly amended. The goals of government regulation in the postcolonial era were much the same as those in the

³⁶ KNA TR/27/1, “Evidence Submitted by the Kenya Agricultural Produce Marketing Board to the Maize Commission of Inquiry,” 13th January, 1966.

³⁷ Interview with Alfred Machayo, Chekalini, November 1, 2012. Machayo later went on to become the Chief Agriculturalist of Kenya and the Kenyan representative to the FAO.

³⁸ KNA DC/ELD/1/24/20, From (Sgd) JP Barnard, Chairman of Uasin Gishu Agricultural Committee, to the CEO, Board of Agriculture, “Illegal Movement of Maize,” 3rd February, 1959; see also Anderson and Throup, “Africans and Agricultural Production,” 345.

colonial era – to generate state revenue. After independence, however, the state desperately needed to pay back loans to the British government and the World Bank for the resettlement programs (see Chapters 3 and 4). The Kenyans supposed to be producing maize for the market were often those who had bought land during the transition, as European farmers left and the Kenyan government resettled Africans. Resettlement meant that, from its beginnings, Kenya emerged as a highly indebted nation. Kenya's solvency depended on the settlers paying back their loans to the Kenyan government, so that the government could, in turn, repay the loan to the British and the World Bank. The Kenyan state needed to control revenue from the agricultural production of the settlers, and the state attempted to exert more pressure on African settlers than non-settlers to sell through the formal marketing channels. On settlement schemes, the government created new communities and new networks of trade, which built in more stringent forms of regulation, most often attached to cooperative societies. Despite these efforts, the independent state was never able to control maize production of African settlers, mostly because they never succeeded in impelling Africans to sell their maize through their cooperative societies.³⁹

Production on settlement schemes in the early to mid-1960s was also fairly abnormal. Not only were the new African settlers dealing with the drought, but there was often a gap before the first harvest. The Kenyan state provided new settlers with *posho* as they cleared and plowed their land, then planted, and then harvested a full year after they were first settled. In addition to a full year's lack of production, it took time for these

³⁹ As the previous chapter noted, one of the main reasons farmers avoided selling their products to cooperatives was that, because these cooperative societies were often mismanaged and corrupt, rural farmers felt they made less money when they used cooperative marketing.

farmers to adjust to their new farms. Many settlers recounted that it often took a few years for them to have good harvests, meaning that settlement areas could not meet the expected production in the years of the maize crisis, a by-product of such a large transfer of farm land in such a short period of time.⁴⁰ Simultaneously, European farmers' maize production dropped dramatically as many fled the country at independence, or stopped producing anything but the most minimal crops in order to avoid taking out loans for production or development.

The new state had even more difficulty regulating maize production for those living outside the highly controlled settlement schemes. Controlling the production of those living in the former reserves, those squatting on unoccupied land, and those who bought land through farm-buying companies did not have major significance for loan repayments, but it did have implications for Kenya's ability to be self-sufficient in food production and for the state's ability to forecast food shortages. The government could not as easily pressure Kenyans who remained in the former reserves to create marketing cooperatives, and thus, to create a clear – and easily monitored – avenue for selling produce to the M.M.B.

During the transition to independence, many European farmers left their farms abandoned, or government delays in surveying and planning settlement schemes meant land remained unoccupied for long periods of time. In these circumstances, African laborers living on the former white farms were joined by new squatters, and they often stayed for years at a time. There were also a number of African farm-buying companies, particularly in Uasin Gishu (see Chapter 4). Local leaders often helped to form these

⁴⁰ Interview with Deina Iboso, Lumakanda, November 12, 2012; Interview with Muzole Shioani, Lumakanda, November 13, 2012.

companies from groups of landless people. The companies bought former European farms that had previously produced a large amount of Kenya's marketable maize. They usually did not form marketing cooperatives, but simply divided the land based upon shares. This form of non-government resettlement allowed farm-buying settlers a way around the more stringent regulations of the settlement cooperative societies. If the Kenyan government could not control the production of the highly regulated settlement cooperatives, it certainly could not control the production of squatters on abandoned farms, or farmers on the sub-divided plots of former European farms. This inability to regulate general production in the country had consequences ranging from high rates of loan arrears to state blindness to signs of future famines.

This inability to control the marketing of farm produce also had significant implications for the local government authorities. Though Kenya instituted a Graduated Personal Tax (GPT) at independence, the GPT did not produce enough revenue for county councils. The Kenyan state was a theoretically centralized one after the dismantling of *majimboism* (the federalized form of government agreed upon during the independence negotiations) in 1964. However, as Chapter 2 showed, the central government often pushed expensive programs onto the local authorities. Thus, the failures of regulated state agricultural marketing had repercussions for the Kenyan central state, but also, for the local governments and local people, and the provision of social services. Local governments did not receive revenue from agricultural taxes if Kenyans did not sell their produce on the formal market.

THE CRISIS

A combination of factors contributed to the start of the maize shortage. In 1963, the government decreased the prices offered to Kenyan farmers for their maize leading many farmers to decrease the acreages of maize planted that year. With independence approaching at the end of 1963, many European farmers had also stopped developing their farms and were simply waiting for their land to be purchased by the government for African settlement; in addition, those Kenyan farmers resettled on former European farms had difficulty planting and harvesting a maize crop in the first couple years, as many were unfamiliar with the new soil and planting season of the region in which they had been settled. All of these factors precipitated the start of the crisis. Kenyan agricultural production was in transition at this time – the uncertainty about the future and the dissatisfaction with government regulation of maize, coupled with a drought, the departure of the European farmers and the entrance of African farmers with little time to clear their land and plant their maize during resettlement, led to the crisis.

Beginning in July 1964, the Maize Marketing Board advised the Ministry of Agriculture of the necessity to import 20 – 30,000 tons of maize as the possibility of a shortage before the next harvest became likely. This advice came just one year after Kenya had exported 400,000 bags of maize to Japan. The Ministry of Agriculture formally authorized the importation of 150,000 bags from Tanzania and Uganda on August 12th, 1964. At the same time, the Kenyan government negotiated with the American government on a maize import, but the U.S. advised that maize was unavailable, so the Ministry of Agriculture authorized importation from the cheapest source other than South Africa. On October 5th, the Maize Marketing Board requested

permission to use the Nairobi emergency reserve of maize with the justification that the 1964 planted crop was likely to be better than expected. The government granted permission on October 6th, and on October 10th, the M.M.B. made a similar request about the Mombasa maize reserve, which the government granted the same day.⁴¹

On December 9th, the M.M.B. advised the Ministry of Agriculture of an import requirement of 662,000 bags. The Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Finance then discussed the proposal and the Ministry of Finance wrote a letter to the U.S. Ambassador requesting 500,000 bags of yellow maize at the end of the December. The two governments signed the agreement at the end of February, but a number of delays followed. Three months later, the maize still had not left U.S. shores and was further delayed by news that the appointed shipping agents had been indicted on conspiracy to defraud charges.⁴²

On the ground, government officers recognized that the situation was growing dire. The “Safari Diary” of the Assistant Commissioner for Cooperative Development (South) from November 24, 1965 reported concern about the “illegal” sales of maize, and estimated that over 53,000 bags had been sold outside the cooperatives to Uganda.⁴³ In the report “Black Market Maize in the Western Region,” T.W. Morgan wrote for the Assistant Commissioner for Cooperative Development that “the unrealistic price paid by the Maize Marketing Board is causing the majority of settlers in Western Region Schemes to sell their maize in the Black Market for cash and for a comparatively higher

⁴¹ KNA, TR/17/4, Ministry of Cooperatives and Marketing, “Imports: Maize Commission of Inquiry.”

⁴² KNA TR/17/4, BCW Lutta, Ministry of Housing and Social Services (formerly of Ministry of Cooperatives and Marketing), “Memorandum to the Commission of Inquiry – Maize.”

⁴³ KNA TR/1/350, Ag. Asst. Commissioner for Cooperative Development (S), “Safari Diary,” 24 November, 1965.

price than that offered by the Maize Marketing Board. This constitutes a considerable loss to the cooperative societies on the settlement schemes.”⁴⁴ This black marketing, in combination with the drought and subsequent reduced harvest, led to greater problems than simple losses to cooperative societies. It also meant that Kenyans began finding it difficult to purchase *posho*.

On June 5th, the shipment from the U.S. still had not arrived and the Permanent Secretary of Agriculture advised the M.M.B. of the potential necessity of ordering a second shipment. The first part of the maize shipment from the U.S. – about 13,000 tons (130,000 bags) – arrived on June 17th, over six months after the Kenyan government agreed on the need for the shipment and almost a full year after the M.M.B. first raised the issue of a possible maize shortage.

The second and third shipments from the US arrived on August 3rd and August 26th respectively, completing the order for 500,000 bags from the US. In between the arrival of the final two shipments, the Maize Marketing Board recommended a further importation of 250,000 bags. The Kenyan government negotiated and signed a new agreement with the United States on August 31st, allowing for the supply of up to 500,000 additional bags of maize on an as needed basis. A few days later, the Board reviewed the position again and advised that Kenya now required the full amount of 500,000 bags. The first of this new set of shipments arrived on November 15th.

The maize crisis did not disappear with the arrival of the American maize. In many ways, it actually worsened. In his testimony to the Maize Commission of Inquiry,

⁴⁴ KNA TR/1/350, From TW Morgan for Ag. Asst Commissioner for Cooperative Development (S) to the Commissioner for Cooperative Development, “Black Market in Maize in the Western Region, Upkeep of Roads in Cooperative Society Areas,” 25th November, 1964.

B.C.W. Lutta, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Social Services (formerly of Ministry of Cooperatives and Marketing) asserted, “It is my opinion that the ultimate food shortage was caused more by maladministration of and malpractices in distribution than by the delay in arranging the importation.”⁴⁵ There were reports that E.A. Andere, General Manager of the M.M.B., had made promises to the Provincial administration about the arrival of new supplies of maize that were not kept, and there were widespread reports that the government did not follow the proper protocol for the distribution of maize. All maize was supposed to be channeled through District Commissioners, and District Committees were to submit their requirements to the Board and specify which certified traders were to receive maize shipments. However, officials often bypassed old traders for inexperienced ones. Officials also inflated the demand for supplies (and even duplicated them, fraudulently ordering emergency supplies for districts with an already full ration), distribution remained largely unsupervised, and the exorbitant prices charged to consumers – which were supposed to remain controlled – went unchecked.⁴⁶

Politicians and elites often went over the heads of District Commissioners, many of whom also participated in the corruption, to get maize directly. There were reports that Members of Parliament went to the General Manager of the M.M.B., Andere, to obtain maize for Asian traders with whom they had business connections.⁴⁷ There were even reports that Kenyans were smuggling the imported maize over the borders into Uganda and Tanzania, similar to much of the maize grown in country.⁴⁸ More embarrassing for

⁴⁵ KNA TR/17/4, BCW Lutta, Ministry of Housing and Social Services (formerly of Ministry of Cooperatives and Marketing), Memorandum to the Commission of Inquiry – Maize.

⁴⁶ KNA TR/17/4, J. Cooper (SAS), “Cabinet Committee – Food Shortage,” 12th July, 1965.

⁴⁷ KNA TR/17/4, From PC, WP to Mr. Andere, GM Kenya Marketing Board, 27th July, 1965

⁴⁸ KNA TR/17/4, From J. Cooper (SAS) to PS, “Maize Distribution.”

the government were allegations that the General Manager of the West Kenya Marketing Board, the General Manager of the Maize Marketing Board, and the Minister of Cooperatives were involved in the smuggling of maize.⁴⁹ The Minister of Cooperatives, Ngei, was accused of allowing his personal interests in a milling company, a maize store, and a M.M.B. appointed agent “to come into conflict with his duty to a statutory Board to the certain detriment of the latter.”⁵⁰

By the time the earliest of the second set of shipments arrived in Kenya, the public had lost patience, coming to the conclusion that government blunders had led not only to the shortage, but also to the slow importations and mismanaged distribution of maize. On October 27th, 1965, the Kenya National Farmers’ Union (KNFU) – a union which originally represented European farmers to the colonial government – attacked the gross negligence of the M.M.B. and the government.⁵¹ On the same day, the *Daily Nation* published an editorial bringing to light the problems in distribution of food aid and concluding that there was “something wrong somewhere” in the maize distribution system.⁵² For the next two months, the maize crisis received daily coverage in the *The Daily Nation* and *The East African Standard*. The KNFU statement and the increasingly alarmist tone from the newspaper reports catalyzed belligerent responses from various government officials, but particularly from the General Manager of the Maize Marketing Board, E.A. Andere, and from the Minister for Marketing and Cooperatives, Paul Ngei. Andere accused the European farmers of trying to sabotage Kenyan farm production and

⁴⁹ KNA TR/17/4, From BCW Lutta to D.N. Ndegwa, PS Office of the President, “Maize Distribution,” 29th October 1965.

⁵⁰ Kenya, *Report of the Maize Commission of Inquiry*, 166.

⁵¹ KNA TR/17/5, “KNFU attacks Maize Board on Famine Attitude,” *East African Standard*, 27 October, 1965.

⁵² KNA TR/17/5, “Maize Probe Urged: Farmers’ Union President Hits out at Marketing Board,” *Daily Nation*, 27 October, 1965.

the KNFU of being a racist organization.⁵³ As more facts came to light, the newspapers began to accuse the government of the misuse of authority, of bribery and corruption, of unnecessary delay in getting maize from the United States, and of a defective system for farm produce distribution. And, beginning in mid-November 1965, the calls for an inquiry into the maize crisis became impossible to ignore. Minister Ngei, exhibiting both his brashness and his lack of tact, responded to the call for a commission of inquiry by saying that he did not take orders from newspapers.⁵⁴

Kenyans wrote eloquent letters to the editor almost daily, detailing the maize situation in their communities, revealing their hardships, and echoing the newspapers call for a commission of inquiry. Many emphasized that traders had no *posho* to sell and consumers could find no *posho* to buy. An anonymous Naivasha resident wrote in to the *Daily Nation* on November 1st, 1965 about the situation in his region, “Several traders I have talked to say that every day hundreds of people come to ask for *posho*. They start from one end of the street, asking only one question. Have you any *posho*? The simple answer is NO.”⁵⁵ James D. Gathuri of Kiambu wrote a similar letter to the *Daily Nation* editor on November 4th, 1965, “Though there are people in Kenya today starving because they do not have money to buy food with, hundreds of thousands of others are starving because they do not have something to buy.”⁵⁶ Others expressed disappointment with the government and hinted at the implications of an unresponsive state. In her November 4th

⁵³ KNA TR/17/5, “Full Maize Quotes for Millers’, Posho should be available – Ngei,” *Daily Nation*, 3 November, 1965.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ KNA TR/17/5, Non-Posho Eater and Seller, Naivasha, “Face the Facts, Mr. Andere,” *Daily Nation*, 1 November 1965.

⁵⁶ KNA TR/17/5, James. D. Gathuri, Kiambu, “Letters to the Editor: Call for Inquiry,” *Daily Nation*, 4 November, 1965.

letter to the editor of the *Daily Nation*, Gabriel Ndula warned that “a hungry nation cannot be contented.”⁵⁷ Manoah Kisame of Nakuru wrote in to the *Daily Nation* on November 6, “Many an innocent person is experiencing difficulty due to the maize shortage and yet Mr. Andere dares tell a Press conference that the situation is being exaggerated! God have mercy on him.”⁵⁸ These letters to the editor not only broadcast the difficult circumstances of Kenyans in various regions, but they also emphasized the dissatisfaction Kenyans felt towards the government, and particularly, towards the Maize Marketing Board.

The crisis had reached a fever pitch. Both Minister Ngei and M.M.B. manager Andere continued to respond abrasively to calls for an inquiry. Finally, in December of 1965, the Ministry of Agriculture took over the West Kenya Marketing Board (W.K.M.B.) as part of a cabinet reshuffle. Minister McKenzie suspended five senior officers of the W.K.M.B., and Kenyatta formed a committee to look into statutory boards.

On January 10th, 1966, the Commission of Inquiry into Maize Marketing in Kenya began. After seventy-five witnesses, 500 interviews, and four and a half months, the Commission published its findings. For the most part, the commission did not make recommendations for drastic changes to a system which had so utterly failed the Kenyan people. The commission recommended continued attempts at self-sufficiency in maize within Kenya and the continuation of the fixed price system, with the added recommendation that government should announce prices as far ahead of the planting season as possible. They recommended that government should encourage cooperative

⁵⁷ KNA TR/17/5, Gabriel Ndula, Nairobi, “Letters to the Editor: Hungry Nation Cannot be Contented,” *Daily Nation*, 4 November 1965.

⁵⁸ KNA TR/17/5, Manoah Kisame, Nakuru, “A ‘Thank You’ on Maize Shortage,” *Daily Nation*, 6 November 1965.

societies – already in place on all the settlement schemes and in many non-settlement maize producing areas – to collect maize from small producers. The commission advised that the government should continue to add special fees into the maize price to build up a price stabilization fund, thus perpetuating the high differential between price paid to grower and the price of purchase. They also recommended the continuation of the policy that prohibited the free buying and selling of maize between private individuals without the mediation of an organization like the Maize Marketing Board.⁵⁹

Though its recommendations were conservative, the commission did lay blame for the crisis, concluding that the M.M.B. and the Ministry of Cooperatives and Marketing were both partially at fault for the delay in obtaining shipments of maize. The Commission also published its conclusions on the state of the shortage and the events which occurred during that time period, arguing that the shortage of maize was around 10 percent, and that a considerable amount of maize was smuggled into Uganda, though the remaining part of the shortage was due to drought.⁶⁰ The Commission found a number of the allegations against the M.M.B., the West Kenya Marketing Board, government officials, District Commissioners, Members of Parliament, and Minister Ngei to be true.

The Commission did suggest some changes. It recommended that retailers' profits on sifted flour should be reduced to 7 ½ percent. The biggest change the Commission recommended was to repeal the provision in the Maize Marketing Act, which compelled the Board to act only through agents unless otherwise authorized by the Minister. Despite a crisis of production, marketing, distribution, and general administration, the

⁵⁹ Kenya, *Report of the Maize Commission of Inquiry*, 160.

⁶⁰ Kenya, *Report of the Maize Commission of Inquiry*, 42.

Commission made few substantive recommendations for the revamping of the maize industry.

Change did come out of the crisis, in spite of the commission's conservative findings. Aside from the Ministry of Agriculture takeover of the West Kenya Marketing Board (W.K.M.B.) and the suspension of five senior officers of the W.K.M.B., just after the start of the commission, Kenyatta replaced the Maize Marketing Board with the new Maize and Produce Marketing Board, and he suspended Minister of Cooperatives and Marketing, Paul Ngei. The state's general resistance to change meant, however, that these adjustments proved to be largely superficial as Kenya remained plagued by the same issues with maize production and marketing for decades to come.

CRISIS IN PERPETUITY?

Despite the publicity in newspapers, the national outcry, and the publication of the commission's findings and recommendations, for decades the Kenyan maize industry continued to be plagued by many of the same problems that first contributed to the crisis in the mid-1960s.

After the maize crisis, the Kenyan government instituted some changes to its maize policy. Most of these changes, though, proved to be largely cosmetic. Kenyatta removed Ngei from his position as Minister, and reshuffled some departments and ministries replacing the old Ministry for Co-operative Development and Marketing with a new Ministry of Co-operatives and Social Services, which contained within it a Department of Co-operative Development. The Office of the President gave this new Co-operative Development department more power, and the short-term policy became to

remove cooperative society officials who misappropriated funds.⁶¹ The government put more power into the hands of cooperative societies to act as a government regulatory agent, both to control maize marketing and to encourage loan payments by settlers.⁶²

The importation of maize during the crisis had damaged the solvency of the Kenyan economy. Though the testimonies in the Commission of Inquiry demonstrated that the high differentials between the government price for farmers and the costs to consumers were part of the problem, the purchase of famine aid maize from the U.S. led to the perpetuation of this high differential. The Kenyan government had taken out large loans to pay for the importation of American maize, and Kenyan maize farmers bore a large portion of this cost in order to maintain consumer prices and not overburden the Kenyan treasury.⁶³ Despite the supposed overhaul of the system and the time and effort put into the Commission of Inquiry, many problematic aspects of the maize marketing system remained the same, and even the discussions officials had about the weaknesses of the system remained the same.⁶⁴

The reforms resulting from the Commission of Inquiry had little impact on the decisions farmers made about marketing their maize, or the ease with which the black market could undercut and destabilize the regulated government market. In 1966 alone, seven settlement cooperative societies in Area North – which included the settlement

⁶¹ KNA TR/17/3, Philip Matson, Nordic Project, Co-ordination Field Operation Section, “From producer to consumer, the role of Co-operatives in marketing agricultural products in Kenya,” presented at the KNFC ICA Seminar on ‘Some Problems of Marketing,’ 9 January 1971.

⁶² KNA TR/1/351, “A Speech to be Delivered by the Asst. Minister for Lands and Settlement, the Hon. J.M. Gachago, M.P., to Farmers Attending a Course at Kenyatta Education Institute at Njoro on Settlement Cooperative Societies on 15.11.65.”

⁶³ KNA TR/1/351, “Minutes of the 18th Meeting of the Central Agricultural Board held,” Conference Room of the Ministry of Agriculture Rhodes House, 4th October, 1966.

⁶⁴ In 1968, for example, the Central Agricultural Board considered sponsoring a study to analyze whether the system of maize marketing worked in Kenya’s interest.

schemes in the northwestern region of the Rift Valley and the eastern border of Western Province – had not paid back their loan advances for maize planting. The government forced these societies to sign irrevocable orders to pay the full amount as soon as 1966/67 crop was harvested. However, when the 1966/67 crop was harvested, only two paid.⁶⁵ This pattern continued throughout the 1960s. The new Maize and Produce Board wrote to the Director of Settlement in 1968:

...the marketing of maize in the settlement schemes around Lugari is in a complete mess; as many small scale farmers are refusing to deliver their maize through co-operative societies because they allege that payments for maize already delivered have not been made by the co-operatives...They are therefore finding out-lets in the markets or trading centres outside the settlement schemes...In the process of so doing, some farmers are committing offences against our movement regulations, but prosecutions are not easy...Instead of co-operatives getting the loan repayments, some maize may be findings its way into the black market.⁶⁶

This black marketing turned into a vicious cycle. Farmers sold their maize outside cooperatives for various reasons, often to avoid repaying their loan, which put them – and often, their cooperative society – in positions of further indebtedness. In response, the loan granting institutions withheld payment for maize even for those individuals who had no debts, which encouraged more farmers to sell outside their societies. Manasi Esipeya, former Settlement Officer in Turbo, said of this dynamic, “Through cooperative movement, the settler has to pay his loans, and for him to avert that loan is to sell privately to a middle man and a middle man goes and sells at a higher price.”⁶⁷

Agricultural extension officer in Chekalini settlement scheme, Wilberforce Oyalo added, “Middle men were the people who spoiled cooperatives. They interfered by giving higher

⁶⁵ KNA TR/17/3, “MFR and Maize Marketing in Area (N).”

⁶⁶ KNA TR/17/11, From Maize and Produce Board to the Director of Settlements, “Marketing of Maize – Northern Settlement Areas,” 22nd May, 1968.

⁶⁷ Interview with Manasi Esipeya, Chekalini, January 1, 2013.

prices.”⁶⁸ Not only did farmers continue to sell their maize outside their cooperatives – despite the harsher restrictions and tighter controls which grew out of the Commission of Inquiry – but they were doing so with impunity, and the government was well aware that it had little power to halt these actions.

The continued black marketing of maize exposed the Kenyan state. Financially, the independent Kenyan state was born in debt, and administratively, the Kenyan state inherited much of its bureaucratic apparatus from a colonial state that asserted its authority unevenly, and often, ineffectively. The independent state had to surmount the additional difficulty of staffing this complicated, but inefficient, government machinery with a largely illiterate and uneducated population. The Kenyan state came into being in a financially and administratively fragile position. The maize crisis represents one of many early postcolonial crises that exposed these insecurities.

The inability to remedy these problems often led policymakers to use “quick fixes.” As discussed in the previous chapter, from 1966 to 1967, the Kenyan government gave the first eviction notices for settlers who had defaulted on their loans. This was followed by a quick about-turn after an uproar from settlers and their advocates. Kenyatta tried to quell the discontent by following the eviction notices with the hurried announcement of a two year moratorium for settlers, and that all evicted settlers should have their cases reviewed. Then, in 1969, the government announced its intention to decontrol maize marketing as from the beginning of 1970. This, however, did not come to be for another couple decades. In 1970, with another maize shortage the government had the same discussion as in 1966 about how to solve the problems of the maize

⁶⁸ Interview with Wilberforce Oyalo, Chekalini, January 1, 2013.

industry.⁶⁹ In 1970, government boards and committees reassessed many of the issues that came up during the Commission of Inquiry in 1965, but this time, they proposed more free market answers. Though the government wanted the Maize and Produce Board to compete on the free market, they still recognized the need for subsidies and for the government to be responsible for expenses related to exporting and storing maize.⁷⁰ Thus, again, despite discussion of change and recognition of major problems, policymakers made few alterations.

In November 1977, over a decade after the Commission of Inquiry in the Marketing of Maize, the government finally took steps to overhaul the maize industry, relaxing the marketing system and allowing for free movement of inter-district trade. The longevity of these discussions about marketing maize without any major changes illustrates an important characteristic of the postcolonial state. The public conversation on problems continued for a prolonged period of time before any definitive action or change occurred. Public admission of fault, and public discussions on solutions substituted for action, where the state was unable or unwilling to make changes.

Certain aspects of maize marketing, though, remained the same, or even regressed. In 1977, the same year that the government made its first major changes to the maize marketing system, Kenyatta again appointed Ngei to be Minister for Cooperative Development. Ngei's second appointment demonstrates that the allegations against him and the findings of the commission of inquiry held dubious importance. It also

⁶⁹ KNA AVS/3/69, "Extracts from the Minister's Speech on Ministry Estimates, 1969-1970," 25th July, 1969.

⁷⁰ Interview with Alfred Machayo, Chekalini, November 1, 2012. Machayo noted that the government was under pressure from labor unions to keep the price of food down, since they would strike for higher wages if food costs rose.

demonstrates some of the complexities of a postcolonial state in which important questions remain unresolved for long periods of time, lengthy debates and negotiations proved fruitless, and the state recycled failed solutions (and, in some cases, officials).

The fact that the government formed the Maize and Produce Board in the wake of the Commission of Inquiry, and then overhauled the new board again only a couple years later, and that the recommendations of the commission were conservative but still went unimplemented, illustrates this integral point about the postcolonial state. Important questions remained unsettled for extended periods of time. The postcolonial state was an indecisive one. Processes for change were repetitive and inefficient, creating stagnation and what must have felt like *déjà a vu* for lawmakers who continually discussed the same questions. Some of this continual reassessment can be understood as part of the process of the transition to independence; it was through the practice of governance, and the negotiation of this governance, that the state eventually defined itself.

TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF STATE OBLIGATION

The maize crisis complicates our understanding of government obligation, the rights of citizens, the relationship between the state and citizens, and how these concepts came to be defined in the early postcolonial era. The Kenyan state's inability to ensure the availability of the most basic foodstuff, and then, its inability to effectively distribute famine aid had broader implications, particularly for the newly developing contract between citizens and the state. Through the maize crisis and other episodes like it, Kenyans negotiated questions about state obligation.

The maize crisis – like other early postcolonial crises – helped Kenyans form expectations for their government, and allowed the government to experiment with how it

would, or should, provide services. Kenyans had not yet formed clear expectations for government provisions. There was a hazy understanding that the government must provide a “safety net.” It was a quite literal understanding of safety and government obligation, in which Kenyans often expected that the government would protect those on the margins of society who were insecure. This sometimes meant helping orphans or widows, but there was not a universal understanding of the necessity of economic equality, or of the government providing extra resources to the poor.

There was, however, a fairly universal understanding that the government should protect vulnerable people from their mortal insecurities. Here, Angelique Haugerud’s argument for the existence of a tenuous moral contract between the state and citizens is important, but needs to be further explored to understand how this contract developed and what it looked like just after independence.⁷¹ The maize crisis should have weakened the relationship between patrons and clients in Kenya, but it was just one instance in the development of this contract. While there had long been systems of authority, never before had Kenyans had a centralized state which they were supposed to be able to rely on. It was only through the maize crisis – and other events in the years after independence – that they came to understand what they wanted from the state and came to form expectations of what the state would actually provide.

Partially because of this history, there was a powerful belief in self-sufficiency and hard work just after independence. But, this belief only existed for those who had the resources to achieve this type of development. Kenyans did believe that in the years after independence the community should often assist the needy. This was usually done

⁷¹ Angelique Haugerud, *The Culture of Politics in Modern Kenya*.

through donating money to a family for their children's school fees, or giving some maize to a widow who could not produce enough on her own.⁷² But, they also recognized that there were certain forms of assistance beyond a community or an individual. As Selena Serem noted, "It was the responsibility of the *serikali* to settle people, because as an individual I cannot have land to give to a squatter, and it was also the responsibility of the *serikali* to offer medication to sick people."⁷³

There was a belief that the government was responsible to provide a safety net to the needy, when the numbers of the needy exceeded the abilities of small communities. While Kenyans often thought of their farming work as a central part of developing the nation, in the time of a famine, they could not be responsible for feeding the entire nation, and moreover, they could not control the distribution of maize to the hungry. It was in these types of instances that Kenyans expected government assistance to provide them with minimal amounts of protection, enough protection that they did not starve.

These expectations for government famine assistance should be understood alongside the ways in which Kenyans conceptualized their contributions to nation building and development in the early postcolonial era. Many thought that they helped to build the nation by farming and selling their produce to other parts of the country, literally through feeding the nation. Stanley arap Songok said, "From the production of the farm, I was supplying milk to the K.C.C. [Kenya Cooperatives Creameries] and the same milk was used to feed people who were not keeping cattle. I was taking maize to cereals and produce board, and the same maize was taken to millers and millers sold it to

⁷² Interview with Philomon Tanai, Leseru, January 9, 2013.

⁷³ Interview with Selena Serem, Leseru, November 28, 2012.

those people who did not practice farming.”⁷⁴ Good farm work was *maendeleo*, or development, because it was integral to the health and well-being of the Kenyan populace, and Kenyan farmers understood the system in which their food was supposed to be delivered to other parts of the country. Susan Rono illustrated this belief. “I assisted the nation through the supply of milk and maize through the K.C.C. and Cereals Board, because after sending my products they were being transported to far places to assist the needy who didn’t have food.”⁷⁵ Rural Kenyan farmers in the Rift Valley and Western highlands saw feeding the nation and being self-sufficient as a significant aspect of nation building. Simultaneously, in the absence of adequate farm production, they expected the Kenyan state to provide food to the hungry.

CONCLUSION

The maize crisis became a multi-faceted crisis: a crisis of hunger, a crisis of confidence in the government, and a crisis in the policies connected to agricultural marketing in Kenya. Through this crisis a complicated picture of African postcolonial politics emerges, making clearer: 1) the complex effects of decolonization on state policies and the lives of postcolonial citizens, 2) the diffuse and destabilizing form of power which developed in the early postcolonial era, and 3) the varied and nuanced ways in which government obligations became defined through encounters (or neglect) with both the colonial and postcolonial states.

The change and uncertainty that were part and parcel of decolonization first helped catalyze, and then prolonged, the crisis. The transition in agricultural production, and the new state’s administrative and financial shortcomings were closely connected to

⁷⁴ Interview with Stanley arap Songok, Sosiani, November 20, 2012.

⁷⁵ Interview with Susan Rono, Leseru, November 22, 2012.

the changeover in power, and both played a role in the maize shortage. These same state weaknesses, along with a lack of clarity about the priorities and direction of state – also a product of a quick transition to independence – slowed the resolution of the issue of maize marketing in Kenya. The maize crisis makes apparent one of the defining features of the postcolonial state – the longevity of decision-making and the continual rehashing of the same debates for decades on end.

Secondly, the maize crisis reveals the state's inability to shape the economic decision-making of the populace. The maize crisis illustrates the diffuseness of power immediately after independence, and how different actors took hold of power in different ways. While all actors were not equal players, rural farmers had the ability to influence significant events and historical processes through their quotidian decision-making. Elites, too, of course had the power to shape historical processes. The corruption of politicians in the years just after independence had the paradoxical effect of benefitting each individually but destabilizing the hegemony of the state, since corruption scandals played a part in delegitimizing state authority.

Lastly, the maize crisis shows the nuanced and varied understandings of government obligation formed through access to government assistance, or through a lack of government assistance. There was no universal understanding of a citizenship which endowed Kenyans with specific rights. It was only through experiences, that Kenyans began to develop a very complex understanding of what their state might be able to offer, or *should* be able to offer.

The next chapter continues to explore this same question of state obligation. It looks, in particular, at Kenya's self-help programs, and how those programs – like the

maize crisis – shaped citizens' understandings of their rights and of government obligations.

6 A Labor of Love?: Self-Help and the Contradictions of Postcolonial Governance

No one likes to be told what to do. It makes us stubborn. Therefore, the surest way to get things done is to start with what the people want and need – what they need so much that they are willing to work to get it.¹

The flow of information concerning the people's needs is channeled upwards to assist in formulation of the overall development planning. In turn, the overall plans are fed back into the community development committee structure, in order that local plans be in tune with the larger picture. In this way, government plans truly reflect the needs and wishes of the people; objectives of the people and the government are one!²

... This is the essence of African Socialism – mutual dependence of individual and society for mutual social, political and economic security. This definition envisages the individual not as a passenger carried in the ship of state but as a member of the crew who participates in the important business of the sailing of the ship of state.³

President Jomo Kenyatta chose *Harambee* – “pull together” in Swahili – as his maxim. He used this maxim in an attempt to move the country away from the political animosities that developed during the independence negotiations and towards the all-important task of nation building. In little time, *harambee* evolved to be synonymous with “self-help,” which became a central tenet of the state-promulgated image of its relationship to citizens, a relationship where the state only helped those who first helped themselves.⁴

¹ KNA JA/31/19, “This is Community Development in Kenya,” Pamphlet Published by the East African Literature Bureau, 1964.

² KNA BY/54/1, Ministry of Co-operatives and Social Services Ronald Ngala, Minister, Department of Community Development and Social Services, G.J. Njenga, Director, “The Self-Help Movement, Kenya, 1968.”

³ KNA TR/1/333, Paul Ngei, “The Application of African Socialism to Co-operatives and Marketing in Kenya,” 21 May 1966.

⁴ There is a fairly long and rich academic literature on self-help and Africa, though it is only more recently that historians have begun publishing accounts of early postcolonial self-help programs. See, for example,

This chapter begins by examining the colonial origins of “self-help.” The colonial history of self-help reveals both the continuities and changes in the practice and rhetoric of self-help during decolonization. Many other newly independent African nations utilized self-help similarly to Kenyatta, and many of those programs, too, followed from colonial development practice. John Hamer writes:

Many governments in new African nations have encouraged the establishment of these associations as a means of promoting local enthusiasm and participation in the so-called modernizing process, at the same time linking local, usually rural, endeavors to national socio-economic objectives. Such forms of association are especially appropriate because of relatively small size and limited capital investment, which means that they fit more easily with local knowledge and organizational abilities and use up a minimum of scarce capital resources.⁵

Kenyatta’s emphasis on self-help was not his alone.

“Betterment” schemes and development schemes in both colonial and postcolonial Kenya were often decentralized and tended to rely on self-help and local taxation efforts. This practice evolved largely in response to the financial and administrative inadequacies of the colonial and postcolonial state. These programs depended on local labor and local investment, and they were often locally led. The African District Councils of the late colonial period, for example, regularly depended on

Joel David Barkan, “Development Through Self-Help: The Forgotten Alternative,” *Rural Africana* no. 19/20 (1984): 115-129; Barbara P. Thomas-Slayter, *Politics, Participation, and Poverty: Development Through Self-Help in Kenya* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985); Joel D. Barkan and Frank Holmquist, “Peasant-State Relations and the Social Base of Self-Help in Kenya,” *World Politics* 41, no. 3 (1989): 359-380; Joel D. Barkan, Michael L. McNulty, and M.A.O. Ayeni, “‘Hometown’ Voluntary Associations, Local Development, and the Emergence of Civil Society in Western Nigeria,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 29, no. 3 (1991): 457-480; Jennifer A. Widner, *The Rise of a Party-State: From “Harambee” to “Nyayo!”* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Priya Lal, “Self-Reliance and the State: The Multiple Meanings of Development in Early Post-Colonial Tanzania” *Africa* 82, no. 2 (2012): 212-234.

⁵ John H. Hamer, “Preconditions and Limits in the Formation of Associations: The Self-Help and Cooperative Movement in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *African Studies Review* 24, no. 1 (1981): 114.

compulsory communal labor to develop their communities.⁶ Self-help programs in the post-colonial era also depended on some form of coercion. Thinking through the continuities between colonial and independent self-help programs is useful for understanding how local communities approached development and understood government obligation. It demonstrates the longevity and reworking of coerced labor, and the changing extent of local control over resources and development.

The chapter also explores how Kenyan citizens interpreted the new characteristics of the independent form of self-help. Examining self-help reveals how – as new citizens – Kenyans negotiated the role they wanted to play in their own development and the role they wanted the state and third party development institutions to play. *Harambee* projects raised questions about the meaning of government obligation. At independence, many Kenyans had vague and rapidly changing expectations of their government. These expectations hardened and became more specific as time passed, often in response to negotiations of self help programming on the ground. New citizens folded in their many contradictory experiences of government intervention, self-help success and failure, and their desires and disappointments with local development. As Kenyans layered these experiences one on top of the other, they began to create complicated ideas of government obligation and citizens' rights.

The state, for its part, was also negotiating a moving assemblage of questions. Focused on larger, national development programs, the Kenyan state could not provide local communities much assistance on smaller projects, such as schools, health centers, and roads. Self-help provided the state with a justification for its absence. By foisting the

⁶ See, for example, KNA DC/UG/2/3/50 From Commissioner for Local Government to all PCs, "Minor Communal Services," 29 October 1956.

task of local development onto small communities, the state freed itself of some responsibility. This small political victory for the state came at a price, however. Self-help undermined the image of a monolithic and supportive state; it also undermined state development plans. Citizens keenly took up the charge to “help themselves,” and as a result, they participated more fully in choosing the development path of the new nation, which often deviated from the plans of central government.

This enthusiastic communal participation forced the government to involve itself in self-help programs more actively than it had originally intended. The Kenyan state increased its community development staff and added stricter bureaucratic checks to regulate and reign in *harambee* schemes. Kenyan citizens also pushed back, and a tug of war began. Local communities often ignored the new regulations on self-help if they thought government involvement would hinder the development they desired. In response, the state withheld funding for the recurrent expenditures local communities could not afford themselves. Newly finished and half-finished schools and hospitals dotted the transforming landscape. These buildings often sat silent and empty, absent teachers and nurses, children and patients, desks and medications, inhabiting a purgatory between communities and the state. Incompatible ideas about development priorities and incompatible expectations for state assistance created this purgatory.

Individual politicians entered embattled *harambee* settings seeking new clients. Soon after independence, Kenyan politicians began giving large hand-outs to *harambee* programs as a way of consolidating their power. Self-help began to evolve into a personal patronage system, in which communities exchanged political loyalty for donations. This change to the practice of self-help had larger consequences, contributing to an emerging

political culture which increasingly revolved around personalized leadership and hyper-localized political issues. The avid participation of politicians in *harambee* programs – both as donors, and as ceremonial figures who laid foundation stones – compounded the growing inequality that *harambee* programs and Kenyan development policy more broadly had already perpetuated. Postcolonial self-help had always incommensurately benefitted those communities with greater resources, since they were best equipped to organize local development programs and could more easily raise funds. And the large personal donations of Kenyan politicians and the Kenyan elite tended to go to the regions already in possession of disproportionate political power and resources.

Harambee took on many meanings, and Kenyans used their experiences with *harambee* to make sense of a changing political context. Initially a way for the state to deflect some responsibilities, *harambee* became a site at which citizens contested the meaning of government obligation and the development priorities of the new nation. It was also a development program which increased inequality and which contributed to a personalized politics revolving around patronage and clientelism. *Harambee* reveals the contradictions, contested nature, and dynamism of early postcolonial governance in Kenya. It reveals the complicated ways in which Kenyans experienced government intervention, the ways new political relationships emerged, and the ways Kenyans made sense of this transforming context.

FROM COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TO *HARAMBEE*

When Kenyans celebrated Independence on December 12, 1963, they did so in a setting marked by possibility, but also, by paucity. The land in the Rift Valley highlands provided possibilities for a more prosperous future, but there was a patent absence of

schools, hospitals, and roads. The area had been developed for European families and their estate farming. As the Kenyan government divided up this land into smaller plots for Kenyan families, these absences became clear to African settlers. There were few roads, because there had been large farms in the colonial era. There were few schools, because there had been few children, most of whom were sent to boarding schools. And, there were few health centers, because – again – the European population had been so much sparser. These absences were equally striking in other areas of the country, particularly areas where there had been few missionaries and where the colonial state had not been very active.⁷

The new independent government did not have the resources to provide schools, hospitals, and roads for the entire population. Though the Kenyan state did not prioritize these programs, it recognized their importance. Kenyans desperately wanted these improvements. Aside from gaining access to land and agricultural resources, oral histories and archival record suggest that education and healthcare constituted what were probably the other two most desired arenas of development. The independent state – unable to provide these programs to the many small communities throughout Kenya – still recognized the importance of making improvements to its educational and health facilities. In order to do so, the independent state drew inspiration from the colonial state continuing with the policy approach of community development through self-help. The colonial state had used “self-help” programs largely to complete development programs colonial policymakers had created, such as irrigation schemes and soil erosion schemes. Because it was not the Kenyan colonial subjects who created these programs – and often

⁷ This was not the case nearly as much in Central Kenya and in Nairobi.

Kenyans actually contested these programs – there was a good deal of coercion in the labor of self-help.

Though the postcolonial government continued to use the self-help programs first introduced by the colonial state, it did not plan to continue the practice of coerced labor. The opposite was true: postcolonial self-help was supposed to be “conceived and executed by the people.”⁸ In other words, postcolonial self-help departed from colonial self-help in theory, because an important part of self-help was for communities to imagine their own development and then enact it. This was in contrast to colonial self-help, where colonial bureaucrats imagined programs and forced Kenyans to implement them. As the Provincial Community Development Officer of Western Province noted in his “Good-bye 1965 and Welcome 1966” message, “I am satisfied that during the passing year, many of you, if not all, accepted community development as your own concern and not an imposed idea as it was the case in the colonial days.”⁹

Even so, in practice, many aspects of self-help remained fairly unchanged as Kenya transitioned from colonial rule to self-governance.¹⁰ The utility of self-help for the government remained largely the same. Where the colonial state used the forced labor regimes of self-help in the absence of financial and personnel resources, the postcolonial state used self-help for similar reasons. Like the colonial state, the postcolonial state was financially weak and administratively understaffed. The independent state just did not

⁸ KNA JA/7/9, Local Government Commission of Inquiry Memoranda (1966), “A National Policy of Community Development Submitted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Services.”

⁹ KNA DC/KMG/2/4/32, Message from H.M. Stanley Njeru – Provincial Community Development Officer, Western Province, “Good-bye 1965 and Welcome 1966.”

¹⁰ KNA ACW/1/425, Kefa Onyoni, for PS Ministry of Housing and Social Services to PS Ministry of Finance and Planning, “Comments on Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism,” 1978. Despite the similarities between colonial and postcolonial self-help, many independent government documents emphasized the “Africanness” of self-help, arguing that it was “well embedded in [their] traditions.”

have the resources to provide every local community with schools, health facilities, and roads.

The postcolonial adaptation of self-help did depart in some important ways from the colonial version of community development. In February of 1964, Jomo Kenyatta announced a new national plan for Community Development. Kenyatta said, "...the actual business of Community Development is the concern of every Government Department, every voluntary organization, and in fact every citizen of Kenya. Community Development in Kenya means the democratic process of including people, as well as Government, in planning and working for the type of society we wish for ourselves."¹¹ This remaking of community development ultimately represented the greatest amount of change from the colonial era in that it positioned everyday Kenyans as the imaginers of their own development programs. Self-help, as envisioned by Kenyatta and laid out in his 1964 plan, added an imaginative process to development for communities all over Kenya. Communities were not only to labor physically to develop themselves, but also mentally, to become a stakeholder in the decision-making process. The theoretical postcolonial version of self-help suggested greater local control and ownership over community development.

