Marginalization and political participation on the Kenya coast:

the 2013 elections

In the months leading up to the election of March 2013, media coverage of politics at the Kenya coast focussed largely on the 'Mombasa Republican Council', whose self-styled leaders called repeatedly for a boycott of the election as part of their campaign for secession. A series of lethal, if localized, attacks raised the possibility of widespread violence, and there was much talk of widespread disaffection at the coast, as a consequence of decades of political and economic marginalization.

In the event, while there were a few savage attacks on police and polling stations on the night before the polls, fears of widespread disruption proved groundless. And despite relatively low levels of registration in some parts of the coast, the boycott did not materialize. Coast participation rates look relatively low – only one in four people at the coast voted, in contrast to the extraordinary turn-out in central Kenya and in key parts of Rift Valley. But a time series of electoral participation at the coast shows that participation rates were significantly higher than in any previous election; many more people voted than in previous elections, and there was a greater proportional increase in voting than in Kenya as a whole. Turnout rates at the coast did not rival those in central Kenya, but they suggest a population which is becoming more, not less, interested in voting. The MRC did not succeed in turning people against the elections; nor, apparently, did their activities crystallize the cohesion of the 'Coasterian' community which they claim to represent, or produce any acknowledged leader for that community. In analysing this failure, this paper will contribute to the modest but growing literature on the recent history and politics of the coast; and in analysing increasing participation, this paper will continue to a much wider literature on voting in Kenya, and in Africa more widely.

INSERT Table 1: comparative voter turnout, 2013 (derived from published IEBC figures)

INSERT: Table 2: comparative turnout in national elections since 1992 (derived from ECK and IEBC published figures).

Coastal identity and politics

The secessionist posturing of the MRC attracted a degree of public sympathy which suggests that many at the coast share a sense of 'marginalization'. But the history of this movement, and the events of the campaign, show clearly that this potential political community remains deeply riven, and that multiple ties of involvement with Kenyan politics outweigh any distinct 'coastal' identity.

The 'Republican Council' first announced its existence in 2005, with a lengthy letter to the British monarch, Queen Elizabeth.[1] The authors of that letter rehearsed a series of grievances familiar to many people at the coast - over access to land, education and employment. While the term 'marginalisation' is relatively new to the political lexicon at the coast, this sense of disadvantage has been a feature of the coast for decades, and has been identified as a defining feature of coastal politics.[2] The letter also made reference to the complicated legal history of the coast, which had in the colonial period been formally a protectorate, rather than part of Kenya Colony. That distinction had been removed just before Kenya became independent in 1963, in a series of agreements between the British government, the Sultan of Zanzibar, and the newly-elected prime minister of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta.[3] The 2005 letter claimed that under the terms of those agreements, the coast had the right to become independent, and they boldly declared that henceforth the coast would no longer be part of Kenya. A few weeks later, a police raid on what they described as a training camp led to the detention of some of those associated with the letter.

In 2010, in the context of the referendum on the new constitution, the letter's authors renewed their campaign of letter-writing; the new letters were addressed to parliamentarians in Kenya, and in the East African assembly. Like the letter to the Queen, they were photocopied and circulated as a form of popular propaganda in themselves; alongside them there appeared leaflets in the name of what by early 2011 was routinely called the 'Mombasa Republican Council', or MRC. The letters and leaflets repeated the earlier claims about the 1963 agreements, and the demand for independence.[4] By late 2011 people claiming to speak for the MRC were calling for a boycott of the elections, and police were breaking up meetings associated with the MRC and making significant numbers of arrests.[5]

As a vivid expression of coastal grievances, the call for secession evidently attracted a degree of sympathy. The sense that the coast has lost out is widespread – strikingly, the coast was the only one of the former provinces of Kenya in which an opinion poll in 2013 showed that a majority

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[1] Much of the discussion here echoes the argument made in Willis and Gona, '*Pwani C Kenya*?'.
[2] Mazrui, 'Ethnic voices and trans-ethnic voting'.
[3] Brennan, 'Lowering the Sultan's flag'.
[4] Willis and Gona, '*Pwani C Kenya?*', pp. 62-64.
[5] 'Politicians told to keep off MRC affairs', *The Star*, 29 Sep. 2011 < http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-47507/politicians-told-keep-mrc-affairs> (13 June 2013); '15 members of illegal MRC deny oath charge', *The Star,* 27 Sep. 2011 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-47838/15-members-illegal-mrc-deny-oath-charge> (13 June 2013); '18 members of banned gang seized', *Daily Nation*, 24 Oct. 2011 < http://www.nation.co.ke/News/regional/18-members-of-banned-gang-seized-/-/1070/1261290/-/qosn9gz/-/index.html> (13 June 2013).

believed that they were worse off than in 2007.[6] The clumsy brutality with which meetings were broken up encouraged this, as did a sense of dissatisfaction with elected politicians.[7] Those who claimed to speak for the MRC pulled the rug from under the feet of coast parliamentarians with a vivid articulation of coastal grievances which offered a dramatic inversion of politics-as-normal: suddenly, the shabbily-dressed and marginal were asserting that law and international treaties were on their side. The style and language of those who claimed the MRC mantle were quite distinct: unlike civil society activists and politicians, they were not college-educated, English-speaking and smartly dressed, and they rejected calls to form into a civil society organization or a political party. That politicians felt threatened by the MRC was clear enough. Many coast MPs rushed to express their understanding of the MRC's concerns, even as they denounced its stated political goals.[8] When Najib Balala launched his new party in early October 2012, he went out of his way to mention the concerns of the MRC.[9] Some commentators noted that the initials of his Republican Congress party, combined with the prancing horse which was its symbol, seemed to have been arranged to look rather like the letters MRC.