The reality was often more complicated and less empowering for local communities. The emphasis on community development in postcolonial Kenya grew less out of Kenya's commitment to local democracies, and more out of necessity to place some of the burden in providing social services and development on Kenya's population. Even so, individuals were still able to make economic decisions that departed from state

¹¹ KNA JA/31/19, Pamphlet Published by the East African Literature Bureau, "This is Community Development in Kenya," 1964.

policy, and self-help allowed communities to have more control over how their money was spent. Many families preferred, for example, to contribute money to self-help rather than pay back their land loans, because their contributions produced physical results.

A more menacing new postcolonial reality was the growing inequality that self-help programs contributed to. Whereas the colonial Community Development programs – which increased and accelerated in the post-WWII years – focused on “women,” “delinquents,” and the “destitute,” the independent program focused on those “who helped themselves.” Unsurprisingly, those most able to create and participate in self-help programs were the already privileged. Richer communities could more easily raise money and could draw on the skills of their better-educated population.

Though so much of community development rhetoric was about communities taking ownership and control of their own development, there was an oppositional trope which suggested some general coercion. The government believed that some “backwards” communities did not have exposure to new ideas which would help them understand their own needs. According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Services’ 1966 document, “A National Policy of Community Development”:

Inevitably in any country there will be communities who see no reason to change their attitudes and whose philosophy of life will be based on traditional thinking. In these circumstances, the projection of ideas is necessary in order to stimulate social change. It is of supreme importance that the projection of ideas emanates from people who have been accepted as the leaders in the political revolution which has brought *Uhuru*. In other words, the political leaders with their assured status can now if they so wish spearhead the social revolution necessary in backwards communities.¹²

¹² KNA JA/7/9, Local Government Commission of Inquiry Memoranda, “A National Policy of Community Development Submitted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Services,” 1966.

The document asserted that, in these cases, it would be necessary to involve political leaders, such as Cabinet Members and the members of the National and Regional Assemblies. More broadly, in so-called backwards communities, it became the role of the national bureaucratic machinery – the Community Development Department – to show these people what they needed and what change they *should* work towards. This alternative plan for “backward” communities was in opposition to the local ownership self-help was supposed to emphasize. At the same time, this justification of the “projection of ideas” onto backwards communities possessed unnerving parallels to colonial rhetoric and policy.

It represented, though, just one of the many paradoxes of self-help in the postcolonial era. The Kenyan government introduced the connected ideas and policies on *harambee*, community development, and self-help using contradictory language. Self-help, the Kenyan government pamphlets said, would not develop the nation as a whole, yet, it was integral to national development. The independent government made a distinction between “national” development versus self-help and community development, despite the fact that there was a “national development plan for community development.” In many ways, this hazy distinction paralleled the hazy distinctions between the Kenyan national government and the local authorities (see Chapter 2). “This is Community Development in Kenya,” a pamphlet published by the Ministry for Labour and Social Services, made this incongruous government attitude towards community development clear.

Community development does not solve national problems like unemployment, or finding new industries for Kenya or increasing the market for coffee. Community development is a planned programme of helping citizens to solve their own local problems by using their own resources. They may build roads and bridges to the

nearest market. They may build primary schools. They may cut down bush to make better pasture for the cattle. They may learn that they are a part of Government and, therefore, people are also responsible for the work of Government. In these ways, community development makes a real contribution to the building of Kenya and to Kenya's development.¹³

The beginning of this quotation argued that community development would not solve national problems, while the last sentence states that it would make a real contribution to Kenyan nation building and development. This contradictory rhetoric allowed for the central government to prioritize big national projects over local ones. The Kenyan state justified the emphasis on so-called national projects because these contributed to developing the nation, while self-help was not given the same level of priority since it was assumed that they only benefitted a small group. At the same time, the independent Kenyan state needed to emphasize the importance of community development for nation building in order to encourage local communities to actively participate in self-help.

Harambee, then, had numerous meanings, and the state used *harambee* programs to different ends. *Harambee* meant to pull together as a nation. It also meant community development through self-help. *Harambee* empowered local citizens to guide their own development, but it became necessary because the central government had to focus on the more important task of developing and building the nation. The paradoxical conception of the role of self-help in national development becomes clear when the explicit disavowal of community development's ability to solve national problems is compared with a different definition of self-help that appears later on in the same pamphlet. The pamphlet states that self-help could also mean, "democracy, nation building, or becoming

¹³ KNA JA/7/9, Local Government Commission of Inquiry Memoranda, "A National Policy of Community Development Submitted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Services," 1966.

truly independent.”¹⁴ In this definition, self-help is critical to enormously important ideas and processes for national development.

The communities creating and building self-help programs added their own ideas to the evolving and complicated notion of *harambee*. Kenyan communities working on self-help programs reshaped what these programs meant. Communities very frequently created *harambee* programs with a great deal of enthusiasm. They often gave labor, materials, and money voluntarily. Some of this willingness resulted from a community’s ownership of their self-help programs. This ownership and the ability to decide how to help themselves also meant that citizens conceptualized *harambee* donations very differently than taxes. The tax was an abstract fee paid to a government official (likely, not a member of the community) and going towards an unknown goal (see Chapter 2). With *harambee*, Kenyans could see where their money went and how it benefitted them.

Self-help programs had varying amounts of government intervention. Self-help theoretically signified a two way flow of information, “Down from Government to People” and “Up from People to Government.”¹⁵ Although the plan for community development envisioned government supervision, this did not always occur. A Government Ministry (initially, the Ministry of Labour and Social Services, and then later, after a ministerial reshuffling, the Ministry of Co-operatives and Social Services) was supposed to review communities’ development plans for self-help programs. The size of these communities ranged from villages to locations to divisions to districts, and on occasion, to all the way up to the provincial level.

¹⁴ KNA JA/7/9, Local Government Commission of Inquiry Memoranda, “A National Policy of Community Development Submitted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Services,” 1966.

¹⁵ Ibid.

At times, relevant government ministries gave grants to help fund self-help projects. For example, in Kakamega District in 1968, communities working to build health centers donated about 13,100 Kenyan shillings worth of their labor, 15,460 shillings of material, and 172,890 shillings of cash for a total of 201,450 shillings. The Central Government, for its part, contributed 15,910 shillings to these programs.¹⁶ It was through conversations about local needs and national development plans, through voluntary labor and the donations of a local community, and through the government provision of grants, that a community development program was supposed to blossom.

In practice, self-help meant a range of programs. Both archival record and oral histories suggest that in the 1960s and 1970s, self-help programs typically meant building schools and hospitals, though self-help programs also included building roads, bridges, and community centers.¹⁷ On occasion, communities attempted more technically complicated programs, such as building cattle dips or milk coolers. Self-help also included adult education programs, social welfare, youth work, sports programming, and cultural affairs. These programs differed substantially from those of the colonial era. To create these programs, individuals and families within communities contributed their labor, raw materials, and cash. The state divided these programs into two categories based on how the government understood the economic purposes of these programs. The first classification was called “Economy Developing” and included “water supplying projects, transportation and communication facilities, agricultural ventures of all kinds,

¹⁶ KNA BY/54/1, Department of Community Development, Kakamega, to Provincial Medical Officer, Kakamega, “Re: Self Help Health Centres,” 20th November, 1968.

¹⁷ For an analysis of self-help education programs in Tanzania, see: Kristin Phillips, “Dividing the Labor of Development: Education and Participation in Rural Tanzania,” *Comparative Education Review* 57, no. 4 (2013): 637-661.

and other buildings and constructions.”¹⁸ These programs made up 26.5 percent of the total value of self help work in 1968. The second government classification of self-help projects was known as “Social and Domestic Facilities.” This classification included projects such as schools, health centres, and recreational facilities and these projects made up 73.5 percent of the total projects.¹⁹ These classifications reveal the simplistic economic lens through which the national government viewed self-help projects. Not only did the government believe most self-help projects did not contribute to economic development, but the “economy developing” category excluded projects which would clearly make future contributions to economic development, such as education.

Rather, government officials often believed that the majority of self-help projects only benefitted individual, small communities and would not generate economic development for the whole nation (or, at least, not immediate or direct economic development). Likely, it was for this reason, that self-help projects were self-help projects. The people of Kenyan communities contributed the majority of the money and labor. In fact, 94.2 percent of the total valuation came from the people themselves, and the rest of the money was supplemented by central and local government grants, overseas sources, private individuals, and business firms.²⁰ Total valuation grew dramatically over time. In 1964, just after independence, Kenyans contributed a little over K£200,000 to self-help programs, while by 1977, they contributed in excess of K£7,000,000, a year.²¹

¹⁸ KNA BY/54/1, Ministry of Co-operatives and Social Services Ronald Ngala, Minister, Department of Community Development and Social Services, G.J. Njenga, Director, “The Self-Help Movement, Kenya, 1968.”

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ KNA ACW/1/425, Kefa Onyoni, for PS Ministry of Housing and Social Services to PS Ministry of Finance and Planning, “Comments on Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism,” 1978.

Community participation sometimes looked different in practice than in its optimistic, hypothetical form. Not all individuals and families agreed upon the projects their communities began in the years after independence. And, not all individuals and families could afford to donate money or material equally. This was not supposed to matter, because one of the primary goals of community development in Kenya was to assist Kenyans “to take action to meet their needs through voluntary self-help activities.”²² A number of informants said that if the poor in their communities could not afford to contribute money, they could make labor contributions, for example, by physically helping to build schools and hospitals. Many recalled that members of the community contributed whatever they could, in terms of money, or items of value (such as chickens), and they recounted that there was not a set amount of money or labor hours that households had to contribute. They also remembered a gendered division of labor, particularly, that women gathered the mud for building.²³

Other informants, though, had different memories, where self-help was not voluntary. Some remembered Assistant Chiefs coming around to their houses to ask for a specific amount of cash, and in the absence of a donation, confiscating their property. A number of informants recalled that Chiefs stole their chickens for self-help. Selena Chelimo Barno, for example, said of her family’s property being taken:

We were afraid that maybe it was the order of the *serikali* (government) to do such, so we were afraid that if one raises an alarm or complains, the same person could be arrested...If that could happen today, somebody would ask why, because the constitution has made all people know they have rights somewhere.

²² KNA JA/7/9, Local Government Commission of Inquiry Memoranda (1966), “A National Policy of Community Development Submitted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Services.”

²³ Interview with David Munyatta, Chekalini, November 17, 2012. Many people spoke about this practice, but Munyatta, especially, spoke extensively in his interview about the injustice and theft of the *harambee* collection system in the Kenyatta era.

But those days, people were being misled by leaders. They just waited for leaders and everything was done according to what a leader said.²⁴

The misinformation which abetted self-help theft shaped feelings of resentment within communities, particularly towards community leaders.

Archival evidence supports these reflections. The Minutes from a District Commissioners Meeting in Western Province at the end of 1969 noted, “A decision was made that in 1970 some force should be used in the collection of self-help funds with quotas say shs. 5,000/= being given to sub-locations as a target for the whole year.”²⁵ A Kenyan farmer painted a similar picture of the compulsory characteristics of self-help. He wrote to his District Officer in 1969:

I am surprised that people just come at my home during my absence and take my things before I am told what is going on. This thing has been made a habit at my home. Firstly, a group of people came at my house and took my Iron box during my absence and my wife’s absence. I tried to find out whom they were, and was told that they did that because they wanted me to pay for the school building. Secondly, they came again and caught 2 cocks and 2 hens during my children’s presence and said the same. Thirdly, they came and found my wife sick in the home. They asked her to pay some money because she does not go and make the roads...²⁶

Though it is hard to reconstruct the extent of the use of force for self-help collection, it is clear that it was widespread.

The coercive nature of self-help programs in the postcolonial era paralleled that of the colonial era. The fears of arrest that Selena Chelimo Barno described grew partially out of the Kenyan colonial history, in which the colonial state – already founded on a forced labor regime – imposed draconian laws throughout its three-quarter century of rule

²⁴ Interview with Selena Chelimo Barno, Leseru, November 28, 2012.

²⁵ KNA HB/27/8/4, “Minutes of the District Commissioners’ Meeting held at the Provincial Commissioner’s Office on 19th December, 1969.”

²⁶ KNA DC/KMG/2/4/33, William A. Kigame, Kakamega, to the DO Lugari, “Re: Self Help in Lugari,” 20th June, 1969.

(and, particularly, in the last decade during the Mau Mau State of Emergency). Even so, the early postcolonial era was accompanied by a sense of optimism from many Kenyans, and many communities enthusiastically created self-help programs. They saw these programs – contra to how they had understood self-help under the colonial era – often as something that they were happy to contribute to, because they often expected that these programs would positively impact their families. Despite the optimism of independence, the early use of force to collect *harambee* contributions gave some a sense of pause. Early feelings of unease, and even disappointment, emerged as it became clear that the new political and economic order would not be wholly different from the old.

DEFINING GOVERNMENT OBLIGATION

It was not just the optimistic atmosphere brought on by independence that encouraged participation in self-help. In the absence of either a history of desired government intervention or a clearly defined sense of government obligation, communities took on their own development projects. Having only recently achieved independence, Kenyans tended to have few specific expectations of their government. In 1963, the majority of Kenyans had lived their entire lives under colonial rule, and oftentimes, many Kenyans articulated their expectations for change at independence as the abolition of especially hated colonial policies, such as the mandatory carrying of the *kipande* (colonial identity card) or colonial taxes.²⁷

The overwhelming centrality of land and land resettlement for expectations of independence (see Chapter 3) also played a part in the absence of more specific expectations for government obligation. William Serem recalled, “After independence,

²⁷ Interview with Jairo Murungo Libapu, Lumakanda, November 3, 2012.

we thought that we were just to live like that. We were not actually thinking of getting anything from the government, so we didn't expect anything from the government. So long as we got land and *uhuru*, that was final."²⁸ Karen Misavo, a Lumakanda settler, echoed this idea that settlers did not expect other government assistance, "The government could not assist again because it had given us land and it transported us to this place. So, it was our responsibility to work hard."²⁹

Other informant recollections suggest a more nuanced context. A range of aspirations existed, just as a range of expectations existed for how the government should help transform these aspirations into realities. The focus on land and *uhuru*, along with a lifetime of colonial rule, meant most importantly, that after independence Kenyan citizens and the Kenyan state were just beginning to work out on the ground ideas about the rights of citizens and the obligations of the state and local communities.

Very often, these negotiations occurred at the site of *harambee* projects. The creation of self-help programs raised questions within local communities about the meaning of development, the responsibility of the government, and the rights of citizens. Communities debated these questions with state actors, and over time, individuals formed more concrete and specific ideas of government obligation. *Harambee* programs were a common site of these debates, because they occupied an ambiguous space – often government-orchestrated or regulated, but just as often, absent of government intervention. The ambiguous and inconsistent role state actors played in different *harambee* programs shaped Kenyan communities to different ends, and generated complicated discussions about government responsibility in local development settings.

²⁸ Interview with William Serem, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

²⁹ Interview with Karen Misavo, Lumakanda, October 31, 2012.

The question about what circumstances obligated the state to protect the social welfare of its citizens also came to the forefront during periods of crisis, such as famine, natural disaster, or epidemic outbreak (see Chapter 5).

Citizens' rights constituted the flip side of this emerging understanding of state obligation. Similar to contested ideas about government obligation being worked out at the site of *harambee* projects, Kenyans debated ideas about citizens' rights at this same time and in these same spaces. Not only were Kenyans asking whether the government was obligated to assist with the building of infrastructure and the development of local communities, but they were also asking if – as citizens – they had a right to these resources. Often, rural Kenyans conceptualized what it meant to be a citizen (*mwananchi*) without discussion rights, human rights, or the Kenyan constitution, but rather, through an ambiguous framework about rights to state resources (see Chapter 7). Though rural Kenyans made a connection between citizenship and state resources, rural Kenyans often inverted the relationship between citizenship and state resources. Many informants recalled that they did not believe they became citizens until they owned land. This idea is especially important since large portions of the population – most notably, women – were basically excluded from land ownership (see Chapter 6).

Most Kenyans connected independence to “development” and thought of development not as the abstract “progress” or the “improvement” of one’s life as conceptualized under Western development paradigms, but as concrete achievements that signified the attainment of a certain standard of living. Jairo Murunga Libapu recalled, “Development was cattle, milk. Being a good farmer, I used to produce 200 bags of

maize.”³⁰ Kenyans understood development as a general well-being that could be achieved through a dependable livelihood (usually, farming) and hard work. There were very few expectations for specific government assistance at that time, but a longing for self-sufficiency, a longing to be provided with the resources – most importantly, land – to be able to take care of one’s family. This is why land was so integral to conceptions of citizenship; it was integral to aspirations and desires for progress.

These notions translated easily into the pursuit of self-help. As originally conceived by the national government, local communities would start schools and health centers according to their needs, and then the government would take these over, providing teachers, nurses, other staff, and materials. This worked within the government’s idealized conception of *harambee*, which gave communities ownership over their own development, unburdened the central state from providing services it simply did not have the resources to make available, but still involved the central state in local lives. Because Kenyans longed for self-sufficiency and ownership of their own development, the *harambee* idea was “well received.”³¹

Few informants recalled feeling disappointment, then, about building their own schools; they did not initially perceive this as government failure or inadequacy. Joseph arap Bir’geng recalled, “We were just pushing by ourselves; we were saying if the government has the opportunity, let them help us. If not, we will just continue with our development.”³² Bir’geng’s recollections were supported by the oral histories of most informants.

³⁰ Interview with Jairo Murungo Libapu, Lumakanda, November 3, 2012.

³¹ Interview with Alfred Machayo, Chekalini, November 1, 2012.

³² Joseph arap Bir’geng, Sosiani, November 20, 2012.

Kenyan ideas about the state's roles and obligations did vary, however. Others responded more ambivalently to the lack of state assistance in local development projects. Samuel Kimeli Kiplagat said, for example, "We used to contribute [to *harambee*] because we didn't depend on the government. If you could depend on the government, they would not have been there... When you depend on the government, you don't know whether they will give you some money or not. So, we decided to contribute ourselves."³³ This was not an unusual narrative. Many informants remembered the early postcolonial government as undependable. Likely, this notion emerged principally from self-help programs, since the degree of government involvement in these local projects was inconsistent. Rural Kenyans, nonetheless, often recounted these memories without censuring the government. Rather, these informants responded to government unreliability with stoicism, and simply mobilized their own communities in the provision of services.

In some cases, rather than hoping for government intervention, individuals actively hoped for the opposite. Many Kenyans said that they did not want the government to be part of their local development projects. Hoseah arap Keter recalled, "We didn't want the *serikali* to be involved [in building schools and health centers]... We thought that if the *serikali* was given the responsibility to build, they will take the premises. We were asking ourselves, 'what is our responsibility after owning the land?' It is our responsibility to head the institutions. The *serikali* was only to employ the teachers and nurses, and other people. We wanted to own the buildings."³⁴ Keter's view was a common one. Many communities believed that constructing schools and health centers

³³ Interview with Samuel Kimeli Kiplagat, Sugoi, January 10, 2013.

³⁴ Interview with Hoseah arap Keter, Sosiani, November 21, 2012.

gave residents control. In the eyes of many rural Kenyans, local ownership of schools and health centers equaled local ownership of institutions, and thus, of local development.

Despite this longing for local control over community development, Kenyans commonly made a distinction between the government responsibility with regard to schools versus hospitals. Though there were few agreed upon expectations for the early postcolonial state, there was a fairly common expectation that the government would build and maintain hospitals. Health care and health facilities were seen as distinct from schools, because they provided a safety net and security for the population. Education was understood to be an aspect of development, which – although very important – did not usually mean the difference between the life and death of a Kenyan. Sylvester Barngetung Sing'ari articulated this idea. “The *mwananchi* should be provided for in line of security, he should be protected by the government. *Mwananchi* should get health facilities and services should be provided in time of need.”³⁵ Kenyans largely expected government assistance for their health and well-being.

Aside from helping to ensure the health and well-being of the population, Kenyans also articulated a belief in government responsibility for social services and development which extended past the abilities and resources of a small community (see Chapter 5). In these cases, where the safety of Kenyans was at stake or the ability of local communities had been overstretched, Kenyan communities hoped their government would step in to help. The government did not always do so, and in these instances especially, Kenyans resented the lack of government assistance. Samuel Kimeli Kiplagat recalled, “We were overburdened...education you have to bring, hospitals you have to pay. Things

³⁵ Interview with Sylvester Barngetung Sing'ari, Leseru, November 19, 2012.

which the government should have taken, because it was heavy for the people. The government returned that burden to the people. That is why we didn't develop as quickly."³⁶ In these cases where communities felt the heavy burden of their extensive responsibilities, they often made a direct causal connection between the lack of government aid and the forestalling of their development.

Despite local feelings of burden as a result of the lack of government support, the state profoundly shaped the definition of government responsibility. The government of Kenya guided citizens' notions of government responsibility, and state conceptions of government obligation often closely matched those of citizens. For instance, a Memorandum by the Ministry of Health noted that "The Government of Kenya accepts the responsibility for the health of the nation and realizes that the development of health services cannot be considered in isolation but as an integral part of national development."³⁷ This was almost identical to many informants' clear conceptions that healthcare was a responsibility of the government. A similar pattern occurred with secondary education. Many informants recounted that they came to expect that if they built a primary school, it obligated the government to build a secondary school eventually. Thus, when pupils finished primary school, they could continue their education at the secondary school.

Ainea Alulu's thoughts about the government role in secondary schools demonstrate how lived experiences of government assistance could frame popular conceptions of government obligation. Alulu recalled that it was the community's

³⁶ Interview with Samuel Kimeli Kiplagat, Sugoi, January 10, 2013.

³⁷ KNA JA/7/9, Local Government Commission of Inquiry Memoranda, "Memorandum by the Ministry of Health," 1966.

responsibility to build schools and, especially, it was the community's responsibility to take care of the primary schools. However, he noted, it was the government's responsibility to help much more with the secondary schools, since many Africans were not educated at that time and it was important for the nation.³⁸ It is likely that Alulu's ideas about government responsibility – like those of other Kenyans – emerged from experiences in which the government entered local communities and built secondary schools. The state prioritized secondary education as integral aspect of nation building. Kenyans witnessed the government building secondary schools and, as a result, came to expect this service from the government.

Experience did not always transform into unquestioned ideas about state obligation. Kenyans contested the state's proposed ideas of government obligation when these ideas were anathema to their own visions of development, or when Kenyan communities felt they needed state assistance to complete important local development projects. Very often, Kenyan citizens contested notions of government obligation and the state prioritization of development projects through self-help programs. In 1969, the Provincial Community Development Officer observed, for example, "that people of Western Province were not hard working and only did half jobs in self help projects in the belief that the Government could come in and finish off. This resulted in waste of money, time and effort. This could only be avoided through education and understanding of the masses to remove ill conceived ideas that the people have done so much and the Government so little."³⁹ This anecdote – one among many in the archives – reveals a

³⁸ Interview with Ainea Alulu, Lumakanda, November 5, 2012.

³⁹ KNA HB/27/8/4, "Minutes of Administrative Officers' Meeting held at the Provincial Commissioner's Conference Room on 16th July, 1969."

tension between the conceptions of “the masses” and the state about when the government should intervene and how much support the government should provide.⁴⁰ By refusing to continue their self-help projects, these communities were asserting a different vision of government responsibility. This refusal suggests a shift, which began to occur in the mid to the late 1960s, as some Kenyan communities began to conceptualize a more specific role for the state in their local development.

Harambee played an important role in shaping Kenyan notions of *serikali* (government), because *harambee* programs represented a site at which Kenyan communities and the Kenyan state negotiated government obligation. Through community development trial and error, some semblance of an understanding of government emerged. Frederick Kemboi arap Tum Kiptulus recalled the evolution of his thinking, “I really didn’t understand what the *serikali* (government) meant back in those days after *uhuru* (independence), but I thought everything belonged to the government. But later, *harambee* was introduced by Kenyatta. And that is when we learned that anything that came out of the *harambee* belonged to us.”⁴¹ Community-driven *harambee* projects gave people the sense of ownership that they longed for. These feelings of local ownership bolstered national longings at independence to “own” development and the direction of the nation. Self-help reaffirmed self-government; the two gave meaning to one another. Tum Kiptulus added, “We thought the *serikali* was different and the community was different, but we later came to realize that the government is us now, the

⁴⁰ See, also, KNA HB/27/8/6, “Minutes of the Administrative Officers’ Meeting held in the Conference Room on the 22nd July, 1968 at 9.30 A.M.” “The Chairman pointed out that the spirit of self-help was still low in many areas of the Province. Officers were therefore urged to use their administrative efforts to make people appreciate what is demanded of them in matters of self-help. District Officers were asked to see that self-help donations were well accounted for and also that the money was spent for the purpose it was meant...”

⁴¹ Interview with Frederick Kemboi arap Tum Kiptulus, Leseru, November 22, 2012.

community.”⁴² Joseph arap Bir’geng offered a similar understanding of the relationship between the community and the government. “For a chief to be, it is the community. For the government to be, it is the community. The community is the pillar, and that should be the *serikali*.”⁴³ Through self-help, a community-centric notion of government emerged.

The common interweaving of local and national spaces, forms of governance, and development did not produce a singular response to government obligation, however.

Sally Kogo recalled her apathy towards the government.

I wasn’t disappointed in the *serikali* because the place was bushy so it was understood that the government never knew that people were living there. So, it was our responsibility to go to the government and introduce ourselves, ‘We have a place living somewhere there and we need your services.’ So, we needed to introduce ourselves to the government. I think it was our responsibility to introduce ourselves to the government.⁴⁴

Kogo – like many Kenyans, but particularly, like marginalized groups, such as women or squatters – responded to government absence by placing further obligation on her own community. Marginalized groups often felt they did not have rights to state assistance, and they tended to respond by more creating alternative non-state institutions for support (see Chapter 7).

Not all Kenyans responded in this way, nor were all Kenyans as forgiving of the inadequacy of government aid. Some informants articulated a sense of disappointment when the government did not meet their minimal expectations for assistance. Aaron Juma Wechuli remembered, “We were disappointed with the government because it didn’t want to build anything. It was giving us that responsibility. We were given trees and for

⁴² Interview with Frederick Kemboi arap Tum Kiptulus, Leseru, November 22, 2012.

⁴³ Interview with Joseph arap Bir’geng, Sosiani, November 20, 2012.

⁴⁴ Interview with Sally Kogo, Leseru, November 23, 2012.

us we were to build.”⁴⁵ Ainea Alulu recalled that it was the government responsibility to hire teachers, but in Lumakanda in the 1960s, the government did not provide teachers for the primary school. As a result, the Lumakanda community paid for the teachers. Alulu recalled, similarly, that hospitals were the responsibility of the government. The government did not build a hospital in Lumakanda, so residents built it themselves. Alulu noted that these instances led to community disappointment with the government.⁴⁶ As both Wechuli and Alulu suggested, Kenyan communities often responded to the dearth of government assistance with community action. This community action became part of a negotiation over government obligation and over how to prioritize development in the new nation.

NEGOTIATING SELF-HELP

From the point of view of some local communities, their invitations for central government assistance with local development projects often went unheard. From the point of view of the state, self-help projects often took on a life of their own.⁴⁷ The direction of these local community projects rarely aligned with the visions of national policymakers, or with national development plans. The government felt it could not control the trajectory of self-help, a problematic trend in policymakers’ eyes. While officials publicly lauded the growing importance of self-help in Kenya’s development, privately, correspondence reveals increasing panic among officials about their inability to control the nature of these development projects. This official anxiety culminated in 1968

⁴⁵ Interview with Aaron Juma Wechuli, Lumakanda, October 31, 2012.

⁴⁶ Interview with Ainea Alulu. Lumakanda, November 5, 2012.

⁴⁷ Michael Jennings, “‘We Must Run While Others Walk’: Popular Participation and Development Crisis in Tanzania, 1961-9,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 41, no. 2 (2003): 163-87. Jennings argues local self-help activity raised Tanzanian state fears about its power to control development policy and led to the establishment of statist rule.

when the government created an inter-ministerial committee to process all applications for special assistance with self-help projects. This inter-ministerial committee signaled state backtracking on its initial idealized notion of *harambee*. The government had originally made clear to citizens that it would only help them if they first helped themselves. But, with this inter-ministerial committee and other policies designed to regulate self-help, the state pushed back against citizen ingenuity and initiative. By more closely regulating self-help, the state attempted to direct self-help programs more closely, and it withheld aid and grant money if citizens did not help themselves in the way that the state envisioned.

This state reversal, and intrusion into a program that had once been lauded for being community-led, did not go unnoticed. Kenyans often envisioned development differently than the central government envisioned it, and they recognized a conflict emerging from their divergent development priorities. The Minutes of a meeting of Rift Valley District Commissioners in 1968 noted, “Concern was expressed because it is thought that certain ministries carry out development projects which are not regarded by the local people as priorities. District Commissioners felt that local people should be consulted before any project is started by a Ministry and use should be made of the Development Committees.”⁴⁸ Kenyans frequently did not wait to be consulted, however.

On innumerable occasions, communities created self-help projects against the behest of local and national officials. For example, in Chekalini, a settlement village on the eastern edge of Western Province, community members under the leadership of a church minister continued building a health center despite official attempts to halt their

⁴⁸ KNA HB/27/8/6, “Minutes of the District Commissioners’ Meeting held at the Provincial Headquarters, Rift Valley Province, Nakuru, on the 5th February, 1968.”

progress. The Western Provincial Medical Officer wrote to the District Commissioner of Kakamega in September of 1966 about the Chekalini Health Center:

I have visited the above so called Health Centre and have ordered that the Centre be closed forthwith.

As you yourself probably know, authority to grant permission to operate Health Services, and to practice medicine lies entirely with an ad hoc Statutory Board, the Medical Practitioners and Dentists Board. The Minister has no authority as such therefore, to grant such permission, he being usually a non-professional person. I therefore fail to see how 'Bishop Ajuoga' of the Church or Christ in Africa, could have obtained permission from the Hon. Minister.

As far as I am concerned, the Centre is operating illegally.⁴⁹

The medical officers' order to close the health center, and his opinion that the centre was operating illegally created little change. Chekalini community members continued building the health centre that they wanted for their village. Instances such as this one demonstrate conflicting views of what constituted development, how development should be prioritized, and what the protocol for creating development projects should be. These instances demonstrate a lack of regard for lower level state officials, particularly, when a state intervention involved an attempt to bar a local development project.

This sort of conflict at the site of *harambee* projects occurred often, and it occurred at the site of all sorts of development projects. The Minutes of a Rift Valley District Commissioners 1966 meeting read, "Speaking about Harambee Schools, the Provincial Education Officer said their demand had become chronic and they were being established without following the right procedure. Applications for registration of such schools should be sent to the Ministry of Education through the County Council and the

⁴⁹ KNA MOH/8/157, S.N. Ngure, PMO, Western to the DC, Kakamega, "Re: Chekalini Health Centre," 1st September, 1966.

Provincial Education Officer.”⁵⁰ But, as some of the previous oral histories demonstrated, the lack of government support often galvanized communal action. Members of small communities deeply desired health centers, schools, and roads. In the absence of government assistance or explanation as to the protocol, these communities took it upon themselves to bring their own form of development. They cared little for government procedure, especially since it often slowed progress and did not guarantee future government support.

In some cases, communities even began self-help projects as a way of encouraging the government to participate in their local development programs.⁵¹ The minutes of a “Western Province Self-Help Co-ordinating Committee Meeting” recorded a telling interchange between two committee members on this subject. “Mrs. Nabutola had said that she had come across cases of misinterpretation of self-help spirit and Mr. W. Wabuge wanted to know what she meant. She replied that some people started self-help projects not out of their own need but with a false hope that by doing so they will be able to secure government aid.”⁵² Kenyan communities, it is clear, contested the government at the site of *harambee*. They contested government prioritization of national development over local development, and they contested the slow, tedious, and bureaucratic government procedures.

For a government that hoped communities would take on vast development responsibilities, but also wanted these same communities strictly to follow its guidelines

⁵⁰ KNA HB/27/8/6, “Minutes of the Meeting of the District Commissioners held at Provincial Headquarters, Rift Valley Province Nakuru – on Friday, 25th February, 1966.”

⁵¹ Frank Holmquist, “Self-Help: The State and Peasant Leverage in Kenya,” *Africa* 54, no. 3 (1984): 72. Holmquist argues that self-help gave peasants greater leverage on state policy and budgets, and that self-help allowed peasants to “alter subtly” – but to peasant advantage – the peasant-state relationship.

⁵² KNA DC/KMG/2/4/32, “Western Province Self-Help Co-ordinating Committee Meeting: Minutes of a Meeting held in the PC’s Conference Room,” January 16, 1967.

and procedures, these contestations signaled trouble. The Kenyan national government was unwilling to relinquish control over the national development path and, thus, attempted to right the wrongs of communities that ignored government procedure and government development priorities. Independent Kenyan government officials, particularly officials in the Ministry of Co-operatives and Social Services, came to believe after a few short years of self-help experimentation “that initiators of self-help projects, however large or small need guidance as development of Kenya, as a whole, has reached the stage where haphazard projects can hinder rather than help the overall plan or cause considerable frustration to the people.”⁵³ The Personal Secretary for the Ministry of Co-operatives and Social Services who wrote the above, continued, “Development can be viewed as a jigsaw puzzle where every piece must fit into its own place. Consequences must be taken into account, that is to say, consideration must be given to the availability of technical or specialist staff before a project that requires them is embarked on. Also where recurrent costs are implied, it has got to be ascertained how much would be required and where the money would be obtained.”⁵⁴

The government response to unendorsed self-help projects ranged. In some cases, government officials attempted to apply light pressure on communities to practice the state sanctioned form of self-help. A Kakamega District Community Development Officer addressed the Self-Help Group Leaders in his district in May of 1968:

I have sought this opportunity to address you, in an endeavour to initiate to your Community a new IMPACT aimed at considering to finish these projects, without very rigidly dwelling on the Government aid, which will be for the coming according to the suitability of time, basing it of course on the PRIORITIES. Since

⁵³ KNA DC/KMG/2/4/32, GSK Boit, PS for Ministry of Co-operatives and Social Services to PCDOs, “Finance for Self-Help Projects,” 25th May, 1967.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

you are aware that the planning is being done by the people, it will be unhealthy if any groups to fall a prey to the propagandist that our Government is not helping as it promised.⁵⁵

A Monthly Report in 1969 by the Senior Settlement Officer of Sotik reveals a similar application of an attempted government corrective by, once again, pushing self-help leaders to follow the orders of local officials. The officer recounted, “In Manaret Scheme there was a self-help project on repair of Simbi road, after a slight grading had been done. The spirit should be extended to other schemes. Internal roads for access is still a major problem and it can only be overcome, if more interested community self-help groups are formed. I would suggest that in order to improve this situation, at least monthly there should be meetings in various areas attended by heads of department of the area to institute the idea.”⁵⁶ These meetings – where local government officials tried to persuade communities to practice specific forms of self-help – signified one way in which individuals in local communities encountered government representatives and had the opportunity to assert their opinions. The archival record suggests that this form of government pressure on self-help groups produced few results, since years later, government officials still complained of the lack of discipline of self-help groups and their inability to keep these groups under control.

As in other instances where government officials were unable to convince Kenyan citizens to practice development “properly” or follow the government development vision, the state employed alternative strategies to police self-help projects. In other

⁵⁵ KNA DC/KMG/2/4/33, E. Mugo, District Community Development Officer, Kakamega to the Group Self Help Leaders, Kakamega District, “Message [sic] to the Self-Help Group Leaders Kakamega District,” 23rd May 1968.

⁵⁶ KNA AVS/13/21, Schemes Monthly Report: Senior Settlement Officer, Sotik, “S.S.O.’s Sotik Area Monthly Report for July, 1969.”

words, widespread disregard of government directives, shaped independent Kenya's governmentality. With *harambee* programs, the state policing of rural communities most often took the form of a planned bureaucratization and formalization of self-help. This policy entailed greater government oversight of community-run development projects, creating a complicated structure of community development officials as well as an intense application process prior to beginning a *harambee* scheme. These attempts to more closely monitor and control self-help encountered setbacks, since the state had neither the staff to monitor the exploding self-help sector, nor the bureaucratic structure to manage incoming applications.

Government correspondence, memoranda, and development plans repeatedly emphasized the pyramid of community development staff and committees intended to closely monitor self-help projects. A 1964 draft circular on "National Development Committees" outlined the structure, which "in addition to providing a framework for directing Community Development policy, will be the channel for financial and material assistance to Community Self-Help Schemes."⁵⁷ This framework comprised national, regional, local authority, area/location, and sub-location development committees. The circular laid out the method through which government assistance would be awarded. First, the National Committee would allocate the proportion of funds and materials to each region. Then Regional Committees would make allocations to Local Authorities. Local Authorities, finally, would furnish assistance to area/location and sub-location committees.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ KNA JA/31/19, "Draft Circular: National Development Committees, 16th October, 1964."

⁵⁸ Ibid.

A 1966 “National Policy of Community Development” by the Ministry of Labour and Social Services placed a similar emphasis on this hierarchy of community development. The Ministry wrote in the memorandum, “It will be the duty of Community Development staff to establish village and locational level Community Development Committees.” The policy continued “Where local resources are insufficient to meet expressed community needs, the village or local Community Development committee will detail the assistance required in terms of skilled labour or materials not available locally and submit an application for assistance to the County Community Development committee.”⁵⁹ A National Committee for Community Development continued to sit at the top of this pyramid of committees, allocating resources to provinces, and coordinating and reviewing the national policy on community development.⁶⁰

Central government ministries and committees could assert the neat structure of community development as much as they wanted, but in practice, self-help rarely operated so smoothly. With self-help health centers, for example, the government dictated that a community must first transfer the plot of land to the County Council. Next, County Councils needed to give communities clearance, and then, the community had to use the Medical Officer of Health’s plans for building the center.⁶¹ Government correspondence on “Harambee Hospitals and Health Centres” similarly insisted that “no hospital, health centre or maternity hospital is built which does not conform to the

⁵⁹ KNA JA/7/9, Local Government Commission of Inquiry Memoranda (1966), “A National Policy of Community Development Submitted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Services.”

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ KNA MOH/8/157, A.J. Kinya, Ag. Director of Medical Services to the Commissioner of Lands, “Lumakanda Settlement Scheme Health Centre – Plot No. 88,” 17th February, 1967.

Ministry's [of Health] plans."⁶² As the example of the Health Center in Chekalini demonstrated, communities often did not adhere to these government strictures.

Chekalini, led by a Church minister, built a health center that did not comply with the Ministry of Health plans, and which had not been cleared by the County Council.

When communities did seek assistance from local government officials and worked within the government-proposed framework, it was not always to their benefit. In March of 1967, for example, the District Officer Central wrote to the District Commissioner Kakamega about a self-help cattle dip project in Kambiri. The District Officer recounted:

I have visited the site on 24/2/67 during my *Baraza* in that area and the main topic was the dissatisfaction by the people of that area on the miscalculation of wrong advices rendered by the then Veterinary Assistant.

The project has cost the group something like 3000/- which is a big loss to those poor people who sweated themselves to help themselves and achieve nothing in the end.

What remedy is being processed for them for consolation.⁶³

The District Commissioner responded to this appeal for reparation with little sympathy. He wrote, "Advise them to regard the loss as the baby that dies, and a couple tries to get another."⁶⁴ With such little compassion for communities thwarted by government error and with little visible advantage to following government protocol, it is not surprising that communities so often avoided state bureaucratic and regulatory measures for self-help.

⁶² KNA MOH/8/157, DDMS to the Assistant Secretary, "Re: Harambee Hospitals and Health Centres," 30th June, 1966.

⁶³ KNA DC/KMG/2/4/32, From DO Central to DC Kakamega, "Cattle Dip Kambiri Self-Help Project," 1st March, 1967.

⁶⁴ KNA DC/KMG/2/4/32, From F.M Nthenge, DC Kakamega to the DO Central, "Kambiri Self-Help Cattle Dip Project," 3rd March, 1967.

More often, though, even had local communities wanted government assistance, it was nowhere to be found. Oral histories belie the emphasis of Kenyan national development plans on the complicated and locally-grounded community development structure. Rather, informants often recounted organizing themselves for self-help projects. Their memories were without the local community development officers so significant to the national development documents. Sometimes, rural Kenyans remembered simply coming together as a community in response to a development need. Other times, they recounted the important role that local leaders – such as chiefs, church leaders, or prominent community members – played in organizing self-help projects and spurring their communities into action.

Archival evidence – largely, government correspondence and minutes, as opposed to national development plans – supports these oral accounts. The absence of state actors at self-help sites resulted from a skeletal bureaucratic staff. In the 1964 Minutes of a National Committee for Community Development meeting, Daniel Arap Moi, at the time a Member of Parliament in the Rift Valley Region, said that “whilst he welcomed the National Community Development Plan and its implementation he was disappointed that no officers could be appointed for more than half the Districts of the Region. There was also a great need for more County Council Community Development Assistants.”⁶⁵ The representatives from Western Region made a similar complaint at this same meeting, noting that the plan called on the counties to employ more Community Development

⁶⁵ KNA JA/31/19, “Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the National Committee for Community Development,” December 8th 1964.

Assistants even though they could not afford to take on more staff.⁶⁶ Adding to this challenge, Community Development staff were often the first to be let go when budget problems arose. A Cabinet memo noted, “It is understandable that when money is not available staff has to be cut down. What we consider as most unsatisfactory is the fact that when retrenchment is necessary, the first to be axed are invariably Community Development workers.”⁶⁷

This thin staffing on the ground impacted communities trying to work through government channels to complete their self-help projects. The District Commissioner of Kakamega wrote to some of his District Officers in September 1965 about the lack of progress with self-help projects in the region.

We have had several colourful ceremonies of foundation stone laying and my hope has been that wherever these ceremonies have taken place, the projects would be completed without delay. To my surprise this is not so.

I have visited 5 projects in Vihiga and Mumias all of which appear to have stopped on the day that the ceremonies were held. I am now requesting you to use your good office in reviving the spirit that it is required to complete the projects.⁶⁸

With a shortage of community development officers on site, local government officers – already stretched thin – could do little more than attempt to assist some *harambee* schemes on occasion.

Petitions from self-help groups suggest that, even when local government bodies wanted to invest in self-help, few had the wherewithal to provide support to *harambee* projects. The Koromati Self Help Group wrote a memorandum to the District

Commissioner of Kakamega in the mid-1960s:

⁶⁶ This complaint was also part of a larger squabble between local and national government bodies about authority and financing. See Chapter 2.

⁶⁷ KNA JA/31/19, From GSK Boit, PS to All PS’s “Cabinet: Development Committee: Plan Implementation: The Need for Positive Action,” [undated, likely 1965-66].

⁶⁸ KNA DC/KMG/2/4/32, From DC Kakamega to DCO Central, Mumias, Lurambi & Vihiga, Self-Help Scheme General Correspondence (1965-67), 23rd September, 1965.

Sirs, these are the troubles. We erected a school on which we spent 500/-/ then we were advised to leave it because it was on a wrong site.

We then started erecting another school on which we are still embarking. On this one we have already spent 500/- on nails, poles and transport.

Now we are building a bridge on which we have already spent 300/- and it is incomplete. It is to enable children to reach school safely.

We respectfully request our honourable visitors to give us more advice and a support on this new building, school and nursery.⁶⁹

Similar to the bureaucratic checks the state attempted to institute, the Koromati petition illustrates the ways in which following government protocol could slow progress. Under government instruction, the Koromati self-help group moved the site of their school after already investing time and money in the original building. The new site not only meant lost labor and financial investment, but it also required a bridge in addition to the school building. Yet, at least as characterized by the self-help group, they were not receiving adequate advice and support in completing their project. This petition illustrates wider experiences of self-help. In the eyes of many Kenyans, the government seemed only to appear in order to inform communities of their wrongdoing, but not to provide sought after assistance to complete their projects.

Unable to convince Kenyans to follow the state's vision, or to more closely control self-help projects with a thin staff on the ground, the Kenyan state turned to another strategy. It withheld resources. This was a strategy the state employed in other instances when it attempted to assert control (see Chapter 2, especially). It was easy for the government to justify withholding funding under the rhetoric of *harambee* and self-help. Self-help foisted development obligations onto local communities. The Chairman of the National Committee for Community Development demonstrated this notion at a 1964

⁶⁹ KNA DC/KMG/2/4/32, "Koromati Self Help Group Memorandum," [undated, but written between 1965 and 1967].

meeting, saying that self-help “meant that anyone who did not help himself would not be helped.”⁷⁰ In other words, the Kenyan government could defend both its unwillingness to provide resources by arguing that local communities had not done enough themselves.