But despite this apparent popularity, it was clear from the outset that 'the MRC' was not closely-disciplined in its organization, or coherent in its message. There have been various reports of membership cards and the payment of subscriptions, and claims to an elaborate hierarchy of branches office-holders, but in practice the name of the MRC has been available for appropriation by anyone who cares to use it, leading to considerable uncertainty over its agenda and constituency.[10] That uncertainty reveals a fundamental weakness: the shared sense of marginalization has not itself been enough to create a real political community of *wapwani*, or 'coasterians', because the potential community is deeply divided as to how exactly to understand their marginalization.

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[6] IPSOS Political Barometer survey, 22 Feb. 2013< http://www.ipsos.co.ke/home/index.php/downloads> (16 June 2013).

[7] 'MRC saga offers mixed bag for Coast MPs', *Digital Standard*, 5 Aug. 2012 < http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000063416&story_title=mrc-saga-offers-mixed-bag-for-coast-mps> (13 June 2013)

[8] 'Politicians are reaching out to us, claims MRC', *The Star*, 7 December 2011 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/local/coast/52815-politicians-are-reaching-out-to-us-claims-mrc> (29 August 2012); 'Mwakwere now backs outlawed youth group', *The Star*, 24 October 2011 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/local/coast/45871-mrc> (29 August 2012); 'Muslim leaders ask State to lift ban on outlawed group', *Daily Nation*, 6 February 2012 <http://allafrica.com/stories/201202070775.html> (29 August 2012);

[9] 'My party supports MRC grievances, says Balala', *The Star*, 1 Oct. 2012 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-200/my-party-supports-mrc-grievances-says-balala> (13 June 2013)

[10] For the suggestion that the MRC is a highly structured organization, see 'How Mombasa Republican Council funds its activities', *Digital Standard*, 22 May 2013 <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000084143&story_title=how-mrc-funds-its-activities> (15 June 2013).

Perhaps ironically, the *wapwani* may seem most cohesive when viewed from elsewhere in Kenya: the Coast - as an imagination - always emerges when the rest of Kenya is conversing with, or about, the region. "Coasterians" is a word which emerged and was used by up-country students to refer to students from the former Coast Province who secured places to study in the prestigious national schools that were all located outside the Coast.[11] A striking feature of 2012 and 2013 was the way in which the MRC became the way in which 'up-country' debated with and about the 'the Coast', in a language which was often accusatory or recriminatory. Participants on both sides of that debate repeatedly evoked two contrasting images of Kenya: as the inclusive nation which embraces the coast, and as a distinctive up-country world which is culturally and politically remote.[12] But from within, it was much less clear who the *wapwani* were, or how they should understand their position. Different readings of marginalization divide this potential community into smaller communities which are imagined and lived on a more daily basis: Arabs and Mijikenda, Christians and Muslims, one Mijikenda group against another. Historians and anthropologists have repeatedly demonstrated the   permeability and flexibility of categories of identity on the coast; but their work has also shown that at any given moment these categories have substantial affective power, shaping and constraining people's sense of their interests and their obligations.[13] There are geographical divides, too: different patterns of local concern distinguish the area from the Tana River and northwards from the southern coast.

Such divisions meant that the MRC slogan of *Pwani si Kenya*, while attractive in its simplicity, could not become the basis of a coherent movement – indeed, it might even be ambiguous, serving as a plea for greater inclusion, rather than a defiant assertion of secessionist intent. The appeal to treaties and agreement could be seen as an attempt to create a legal claim free from any ethnic implications. But the printed material bearing the name of the MRC, and some of those who spoke in support of it, could be more exclusive in their ideas about identity. Some expressed the claim to coastal autonomy in terms of autochthony, privileging a Mijikenda claim to authority; and they

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[11] Goldsmith, *The Mombasa Republican Council.*
https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&ved=0CDgQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.kecosce.org%2Fdownloads%2FMRC_Conflict_Assessment_Threats_and_Opportunities_for_Engagement.pdf&ei=QRW_UZeXHeHK0QWsslCwCg&usg=AFQjCNFLA2oKA96QQsBbIZZoC70aMYWCpw&sig2=7THZOIvvxM7k0zCo184gaA&bvm=bv.47883778,d.d2k (17 June 2013), p. 33.
[12] See for example Mathiu Mutuma, "Cry the Beloved Pwani: why I will not be retiring at the Coast any time soon," Daily Nation, October 11, 2012 < http://www.nation.co.ke/blogs/-/446718/1532912/-/view/asBlogPost/-/p4583r/-/index.html>; Paul Goldsmith, 'It's time to stop demonizing Mombasa Republican Council and Look at Real Issues,' *The East African*, Saturday, December 1<http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/OpEd/comment/Stop-demonising-MRC-look-at-real-issues/-/434750/1634082>
[13] Parkin, 'Swahili Mijikenda: facing both ways in Kenya'; McIntosh**,** *The Edge of Islam*; Willis and Gona, 'Tradition, Tribe, and State in Kenya'.

pointedly excluded Arabs, Asians and Swahili from their list of coastal people.[14] While people at the coast can feel a shared sense of grievance against 'up country' people there are multiple tensions within this imagined coast community – notably over land. Many people at the coast are squatters, and while some denounce 'up-country' people, others are equally quick to accuse Arabs of having dispossessed them, especially on the southern half of the coast.