This government strategy was especially insidious given the type of development local groups undertook with self-help. Most self-help projects – schools and hospitals, especially – required what the Kenyan government referred to as “recurrent expenditures.” These were expenditures that, in theory, the government had taken on as its own responsibility. If a community built a school, the state had promised to provide books, desks, teachers, and staff. If a community built a hospital, the state agreed to provide nurses, medicine, and other supplies. In practice, however, the state could not meet the frenetic pace set by enthusiastic communities. Not only did the independent Kenyan state not have the trained staff, it did not have the money to pay for these regular expenditures. Rather than admit this, the state attempted to slow the progress of communities by putting in place more tedious administrative checks and by imposing greater responsibility for these development projects on local communities.

When these strategies did not slow the pace of community building projects – of roads, of schools, of health centers, of cattle dips – the state simply defunded the programs. The Minutes of the National Committee for Community Development in December 1964 made this possibility clear. The minutes stated, “If self-help projects go forward without planning and co-ordination, schools will be built without teachers to staff them, dispensaries constructed without an assured supply of drugs, and agricultural

⁷⁰ KNA JA/31/19, “Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the National Committee for Community Development,” December 8th 1964.

projects started without the guidance of professional extension workers.”⁷¹ At this same meeting, a representative for the Minister for Local Government suggested that “self-help projects which would involve subsequent recurrent expenditure by Councils, should be avoided. This included schools, health centres, youth centres, and nursery centres.”⁷² The audacity of such a suggestion might not come through in the text. But, this was a setting in which, aside from land, schools and health centres were at the forefront of Kenyan aspirations. To suggest that these should be put on hold and to believe that communities would heed this suggestion, implies an abject misunderstanding of what rural Kenyans longed for and how they planned to make new futures for their families.

A few years later, perhaps in response to community resistance, the state had become more attuned to Kenyan aspirations. A document entitled “The Self-Help Movement, Kenya” authored in 1968 by Ronald Ngala, Minister of Co-operatives and Social Services, and G.J. Njenga, Director of the Department of Community Development and Social Services, illustrates this changed perception. They reported,

The number of schools undertaken continues to grow substantially. The thirst for education for the children of Kenya is apparently unquenchable, despite the increasing problem of meeting the recurrent costs of such schools. Nearly one and one third million pounds went into the various types of educational projects, secondary schools, primary schools, and teachers’ houses. Similarly an increase in numbers over 1967 is noted in all other categories of these Social and Domestic Facilities.⁷³

Government realization of the significance of self-help projects to local communities could not transform the financial challenges it faced. The state continued to withhold

⁷¹ KNA JA/31/19, “Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the National Committee for Community Development,” December 8th 1964.

⁷² KNA JA/31/19, “Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the National Committee for Community Development,” December 8th 1964.

⁷³ KNA BY/54/1, Ministry of Co-operatives and Social Services Ronald Ngala, Minister, Department of Community Development and Social Services, G.J. Njenga, Director, “The Self-Help Movement, Kenya, 1968.”

funding from many self-help projects, despite Kenyans' "unquenchable thirst" for schools and health centers.

Community resistance to the lack of state assistance, and consequent disappointment, raises questions about how Kenyans revised their understanding of their rights as citizens, and of the government's obligations over time. As the earlier section suggested, Kenyans initially expected very little assistance from their government after independence. But, when the state actively inhibited communities from providing for themselves, this did lead to early disappointment and to Kenyans rethinking their understanding of the new political order, and of what they desired and deserved from it.

The entrance of external development agencies further complicated this setting. The Kenyan state overcame its own financial and administrative incapacity by seeking aid from outside donors. These external agencies represented just the newest set of the many non-state actors working to provide social services in Kenya after independence. External development agencies and donors followed from a long history of external intervention – of missionary work, most significantly – to provide education and healthcare.⁷⁴ UNICEF, for example, began providing aid to self-help projects as early as 1961. UNICEF funded the provision of equipment, stipends for training, and vehicle replacements that County Councils could not afford.⁷⁵ Most of the outside offers of assistance with self-help projects in the early independent era came from other nations. This support included both financing and technical assistance. By 1964, Kenya had

⁷⁴ For more on missionaries, see: John and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa, Volume One* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991); Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*.

⁷⁵ KNA JA/31/17, From Asst. Commissioner for Social Services to the PS, Ministry of Local Government and Lands, 12th July, 1961.

received offers of assistance from: “Most Commonwealth Countries, all Scandinavian countries, Yugoslavia, UAR [United Arab Republic / Egypt], Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, USSR, West Germany, China, Italy, France, Romania, Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, USA and Israel.”⁷⁶ Nongovernment organizations, such as CARE and the Ebert Foundation, began to provide assistance to self-help programs at the same time.⁷⁷

External actors not only provided resources and funding, but they also provided conceptual foundations for self-help. “This is Community Development in Kenya,” a pamphlet published by the East African Literature Bureau in 1964, was based on a pamphlet first published by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 1962.⁷⁸ USAID was one of the most prominent external aid agencies funding self-help. At times, the agency used its Special Self-Help Fund – money set aside each year to aid self-help projects near completion – as a way of assisting sectors where the agency did not have programming. This fund would not cover recurring expenses, and “in essence” was meant “for roofs, not walls or labor.”⁷⁹ USAID funding would not solve the financial problems self-help posed, but it would provide a temporary stopgap for a bleeding Kenyan treasury anxious to please a populace longing for community development.

⁷⁶ KNA JA/31/19, Pamphlet Published by the East African Literature Bureau, “This is Community Development in Kenya,” 1964. Cold War politics deeply shaped aid and development assistance in Kenya, and throughout Africa and other parts of the Global South.

⁷⁷ KNA BY/54/1, J.G. Njenga, Director of Community Development and Social Services, to all Provincial Community Development Officers, “Special Assistance to Self-Help Project,” 25th July, 1968.

⁷⁸ KNA JA/31/19, Pamphlet Published by the East African Literature Bureau, “This is Community Development in Kenya,” 1964.

⁷⁹ KNA MOH/8/157, From Carroll S. Hinman, Director of USAID to Mr. GSK Boit PS Ministry of Cooperatives and Social Services, 29 December, 1967.

The presence of these new actors did not go unnoticed, and Kenyan communities became aware of the growing role that external agencies had begun playing in self-help projects. The Chairman of the Lumakanda Community Development Coordinating Committee wrote to the District Commissioner of Kakamega in 1966, for example, “Your assistance will prove that Lumakanda can help and develop itself with the Assistance from Central Government in kind (including foreign aid).”⁸⁰ A secondary school headmaster illustrated a similar knowledge of the sources of external funding for self-help, writing in 1967 that he used a USAID grant of 7,000 shillings to purchase blocks, roofing material, wood, and cement.⁸¹

The repercussions of a new state relying on external help to provide deeply desired development are ambiguous and difficult to assess. In a newly independent context, one might expect implications to state sovereignty. However, the early postcolonial period was also a setting in which Kenyan citizens had vague notions of government obligations, which were in the process of coming into being. The early entrance of external actors combined with a lack of desired state assistance did not seem to have delegitimized state authority. Over time, though, Kenyans did begin to form more firm expectations of state assistance. *Harambee* was an important site at which communities asserted their desires for development, their disappointment with government assistance, and simultaneously, their ambitions and self-determination.

⁸⁰ KNA DC/KMG/2/4/32, From Moses Kevogo Mudaki, Chairman, Lumakanda Comm. Dev. Co-ord Committee, “Re: Health Problem,” 27th October, 1966.

⁸¹ KNA DC/KMG/2/4/33, From Harry Nachtigall, Headmaster Emusire Secondary School to the DC, Kakamega, 24th August, 1967.

PULLING TOGETHER OR PULLING APART?

There were some less ambiguous outcomes to the growing importance of self-help programs. One clear outcome of the emphasis on self-help was its contribution to an increasingly unequal social and economic order. Self-help, though supposedly created to empower local communities, acted in some ways as an anti-welfare program. The government took care of those who helped themselves, rather than those who could not help themselves. The communities able to help themselves had more educated individuals, individuals with technical skills, and had a wider base of capital to draw from. This perpetuated already existing inequalities, particularly regional inequalities.

The state was aware of the need to appear mindful of, and working to undo, uneven development. A Cabinet Development Committee memorandum stated, “When distributing K£60,000 allocated for self-help the Ministry was conscious of the fact that Government is committed to assisting the less developed areas.”⁸² This stated commitment to less developed areas never translated into a reparative policy. The memorandum continued, “Consequently, the North Eastern Province got a share equal to that of the other Provinces.”⁸³ An equal share of grant money would not undo years of unequal development, and this sort of thinking reveals the lack of commitment to creating a more equal society. At times, the government did allocate slightly more money to what it considered to be the “backward districts,” but it never wholeheartedly invested in developing these areas.⁸⁴

⁸² KNA JA/31/19, From GSK Boit, PS to All PS’s “Cabinet: Development Committee: Plan Implementation: The Need for Positive Action,” [undated, but 1964-66].

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ KNA DC/KMG/2/4/32, Charles N. Chomba, DC Kakamega to PC Development Officer, Western, “Chairmanship and Presidency of Self-Help Development Co-ordinating Committees,” 29th December, 1965.

State publications emphasized assistance to less developed areas, but they also emphasized – in more cloaked rhetoric – a commitment to assist communities already further developed. The Personal Secretary of the Ministry of Co-operatives and Social Services wrote in 1967, “Funds to assist these projects are voted to this Ministry and it is this Ministry’s duty to administer those funds to ensure the greatest value to the greatest number of both projects and people.”⁸⁵ Which projects and people represented the greatest value was open to interpretation but, certainly, it cost less money to aid projects in better developed areas. It was easier to transport supplies, for example, to a region with better road networks.

It was not just a lack of financial investment in lesser developed areas which perpetuated inequality. Individuals in these areas were less likely to have advantageous political connections, and there were fewer educated people in these communities. Both of these factors presented further challenges to “underdeveloped” communities. An adviser to a *harambee* Health Centre in Kericho wrote to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health in 1967, “During colonial days we, in rural areas, were neglected; and thus we were left with less health services. But this has also been aggravated by illiteracy that is common in rural areas of Kenya.”⁸⁶ Illiteracy made submitting self-help applications more difficult, and in effect, it made it more difficult for areas with fewer educated Kenyans to garner government aid.

⁸⁵ KNA DC/KMG/2/4/32, From GSK Boit, PS for Ministry of Co-operatives and Social Services to PCDOs, “Finance for Self-Help Projects,” 25th May, 1967.

⁸⁶ KNA MOH/8/157, From Councillor Tim Mibei, Adviser to the Committee Roret Health Centre, ‘Harambee,’ Kericho to the PS, Ministry of Health, “Re: Financial Donation to the Above Harambee Health Centre,” 7th November, 1967.

Literacy, though, was not the only form of knowledge required for successful grant applications. An understanding of what the government wanted was integral to getting aid. This knowledge was greatest among the elite, those with close ties to the state. A note from P. Ndegwa, the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury illustrated how the application process privileged the wealthy and the educated. “It is intended to distribute these grants, as equitably as possible to the Provinces on the basis of sound proposals...Initially, the allocation to each Province will be up to the maximum of K£14,000. It is expected that each Province will be able to formulate sound proposals within this ceiling. However, if any Province is unable to do so, its allocation will be diverted to other Provinces from whom supplementary proposals will be invited.”⁸⁷ The explication of this practice lays bare the process through which an “equitable system” easily transformed into a system which advantaged the elite.

Self help not only perpetuated regional inequalities, but it also perpetuated inequalities within communities. Women represented a group left out of the state conception of self-help, and often excluded from community development processes (see Chapter 7). A Memorandum from a Women’s Self Help Group in Chepkorio to the Minister of Health illustrates the hardships women faced when creating self-help projects. The women wrote in the memo about the difficulties they had encountered trying to raise funds for a maternity extension in their health centre.

We have collected money towards [sic] the extension of the ward amounting to 3,600/- only after a period of eight months. Mr. Minister Sir, we have estimated the ward is to be extended will be 15,000/- and we have tried to collect the above figure and we are ready to do most of the labour by hand and still work hard to obtain accessible materials like stones, bricks, etc. Therefore Sir, we look upon

⁸⁷ KNA BN/87/19, From P. Ndegwa, PS to the Treasury to All PCs, All Provincial Planning Officers, “Grants to District Development Committees,” 3rd November, 1971.

you and request you to take our case to your ministry and consider assisting us in materials like iron sheets and bags of cement...Sir, we hope that you can help to remind our husband all over to help us too...Mr. Minister, Sir, every mother donated 5/- and still continue till we see in reality the problem solved having enough space with health conditions thus create healthy people in a healthy nation.⁸⁸

In rural settings, where women often had little financial control over household income and resources, it was difficult for them to complete self-help projects without aid from the state. This handicap became further compounded, because women tended to be less formally educated, and they were often excluded from the state channels which opened up access to self-help funding.

The state also discriminated against other marginalized groups through self-help. Pastoralists were chief among these groups.⁸⁹ A 1978 correspondence reviewing the application of African Socialism to Kenyan society, suggests that policymakers were aware of the ways in which groups, such as pastoralists, became further disadvantaged through self-help programs. The Permanent Secretary of Natural Resources wrote, "But for *harambee* spirit to be sustained *wananchi* (citizens) are presumed to have the means. Left on its own, as is the case, self-help could result in undesirable imbalance in development. Pastoral areas are being left even further back than they were before.

⁸⁸ KNA MOH/8/157, Mrs. G. Ego, Chairman Chepkorio Maternity Extension Women Self Help Group, "Memorandum to the Honourable Minister of Health Mr. J. Otiende from Chepkorio Maternity Extension Women Self Help Group," 23rd March, 1967.

⁸⁹ There is an extensive literature on pastoralism and development in Eastern Africa. See, for example: Thomas Spear and Richard Waller, *Being Maasai: Ethnicity and Identity in East Africa* (London: James Currey, 1993); David Anderson and Vigdis Broch-Due, eds. *The Poor Are Not Us: Poverty and Pastoralism in Eastern Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999); Little, *The Elusive Granary*; Hodgson, *Once Intrepid Warriors*.

Concerned efforts must be made to take them along in the self-help and development tempo in which the country is marching.”⁹⁰

For marginalized groups, however, the development march carried on, often without them. Important as it is to point out the neglect of certain groups within society – women, pastoralists, squatters, specific ethnic groups – this form of neglect very closely paralleled regional neglect. And, it is the figures on self-help by region that are most revealing of the inequality produced through these programs. For example, a report on the self-help movement in Kenya in 1968 stated that, “Close scrutiny of these figures shows that Central Province with a decreased number of projects from 1967 had a markedly increased valuation and moved into first place among the provinces on the basis of valuation. Nyanza similarly had fewer projects and increased valuation, and is in the second position based on valuation.”⁹¹ In short, this assessment of self-help valuations reveals a trend in 1968 in which *fewer* projects received *greater* funding. Grant aid for self-help was becoming increasingly concentrated, rather than more evenly distributed. Further, the fact that Central Province – one of the most developed, if not the most developed, provinces – had the greatest valuation further supports the thesis that self-help benefitted the most privileged to the greatest extent.

Political scientists have examined this very question about the distribution of self-help aid, and come to similar conclusions. Arne Bigsten noted in *Regional Inequality and Development: A Case Study of Kenya*, “As a self help movement it is to a large extent

⁹⁰ KNA ACW/1/425, From JHO Omino, PS Ministry of Natural Resources to Mr. L.O. Kibinge, PS Ministry of Finance and Planning, “African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya, Some Thoughts,” 4th April, 1978.

⁹¹ KNA BY/54/1, Ministry of Co-operatives and Social Services Ronald Ngala, Minister, Department of Community Development and Social Services, G.J. Njenga, Director, “The Self-Help Movement, Kenya, 1968.”

dependent on the contributions of the people within the community, which, naturally, makes it easier to initiate *Harambee* projects in the economically more advanced areas. The distribution of *Harambee* activities may therefore be assumed to reflect existing regional inequalities.”⁹² Bigsten demonstrated that, in 1972, Central Province received the greatest amount of contributions with a total of K£ 1,003,071. North Eastern had the least with K£ 63,887. Below, you can find a reproduction of Bigsten’s table, which makes clear not only the range in values, but also shows where the contributions came

Table 6.1 Harambee Contributions by Province

Province	Total (K£)	Contributions by (K£)			
		The people	Central Government	Local Government	Other
Central	1,003,071	922,420	47,372	7,114	26,165
Coast	239,222	180,098	32,937	368	25,819
Eastern	483,998	419,523	40,336	2,859	21,244
North Eastern	63,887	40,351	20,009	1,676	1,851
Nyanza	459,245	407,165	25,385	1,320	25,375
Rift Valley	635,923	550,670	38,289	8,051	38,913
Western	230,577	186,852	3,745	10,291	43,725

Source: Arne Bigsten, Regional Inequality and Development: A Case Study of Kenya (Nairobi, Kenya: Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, 1977), 160.

from.⁹³ The data indicate that Central Province received the greatest contributions from its own people and from the Central Government.

Even more indicative of the inequality likely produced through self-help is the data Bigsten used to show per capita spending. This data demonstrates, again, that Central Province spent the most per capita for self-help programs. It does show, however, that North Eastern Province – a very poor province – received the most Central

⁹² Arne Bigsten, *Regional Inequality and Development: A Case Study of Kenya* (Nairobi, Kenya: Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, 1977), 160.

⁹³ Bigsten, *Regional Inequality and Development*, 161.

Government contributions per capita of all the provinces. Western and Nyanza – two other poorer provinces – however, received very little Central Government contribution

Table 6.2 Per Capita *Harambee* Contributions

Province	Total	Rank Order	Contributions by the People	Contributions by Central Government
Central	0.54	(1)	0.50	0.025
Coast	0.23	(4)	0.17	0.031
Eastern	0.23	(4)	0.20	0.019
North Eastern	0.25	(3)	0.16	0.079
Nyanza	0.19	(6)	0.17	0.011
Rift Valley	0.27	(2)	0.23	0.016
Western	0.15	(7)	0.13	0.003

Source: Bigsten, *Regional Inequality and Development*, 160.

per capita. Bigsten concludes that “it is not quite clear whether *Harambee* contributes to increasing inequalities, or if it is just a manifestation of those that exist.” He adds, however, that “an equitable distribution would be more likely with a system of taxation and a conscious regional distribution of infrastructure investments by the government.”⁹⁴

While this quantitative evidence might not unequivocally demonstrate that self-help produced inequality, it supports the qualitative evidence that indicates the production of new inequalities through self-help programs. Qualitative evidence also suggests that *harambee* produced new political relationships and unequal administrative attention to wealthier provinces. These new political dynamics affected the success of different regions. The District Commissioner of Kakamega wrote at the end of the 1965 that, “The general trend of things appears to be that Self-Help projects have been more successful

⁹⁴ Bigsten, *Regional Inequality and Development*, 162.

where administration has taken interest and put effort in supporting, morally or otherwise, the co-ordinating committees.”⁹⁵

Interest and moral support came from both the administration and from individuals. Informants remembered important lawmakers coming to give donations to their projects. Many residents of Sosiani village remembered, for example, that the Minister of Health Otiende came to donate 20,000 K£ to their health centre. The archival record supports these memories, noting that Otiende gave these 20,000 K£ donations to a number of communities in the mid to late 1960s.⁹⁶ Ainea Alulu remembered Members of Parliament coming to donate money and convincing the government to provide nurses.⁹⁷ Alfred Machayo said that it was very common for politicians to come to rural villages and give donations.⁹⁸ This personal *harambee* donation became typical over time. It gave better politically-connected communities disproportionate access to state resources, but it also produced a new political patronage system.

With the case of the donations from the Minister of Health, for example, further expectations for assistance emerged. Communities that received Otiende’s donations felt they had entered into a political contract, one in which they traded loyalty for political favors. The Thompson’s Falls Maternity Ward Self-Help Committee, for example, requested Otiende “spare time to meet a delegation from this Committee before 11th June, 1966. The Committee is confronted with some urgent problems which can only be solved

⁹⁵ KNA DC/KMG/2/4/32, From Charles N. Chomba, DC Kakamega to PC Development Officer, Western, “Chairmanship and Presidency of Self-Help Development Co-ordinating Committees,” 29th December, 1965.

⁹⁶ See: KNA MOH/8/157; KNA Uasin Gishu District Annual Reports.

⁹⁷ Interview with Ainea Alulu, Lumakanda, November 5, 2012.

⁹⁸ Interview with Alfred Machayo, Chekalini, November 1, 2012.

with your personal assistance otherwise members will feel disappointed and frustrated...”⁹⁹

Largely, though, it was politicians who stood to benefit from making “personal donations,” gaining loyal clients through their generosity. Personal contributions from politicians opened up new avenues for corruption, particularly since it was hard to tell whether the contributions came from the central government or from the individual. It also remained unclear how certain projects were selected to receive assistance.¹⁰⁰ A Progress Report on Self-Help Projects in Western Province, for instance, stated that “the procedure followed has not been satisfactory because the District and Provincial Community Development Committee were not made aware how these projects were selected. It has been difficult and embarrassing to us when information is required by Nairobi at short notice when we have not been consulted by the Member of Parliament who originated the project.”¹⁰¹ In other words, Members of Parliament had been selecting self-help projects to fund without any oversight from the community development bureaucratic structure put in place to monitor self-help. Individuals, instead, were making decisions about how government grants would be spent.

Other evidence supports this emerging status quo for *harambee*.¹⁰² The Director of Community Development and Social Services wrote in 1968 that, “most applications

⁹⁹ KNA MOH/8/157, From J. Nderitu, Clerk of the Council, to the Minister for Health, “Thompson’s Falls Maternity Ward,” 26th May, 1966.

¹⁰⁰ For more on neopatrimonialism, see Joseph, *Democracy and Prebendal Politics*.

¹⁰¹ KNA DC/KMG/2/4/33, “A Progress Report on Assistance to Self-Help Projects in Western Province to be Submitted to Provincial Community Development Committee Meeting on May 30th 1969.”

¹⁰² Lynch, *I Say to You*, 100. The use of *harambees* to consolidate political power came to its apex under Daniel arap Moi’s rule, and it was Moi who perfected this form of political patronage. “Moi used his personal wealth—together with state resources under his control—to contribute personally, or through political allies, to local *harambee* drives across the country and was one of the top five donors for several years in the late 1960s and 1970s.”

received in the past have emanated from individuals like politicians.”¹⁰³ Minutes from a Western Province Self-Help Coordinating Committee Meeting depict a similar context. The minutes reveal that some politicians took “part with the intention of gaining popularity and getting publicity. Cases had come to light where politicians sought to supersede the legitimate leaders of self-help projects.”¹⁰⁴ Though civil servants seemed troubled by this departure from a romanticized notion of communities pulling together to help themselves, the trend would continue.

In 1978, the Personal Secretary for the Ministry of Housing and Social Services, Kefa Onyoni, wrote a scathing review of what *harambee* had become. “It has been observed over the years through complaints that have been made in public speeches or in the press, that there has been a progressive tendency towards Politicalisation of the spirit of Harambee.”¹⁰⁵ Onyoni continued, “Closely related to this is the thinly veiled competition that arises in making personal contributions.”¹⁰⁶ Onyoni closed his indictment with a pithy evaluation of the deterioration of *harambee*, “Such practices erode the spirit of self-help.”¹⁰⁷ Perhaps, such practices had *further* eroded the spirit of self-help, but self-help had never been practiced with the type of spirit the government pretended to originally envision after independence. Certainly, though, an important shift had occurred – beginning as early as the mid-1960s – in which state actors had begun to

¹⁰³ KNA BY/54/1, From J.G. Njenga, Director of Community Development and Social Services, to all Provincial Community Development Officers, “Special Assistance to Self-Help Project,” 25th July, 1968.

¹⁰⁴ KNA DC/KMG/2/4/32, “Western Province Self-Help Co-ordinating Committee Meeting: Minutes of a Meeting held in the PC’s Conference Room,” January 16, 1967.

¹⁰⁵ KNA ACW/1/425, From Kefa Onyoni, for PS Ministry of Housing and Social Services to PS Ministry of Finance and Planning, “Comments on Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism,” 1978.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

use the funding of *harambee* projects as a way to consolidate their authority and attract new clients.

CONCLUSION

Self-help reveals the contradictions of Kenyan governance in the early postcolonial years. The chapter began by exploring the reasons why the Kenyan state emphasized self help. *Harambee* allowed the government to play a role in local development projects. It also allowed the government to abdicate some responsibility for financing and administering the innumerable projects it did not have the resources or personnel to support. *Harambee* excused state absence and weakness, and instead, emphasized the personal responsibilities of citizens.

Kenyan citizens, though, contested this discourse and this practice of governance. Like the state, their conceptions of government obligation and their expectations for government intervention were evolving and full of contradictions. Through self-help projects, especially, Kenyan communities negotiated the meaning of government obligation, the extent of ownership they would have over their local institutions, the development priorities of the new nation, and the role the government should play in local development.

Much of this chapter interrogated what it meant for the government to not provide desired support to local development projects. The final section of this chapter, conversely, raised questions about the ways in which individual state actors participated in reshaping political relationships *through* their support at local development projects.

Harambee, then, was a site of contestation and change. It was a site where local communities ignored strict state guidelines about the bureaucratization and

implementation of development. It was also a site where the state attempted to strong arm local communities by withholding resources. It was a site at which already existent inequality increased, and a site at which a new, postcolonial personal patronage system became further accepted as a part of Kenya's political culture.

The next chapter takes up a thread of this chapter on the ways in which marginalized groups were further marginalized through self-help. Chapter 7 examines how women responded to their exclusion from household and state resources, and from public political spaces in resourceful ways.

7 'The Land Was Ours, But It Was Not Mine': Exclusion, Political Imagination, and Women's Mobilization

*Mwananchi (a citizen)? I had only ever heard of that.*¹

-Chelimo Martha Keino

This chapter tracks how, in the short period after independence, men and women came to form different relationships to the new state and, consequently, different understandings of belonging and citizenship. Women were largely excluded from formal political spaces, and they had few avenues for accessing the resources of the state, especially land. Citizenship in postcolonial Kenya was built through the promise of development and resources from the Kenyan state. This chapter, then, examines political imagination and political engagement from one periphery. As inequalities were (re)mapped onto gender difference, women began expressing distinct ideas about belonging and rights to resources in the new nation-state. Women's postcolonial political imaginations also shaped their forms of political engagement. Women's shared experiences of political dispossession within the state helped mobilize their collective organization to access resources. Conversely, women's ability to make social and economic improvements without government assistance further hardened feelings of not belonging to the state.

Previously scholarship considers the role of universalistic expressions of citizenship and the language of liberal rights in the creation of a national polity. For example, Kenda Mutongi has argued that widows in Western Kenya used the new

¹ Interview with Chelimo Martha Keino, Leseru, November 19, 2012.

language of citizenship to demand their rights.² However, my research on women in the western highlands of Kenya shows that these expressions of citizenship were, in fact, not universal, but instead inflected by inequalities that were structured by gender. Women did not use the language of rights, nor the language of universal citizenship when discussing their relationships to the nation-state. Instead, they articulated a set of desires they had as individuals in the post-colonial period. These desires often took the form of healthcare and education. The nation-state had promised these developments at independence, but they were not delivered. As a result, women's expectations of the state as a main provider for resources were compromised. In reaction to their own sense of disenchantment with the state, women, rather than demanding rights as citizens, collectively organized, creating intimate polities outside and alongside the nation-state.

The findings of this chapter deviate from Giblin's assertion that rural Tanzanians situated themselves in relationship to state authority, because of their "historical state of exclusion," as well as from Lal's critique of Giblin, in which she argued that the private sphere was not an autonomous site to which rural people retreated, and that local language and practices "were deeply entwined" with national development.³ Because of their exclusion, the language and development practices of women were less influenced by those of the state. While they often did not situate themselves in relationship to state authority, they also did not retreat to the "private" sphere. Women publicly participated in a form of "development" outside of state control, and one which was defined by their own needs.

² Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*.

³ Giblin, *A History of the Excluded*, 7. Lal, "Militants, Mothers and the National Family," 19.

This chapter also examines the various factors that shaped women's responses to their exclusion and disenfranchisement. Women's peripheral position meant that they often formed systems of support within their small communities more helpful than the state-sponsored avenues for accessing assistance. Thus, for some women, their seemingly circumscribing position actually led to opportunity, as they took initiative and formed social and economic groups to provide services and support to one another and their families. For other women – often those who lacked the support of a women's organization, or those with male family members who exercised control over their spatial mobility and day to day routines – their political isolation was equaled by a social isolation and a lack of economic agency.

Women were marginalized politically, socially, and economically based upon their gender, but women's experiences were complicated and varied dramatically based upon different life circumstances. Many factors shaped both women's experiences and their diverse responses to those experiences – ethnicity, community, and family, for example. This chapter examines the political subjectivities of women during decolonization. It examines both how inequalities were written across gender differences, but also shows that women did not share a singular experience. All of these forms of inequality deeply shaped how women made meaning of their lives and formed understandings of the state.

THE POLITICS OF EXCLUSION

Baraza were a long-standing political tradition in Kenya adapted from coastal Swahili society. British colonial administrators used the space of the *baraza* to address the public. Over time, *baraza* became a space for public meetings and a space where

colonial subjects could bring *shauri* (problematic issues) to colonial officials. In the independent era, *baraza* continued to serve as an essential space for governing.

Angelique Haugerud has argued that *baraza* maintained its importance for four main reasons.

First, through these gatherings the one-party state affirms itself as a symbolic presence and sets limits on tolerable behavior among citizens. Here citizens learn to deploy political symbols in ways acceptable to those in power... Second... listeners detect clues to contending forces within the state. These public meetings offer a display of elite cohesion, but provide as well glimpses into intra-elite competition, tensions, and conflicts, and of popular discontent and resistance to elite authority... Third... rulers' *baraza* rhetoric constructs a moral armament to justify their rule... Finally, *baraza* attendance is a fundamental social act that outwardly signifies membership in and ratification of a particular social order. Not to attend is to say 'one does not recognize the moral authority of those individuals whose position or office is invested with upholding that authority.' Public attendance is therefore important to both state and citizens.⁴

Haugerud's analysis rings true for the early postcolonial western Rift Valley, but her assertion of the public importance to attend *baraza* to both citizens and the state leaves unexamined an important question: what if a large portion of citizens did not attend *baraza*? Haugerud does not explore the significance of absence from *baraza*, and how that might have shaped membership in, or exclusion from, a social and political order.

Joseph arap Bir'geng, a Sosiani settler, put the importance of *baraza* more simply, "When we needed assistance from the government the *baraza* was the only place to make the community and the government meet." Most men understood the *baraza* in the same way. If they wanted to make a complaint to the government or make a request for development assistance, they used the space of the *baraza*. Men and women generally described the *baraza* as a way to "meet" the government through a representative – usually the chief or the District Commissioner. The *baraza* was the site at which the

⁴ Haugerud, *The Culture of Politics in Modern Kenya*, 99-100.

government could relay important messages about issues ranging from the importance of hard work, to the type of fertilizer farmers should use, to the necessity of sending children to school. Most rural Kenyans understood these messages to come from the government.⁵ During holidays, District Commissioners often read Kenyatta's speeches aloud to those assembled at the *baraza*. In an era when radios were still rare, the majority of the population was illiterate, and newspaper distribution was uncommon outside of towns, people received news through *baraza* as well as from those who traveled for special ceremonies such as weddings or funerals.

The *baraza* served as more than just a site for the government to relay messages or instructions to its citizens, it was also the site at which the citizens could bring their grievances, claims, and problems to the government. If a community had a problem which required government intervention, the community brought it to the *baraza*. From there, they hoped that the chief or the District Commissioner would bring their grievance up to a more senior official who could help them to resolve the problem.

Yet, after independence, Kenyan women in the northwest Rift Valley were largely excluded from the *baraza*, the formal site at which the government, the local community, and the average citizen met. Lumakanda settler Karen Misavo remembered, "The baraza were meant for men. Women we used to ask ourselves 'why should we go to baraza?' We never went to *baraza*. We used to say it belongs to men ... We used to see that men had a lot of time and women were very busy. So they had to attend baraza while we

⁵ Interview with Aaron Juma Wechuli, Lumakanda, October 31, 2012. Wechuli, like many others, said that chiefs and other local authorities got their directions from the government, which they then relayed to Kenyan citizens.

stayed at home.”⁶ “Chebagui Bwalei, of Sosiani, said, “It was the order of the whole community. Women were left behind to look after things.”⁷ Rael Serem, a Sosiani settler, said similarly, “I never attended *baraza*, because I was a woman and my husband was already there. What was my need to attend?”⁸

This exclusion, or in some cases, the choice not to participate in the *baraza*, did not preclude women from playing important roles in their communities. Women’s exclusion from the *baraza* shaped their understanding of the government, and their understanding of what it meant for them to be citizens. Their sense of exclusion from a site at which officials often distributed state resources galvanized them to take action to provide the as best they could the development they desired. Women actively sought to better their own lives and to create a space for themselves outside the state. Sometimes women took these actions without any regard for the state, sometimes in contestation of the state, and sometimes by working alongside an imagined state.

Women responded, generally, to their exclusion by forming tight social networks, oftentimes assisting each other through these networks much more than the state assisted the community. Women formed organizations and participated actively in their churches, and women’s dedication to these groups, proved invaluable to women and their communities. They demonstrated resourcefulness in providing for themselves rather than waiting for government assistance, or sending word to the government through the long, hierarchical channels that most men described. As a result of their exclusion, though, individual women were much more likely than men to see themselves as something apart

⁶ Interview with Karen Misavo, Lumakanda, October 31, 2012.

⁷ Interview with Chebagui Bwalei, Leseru, November 23, 2012.

⁸ Interview with Rael Serem, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

from the *serikali*, or not to consider themselves a *mwananchi*, to feel disappointed in the government, and to feel that their lives did not change after independence..

Kenyans valued personal relationships with their leaders, and valued “seeing” and “knowing” their leaders. They desired an intimate politics based on relationships, rather than abstract principles or depersonalized bureaucratic processes (see Chapter 2). In this setting in which Kenyans valued interactions with government officials, combined with women’s general exclusion from this physical form of politics, it is not surprising that women conceptualized themselves as outside the government or excluded from the government. Hence, it was very common for women to say that when they heard of *mwananchi* or *serikali*, they could not understand, and that they did not think of themselves as *mwananchi* or as part of the *serikali*. Eunice Tele Maiyo said, “It was those who were among me, but it wasn’t me.”⁹

In addition to feelings of being outside the government, women’s exclusion from public political spaces meant that they were also excluded from information on how to form a relationship to their new government, or to access the services the government provided. Dorcas Lagat said that she expected to get something from the government, but she did not know whom to follow, or whom to go to.¹⁰ Helen Kirua said, similarly, that they never saw any change or improvement unless those living with them had knowledge on what to do, or how to go to the DC.¹¹ Women felt both excluded from the government and from the knowledge of how to access government services.

⁹ Interview with Eunice Tele Maiyo, Leseru, January 9, 2013.

¹⁰ Interview with Dorcas Lagat, Sogoi, January 10, 2013.

¹¹ Interview with Helen Kirua, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

Women's exclusion from the *baraza* was not necessarily detrimental to their ability to access "development," because of the inherent limitations of the *baraza* system. Though the *baraza* theoretically functioned as a meeting point between the government and its citizens, in reality, the government officials that citizens met were often powerless to act. They met representatives of the government who then relayed their messages to other representatives of government up the "chain of command," until, in the best cases, that message reached an official high enough that action could be taken and the problem or request could be attended to. Both the *baraza* as an outlet for the government to make announcements and for citizens to make complaints met with failures. The government could do very little to control the reception of their communications, instructions, and announcements. On the other hand, complaints or requests from communities also very frequently went unheeded or without government response.

Communication with the government, outside the site of the *baraza*, was both inconsistent and mysterious to rural Kenyans. Sally Kogo explained the process of communication after the *baraza* in vague terms, "So long as we had made our complaints...we just were to wait for the results. So long as the information came back to us, we didn't want to know how the local officer went."¹² When communities made a complaint at a *baraza*, there was little telling whether they would receive a response. This unpredictability created an air of inscrutability about how the communication was passed from rural areas to Nairobi government offices. Even if this communication system connected rural communities to Nairobi, and then back again to those some rural communities, it was marked by a mysteriousness in rural eyes. As Kogo's above

¹² Interview with Sally Kogo, Leseru, November 23, 2012.

quotation demonstrates, most rural people did not understand the processes by which their communications traveled. More frequently, Kenyan communities awaiting an official response never received one, only adding to the mystery and transforming the space between their rural community and Nairobi into a kind of void in rural eyes. The system of the *baraza*, then, though it appeared to give Kenyans an active say in their own government, actually put them in a passive position where they waited for government response without much control over whether any change ever occurred.¹³

Kenyans recognized the failings of this system and understood these failings as an aspect of the broader failings of their new political system. Kiptoo arap Maina recounted, “[At independence] these leaders that we elected went to the central government and they did not bring the services back. The colonialists were still there... We elected them but on reaching the central government they just tell the President, ‘My people there are greeting you, they don’t have any problems, we are just okay.’”¹⁴ Along the same lines, Christopher Lelelilan said, “Once elected, those people could not come to visit us. It was just during the time of elections... Then, after the elections, they would go to Nairobi and stay there.”¹⁵ Rural Kenyans used this rhetorical trope of disappearance commonly to describe both politicians and communications which vanished into Nairobi. The experience of feeling disconnected shaped Kenyan ideas about the utility of the *baraza* and of Kenyan participation in the *baraza*. Communities might send word to Nairobi

¹³ Here, Anderson’s argument about the importance of communication for nationalism is relevant. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

¹⁴ Interview with Kiptoo arap Maina, Leseru, November 23, 2012.

¹⁵ Interview with Christopher Lelelilan, Leseru, November 26, 2012.

about their problems, but a community could not reliably expect a response to come back to them in the form of the development assistance they had requested.

These experiences with the *baraza* and with elected politicians affected the ways in which Kenyans conceptualized their government. Steven Kiplemai Ngetich, for example, said the *serikali* was “the DC (District Commissioner) just, because we could actually seek help from him, and everything was channeled through the DC.” Ainea Alulu remembered that politicians occasionally came to *baraza* and people made complaints, but that the politicians did not assist.¹⁶ Men, then, might have been able to go “directly” to the government through the chief or the DC, but this was by no means a foolproof way to gain access to development or to solve community problems. There was a widespread notion that many of these messages got lost along the way and never made it to the central government, and thus, services never made it back to the community. John arap Kuto said that through *baraza* the community raised their grievances, like needing more nurses at dispensaries. When the new doctors and nurses arrived, they knew their grievances had been heard.¹⁷ If the government did not send these doctors and nurses, however, the community had little recourse. If those local authorities did not send requests through the proper channels or if higher authorities did not respond, Kenyan communities had few alternatives for taking an active role in accessing the development they requested.

Most women could not, or did not, use the *baraza* as a direct outlet for meeting the government. Kenyans often noted, though, that women could communicate with the government through their husbands, or that husbands would bring back news to their

¹⁶ Interview with Ainea Alulu, Lumakanda, November 5, 2012.

¹⁷ Interview with John arap Kuto, Sosiani, November 30, 2012.

wives from the *baraza*. Some women understood this system as part of the division of labor between a husband and wife. Theresa Ngososei said, “It was the husband’s responsibility to attend cooperative meetings and *baraza* in every family; he could go and bring back news.”¹⁸ This had implications for how women thought about their responsibility and participation in the new nation. Ngososei added, “Women were reluctant to attend *baraza* because we weren’t given opportunity to give our views; we thought we had no responsibility.”¹⁹

Some women criticized this male mediation. Ruth Malakwen Cheptekeny said, “During those days men were very rigid, so they were just attending *baraza* without telling women what they were going there for and how these *baraza* were called.” She added, “Men were very harsh to an extent that they did not even call women by their names. They just called, ‘hey!’ And therefore, whatever these men were doing outside the home was not disclosed to women.”²⁰ Regardless of women’s varying opinions on their exclusion from *baraza* – usually shaped by their relationship to their husbands or male relatives – both women and men widely remembered male-only attendance of *baraza*. Reverend Philomon Tanai, for example, said that even though widows did not have male relatives who could attend *baraza* in their stead, they still remained at home. Village elders informed widows of government announcements and brought their ideas and grievances to the *baraza*.²¹

This male mediation between women and state officials certainly distanced women in Uasin Gishu District from the institutions and actors of their new government.

¹⁸ Interview with Theresa Ngososei, Leseru, November 27, 2012.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Interview with Ruth Malakwen Cheptekeny, Leseru, January 9, 2013.

²¹ Interview with Philomon Tanai, Leseru, January 9, 2013.

But, simultaneously, as shown above, the *baraza* system produced feelings of distance between rural communities and Nairobi-based actors. These factors produced complex ideas among men and women about the government. Women were more visibly disconnected from the government through their exclusion from the *baraza*. However, the failings of the *baraza*, representative of some of the failings of the broader political system, also imposed a distance between the capitol and the broader rural population, including the men who attended the *baraza* and the central government.

Women's exclusion from *baraza*, and the ways they remembered this exclusion speaks to their broader position within postcolonial society.²² The structure of authority and communication in the *baraza* created different forms of citizenship, and women's exclusion from the *baraza* paralleled their marginalization from other male-dominated political, social, and economic arenas in their communities. Women's degree of marginalization from the system of the *baraza* had implications for how they developed a relationship with the new state. Because women were excluded from the *baraza*, they did not develop a sense of national belonging based on citizenship, rights to state resources, or on forming relationships with state actors. Nevertheless women – like men – wanted development at *uhuru*. Postcolonial political culture was formed not only by men at the site of the *baraza*, but also by those who lacked rights and formed new institutions outside and alongside the state. Widespread exclusion from the state-sponsored development arenas, in which many men participated and accessed resources, pushed

²² KNA TR/1/351, "Minutes of the 18th Meeting of the Central Agricultural Board held on 4th October, 1966 in the Conference Room of the Ministry of Agriculture Rhodes House." Exclusion from communal spaces also extended to more community-oriented aspects of local government, such as cooperative meetings and the District Agricultural Council (DAC). In 1966, no women had ever been members of a DAC in Kenya.

women to create alternative spaces for their own development outside the control of the state. In these spaces, women negotiated different ideas about citizenship and the state amongst themselves.

Men – ranging from husbands to local government authorities to national politicians – often worked together to exclude women from the spaces in which men consolidated their power in late colonial and early postcolonial Kenya.²³ Men also excluded women from resources. Husbands almost always managed household incomes, circumscribing their wives' financial autonomy.²⁴ While financial control differed among households, most men and women remembered that husbands controlled the economic assets and deciding how to use money. A woman's farm labor endowed her with few rights to control the profits of the farm. Pauline Ngetich emphasized this point, "When somebody was practicing poultry-keeping, those poultry were not hers. When she could actually sell some chicken to buy a sheep, the sheep would not belong to her. Even a cow."²⁵ Similarly, Anna Chelimo Kipkalum remembered, "The husband owned the cattle. There was no woman taken to own cattle."²⁶ These feelings of an inability "to own" extended to more than livestock. Helen Kirua remembered, "Everything belonged

²³ Bozzoli, "Marxism, Feminism, and South African Studies," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 9, no. 2 (1983): 151; Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1992), 1-2; Lynn Thomas, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Allman and Tashjian, *I Will Not Eat Stone.* Many scholars have argued that African men and European colonizers both participated in the marginalization of women in the pre-colonial and colonial eras. Less historical scholarship has examined the early postcolonial era.

²⁴ Interview with Fanike Chanzu, Lumakanda, November 9, 2012. There were certainly exceptions, where women and men remembered making decisions together about how to spend their money, or where women whose husbands worked off the farm were forced to give women much more autonomy in making financial decisions in their absence. For instance, Fanike Chanzu, whose husband worked outside their farm, remembers that he made the payments for the loan at first, but then she took over that responsibility with time.

²⁵ Interview with Pauline Ngetich, Sosiani, November 21, 2012.

²⁶ Interview with Anna Chelimo Kipkalum, Leseru, November 28, 2012.

to my husband, even the children. I was just there. I owned nothing.”²⁷ This lack of financial autonomy and lack of participation in household financial decision-making left women in a vulnerable economic position, and it represented another aspect of the organization of postcolonial society which disenfranchised women.²⁸

This economic marginalization resulted in hardship for women whose husbands made poor decisions about money, and gave them little recourse to gain control over their family’s assets. Felistas Muriga Nasambu said that her husband made decisions about whether to buy cattle and sheep, and which purchases to make for home consumption, such as cloth, sugar, or salt.²⁹ Karen Misavo recalled that she had to consult her husband before selling small amounts maize or beans so she could make a small contribution to her church group.³⁰ Many women complained that their husbands used the family’s money irresponsibly.

Most commonly, women remembered that their husbands literally liquefied their household assets by purchasing alcohol. Kabura Maina Mwati wrote to the Area Settlement Controller (Central Rift) on March 9, 1973, “...I have got 11 children in

²⁷ Interview with Helen Kirua, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

²⁸ There is a rich literature on women, labor, economic development, and political and economic marginalization. See, for example: Ester Boserup, *Woman’s Role in Economic Development* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1970); Margaret Jean Hay, “Economic Change in Late Nineteenth Century Kowe, Western Kenya,” in *Hadith 5: Economic and Social History of East Africa*, ed. B.O. Ogot (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1976), 92-109; Jane Guyer, *Women’s Work in the Food Economy of the Cocoa Belt: A Comparison* (Brookline, Mass.: African Studies Center, Boston University, 1978); Claire C. Robertson and Iris Berger, eds. *Women and Class in Africa* (New York: Africana Pub. Co, 1986); Edna Bay, ed. *Women and Work in Africa* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982); Sharon Stichter and Jane L. Parpart, eds. *Patriarchy and Class: African Women in the Home and the Workforce* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988); Jean Davison, *Agriculture, Women, and Land: The African Experience* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988); Berger, *Threads of Solidarity: Women in South African Industry, 1900-1980* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); Miriam Goheen, *Men Own the Fields, Women Own the Crops: Gender and Power in the Cameroon Grassfields* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996); Kathleen Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain: A History of Women, Work, and Politics in Mozambique* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2002).

²⁹ Interview with Felistas Muriga Nasambu, Lumakanda, November 9, 2012.

³⁰ Interview with Karen Misavo, Lumakanda, October 31, 2012.

family, and sometime ago my husband was given a plot...I have been working very hard on that plot but sometime ago due to drinks (*pombe*) he was approached by a rich businessman...and I discovered that he is intending to sell that small land to him. Would you please be kind enough to stop this forever, because of these children and myself we have got no other land in this country...”³¹ This letter is illustrative of many women’s complaints, and demonstrates the possible negative consequences of men’s singular control over a family’s economic assets.

The patriarchal system meant that most community members accepted men’s control over household resources. Men’s financial control often went unquestioned, making it more difficult for women to contest this arrangement. Many women challenged their husbands nonetheless. In a petition to President Kenyatta written on February 25, 1966, S.M. Kubai wrote on behalf of a woman:

Mrs. Muthoni is complaining that since her husband took her back to her parents on 16.11.63, he has never turned up although he had promised that he would go back within one week’s time. Now she says that she is in great difficulty on children’s expenses and also for her own expenses. Therefore she is seeking for *Mzee’s* advice on this matter because she does not want to take her husband to the court before knowing his last decision.³²

While most women in Mrs. Muthoni’s position would likely continue to rely on the support of their parents and family instead of writing to the president, Mrs. Muthoni’s actions and her belief in her rights to some recourse – by either going to Kenyatta or to court – demonstrates that women did challenge the circumscription of their financial independence. Women, their families, and their advocates contested men’s control of

³¹ KNA KA/6/20, From Mrs. Kabura Maina Mwati to The ASC (C), “Ref: Plot No. 58 – Ngorika Scheme,” 9th March, 1973.

³² KNA KA/6/19, From SM Kubai to Kenyatta, February 25, 1966.

household finances, and some women gained some financial autonomy – either by hiding money from their husbands, by making decisions alongside their husbands, or by challenging their husbands – demonstrating the complex negotiations over household financial control.³³

Women’s financial constraints extended to property ownership. Documentary evidence clearly demonstrates the discriminatory laws of the colonial and postcolonial states, the ways men dispossessed single women of property, and women’s dissatisfaction with and contestation of late colonial and early postcolonial systems of land tenure.³⁴ When the colonial government began settlement in the early 1960s, single women could not purchase land sold under these programs. Colonial officials recognized the problematic nature of this policy, but they could do little to help women without amendment to the legal definition of “head of household.” The District Commissioner of Nandi and the Provincial Commissioner of the Rift Valley corresponded in the beginning of 1963 about a widow with nine children who had been forced to leave Nandi District and did not have any land in her home area of Central Province. The DC asked the PC if there was anything he could do, and the PC responded, “I am afraid that there is no help that I can give to this wretched woman. The present directive is that plots must only be granted to male heads of families.”³⁵

Some women petitioned the government themselves, complaining about the policy and their insecure economic position. Wambui w/o Muiruri of Ainabkoi, wrote to

³³ Jane Guyer, “Household and Community in African Studies,” *African Studies Review* 24, no. 2/3 (1981): 87-137. Guyer showed similar findings.

³⁴ There was a long history of Kenyan women’s land dispossession and resistance to that dispossession. Leigh Brownhill, *Land, Food, Freedom: Struggles for the Gendered Commons in Kenya, 1870 to 2007* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 2009).

³⁵ KNA DC/KPT/2/13/4, From JAH Wolff, PC RVP, to AAA Ekirapa for DC, Nandi, February 1963.

the District Commissioner, Uasin Gishu, on January 12, 1963, “I have been employed in A.J. van Rensburg farm for four years now with a family of eight children. I am a widow as my husband died in 1953. I am surprised to see that I am not entitled to get any portion in areas where Land Development Scheme is going on. I would like to know whether you would advice me what I should do as I feel I ought to get the same share as I am the successor of my husband in the family.”³⁶ Wambui’s surprise about the policy – as both head of her family and a former laborer, she assumed she would be given priority. Her use of the word “entitled” in the petition, demonstrates that she believed that she should have the same rights to purchase land as her late husband and any other Kenyan man. The petitions of Wambui and other women, and the correspondence of land settlement officials shows the complicated conceptions of land rights in the 1960s, and the many ways in which gender, ethnicity, work history, place of origin, familial status and other factors were mapped onto conceptions of land rights (see Chapter 3). Wambui’s petition, in particular, signifies an expectation for women’s rights to land in circumstances where women acted as heads of their households and provided for dependants.

The DC replied to Wambui’s letter saying that he expected to be able to “invite applications from widows like yourself next month.”³⁷ By the next month, though, widows from the Van Rensburg farm were still petitioning the DC and the policy had yet to change. Kuria s/o Kimani wrote for the Adam’s Employees on 10th February 1963, “We women with no husbands we have no where to go or money to settle new settlements because no body to help us and now many people have gone to built their

³⁶ KNA DC/ELD/1/10/3, From Wambui w/o Muiruri, Ainabkoi to DC, Uasin Gishu, 12 January, 1963.

³⁷ KNA DC/ELD/1/10/3, From DC, Uasin Gishu to Wambui, 18th January 1962.

homes, sir, when shall we go to build ours?”³⁸ Women’s collective identity is visible in this petition, both in opposition to men – and the opportunities they were afforded – and as a marginalized group organizing themselves. To this petition, the DC replied with less certainty, “I am hoping women without husbands will be able to apply for settlement soon.”³⁹ The petitions of widows and other single women illustrate an engagement with the new government and a belief that – despite policy which inhibited their land rights – they should be able to own land.

This policy did eventually change in the mid-1960s, but local officials who chose settlers continued to discriminate against women. Six years later, women still complained about a lack of access to land.⁴⁰ In a petition dated November 15, 1968, the Cherangani KANU Women’s Wing “requested intervention” from the President’s Office and detailed their difficulties purchasing land. They wrote “Among the residents of Cherangani we have widows and other women who are never allowed to buy *shambas* by the leaders in this area. We are always told that our time for buying the *shambas* is past though we have our money. You, being the father of the nation, what do you think the outcome will be as far as we are concerned?”⁴¹ Local committees, usually composed exclusively of men, often chose settlers with little accountability. The power that members derived from distributing land increased radically with this lack of accountability and produced corrupt practices. Widespread reports emerged of the allocation of land to Chiefs and other local

³⁸ KNA DC/ELD/1/10/9, From Kuria s/o Kimani for the Adam’s Employees (A.J. Van Rensburg, Ainabkoi) to DC, Eldoret, 10th February 1963.

³⁹ KNA DC/ELD/1/10/9, From DC, Uasin Gishu to Kuria Kimani, 18th February, 1963.

⁴⁰ This trend has continued up until the present day, as land and women’s rights became a major issue during debates about Kenya’s new constitution in 2010.

⁴¹ KNA KA/6/19, KANU Women Wing, Cherangani Scheme, Kitale, to the President’s Office, “Request for Intervention,” 15 November, 1968.

leaders through unlawful practices, the distribution of multiple plots to prominent individuals, and the exclusion of women from resettlement.⁴²

Women did not possess labor cards or identification cards, which made it more difficult for them to apply for settlement. Without these cards, it was almost impossible for women to prove that they had worked on European farms, the easiest way to be selected for settlement (see Chapter 3). The District Officer, Vihiga wrote of the challenges of registering displaced squatters and laborers in May 1966. “At the time of the registration, I found it very difficult to identify some of these people especially women because they had no Labour Cards. In this respect, I had to rely on my Sub-Chiefs...”⁴³ If the male Sub-Chiefs did not identify female laborers or squatters, it became almost impossible for these women to be settled without the aid of male relatives.

Oral evidence supports the archival evidence on these discriminatory practices. Almost universally, settlers had no memory of single women accessing land.⁴⁴ Regardless of the national policy on land ownership and broader changes to the structure of government, the selection of settlers remained fairly decentralized in practice and the men who controlled the local authorities controlled access to resettlement plots. Selection committees privileged male applicants over female applicants, irrespective of whether or not the women met the qualifications for settlement and had the money for the down payment. Women were most likely to get land if they had a male advocate.

⁴² KNA DX/21/10/10, From Regional Government Agent Kakamega to the PS, Ministry of Lands and Settlement, “Ref: Your Letter,” 15th June, 1964.

⁴³ KNA DX/21/10/10, From DO, Vihiga to the DC, Kakamega, “Lugari Settlement Schemes,” 18th May, 1966.

⁴⁴ There was one exception, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

In addition, women whose husbands passed away became vulnerable to dispossession, since the state and communities did little to protect their rights to the land. Widows throughout the country petitioned the government as their male relatives tried to take land they needed to support their families. Wambui w/o Gatungu wrote to President Kenyatta on October 26, 1964:

My husband died recently, and by the time when he died, he had two sons of which he shared his land. So I Wambui w/o Gatungu being the mother of one of this [sic] sons whose name is Gitau s/o Gatungu, have fallen into a great trouble. Why? Because when my husband died, Gitau (my son) started selling this land at the same time. I had no idea that he was selling the land as he sold it secretly.

So, when I came to know that he had sold the land, I reported the matter to the Land Office at Kiambu, where they did but nothing...

I therefore thought of crying out to you as the Government so as to give me your assistance of stopping him from selling this land. He is young and he have two (wife) wives with ten children. When he sells the land the money is used uselessly.⁴⁵

Widows' temporary rights to land, their false impressions of these rights, and their lack of documentation, put their land rights and livelihoods at risk. When male relatives stole land, they also stole what was often the only source of sustenance and income for widows and their children.⁴⁶

Oral histories contradict the documentary record on widows. Very few men or women remembered male relatives and local authorities dispossessing women of their land in the settlements used in this study. Rather, men and women commonly remembered how well communities cared for widows. Anna Chelima Kipkalum said that widows were the responsibility of the community, that people respected them and cared for them. She recounted that if a widow had a bad harvest, the community would give her

⁴⁵ KNA KA/6/31, From Wambui w/o Gatungu to Kenyatta, 26 October, 1964.

⁴⁶ Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*, 4. Widows head a large percentage of African families, and nearly 30 percent of adult women in Africa today are widows.

maize.⁴⁷ Pauline Tum emphasized the importance of in-laws. She grew up in a single parent home and her uncle took care of her, her siblings, and her mother. He took responsibility until her brother grew up, and later on, her uncle helped her mom get land. Tum, similar to Kipkalum, stressed that Kenyans helped widows.⁴⁸ Rael Serem and Karen Misavo, settlers in Sosiani and Lumakanda respectively, said that the husband's land registration protected widows from in-laws, and that whatever the husband owned widows maintained for their children.⁴⁹

An interview with Alfred and Florence Machayo, Chekalini settlers who met while attending university in the United States, supports archival evidence on the dispossession of widows.⁵⁰ They recounted the insecure position of widows, and that inheritance of land could quickly become complicated. Men's names were on title deeds; many women did not have marriage certificates; and many women did not realize they needed their husband's identification card to prove their rights to the land. If the family had sons, the land was usually divided among the sons. The widow was not entitled to own the land, but to hold and manage the land until her sons came of age to take ownership. The Machayos said that a woman might be left with land for a time, but she was often "being eased out." When her husband died, a woman would remain on the land, but if she remarried and had children with a second husband, this complicated inheritance. If a woman was left with land and had no children, this also caused problems. If a woman's husband had brothers, they often wanted a big portion of the

⁴⁷ Interview with Anna Chelimo Kipkalum, Leseru, November 28, 2012.

⁴⁸ Interview with Pauline Tum, Leseru, November 22, 2012.

⁴⁹ Interview with Rael Serem, Sosiani, December 3, 2012; Interview with Karen Misavo, Lumakanda, October 31, 2012.

⁵⁰ Interview with Susan Rono, Leseru, November 22, 2012. Rono's interview supports the Machayos' contentions. She remembered some in-laws being "grabbers," and that women needed the government to protect their land.

land.⁵¹ With a complicated legal structure, ambiguous land rights, and court system that was intimidating and difficult to navigate, men could easily take advantage of women's uncertain position.⁵²

These wide-ranging depictions of widows' security and rights indicate the ambiguous and pluralistic legal system as well as the ways in which different communities and families could dramatically affect the different life experiences of women. While some women in the northwest Rift Valley were able to maintain control over their farms after their husbands passed away, many women were vulnerable to land seizures by their husband's relatives.

This latent vulnerability existed for most women. It was not just single women who experienced land dispossession. Women who lived on farms with their husbands often felt a lack of ownership of the land. Pauline Ngetich summed up women's feelings about land ownership eloquently, "The land was ours, but it was not mine."⁵³ This formal and informal dispossession and marginalization of women from family and community resources shaped the ways in which women understood their positions within society.

Despite women's marginalized position in relation to land ownership, they played very active roles on farms. Nora Kasigene remembered, "The women did a very good job compared to the men in building the nation. Men could just sit down because they had got land and women were working the land."⁵⁴ Both men and women remembered that women were almost always responsible for caring for the children and the home, in addition to numerous agricultural responsibilities. Ruth Malakwen Cheptekeny

⁵¹ Interview with Alfred and Florence Machayo, Chekalini, November 1, 2012.

⁵² Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*.

⁵³ Interview with Pauline Ngetich, Sosiani, November 21, 2012.

⁵⁴ Interview with Nora Kasigene, Lumakanda, October 30, 2012.

remembered, “Men were hardly working. Women were doing a lot of work. I was taking care of the children, preparing food, and doing everything necessary for the family. And whatever men were doing was only to get dressed in the morning, go their own way, and arrive in the evening. That was all.” She added that what a man did outside the home was not of much concern to the family’s welfare.⁵⁵ Both men and women remembered that women took their responsibilities more seriously than men, and in some households women had to provide for their children almost wholly by themselves.

Women’s workload depended on a number of factors. Sometimes, women had extra responsibilities because their husbands drank or refused to work, but other women had more responsibility on the farm because their husbands had outside employment, or because they were in polygynous marriages and owned plots in multiple locations. Rael Serem explained women’s greater workload simply as a way of protecting their families. “Women knew it was their responsibility to take care of the children when men were not with them...so they had to be very active to prevent hunger. That is why they were more active than men.”⁵⁶ When a woman’s husband lived off the farm, a woman took on all the responsibilities of managing the farm and caring for the children and household. Though these circumstances certainly meant an increased amount of work for women, men’s absence could, at times, give women more freedom.⁵⁷ Some women gained greater financial and agricultural decision-making powers. Rebecca Aliviza Maneno remembered a man who had a second wife leaving the first wife to farm the land and manage finances

⁵⁵ Interview with Ruth Malakwen Cheptekeny, Leseru, January 9, 2013.

⁵⁶ Interview with Rael Serem, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

⁵⁷ Interview with Eunice Tele Maiyo, Leseru, January 9, 2013. Maiyo’s husband, for instance, had two co-wives. She never worked with them. The other two co-wives lived together, but she lived alone. Maiyo had previously lived with her mother-in-law, and when her mother-in-law died, she became the caretaker of that property.

by herself. Alternatively, women whose husbands did not live on their farms and who did not have any help could become constrained by their agricultural work and duties at home.

Despite women's great contributions, their position within their communities often did not improve after independence. Selena Chelimo Barno remembered, "A woman was regarded as nothing but a tool to produce children."⁵⁸ This marginalized position within their communities, particularly manifest through their exclusion from *baraza*, their lack of financial autonomy, their insecure land rights, and the unequal division of labor in their households shaped the ways that women thought about their new government, and directed their actions for future improvements for their families and communities.

WOMEN'S MOBILIZATION

The repercussions of women's exclusion from political spaces, and their marginalization in their homes and their communities became clear through their conceptualizations of citizenship and government. Women were much more likely than men to think of themselves as outside the government or excluded from the government and its services. Even when they participated in government-sponsored programs, it was from a more marginalized position than most men, which meant women were less informed than men about these programs and how to become involved in them. Ruth Malakwen Cheptekeny recounted, for example, that she helped with *harambee* but did not know any of the specific details about how the program functioned. She said, "Women were offering services like providing material. After that, we didn't know what

⁵⁸ Interview with Selena Chelimo Barno, Leseru, November 28, 2012.

was going on. We were just sending our children. We didn't know who provided for teachers and so forth, so I could not actually tell how teachers came to the school, or who employed them.”⁵⁹

Kenyan women employed a different language than men to discuss their postcolonial experiences. It was a language particularly marked by gender and the absence of the universalistic principles and rights of citizens. Chelimo Martha Keino laughed, like many women interviewees, in response to the question: what did it mean to be a *mwananchi* (citizen)? Helen Kirua, for example, said of *mwananchi*, “I never heard that word much. I think it was those who were living in a certain region.”⁶⁰ Other women thought deeply for a time, before answering, similarly, that they just did not know what *mwananchi* meant.⁶¹ Some gave reductive answer such as to be a Kenyan or to be born in Kenya. Others, like Pauline Tum, qualified their answers by noting they never went to school (and, thus, were not well-equipped to say).⁶²

Men, on the other hand, almost always understood *mwananchi* in a possessive way. To be a citizen meant to be the owner of the land or the owner of the country. Women occasionally also asserted that citizenship equaled an ownership of the nation or the land, or a form of belonging to the country, though they defined citizenship in this way less often and with less certainty than men. At times, women understood their ownership of the nation or their relationship to the nation, as mediated through their husbands. Rael Serem, a Sosiani settler said, “Because I was living with my husband on

⁵⁹ Interview with Ruth Malakwen Cheptekeny, Leseru, January 9, 2013.

⁶⁰ Interview with Helen Kirua, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

⁶¹ Interview with Karen Misavo, Lumakanda, October 31, 2012; Interview with Difina Agatha, Lumakanda, November 3, 2012; Interview with Coretta Visyafua, Lumakanda, November 7, 2012; Interview with Felistas Muriga Nasambu, Lumakanda, November 9, 2012.

⁶² Interview with Pauline Tum, Leseru, November 22, 2012.

this land, I was a *mwananchi* through my husband.”⁶³ Different expressions of citizenship highlighted two things: first, citizenship was linked to rights to resources; second women rarely had rights to resources. As a result, women did not consider themselves political subjects during the post-independence period.

Women made similar remarks about their understanding of the *serikali* (government). Serem remembered, “The word *serikali* was just there, I couldn’t even think to know what it meant. It was just *serikali*.”⁶⁴ Eunice Tele Maiyo’s answer demonstrated that, for her, the independent government meant exclusion. “The *serikali* during those days was somebody else, but not us. It was *Mzee* [Kenyatta] and others.”⁶⁵ Most men, though, did not remember being excluded from the *serikali*, and they demonstrated a confidence, absent from women’s answers, when defining government, though their definitions did vary wildly. Men felt that they understood what the government *was*, whether they defined the government as Kenyatta, District Commissioners, people in uniform, or something more abstract, such as the community.

Because of their exclusion, women used creative means to communicate with their leaders, and they also relied on one another. A few women said that they used songs and performances to speak to Kenyatta.⁶⁶ Selena Serem remembered women’s groups in the Burnt Forest area that met to sing with one another. She specifically recounted a time when the group sang to Kenyatta, and that afterwards some members of the group

⁶³ Interview with Rael Serem, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Interview with Eunice Tele Maiyo, Leseru, January 9, 2013.

⁶⁶ Askew, *Performing the Nation*. Askew has shown the importance of performance in contesting and refiguring nation-building in modern Tanzania. See also: Leroy Vail and Landeg White, *Power and the Praise Poem: Southern African Voices in History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991). Vail and White analyze the role of song and oral poetry more broadly, and their book includes an examining how a corpus of songs shows women’s unique interpretation of history.

received settlement plots as a result of the song.⁶⁷ Christopher Lelelilan remembered women singing to Kenyatta about their grievances. Lelelilan said that the women who created songs about had more success than those who just met with the president.⁶⁸ More important than whether or not women received land or had their problems resolved after their performances is the strongly held belief in the importance of being able to perform for Kenyatta, which grew out of both women's exclusion from the state, and the developing personality cult around Kenyatta. These performances gave women the opportunity to "speak" to the president through song.

Kenyatta's visits were rare, and despite women's creativity, they often could not personally meet the government or its representatives.⁶⁹ These feelings of exclusion and women's inability to participate in the physical, personal politics of post-independence Kenya meant that they used alternative authorities to solve their problems. Many women remembered that they could go to speak to village elders (a part of the provincial administration), but they preferred to take their problems to each other first, to their neighbors, or to the church. Exclusion motivated the building of political and social networks among women.

Oftentimes women used a combination of resources to solve their problems. While women's friendships, their relationships to their neighbors, and their roles within their churches varied depending on personal circumstances and upon their communities, the great majority of women relied on these resources in times of hardship. Friends, neighbors, and churches provided help to women when they dealt with spousal abuse and

⁶⁷ Interview with Selena Serem, Leseru, November 28, 2012.

⁶⁸ Interview with Christopher Lelelilan, Leseru, November 26, 2012.

⁶⁹ Some informants never remembered meeting or seeing Kenyatta, and most others recounted him visiting their village once, at most.

alcoholism in their families, or when they had difficulty paying school fees or providing food for their children.

Most often, women recounted that if they had a problem with their husbands, they could go to elder women in their community. Esther Meiyo remembered that senior women advised junior women, and they used Christian teachings to try to reform the husbands who drank *pombe* (locally-brewed beer) or physically abused their wives.⁷⁰ Rael Serem said that when women had problems, they could go to elders or neighbors to whom they were close, “like parents.” They would spend the night at these elders or neighbors’ houses, and then they would all go back the next day to see the husband and talk to him to solve the conflict.⁷¹ Eunice Tele Maiyo remembered, likewise, that when a woman had a grievance she could run to an elder and that person would go to the family and solve the problem. If the husband did not change, the woman could run away to her parents, and they had to solve the problem.⁷²

Informants commonly remembered that women and communities would not use village elders or area chiefs to resolve conflicts or to seek help in the 1960s and 1970s. Chelimo Martha Keino remembered that in the decades after independence women preferred conflict resolution or local discussion rather than going to an authority.⁷³ Pauline Ngetich explained women’s reliance on the community for resolving problems through their lack of information. Women did not know they could bring their problems to leaders, she said, so they just worked as a community instead.⁷⁴ Helen Kirua

⁷⁰ Interview with Esther Meiyo, Sosiani, November 29, 2012.

⁷¹ Interview with Rael Serem, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

⁷² Interview with Eunice Tele Maiyo, Leseru, January 9, 2013.

⁷³ Interview with Chelimo Martha Keino, Leseru, November 19, 2012.

⁷⁴ Interview with Pauline Ngetich, Sosiani, November 21, 2012.

remembered that women persevered, because their problems were not supposed to be exposed to leaders. They could go to an elder friend of the family to handle problems quietly.⁷⁵ Pauline Tum thought that communities relied on themselves because the leaders in those early times also had nothing and were incapable of providing assistance. She added that if a younger woman had a problem, she would go to elderly mothers. These problems were the community's responsibility; they did not address these issues to leaders.⁷⁶

Many women needed the aid of elders to resolve conflicts with their husbands, and they tended to find this system to be more effective than seeking help from local authorities. Eunice Tele Maiyo said that most of women's grievances were with their husbands, but that the husband had to respect being cautioned by elders.⁷⁷ Along the same lines, Mary Kitur remembered that whatever was decided by the elders in the community was respected by everyone as if they were their parents.⁷⁸ This reliance on neighbors and elders in place of parents developed in the specific context of early post-independence northwest Rift Valley highlands. Most rural farmers living in or around the settlement schemes on the border of Rift Valley and Western Provinces had moved away from their parents and families to settle new land, or they were squatters, or former farm laborers, also living apart from their parents. With the absence of local authorities (or, alternatively, the reluctance to use them for these problems) and this physical distance

⁷⁵ Interview with Helen Kirua, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

⁷⁶ Interview with Pauline Tum, Leseru, November 22, 2012.

⁷⁷ Interview with Eunice Tele Maiyo, Leseru, January 9, 2013.

⁷⁸ Interview with Mary Kitur, Leseru, November 19, 2012.

from parents, women needed especially to rely on their elders, neighbors, and their churches for conflict resolution.⁷⁹

Women did not always use authority figures to resolve their problems or improve their lives. They took their own initiative – most often in informal, quotidian ways – by working together and forming friendships and networks. Women spoke much more than men about their friendships and the ways in which women helped each other on their farms or homes. Most women recounted the ease with which they made friends, even though many had moved multiple times and lived next to strangers, rather than living within a community of families they had known for decades or generations. Zipora Katera, a Sosiani settler, remembered that, even though settlers were strangers to one another, those who came first would show newcomers where to get water and where to fetch firewood. She emphasized that neighbors needed one another, so they became friends through these dependent relationships.⁸⁰ Veronica Masiza remembered that women united to make one community, and this whole community would work together on a piece of land.⁸¹

The types of tasks and the extent of group work women participated in differed greatly, and some women only remembered helping each other in vegetable gardens from time to time.⁸² Most recounted, though, that women worked together more than men.⁸³

⁷⁹ Interview with Mary Kitur, Leseru, November 19, 2012. Many women confirmed that the churches helped with family disputes, though they seemed more likely to go to their neighbors, elders, or parents. In multi-ethnic settlements, this became slightly more complicated, since different ethnic groups and, even, clans within ethnicities resolved family disputes in distinctive ways. At times, women said they took their problems specifically to elder women within their ethnic group or clan. Nonetheless, as Kitur put it, “A neighbor was a neighbor regardless of tribe,” and the community generally respected elders’ decisions.

⁸⁰ Interview with Zipora Katera, Sosiani, November 21, 2012.

⁸¹ Interview with Veronica Masiza, Lumakanda, November 12, 2012.

⁸² Interview with Zipora Katera, Sosiani, November 21, 2012; Interview with Susan Rono, Leseru, November 22, 2012; Interview with Selena Serem, Leseru, November 28, 2012.

Women emphasized the importance of their friendships and working relationships particularly when a woman in the community was giving birth. Women assisted pregnant women by providing milk, porridge, firewood, water, and sugar.⁸⁴ Women's friendships during pregnancies, times of hardship, or during more labor-intensive agricultural periods, such as harvesting or plowing, were central to their successes and their ability to provide adequately for their families.

These friendships and working relationships varied from community to community, and even from neighborhood to neighborhood and household to household. Men could impact the ways in which women formed friendships and worked together. Veronica Masiza remembered women being more active than men in forming groups and working together, but she thought that even men participated through the act of *allowing* their wives to form groups.⁸⁵ Some women did not remember working together on their farms. Ruth Malakwen Cheptekeny said that two or more women would not meet to work together, and that it was the responsibility of everyone to work on their own. She thought this was because men were worried that if women combined efforts they would overcome the men.⁸⁶ Selena Chelimo Barno remembered, similarly, that women did not assist each other much on farms.⁸⁷ While most women said it was easy to make friends in their new villages, some remembered that the large settlement farms made it more difficult to meet their neighbors. Barno said that in Leseru, "the land was so big, so people were

⁸³ Interview with Zipora Ketera, Sosiani, November 21, 2012; Interview with Selena Chelimo Barno, November 28, 2012.

⁸⁴ Interview with Rael Serem, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

⁸⁵ Interview with Veronica Masiza, Lumakanda, November 12, 2012.

⁸⁶ Ruth Malakwen Cheptekeny, Leseru, January 9, 2013.

⁸⁷ Interview with Selena Chelimo Barno, November 28, 2012.

scattered,” and she had fewer friends than previously.⁸⁸ Other women had no recollection of any gendered division of labor and recounted that men and women worked together, both as a household and as neighbors on their farms.⁸⁹

Women’s organizations also provided some of the services the government promised to all Kenyan citizens, but did not make accessible to women. Women responded to their exclusion – from state services, from information about the working of the government, and from the political spaces in which they could “meet” and make demands on the government – by coming together. They were, at times, much more successful than men in fulfilling their aspirations, because they did so through their own initiative rather than waiting for a financially poor and administratively stretched government to provide these services to them. Few women attended *baraza*, but women spoke about the importance of other institutions and groups in their communities in which they played an active role, such as church groups or women’s organizations.

When speaking of building schools and giving their children access to education, Ruth Malakwen Cheptekeny remembered, “We didn’t have the knowledge of asking who to consult when we wanted the government to help us to do our own work.”⁹⁰ Instead of making a complaint to the government and waiting for a response, women worked together, often taking ownership of solving problems in the absence of state aid. Cheptekeny’s use of the phrase “our own work” illustrates how women often conceptualized social services – theoretically the responsibility of the government – as their own responsibility. Women worked together to tackle these responsibilities.

⁸⁸ Interview with Selena Chelimo Barno, November 28, 2012.

⁸⁹ Interview with Selena Serem, Leseru, November 28, 2012.

⁹⁰ Interview with Ruth Malakwen Cheptekeny, Leseru, January 9, 2013.

Women commonly formed their own organizations to provide services or to “develop” themselves, their families, and their communities. The role of these organizations varied from traditional dancing to beekeeping to church groups.⁹¹ Deina Iboso remembered participating in church “home sales,” where all the women visited one home to worship and discuss family matters.⁹² Most commonly, women’s groups conducted an informal system of micro-financing called “merry-go-rounds.”⁹³ Each woman in the group contributed a sum of money at meetings. The group would use the money either to purchase communal goods (purchases almost always intended to make future profits), but more often, one woman would receive the sum of the group’s cash contributions on a rotating basis. Merry-go-rounds provided women with some financial independence. Some women remembered using their shares to pay for school fees.⁹⁴ Others said they used the money to buy cloth for their children, or household items, such as plates and cups, cooking utensils, or sugar.⁹⁵ Felistas Muriga Nasambu stressed that even though her husband generally made decisions about money, she decided about the money from the merry-go-round on her own, and often used it to buy cloth for her children.⁹⁶ The enthusiasm which women showed for participating in merry-go-rounds demonstrates the important role these groups played, and also, women’s activeness in pushing back against the patriarchal system which marginalized them from making autonomous financial decisions.

⁹¹ Interview with Eunice Tele Maiyo, Leseru, January 9, 2013.

⁹² Interview with Deina Iboso, Lumakanda, November 12, 2012.

⁹³ These groups are called Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCA) in the academic literature. Similar associations existed across Africa.

⁹⁴ Interview with Rael Serem, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

⁹⁵ Interview with Felistas Muriga Nasambu, Lumakanda, November 9, 2012; Interview with Pauline Tum, Leseru, November 22, 2012; Interview with Fanike Chanzu, Lumakanda, November 9, 2012.

⁹⁶ Interview with Felistas Muriga Nasambu, Lumakanda, November 9, 2012.

Most commonly, women joined a *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* (*MyW*, Women for Progress) group. Established under colonialism, with its roots in upper class British women's attempts to reform and improve African women's lives, the organization initially aimed to educate women in childcare, nutrition and hygiene.⁹⁷ A small group of European women organized this group in the early 1950s under the colonial government's Department of Community Development and Rehabilitation.⁹⁸ Membership in this organization increased tremendously during the Mau Mau Emergency years, since the club distributed soup to women and milk to hungry children living under the villagization program.⁹⁹ At independence, *MyW* continued to grow. Many women, particularly in Lumakanda, remembered joining *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* (*MyW*) to "uplift their standard of living."¹⁰⁰ The Lumakanda *MyW* chapter organized merry-go-rounds, but women also remembered learning about developing and improving their households and their farms at meetings. Women spoke about *MyW* lessons on farming methods, and how to take care of their husband and children. Fanike Chanzu said that *MyW* groups also collected money to help women, often by sponsoring a child for school.¹⁰¹ *MyW* members also learned how to knit table cloths (and these could still be seen decorating the homes of *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* members today), and make

⁹⁷ Kathy Santilli, "Kikuyu Women in the Mau Mau Revolt: A Closer Look," *Ufahamu* 8, no. 1 (1977): 145.

⁹⁸ Audrey Wipper, "The Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization: The Co-optation of Leadership," *African Studies Review* 18, no. 3 (1975): 99.

⁹⁹ Cora Ann Presley, "The Mau Mau Rebellion, Kikuyu Women, and Social Change," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 22, no. 3 (1988): 519.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Deina Iboso, Lumakanda, November 12, 2012.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Fanike Chanzu, Lumakanda, November 9, 2012.

buckets. Some women joined for the purpose of socializing, and recounted singing together and playing handball together.¹⁰²

Other women joined for what appear to be slightly more frivolous reasons. Florence Konyonyi used her merry-go-round money to buy the *MyW* uniform and said she joined to make friends, but also because she liked the uniform.¹⁰³ The *MyW* uniform allowed women like Konyonyi to participate in a visibly legitimate organization, a quality largely confined to the public sector, and a space from which men often excluded women.¹⁰⁴ *MyW*, then, offered women a space partially outside the government in which they could perform some of the official functions of the government, gain financial autonomy from their husbands and male relatives, and access development resources the government often did not make available to women. The independent government theoretically, but unsuccessfully, practiced an interventionist development policy meant to improve the standards of living of Kenyan citizens through agricultural extension work and other means. *MyW* provided some of these services to women in the absence of this idealized government which never was.

Merry-go-rounds and *MyW*, though largely lauded by women, did not always function to provide women with more financial independence. Coretta Visyafua joined *MyW* mostly to socialize, and she participated in the merry-go-round financing schemes. She said, however, that she often just gave the merry-go-round money to her husband

¹⁰² Interview with Coretta Visyafua, Lumakanda, November 7, 2012; Interview with Deina Iboso, Lumakanda, November 12, 2012.

¹⁰³ Interview with Florence Konyonyi, Lumakanda, November 7, 2012.

¹⁰⁴ Many men and women defined government and government actors by whether or not they wore uniforms. Uniforms offered an air of legitimacy to the new state, which followed closely from a colonial state in which uniforms signified authority.

because she trusted him and worried she might forget where she put the money.¹⁰⁵ While Visyafua's experience demonstrates a lack of financial autonomy, it does not demonstrate a total lack of autonomy. Rather, it shows Visyafua's agency, and also, the strength of her partnership with her husband, whom she trusted. Visyafua decided to join *MyW*, and she decided what to do with the money she received through the merry-go-round. Visyafua's voluntary inclusion of her husband was the exception in a setting where women so valued any opportunities to make financial decisions on their own.

It was not just the men, however, who took advantage of the vulnerabilities of women's financial independence in the early postcolonial era. Like other institutions, merry-go-rounds and *MyW* chapters were vulnerable to corruption and mismanagement. Some women remembered the breakdown of the communal investments of women's groups due to the corruption of some members.

In Sosiani, on the eastern side of the Rift-Western provincial boundary, fewer women remembered *Maendeleo ya Wanawake*, but they did remember many women's *kibagenge* groups. *Kibagenge* means togetherness in the Nandi language, and is a general name for community organizations. The Sosiani women's *kibagenge* group was well-remembered and almost all the women interviewed brought up the importance of this group and the ways it empowered them. Pauline Tum recounted that when she arrived, Priscilla Boit – the wife of the Provincial Commissioner of Western Province at the time, Paul Boit – introduced her to Christianity and *Maendeleo ya Wanawake*. Like other women, Tum used the money from the merry-go-rounds to buy utensils and household goods, but in addition, this group bought a cow and then a plot of land communally. Tum

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Coretta Visyafua, Lumakanda, November 7, 2012.

said that the women used the profit from the cow to educate their children, and the profit “multiplied” so that they could “improve” themselves. The women divided the money they earned equally amongst the group.¹⁰⁶ Pauline Ngetich also remembered the women’s group owning a plot of land, and in addition, a *posho* mill and a pick-up truck that they used as a *matatu*. She said they were able to purchase these things by doing merry-go-round; each woman would contribute 300 shillings. Ngetich recounted that the women in the community generated some profit, but after some time, a few men joined and destroyed it. The benefits were shared among members until that time.¹⁰⁷

There was a common conception among women that men’s participation often led to the downfall of their investments. Eunice Birir summed up this idea when she said that when men were allowed to join women, there was a possibility for mismanagement, but women were capable of running any program when they were given the opportunity.¹⁰⁸ Women’s reluctance to include men in their investment groups was born out of a context in which men excluded women from household financial decision-making and commonly made poor decisions about money to the detriment of their families. With men involved, women would have less bargaining power and less control over resources.

In Sosiani, almost every woman told the same story about their efforts to raise money for and build a women’s maternal health clinic. This story became a legendary example of success, one which women proudly retold during my research. Women almost always recounted the same details, and always with the same air of pride about their accomplishment. The story of women’s initiative and of their ability to build Sosiani

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Pauline Tum, Leseru, November 22, 2012.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Pauline Ngetich, Sosiani, November 21, 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Eunice Birir, Leseru, November 27, 2012.

maternal health clinic demonstrates women's agency and their cooperative responses to exclusion from development resources. That the community created a story about this success also demonstrates the importance attached to this event, and how the community made meaning out of women's independent efforts to improve their lives. Finally, the Sosiani maternal health clinic demonstrates the ways in which the lives of marginalized citizens could vary dramatically based upon the individual circumstances of their community.

The emphasis on the story of the Sosiani maternal health clinic is not exceptional, as other communities also had one or two stories in which informants repeated the exact same details about a specific event (for another example, see Chapter 9). Through the repeated telling of the story, the community remade the story, developing the particular details into a legend. The importance of the development of this singular story lies in the fact that Sosiani residents felt enough pride about their accomplishments that this story was *the story* that informants told when asked about the 1960s and 1970s.

The importance of the story is not only in the details discussed, but in the very re-telling. Women articulated a political belonging and a narrative of their own agency in development. The essential details of the story are also significant, because they demonstrate the ways the community attributed significance to the event. The story of the Sosiani Maternal Clinic often came up when informants were asked about *harambee* (see Chapter 6), but if it did not come up during the interview, almost every woman, and many men, would recount the story when asked if there was anything they would like to add at the end of the interview. The details central to this story – and repeated over and over again – were that Priscilla Boit was the leader, and she organized women to

“cooperate” to build a maternal health clinic. The group she organized was called the Kogilgey Women’s Group. The women organized *harambee* to raise money to build the clinic, and they collected sand and bushstones on their own for the building. The men only helped by driving the tractors and the machines; the women did everything else on their own.¹⁰⁹

Some women included other details which shed light on the process of building the clinic and on the ways in which the clinic affected their lives. In Zipora Ketera’s story, Priscilla Boit played a less important role, and average women in the community had more agency and took more initiative. Ketera remembered that because women were mothers and “were going far for clinics” for maternal health, they decided they should construct a health unit. She said that women came up with idea on their own, and that women from various locations collected sand and bush stones and all contributed money. Ketera, like other women, said it was only women who collected sand and stone. The *wazee* (older men) just loaned their tractors and fuel for machines. Lastly, as the clinic progressed, Ketera added, they involved local administration.¹¹⁰ Like many other women, Ketera emphasized the importance of women collecting money and laboring without men. Where her story differs is with her emphasis on women’s collective realization of their need for the clinic without stressing the importance of Priscilla Boit’s leadership. Ketera’s story is fairly exceptional for its emphasis on the equal involvement of all women. Many other women, though emphasizing their actions in building the clinic, also highlighted the importance of Boit’s leadership.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Pauline Ngetich, Sosiani, November 21, 2012; Interview with Pauline Tum, Leseru, November 22, 2012; Interview with Selena Chelimo Barno, Leseru, November 28, 2012.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Zipora Ketera, Sosiani, November 21, 2012.

Theresa Ngososei said that the women felt so “empowered” by the process of collecting the money and the materials, that they invited then Vice President Daniel arap Moi to assist as guest of honor.¹¹¹ In other words, the process of building the clinic empowered women to such an extent that they felt confident inviting the second highest Kenyan politician to lay the first stone. The building of the Sosiani Maternal Health clinic demonstrates women’s ambiguous position within government and politics. Their exclusion from state resources galvanized them to take action to provide for themselves, which eventually led to a form of political inclusion, as the Vice President attended their stone laying ceremony. In the end, women’s exclusion from the government actually produced an encounter with the government, and this perfectly sums up women’s paradoxical position on the margins of society in early postcolonial Kenya.

Pauline Tum also recounted the role of the government in the clinic. She said she was proud to join the women in building the clinic, and that the health center helped her and her family because, to date, it is the only one in the area. Tum remembered that, after completion, it took the government two years to send nurses and medicine. She was not disappointed about the slow reaction of the government because she knew it was a process; the women wanted only to accept the situation and wait for the government.¹¹²

Tum’s memories are supported by archival evidence. At the beginning of 1968, the only maternity clinic and the only health center in all of Uasin Gishu District was in Eldoret town. At that time, Soy and Moiben had just completed building their self-help

¹¹¹ Interview with Theresa Ngososei, Leseru, November 27, 2012.

¹¹² Interview with Pauline Tum, Leseru, November 22, 2012.

clinics, but the Sirikwa County Council did not have the money to run these clinics.¹¹³

Former scheduled areas where resettlement took place posed especially difficult problems for government provision of services after independence, due to the complete absence of colonial medical facilities or schools.

Women actively participated in building schools as well as clinics, particularly maternal and children's units, and there is a great deal of evidence of the initiative taken by women all over Kenya to improve their own lives in this way. Women in the Mosop division of Keiyo decided the health accommodations in their region were inadequate, and they organized themselves to collect funds to put on an addition to the maternity wing of the Chepkorio Health Centre.¹¹⁴ A delegation of women from Cheptarit, Nandi attended a Sirikwa County Council Public Health and Lands Committee meeting in October, 1966 to seek advice on building a maternity block. They had already bought a plot of land and collected building materials and solicited donations from government ministers. The women attended the meeting because they "wanted to be assisted to be given a plan so that they will know exactly how much they have to do to get the project accomplished. They desired that the plan should be provided as soon as possible in order to keep the spirit of the self-help group high."¹¹⁵

The council agreed to the women's request, but only if it "would not commit the Council to incur capital and recurrent expenditure." This was a common response to requests for aid for self-help hospitals and clinics. In a Sirikwa County Council Public

¹¹³ KNA BY/21/212, From M.A. Fazal, Medical Officer of Health to The Assistant Director of Medical Services, "Re: Health Centres in Uasin Gishu," 14th February, 1968.

¹¹⁴ KNA BY/21/211, "Sirikwa County Council Public Health and Lands Committee Minutes of the 4th Meeting," 11th October 1966.

¹¹⁵ KNA BY/21/211, "Sirikwa County Council Public Health and Lands Committee Minutes of the 4th Meeting," 11th October 1966.

Health Committee meeting in December of 1965, the council resolved that if self-help groups built and equipped units to their standards and these proposals fit into the Sirikwa Health Services development program, the “Council should, within the limits of the finances available to it undertake, as a matter of policy, to provide funds for the recurrent charges for running such extra facilities.”¹¹⁶ The finances were often not available, though. What this meant, in short, was that women and other rural Kenyans who organized themselves to build these clinics would, if council funding was unavailable, need either central government support for the regular expenses of running the hospital, or they would need to be able to raise this money from their communities.

It was difficult to garner either central or local government funding, though. Small communities very rarely possessed the financial capacity to support a big, recurrent expenditure such as a clinic or a hospital. The central government, though more capable of supporting these endeavors financially, also proved difficult to work with. Women, and other marginalized groups, did not know how to access government resources, and they often did not have the network necessary for getting government aid. Here, women’s exclusion from the *baraza* deeply affected their access to leaders who could help them, their understanding of the state’s development plans, and also their understanding of how to access the development that was available.