The significance of the divide between Arab and Mijikenda became quickly apparent in the wake of a series of violent incidents blamed on the MRC. Those who claimed to speak for the MRC had insisted that their methods were peaceful – though they had also implicitly threatened violence.[15] A mock election in Malindi in March 2012 – held to test procedures for managing the complex six-ballot elections - was attacked. [16] A few months later police raided an oathing ceremony which they alleged was linked to the MRC (though photographs of the flags which they seized seemed to mention another, even more ephemeral, organization); fifteen people died in circumstances which remain unclear.[17] Days after that, there was an incident at a campaign rally by Amason Kingi (an ODM gubernatorial candidate, and one of those who had expressed sympathy for the concerns of the MRC). A policeman was killed, as well as three of the attackers.[18] Rumours circulated that the name of the MRC was being used in pursuit of aims quite unrelated to secession: the prominent coastal politician, Chirau Mwakwere, had already implied that the organization represented urban Mombasans, rather than a rural Mijikenda community, and now he went further and accused a 'certain community' of 'landowners' of using the MRC to try and disrupt the implementation of the new constitution, which would have threatened their position.[19] Two people who claimed to be original members of the Republican Council came forward to tell the press the same story: that they had not initially sought secession, but that the agenda had been hijacked by 'agents of the land-

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[14] Willis and Gona, '*Pwani c Kenya?*', pp. 67-70.

[15] James Macharia, 'Separatist storm brewing on Kenya's coast', Reuters, 23 July 2012, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/07/23/uk-kenya-coast-mrc-idUKBRE86M0H820120723> (29 August 2012)

[16] 'Outlawed gang disrupts mock Malindi polls', *Daily Nation*, 24 Mar. 2012 <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/politics/Outlawed-gang-disrupts-mock-polls-/-/1064/1373206/-/12ugc1vz/-/index.html> (13 June 2013);

[17] 'Kaloleni death toll rises to 15', *Daily Nation*, 28 Sep. 2012 <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/Kaloleni-death-toll-rises-to-15-/-/1056/1520538/-/t4oxos/-/index.html> (13 June 2013)

[18] 'Four killed in panga attack on minister', *Daily Nation*, 4 Oct. 2012 <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/1525182/-/xtax6pz/-/index.html> (13 June 2013)

[19] 'MRC says it's not working for tycoons in Mombasa', *The Star*, 4 January 2012 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/local/coast/56373-mrc-says-its-not-working-for-tycoons-in-mombasa> (29 August 2012); 'Rich landowners behind secession push: Mwakwere', *Daily Nation,* 25 Oct. 2012 <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/Rich-land-owners-behind-secession-push-Mwakwere/-/1056/1598416/-/apvsyp/-/index.html> (13 June 2013)

owning class' belonging to a 'certain community'.[20] Given the content of the 2005 letter, this seems entirely implausible, but it was, at least, evidence of the significance of the tension amongst the 'coasterians.' At the same time, Mwakwere was locked in a long, and ultimately unsuccessful, tussle with Balala to be accepted by Uhuru Kenyatta and his allies as the representative of coast interests; their contest had also taken on very explicitly ethnic overtones.[21]

Alternative rumours circulated, too: alleging that the violence of October had been arranged neither by the MRC, nor by big landowners, but by coastal politicians who feared the popularity of the MRC; or that it was the work of national politicians who wanted to disrupt registration at the coast, or to intimidate up-country voters. 'Police sources' reported that prominent coast politicians and businessmen were funding the group.[22] Rumours were fanned by the curious intervention of Gideon Mbuvi, also known as 'Sonko', the populist Nairobi politician who was to win the Nairobi senator seat on a TNA ticket. In November he stood bail for the most prominent figures associated with the MRC, who had been arrested after the October violence.[23] Since the Mombasa preacher Sheikh Mohammad Dor had been arrested for saying publicly that he would be willing to 'help' the detained men if requested, there was some public surprise both that Sonko decided to offer bail, and that he was allowed to provide it.[24] The released men restated their commitment to peaceful methods, but also repeated their calls for an election boycott.[25]

By December, however, it was clear that these calls had little effect. Registration at the coast was lower than in some other parts of the country, and was particularly low in Kwale district, seen by some as the heartland of the MRC. But there was nothing like a general boycott, and while some of the MRC leaders tried to use a court case against the elections as a focus for demonstrations, the

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[20] 'MRC founders: separation was not part of original agenda', *Digital Standard*, 16 Oct. 2012 <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000068550&story_title=MRC-founders:-separation-was-not-part-of-original-agenda> (13 June 2013)

[21] 'Mwakwere and Balala fight for G7 coast supremacy', *Daily Nation*, 11 Nov 2012 <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/politics/Mwakwere-and-Balala-fight-for-G7-Coast-supremacy/-/1064/1617594/-/qh9yeh/-/index.html> (10 June 2013); 'Mwakwere and Balala G7 turf wars selfish, say Coast leaders', *Daily Nation* (print), 16 Nov. 2012, p. 2; 'Mwakwere-Balala power wars threaten unity in the Coast', *Sunday Nation* (print), 18 Nov 2012, p. 30.