In these circumstances, the presence of prominent, educated women in a community often became very important. Regardless of the way in which women recounted the story of the building of the Sosiani Maternal Health Clinic, Priscilla Boit clearly played an active role in the community. She organized women’s groups, helped

¹¹⁶ KNA BY/21/211, “Sirikwa Country Council Public Health Committee Minutes,” 20th December 1965.

women learn the process of building a self help clinic, and she attended *baraza* to ask for community support and communicate with the DC about government aid. Without Priscilla Boit, the women of Sosiani might still have built the clinic on their own, but the process would have been more challenging, certainly.

Priscilla Boit's role in the Sosiani Maternal Health Clinic demonstrates the importance of localized factors and, even, the presence of a single person in shaping women's experiences. A prominent woman or a local leader could deeply affect women's groups, and thus, women's lives. Rael Serem, for example, remembered in Burnt Forest, before she moved to Sosiani, that women assisted one another on their farms, but there were no women's groups or merry-go-rounds.¹¹⁷ Women's lives and their ability to form organizations to meet their own needs depended a great deal on the community in which they lived, the existence of women's organizations, and whether there was an educated leader who could guide them on how to work with the government or to organize them.

LIFE HISTORIES IN OPPOSITION

Women's experiences also differed drastically depending on the men in their families – husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers-in-law. As demonstrated above, sons sold their mothers' land at times, and brothers-in-law attempted to grab the land of widows. Women's husbands and fathers also shaped their lives deeply.

Here, the life histories of two different women serve to illustrate these extremes.¹¹⁸ Eunice Birir, a farmer now living in Chemalal, Leseru, had a life very much

¹¹⁷ Interview with Rael Serem, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

¹¹⁸ Feminist scholars, particularly those working in the Global South, have argued for the importance of using women's life histories. Susan Geiger, "Women's Life Histories: Method and Content," *Signs* 11, no. 2 (1986): 334-351; Susan Geiger, *TANU Women: Gender and Culture in the Making of Tanganyikan Nationalism, 1955-1965* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1997); Margaret Strobel, *Muslim Women in Mombasa, 1890-1975* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

constricted by the actions of her husband. After years of squatting and moving with her family to work on various European farms in the colonial era, Birir married and moved to Bukura, Western Kenya, where Luhyas living there gave her and her husband a small piece of land to plow. They stayed for two years before moving to Kongoni Farm, Nandili in Western Province, in an effort to secure their own land. Her brother-in-law was living with a European farmer at the time and accommodated them on the Kongoni Farm. Birir and her family stayed there one year and then migrated to Sosiani settlement. Her parents had invited them to come and apply for settlement, because her parents were staying close to Sosiani with her brother at Ndalat. After selling their cattle and asking for assistance from relatives, they were able to put down the deposit for a plot in the scheme. She and her husband received 44 acres and four dairy cattle.

Birir said that her husband was “active,” or hard working, for three years. Then, he sold the land in Sosiani without consulting her – since it was his name on the title deed – and moved to a new piece of land. Soon after, though, he also sold that land and moved back to the Sosiani area to Chemalal. Birir had stayed with her parents while her husband moved, because she had just given birth. While living with her parents and taking care of her newborn, she said, her husband squandered all their money. Birir and her husband were only able to get settlement in Chemalal, because her parents knew people there and assisted them. However, this time, she and her husband could only afford to purchase 10 acres as opposed to the 44 acres they had first received. Birir said her husband would not listen to any advice, and he drank a lot. However, because she had many children with him, she decided to continue living with him. If she had left him, she thought she might have difficulties, especially with sending her children to school. She said she respected

the law that everything was owned by her husband, because it was registered under his name. However, she thought it was unfair of her husband to misuse what they had while others were struggling so much.

Birir remembered that when they moved to Chemalal, her husband neglected paying the land and development loans, saying that cooperative could sell their land if they wanted to. Her son assisted her, but she remembers struggling to get enough food and all the while the loan was accumulating. Birir recounted that she constantly worried about eviction. She said, “*Mimi na watoto tunaenda wapi tena?*” (My children and I will go where again?)

According to Birir, her husband did not share any of the farm labor. She struggled with all the work, remembering that she took the cows out in the morning, then came back to prepare lunch, and collected the cattle, all while her husband stayed around the house doing nothing. On the weekend, she took her children to do weeding.

It was not just that Birir had to do both her own work and her husband’s work, but he also constricted her socially, because he did not allow anyone to visit their home. She said she just had to persevere. When she was beaten, she would go to her parents, but saw that her children were not being educated. Her parents might warn her husband, but he would repeat his behavior in a few days. She described her husband’s behavior as “torture” and said she had health complications as a result of their relationship.

Birir’s situation was one of extreme isolation. Her husband would not allow other people to visit their house and she was not allowed to attend church or women’s groups, or other social events. Birir said she never thought other women had the same problems as she did. Like other women, her financial autonomy, freedom of political engagement,

and access to resources was constricted by the patriarchal foundations of early independent Kenya. Her husband did little to care for the family, he beat her, he drank, she did the majority of the labor, and yet, she had little control over the financial resources of the household. This occurred in other households, certainly, but Birir's life history represents an extreme. Her life history is particularly extreme with the amount of isolation she experienced, and also, the inability to get help from her parents or community in reforming – at least a little – her husband's behavior.

Grace Nasimiyu's life story, though it also involved a troubled relationship with her husband, had a very different outcome. Nasimiyu got married in 1952. She and her husband stayed in Kabras, his home area, where they had a small piece of land. She explained that they got divorced in 1958 due to "family differences," and she went back to her parents' home, where she heard about land settlement programs. Nasimiyu said she went "crying" to the Settlement Officer (SO) saying she had three children, so the SO promised that he would not leave her out.¹¹⁹

Nasimiyu was chosen to settle a plot in Lumakanda. She remembered that her parents encouraged her to come and her father gave her his identity card. At that time, women did not have identity cards, and thus, could not apply without the aid of a male relative. Women's applications were most often submitted through their husbands, who served as heads of households. In Nasimiyu's case, though, because she was divorced, her father lent her his identification card and gave her the money for the down payment. Women's general lack of financial autonomy was combined with their exclusion from bank loans (the poor were, also, generally excluded from bank loans), since, again, they

¹¹⁹ This example supports an argument in Chapter 3 about the importance of personal relationships with government officials for gaining access to land settlement plots.

did not have identity cards and few women had any liquid assets. This made it almost impossible for them to pay for a settlement plot without the help of a male relative.

Even though Nasimiyu depended on the support of her father and the Settlement Officer in order to gain access to land, she did not, ultimately, that her rights were any different than a man's. When asked if women and men were equal, Nasimiyu replied, "What men got [land], even me, I got."¹²⁰ Nasimiyu asserted, in other words, that equal access to land corresponded to broader equality between women and men as citizens. This belief, again, demonstrates the connections between rights to resources and conceptualizations of citizenship. However, Nasimiyu's circumstances were certainly rare. Very few informants remembered any single women who gained access to settlement. As demonstrated earlier, single women were originally excluded from resettlement programs by the Ministry of Settlement and, after the policy changed, local committees, headed by men, continued to work to exclude women from land ownership.

Even after getting land, Nasimiyu was still confronted with the challenges of taking care of three children and doing the farm work on 22 acres by herself. She said, though, that it was not difficult to take care of the farm because she was hard-working – a common discourse among successful farmers. Once her children grew up, they helped, and she said that people were working together back then. She could leave her kids with her neighbors if she needed. She also said that local leaders assisted her, and that if she had a financial problem, she could go to them for help, though not many people did this.¹²¹ Nasimiyu also remembered, like so many other women, getting help from fellow

¹²⁰ Interview with Grace Nasimiyu, Lumakanda, November 12, 2012.

¹²¹ Other interviewees confirm this. While interviewees mentioned getting help from local authorities, they did not speak about financial assistance.

women, the Catholic Church, or from *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* through lessons on development and merry-go-rounds. Nasimiyu did not expect, or think that she got extra help from the community because she was a single mother, and she said she would always go to women first about her problems.¹²²

CONCLUSION

Eunice Birir and Grace Nasimiyu's divergent life histories demonstrate the range of women's experiences, which were often deeply shaped by their communities and male relatives. Women were placed in peripheral positions throughout Kenya in the years just after independence. They had very few means to directly participate in community-level political debates and decisions. Women also lacked rights to land. Combined with heavy workloads in their homes, women had few avenues to access public services, resources, or political leadership independently of their husbands or male relatives. Women were more likely than men to say that their lives did not change after independence, because they were largely excluded from formal and public political spaces where "self-government" was visible, particularly the *baraza*. Helen Kirua remembered of *uhuru*, for example, "I was just living. There was no change."¹²³ After independence, women were often just as constrained in their relationships with their husbands and families, and given greater workloads. Rael Serem remembered, "Yes, we were really free. We got independence. But, still we were under our husbands. So, freedom was not there yet to us. Because we were still working under the leadership of our husbands."¹²⁴

¹²² Interview with Grace Nasimiyu, Lumakanda, November 12, 2012.

¹²³ Interview with Helen Kirua, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

¹²⁴ Interview with Rael Serem, Sosiani, December 3, 2012.

Despite being politically and economically marginalized, women organized themselves to secure public services and rights to resources. How did women, at the margins of political and economic post-independence spaces, secure public resources for their families and communities? Women employed creative strategies to better their own lives by working together, forming tight social networks, joining women's clubs in churches or their communities, creating their own self-help groups, and participating in micro-lending. These were alternatives to state development, and they offered women an avenue to better control their financial resources and the development programs in their communities.

This, of course, was not the experience of all women. Just as our understanding of decolonization needs to be modified to include all the meanings attached to it, and just as there were many ideas about development, women had multiple understandings of the state and its obligations. Some women were more integrated into formal public political spaces than others. Some women only confided in their friends or in church elders when they needed help. Other women would go to chiefs. Some women had some control over their finances and some did not. A woman's experience depended on a number of factors – her husband, her friendships, her work situation, her children, and her community, among many others. On the whole, women were more excluded than men from public political spaces, based on their gender.

This chapter illustrates how women imagined and encountered the state differently than men as a result of their exclusion from state processes. It was through the state's exclusion of women from political discourse and rights, that they did encounter the state (in its absence) and came to form alternative political imaginations. This had the

contradictory effect of transforming women into marginalized citizens early on, but also, of motivating them to take an active role in improving their lives.

The next chapter continues to examine mobilization from the margins of early postcolonial society. It looks at a World Bank-funded forestry program that squatters contested.

8 'Are You Planting Trees or Are You Planting People?': Defining Kenya's National Interest (Part I of II)

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, World Bank officials, high Kenyan government officials, local politicians, and rural farmers argued and negotiated whether to plant trees or to resettle squatters on farmland in Turbo division. The dispute was actually about the much broader and more complicated issue of how Kenya would define its national interest and development in the years after independence. The protracted contestations over these questions occurred in a decolonizing setting where there was great ambivalence about how the Kenyan state should create policies and what aspect of development should take priority. At the heart of this debate over whether to plant trees or settle people in Turbo lay the issue of inequality, and whether the Kenyan state would privilege industry and economic growth over aid to the landless and the impoverished.

The government planned the forest in Turbo to provide raw materials for a Kenyan paper plant. At the end of 1963, just before independence, Kenyan officials began conceptualizing and drafting working papers for a pulp and paper factory. The government hired consultants to research the industry, the world market for pulp and paper, and to make economic projections on the profitability of this industry in Kenya. Once these consultants endorsed the project and the Kenyan government received British and World Bank funding, they began earnestly planning a factory and a reforestation scheme.

With World Bank stipulations that at least 50 percent of the timber come from within a 25 mile radius of the site of the factory, the Kenyan government chose to

reforest an area surrounding the town of Turbo. This area had already been purchased and promised for squatter settlement. Though the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Conservator of Forests were able to buy the land back from Agricultural Settlement Trustees, they were unable to remove the squatters from the land or to gain the total backing of other government ministries and officials on whether reforestation or pacifying squatters was more important for the future of the Kenyan nation. The Turbo Afforestation scheme, then, engendered debates about how to understand and prioritize the interests of the new nation. It became a space in which the rural poor, the local government authorities, the central government and the World Bank all contested the definition of Kenya's national interest and development. Turbo Afforestation led to prolonged inter-ministry fighting about the direction of the country – economic growth versus social welfare – and also about the rights of squatters. Squatters (see Chapter 9) forced discussion on these issues and successfully contested this World Bank-funded and state-led development program through their refusal to be physically removed.

The debate on Turbo Afforestation and the success of the squatters occurred in a specific setting – a decolonizing Kenya that had yet to fully define the direction of the country, and that had yet to instill a sense of nationhood or national identity among all its new citizens. The debate lasted over a decade, as various state and non-state actors actively negotiated how to implement a major national development program. The length of the debate over this program illustrates the many years of contestation over the definition of the national interest, and makes clear the need to understand decolonization and early postcolonial state making in a longer historical frame. The Turbo forest program example, and the many ways that different individuals and groups debated,

participated in, and experienced its implementation, demonstrates the necessity of holding on to historical ambiguities.

The varied participants in the Afforestation debate also brings to light the large number of actors involved in state formation, from the squatters, to the local politicians and civil servants advocating on their behalf, to cabinet ministers and Kenyatta, all the way up to the World Bank. All played a role in debating the issues raised by this development program. The Turbo Afforestation scheme demonstrates that, despite the government's unwillingness to publicly admit any obligation to squatters – a group with no rights to the land they lived on – squatters played a decisive role in development planning and actively negotiated and demanded rights to the resources of the state.

The “state” was not a monolithic entity but was composed of ministries and actors with very different agendas and visions of the future. These different interests caused delays in government planning. Four ministries, numerous local politicians, many government officers, hundreds of squatters, the World Bank, other international financial institutions, and private firms all participated in the planning and implementation of Turbo Afforestation – and thus, in the debate over development, inequality, and the national interest of Kenya. The state was composed of all these actors, some formal state actors some not, and was fragmented by its lack of direction. This created a context in which power was often derived more from the way in which it was imagined by the populace than from participation in formal political institutions.

The conclusion to the afforestation debate – the drawn out creation of a paper industry, the settlement of some squatters in Turbo, and the disregard of other squatters, unemployed and landless Kenyans – demonstrates both the continued ambivalence of the

divided Kenyan state on questions about the national interest, industry, and inequality, as well as the repercussions of this indecisiveness. With pressure, President Kenyatta folded quickly in the late 1960s and promised squatters that they would get land, changing the plans for land use in Turbo for a third time since independence. This decision was fraught with important implications, as the ministries involved had to scramble to find new land for the forest in order to receive World Bank aid, and the Ministry of Lands and Settlement attempted to identify the “real squatters” who deserved land.

Some squatters did receive land in these new settlement schemes, but many remained landless and remembered Kenyatta bringing in “*watu wakubwa*” (big people), rather than giving land to the squatters who needed it most. Simultaneously, the Turbo Afforestation project, which was at the time the biggest development project in Kenya’s history, continued to be delayed as the government struggled to find any productive land where squatters would not fight the government to choose farmland over forest. Turbo Afforestation may have brought questions about the national interest, development, growth, and inequality to the forefront of the new nation’s conscience, but it certainly did not resolve these questions and they continued, and continue, to be debated both in parliament, amongst ministers, local politicians, by average Kenyans, and with bilateral donors and international institutions as well.

This is the first of two chapters which explore this fraught and debated development program. This chapter focuses on the forestry scheme and paper industry, mostly from the side of the Kenyan government and the World Bank. It also examines broader national policy questions on squatters and unemployment that came to the forefront of public debate during the early implementation of the program. The next

chapter (9) explores the same story from the perspective of the squatters, examining not only how they engaged with the state, but why and how the outcomes of their contestations shaped their ideas about citizenship and independence.

All three levels of analysis – national, local, and international – illustrate the need for continued exploration of evolving ideas of nationhood and development in the early postcolonial world. Scholars have yet to fully understand the complicated relationship between new citizens, postcolonial nations, and international institutions, or how all these relationships were shaped by and were shaping a Cold War, a postcolonial, and a soon to be, economically depressed global context. The complicated negotiations for power and resources deeply shaped global trends, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s. An unquestioning acceptance of the importance of these world trends – such as the 1970s recession or neoliberalism – obscures much more complicated experiences and processes on the ground in the global South. Some saw the decade of the 1970s – generally believed to signify a reversal of material fortunes for Africans – as a period of prosperity, while for others, postcolonial disappointment set in almost immediately. Postcolonial citizens actively negotiated with state and international institutions, and their diverse experiences produce an ambiguous, and rich, picture of independent Africa. The Turbo Afforestation program, and the many actors involved in its implementation, demonstrates this diversity and complexity.

BACKGROUND

At the beginning of November 1972, Jomo Kenyatta attended the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony for a new Pulp and Paper Factory at Webuye (formerly,

Broderick Falls),¹ in Western Kenya. Two years later, on November 24th, 1974, the first paper rolled out from a Webuye machine.² What was once lauded as the biggest development program in Kenyan history, had hit a series of setbacks, and it had been almost a full 10 years after planning began before Kenyatta was able to lay down that first ceremonial stone. Plagued by delays as a result of conflicts between different government ministries, between the state and citizens, and between financial backers and the government, the programs connected to the creation of the Webuye Factory and a paper industry in Kenya provided a space in which important questions related to state formation became highly contested.

Beginning in 1945, the colonial government started planting pine and cypress trees in the West Rift Valley. In 1956, an English consulting firm completed a survey on the feasibility of building a bulk paper mill in Kenya, which would use the thinnings removed from the tree plantations each year. The Grant report concluded that Broderick Falls in Western Kenya was the best site for the mill, but with the Mau Mau emergency, overseas investors were scared off from the project.³ By 1961, the Kenyan colony had established 192,000 acres of forest plantations, mostly quick growing exotic softwoods in Rift Valley and Central Provinces.⁴ In 1963, the Kenyan government began a new survey

¹ In the colonial era, the town presently called Webuye in the Western Province of Kenya was called Broderick Falls. The name was changed after independence on account of the colonial legacies attributed to it.

² KNA BA/2/27, From F.C. Dhariwal, Panafrican Paper Mills to Mr. JHO Omino, PS, Ministry of Natural Resources, "Sub: Commissioning of the Mills at Webuye," 30th November, 1974.

³ KNA AE/22/141, From J.S. Spears, Executive Director, to Mr. B.J. Wanjui, Executive Director, Industrial Development Corporation, "The Pulp and Paper Company of East Africa, Limited," 12th January, 1965.

⁴ KNA BN/96/4, Memorandum by the Minister for Tourism, Forests, and Wildlife, "Secret Council of Ministers: Future Organisation of the Departments and Services in the Ministry of Tourism, Forests and Wild Life," [undated].

on establishing a paper mill.⁵ This survey examined the production of raw material, the financing, employment creation, logistics, and the profitability of establishing a paper industry in Kenya. The Sandwell Report, published in September 1963, again concluded that Broderick Falls provided the most suitable site, and that an “unbleached, kraft pulp and paper mill producing industrial paper from Government owned softwood plantations would be a viable proposition.”⁶

With the positive Sandwell Report, the Kenyan government began to assess financing possibilities and approached some international firms. These discussions persuaded the Kenyan government that they were unlikely to partner with a commercial firm for the establishment of a mill on such a small scale.⁷ Uganda and Tanzania had also begun investigating the prospect of establishing their own paper mills. At the same time, Parsons and Whittlemore, the first international firm to show interest in the project, required that the mill have access to the whole of the East African market, and that Tanzania and Uganda would support a common tariff protection policy for the industry.⁸

Throughout the negotiations with European firms, the Kenyan government and its consultants debated the size of the proposed mill, with some economic forecasting suggesting they should build a large mill – “four times as large”⁹ – and others questioning the general profitability of the industry. The larger mill required much more

⁵ KNA AE/22/139, “Paper mill survey starts this week,” *East African Standard*, 22 April, 1963

⁶ KNA AE/22/141, Joint Memorandum by Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Commerce and Industry, “Kenya Government. Draft Cabinet Paper. Broderick Falls Pulp and Paper Project,” 15th May, 1964.

⁷ KNA BN/85/15, From the Treasury, “Memorandum to H.M. Government on the Turbo Afforestation Scheme (Second Revision, June 1966).”

⁸ KNA AE/22/141, Joint Memorandum by Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Commerce and Industry, “Kenya Government. Draft Cabinet Paper. Broderick Falls Pulp and Paper Project,” 15th May, 1964.

⁹ KNA BN/85/14, Memorandum by the Minister for Natural Resources, “The Cabinet. Kenya Pulp and Paper Mill. Proposed Turbo Pulpwood Afforestation Scheme,” 1964.

softwood and the government was forced to reconsider their ability to provide the raw materials. With this recognition, they also had to look into the cost of transporting the wood to the Broderick Falls factory. Eventually, the Cabinet decided that, “To overcome these problems, there is only one satisfactory solution and that is to acquire about 60,000 acres of land as near as possible to Broderick Falls that is suitable for a softwood Afforestation scheme.”¹⁰

Competition from Uganda and Tanzania and the necessity of finding fertile land to reforest close to the mill site complicated the project from its beginning. The government chose the area to the north and south of the town of Turbo in Uasin Gishu District for these tree plantations. By the time the Cabinet proposed the Turbo Afforestation Scheme, the Central Land Board had already purchased large areas of this land for settlement schemes. On November 11, 1964, the Cabinet agreed to a memorandum by the Minister for Natural Resources which called for the establishment of this 60,000 acre soft-wood plantations in the Turbo area. After gauging investor interest, the Ministers for Lands and Settlement and for Natural Resources and Wildlife realized that, “it will be difficult if not impossible to attract investment into the proposed Broderick Falls pulp mill unless this scheme [Turbo Afforestation] goes forward.”¹¹ The planned establishment of the paper industry in Kenya hinged on creating a forest in Turbo division.

¹⁰ KNA AE/22/141, Memorandum by the Minister for Natural Resources, “The Cabinet. Kenya Pulp and Paper Mill: Proposed Turbo Pulpwood Afforestation Scheme,” 1964.

¹¹ KNA BN/85/14, Joint Memorandum by the Minister for Lands and Settlement and the Minister for Natural Resources and Wildlife, “Development Committee Memorandum, Turbo Afforestation Project: Northwest Kenya,” 1965.

The cabinet also suggested the Kenyan government consider alternative areas for settlement. From the beginning, the Kenyan government knew the risk squatters posed, as Turbo had been a former European settler area, where Nandi and Luhyas had been promised settlement. They went forward with the Turbo Afforestation scheme with the knowledge that there were few other suitable areas of fertile, expansive land that could be transformed into forest, and with the assumption that the government would be able to resettle the squatters and landless Kenyans elsewhere. What the government did not realize was the difficulties they would meet in convincing squatters of the former and the challenges in implementing the latter.

At the time that the Cabinet published their first paper on the Turbo Afforestation Scheme, three different groups owned the 60,000 acres planned for Turbo Afforestation. The Ministry of Settlement owned 29,000 acres, the East African Tanning and Extract Corporation (EATEC)¹² owned 25,000 acres, and “assisted owners”¹³ possessed 5,000 acres. In total, this land was worth approximately £640,000 a sum greater than the Kenyan Treasury could afford.¹⁴ The Settlement Fund Trustees agreed to allow the Ministry of Natural Resources to purchase about 20,000 of the acres, which the Central

¹² KNA AE/22/217, From H.S. Fisher, General Manager, to the Hon. The Member for Agriculture & Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture, “East African Tanning Extract Company, Limited – Application for Transfer of Factory Licences to Subsidiary Companies in Formation,” 16th October, 1953. The East African Tanning Extract Company Limited was incorporated in November 1937 and began with just a wattle extract factory at Kikuyu and a wattle bark mill at Thika, with raw materials coming mostly from Central Province. After World War II, however, the company began rapid expansion involving land acquisition, plantation development and factory building in Uasin Gishu and Sotik, as the world market for wattle increased greatly.

¹³ In the early 1960s, the Central Land Board and government approved the purchase of farms or subdivisions of farms by individual “Assisted Owners.” The Central Land Board and government aided these “Assisted Owners” in the purchase of the land with loan money, but these owners were not a part of a wider settlement scheme. When World Bank and bilateral funding for settlement was being negotiated, however, these schemes did not qualify for funding, and the Board rejected all future individual Assisted Owner Schemes.

¹⁴ KNA AE/22/141, The Treasury, “Turbo Afforestation Project,” 14th April, 1965.

Land Board had already bought for a price of about £200,000.¹⁵ Settlement later released an additional area to the Ministry of Natural resources, originally planned for the Osorongai Settlement Scheme, so that the total area for sale to the Ministry of Natural Resources equaled about 33,000 acres.¹⁶ These negotiations “dragged on” for three months instead of the planned one month, hinting at the first signs of a broader pattern of delays. These early delays created the beginnings of what would become a chronic squatter problem in the area, as squatters continually moved in to take advantage of unused land.¹⁷

The government began the construction of the Turbo forest nursery in 1965 with a goal of planting three million seedlings by March, 1966.¹⁸ The successful creation of the paper mill depended on the reforestation scheme, as most investors demanded the establishment of a nearby forest to raise the net return on invested capital above the low 11 to 18 percent range that it would be otherwise.¹⁹ The Ministry of Natural Resources, in agreement with the Treasury, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and the Ministry of Lands and Settlement, proposed to purchase the 60,000 acres over four consecutive years in order to spread the capital outlay for land purchase over the period, and to attempt to keep the land productive and free of illegal squatters during the transition to forestry.²⁰

¹⁵ KNA BN/85/14, From A. Davies, for PS to PS, Ministry of Natural Resources, “Broderick Falls Wood Pulp Factory,” 26th January, 1965.

¹⁶ KNA BN/85/14, From J.W. Maina, Ag. Deputy Directory of Settlement, 3rd February, 1965.

¹⁷ KNA BN/85/14, From P. Shiyukah to A.P. Achieng, PS, Ministry of Natural Resources, 18th March, 1965.

¹⁸ KNA AE/22/142, “Pulp and Paper Company of East Africa, Limited. Working Committee Meeting: Broderick Falls Pulp and Paper Project. Summary of Main Developments: April – December, 1965,” 20th December 1965.

¹⁹ KNA AE/22/142, From CMG Argwings-Kodhek, Minister of Natural Resources to Otiende, Onamu, Masinde, Khasakhala, Munoko, Osogo, 8th August, 1966.

²⁰ KNA BN/85/14, “Turbo Afforestation (Draft Only)” [undated].

The government decided, in addition, to manage the area as a joint agricultural-forestry scheme during the afforestation process as a way of reducing the cost incurred for operations, land purchase, equipment, and working capital during the tree planting process, and as another way to keep squatters off the land. With a small forest department lacking experience in agriculture, the Kenyan government chose to use a private agent to manage the area.²¹ They originally planned a complex management consortium, which included the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC, a statutory board under the Ministry of Agriculture), the Forest Department, the Treasury, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the East African Tanning and Extract Company. The government wanted the ADC to employ EATEC as its agent for some of the operations. The talks between these various agents broke down over financing in December, 1965, resulting in delays for implementation and more time in which the land in the Turbo area lay idle.²² Frustrated at these delays, the Central Agricultural Board (CAB) threatened to recommend that the Minister for Agriculture apply a Management Order to 21,000 acres, in order to take over the land and to take advantage of the 1966 planting season.²³ Eventually, later in 1966, the Kenyan Government, the ADC, and EATEC came to an agreement. This agreement broke down three years later in 1969, and the government replaced the tripartite agreement with a direct contract with EATEC.²⁴

The delays which plagued every aspect of the planning and implementation of the Turbo Afforestation scheme and the paper factory not only had repercussions on the

²¹ KNA BN/85/14, "Turbo Afforestation Project Preliminary Appraisal," [undated].

²² KNA BN/85/15, From R. O'B Wilson, Central Agricultural Board, "Turbo Area 'B,'" 17th December, 1965.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ KNA BA/6/25, From JPW Logie, Chief Conservator of Forests to the GM, EATEC, "Revision of the Present Agreement for the Management of the Turbo Agricultural Operations," 29th April, 1969.

profitability of the industry, its establishment and competitiveness, but also on the ability of the government to carry out the planned program. The Kenyan government recognized from the beginning the risk that a squatter problem posed, and the likelihood that large tracts of idle, fertile land in the Rift Valley would attract landless Kenyans. This problem was not exclusive to Turbo Afforestation. Part of the great concern over squatters in the Turbo area resulted from the government's broader experience with squatters, inadequate land, and the state's inability to stymie squatting, particularly in the former white highlands areas of Rift Valley and Central Provinces.²⁵

At the same time that the Kenyan government attempted to create the Turbo Afforestation project and the Webuye Paper mill, it was also setting policy precedents for economic and social priorities. The post-independent Kenyan government first addressed the squatter problem²⁶ through Operation "Real Estate" in 1964, an effort to evict all squatters using magistrates on the ground to adjudicate the cases. After the failure of this operation, Kenyatta appointed a Special Commissioner for Squatters in 1965 "to determine the extent of the squatter problem, to advise the Government on alternative measures for settlement or re-employment of squatters, and to advise the Government on the most expeditious way for the removal of illegal squatters."²⁷ This move signified an abrupt reversal from Operation "Real Estate," as it betrayed a new, more cautious approach to the squatter problem. The appointment of a Special

²⁵ Squatting was also a problem on the Kenyan coast, but the nature and history of squatters in that region differed dramatically from Central and Rift Valley Provinces.

²⁶ The independent Kenyan government had only previously addressed the squatter problem through its land resettlement programs.

²⁷ KNA AVS/13/63, "A Covering Letter for the Report on the Special Commissioner's Visits to Provinces to Investigate the Squatter Problem," 12th July 1965.

Commissioner for Squatters, Z.B. Shimechero, represented a tacit acknowledgement that the government had lost control of the squatter problem.

With Shimechero's appointment, the Kenyan state reworked its policy to prevent new squatters and to remove those squatters who entered idle land after May 1, 1965. The Special Commissioner for Squatters made a distinction between squatters – those living on property to which they had no title – and the resident laborers who had, historically under colonial rule, been classified as squatters. Shimechero also discarded the word “illegal.” Previously, classification as a squatter had distinguished between “squatters,” or resident laborers, and “illegal squatters,” those newly classified by Shimechero as “squatters.” Though Shimechero's classification system seemed to be an attempt to de-stigmatize the label of “squatter,” great significance was attached to being identified as a resident laborer rather than a squatter, as it often gave the laborer priority access to land resettlement.

Following his introduction of a new classification system, Shimechero ordered the registration of all squatters.²⁸ In 1965, a “Report on the Squatter Problem in Kenya,” estimated that there were 5,000 families of squatters in the Rift Valley, and 2,500 families of squatters in Western Province.²⁹ With this large, and ever increasing population, the Kenyan government recognized the social and economic consequences to the new country, noting in particular the possibility of a widespread health epidemic, the hindering of agricultural development, and the possibility of political agitation affecting

²⁸ Government attempts to register all squatters were met with a variety of problems. It was impossible to identify all squatters; it was often impossible to distinguish between “genuine” and “non-genuine” squatters; many squatters did not know their home areas; a number of cases were accidentally omitted; etc.

²⁹ KNA AVS/13/63, Special Commissioner for Squatters, Z.B. Shimechero, “Report on the Squatter Problem in Kenya.”

security.³⁰ By April 1966, the Sub-Committee of the Cabinet on the Squatter Problem reported, that there were about 35,000 families without titles, and after accounting for those who had land rights elsewhere, those who were old, those in urban locations, and those who would find employment, a balance of 21,750 squatters would need land.

The Sub-Committee noted further, that “there is a distinct shortage of high potential land available for settlement. To prevent squatter settlement from becoming uneconomic agricultural slums of discontented squatters it will be necessary to allocate fairly large acreages per family, and provide some development loans if the Government is convinced that these squatters have as much right as anyone else to expect a reasonable future from our Nation.”³¹ Despite these troubling numbers, in 1966 the Kenyan government believed it could “absorb” 75 percent of the total population of squatters by giving them settlement which would provide subsistence and enough income for taxes, school fees, and other minor expenses.³² This assessment would prove to be overly optimistic.

A couple years later, it had become clear that the institution of the new, “pro-squatter” policies had led to mostly superficial changes. The policy created different categories of landless peoples, and then used these distinctions to determine access to resources. The halfhearted government commitment to ameliorating widespread landlessness, then, became clear through their “fixing” of the numbers by labeling only

³⁰ KNA AVS/13/63, Sub-Committee of the Cabinet on the Squatter Problem [compiled by Ministry of Lands and Settlement with reference to the Sub-Committee], “Summary of the Report on the Squatter Problem in Kenya,” 20th July, 1965.

³¹ KNA BN/97/3, Sub-Committee of the Cabinet on the Squatter Problem [compiled by Ministry of Lands and Settlement with reference to the Sub-Committee], “The Squatter Problem” 14th April, 1966.

³² KNA BN/97/4, Memorandum by the Minister for Lands and Settlement, “Cabinet: The Final Paper of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on the Squatter Problem,” 15th June, 1966.

some landless groups as squatters. This privileged very few with the resources that all landless peoples needed and desired.

Despite the basic Kenyan policy presumption that certain groups were more worthy of land, by the close of the first five years of independence government bureaucrats had begun to acknowledge that many Kenyans had not become landless through any fault of their own. Rather, Shimechero admitted that the landless were “destitute Kenya people who have the unfortunate fate of being squatters.”³³ The fairly arbitrary classification system to distinguish between squatters or landless Kenyans belied the important fact that all were impoverished and in need of access to resources or employment. The prioritization for settlement of some landless groups over others suggested, though, that certain groups were more deserving of government assistance. In reality, the Kenyan state did not have the wherewithal, or the available land, to settle all landless Kenyan families.

The newer policy on squatters in the mid-1960s did represent a genuine attempt to improve the problem, but it was also a public relations tactic. The policy was meant to appease squatters by making it unquestionably clear that the government was making an effort to help them. The government would not have given such importance to squatters if it did not see them as a big security risk. Squatters’ power lay in their numbers, their ability to contest the government, and government fears of rural unrest.

After much debate over the policy, the government finally decided to try to settle the maximum number of squatters, with the justification that it was “better to settle many squatters at a low standard of living equivalent to that existing in rural areas rather than

³³ KNA AVS/13/63, ZB Shimechero, “Administration and Selection of Squatters for Squatter Projects,” 26th March, 1968.

settle a few squatters at a reasonably high level of income.”³⁴ By the financial year 1966/67, the Million Acre Scheme – the largest land resettlement scheme in Kenyan history – had been completed. Settlement possibilities for those who remained landless closed down, as the amount of land made available for purchase decreased dramatically. Some possibility for settlement remained, though, and in the mid-1960s, the government created new resettlement schemes specifically intended for squatters.³⁵ In June 1968, The Special Commissioner of Squatters reported that he had prevented a new influx of squatters and had found settlement for 12,693 families (or, 63,465 persons) in two years.³⁶ While these settlement schemes represented inroads, the inaccurate and ever-changing statistics on squatters make it impossible to know what percentage remained landless. It was clear, however, that landlessness and land poverty remained a widespread problem, and was never fully resolved.³⁷

In the 1970s, the government developed a broader program to address the squatter issue through the introduction of Haraka Settlement Schemes, under which 14,000 landless people were settled on 37 schemes throughout the country. *Haraka* means fast in Swahili, and policymakers created these schemes with the intention of settling as many squatters as quickly as possible. Unlike most settlement programs, the Haraka farms were extremely small, about 1 hectare, or 2 ½ acres (as opposed to the more standard 15 acres and above), and the Department of Settlement completed the resettlement without the option of extension services. This represented a departure from a settlement and

³⁴ KNA BN/97/4, Memorandum by the Minister for Lands and Settlement “Cabinet: The Final Paper of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on the Squatter Problem,” 15th June, 1966.

³⁵ KNA BN/81/41, From Office of the President to the PS, Ministry of Agriculture, PS, Ministry of Lands and Settlement, and All PCs, 2nd March, 1967

³⁶ KNA BN/81/41, from ZB Shimechero, Special Commissioner, Squatters to the PS, Ministry of Lands and Settlement, “The Role of the Special Commissioner, Squatters,” 21st June, 1968.

³⁷ Squatters and landlessness remain a contentious political issue in Kenya.

agricultural policy that had previously required agricultural extension. The government also created the Shirika cooperative farm program beginning in the early 1970s, which settled the “landless, unemployed, and destitute” on government managed cooperative farms with land allocated in a single unit.³⁸ The Haraka and Shirika programs paralleled other aspects of squatter policy, for their direct contravention of broader settlement and economic development policy. The sheer number of squatters in contrast to available land, and the desultory efforts these programs represented, also ultimately set them up for failure.

The government approach to the squatter problem demonstrated the conflicting interests of the new nation. Both Kenyan and British development plans and policy illustrated their belief in the importance of economies of scale and agricultural knowledge and experience (see chapter 3). These policies were founded on presumptions that smallholder farming was uneconomical, and that those with prior working experience on European farms were the only ones capable of owning and managing these large farms. The Kenyan government based its policy on the economic principles of the British colonial state, which assumed it was less profitable to give many small plots to the large population of squatters, who were believed to have little agricultural knowledge, and thus, not expected to be as productive. At the same time, the government worried about the “security” problem that the perpetuation of a landless class would produce. The Kenyan state debated whether it was their obligation to try to give all Kenyans a piece of land, or whether it was better to focus on what they assumed would be the agriculturally

³⁸ KNA TR/29/5, Settlement Fund Trustees, “The Shirika Settlement Program” [undated].

more productive route of fewer landowners with larger landholdings. This debate almost wholly ignored non-economic attachments to having land.³⁹

The squatter problem was closely connected to the other main problem beleaguering the new Kenyan state – high levels of unemployment. Though the Kenyan government attempted to curb squatting, they always recognized that “there are more squatters than land on which to settle.”⁴⁰ Even if Kenya had been able to settle all squatters, squatters’ children would eventually be in the same position, as land inheritance would either be further divided, or only the first-born would inherit the land. The more long-term solution, then, according to both the Kenyan government and the financial institutions backing Kenya’s development, was to provide opportunities for employment. High levels of unemployment began to become especially apparent in early 1960, but employment was virtually stagnant from 1954 – 1970, and in the decade prior to independence employment declined.⁴¹ By June 30, 1961, reported employment levels had fallen by 32,762 or 5 ¼ percent from just the year before, despite a rapidly increasing population, and this number was expected to continue decreasing.⁴²

In February 1964, the Kenyan government tried to address the problem by signing a labor agreement – commonly referred to as the tripartite agreement – with the Federation of Kenya Employers and the Kenya Federation of Labour. The agreement not

³⁹ Access to land in Kenya, though continually evolving, has historically been both an economic *and* a social asset; it has often symbolized membership in a descent group or rural polity, which has then further entitled a person to make claims on other resources controlled by the group. In the precolonial Rift Valley, men accumulated wealth through people rather than through land, since there was no value in having more land than one could use. Land use and access has also been inextricably linked to struggles over territorial control and trade, environmental control, cosmology, morality, and identity.

⁴⁰ KNA BN/81/41, From Office of the President to the PS, Ministry of Agriculture, PS, Ministry of Lands and Settlement, and All PCs, 2nd March, 1967.

⁴¹ KNA BN/81/158, “Memorandum by the Minister for Economic Planning and Development on Government’s Unemployment Policies,” 1970.

⁴² KNA BN/81/158, “Unemployment,” 1961.

only required the government and public service sector to increase their number of employees by 15 percent and private employers to increase the number of their employees by 10 percent, but it also stipulated that farmers could not fire or evict laborers from farms for a full year without government permission.⁴³ The tripartite agreement represented a temporary effort to provide employment, since inflated local governments could not maintain excess staff, especially without grants from the central government. For the longer term, the government could only combat unemployment by creating jobs through business and industry, by growing the economy. A publication on rural development noted, “The critical problem is to provide these rural people an opportunity to make a livelihood, and a better livelihood. Unemployment...is the central problem of the Kenya economy, and one of growing urgency and scale. Unless this problem can be solved, land-holdings will be sub-divided into smaller and smaller pieces, unemployed will go in even greater numbers to towns which cannot employ them.”⁴⁴ Landlessness and the dearth of industry to provide employment represented a two-pronged problem for the new postcolonial state.

Increasing levels of unemployment did not coincide with a decreasing Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In fact, it was just the opposite. The GDP was increasing, and the economy was growing, but so were the landless and unemployed classes.⁴⁵ Inequality was also rising, then, as a small number of Kenyans gained access to the resources that allowed them to contribute to, and benefit from, the growth of the economy. This wealth was also not being redistributed, as the social services of the new government remained

⁴³ KNA BN/81/158, From T.G. Lovering, SEC/CLB to PS/LS, 12 February, 1964.

⁴⁴ KNA TR/3/58, “Rural Development: Programme in Representative Areas,” 29 November 1968.

⁴⁵ KNA BN/81/158, “Memorandum by the Minister for Economic Planning and Development on Government’s Unemployment Policies.”

poor (see Chapter 2). Often when the government addressed the squatter problem, they did so as a means of ameliorating a social ill, as a way of calming any tensions caused by the growing inequalities of newly independent Kenya, which became most visible through unequal access to land.

The Kenyan government did not see the settlement of squatters as an economic investment, but rather, as a way of quelling rural unrest. This approach followed all too closely from colonial development programs, which had provided services to Africans to appease them and subdue any revolutionary leanings. The justification was the same for the postcolonial state's policy on squatters – they provided just enough to the rural masses largely excluded from the resources of the state to prevent them from becoming so discontented that they would seek political change. A discursive thread on both squatters and the unemployed as a security risk ran through the policy and correspondence. This concern about “security,” provided the greatest incentive for the state to address the problem. The Kenyan state would come to learn the seriousness of the risk disaffected squatters posed to development plans all too well through their experience in Turbo.

Despite the recognition of the possibility of a squatter problem in the area designated for Turbo Afforestation, and despite their attempts to manage this problem, by the end of July 1965, already about 300-400 families were residing illegally in Turbo area “B.”⁴⁶ In early August, a group of Nandi Elders led by Hon. D.T. arap Moi, then Minister for Home Affairs and later Kenyan President from 1978 to 2002, approached J.H. Angaine, Minister for Lands and Settlement. Angaine wrote following this meeting, “I

⁴⁶ KNA, BN/85/14, From J.S. Spears, Conservator of Forests to the Director of Settlement, 29th July, 1965.

feel that... it would be worthwhile reviewing intended land purchase in this area and possibly excluding it altogether and allowing the tenants to take up these farms, for it must be appreciated that the Nandi will be foregoing a considerable acreage which they anticipated and indeed know was coming to them for settlement purposes.”⁴⁷ By February, 1966, the Divisional Forest Officer of Turbo said there were 552 families of an average size of 5 on the land demarcated for afforestation.⁴⁸ By August of the same year, government officials noted there were 483 genuine families squatting, and 156 families of “non-genuine squatters,” a new total of 639, up from the original estimates of 300-400.⁴⁹ The squatter problem that government officials had always worried about had increased to crisis proportions as delays left the land idle, and as the Nandi organized themselves to fight for the land they had been promised.

Early on, squatters made it impossible for government to implement their plans by refusing to leave the land, and actively disrupting the reforestation program. A.F. Achieng, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism approached P. Shiyukah, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Lands and Settlement about how “the labour were cutting down trees, building huts and in general making a mess of the whole scheme,” at the beginning of 1966.⁵⁰ By that time, the government realized Nandi agitation was growing and new squatters were increasingly settling on the underutilized land intended for afforestation in the near future. The Director of

⁴⁷ KNA BN/85/14, From Angaine, Minister for Lands and Settlement to The Hon. S.O. Ayodo, Minister for Natural Resources and Wildlife, “Turbo Afforestation Project,” 19th August, 1965

⁴⁸ KNA BN/85/15, Kiambithu, “Turbo Project Afforestation Scheme: Notes on a Meeting,” 11th February, 1966.

⁴⁹ KNA BN/85/15, From Provincial Commissioner Western Province, “Squatters: Turbo Afforestation Scheme,” 30th August, 1966.

⁵⁰ KNA BN/85/15, From P. Shiyukah, Permanent Secretary to A.F. Achieng Esq., Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, “Turbo Afforestation Scheme,” 26th January, 1966.

Settlement had become progressively more anxious that there were no alternative settlement schemes for the Nandi and Abaluhya displaced by the scheme, who had been promised land. The Director wrote in February 1966, “In order to contain the feelings of the Nandi people we have, all the time, suggested that we would buy alternative land for them. This we thought we could easily accommodate within our proposed Land Settlement programme but as everybody knows this was greatly cut down in the London talks and we cannot now continue to make any more empty promises to the Nandi people.”⁵¹

By the mid-1960s, the Kenyan government found its financial position increasingly constrained. The state’s capacity to settle the Nandi of Turbo on new settlement schemes was circumscribed not only by the sheer number of squatters and their refusal to move, but also by government inability to fund these programs. The Van Arkadie Mission, set up in 1966 to investigate the land settlement program in Kenya, had recognized these financial problems and had even recommended easing the debt burden during the financial period from the 1966/67 to the 1979/80 by £2.75 million.⁵² Despite Kenya’s financial woes, however, the United Kingdom was reluctant to make more funds available for new settlement programs after the Million Acre Scheme.

Without further British aid, it was financially impossible “to embark on elaborate squatter schemes,” and as a result, the Kenyan government decided it would be necessary to introduce a “quick and low cost type of settlement...For this, squatters will be placed on available land on temporary basis without any sense of permanence pending the

⁵¹ KNA BN/85/15, Director of Settlement, “Land Purchase Programme and Turbo Afforestation Scheme,” 2nd February 1966.

⁵² KNA BN/81/34, C. Kahara, “Summary of Van Arkadie Report,” 15th February, 1967.

regularization of their settlement, land registration and completion of land payment before acquisition...⁵³ The British High Commission encouraged the Ministry of Settlement to give up land in Turbo in favor of Afforestation because the U.K. government was unwilling to lend Kenya more money for development loans and extension services on settlement schemes. At the conclusion of the Million Acre Scheme in 1966, United Kingdom loans for settlement had been completely exhausted.⁵⁴ Lack of finance, lack of available land, and high unemployment rates were some of the factors that pushed the Kenyan government to explore new forms of settlement and development. The emphasis on industry and low cost settlement without extension services, however, represented a “fundamental policy change,” and a departure from the previous policies founded upon a belief in so-called economical land units and the necessity of extension services.⁵⁵

The Kenyan government was debating all of these questions at the time – how to spend Kenyan Treasury money, how to resolve the squatter problem, and whether extension services and an investment in smallholders were important. In lengthy comments on a Ministry of Lands and Settlement Paper, the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development asserted:

The more we invest in putting a few thousand squatters on an economic plateau where they can scarcely fail to realize a handsome income target, the less resources will be available for assisting tens of thousands of other smallholders throughout Kenya who have shown initiative and are willing to put in a greater amount of their own effort in order to move forward. Among other questions, there is a real problem of equity here. Why should 16,5000 ‘squatters’ at the

⁵³ KNA BN/81/41, Memorandum by the Minister for Lands and Settlement, “The Final Paper of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on the Squatter Problem,” 15th June, 1966.

⁵⁴ KNA BN/85/16, From S.D. Gathiuni for Permanent Secretary to the Permanent Secretary, Office of the President, “Land for Squatters or Landless People,” 11th March, 1970.

⁵⁵ KNA BN/85/15, From Director of Settlement, “Land Purchase Programme and Turbo Afforestation Scheme,” 2nd February 1966.

Coast be chosen, in preference to hundreds of thousands of farmers throughout the country who are scarcely any better off, to receive insufficient Government assistance..? In fact, there is every reason to believe that a much larger contribution to national income, output and employment could be obtained by investing the same funds with a few Coast farmers...plus others like them in the rest of the country...⁵⁶

The Ministry's opinion on squatters and equity was shaped largely by the financial restrictions of the Kenyan state, and the ministerial opinion on squatters paralleled that of many government officials and citizens. Despite efforts to de-stigmatize squatters, many perceived squatters as lazy and idle and personally responsible for their dire situation. At the same time, the Ministry demonstrated a concern about broader inequalities in Kenya that a squatter policy would not address. Kenya's limited financial resources further complicated the already impossible question of trying to figure out how to "develop" the country – a contested word and concept – and how to find land for the unmanageably large landless and land poor class.

Kenya's financial woes were coupled with a lack of available land for settlement. In June 1966, the Kenyan Cabinet noted that, "The squatter operation is at the moment confronted with the problems of lack of finances consequent to which is lack of appropriate land for settlement. Despite the Cabinet's definite directive for funds to be made available to Special Commissioner, Squatters, for the purchase of abandoned and mismanaged farms for the settlement of squatters...the Treasury have so far not been willing to release the funds."⁵⁷ In the case of the contestation over the land at Turbo, the

⁵⁶ KNA BN/97/3, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, "Comments on Ministry of Lands and Settlement's Paper on Squatters," 1966.

⁵⁷ KNA BN/97/4, Memorandum by the Minister for Lands and Settlement, "Cabinet: The Final Paper of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on the Squatter Problem," 15th June, 1966.

Ministry of Lands and Settlement, in fact, could not find an alternative site for squatters living on Area “B,” which was originally planned for settlement.

The general land shortage in combination with government policy on selecting settlers made it almost hopeless to try to resettle Turbo squatters elsewhere. As time had passed and the land remained unused by forestry, more and more squatters moved onto the land. It was not viable for the government to attempt to identify the “real” squatters, and even then, the policy on land settlement required that settlement select former laborers from the region first. Thus, the Turbo squatters could never be prioritized in a different area.

The Ministry of Lands and Settlement attempted, without much success, to get around this stipulation, investigating, for example, the possibility of resettling the Turbo squatters by co-opting part of the Nandi Forest Reserve to create land for settlement. Permanent Secretary Shiyukah of the Ministry of Lands and Settlement wrote to the Clerk of the Sirikwa County Council in October 1966 requesting the council’s agreement to provide land from the Nandi forest for the settlement of 550 squatter families from Turbo Area B. He wrote, “This Ministry has explored every avenue to find land for these squatters, but it is now apparent that any farms that we might buy up for the Area B squatters would be already occupied by other squatters, largely ex-labourers on the farms, and as it is the Government’s policy to give priority for settlement to ex-legal labour, there would be little or no land left for the Nandi on any farms we might buy.” Shiyukah did not come to this decision lightly and noted his own reluctance to recommend a reduction in forest area. He believed that it was necessary to find land for the Turbo Area B squatters, otherwise “it will not be possible to go ahead with the wood-pulp scheme,

which would be a great loss to Sirikwa County and to the economy of the whole of Kenya.”⁵⁸ The combination of problems with planning Turbo Afforestation, squatters, unemployment, and the financing forced government officers to make difficult decisions about which development programs to prioritize.

The World Bank Loan funding Turbo Afforestation, which began in 1968, required additionally that the forest area providing the raw materials for the paper factory lay within a 25 mile radius of the site.⁵⁹ Despite these stipulations, Kenyatta gave in to pressure from Nandi squatters and politicians to make a settlement scheme in Turbo. Kenyatta promised Nandi settlers in 1968 that the Turbo Area B land would be used for settlement and not for forest, changing the land use plan for the third time in a matter of five years. In March 1968, Kenyatta instructed the Ministry of Settlement to carry out a crash settlement program in Turbo to be completed by the end of April 1968.⁶⁰ And, both settlement and forestry had to scramble to carry out their respective programs. The crash scheme encompassed 20,572 acres, subdivided into 734 plots of an average of 27 acres per plot. 664 of the total plots had been settled by the end of April, 1969.⁶¹ This crash settlement scheme and Kenyatta’s broader promise to settle the landless, did not, however, make the Turbo squatter problem disappear. So many new squatters had already moved in to the area by the time settlement began that it was difficult to discern the “real” squatters from those who had arrived later, and there were many more squatters than plots available.

⁵⁸ KNA DX/21/10/8, P. Shiyukah, PS Ministry of Lands and Settlement to the Clerk to the Council, Sirikwa County Council, “Squatters on Turbo Area B,” 31st October, 1966.

⁵⁹ KNA BN/85/14, From J.S. Spears, Conservator of Forests to PS, Ministry of Lands and Settlement, 3rd February, 1965.

⁶⁰ KNA BN/85/16, From JK arap Koitie to The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Natural Resources, “Turbo Afforestation Scheme and the Broderick Falls Pulp and Paper Project,” 14th March 1969.

⁶¹ KNA BN/85/16, From Angaine to Kenyatta, 22nd April, 1969.

The government often addressed the squatter issue through these patchwork efforts, but it also created broader policy to try to solve the squatter problem. By July 1969, the government had made clear its recognition of squatting as a national crisis not only through the appointment of the Special Commissioner for Squatters, but also by explicitly mentioning the importance of the creation of settlement schemes for squatters in the 1970-74 Development Plan.⁶² These broader changes and Kenyatta's acquiescence seemed to have little positive effect in Turbo, since by that point, squatters in the area numbered about 1,000 families.⁶³ Turbo was characteristic of a bigger political picture, in which the government was happy to make superficial modifications to policy to aid the poor, but unwilling to make deeper policy adjustments which would lead to real change.

Squatters represented a major political problem everywhere they resided. In Turbo, especially, squatting created a political crisis, because World Bank funding depended on reforesting that specific area, and because the government had planned for the pulp and paper factory to be one of the biggest national development programs. The Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Natural Resources J.H.O. Omino wrote in 1973, "We are soon coming to the end of our first World Bank Forestry Project Loan and are preparing details for the second phase. In the absence of land for sustained afforestation our plans in this direction will obviously come up against stiff opposition. The up-shot of all these obstacles is that Webuye Pulp and Paper Mill, the biggest single project ever undertaken in this country, will be frustrated into inevitable collapse."⁶⁴ The program

⁶² KNA BN/85/16, From S.D. Gathiuni for Permanent Secretary to the Permanent Secretary, Office of the President, "Land for Squatters or Landless People," 11th March, 1970.

⁶³ KNA BN/85/16, From Z.B. Shimechero, Special Commissioner, Squatters to The Minister of Lands and Settlement, "Re: Turbo – Kudler's Farm," 29th July, 1969.

⁶⁴ KNA BA/2/38, From JHO Omino, PS to the Minister, "Your folio (107) refers," 24th August, 1973.

relied heavily on the World Bank funding. From 1970-75, a World Bank loan funded 65 percent of the project cost of £454,600.⁶⁵ Failure to meet World Bank stipulations on land for reforestation, would mean to lose the loan, and in consequence, to cripple the entire project and industry.

As the Ministry of Natural Resources sought new spaces for forest, they found the same squatter problems in every region. The air of resignation after these repeated defeats is manifest in a letter from the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Natural Resources in May of 1970:

We had hoped that up to 60,000 acres would be available, out of which some 55,000 would be plantable. By losing 22,000 acres [to settlement] the land available has now been reduced to some 25,000 acres. We were asked to find alternative suitable land to be bought for the scheme, but each time we have met with difficulties. We lost two farms to squatters last year (1969) plus the National Farm which had been leased to ADC. The local people simply moved into the farms and refused to leave. The National Farm was invaded by armed men and we were forced out.

Now we are at the point of being confronted at another farm i.e. Cooper's Farm, L.R. No. 11013 which we bought recently. People have moved in illegally and started ploughing the land. The Provincial Commissioner, Rift Valley Province, was requested to remove the men out and he has ordered the DC Eldoret to take action. Court action has been initiated, but already representations are being made. Allegations of mistreating *wananchi* are being made. If Cooper's farm is lost to the scheme then we might abandon the whole idea of the pulp mill. The World Bank is financing the Turbo Afforestation Scheme for the next 6 years, and we plan to plant some 3,000 acres per year, but there seems to be calculated resistance to what we are trying to do.⁶⁶

Squatters resisted afforestation everywhere, and in doing so they demonstrated their political power. In the case of Turbo Afforestation, squatter resistance also illustrated the divided priorities of a government trying to promote industry and small-scale farming

⁶⁵ KNA BA/626, From TAM Gardner, Project Manager, World Bank Forestry Project, Eldoret, to The Chief Statistician, Agriculture Section, "Turbo Afforestation Scheme," 2nd April, 1971.

⁶⁶ KNA BA/6/26, From PS, Ministry of Natural Resources, "Turbo Afforestation Scheme and Broderick Falls Paper Project," 14th May, 1970.

simultaneously. That the squatters had so much success contesting the forest – even with its World Bank funding – shows this government discord, along with squatter strength.

By April 1971, the World Bank Forestry Project Manager noted that only 15,230 hectares of the required 30,300 hectares had been purchased.⁶⁷ He added, “The Ministry of Natural Resources is currently negotiating for the acquisition of extra land but with very heavy pressures from other interests it is anticipated that great difficulty will be found in achieving the target.”⁶⁸ The agreement with the World Bank stipulated that 75,000 acres (or, 30,300 hectares) be made available for afforestation. There was even concern that the £1 million World Bank loan would fall through if the Kenyan government failed to provide alternative land.⁶⁹ According to the agreement, a total of 23,000 acres had to be planted by 1975, 18,000 of which were supposed to come from the Turbo area.⁷⁰ By the end of 1973, the Commissioner of Lands noted the difficulty of acquiring land for afforestation without using the government’s powers of compulsory purchase, since many of the farms they planned to buy had already been sold privately.⁷¹ In 1975, when the Ministry of Natural Resources was negotiating a new loan with the World Bank, the same problems of inadequate land availabilities and squatting continued to plague the project. Permanent Secretary (PS) Omino wrote to N.S. Kungo, the PS to the Ministry of Lands and Settlement on May 31, 1975:

⁶⁷ A hectare is equal to 10,000 square meters, or 2.47 acres.

⁶⁸ KNA BA/626, From TAM Gardner, Project Manager, World Bank Forestry Project, Eldoret, to The Chief Statistician, Agriculture Section, “Turbo Afforestation Scheme,” 2nd April, 1971.

⁶⁹ KNA BN/85/16, From Ministry of Natural Resources, “Notes on the Pulp and Paper Mill and Pulpwood Afforestation Project,” 1970.

⁷⁰ KNA BA/6/29, “Minutes of the 2nd Meeting held in the Conference Room of the EATEC Eldoret,” 11th November, 1970.

⁷¹ KNA BN/85/16 From DH Kydd, for Commissioner of Lands to The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Lands and Settlement, “Land Valuation – Turbo Pulpwood Afforestation Scheme,” 1st December, 1973.

...I am in the process of negotiating a new loan. I want to be in a position to inform the Bank that all the conditions of loan effectiveness of the original loan have been met. One of those conditions relates to the question of land for afforestation and it is obvious that if some of the land acquired for this purpose has squatters, the project can be deemed unsuccessful. Concomitantly therefore, my chances of securing a second loan and a much bigger one, if I may add, are remote.⁷²

Squatter resistance in Turbo put future World Bank loans – integral to the creation of a paper industry – at major risk.

Simultaneous to the challenges of finding land for reforestation and settlement, removing squatters, negotiating management agreements for the dual agricultural-forest project, and approaching the World Bank and the UK government for loans, the Kenyan government was also seeking a financial partnership with a private firm to manage the paper mill. After numerous delays and ambivalent investors, the Kenyan government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Orient Paper Mills in 1966, an Indian company associated with the Birla Group, to carry out the pulp and paper project with an output of approximately 50,000 tons per annum. The Birla Group formed the subsidiary company Pan-African Paper Mills to run the Webuye factory. According to the agreement, the Birla Brothers would take 80 percent of the equity directly or indirectly and would arrange for all loan finance required, while the Kenyan government was responsible for 20 percent of the equity capital to be invested by one of its financial agencies. The Kenyan government also agreed to create policy to reserve the Kenya market for the factory's output and to restrict imports.⁷³

⁷² KNA BN/85/16, From J.O. Omino, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Natural Resources to Mr. N.S. Kungo, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Lands and Settlement, "Turbo Afforestation Scheme," 31st May, 1975.

⁷³ KNA AE/22/142, From Kibaki, Minister for Commerce and Industry, to Birla Brothers, 30th August, 1966.

Despite signing a Memorandum of Understanding, the Birla Brothers soon tried to change the conditions of the agreement. In the end, nine financial institutions contributed to both equity and loan funds for the project, including: the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank Group, the African Development Bank, the East African Development Bank and the Development Finance Company of Kenya. National and Grindlays Finance and Development Corporation, Barclays Bank DCO and its subsidiary, Barclays Overseas Development Corporation Ltd., the First National City Bank of New York and the Arab African Bank participated in the IFC commitment. Local contribution represented about 10 percent of the financing.⁷⁴

Construction of the factory also met with delays, with the government purchasing the site over two years before building began.⁷⁵ Once the mill finally began producing paper, the Department of Forests and the Treasury disagreed over whether or not expansion was wise. Forest felt they could not guarantee the wood volumes necessary, but the Treasury and Pan African Paper Mills argued that an expansion would be more profitable.⁷⁶ The World Bank and IFC discussed the possibility of funding expansion of the reforestation program and a further commitment to Pan African Paper Mills in 1980.⁷⁷

The various delays – on account of government missteps in securing private investors, continued debates over the capacity of the mill, and government inability to

⁷⁴ KNA TR/13/2, "First Pulp and Paper Mill in East Africa," *East African Standard*, July 1970.

⁷⁵ KNA KY/13/2, From Paul Boit, PC Western, to the PS, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, "Pulp and Paper Factory at Broderick Falls," 6th August, 1971.

⁷⁶ KNA BA/2/29, From J.Y. Wawiye, for Chief Conservator of Forests to the PS, Ministry of Natural Resources, "Panafican Paper Mills – Availability of Wood for Planned Expansion," 20th June, 1978.

⁷⁷ KNA BA/2/29, From Bengt G. Sandberg, Division Chief, Country Programs I Eastern Africa Region, World Bank, to Mr. J.G. Shamalla, PS, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, "Future Investment by the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation in Kenya's Forestry and Forestry Industries Program," February 25, 1980.

establish nurseries or to find a new location for forest when settlement took over the land – led to more business competition. Tanzania and Uganda – both anxious to start their own industries – began planning their own paper mills, and Lonhro Corporation built a domestic plant in Thika to produce 18 tons of newsprint per day using imported pulp, all while Kenya mishandled the early planning of its own paper mill.⁷⁸ Uganda intended to complete a paper plant in late 1968 or early 1969, and Tanzania was considering manufacturing pulp and paper from sisal.⁷⁹ Price competition from foreign sources outside Africa also remained a concern, as there was significant surplus in many of the major producing countries. This resulted in considerable price fluctuations and “periodic dumping of large consignments of pulp and paper products in East Africa at marginal costs of production, or even below.”⁸⁰ The Kenyan government estimated that in order to achieve their price structure a minimum import tariff of 40 percent on pulp and paper products would be necessary to prevent competition from these cheap foreign sources.⁸¹ The high interest on borrowed capital also made it necessary to raise the domestic price to balance the budget.⁸² With all these financial impediments, the Birla Brothers estimated that the project would only begin making profits in the fourth year of production.

World-wide inflation in the 1970s added further uncertainty to what was already a risky venture, as it became more difficult to project future pulp and paper prices. Between 1970 and 1974, for example, the cost of growing trees skyrocketed, increasing by 25

⁷⁸ KNA AE/22/145, From O.S. Knowles to Mr. Kibe, “Pulp and Paper Project,” 12th August, 1968.

⁷⁹ KNA AE/22/146, Memorandum by Kenya, “Draft: East African Industrial Promotion Advisory Committee Tariff Protection Pulp & Paper Industries,” 1968.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² KNA AE/22/146, From S.N. Bhandari, Birla Brothers, to the PS, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, “Sale: Pulp & Paper Project Broderick Falls Protection Tariff,” 28th August, 1968.

percent.⁸³ The mishaps which surrounded all aspects of Turbo Afforestation and the establishment of a pulp and paper industry in Kenya, then, were not without their implications, especially as the delays led to increased competition and rising input prices due to global inflation. At the same time, Kenya had made a gigantic investment in the creation of forest and a paper industry. In 1968, the National Forests contributed £6 million to the Gross Domestic Product, and the construction of the Panafrican Paper Mills (E.A.) Limited at Webuye was estimated to cost some 17 million shillings.⁸⁴ During the 1970-74 development plan period, the Kenyan government planned to spend about 4.54 percent of its annual budget on forestry, or 5,931 million shillings for the five years period.

Regardless of all this investment and financial backing, the success of the Turbo Afforestation scheme and the creation of a Kenyan paper industry would hinge more on the way Kenyan squatters perceived these programs – as well as broader issues connected to inequality and development – than on the government’s ability to execute their plans.

In 1973, a decade after planning for the establishment of a Kenyan paper industry began, the Minister for Natural Resources wrote, “...I fear that the entire future of the paper mill project, the biggest single project in Kenya, is in possible jeopardy if more land is not acquired in time.”⁸⁵ Numerous setbacks had slowed the progress of the project, but why, if Turbo Afforestation was such an important project with World Bank

⁸³ KNA BA/2/27, From JHO Omino, PS to the PS, Ministry of Finance and Planning, PS, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Executive Director, ICDC, “Pan African Paper Mills (E.A.) Ltd. – Royalty Payment,” 17th June, 1974.

⁸⁴ KNA VF/4/12, FM Kamau, Project Manager and JEM Kiilu, Assistant Project Manager, “World Bank Forestry Loan Project Soft Wood Plantations Cost Analysis 1969 to 1970 and 1972 to 1973,” January, 1974.

⁸⁵ KNA BA/2/38, From William O. Omamo Minister for Natural Resources to Hon. T.A. Towett, MP, “L.R. No. 6657 & 10832 – Kitale,” 6th September, 1973.

financing and years of planning, did its implementation meet with such a lack of success? The early failures of Turbo Afforestation, and the subsequent failures to establish a pulp and paper industry at Webuye grew out of unresolved questions about the definition of development in early post-independence Kenya, and how the government attempted to define the national interest. These questions created not only inter-ministerial fighting, but head to head conflict between squatters (often supported by local politicians) and local forestry officers on the ground.

The debate about whether land at Turbo would be better utilized as forest or settlement, was – in short – a debate about the economic path of Kenya, whether it was more important to develop industries and increase economic growth, or whether the new Kenyan state would be a more redistributive, socialist state, which guaranteed a minimum level of economic security to each citizen. Kenya became independent emphasizing land resettlement through the transfer of former European settler farms to African smallholders. The Kenyan government could not, however, create a pulp and paper industry without prioritizing the establishment of forests. The creation of these forests not only meant less settlement generally, but the specific land the state wanted to reforest had been physically planned and purchased for settlement. Despite the transfer of over a million acres through government programs during the final years of colonial rule and the early years of independence, the promises of accessing land after independence remained unrealized for a large portion of the population. The Kenyan government, on the whole, did not consider the settlement of squatters as a measure which would economically benefit the country, and thus, argued that the establishment of a pulp and paper industry

in Kenya would be of greater long term benefit to the new nation than settling squatters on small plots of land.

Most government bureaucrats and politicians saw the benefits of squatter settlement, and its necessity for the development of the new country. Officials tended to agree that “high density” settlement would lessen the tensions spawned by the presence of an enormous population of squatters. Some officials, in contrast with squatter skeptics, did believe that squatters could contribute to agricultural production and development in the country. Turbo afforestation brought these polarized opinions to a head. Generally, the Ministry of Lands and Settlement supported the settlement of squatters, while the Ministry of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Tourism and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry advocated the establishment of the forest and the paper industry.

These latter ministries justified the supplanting of a settlement scheme by using projections about employment and economic growth. A Treasury memorandum on the scheme compared job creation between settlement and industry, noting that the government had come to the conclusion that the “national interest would be served better by establishing forestry plantations in the area... In terms of employment alone 1,000 men would be employed permanently on the forestry operations with an additional 4,000 men employed as seasonal labour. This compares with 1,550 families (25 acres per settler) who would be provided for on the planned settlement schemes...”⁸⁶ The Government estimated that the establishment of the mill would create up to an additional

⁸⁶ KNA BN/85/14, Kenya Government, “Memorandum to H.M. Government on the Turbo Afforestation Scheme in Relation to the Expanded Settlement Scheme (Draft),” 27th October, 1965.

15,000 jobs in forestry, logging, transport, and factory operations, and industries connected to pulp and paper.⁸⁷

Even though land remained the most contentious and pressing political issue, the Kenyan government realized the urgency of addressing the related unemployment crisis as well. With limited resources, the Kenyan state had to make tough choices about how to use money for development programs. To make these decisions, government officials participated in a broader debate about the definition of Kenya's "national interest." In almost every memorandum and piece of correspondence on the subject of Turbo Afforestation, bureaucrats used the terms "national importance" or "national interest." Much of this rhetoric assumed that the national interest equaled economic growth. The economic policy of the newly independent Kenyan state was founded upon the belief that squatter settlement would not contribute to economic growth. It was for this reason that the Ministry of Settlement originally agreed to give up the land they had purchased in Turbo to forestry.

The proponents of afforestation characterized the decision to prioritize industry over settlement as a more sophisticated approach to development, which would lead to progress for the *entire* country, as opposed to a small number of settlers. In a 1966 meeting with Members of Parliament and Senators of Turbo, the Minister for Natural Resources, Wildlife and Tourism, S.O. Ayodo, said, "Although the Government of the past might have promised that after the Europeans' departure, the land in question would be handed back to the Nandi, the present Government is thinking of developing the area in a way that will benefit the Nation as a whole, and the local people with

⁸⁷ KNA BN/85/15, From the Kenyan Treasury, "Memorandum to H.M. Government on the Turbo Afforestation Scheme (Second Revision, June 1966)."

employment...”⁸⁸ This emphasis signified a fundamental alteration of policy, and one which downplayed the importance of settlement and agricultural development in favor of industry and job creation. Though the Kenyan government never expected smallholders to make a large contribution to economic growth, they believed that agriculture played an integral part in Kenya’s economy.

Despite this emphasis on the “national importance” of the paper factory, there was a regional logic behind it as well. A Kenyan memorandum illustrated this contradiction, jumping quickly from a justification of national importance to one which emphasized its regional significance. “The successful development of this project is a matter of great economic and political importance to Kenya,” the memorandum began. “Its importance arises from the fact that it is the only major industrial project which can in the foreseeable future be developed in the Western Province of Kenya, which is an area of high unemployment.”⁸⁹ The Rift Valley, on the other hand, was home to some of the most fertile land in the country, and also, to nascent industries, mostly in the towns of Nakuru and Eldoret.⁹⁰ This emphasis on the need to develop Western Province specifically belied the broader rhetoric about the “national importance” of Turbo Afforestation and the Webuye Paper Mill. Further, feelings of regional competition and inequality played a large part in catalyzing the resistance of Nandi squatters.

The politicians and government officials advocating on the squatters’ behalf disputed the economic reasoning of the government officials supporting and planning the

⁸⁸ KNA BN/85/15, Kiambithu, Ministry of Lands and Settlement, “Turbo Project Afforestation Scheme: Notes on a Meeting,” 11th February, 1966.

⁸⁹ KNA AE/22/146, Memorandum by Kenya, “Draft: East African Industrial Promotion Advisory Committee Tariff Protection Pulp & Paper Industries.”

⁹⁰ Eldoret and Nakuru both had textile and agricultural processing industries.

program. Powerful politicians, like Daniel arap Moi, Achieng Oneko, William Morogo Saina, and Burudi Nabwera⁹¹ believed that settlement might be of more immediate economic benefit to the country, “or more important, in terms of African Socialism, as seen by the settler than the employment creation of a National Programme.”⁹² African Socialism became an often deployed and highly disputed idea in April 1965, when the government published a Parliament-approved pamphlet, called “African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya.” The document used Africa’s “communal traditions” to lay out government ideas on political democracy, mutual social responsibility, resource use, and the equitable distribution of wealth and income.⁹³ On the question of land, the paper emphasized Africanization of land ownership through settlement, and that land ownership would not be concentrated in a few hands.⁹⁴ African Socialism represented more of a guiding document than a policy, and politicians took advantage of its ambiguity to make calls for changes ranging from the institution of a system of cooperative farming, to an increase of government shares in the major companies and businesses, to a defense of quick settler loan repayments.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Oneko was one of six freedom fighters arrested in Kapenguria in 1952 by the British colonial government for alleged involvement in Mau Mau. Oneko won the Nakuru Town Constituency seat in the first parliamentary elections and Kenyatta appointed him Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Tourism. He quit the government in 1966 to join the socialist Kenya People’s Union and was arrested by Kenyatta in 1969. William Morogo arap Saina was a Nandi politician elected MP for the Eldoret North constituency in 1969. Burudi Nabwera was defeated in the 1963 independence elections in Western Region. Soon after, he was nominated as Ambassador to the United States and U.N. Representative. He became a Member of Parliament in the 1970s.

⁹² KNA BN/85/14, From J.W. Maina, Director of Settlement to the Permanent Secretary, 1965.

⁹³ KNA ACW/1/425, From D.M. Mbela, PS Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, to PS, the Treasury, “African Socialism: Comments on Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965,” 21st March, 1978.

⁹⁴ KNA BN/81/176, “Review of Kenya’s Five Year Progress and Achievement in Land Tenure and Administration,” 2nd July 1968.

⁹⁵ KNA BN/97/2, “Mr. G.G. Kariuki, Notice of Motion tabled on 26 November, 1963,” “Motion – (Mr. Ngala-Abok) on 12.11.65 (Minister for Economic Planning and Development),” “Motion No. 372 (Mr. Ngala),” 15.10.65.

Even with African Socialism's emphasis on the equitable distribution of land, proponents of the settlement of Turbo squatters still needed to economically justify their position. They often equivocated on the economic benefits, and whether settlement was tantamount to development. Policymakers assumed that squatters possessed little agricultural knowledge and that farming small plots of land was not economical. James Gichuru, the Minister of Finance, evidenced this viewpoint during a meeting at the British Ministry of Overseas Development. He noted that "the Kenya Government accepted the Mission's view that the buying out of European farms in itself was not real development. However, he believed...some kind of land settlement programme should be continued."⁹⁶ The otherwise numbers-oriented policymakers like Gichuru commonly defended settlement in this way, without economic substantiation. There was a consensus that a "crowd of landless / frustrated persons"⁹⁷ threatened security and development. The settlement of squatters played an essential role in development because ignoring squatters would lead to unrest, which would impede progress. For many policymakers, the settlement of squatters and the land poor only constituted development as an antidote to a threat to development.

Though he was a proponent of "uneconomical" settlement in the mid-1960s, Gichuru supported the Turbo Afforestation scheme rather than additional settlement. Just as squatter supporters were not anti-industry, the advocates of Turbo Afforestation and the paper industry did not represent anti-squatter interests. Rather, the interests of squatters and industry clashed, since there was not enough well-located, fertile land in

⁹⁶ KNA BN/85/14, "Record of Meeting Held at the Ministry of Overseas Development at 3 pm on Monday, 26th July, 1965, to discuss the Interim Stamp Report: 1st Meeting."

⁹⁷ KNA BN/85/16, From PC RVP, S. Nyachae to The Permanent Secretary, Office of the President, "Turbo Settlement Scheme," 28th April, 1969.

Kenya for forestry and farming. Squatter advocates not only disputed the economic reasoning behind the government's decision to prioritize forestry over settlement, but some felt the government had a "moral obligation" to find new land for those promised settlement.⁹⁸ The equivocations and contradictions implicit in the rhetoric of both supporters and detractors of afforestation and the Webuye factory were made even clearer through their indecisive actions.

African Socialism emphasized the equitable distribution of resources, particularly land. The vagueness of the document, and the broadly capitalist-oriented Kenyan policy, reveal both a state divided in its economic vision and lacking the political will to create material change. Similar to the ways in which the government handled squatters, African Socialism represented more of a performance more than a policy, and the state never made any attempts to really redistribute its wealth. Ultimately, the state was only willing to make superficial pronouncements about equality to create the image of economic justice. That the state had to create documents such as African Socialism, and that Turbo Afforestation was so hotly debated, demonstrates that this path was not always a foregone conclusion. The state did make some concessions to marginalized groups, and state formation in the early postcolony was an extended exercise.

The Turbo Afforestation narrative from the side of the government reveals not only state miscalculations in executing early development programs, but also, a national interest ardently debated. Squatters also contested this program on their own terms, revealing a further fragmented state and exposing the vulnerability of the power of a divided state.

⁹⁸ KNA BN/85/16, From PC RVP, S. Nyachae to The Permanent Secretary, Office of the President, "Turbo Settlement Scheme," 28th April, 1969.

9 ‘Are You Planting Trees or Are You Planting People?’: Squatter Resistance, International Development, and Postcolonial State-Making (Part II)

At independence, the Kenyan government planned a paper factory as “the biggest single project ever undertaken,” meant to generate economic growth and employment for the new nation.¹ The government also planned a reforestation project to supply the factory with raw materials. The paper factory and the attendant forestry program symbolized the promises of independence with their plans for economic growth and employment creation, and their World Bank funding. But, by 1966, the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development described Turbo Afforestation as a “political liability,” and the lack of progress of the few years before as “depressing.”² Three years later the progress was no less depressing. In 1969, a group of Nandi farmers living in the reforestation area took up “spears and arrows” to contest the planting of trees.³

In July 1969, a group of Nandi squatters published a memorandum declaring their grievances about broken promises for land. The memorandum explicitly alleged government wrongdoing, and argued that planting trees instead of people had “hurt the Nandi people terrible because they had been promised settlement...”⁴ The squatters also recounted their direct and aggressive confrontation with the government in their memorandum, describing how “the Nandi people turned out in the morning with spears

¹ KNA BA/2/38, From JHO Omino, PS to the Minister, “Your folio (107) refers,” 24th August, 1973.

² KNA AE/22/142, “Pulp and Paper Project,” W. Wamalwa, PS, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, 9th June, 1966.

³ KNA BN/85/16, “Memorandum from Nandi Squatters (LR 6438/2 Turbo, National Farm),” 17th July, 1969.

⁴ Ibid.

arrows etc. to resist the planting of trees and protest for settlement.”⁵ The squatter memorandum demonstrates the galvanizing effects of Nandi anger after years of broken promises. Sound only in theory, the Turbo Afforestation project catalyzed major debates, as well as widespread contestation and disagreement among formal and informal state actors, about the direction of the country. These debates remained long unresolved, and the implementation of the program met with delays and failures.

Through Turbo Afforestation, many groups of squatters engaged directly in a broader debate about inequality and the definition of development, but the forestry program also represented a concrete assault on their livelihoods and their homes. Squatters understood the debate over the Turbo Afforestation, at its simplest, as a question of whether trees or people were more important. They uprooted the trees, making it impossible to create government forests, and they sent multiple delegations to speak to President Kenyatta, and to ask him, “are you planting trees or are you planting people?”⁶ Their rhetoric was both literal and metaphorical and must be understood in the context of early independence. These farmers believed strongly that they – not trees – were supposed to be the seeds of the new nation, which would grow, reproduce, and bring prosperity.

The debates surrounding Turbo Afforestation represent the crux of state formation and occurred in the specific setting of a decolonizing Kenya. Turbo Afforestation is a story of a country trying both to establish itself within the world and the East African region, and trying to create a relationship with its citizens. Inherited policy challenges,

⁵ KNA BN/85/16, “Memorandum from Nandi Squatters (LR 6438/2 Turbo, National Farm),” 17th July, 1969.

⁶ Interview with Michael Keter, Sugoi, January 14, 2013.

especially those connected to squatters and unemployment, coupled with limited financial capacity, forced the Kenyan state to make difficult decisions about the national interest and the future direction of the country (see Chapter 8). There was never a consensus on these questions, as a variety of state and non-state actors negotiated Kenya's path. The success of Nandi squatter resistance demonstrates the vulnerability of a fragmented state and a president stretched thin by conflicting demands. In this setting, the squatters confidently refused to move, actively opposed the implementation of a national program, and made claims to state resources.

The Turbo Afforestation program revealed tensions amongst government bureaucrats, but it also revealed how rural farmers engaged with the state and made claims just after independence. The combination of resentment of the injustice and a lack of viable economic alternatives, tacked on to the already highly emotional and contested issue of land, meant that squatters were willing to take a risk and fight their government. Their successes and their resolve reveal an extraordinary portrait of the early postcolony. This portrait is representative for its illustration of common grievances of the poor. But it is exceptional for the extended direct confrontation with the government, and for the triumph of rural farmers, ultimately leading to a reversal of national development policy. Throughout the new nation-state, Kenyans made claims for the land that they had imagined would accompany independence. Experiences and access to land varied dramatically in reality. The Nandi sense of injustice was common, but their response to this injustice was exceptional and demonstrates an aggressive, direct challenge to the early postcolonial state.

In postcolonial Kenya, citizens resisted and worked to shape development programs when they interacted with representatives of the state and development institutions. An understanding of the obligations of the state and the rights of citizens began to emerge and stabilize through these complicated and entangled relationships and the successes and failures of the Kenyan state and Kenyan citizens.

This chapter examines the planning and implementation of the Turbo Afforestation program, focusing in particular on the fifteen years after independence (1963-1978) when the turmoil surrounding the program reached its zenith. Through an examination of the tensions of this project, the chapter shows that squatters contested Turbo Afforestation on different terms than the national level politicians and policymakers. Rural farmers often spoke about the injustice of the Turbo forestry program in the parochial terms of local land politics. In vocalizing their immediate concerns, the farmers contributed to debates on the much larger and abstract questions of inequality and the meaning of development in early post-independence Kenya. Land distribution and use, even in local settings, raised these questions more than any other issue. This chapter, again, redirects a scholarly debate about whether “the excluded” retreat to spaces outside the state or utilize state discourses, and emphasizes instead how those excluded from state resources engage with each other, with those in power, and with formal state institutions.⁷ Those most explicitly marginalized by the state actively negotiated the path of new nations on their own terms.

This chapter also demonstrates the complexity of postcolonial power. The government’s quick concessions to a group of marginalized citizens revealed the illusion

⁷ Giblin, *A History of the Excluded*; Lal, “Militants, Mothers, and the National Family.”

of state power and the state's fragmentation in the early years of independence. This fragmentation grew out of disagreements about how to address growing inequality. These divisions created a paradoxical dynamic in which an insecure state attempted to consolidate its power but also remained vulnerable to peripheral challenges. This form of power developed in a decolonizing setting in which a clear national identity and a clear national direction had yet to fully form. The direction of the state was never fully agreed upon – either among formal government actors, international institutions, or the rural poor. Despite this contestation within the state, scholars have too often written about states as monolithic entities, particularly in discussions of state power. Older analyses of postcolonial Kenya ignore the complexities of these debates by focusing on development plans and policies rather than the debates engendered by development.⁸ Turbo Afforestation, and the complex power relationships it exposes, allows for a deconstruction of a state which often looms too large and comes off as far too homogeneous. The case of Turbo also provides a tangibility to a postcolonial African state – composed of many dissonant actors – which has been better theorized than constructed through historical evidence.⁹

Lastly, this chapter demonstrates the need for a more complicated periodization of the African postcolony, as the vastly different experiences of Kenyans shaped diverse ideas about the successes and failures of independence. There existed a multiplicity of conceptions about when historical transformations occurred in individual lives and communities, and about which years represented periods of prosperity and which were

⁸ See, for example: John Harbeson, *Nation-Building in Kenya*; Wasserman, *The Politics of Decolonization*.

⁹ Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*; Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*; and Bayart, *The State in Africa*.

periods of hardship. Those Kenyans settled by the government remembered the early years of independence very positively, while those who remained squatters felt disappointment almost immediately after independence. James Ferguson has both deconstructed telos-oriented assumptions of the improvements of development and called for an examination of how development ideas are contested on the ground in local settings.¹⁰ Despite this call for research, scholars have yet to provide an in depth historical understanding of how local challenges to development shaped a decolonizing and cold war setting (rather than, just how those settings shaped development). This local inflection on the global allows us to see broader historical trends in a new light, and with greater nuance.

This chapter relies on archival sources and oral interviews in Rift Valley and Western Provinces. In particular, this chapter uses interviews conducted in Tapsagoi and Sugoi villages in Uasin Gishu District, though it also uses interviews conducted with residents of neighboring villages physically unaffected by the afforestation program. The government originally planned Tapsagoi and Sugoi for their Turbo tree nursery program, but later converted them to settlement. The area lies on the western side of the Great Rift Valley close to the contemporary Kenya-Uganda border, and on the northwestern edge of what was once the exclusive European-owned White Highlands of colonial rule.

INEQUALITY IN INDEPENDENT KENYA

The previous chapter examined Turbo Afforestation from the perspective of government officials and the World Bank, who mostly participated in this debate by asking the broad question *what is Kenya's national interest?* Two main factions emerged,

¹⁰ Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity*; Ferguson, *Global Shadows*.

with one group arguing that it was in the new nation's interest to develop growth-oriented industry, while the other argued that the new nation should define itself as a more welfare-oriented, redistributive state.

The squatter problem and the settlement of the landless overshadowed debates about "the national interest" and the significance of African Socialism, however. Land had always been the most important political issue in Kenya, and with the coming of independence, many Kenyans aspired to get land. Five years after independence, and after the completion of a major resettlement program, landlessness remained a large and visible problem. Many Kenyans believed the government had not done enough to resolve landlessness, squatters, and the unequal distribution of land, and they felt these problems should continue to be the government's first priority.

P.K. Boit, Provincial Commissioner of Western Province, noted in 1970 that the government wanted to address the squatter problem and simultaneously promote industries, but:

Politically, settlement of squatters and allocation of land to the needy ones is given a higher priority. It is for this reason that the Ministry of Natural Resources has been loosing [sic] land that had been ear-marked for afforestation. So long as we have squatters therefore, the public just do not understand why certain portions of land should be afforested. Economically of course provision of employment has to rank fairly high as well in our priorities but the prevalent sensitivity on land will always make any proposals to expand plantations of forests to be viewed with indignation by the masses and the politicians.¹¹

Even if cabinet ministers and international development institutions believed ardently in the importance of industry, the will of the broader Kenyan public would not be swayed on this issue.

¹¹ KNA BN/85/16, From P.K. Boit, PC Western Province to The Permanent Secretary, Office of the President, "Land for Squatters or the Landless People," 18th March, 1970.

The Ministry of Natural Resources responded to Boit's above assessment with annoyance. "I wish to state here clearly that it is not the Ministry of Natural Resources that has been losing such land but the Government of Kenya and the people of Kenya as a whole. The sooner we regard ourselves as playing our little parts in the whole machinery rather than in our airtight compartments then the more real will our concept of independence be."¹² This was a new, ill-equipped and dysfunctional machinery, however, and state actors had to balance attention to individual parts of the machinery with attention to the machine as a whole.

The state was no monolith. Politicians, bureaucrats, and officials continually debated what exactly constituted the national interest, but also, were forced to negotiate between the complicated and conflicting needs of local, regional, national, and international spaces. The national government focused heavily on local issues – national politics was often little more than a sum of competing local interests – as both a means to creating a relationship with citizens disconnected from the national political scene in Nairobi, and as a means of meeting the minimal expectations of marginalized rural Kenyan communities.

The political imagination of the rural poor was often geographically narrower than the boundaries of the new nation-state, and parochial ideas about development were a product of the time period. In the years after independence, rural Kenyans had no reason to believe in sacrificing for a redistributive state after spending the majority of their lives under an extractive colonial state.

¹² KNA BN/85/16, From J.M. Opal to Permanent Secretary Office of the President, "Land for Squatters or Land for Landless People," 23rd March, 1970.

Informal state actors – such as squatters in Turbo – participated in these debates about how to prioritize government resources, but using different terms than the government. They did not conceptualize the question of forestry and industry versus squatter settlement as a question of the national interest, as a question of the whole machinery, or as a question of comparative levels of job creation. When squatters in Turbo refused to move and uprooted trees, they were making a claim on the government and asserting their individual rights to resources.

Turbo Afforestation became a way in which squatters talked about economic justice and wealth redistribution. Squatters questioned the wisdom of the Webuye Factory and Turbo Afforestation by debating the meaning of development, and by raising questions about regional competition for resources and the production of inequality in post-independence Kenya. Rural farmers did not think of Turbo Afforestation as a question of national interest in part due to the difference between their very personalized conceptions of development – being a good farmer and educating their children – and the government's ideas about development – usually analogous to the national (economic) interest. The nation was new enough that the state had yet to provide many services to the rural poor, and additionally, there was no consensus about the rights of citizens, the obligations of the state, or the meaning of development. There were hopes for greater equality after independence, but many rural farmers did not think of national industry in another region as development. This skepticism about the broader benefits of industry proved to be well-founded, since the Kenyan state did not commit to spreading wealth equitably.