[22] '3 Coast MPs probed over MRC links', *The Star*, 13 Oct. 2012<http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-90815/3-coast-mps-probed-over-mrc-links> (13 June 2013)

[23] 'Sonko strikes peace deal with MRC leaders', *Daily Nation*, 5 Nov. 2012 <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/politics/Sonko-strikes-peace-deal-with-MRC-leaders/-/1064/1611530/-/m29mtcz/-/index.html> (13 June 2013)

[24] 'Sheikh Dor denies incitement charge, freed on bail', *Daily Nation*, 18 Oct. 2012 <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/politics/Sheikh-Dor-denies-incitement-charge-freed-on-bail/-/1064/1536258/-/27o3jyz/-/index.html> (13 June 2013)

[25] MRC's Mraja and Randu finally released on bail', *The Star*, 17Nov. 2012 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-95950/mrcs-mraja-and-randu-finally-released-bail> (4 June 2013); 'MRC in new bid to block polls in Coast despite voter registration', *The Standard* (print), 19 Dec. 2012, p. 2.

turnout for these was very modest.[26] Others associated with the MRC publicly registered as voters, or announced their intention of standing as candidates.[27] As the campaigns began, it was apparent that people were far more likely to turn up for election rallies than for anti-election demonstrations.

Meanwhile, oathing of young men was reported to be continuing, though it was not clear who was paying for it, or what exactly the oaths bound them to do.[28] Leaflets threatening those who registered or voted were circulated; some of them specifically threatened people of up-country origin. [29]There were further minor incidents involving attacks on the police.[30] Then, on the eve of the election itself, came the most coordinated violence of all: in the space of a few hours police patrols were attacked in the Mombasa suburbs of Miritini and Mshomoroni and a polling station was attacked in the suburb of Mlaleo. Shortly afterwards, a chief's camp was attacked in the rural hinterland, in Jibana, and finally a tallying centre at Chumani, on the north coast, was briefly overrun by a gang which destroyed vehicles as well as attacking people. In all ten security officers and around nine other people were reported killed. The attacks were all similar – perpetrated by young men, dressed in blue or black clothes with red cloth tied around their heads, and armed with machetes. Quite how many were involved in total is not clear; nor is it clear if the attackers were all different, or belonged to one or two groups which moved from one attack on to the next by vehicle.[31] The security services seem to have been surprisingly unprepared for the attacks; and while some arrests were subsequently made (including, after a time, the nominal leaders of the MRC), a degree of mystery still hangs around these events.[32]

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[26] 'Seeking autonomy', *The Standard* (print), 19 Dec. 2012, p.10; 'Judges dismiss MRC breakaway case', *Daily Nation* (print) 21 Dec. 2012, p. 35

[27] 'Change of heart as ex-MRC leader enlists as voter', *Digital Standard,* 27 Nov. 2012 <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000071589&story_title=change-of-heart-as-ex-mrc-leader-enlists-as-voter> (13 June 2013); 'Two ex-MRC officials to vie for Junda, Likoni wards', *The Star*, 19 Jan. 2013 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-103513/two-ex-mrc-officials-vie-junda-likoni-wards> (30 June 2013).

[28] 'MRC suspects face oathing charges', *The Star,* 5 Feb. 2013 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-105862/mrc-suspects-face-oathing-charge> (16 June 2013)

[29] 'Kisauni DC orders crackdown against anti-voting leaflets', *The Star*, 3 Dec. 2012 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-98004/kisauni-dc-orders-crackdown-against-anti-voting-leaflets> (16 June 2013); 'Hateful leaflets spark tension in Mombasa', *The Star*, 23 Feb. 2013 <http://allafrica.com/stories/201302250308.html> (16 June 2013).

[30] 'Police injured in petrol bomb attack on station', *Daily Nation*, 3 Dec. 2012 <http://mobile.nation.co.ke/News/Police-injured-in-petrol-bomb-attack-on-station/-/1290/1635296/-/format/xhtml/-/12aguaqz/-/index.html> (16 June 2013)

[31] 'KDF deployed to Mombasa after gang kills police officers', *Daily Nation, 4 March 2013* < http://elections.nation.co.ke/news/KDF-deployed-to-Mombasa-following-night-attack/-/1631868/1710756/-/s49jpu/-/index.html > (16 Hune 2013); 'MRC attack leaves six policemen, six attackers dead, *The Star,* 5 March 2013 < http://184.106.76.113/news/article-110568/mrc-attack-leaves-six-policemen-six-attackers-dead> (16 June 2013)

[32] 'MRC suspects charged with four Mombasa police killings', *The Star*, 6 Mar. 2013 < http://starreport.co.ke/news/article-110696/mrc-suspects-charged-four-mombasa-police-killings> (16 June 2013)

Whatever their intention, and whoever organized them, the effect of these attacks was evident but ultimately limited. In a number of polling stations, voting was significantly reduced: while all stations opened - though in some cases rather late - the police and/or the IEBC (it was not clear which) closed some early, citing security concerns. A rough estimate suggests that voting was reduced by around two thousand people in the most directly-affected areas; the wider effect of the violence on turnout is really impossible to gauge. But still, the evidence of the poll is clear enough: overall, the MRC campaign did not lead to a boycott, nor did it create any new sense of unity among the 'coasterians'. Writing in the 1990s, Tom Wolf echoed an argument made by Richard Stren some twenty years earlier: despite the widespread sense of marginalization, a factional coastal politics have been dominated by up-country concerns, as divisions among the coast population consistently prove more powerful than any shared sense of coastal identity.[33] The evidence of the 2013 election seems to confirm the continuation of this pattern: despite the widespread use of the term *wapwani*, there is no real evidence of a coherent coastal political identity.

Electoral participation, patronage, and political culture

Increased participation in the elections is evidence not simply of the failure of the MRC. It shows how a political culture based on patronage and personal ties can draw people into a wider political system – involving even those who may more generally feel excluded and alienated. The results of this were complex. Alongside the overall increase in voter turnout, there was another striking feature of the elections of 2013 at the coast. Raila Odinga's presidential vote was significantly higher than in 2007 – not just in numbers, but as a proportion of the vote.

INSERT Table 3: presidential votes cast for Raila Odinga in Coast Province (derived from ECK and IEBC published figures)

And, despite a vigorous campaign which brought the Jubilee team to the coast more than once, Uhuru Kenyatta captured fewer votes, and a much smaller proportion of votes, than Kibaki had in 2007.

INSERT Table 4: presidential votes coast for Mwai Kibaki and Uhuru Kenyatta (derived from ECK and IEBC published figures).

These trends were apparent right along the coast. The distribution of the votes suggests that much of Uhuru's support may have come from 'up-country' voters. In rural Mijikenda constituencies, such

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[33] Wolf, 'Contemporary politics'; Stren 'Factional politics and central control in Mombasa'.

as Magarini and Ganze, he received almost no votes at all, but in constituencies with a high proportion of Kikuyu settlers, such as Lamu West, he outpolled Raila.

 INSERT Table 5: increase in presidential votes for Raila Odinga by county (derived from IEBC published figures).

While opinion polls have been generally criticised for failing to predict Uhuru's victory in the presidential election nationally, on the coast they actually underestimated the extent of Raila's vote (the February IPSOS opinion poll had put Raila on 73% at the coast). It would be possible to explain this with a particularist coastal argument, linked to the new constitution. Since the 1950s, the idea of devolution has been popular at the coast; this was a stronghold of KADU in the early 1960s, and in the early 1990s it was the coast-based Shirikisho Party (among whose original founders was Chirau Mwakwere's elder brother) which was the most explicit advocate of a new majimboism.[34] But while the vote for Raila might be seen as an expression of coastal support for the new constitution, that seems unlikely to be the complete explanation. In discussion of the 2010 constitution, some who claimed to represent coast opinion made clear their dissatisfaction at the very modest decentralization offered by the new constitution. The *vijimbo* constitution, as some dismissively call it, did not capture overwhelming support at the coast – a majority voted for it, but on a turnout of only 537,000 voters, considerably more modest than that of 2013. The failure of the 2010 constitution provisions on devolution to match up with popular conceptions of devolution - which included strong local control for minerals, public sector service jobs, land and ports - reduced local enthusiasm for the new counties. And there was more than a little scepticism at the coast about the sincerity of Raila's interest in regional grievances, as was apparent from the somewhat cynical response to his announcement of a new 'taskforce' to investigate these grievances.[35]

 An understanding of the high turnout may, therefore, lie in an understanding of Kenyan politics and voter participation more widely; and through discussion of these we will suggest that the high turnout in the presidential contest was actually at least in part a by-product of the coincidence of multiple polls. George Gona's study of the 2007 election emphasised the importance of local factors in coastal elections; and it seems that in 2013, again many voters were participating primarily because of an interest in local contests – for governor, MP or even ward representative.[36]

David Throup and Charles Hornsby have characterised Kenyan voting as a matter of 'bribe and tribe'; a wider, more cautiously- expressed literature, has since the 1960s consistently suggested that

[34] Mazrui, 'Ethnic voices and trans-ethnic voting', pp. 285-7.

[35] 'Historical injustices team stirs up controversy', *Sunday Nation* (print), 16 Dec. 2012, p. 28.

[36] Gona, 'Changing political faces on Kenya's coast.'

electoral choices are driven by ideas about trust and obligation. [37] These incline voters towards those with whom they have some affective bond expressed as identity: clans in rural areas, ethnicity in urban areas. Alongside this, voters are also engaged in a kind of bargaining with candidates, from whom they seek to extract both immediate returns in terms of money or other gifts, and longer-term promises of support – for them as individuals, for their families, or for an area – which may prove harder to cash in. [38] While some have argued that politics in Kenya was significantly changed in the 1980s (as Moi tried to reshape the neo-patrimonial system to secure his power) and again in the 1990s (with multi-partyism) this analysis of the concerns and interests of the ordinary voter has remained consistent. Similar arguments have been made of voters' motivations, and of candidates' campaigns, elsewhere in Africa, though with varying emphases. Elections have been derided as no more than ethnic censuses in some cases, while Staffan Lindberg has suggested that increasingly competitive multi-party elections may simply push up the cost of patronage and entrenched neo-patrimonialism. [39] As Paul Nugent has drily noted

> In most African countries where there has been a meaningful movement towards multi-partyism, one could be forgiven for thinking elections are an extension of the marketplace . . . The public typically trades votes for more or less concrete pledges of expenditure. [40]

The 2013 campaign at the Kenya coast seems to fit both the particular analyses of Kenya and the wider argument. Candidates at every level promised jobs, development, and improved public services. Those who read manifestos in detail would have found differences between major parties, but campaigning - in rallies and meetings, in leaflets and on posters – was all about establishing the personal reliability and generosity of the individual candidates.