Rural farmers contested Turbo afforestation on their own terms, and in response to their own experiences, but they also thought in broader terms about fairness and equality. They were fighting not only for land that would improve their lives, but for land that had been the symbol of the promises of independence, and which they vehemently believed the government owed them. Nandi squatters were not opposed to industry as a rule. The paper industry was sited outside their district and even their province, though, and they did not think of the Pan Paper Factory as development *for them*. A paper industry with a factory located in Western Province did not constitute development in their eyes, because it would not create employment for their community, and as a result, it would not make it easier for them to put food on the table or send their children to school.

Localized conceptions of development grew out of colonial experiences, but also out of the failures of the postcolonial state. The rural poor rarely remembered the state provision of social services, or the redistribution of wealth. Most rural Kenyans, consequently, did not have experiences where local interests forfeited to a national interest resulted in broader, visible benefits. Tiengik arap Sawe, a Tapsagoi settler, demonstrated this more delimited understanding of development, when he noted that people simply thought land was better than the Webuye paper factory.¹³ Kiptoo arap Maina, a Leseru settler, echoed these sentiments, “Something like Pan Paper in Webuye benefits those people in Webuye alone so how do I take it as a development if it’s not of direct benefit to me?”¹⁴ Chebagui Bwalei, another Leseru resident, said similarly, “I wasn’t interested [in Webuye]. I couldn’t even believe that it was development. I took it

¹³ Interview with Tiengik arap Sawe, Tapsagoi, January 12, 2013.

¹⁴ Interview with Kiptoo arap Maina, Leseru, November 23, 2012.

as none of my business.”¹⁵ The afforestation scheme did not adversely affect either Maina or Bwalei’s access to land in Leseru, 12 kilometers east of Turbo. In their skepticism of the creation of a Kenyan paper industry, though, they belonged to the majority. Most residents of the northwest Rift Valley questioned whether the Webuye factory represented development.

A minority of Rift Valley residents thought the paper industry in Western Province would contribute to development. The belief in industry as development, though, was uncommon amongst Rift Valley residents in the 1960s and 1970s, a time period in which many Kenyans scaled down their ideas about development and rights to more local settings. Phillip Metto conceded that the Webuye Pan Paper factory constituted development, but added that it only benefitted the Luhya community.¹⁶ Paul Sitiene explained that his views on development had changed over time. “During those days, I was thinking of that [the paper industry] as not directly linked to me. I thought it was just something that belonged to another person. But now, I have realized that it is very important and very useful to me.”¹⁷ Sitiene’s transformed understanding of development illustrates the links between the nascent state of early post-independence Kenya, yet to provide services to the population, and geographically-bounded conceptions of development. Local conceptions of development were as much a product of past experience in colonial Kenya as they were of early postcolonial Kenyan politics. They emerged both from a past which had taught rural farmers that states do not

¹⁵ Interview with Chebagui Bwalei, Leseru, November 23, 2012.

¹⁶ Interview with Phillip Metto, Leseru, January 15, 2013.

¹⁷ Interview with Paul Sitiene, Sosiani, November 21, 2012.

redistribute wealth or resources, along with a paucity of information about development projects in other regions and how these projects might improve the lives of all Kenyans.

The rural poor who lived through decolonization had believed that the promises of independence lay in access to land and resources, and the equitable distribution of the two. Landlessness, more than any other issue, engendered debates about postcolonial inequality. Mary Kitur, a squatter living adjacent to Sosiani settlement in Kapkiruk, Leseru, said, “As an independent country, I thought that every resident should be resettled and was supposed to be given enough resources by the government to be provided for equally.”¹⁸ Unmet expectations for equality led to disenchantment. Frederick Kemboi arap Tum Kiptulus said, “I was disappointed in the government, because the people who owned property were given more on top of what they had. But others were being overlooked. And, therefore, to me, freedom meant nothing.” The visible perpetuation and production of inequality shaped the way that many rural farmers thought about the meanings of *uhuru* [independence]. William Serem recalled, “*Uhuru* means to lead oneself, but eventually we came to learn that there were those people who owned the real meaning of *uhuru*. Even if we are all Africans, there are some people who are superior to others.”¹⁹ *Uhuru*'s hollowness had repercussions for the ways in which Kenyans engaged with the new state.

Squatters believed a lack of government commitment to citizens perpetuated widespread landlessness. This unwillingness to address inequality represented, for many, a lack of state dedication to ensuring the equal rights of citizens. Kitur remembered, “For anyone to be a true *mwananchi* [citizen], they should not be a squatter anywhere or

¹⁸ Interview with Mary Kitur, Leseru, November 19, 2012.

¹⁹ Interview with William Serem, Sosiani, November 28, 2012.

lacking behind in development.”²⁰ Sylvester Barngetung Sing’ari, another squatter living in Kapkiruk, said, “I had a feeling that independence could bring equality, because people with property had been overpowering the poor. Those who have nothing, those people who were left behind, those people who were squatters, who were poor right from the beginning. I thought independence meant equality for us all.”²¹ Land was flush with many deeper meanings for the rural poor. While government officials debated the national interest in the terms of “security” and “growth,” rural Kenyans often debated using the more abstract ideals of equality and the rights of citizens. They used the pervasiveness of landlessness as one way to gauge whether or not the promises of independence had materialized.

Squatters also understood their continued landlessness through the lens of regional inequality and ethnic competition. Localized assessments of development, in combination with an uneven distribution of inadequate services and resources, created a setting rife with feelings of regional competition. Many believed the creation of industry in Webuye only assisted in development for the Luhya in Western Province. Both Nandi and Luhya felt in addition that they were competing with Kikuyu for land, and that the Kikuyu benefitted disproportionately because of their dominance in government. Jairo Murungo Libapu, a Luhya settler in Lumakanda, recalled this feeling of ethnic favoritism. “I didn’t like how the government divided its resources. The leaders that were there, every leader was ruling to only benefit his or her people.”²² Simon Limo, a Nandi settler in Sosiani, echoed these feelings, “They say ‘these are squatters,’ and those who

²⁰ Interview with Mary Kitur, Leseru, November 19, 2012.

²¹ Interview with Sylvester Barngetung Sing’ari, Leseru, November 19, 2012.

²² Interview with Jairo Murungo Libapu, Lumakanda, November 3, 2012.

are in the government, they hear the cries, but those who are in the government, they bring theirs...So the squatters remain squatters.”²³ This longstanding competition for land in the northwest Rift Valley – between Kikuyu, Kalenjin, and Luhyas, and then later, between forest and settlement – created an atmosphere of anxiety and vulnerability which catalyzed contestation of any government attempts to take land. Feelings of vulnerability – along with a fervent belief in their rights to land – emboldened the rural poor to organize themselves.

Helen Chepkuto’s experience is illustrative of the ways in which landlessness shaped postcolonial disappointment and political engagement. Chepkuto, who began squatting on land in Kapkiruk after independence (and continues to do so up to the present), believed her situation was unfair. “I wasn’t happy that other people were given land. I was expecting to be given settlement...I was living in a *mzungu’s* [European’s] farm before, and later, someone from far – a Kikuyu – was given land and we were left out...Though we had no money, the government could have stood by us and given us a loan.” Chepkuto’s experience shaped her political participation and her understanding of postcolonial politics. “I remember during the first election I participated with other voters, thinking that whoever was elected will bring change. But eventually, the MPs brought their own people, and Kenyatta also brought his own people...I think the Kikuyu whose land I was living on was given land by Kenyatta. Kenyatta didn’t give us any land, he never assisted.”²⁴ Christopher Lelelilan, a Leseru resident, also thought that leaders favored their own ethnic groups. He believed Kenyatta only gave land to Kikuyus and that Moi gave land to his Tugens (a sub-group of the broader Kalenjin ethnicity of which

²³ Interview with Simon Limo, Leseru, November 27, 2012.

²⁴ Interview with Helen Chepkuto, Sosiani, November 30, 2012.

the Nandi are a part).²⁵ These feelings were born out of the anxieties of independence and experiences of inequality, both of which perpetuated long-held feelings of regional competition for resources, heightened localized ideas of development, and spurred on contestation of Turbo Afforestation.

The issues raised in the debate over Turbo Afforestation – land access, inequality, and ethnic competition in particular – emerged from deeper histories. The most heated political deliberations during decolonization revolved around the organization of the post-colonial government, since the government structure determined who controlled land. The Kenya African National Union party (KANU), primarily backed by Kikuyus and Luos, argued for a strong, national government. The Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) represented the so-called minority ethnic groups and advocated for *majimboism* – a complex federal-style government that allowed for regional autonomy, and vested power over land in district governments.²⁶ Though the final constitutional conference ahead of Kenyan independence called for *majimboism*, Kenyan elections placed Jomo Kenyatta and KANU overwhelmingly in power. By 1964, Kenyatta abolished the federal form of government, KADU dissolved, and Kenya became a de facto one party state.²⁷ Many Nandi, a sub-group of the Kalenjin and one of the “minority” ethnic groups, felt vulnerable after this change. They worried that they lacked representation in top

²⁵ Interview with Christopher Lelelilan, Leseru, November 26, 2012. It should be noted, however, that often settlers who received land, thought of that land as coming directly from Kenyatta and were much less likely to think of ethnic competition and regional inequality beginning so soon after independence.

²⁶ Anderson, “Yours in Struggle,” 547.

²⁷ Anderson, “Yours in Struggle,” 563.

government positions, and that as a result land resettlement in the Rift Valley would favor the Kikuyu.²⁸

Rural Kenyans were right to equate unequal land distribution with economic inequalities. Access to settlement often meant the difference between poverty, and improved standards of living. Almost every settler interviewed from the Lumakanda Settlement Scheme believed they were economically much better off than their relatives who remained in Vihiga district, the former Maragoli native reserve. Many recounted supporting their extended families by bringing them maize and milk. While Vihiga – with its tremendously high population density and, consequently, small farms – represented an extreme case, it demonstrates the comparative possibilities that the 15-acre settlement farms (as opposed to the 1-2 acre Vihiga farms) opened up for settlers. Settlers in Sosiani and Leseru also often realized their comparative luck. They spoke about how their families who remained in Nandi nicknamed Uasin Gishu “*shamba*” (farm in Swahili), since it was the place Nandi went to get farms, and since the large swathes of land in the district represented opportunity. It was not just gaining access to land which improved the lives of settlers, but land also gave settlers access to other resources, such as loans and extension services (see Chapter 3).

²⁸ KNA KA/6/19, From Senator GN Kalya, Kapsabet (Nandi) to His Excellency President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, 21st May, 1966. The letter captures this sentiment. “The present situation is a tense one, especially, after the reshuffle of the Cabinet and the imminent opposition of Government. The reshuffle and additional of Ministers/Assistant Ministers have brought some despair and doubt amongst Nandi people – especially the educated lot. The contention and argument they put forward is ‘Is the Government for ever going to by pass (Kalenjin) Nandi in Ministerial posts, education, improvement of roads, erections of factories etc.? or all the (Kalenjin) Nandi either in the Civil Service or Parliament incapable of holding top places?’ ...It is very unfortunate that Nandi people stake so much on why our President has not paid a visit to Nandi since Independence. Many of the misguided elements use this excuse to point out that the Government is not interested in the welfare of Nandi people.”

Landlessness, and the inequalities it revealed, represented a major issue throughout the country. Many groups questioned the government's commitment to addressing inequality. The "Citizens of Naivasha" wrote to the KANU District Chairman in 1967, "How many types of policies has the Government? We want to know if there is policy for rich people Ministers and for poor citizens..."²⁹ In a letter headed, "Harambee and the Poor," two Kipkabus³⁰ residents complained, "So, the needy have not been issued with even half of those acres [of the Million Acre Resettlement Program]. Now, if these acres are finished, what will you give use [sic] we the needy? ... Thus, the poor voted to get a government which can eliminate bad things of the colonialists for them, yet things are getting worse than before... Thus we ask you, were those who requested for independence the rich or the poor?"³¹ Kenyans very frequently raised issues of inequality through rhetoric about the visible presence of a rich and a poor class. They connected these polarized economic classes to disenchantment as a result of exclusion from land ownership.

The government did realize that it had not adequately addressed inequality, and it responded to calls for a more equal Kenya if not wholeheartedly, then at least superficially. African Socialism became an often deployed and highly disputed idea in April 1965, when the government published a Parliament-approved pamphlet on the subject. The document used Africa's "communal traditions" to lay out government ideas on political democracy, mutual social responsibility, resource use, and the equitable

²⁹ KNA KA/6/19, From Citizens of Naivasha to the KANU District Chairman, 15th November, 1967. Naivasha is located in the eastern Rift Valley.

³⁰ Kipkabus is also located in Rift Valley Province, 50 kilometers southeast of Eldoret.

³¹ KNA KA/6/32, From Joseph C. Langat and David K. Koghe, Kipkabus to the Kenya Prime Minister, "Harambee and the Poor," 1 February, 1964.

distribution of wealth and income.³² African Socialism represented a guiding document rather than a policy, and it led to little material change. Parliamentary consensus on the creation of the African Socialism document does demonstrate, however, state recognition of a public desire for the redressing of extreme inequalities.

A 1973 Office of the Vice President memorandum, which added a section called “Equality,” also demonstrates that the government was aware of the need to at least appear to address the issue. The memorandum noted that “current trends are far removed” from the tenets of African Socialism. “Everyday extremes of great wealth among massive poverty are coming to light. There is also a growing tendency for regional disparity in the allocation of development resources – infrastructure social and economic.”³³ Kenyans were disillusioned with the visible inequalities in their new nation, and the government realized it early on.

Ten years after independence, inequality in Kenya was growing rather than diminishing. Much of this rising inequality resulted from inequities first produced by colonial rule, and later in early independent Kenya, inequities produced by the unequal distribution of resources. This growing inequality had implications for the new state, producing early discontentment and disengagement among the excluded. For some, this led to the delegitimization of the government, and there was a proliferation of community-led organizations that acted as “alternative states” and provided resources to its stakeholders. There was also, as in the case of Turbo, contestation of state marginalization.

³² KNA ACW/1/425, From M. Mbela, PS Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, to PS, the Treasury, “African Socialism: Comments on Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965,” 21st March, 1978.

³³ KNA BN/81/158, From S.D. Gathiuni, for PS, Office of the Vice President to the PS, Ministry of Finance and Planning, “Employment, Incomes and Equality,” 15th March, 1973.

The Turbo squatters and their supporters reacted to inequality when they resisted the implementation of the afforestation program by refusing to move, by uprooting trees, and by speaking directly to politicians and policymakers. Squatters understood Turbo Afforestation as an unfair distribution of resources, and a plan that would hinder their development. Squatters were – at the same time – asserting their rights to the land. They were fighting against what they saw as an injustice, and one which would perpetuate the type of inequality they believed independence was meant to redress.

Ultimately, it was the power of these rural farmers and squatters that prohibited the government from establishing nurseries and led to the downfall of the project. Cracking under the pressure from both Nandi squatters and their representatives, Minister Ayodo (Natural Resources) and Minister Angaine (Lands and Settlement) publicly stated on February 11, 1966 that alternative land would be found for squatters residing in the Turbo Afforestation scheme. After this announcement, A.P. Achieng, Permanent Secretary for Natural Resources, Wildlife and Tourism wrote that Ministers should go to Turbo immediately to explain the decision, since new squatters were arriving in Turbo area ‘B’ everyday and building houses.³⁴ V.E.M. Burke, the Deputy Director of Settlement, took a more realistic approach to the problem, noting that “it is quite clear that we cannot guarantee to accommodate all the area ‘B’ squatters elsewhere in normal settlement...I see no point in following up Mr. Achieng’s suggestion that the two Ministers should tell the area ‘B’ squatters that they will get plots in the Londiani/Lumbwa area. The squatters concerned will know perfectly well that this land is

³⁴ KNA BN/85/15, From AP Achieng, Permanent Secretary for Natural Resources, Wildlife and Tourism, “Turbo Afforestation Scheme,” 25th March, 1966.

already occupied by Kikuyu squatters.”³⁵ The government knew there would not be enough land to settle all those demanding farms. They also realized that, nonetheless, they would need to do something in order make greater concessions to the Turbo squatters, who continued to make the implementation of their development program impossible.

THE MIRAGE OF STATE POWER

The conflict with Turbo squatters, and the government inability to come up with a viable solution, revealed the mirage of postcolonial state power and the vulnerability of a new, fragmented state. The Kenyan state was neither able to gain squatter cooperation, nor to effectively police squatters’ civil disobedience. P. Shiyukah, Permanent Secretary for Lands and Settlement, demonstrated the government weakness arising out of this context. He wrote about the potential repercussions of promising the squatters land. “The trouble makers might wish to attack the Government on the grounds that perhaps the land they have been offered is poor agriculturally and also is far away from area ‘B’ of Turbo, and therefore would say NO! to the suggestion.”³⁶ Squatters had already rejected government offers of employment in the forestry department, preferring to wait for land instead.³⁷ Government efforts to appease squatters were largely in vain, demonstrating an unusual set of power dynamics between the state and a marginalized group of citizens. Squatter resilience and rejection of the alternative options presented to them show a remarkable confidence and disregard for government authority.

³⁵ KNA BN/85/15, V.E.M. Burke, Ag. Deputy Director of Settlement, “Turbo Forest Station Scheme,” 25th March, 1966.

³⁶ KNA BN/85/15, From P. Shiyukah, Permanent Secretary, “Re: Your Conf. 143/132,” 1st April, 1966.

³⁷ KNA BN/85/15, P. Shiyukah, “Turbo Afforestation Scheme,” 8th October 1966.

Government vulnerability derived from concern about squatters as a security threat, and from an inability to control the situation. The Turbo Afforestation Advisory Committee noted as late as 1973 the total ineffectiveness of the existing government machinery to evict squatters, as higher authorities often reversed the actions of local administration and police officers.³⁸ Government plans to redress the situation also depended on the compliance of the squatters, an improbable policy presumption. Angaine noted in a memorandum that “squatters have also refused to move off the land; to attempt to clear these people from the land by force might well create a considerable security problem...”³⁹ Most government officials agreed that the forest scheme could only be successfully implemented with the removal of squatters, a task made impossible without alternative land. Government officials recognized additionally that if they planted trees, they would “unquestionably be uprooted by squatters.”⁴⁰ The squatters, in their organized and resilient refusal, proved their power to force the state’s hand on development and land policy.

Squatters’ memories support this narrative of government ineffectiveness. Wilson Cheruyot Boit recalled:

I was planting maize, but when they [government officers] came, they started planting trees inside my maize by force. Some government officers spent days at my place supervising the tree planting. They had armed guards with them...I did not bother despite the armed guards being around. So, when they planted trees in one area, I shifted to another region and planted my maize there. They then would follow me and plant trees there, and I would in turn go to another area and plant my maize.⁴¹

³⁸ KNA BA/6/29, “Turbo Afforestation Advisory Committee Minutes of the 9th Meeting,” 2nd March, 1973.

³⁹ KNA BN/85/15, J.H. Angaine, “Turbo Afforestation Scheme Area B: Settlement of Squatters (Memorandum by the Minister for Lands and Settlement),” 25th October, 1966.

⁴⁰ KNA DX/21/10/8, “Joint Meeting of Nandi, Kakamega and Uasin Gishu District Commissioners held at Osurungai on the 15th September, 1966.

⁴¹ Interview with Wilson Cheruyot Boit, Sugoi, January 10, 2013.

Boit added that when the government planted trees, the people would “spoil them.”⁴²

Many others recounted similar stories of evading government officers and disrupting the planting program. These oral histories back the archival accounts of squatter steadfastness and courage in the face of state officers.

Government solutions to the squatter problem ranged from using the General Service Unit to guard the trees to instituting raids on the squatters’ livestock in order to compel them to move away from the area. Other officials suggested less aggressive solutions, such as holding *baraza* [public meetings] to explain the situation and gain squatters’ cooperation.⁴³ Eventually, the government employed a litigious strategy, fining, jailing, or serving court orders. This proved to be largely unsuccessful and required a great deal of time and money.⁴⁴ Despite the difficulties and inefficiencies of this system, the government was still trying to evict squatters from Turbo using quit notices all the way into 1977.⁴⁵

On occasion, the government did use *baraza* in an effort to gain squatter cooperation, but squatters also contested the government in these spaces. Attempted government solutions once again proved wholly unsuccessful. Daniel Kebeney Bitok recalled that “*baraza* were called and we were asked why we were uprooting the trees, and we complained that it was another way of making the government realize that it

⁴² Interview with Wilson Cheruyot Boit, Sugoi, January 10, 2013.

⁴³ KNA DX/21/10/8, “Joint Meeting of Nandi, Kakamega and Uasin Gishu District Commissioners held at Osurungai,” 15th September, 1966.

⁴⁴ KNA DX/21/10/9, From HK Ikenya, Divisional Forest Officer, Turbo to the Superintendent of Police, “Operational Orders: Coopers Farm and Manzini Farm,” 15th February, 1972.

⁴⁵ KNA DX/21/10/9, From J.M. Tiampati, Ag. DC Kakamega, to the PC Western, “Squatters – E.A. Tanning Co.,” 9th February, 1977. Those evicted in 1977 were mostly former employees of East African Tanning and Extract Company, which sold the remainder of its land to the government for afforestation in that year. These squatters and former employees not only lost their jobs, but also their subsistence plots. The exact number of employees working at EATEC when the government finally purchased the land was unknown, with estimates ranging from 152 to 600.

wasn't fair to plant trees and evict people who were squatting on the land. We thought that after the *wazungu* [Europeans] left, the land would be for us. And, the government was planting trees. Where were we going to live?"⁴⁶ Bitok's memories demonstrate the various means and spaces – the uprooting of trees, the *baraza* – squatters used to assert their opposition to the program. They also reveal the ineffectiveness of government responses to squatters, and the surprising power dynamics of state-squatter encounters. The resistance to the Turbo Afforestation program continued for years. Even as the government scrambled to find new land for squatters, more and more flooded into the Turbo Afforestation Area 'B' throughout the mid-1960s.

Local and national politicians who supported squatters participated directly on the ground. The involvement of politicians demonstrates how an examination of the exercise of power in micro settings reveals a different and more complicated picture than that gleaned from above. It also illustrates the ineffectiveness of government machinery. Members of Parliament, such as Daniel arap Moi and Burudi Nabwera, could easily outmuscle minor officers on the ground, regardless of whether national policy supported M.P.'s actions. A forest officer recounted the effects of a visit by Nabwera when he met with 50 – 60 trespassers.

He [Nabwera] enquired about their [trespassers] welfare and was told that I am trying to remove them from this Estate and stop them cultivating *shambas*. He was also told that I am pulling down their houses. As a matter of fact, I had taken the majority of the men present to court charged with illegal cultivation in July, 1970. The Court Magistrate fined some of the men and ruled that all should leave the Estate as soon as they had finished harvesting their crops. Mr. Nabwera then visited a house which had been pulled down by my headman, after the inhabitants...had moved away to the Settlement Scheme...Mr. Nabwera instructed me to stop trying to move these people and allow them to cultivate on this estate. I told Mr. Nabwera that I was only carrying out my orders, but did not

⁴⁶ Interview with Daniel Kebeney Bitok, Leseru, November 26, 2012.

try to argue the point, as by this time a lot of people had collected at the KFA Office and I was feeling rather embarrassed.⁴⁷

Nabwera reprimanded the forest officer in front of squatters as a way of delegitimizing the officer's authority and to assert his own authority.

Regardless of the politicking, or the central government forest policy dictates, many squatters imagined power, and made sense of their political world, through their physical encounters with politicians and officials. Well known local and national leaders on the ground could very easily play into these imaginings, resulting in a consolidation of their own power and a greater resolution amongst squatters to resist the program. By participating actively in local politics, national and local politicians played a role in the lives of the rural poor, created relationships with their constituents, and bridged the divide between national Nairobi politics and the local politics that non-elites cared about so passionately. As a side effect, these leaders participated in the fragmentation of power within the postcolony, which empowered the rural poor and detracted from the power of the centralized state.

Government officials believed politicians like Nabwera recruited and organized new squatters to enter the land and keep the government from implementing the program. There were even allegations that District Officers destroyed fences. (These were definitively denied.)⁴⁸ Politicians' involvement allowed government officials to discredit squatters' initiative by blaming leaders for their galvanizing presence. The minutes of a 1966 joint meeting of District Commissioners of Nandi, Kakamega, and Uasin Gishu

⁴⁷ KNA BN/85/16, From C.B. Looman, Forestal Lands Estate to The Estates Manager, Turbo, "Re: Trespassers on Forestal Lands," 12 January, 1971.

⁴⁸ KNA KA/6/19, From Ag. Provincial Commissioner, Rift Valley Province, Nyachae, to SK Monje, Esq., Eldoret Thro' The District Commissioner, Uasin Gishu District, "Turbo Afforestation Project," 14th February, 1966.

demonstrates this naïve assumption. “The Officers noted unanimously that the...problem was mainly political, i.e. the illegal squatters now occupying Osurungai area were and are politically influenced.”⁴⁹ State officials used the word “political” to signal anti-government, and often, to imply an intrusion by leaders. The language here suggests that squatters could not possibly organize themselves, or become politically active without the influence of elite politicians. Though politicians played an active role and aided the squatters’ cause, squatters were not passive bystanders simply allowing themselves to be recruited.

It was not just the government who alleged foul play on the part of the squatters; the reverse happened, with widespread allegations of state foul play as well. MP J.L.N. Ole Konchellah wrote an angry letter to the Minister for Natural Resources, “Would you then please give instruction to your officer in the field to stop the tactics they are using trying to evict these people who are residing in their mother land. They have stoped [sic] these people grassing their cattle in the areas of the forestation. I understood that water pipes were sometimes blocked – plugged [sic] or uprooted so that these people could not get water in the area...Would you stop all these until these people are shown where to go.”⁵⁰ The battle over Turbo afforestation had turned dirty. The intensity of the physical encounters with government officials only increased squatters’ determination, though. Their belief, both in the possibility of gaining access to land and the injustice of government efforts to take land, proved powerful for organizing resistance.

⁴⁹ KNA DX/21/10/8, “Joint Meeting of Nandi, Kakamega and Uasin Gishu District Commissioners held at Osurungai,” 15th September, 1966.

⁵⁰ KNA BA/6/25, From JLN Ole Konchellah MP to JJM Nyagah, MP, “Re: Uasin Gishu Masai Settlement at Kipkaren,” 4th April, 1968.

By October of 1966, the Provincial Administration realized that the squatters would make afforestation impossible, because they refused to leave the land and actively opposed government efforts to create nurseries by destroying trees and uprooting seedlings. The Minutes of a Rift Valley Province administration meeting described the situation in Turbo as “an inflammable political issue which was likely to cause serious repercussions.”⁵¹ Government planners had always recognized the threat squatters represented. At the same time, they put in place few safeguards and created an ineffective plan of action to appease the squatters. The lack of commitment to resolving the squatter problem demonstrates government naiveté about the resolve and political power of the squatters, as well as the weaknesses and fragmentation of the postcolonial state.

SQUATTER ACTIVISM AND POSTCOLONIAL POWER

This government naiveté becomes even clearer through former squatters’ oral histories. The ways that squatters recounted the story of their intransigence and their tactics of resistance demonstrate a surprising set of state-citizen power dynamics skewed in the squatters’ favor. Squatter success illustrates government incapacity to enforce its own policies. It also shows the effects of a divided state lacking a uniform vision and the repercussions of an at best nascent national consciousness, which revolved around the figure of Jomo Kenyatta.

Most squatters reacted with incredulity at the thought that trees could ever be more important than people. Wilson Cheruyot Boit remembered a clear choice between the welfare of people and trees. “People continued to make noise by saying that they were dying of hunger and yet the government was busy planting trees instead of giving them

⁵¹ KNA BN/85/15, “Minutes of a Meeting held in Provincial Commissioner’s Conference Room, Nakuru,” 6th October, 1966.

land.”⁵² It was simply inconceivable for squatters to agree to a development program that prioritized trees over people. Many squatters believed that only a sinister government would allow its citizens to starve for the sake of planting trees. Conversely, those who were settled imagined a benevolent Kenyatta, for ultimately redressing government wrongs by creating a settlement scheme.

Squatters felt they had no other choice but to contest the policy, not only because they felt it was unfair, but also because they would become homeless and landless if it was implemented. Simon Limo recalled that, “The residents of the land couldn’t agree. If they give the whole land to plant trees, where will we live when we are squatters?”⁵³ Priscilla Murei gave a similar reasoning for squatter activism. “We did not fear. People had courage, because they were many and they were in need of the *shamba* [small farm].”⁵⁴ Christina Cherotich summed up this attitude when she pithily explained her community’s reaction to the project “we just refused.”⁵⁵ Many squatters believed that they had no alternative but to fight, because if they allowed the government to displace them for forest, they would have no home and no land.

Despite these detailed and intimate memories, interviews with former squatters illustrated varying amounts of knowledge about the government tree planting program. Christina Cherotich, for example, said that she had no idea why the government would want to plant trees.⁵⁶ Most squatters understood that the government intended to plant the trees for the factory in Webuye. Few others said they knew much more about the

⁵² Interview with Wilson Cheruyot Boit, Sugoi, January 10, 2013.

⁵³ Interview with Simon Limo, Leseru, November 27, 2012.

⁵⁴ Interview with Priscilla Murei, Sugoi, January 14, 2013.

⁵⁵ Interview with Christina Cherotich, Tapsagoi, January 12, 2013.

⁵⁶ Interview with Christina Cherotich, Tapsagoi, January 12, 2013.

development plan for the forest and the pulp and paper mill. The lack of information resulted from the ineffectiveness of government communications to rural areas. This information void between the central government and rural areas had important policy implications, since squatters contested this program partially as a response to the fact that they did not think of it as development. If the government had successfully communicated the development plan and how it was intended to create jobs and growth for the *entire country*, perhaps it would have partially stymied squatter mobilization.

Wilson Cheruyot Boit was an exception for having heard of the World Bank. He recalled, “After independence, Webuye Paper Mills was constructed with aid from the World Bank. The World Bank said they needed much paper...The factory was constructed and it started operating... The World Bank was funding the project.”⁵⁷ Even though Boit understood the project better than most, he noted his own past misconceptions. “We did not understand what the World Bank was,” he said. “We thought the *wazungu* were coming back...This was because the manager during the construction was a white man...Even the surveyor in charge of tree planting was a white man and so we thought the whites were returning.”⁵⁸ Boit’s memories of these fears are significant because they demonstrate the misinformation circulating around the broader development plan for Turbo Afforestation (and, thus, also about the benefits it might provide the entire nation). Boit’s memories also reveal the anxieties prevalent in early postcolonial Kenya about the longevity of independence and whether the coinciding newfound hope for access to land was misplaced. The planting of trees not only brought

⁵⁷ Interview with Wilson Cheruyot Boit, Sugoi, January 10, 2013.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

up fears about the impermanence of independence, but it also represented an assault on the main promise of independence – land.

In many ways, the local lack of knowledge about the World Bank and about the full development plan for the Webuye paper factory grew out of exclusion from this information, and from the government's inability to impart this information to the population. The state was unable, additionally, to convince the population to stand behind national programs, and had been unable to engender a national consciousness. Despite post-independence efforts to create a national sense of belonging, many Kenyans did not see the future or development through a national lens. As Kenya entered independence, the poor infrastructure, illiteracy, lack of newspaper distribution, and lack of radios kept communities from having much contact with one another, from getting quotidian information about other rural spaces, or from accessing daily information about the country and the world. Informants recounted that they got most of their news through *baraza* [public meetings], and from those who traveled and brought news back with them. The disconnections (and the connections) between different rural spaces, between rural and urban spaces, and between rural and international spaces effected non-elite conceptions of development and “progress,” particularly the geographical range these conceptions encompassed. The disconnections often inhibited broader thinking about the nation when individual livelihoods were at stake. And in Turbo, as in many other parts of Kenya, squatters and residents focused on local issues mostly pertaining to land access and development.

Squatters took great pride in their eventual extraordinary success, and informants always wanted to recount the Turbo Afforestation story detail by detail, telling of their

victory over the government. In the two adjacent villages of Sugoi and Tapsagoi, both originally planned for a tree nursery to feed the Webuye paper factory, residents emphasized the importance of planting people over land, and they also emphasized their agency in the story – by both persistently staying in the area, by uprooting trees, and by traveling to see Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of independent Kenya, to convince him to change the policy.

Perhaps most tellingly, not only did each informant recount asking Kenyatta “Are you planting trees or are you planting people?” but a tenor of intimacy suffused almost all retellings of the story. These intimate retellings represent an assertion of squatter agency. Chepsiror arap Leleli remembered, “We saw him [Kenyatta] and we sang with him.”⁵⁹ Michael Keter, like Leleli, imbued his version of the story with a sense of familiarity. Keter even recounted overhearing a dialogue between President Kenyatta and the Director of Settlement, J.H. Angaine. He said that, after the squatter delegation arrived, the president asked Mr. Angaine to make a scheme. As Keter retold it, “Kenyatta said to him [Angaine], ‘These people who are coming here, where are the *shambas* they are complaining of?’ Angaine replied, ‘The *shambas* are between Ndalat, Sergoit, and Sosiani.’ The president asked, ‘Are we going to plant trees or are we going to plant people?’ Angaine replied that it was better to plant people.”⁶⁰ Keter’s retelling of this conversation demonstrates not only his feeling of closeness to the president, but also, memories of his own agency and participation. Keter’s used Angaine’s confirmation that it was better to plant people as a rhetorical device in his storytelling to further validate the

⁵⁹ Interview with Chepsiror arap Leleli, Tapsagoi, January 12, 2013.

⁶⁰ Interview with Michael Keter, Sugoi, January 14, 2013.

squatter cause. Keter was asserting that, through their actions, squatters convinced not only Kenyatta to agree with them, but also the Director of Settlement.

Informants' emphasis on Kenyatta's role in the Turbo forest story also gives further insight into the convoluted web connecting local, national, and international political spaces in the early postcolonial world. The successful contestation of Turbo Afforestation reveals how individuals and groups gained access to, utilized, and conceptualized power. This was a setting where most rural Kenyans imagined authority through their physical encounters with government officials and politicians. But they also imagined power through the ultimate embodiment of the nation, Jomo Kenyatta, known familiarly as *baba taifa* (father of the nation) and *mzee* (a respectful name for an elder). Kenyatta was one of the few, if not the only, national-level politicians that almost every Kenyan knew, and they credited him both with bringing independence and giving out land.

Turbo residents ascribed a great deal of power to Kenyatta. As demonstrated above, Kenyatta loomed large in the stories of fighting Turbo Afforestation. Most informants not only recounted their personal conversation with Kenyatta, but remembered that moment in particular as a turning point in the struggle against the government. As Ruth Jepng'eno Kipkurui plainly put it, "Kenyatta agreed and we got settlement."⁶¹ The rural poor saw a direct, causal relationship between bringing a grievance to Kenyatta and its resolution. Despite local conceptions of politics and development and a circumscribed flow of news, Kenyatta represented the nation and symbolized power in the nation, even to the rural poor whose lives he often little affected.

⁶¹ Interview with Ruth Jepngeno Kipkurui, Tapsagoi, January 12, 2013.

This symbolism proved powerful. Rural farmers' belief in Kenyatta's power actually helped endow him with that power. This political imagining transformed into reality perpetuated a view where Kenyatta was almost equivalent to the state.

Kenyatta's power, then, sprang in many ways from his emblematic role and its importance in the minds of the rural poor. This symbolism gave him more concrete powers. In the Turbo case, he altered enormously a national development plan by making promises to Nandi squatter delegations. These promises for land settlement demonstrate the contradictory mix of strengths and weaknesses that lay in Kenyatta's power. His ability to promise land to squatters without consulting the government or thinking about the repercussions of his decision demonstrates his consolidated power. Conversely, the need to acquiesce to the Nandi delegations illustrates the power of squatters. It also demonstrates Kenyatta's own weaknesses and the weaknesses of the state, since Turbo Afforestation revealed the power of rural farmers to upset important national programs. Kenyatta asserted his presidential power, in short, by succumbing to the pressure of poor, landless squatters whom his government could not control. To appease them, he modified one of the country's largest development programs, further delaying and complicating its future fruition and benefits. In Kenya's early postcolonial history, Turbo represents an exception, as the Kenyan state often successfully marginalized large portions of the population. Turbo is important, however, for revealing how very little it took to upset these power dynamics.

The nature of Kenyatta's rule also illustrated how various groups – from different regions and ethnicities, from different government ministries, and different institutions – pulled the strings tying the government's hands in opposite directions. These multiple

pulls for development stretched the president thin, as he attempted to please the many, conflicting interest groups. As a result, Kenyatta had to emphasize agriculture *and* industry, redistribution of wealth *and* trickle-down economic growth, regardless of whether they conflicted with one another.

Kenyatta's promises to privilege agricultural development are best illustrated through his "Back to the Land Speech" on Jamhuri Day, the first anniversary of Kenya's independence. The speech began, "Our greatest asset in Kenya is our land. This is the heritage we received from our forefathers. In land lies our salvation and survival... Whatever our plans for the future they must spring from a resolve to put our land to maximum production, however small the acreage we may possess."⁶² Despite the various disconnects between Nairobi and distant rural areas, squatters and other rural Kenyans continually drew upon this notion of "back to the land" and appropriated the idea to justify their claims for land. Kenyatta and his government rhetorically stood behind the emphasis on land and agriculture, but their policy often belied the ideas put forth in the speech. Kenyatta, in addition, hinted at the inequalities that his government condoned with the afterthought, "however small the acreage we may possess." This land inequity, and the irreconcilable gulf between Kenyatta's rhetoric and actions, can be no better illustrated than through the Kenyatta family's acquisition of thousands of acres of land after independence, much of which was not put to productive use.

Kenyatta played different roles for different interest groups. The "Back to the Land" speech may have been one of his most famous, but he also emphasized industry, especially to those who would benefit from it. A May 1966 government memorandum on

⁶² Jomo Kenyatta, *Suffering Without Bitterness: The Founding of the Kenya Nation* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968), 23.

Turbo Afforestation and the Webuye Paper Factory noted, for example, that “this project, more than any other, has let H.E. the President down because years ago at Broderick Falls he pointed at the site and told the people that they would have the factory...”⁶³

Kenyatta’s power partially lay in his ability to make those kinds of personal promises at the local level, to physically show a group of people where the factory that would benefit them would be located. His word meant more to individual Kenyans when given in intimate settings similar to the one described above, and to the stories told by Nandi squatters. The small-scale setting, along with the irregular flow of national news, allowed Kenyatta to maintain his multiple airs, since many of his promises conflicted with one another and were impossible to keep simultaneously. Nandi squatters would learn this lesson all too soon after Kenyatta promised them settlement in Turbo.

Part of Kenyatta’s authority came from his ability, with a quick promise, to change the course of long-debated policy, even policy shaped by the stipulations of large international institutions funding development. While these pronouncements could change the course of policymaking, they did not necessarily coincide with, or lead to, smooth and quick execution. After the president promised land to the Turbo squatters, the Kenyan government had difficulty instituting the proposed settlement, as it was unclear where the Nandi would be settled, and which squatters to choose.⁶⁴ In addition, the government had difficulty making last-minute changes to land resettlement programs, because they were not included in the development estimates, and there were no financial

⁶³ KNA AE/22/142, From K.S.N. Matiba, PSCI to IDO, “The Pulp and Paper Project,” 19th May, 1966.

⁶⁴ KNA BN/85/16, From J.K. arap Koitie, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Lands and Settlement to J.N. Michuki Esq., Permanent Secretary, The Treasury, “New Settlement in the Turbo Area,” 5th January 1970.

provisions available even to purchase land newly demarcated for settlement.⁶⁵ Kenyatta's vague promises without regard for the consequences left officials and policymakers frantically trying to clean up the mess in the aftermath.

Many officials were disgusted by government efforts to appease squatters, arguing that it had, "encouraged defiance of Government by rewarding people, who have moved on to farms illegally, with land. The effect of this is that as soon as land is acquired for the Scheme, people, who are not necessarily landless, move onto the farm often with political backing."⁶⁶ Whether or not squatters were encouraged by Kenyatta's assent to their demands, government correspondence does suggest that the squatter problem in the Turbo area, and in the areas subsequently planned for afforestation, became worse and not better after promises of land. For Kenyatta, though, the promise to the squatters was more important than its execution or repercussions. Kenyatta maintained his authority by inculcating an image of himself as the "giver of land." So long as he could promise settlement to squatters in order to appease them and perpetuate his own cult of personality without wholly disrupting the forest-paper program, then he had achieved his goal.

'WE NEVER FOUGHT THE GOVERNMENT LIKE THAT AGAIN'

The multiplicity of voices and actors meant that Turbo Afforestation continued to be contested for a long time. The early postcolonial era was marked by extended periods of uncertainty about policy dilemmas. Policy irresolution produced a long period of indecisiveness, but also a prolonged period of insecurity, as government responsibilities

⁶⁵ KNA BN/85/16, From J.K. arap Koitie, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Lands and Settlement to J.N. Michuki Esq., Permanent Secretary, The Treasury, "New Settlement in the Turbo Area," 5th January 1970.

⁶⁶ KNA BN/85/16, Ministry of Natural Resources, "Notes on the Pulp and Paper Mill and Pulpwood Afforestation Project," 1970.

and citizens' rights remained unclear. This, in combination with a confined flow of national news, shaped rural Kenyans' conception of nationhood and national identity. As a result, squatters participated in the debate over Turbo Afforestation in terms of the local politics of land and the broader politics of inequality, rather than through the question of the national interest.

These factors encouraged the development of both a devolved and centralized form of power in early postcolonial Kenya. This paradoxical power fostered a context in which squatter intransigence could force change to a World Bank funded program, but also, a context in which it took the personal power of the president to assent to this modification. The state's incapacity to deal with squatters, and its concern about the political implications of removing them, gave squatters – who might have been peripheral actors in other settings – great power. Their power forced major alterations to an important national development program. Power was simultaneously centralized. State divisions, and consequent indecisiveness, helped empower Kenyatta as the face of the nation to make promises to the public in the absence of state clarity. These same state divisions made the implementation of Kenyatta's promises difficult and slow, however.

Turbo Afforestation makes clear the complexity and diversity in the practices of power, authority, governance, and citizenship during the early postcolonial era. The nature of power and state decision-making during Turbo Afforestation also raises questions about simplistic scholarly assumptions which – even in debating class differentiation during decolonization – often paint a picture of an overly capitalist

postcolonial Kenya.⁶⁷ The economic theories espoused by the Kenyan government, its bilateral donors, and international financial institutions suggest a capitalistic orientation. If Kenya were so straightforwardly capitalist, though, would the state have engaged in long debates about the national interest (growth or redistribution), its “moral obligation” to squatters, or included sections on inequality in its publications? Even if African Socialism always remained vague, and a socialist ideal never came to fruition, these discussions signal that alternative possibilities existed, and that certain state actors fought for Kenya to take a different path.

Judith Heyer’s comparison of early Kenyan and Tanzanian development plans is illustrative of the simplistic interpretations in early scholarly works on development in postcolonial East Africa. By comparing Kenyan and Tanzanian planned expenditure for social services, Heyer portrayed two fundamentally opposed states. She ignored the contentiousness of development, the continual revision of plans, and the discrepancy between development as planned and implemented, and instead concluded that “Kenya seems to be putting rather little emphasis on the development of social services compared with Tanzania.”⁶⁸ Though Kenya did remain growth-oriented, there were alternative possibilities, and the state would not have debated the plight of a fairly small number of squatters in Turbo if it was only concerned with its GDP. Turbo Afforestation

⁶⁷ Colin Leys sparked a debate about class differentiation and decolonization when he revised his influential, *Underdevelopment in Kenya*. In this first work, Leys asserted that at independence an African “auxiliary bourgeoisie” carved out a more permanent niche as a small protected stratum of African capital-owners. Four years later, Leys revised his original thesis in, “Capital Accumulation, Class Formation, and Dependency: The Significance of the Kenyan Case,” arguing that further Kenyan capitalist development should be understood as open. Raphael Kaplinsky and Steven Langdon rejected Leys’ position. Kaplinsky argued that a peripheral country which did not have a large internal market or the ability to profit from the global development of capitalism faced limits on its capital accumulation. Langdon argued, similarly, that the Kenyan bourgeoisie alliance with foreign capital inhibited the indigenous bourgeoisie from transforming foreign capital because of its dependence on foreign capital.

⁶⁸ Judith Heyer, “Kenya’s Cautious Development Plan,” *East African Journal* (Aug. 1966).

demonstrates the possibilities of the early postcolonial era, and the deeper meanings attached to the fact that only some of these possibilities were realized.