The importance of patronage, and of local competitions for status, can be seen through a local study of the workings of parties, and the motivations and activities of candidates. At the coast, as elsewhere in Kenya, there are two kinds of parties. There are those small parties whose nominal existence has been stable for some years: at the coast Shirikisho and KADU-Asili are obvious examples, but there are others, such as Chama cha Uzalendo and the Kenya National Congress. These parties have no significant resources or enduring membership, and the only constant

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[37] Throup and Hornsby, *Multi-party Politics in Kenya*, p. 340.

[38] Hyden and Leys, 'Elections and politics in single-party systems'; Berg-Schlosser, 'Modes and meaning of political participation in Kenya'; Throup, 'Elections and political legitimacy in Kenya'; Nic Cheeseman, 'Kenya since 2002'.

[39] Chabal, 'A few considerations on democracy in Africa'; Lindberg, ''It's our time to 'chop'; Gyimah-Boadi, 'Political parties, elections and patronage'.

[40] Nugent, 'Banknotes and symbolic capital', p. 255.

manifestations of their existence are their 'offices', located in shuttered and deserted roadside shops or on the third-floor of shabby walk-up office blocks in less desirable parts of town, which double as the business address of a local patron. Then there are large parties, which burst into brief and dazzling existence for the purpose of an election. These large parties create offices, hire staff, and spend extremely large sums: but they rely on the energies and wealth of local patrons, and on the activation of business and social networks, rather than on a stable and enduring organization. They are campaign machines, rather than being parties in the sense of bodies for deliberating policy. ODM, and to some extent WDM, are combinations of these two kinds of party: they have been around for much longer than the Jubilee parties against which they were contending, but they too have almost nothing in the way of enduring structures. In a real sense they exist to gather and spend money for the campaign.

At the coast (and presumably elsewhere, too), parties of the first kind offered no financial support to their candidates in the 2013 elections, and almost nothing in terms of local organization. Their nominations were rarely the subject of contest; instead, they sold them, and in effect all they provided was a sort of counselling service for prospective candidates, guiding them through the bureaucratic processes of the election – the gathering of signatures of support, and the preparation of papers to submit to the IEBC. The big parties, by contrast, could offer financial support (though the extent of this evidently varied), and they used their networks of support to mobilize local activists in support of campaigns. Where a wealthy and influential local figure put their own money and social capital behind a national party which also had resources of its own, as with ODM in Mombasa, this could create a locally formidable electoral machine. However, it also created problems, in that hopefuls vying for the privilege of nomination suspected the local patron of favouritism towards particular aspirants, and the weakness of party organization made the nomination process deeply untransparent.[41]

Candidates were also of varying types. Many may have been motivated by the idea of public service; the post-election behaviour of the successful candidates is, however, a reminder that all were concerned also to secure the rewards of office, in terms of pay, status and privilege.[42] The campaign will soon have taught candidates that the electorate expect their politicians to be generous with

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[41] 'Wrangles rock ODM campaign', *Daily Nation,* 26 Nov 2012 <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/politics/Wrangles-rock-ODM-campaign/-/1064/1629844/-/kmsusfz/-/index.html> (10 June 2013); 'Change, experience clash at Mombasa governor race', *The Standard* (print), 12 Dec. 2012, pp. 20-21; 'ODM won't give direct nomination says Joho', *The Star*, 2 Jan. 2013 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-101197/odm-wont-give-direct-nomination-says-joho> (10 June 2013).

[42] 'MPs vote to increase their salaries', *Standard Digital*, 28 May 2013, http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000084620

both wealth and influence. 18% of those surveyed at the coast in a post-election poll acknowledged

receiving gifts from candidates (money and clothes being the main forms of gift) – roughly in line

with the national average of 20%.[43] There may be under-reporting here: there is extensive

anecdotal and eye-witness evidence of the distribution of cash, in particular, which was a feature of

many meetings. One candidate, exasperated by constant, aggressive, demands for cash hand-outs,

called for the government to provide physical protection for candidates.[44] More importantly, the

direct gift was, anyway, only one form of patronage. Voters also expected candidates to be able to

negotiate on their behalf with multiple levels of officialdom, from parking warden to police inspector

to permanent secretary. Some candidates were personally relatively well-off, in terms of money and

status, and ploughed their own stock of both into the campaign in the expectation that it would

yield a return. For such candidates the key was to match their ambitions to their relative wealth, and

to run for the appropriate level of office – whether county ward representative or governor. Other

candidates had little personal wealth – or found that the campaign rapidly ran through their

resources – but had a degree of social capital which others sought to harness to particular parties.

Some were sponsored by the start by patrons, who – in pursuit of their own wider interests -

decided which party they should stand for; others were forced to seek such patrons as the campaign

progressed, and had to change parties. This had dramatic effect in Mombasa, where candidates

associated with Hassan Joho – sitting MP for Kisauni, and candidate for the governorship - secured

all the major nominations for ODM. Joho evidently spent freely on his own campaign, and in support

of those who he favoured. The primaries were as chaotic at the coast as they were in elsewhere in

Kenya, with multiple accusations of rigging, and with people who were neither registered voters nor

ODM members apparently being allowed to participate in some places; the sense of chaos was

confirmed by later complains from ODM staff that they had not been paid for their work.[45] In

advance of the nominations one candidate, Hassan Sarai Omar, moved parties to join Wiper rather

than face what he claimed would be a rigged election. The problems in process were not confined

to ODM.[46] Suleiman Shahbal, Joho's main rival for the governorship, defected again, from UDF to

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[43] Infotrak poll, 23-30 June 2013; further detail available from authors.

[44] 'Senator hopeful wants security', *The Star*, 9 Feb 2013 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-106679/senator-hopeful-wants-security> (10 June 2013).

[45] 'Kilifi ODM polling clerks, presiding officers up in arms over payment', *The Star* 21 Jan. 2013 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-103650/kilifi-odm-polling-clerks-presiding-officers-arms-over-payment> (11 June 2013)

[46] 'Disorder, violence reign in Jubilee, CORD primaries', *Digital Standard*, 18 Jan. 2013 <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000075300&story_title=Disorder,-violence-reign-in-Jubilee,-CORD-primaries> (10 June 2013); 'TNA cancels Kilifi South, Malindi constituency nomination results', *The Star*, 21 Jan. 2013 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-103651/tna-cancels-kilifi-south-malindi-constituency-nomination-results> (11 June 2013.

WDM. In doing so he displaced Abdullah Mwaruwa, who had hoped to be the WDM candidate, and who sought solace – and funds - in a TNA candidacy.[47] In Kilifi, one governor candidate (Francis Baya, a former provincial commissioner) who had been a KADU-Asili MP, moved first to the Federal Party of Kenya and then – at the moment of nominations – to URP. In each case, candidates were presumably trading local influence against the possibility of sponsorship.[48]

And, finally, there were some candidates, who knew that they had no realistic chance of winning, but who became candidates for big parties simply in order to gain sponsorship, in the expectation that the largesse they could offer in the course of their unsuccessful election bid would add to their local status. At the coast, this seems to have been particularly common with candidates for TNA, which became known as 'the money party'. Wealthy local TNA supporters sponsored candidates who they knew could not win simply in order to provide a focus for voter mobilization and a visible presence, with their eye on the importance of gathering presidential votes. In turn, these local patrons hoped to catch the eye, and the future favour, of national leaders. These multiple considerations drove many to compete for office, despite the cost of standing: 1,058 candidates stood for the 129 seats in the six county assembles; and 218 candidates for the 25 national assembly seats from the coast.

And quite apart from candidates and patrons, there were many people who offered themselves to candidates as national or local agents and intermediaries. Rivalrous elder men who claimed 'traditional' authority, clerics competing for recognition as religious leaders, coordinators of civil society organizations vying for influence – all saw the elections as an opportunity to pursue their interests. All insisted that they alone could speak for and influence 'their' constituency, whether they defined this as a particular ethnic group, a whole religious community, a congregation or simply the neighbourhood. All denounced other aspiring intermediaries as impostors. In return they demanded patronage from candidates – and sometimes from international donors seeking to provide electoral support. Self-proclaimed *kaya* elders blessed candidates or organized peace walks; preachers endorsed particular parties; earnest men who claimed to represent the grass-roots

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[47] 'Coast bedfellows mark battle lines', *Daily* Nation, 20 Jan 2013 <http://elections.nation.co.ke/news/Coast-bedfellows-mark-battle-lines/-/1631868/1669872/-/e4ldkdz/-/index.html> (11 June 2013)

[48] 'Historical land problems, defunct factories, are key issues in the fight for Kilifi County', *The Star*, 3 Nov. 2012 < http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-94028/historical-land-problems-defunct-factories-are-key-issues-fight-kilifi-county> (11 June 2013); 'Fury over URP "direct ticket"', *The Star*, 14 Jan. 2013, <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-102685/fury-over-urp-direct-ticket> (10 June 2013); 'Uncertainty over URP primaries in Kilifi', *The Star*, 17 Jan. 2013 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-103197/uncertainty-over-urp-primaries-kilifi> (10 June 2013).

convened workshops where participants received lunch and 'sitting fees' in return for listening to explanations of the voting process or enduring homilies on the importance of peace. [49]

None of this meant that the election could simply be 'bought'. As Nugent's work on Ghana has argued, spending is only the first part of the 'transubstantiation' of money into moral authority.[50] People expect candidates to show immediate generosity, but they also have to believe that those candidates will continue to be generous in the longer term. This inclines them to vote for those on whom they feel they have some claims – of kinship, ethnicity, marriage or locality; and it works against those sitting candidates who have acquired a reputation for failing to help their constituents. The sitting MP for Kaloleni, Kazungu Kambi, earned the sobriquet Kazungu Pesa for his generous spending in his successful 2007 campaign. As a URP parliamentary candidate he sought to show similar generosity in 2013, but lost to a candidate from a minor party who spent much less. But across the coast, demands of financing linked candidates – and intermediaries, and voters - into networks of patronage which were tied in to a wider, national, economy and politics. Involvement in a political campaign on the coast was a lesson to all involved that it was indeed a part of Kenya. Money, and the tempting possibility of access to office and resources, ran through the elections to the lowest level.