For rural Kenyans, the promise of independence lay almost exclusively in land, and those selected for settlement believed these promises had materialized. Many squatters and others remained landless, however, without a dependable source of livelihood. In the case of Turbo Afforestation, some squatters received land, but many did not. They continue to squat on land up to this day. The perpetuation of a large group of landless Kenyans resulted not only from Kenya's financial limitations and the inadequate amount of fertile land available, but also from corruption. Oral and archival evidence suggest that corruption accompanied squatter settlement programs even more so than regular settlement schemes. Alfred Machayo, a former Ministry of Agriculture official, noted that if the word "squatter" was attached to a settlement program, it gave the government license to settle whomever they wanted. The definition of a squatter was hazy, and it was difficult to prove whether or not a person had land elsewhere or had been living in the area previously.⁶⁹

Turbo residents confirmed this portrayal of squatter settlement. Wilson Cheruyot Boit said that settlement in Turbo "was done unfairly. Many people on the ground did not get land. But soon afterwards, the government brought people to take over the land. Those were *watu wakubwa* [big people] who were well connected to the government."⁷⁰ Many remembered how squatters often did not know the land they were living on had been bought by someone else until the owners showed up and forced them to leave. Boit added that some of the "big people" who came to Turbo for the squatter settlement

⁶⁹ Interview with Alfred Machayo, Chekalini, November 1, 2012.

⁷⁰ Interview with Wilson Cheruyot Boit, Sugoi, January 10, 2013.

schemes “sold their land and left. Yet others were farming and going back to Nairobi.”⁷¹ These wealthy and absentee owners who were settled as “squatters” were a visible representation of the production of inequality and injustice in early postcolonial Kenya, and thus, of the unrealized promises of independence.

Those who remained squatters formed a different relationship to the state than those settled. Squatters’ continued position of illegality fostered feelings of insecurity and fears of eviction. Because of these fears, many squatters – without the backing of an organized movement – felt they could not contest the state or make claims on the government for rights and resources. Squatter settlements often lacked government services, such as schools and hospitals. Though the state provision of social and development resources was generally inadequate throughout rural Kenya, squatters were doubly hurt by the perpetuation of their landlessness. Their livelihoods and ability to provide for themselves and their families were continually at stake. Further, they did not have access to the resources which would allow them greater security in the absence of land. Thus, squatters – like other marginalized groups (see Chapter 7 on women) – responded to the inadequacy of state services by forming alternative institutions to provide their own community safety nets. Because of their vulnerable position partially outside the formal state, squatters took up a much stronger rhetoric of early postcolonial disappointment than settlers, which they almost always connected to the injustices of unequal land distribution and development resources.

For those former squatters lucky enough to get Turbo settlement plots, life improved. Settlers, local politicians, government officials, and others who had

⁷¹ Interview with Wilson Cheruyot Boit, Sugoi, January 10, 2013.

participated in the debates surrounding Turbo Afforestation often quickly forgot those not lucky enough to get land. With the Turbo settlement schemes, the government had made a symbolic effort to appease those resisting Turbo afforestation and had deflated the momentum of the organized movement. Those who received land wanted little more from the government. Jemosbei Kirwa Kili remembered, “There were no other times we fought the government. We feared the government. There were men who were courageous enough to face the government, because they wanted to settle.”⁷² Priscilla Murei echoed Kili saying, “We never fought the government like that again.”⁷³ There was nothing more important than land. The fact that the national interest and the meaning of development remained ambiguous, and that many squatters continued to be forgotten, had lasting repercussions for Kenya, however.

In 1978, the Kenyan government began rethinking Sessional Paper no. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism. In this process, the Ministry of Finance and Planning sent a survey to other ministries asking them to assess the successes of African Socialism. J.H.O. Omino, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Natural Resources responded tellingly.

Grabbing by a few individuals continues unabated with concomitant conspicuous consumption much to the frustration of the silent majority. Efforts must not only be made but must also be seen to be made by Government to make financial resources more easily and widely available as a necessary prerequisite for redressing the obvious imbalance that has been created.”⁷⁴

The Kenyan postcolonial state never fully addressed growing inequality, though.

⁷² Interview with Jemosbei Kirwa Kili, Tapsagoi, January 12, 2013.

⁷³ Interview with Priscilla Murei, Sugo, January 14, 2013.

⁷⁴ KNA ACW/1/425, From JHO Omino, PS Ministry of Natural Resources to Mr. L.O. Kibinge, PS Ministry of Finance and Planning, “African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya, Some Thoughts,” 4th April, 1978.

In many ways, the outcome of Turbo Afforestation symbolizes the noncommittal path Kenya was to follow. There was enough resistance from the rural poor to derail a development program based on industry and top-down economic growth, and thus, to bring to the forefront questions of equity and the rights of citizens. There was not enough political will to commit fully to addressing the squatter crisis or the unemployment crisis. Kenya chose not to choose in the end. There would be neither a full emphasis on industry and top-down economic growth, nor a full emphasis on redistributive growth. The two did not have to be mutually exclusive, but what emerged from the broader debates surrounding Turbo Afforestation were superficial concessions. These concessions allowed the elite to continue to benefit disproportionately while still suppressing the rural unrest catalyzed by these injustices. For many, the early postcolonial present was a disappointing contrast to the past's future.

10 Conclusion

When they began building the factory in Webuye, Joab Siundu Macheso recalled, they invited President Jomo Kenyatta to come for the foundation laying ceremony. Macheso said, “When he [Kenyatta] came to put the foundation, he found the area was still called Broderick Falls. Now when he came...he said I cannot put the foundation when the area was still under colonialism. So he said I cannot put the foundation until we get the right name, the African name.” Macheso’s memories of Kenyatta’s insistence on getting “the African name” prior to building the Webuye factory is illustrative of the nature of politics in the postcolony. With the transition to independence, both promise and anxiety emerged. The promises brought a renewed pride in “Kenyan-ness” and “African-ness,” and the possibility of building a great nation together. But the anxiety brought posturing – President Kenyatta’s visit and his public insistence on replacing the antiquated anti-African name. The old, the colonial, the names like Broderick Falls, needed to be disposed of, to be replaced by African names, names like Webuye.¹ The change from Broderick Falls to Webuye and Kenyatta’s emblematic presence symbolized the transition to independence, and the creation of an African nation-state.

December 11, 1963 – the date of Kenya’s independence from British colonial rule – signified many things, and held many meanings, to Kenyans. This political transition was full of complexities. Similarly, the narrative about the name of Webuye and the laying of both a physical and metaphorical foundation for African industry belies the

¹ Interview with Joab Siundu Macheso, Webuye, July 11, 2013. Macheso recounted that the name Webuye came from a creek in the area, but a *Daily Nation* article asserts that the name came from a cobbler who used to repair shoes for railway workers. David Misiko, *Daily Nation*, “Webuye lost paper mill but not its chicken soup,” January 10, 2014.

debates and contestations which so marked the forestry and paper factory programs. That flattening narrative contradicts the negotiations, resistances, and compromises inherent in the planning and implementation of development programs in Kenya. It ignores the unequal distribution of the resources, development, jobs, and wealth generated by these programs. It disregards all the negative impacts of development programs – displacement, marginalization, increasing inequality, and the disappointment attached to hopes unrealized.

The creation of the Pan Paper Industry was a part of this complicated transition. Its promises, its contention, and its successes and its failures make clear the ambivalent understandings of what development and decolonization signified. Webuye residents remember the excitement that the opening of the factory brought in the 1970s, as well as the many positive changes – the growth of the town, and the creation of employment and business. Today, however, the Pan Paper Mill in Webuye is closed, and Webuye inhabitants recount the hardships that have resulted because of this closure.

As one approaches the town of Webuye from the main highway in western Kenya heading towards Uganda, the factory looks misplaced among the lush farm fields, where smallholders grow maize, sugarcane, beans, and vegetables, and raise cattle. Even with the factory visible from the road, Webuye appears as an unexpected industrial center, juxtaposed with the extensive rural and bucolic landscape in which it is ensconced. To turn off from the highway into the town is almost to retreat back to the decades in which many parts of the town were built. The architecture of the former housing blocks of Pan Paper workers betray the early 1970s time period during which they were planned and built. The block housing appears not to have been updated or repaired. The housing

remains sturdy and steadfast, nonetheless, but dilapidated, with paint peeling, sign posts so fully corroded that they are no longer legible. The town itself has a quietness about it, eerie for a place of its size. This dearth of bustle is understandable in the aftermath of the shutting of the factory, as Webuye residents complain that many former workers have left to seek employment or land elsewhere, and many businesses have, consequently, suffered considerably.

Still, aside from the factory and the population loss, Webuye looks like most other towns in Kenya, with its kiosks advertising phone credit and sodas, with many roadside vendors selling secondhand clothing, grilled maize, and fresh produce. Just as Webuye could be many other Kenyan towns, its story is representative of so many other places in Kenya. It is representative not because of its development trajectory, but rather, because it demonstrates the complexity of independence. Webuye illustrates the promises, the disappointments, and the diverse ways in which different groups of people experienced, and made meanings out of, independence and international development in the half century which has since passed.

The story of Webuye reveals that development often brought equivocal outcomes. Pan Paper exposes the sorts of tradeoffs communities had to make in exchange for accessing development. Despite, for instance, research and assurances that the mill would not cause any environmental damage, newspaper articles and Webuye residents' accounts suggest otherwise. There was concern on both the part of the World Bank and the Kenyan Government prior to the opening of Pan Paper that the factory would pollute the Nzoia River. After lackadaisically reviewing a UNESCO Ecological Survey and getting assurances from the management company, the government ministries involved agreed

that there was “no time for waiting.”² Webuye residents spoke in detail about how the factory’s pollution negatively affected their lives and their health. Macheso said, “The factory chimneys brought up fumes and chemicals, which burned the plants, trees, and buildings...The workers became sick because of the chemicals.”³ Fred Machasio, another Webuye resident, said, “The chemicals. We had a very big problem. Chemicals used to destroy the houses of residents...People were sick, especially their eyes. Doctors said that the chemicals affected male functioning.”⁴ Both workers and residents took the company to court over the pollution.

And, while the factory brought jobs, it also brought poor working conditions. Webuye inhabitants remember paper mill workers going on strike. Numerous informants recounted a series of strikes between the 1970s and the 1990s. Most remembered that workers went on strike over their low payments, and that in the 1997 strike more than 400 employees lost their jobs. The mostly African workers tended to have a contentious relationship with the Indian management. Fred Machasio recalled, “People didn’t like the Indians because they paid little money, they used to neglect them, abuse them. They were not on good terms with the people.”⁵

For the government, the Pan African Paper Mill produced new headaches, also with the expatriate managing company. In 1986, the firm owed the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources 13,936,431.75 Kenyan shillings, an amount the

² KNA BA/2/27 O.M. Mburu, Chief Conservator of Forests to Director, Water Development and Chief Health Inspector, “Webuye Paper Factory,” 12th July, 1974.

³ Interview with Joab Siundu Macheso, Webuye, July 11, 2013.

⁴ Interview with Fred Machasio, Webuye, July 12, 2013.

⁵ Interview with Fred Machasio, Webuye, July 12, 2013.

ministry described as “indeed colossal.”⁶ It was trouble with creditors, a lack of funding, and an inability to make a profit that ultimately led to the closing of the factory in 2009 and 2010.⁷

In these ways, Pan Paper seems to symbolize the types of sacrifices communities had to make for development. Despite the pollution it brought, most Webuye resident still thought the factory – on the whole – represented a positive change. They believed the industry was good, because it brought employment and growth, but also, because they believed that industry benefitted the nation more than agriculture. When asked if he thought that the Pan Paper factory helped to build the nation, James Karanja said succinctly and emphatically, “*Sana*” (very much).⁸ Residents of Webuye talked about the spatial breadth of the paper industry – that the Rift Valley provided the timber, Western produced the paper, and the finished products might eventually travel through Mombasa to be exported. They were proud to supply products to Kenya and other parts of East Africa. After the factory closed, though, “Poverty *inaingia*,” or poverty entered, as Macheso put it.⁹ Joseph Juma Lukorito described the current crisis in Webuye, “We are IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) by way of the company and unattended by the government.”¹⁰

This narrative represents a different local sense about the nature of postcolonial development and a different rural belief in what constituted the national interest, in contrast to that of Turbo residents. It also reveals a very different periodization of

⁶ KNA VF/12/16, From JN Kariuki for PS Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources to M/S Panafrikan Sawmills, Webuye, “Outstanding Amount – KSHS. 13,936,431.75,” 25th August, 1986.

⁷ Erick Ngobilo, *Daily Nation*, “Second Time Closure for Pan Paper,” October 6, 2010. The factory first closed in 2009 and then again in 2010, shortly after reopening.

⁸ Interview with James Karanja, Webuye, July 11, 2013.

⁹ Interview with Joab Siundu Macheso, Webuye, July 11, 2013.

¹⁰ Interview with Joseph Juma Lukorito, Webuye, July 12, 2013.

postcolonial challenges and disillusionment. For those in Webuye, the 1970s were a time of job creation, town growth, and general prosperity. For those in Turbo, depending on whether or not they got land, the disappointment of independence likely set in sooner. Squatters became disappointed in the 1960s when they were excluded from land resettlement programs and watched the government first try to take their land for forest and then give some of that land to “big men.” For those who did get land, disappointments became visible in different ways, possibly on account of their heavy land loans.¹¹

All these experiences, though they differed, entailed negotiations to access development resources. In attempting to access development, and in encountering state officials and transnational development actors, rural Kenyans formed ideas about state obligation, what it meant to be a Kenyan citizen, and about who controlled and allocated resources. As the ideas concretized, rural Kenyans formed new political relationships – often partnerships to trade political loyalty for land, resources, or services – and in doing so, they participated in creating a political culture that came to be defined by political patronage. Local negotiations over development were central to shaping this culture, but global forces and actors also made their way into these spaces. Neither global capital nor transnational institutions dictated how history would unfold, but they were significant. Alongside many other local and national dynamics, global forces shaped some of the development possibilities of this era. If nothing else, they created constraints that the

¹¹ James Ferguson has questioned the presumed teleologies underpinning much of the work on Africa and development in *Expectations of Modernity*. But, in questioning these teleologies, Ferguson put forth a totalizing periodization of decline emerging from global trends. In the case of copper miners in Zambia, the oil crisis and recession represented the global force. Ferguson, then, in fact, relies on a very conventional timeline. Though this timeline can be exported to other locations, it ignores the diverse and particular ways in which local economies are affected by global economic change in different historical circumstances.

national government debated about how to work within, and which were then reworked on the ground by local people.

Glossary

* Translations are from Kenyan Swahili to English, unless otherwise noted

ardhi – land

baba taifa – father of the nation

baraza – public political meeting

haraka – fast

harambee – pull together; cooperation; self-help

kibagenge – unity; community organizations (Kalenjin)

kipande – colonial identity document

kokwet – neighborhood (Kalenjin)

kujenga taifa – to build the nation

kulia – to cry

kupanda – to plant

kwenda – to go (*tunaenda* – we go)

maendeleo – development; progress

maguru – village elder

majimbo – states; region; (*majimboism* – federalism, regionalism)

matatu – minibuses

mwafrika – African (pl. *waafrika*)

mwanamke – woman (pl. *wanawake*)

mwananchi – citizen (pl. *wananchi*)

mti – tree (pl. *miti*)

mtoto – child (pl. *watoto*)

mtu – man; person (pl. *watu*)

mzee – elder (connotes respect); nickname of President Jomo Kenyatta

mzungu – white person; European (pl. *wazungu*)

pesa hizi zinakuuma – does this money itch you

pombe – locally-brewed beer

posho – maize meal or flour

safari – a trip

serikali – government

shamba – small farm

shauri – problem or issue

shida – problem

shirika – corporation, organization

tena – again

ugali – thick paste or porridge made from maize or millet flour; the staple food in many parts of East Africa

uhuru – independence; freedom

wabunge – Members of Parliament

wapi – where

wasi wasi – anxiety; worry

watu wakubwa – big people

Bibliography

ARCHIVES

Kenya

Kenya National Archives [KNA], Nairobi

The file numbers listed below reflect the classification system used from 2010-2013. (Some ministries are listed more than once, since the department codes changed over time, and/or the name and makeup of the ministries and departments changed during the historical period studied.)

AB	Ministry of Community Development
ACW	Ministry of Finance
AE	Ministry of Economic Planning and Development
AVS	Department of Land Adjudication (Ministry of Lands and Settlement)
BA	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
BN	Lands Office (Ministry of Lands and Settlement)
BV	Ministry of Agriculture
BY	Ministry of Health
CAB	Central Agricultural Board
DC/ELD	District Commissioner, Eldoret
DC/KMG	District Commissioner, Kakamega
DC/KPT	District Commissioner, Kaptabet
DC/TAMB	District Commissioner, Tambach
DC/UG	District Commissioner, Uasin Gishu
DX	Ministry of Lands and Settlement
HB	Provincial Commissioner, Western Province
JA	Ministry of Local Government
KA	Office of the President
KY	Housing Development Department (Ministry of Works)
MAA	Ministry of African Affairs
MOH	Ministry of Health
PC/NKU	Provincial Commissioner, Nakuru
PC/RVP	Provincial Commissioner, Rift Valley Province
TR	Ministry of Cooperative Development and Marketing
VF	Forestry Department (Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources)
XJ	Ministry of Education

Rift Valley Provincial Record Center [RVPRC], Nakuru

ED Uasin Gishu District
 ZL Land Disputes

United Kingdom***The National Archives of the UK, Kew***

CO 533 Colonial Office: Kenya Original Correspondence, 1905-1951
 CO 822 Colonial Office: East Africa: Original Correspondence, 1927-1964
 CO 895 Kenya Constituencies Delimitation Commission: Papers, 1962
 CO 897 Colonial Office: Kenya Regional Boundaries Commission: Papers, 1962
 CO 1054 Colonial Office and Successors: Maps and Plans: Post-1940 Collection
 DO 213 Commonwealth Relations Office and Commonwealth Office: East Africa
 Departments, 1963-1967
 DO 214 Commonwealth Relations Office and Commonwealth Office: East Africa
 Economic Department, 1964-1966
 FCO 31 Commonwealth Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office: East
 Africa Departments, 1967-1980
 FCO 141 Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Predecessors: Records of Former
 Colonial Administrations: Migrated Archives, 1835-2012
 FO 925 Foreign Office: Library: Maps and Plans
 OD 16 Department of Technical Co-operation and Successors: Personnel Services
 OD 26 Department of Technical Co-operation and Successors: East Africa
 Department, 1964-1975
 T 236 Treasury: Overseas Finance Division, 1919-1979

***School of Oriental and African Studies - University of London, Special Collections,
 London***

CA Christian Aid, c. 1946-1990s
 ICA Inter-Church Aid Constitutional Papers, 1949-60
 PP MS 17 Huntingford, George Wynn Brereton, 1920s-1974
 PP MS 46 Hake, Andrew, 1949-1991

***University of Oxford, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at
 Rhodes House, Oxford***

MSS Afr s 746 Papers of Sir Michael Blundell
 MSS Afr s 1669 Papers of William Crawford Heaney
 MSS Afr s 1688 Papers of J. Michael Popkin, 1946-64
 MSS Afr s 1843 Papers of Patrick Edward W. Williams
 MSS Afr s 2229/1 Papers of W.F.P. Kelly
 MSS Afr s 2234/1 Papers of T.G. Askwith

University of Cambridge, Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge

DOHP 118	Transcript of Interview – Buist, John
GBR/0014/AMEJ	The Papers of Julian Amery
GBR/0115/RCMS 161	The Papers of A.T. Matson
GBR/0115/RCMS 175	Kenya Days

PERIODICALS

<i>The Daily Nation</i>	<i>DN</i>
<i>The East African Standard</i>	<i>EAS</i>

ORAL INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted in eight small communities located on the edge of the western Rift Valley highlands. See Map 3.1.

Chekalini

Esipeya, Manasi, 11 January 2013
 Machayo, Alfred, 1 November 2012 and 11 January 2013
 Machayo, Florence, 1 November 2012
 Mtungu, Ngome, 17 November 2012
 Mulwa, Deputy, 1 November 2012
 Munyatta, David, 17 November 2012
 Oyalo, Wilberforce, 11 January 2013
 Wanyonyi, Samson, 17 November 2012

Leseru

Arusei, John, 15 January 2013
 Barno, Selena Chelimo, 28 November 2012
 Birir, Eunice, 27 November 2012
 Bitok, Daniel Kebeney, 26 November 2012
 Bwalei, Chebagui, 23 November 2012
 Cheptekeny, Ruth Malakwen, 9 January 2013
 Keino, Chelimo Martha, 19 November 2012
 Kipkalum, Anna Chelimo, 28 November 2012
 Kitur, Mary, 19 November 2012
 Kogo, Sally, 23 November 2012
 Lelelilan, Christopher, 26 November 2012
 Limo, Simon, 27 November 2012 and 10 July 2013
 Maina, Kiptoo arap, 23 November 2012
 Maiyo, Eunice Tele, 9 January 2013
 Metto, Phillip, 15 January 2013
 Ngososei, Kipkugat arap, 27 November 2012

Ngososei, Theresa, 27 November 2012
 Rongei, Tororei arap, 15 January 2013
 Rono, Susan, 22 November 2012
 Serem, Selena, 28 November 2012
 Sing'ari, Sylvester Barngetung, 19 November 2012
 Tanai, Philomon, 9 January 2013
 Teregin, Solome, 26 November 2012
 Tum Kiptulus, Frederick Kemboi arap, 22 November 2012 and 10 July 2013
 Tum, Pauline, 22 November 2012 and 10 July 2013

Lumakanda

Agatha, Difina, 3 November 2012
 Alulu, Ainea, 5 November 2012
 Bulimu, Benjamin, 30 October 2012
 Chanzu, Fenike, 9 November 2012
 Ibozo, Deina, 12 November 2012
 Jarenga, Theresa, 3 November 2012
 Kanyonyi, Florence, 7 November 2012
 Kegode, Ismael, 12 November 2012
 Kihinga, Jamin Maneno, 8 November 2012 and 9 July 2013
 Libapu, Jairo Murungo, 3 November 2012
 Maikuma, Alan, 3 November 2012
 Maneno, Rebecca Aliviza, 6 November 2012 and 9 July 2013
 Masista, Aaron, 2 November 2012
 Masiza, Veronica, 12 November 2012
 Matifali, Aston, 5 November 2012
 Matunda, James Musamusi, 2 November 2012 and 9 July 2013
 Mbailu, Festus, 6 November 2012
 Misavo, Karen, 31 October 2012
 Muchai, Peter, 6 November 2012
 Muriga, Solomon Ndeche, 9 November 2012
 Mwangi, Jotham Njau, 5 November 2012
 Nasambu, Felistas Muriga, 9 November 2012
 Nasimiyu, Grace, 12 November 2012
 Noyi, Mareb, 8 November 2012
 Olindo, Jotham, 13 November 2012
 Omamo, Rastos, 9 November 2012
 Sabatia, James, 31 October 2012
 Shioani, Muzole, 13 November 2012
 Sumba, Samson, 13 November 2012
 Visyafua, Coretta, 7 November 2012
 Wechuli, Aaron Juma, 1 November 2012
 Zieze, Patrick, 7 November 2012

Mautuma

Munge, Joseph Dugere, 11 November 2012
 Nyanya, Margaret Wanjiru, 11 November, 2012
 Wairimu, Ann, 11 November 2012

Sosiani

Bir'geng, Joseph arap, 20 November 2012
 Busianey, Kibet arap, 29 November 2012
 Busianey, Selena, 29 November 2012
 Chepkwony, Kimeli arap, 30 November 2012
 Chepkuto, Helen, 30 November 2012
 Chepng'ok, Joachim Kirua, 30 November 2012
 Katera, Zipora, 21 November 2012
 Keter, Hoseah arap, 21 November 2012
 Kirua, Helen, 3 December 2012
 Kuto, John arap, 30 November 2012
 Meiyo, Esther, 29 November 2012
 Ngetich, Pauline, 21 November 2012
 Ngetich, Steven Kiplemai, 3 December 2012
 Serem, Rael, 30 December 2012
 Serem, William, 3 December 2012
 Sitiene, Paul, 21 November 2012
 Sognok, Stanley arap, 20 November 2012
 Tororei, David, 3 December 2012

Sugoi

Boit, Wilson Cheruyot, 10 January 2013
 Keter, Michael, 14 January 2013
 Kiplagat, Samuel Kimeli, 10 January 2013
 Koech, Nelson Kiplagat, 14 January 2013
 Lagat, Dorcas, 10 January 2013
 Murei, Priscilla, 14 January 2013
 Mwangi, Elizabeth Wambui, 10 January 2013
 Nagaine, Shadrock Ngetich arap, 14 January 2013

Tapsagoi

Cherotich, Christina, 12 January 2013
 Choge, Stephen Kimeli, 12 January 2013
 Kili, Jemosbei Kirwa, 12 January 2013
 Kili, Jepkosgei Kirwa, 12 January 2013
 Kipkurui, Ruth Jepng'eno, 12 January 2013

Leleli, Chepsiror arap, 12 January 2013
 Sawe, Tiengik arap, 12 January 2013
 Sitienei, Laban Kipkurir arap, 12 January 2013
 Tanui, Nauma Jeptarus, 12 January 2013
 Terigin, Benjamin Kirwa, 12 January 2013

Webuye

Karanja, James, 11 July 2013
 Lukorito, Joseph Juma, 12 July 2013
 Machasio, Fred, 12 July 2013
 Macheso, Joab Siundu, 11 July 2013

PUBLISHED PRIMARY SOURCES

Abrams, P.D. *Kenya's Land Re-settlement Story: How 66,000 African Families Were Settled on 1325 Large Scale European Owned Farms*. Nairobi: Challenge Publishers and Distributors, 1979.

Government of Kenya, *Report of the Maize Commission of Inquiry* (Nairobi: Republic of Kenya, 1966).

Nottidge, C.P.R. *The Million-Acre Settlement Scheme, 1962 – 1966*. Nairobi: Dept. of Settlement, 1966.

SECONDARY LITERATURE

Allman, Jean and Victoria Tashjian. *'I Will Not Eat Stone': A Women's History of Colonial Asante*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000.

Alpers, Edward A. *Ivory and Slaves: Changing Pattern of International Trade in East Central Africa to the Later Nineteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983.

Anderson, David. *Eroding the Commons: The Politics of Ecology in Baringo, Kenya 1890-1963*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002.

_____. "‘Yours in Struggle for Majimbo’: Nationalism and the Party Politics of Decolonization in Kenya, 1955-64." *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 3 (2005): 547-564.

- Anderson, David and David Throup, "Africans and Agricultural Production in Colonial Kenya: The Myth of the War as a Watershed." *Journal of African History* 26, no. 4 (1985): 327-345.
- Anderson, David and Emma Lochery, "Violence and Exodus in Kenya's Rift Valley, 2008: Predictable and Preventable?" *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 2, no. 2 (July 2008): 328-343.
- Anderson, David and Vigdis Broch-Due, eds. *The Poor Are Not Us: Poverty and Pastoralism in Eastern Africa*. Oxford: James Currey, 1999.
- Ashforth, Adam. "Reckoning Schemes of Legitimation: On Commissions of Inquiry as Power/Knowledge Forms." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 3:1 (March 1990):1-22.
- Ashforth, Adam. *Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in South Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Askew, Kelly. *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Barkan, Joel David. "Development Through Self-Help: The Forgotten Alternative." *Rural Africana*, no. 19/20 (1984): 115-129.
- Barkan, Joel D. and Frank Holmquist, "Peasant-State Relations and the Social Base of Self-Help in Kenya." *World Politics* 41, no. 3 (1989): 359-380.
- Barkan, Joel D., Michael L. McNulty, and M.A.O. Ayeni, "'Hometown' Voluntary Associations, Local Development, and the Emergence of Civil Society in Western Nigeria." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 29, no. 3 (1991): 457-480.
- Bay, Edna, ed. *Women and Work in Africa*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1982.
- Bayart, Jean-Francois. *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*. London: Longman, 1993.
- Berger, Iris. *Threads of Solidarity: Women in South African Industry, 1900-1980*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.
- Berman, Bruce. *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1990.
- Berman, Bruce. "Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State: The Politics of Uncivil Nationalism." *African Affairs* 97, no. 388 (1998): 305-41.

- Berry, Sarah. *Cocoa, Custom, and Socio-Economic Change in Rural Western Nigeria*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.
- _____. *Fathers Work for Their Sons: Accumulation, Mobility, and Class Formation in an Extended Yoruba Community*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.
- _____. *No Condition Is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993.
- _____. *Cocoa, Custom, and Socio-Economic Change in Rural Western Nigeria*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.
- Bigsten, Arne. *Regional Inequality and Development: A Case Study of Kenya*. Nairobi, Kenya: Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, 1977.
- Boserup, Ester. *Woman's Role in Economic Development*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. "Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field." In *State/Culture: State Formation After the Cultural Turn*, ed. George Steinmetz. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.
- Bowman, Andrew. "Mass Production or Production by the Masses? Tractors, Cooperatives, and the Politics of Rural Development in Post-Independence Zambia." *Journal of African History* 52, no. 2 (2011): 201-21.
- Bozzoli, Belinda. "Marxism, Feminism, and South African Studies." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 9, no. 2 (1983): 139-171.
- _____. *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991.
- Branch, Daniel, Nicholas Cheeseman and Leigh Gardener, eds. *Our Turn to Eat: Politics In Kenya Since 1950*. Berlin: Lit, 2010.
- Branch, Daniel. *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963-2012*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.
- Briggs, Charles. *Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Brownhill, Leigh. *Land, Food, Freedom: Struggles for the Gendered Commons in Kenya, 1870 to 2007*. Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 2009.

- Case, Earl. "The Pastoral and Agricultural Industries of Kenya Colony." *Economic Geography* 6, no. 3 (1930): 243-256.
- Casida, John E., ed. *Pyrethrum: The Natural Insecticide*. New York: Academic Press, 1973.
- Chanock, Martin. *Law, Custom, and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Clarence-Smith, W.G. and Steven Topik, *The Global Coffee Economy in Africa, Asia and Latin America, 1500-1989*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Cohen, David and E.S. Atieno Odhiambo. *Siaya: The Historical Anthropology of an African Landscape*. London: James Currey, 1989.
- Comaroff, Jean and John Comaroff. *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa, Volume One*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1991.
- Cooper, Frederick. "Africa and the World Economy." *African Studies Review* 24, no. 2/3 (1981): 1-86.
- _____. "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking African Colonial History." *American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (1994): 1516-1545.
- _____. *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- _____. *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- _____. *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- _____. "Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective." *Journal of African History* 49, no. 2 (2008): 167-196.
- Cowen, Michael. "The Commercialization of Food Production in Kenya after 1945." In *Imperialism, Colonialism, and Hunger: East and Central Africa*, edited by R. Rotberg. Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1983.
- _____. "Change in State Power, International Conditions and Peasant Producers: The Case of Kenya." *Journal of Development Studies* 22, no. 2 (Jan. 1986): 355-384.

- Crais, Clifton. *The Politics of Evil: Magic, State Power, and the Political Imagination in South Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- _____. *Poverty, War, and Violence in South Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Davison, Jean. *Agriculture, Women, and Land: The African Experience*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1988.
- Ehret, Christopher. "Aspects of Social and Economic Change in Western Kenya, c. A.D. 500-1800." In *Kenya Before 1900*, ed. B.A. Ogot. Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1976.
- Ellis, Diana. "The Nandi Protest of 1923 in the Context of African Resistance to Colonial Rule in Kenya." *Journal of African History* 17, no. 4 (1976): 555-575.
- Ellis, Stephen. "Writing Histories of Contemporary Africa." *Journal of African History* 43, no. 1 (2002): 1-26.
- Fair, Laura. *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001.
- Feierman, Stephen. "Colonizers, Scholars, and the Creation of Invisible Histories." In *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, eds. Victoria Bonnell and Lynn Hunt. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Ferguson, James. *The Anti-Politics Machine: 'Development,' 'Depoliticization,' and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- _____. *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- _____. *Global Shadows: Africans in the Neoliberal World*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Ferguson, James and Akhil Gupta, "Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality." *American Ethnologist* 29, no. 4 (2002): 981-1002.
- Gadsden, Fay. "The African Press in Kenya, 1945-1952." *Journal of African History* 21, no. 4 (1980): 515-535.
- Geiger, Susan. "Women's Life Histories: Method and Content." *Signs* 11, no. 2 (1986): 334-351.

- _____. *Tanu Women: Gender and Culture in the Making of Tanganyikan Nationalism, 1955-1965*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1997.
- Geschiere, Peter. *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997.
- _____. *The Perils of Belonging: Autochthony, Citizenship, and Exclusion in Africa and Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Giblin, James. *A History of the Excluded: Making Family a Refuge from State in Twentieth Century Tanzania*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Goheen, Miriam. *Men Own the Fields, Women Own the Crops: Gender and Power in the Cameroon Grassfields*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996.
- Gow, David. *Countering Development: Indigenous Modernity and the Moral Imagination*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.
- Guyer, Jane. *Women's Work in the Food Economy of the Cocoa Belt: A Comparison*. Brookline, Mass.: African Studies Center, Boston University, 1978.
- _____. "Household and Community in African Studies." *African Studies Review* 24, no. 2/3 (1981): 87-137.
- Hamer, John H. "Preconditions and Limits in the Formation of Associations: The Self-Help and Cooperative Movement in Sub-Saharan Africa." *African Studies Review* 24, no. 1 (March 1981): 113-132.
- Harbeson, John. *Nation-Building in Kenya: The Role of Land Reform*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973.
- Haugerud, Angelique. "Land Tenure and Agrarian Change in Kenya." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 59, no. 1 (1989).
- _____. *The Culture of Politics in Modern Kenya*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Havinden, Michael and David Meredith. *Colonialism and Development: Britain and Its Tropical Colonies, 1850 – 1960*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Hay, Margaret Jean. "Economic Change in Late Nineteenth Century Kowe, Western Kenya." In *Hadith 5: Economic and Social History of East Africa*, edited by B.O. Ogot. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1976.

- Heyer, Judith. "Kenya's Cautious Development Plan." *East African Journal* (Aug. 1966).
- Hodgson, Dorothy. *Once Intrepid Warriors: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Cultural Politics of Maasai Development*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.
- Holmquist, Frank. "Self-Help: The State and Peasant Leverage in Kenya." *Africa* 54, no. 3 (1984): 72-91.
- Hopkins, A.G. *An Economic History of West Africa*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1973.
- _____. "The New Economic History of Africa." *Journal of African History* 50, no. 2 (2009): 155-177.
- Hyden, Goran. *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.
- Iiffe, John. *The African Poor: A History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Ivaska, Andrew. *Cultured States: Youth, Gender, and Modern Style in 1960s Dar es Salaam*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Jennings, Michael. "'We Must Run While Others Walk': Popular Participation and Development Crisis in Tanzania, 1961-9." *Journal of Modern African Studies* 41, no. 2 (2003): 163-87.
- _____. *Surrogates of the State: NGOs, Development, and Ujamaa in Tanzania*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2008.
- Joseph, Richard. *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Kanogo, Tabitha. *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau, 1905-63*. London: James Currey, 1987.
- Kanogo, Tabitha. "Kenya and the Second World War, 1939-1950." In *A Modern History of Kenya, 1895-1980*, edited by W.R. Ochieng. Nairobi: Evans Brothers Limited, 1989.
- Kanyinga, Karuti. "The Legacy of the White Highlands: Land Rights, Ethnicity and the Post-2007 Election Violence in Kenya." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 27, no. 3 (2009): 325-344.

- Kipkorir, Ben. *The Marakwet of Kenya: A Preliminary Study*. Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1973.
- Kipkorir, Ben. *People of the Rift Valley: Kalenjin*. London: Evans, 1978.
- Kisiara, Richard Otieno. "Labor Contracts in a Polyethnic Agricultural Resettlement in Western Kenya." PhD Diss., Washington University, 1998.
- Kitching, Gavin. *Class and Economic Change in Kenya: The Making of an African Petite-Bourgeoisie*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.
- Klopp, Jacqueline. "Can Moral Ethnicity Trump Political Tribalism? The Struggle for Land and Nation in Kenya." *African Studies* 61, no. 2 (2002): 269-294.
- Lal, Priya. "Militants, Mothers, and the National Family: *Ujamaa*, Gender, and Rural Development in Postcolonial Tanzania." *Journal of African History* 51, no. 1 (2010): 1-20.
- _____. "Self-Reliance and the State: The Multiple Meanings of Development in Early Post-Colonial Tanzania." *Africa* 82, no. 2 (2012): 212-234.
- Langley, Myrtle S. *The Nandi of Kenya: Life Crisis Rituals in a Period of Change*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979.
- Lawi, Yusufu Qwaray. "Tanzania's Operation Vijiji and Local Ecological Consciousness: The Case of Eastern Iraqwland, 1974-1976." *Journal of African History* 48, no. 1 (2007): 69-93.
- Leo, Christopher. "The Failure of the 'Progressive Farmer' in Kenya's Million-Acre Settlement Scheme." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 16, no. 4 (1978): 619-638.
- Leys, Colin. *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neocolonialism, 1964-71*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.
- _____. "Capital Accumulation, Class Formation, and Dependency: The Significance of the Kenyan Case." *Socialist Register* 15 (1978): 241-266.
- _____. "Kenya's Second Development Plan: Political and Administrative Aspects." *East Africa Journal* 7, no. 3 (1970): 6-12.
- Li, Tania Murray. *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

- Little, Peter. *The Elusive Granary: Herder, Farmer, and State in Northern Kenya*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Lonsdale, John. "The Emergence of African Nations: A Historiographical Analysis." *African Affairs* 67, no. 266 (1968): 11-28.
- Lonsdale, John and Bruce Berman, "Coping with the Contradictions: The Development of the Colonial State in Kenya, 1895-1914." *Journal of African History* 20, no. 4 (1979): 487-505.
- Lonsdale, John. "The Conquest State." In *A Modern History of Kenya, 1895-1980*, edited by W.R. Ochieng'. Nairobi: Evans Brothers Limited, 1989.
- Lynch, Gabrielle. *I Say to You: Ethnic Politics and the Kalenjin in Kenya*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Mackenzie, Fiona. *Land, Ecology and Resistance in Kenya, 1880 – 1952*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998.
- Macola, Giacomo. "'It Means As If We Are Excluded From the Good Freedom': Thwarted Expectations of Independence in the Luapula Province of Zambia, 1964-6." *Journal of African History* 47, no. 1 (2006): 43-56.
- MacGaffey, Janet. *The Real Economy of Zaire: The Contribution of Smuggling and Other Unofficial Activities to National Wealth*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991.
- Maddox, Gregory, James L. Giblin, and Isaria N. Kimambo eds., *Custodians of the Land: Ecology and Culture in the History of Tanzania*. James Currey: London, 1996.
- Mamdani, Mahmood. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Mann, Kristin and Richard Roberts, eds. *Law in Colonial Africa*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991.
- Marks, Shula. *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth Century Natal*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.
- Maxon, Robert. "The Years of Revolutionary Advance, 1920-1929." In *A Modern History of Kenya, 1895-1980*, edited by W.R. Ochieng'. Nairobi: Evans Brothers Limited, 1989.

- Mbembe, Achille. *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Moore, Sally Falk. *Social Facts and Fabrications: 'Customary' Law on Kilimanjaro, 1880 – 1980*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Mosley, Paul. *The Settler Economies: Studies in the Economic History of Kenya and Southern Rhodesia 1900-1963*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Mutongi, Kenda. *Worries of the Heart: Widows, Family, and Community in Kenya*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Ndegwa, Stephen. "Citizenship and Ethnicity: An Examination of Two Transition Moments in Kenya Politics." *The American Political Science Review* 91, no. 3 (1997): 599-616.
- Odhiambo, E.S. Atieno. "Ethnic Cleansing and Civil Society in Kenya 1969-1992." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 22, no. 1 (2004): 29-42.
- Ogot, B.A. and W.R. Ochieng'. *Decolonization and Independence in Kenya, 1940-93*. London: James Currey, 1995.
- Ogot, Bethwell A. *My Footprints on the Sands of Time: An Autobiography*. Victoria, B.C.: Trafford Publishers, 2011.
- Okoth-Ogendo, H.W.O. *Tenants of the Crown: Evolution of Agrarian Law and Institutions in Kenya*. Nairobi: ACTS Press, 1991.
- Omosule, Monone. "Kalenjin: The Emergence of a Corporate Name for the Nandi-Speaking Tribes of East Africa." *Geneve-Afrique* 27, no. 1 (1989): 73-88.
- Parsons, Timothy. *The African Rank-and-File: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1964*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999.
- Peters, Pauline. *Dividing the Commons: Politics, Policy, and Culture in Botswana*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994.
- _____. "Inequality and Social Conflict Over Land in Africa." *The Journal of Agrarian Change* 4, no. 3 (2004): 269-314.
- Peterson, Derek. *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004.

- Phillips, Kristin. "Dividing the Labor of Development: Education and Participation in Rural Tanzania." *Comparative Education Review* 57, no. 4 (2013): 637-661.
- Presley, Cora Ann. "The Mau Mau Rebellion, Kikuyu Women, and Social Change." *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 22, no. 3 (1988): 502-527.
- Robertson, Claire C. and Iris Berger, eds. *Women and Class in Africa*. New York: Africana Pub. Co, 1986.
- Ruthenberg, Hans. *African Agricultural Production Development Policy in Kenya, 1952-1965*. Berlin: Springer, 1966.
- Sabea, Hanan. "Mastering the Landscape? Sisal Plantations, Land, and Labor in Tanga Region, 1893-1980s." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 41, no. 3 (2008): 411-432.
- Santilli, Kathy. "Kikuyu Women in the Mau Mau Revolt: A Closer Look." *Ufahamu* 8, no. 1 (1977): 143-159.
- Sayer, Derek. "Everyday Forms of State Formation: Some Dissident Remarks on 'Hegemony.'" In *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, eds. Gilbert Joseph and Daniel Nugent, 367-77. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994.
- Schmidt, Elizabeth. *Peasants, Traders, and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1992.
- _____. *Cold War and Decolonization in Guinea, 1946-58*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007.
- Sheldon, Kathleen. *Pounders of Grain: A History of Women, Work, and Politics in Mozambique*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2002.
- Shepard, Todd. *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006.
- Shipton, Parker. *Mortgaging the Ancestors: Ideologies of Attachment in Africa*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Shipton, Parker and Mitzi Goheen. "Understanding African Landholding: Power, Wealth, and Meaning." *Africa* 62, no. 3 (1992): 307-325.
- Smith, James Howard. *Bewitching Development: Witchcraft and the Reinvention of Development in Neoliberal Kenya*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

- Snell, G.S. *Nandi Customary Law*. London: Macmillan, 1954.
- Somers, Margaret. *Genealogies of Citizenship: Markets, Statelessness, and the Right to Have Rights*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Sorrenson, MPK. *Land Reform in Kikuyu Country: A Study in Government Policy*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Southall, Aidan. "The Illusion of Tribe." In *The Passing of Tribal Man in Africa*, ed. Peter Gutkind. Leiden: Brill, 1970.
- Spear, Thomas and Richard Waller, *Being Maasai: Ethnicity and Identity in East Africa*. London: James Currey, 1993.
- Stichter, Sharon and Jane L. Parpart, eds. *Patriarchy and Class: African Women in the Home and the Workforce*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1988.
- Strobel, Margaret. *Muslim Women in Mombasa, 1890-1975*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.
- Sutton, John Edward Giles. "The Kalenjin." In *Kenya Before 1900*, ed. B.A. Ogot. Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1976.
- Thomas, Lynn. *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- Thomas-Slayter, Barbara P. *Politics, Participation, and Poverty: Development Through Self-Help in Kenya*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1985.
- Uvin, Peter. *Aiding Development: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda*. West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1998.
- Vail, Leroy and Landeg White. *Power and the Praise Poem: Southern African Voices in History*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1991.
- Van Beusekom, Monica M. *Negotiating Development: African Farmers and Colonial Experts at the Office Du Niger, 1920-1960*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002.
- Wasserman, Gary. *The Politics of Decolonization: Kenya, Europeans and the Land Issue 1960-1965*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- West, Harry. *Kupilikula: Governance and the Invisible Realm in Mozambique*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

- White, Luise. *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- Widner, Jennifer A. *The Rise of a Party-State: From "Harambee" to "Nyayo!"* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- Wipper, Audrey. "The Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization: The Co-optation of Leadership." *African Studies Review* 18, no. 3 (1975): 99-120.
- Youe, Christopher P. "Settler Capital and the Assault on the Squatter Peasantry in Kenya's Uasin Gishu District, 1942-63." *African Affairs* 87, no. 348 (1988): 393-418.
- Young, Crawford. *Cooperatives and Development: Agricultural Politics in Ghana and Uganda*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981.
- _____. *The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.