Through these multiple local contests and rivalries – some of which were really nothing do with elections - electoral politics worked their way deep into society. With five local positions being contested, many people will have to come to the end of the campaign with some individual or community stake: a relative running, or a candidate who had promised to help their family or clan with a job or a long-running legal dispute, or to improve local health services - or simply someone

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[49] For competing Muslim intermediaries, see: Hassan ole Naado, 'Muslims should take sides but on principle', *The Star*, 31 Dec. 2012, <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-100979/muslims-should-take-sides-principle>(10 June 2013); 'Muslim group endorses CORD', *Daily Nation* 13 Jan. 2013, <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/politics/Muslim-group-endorses-Cord/-/1064/1664410/-/tmhg1fz/-/index.html > (10 June 2013); 'Jubilee unveils manifesto', *Daily Nation* 3 Feb. 2013, <http://elections.nation.co.ke/news/-/1631868/1683128/-/p89cqfz/-/index.html> (10 June 2013); 'Sheikh Ngao dumps Raila'sCord for Jubilee',   11 Feb 2013 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-106823/sheikh-ngao-dumps-railas-cord-jubilee> (10 June 2013); 'Clerics dump Raila, now back Uhuru', *The Star*, 12 Feb 2013 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-107029/clerics-dump-raila-now-back-uhuru> (10 June 2013). For 'elders', see for example 'Mijikenda kaya elders plan voter listing walk', *The Star*, 29 Nov 2012 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-97580/mijikenda-kaya-elders-plan-voter-listing-walk> (10 June 2013); 'Kaya elders call for peace as polls near', *Digital Standard,* 3 Jan. 2013, <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000074130&story_title=Kenya-Kaya-elders-call-for-peace-as-polls-near>(10 June 2013); 'Kaya elders warn against impostors', *Digital Standard*, 23 Jan. 2013 <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000075656&story_title=Kaya-elders-warn-against-impostors> (10 June 2013).

[50] Nugent, 'Winners, losers and also rans'.

who had given them a sack of flour or a few hundred shillings. Significant numbers of people were thus drawn into the process, not as an act of faith in the constitution, but through the politics of patronage.

That Raila seems ultimately to have benefitted more than Uhuru from these multiple relationships of patronage at the coast may seem surprising. With the possible exception of Mombasa County, it is not evident that politicians associated with CORD spent more than those associated with Jubilee at the coast; and the links between the presidential contest and the local flow of patronage were not by any means straightforward. It might be argued rather that, for those who were drawn into voting by the patronage of an aspiring MP or governor, the presidential choice was actually a secondary choice. The detailed results show no consistency in terms of votes for the two coalitions at various levels of election: in Lamu county, CORD parties attracted only about 7% of votes for members of the national assembly, and won neither of the two seats; they secured 18% of votes for county ward representatives, winning two of the 10 county assembly seats – and Raila took 53% of the presidential vote. In Mombasa, more than 20,000 of those who voted for one of the two rival CORD candidates for the governorship seem to have voted for Uhuru in the presidential election; in Kilifi, on the other hand, two-thirds of those who voted for Jubilee candidates for national assembly seats did not vote for Uhuru in the presidential election. There is a clear overall pattern to this. Many of those who voted for Raila voted for non-CORD candidates at other levels of the election only 314,000 coast voters supported CORD candidates for county assembly seats; but 612,000 voted for Raila as president. And many of the 228,000 coastal voters who chose Jubilee candidates for national or county assembly representative did not vote for Uhuru as president, or for Jubilee gubernatorial candidates: 228,000 voters supported Jubilee candidates for national assembly seats; and 191,000 supported Jubilee candidates for county assembly seats: but only 158,000 voted for Uhuru.

These disparities reflect the weakness of party organization, and the importance local patronage. But they also suggest that the continued, widespread sense of coastal marginalization, and particularly injustice over land – however uncertainly focussed that might be – seems to have made people less inclined to vote for Uhuru, even when they were willing to vote for a TNA or URP candidate in a local race. Although Uhuru and Ruto campaigned hard to overturn this perception; the constant stream of conflicts between squatters and landowners during the campaign meant that this issue was never far from the public eye.[51] The clumsy attempt by the Inspector-General of Police

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[51] 'Land issues return to haunt poll campaigns', *Digital Standard*, 24 Jan. 2013 <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000075718&story_title=land-issues-return-to-haunt-poll-campaigns> (11 June 2013); 'Jubilee will solve land problems, Uhuru tells coast', *Daily Nation,* 26 Jan. 2013 <http://elections.nation.co.ke/news/-/1631868/1676124/-/p8ssocz/-/index.html> (11 June 2013); '100

to ban discussion of land issues during the campaign only served to heighten the sensitivity over this.[52]

Local variation

These patronage dynamics played out variously in different contexts along the coast. The nominations left the Mombasa branches of the two parties of the CORD coalition on opposing sides of a deeply acrimonious gubernatorial race, which spilled over to other levels of the contest. Shahbal repeatedly accused Joho of malpractice in the campaign. Similar accusations were made by Awiti Bollo, the businessman/politician who was running on a Wiper ticket for Nyali MP against Joho's preferred candidate, John Mcharo; and by Hassan Sarai against his senatorial rival, Ramadhan Kajembe, who was another member of 'Team Joho'.[53] The nadir of this internecine rivalry came with the visit by senior CORD figures to the coast in late February, just before the elections, when Kalonzo and the principal WDM candidates were publicly humiliated at a rally.[54] In Kilifi, Amason Kingi was declared the ODM gubernatorial candidate after a controversial nomination, triggering a number of defections.[55] But while the port of Mombasa ensured interest from multiple potential patrons for candidates there, Kilifi has no similar resource, and none of Kingi's opponents were able to finance substantial campaigns; he went on to win the governor's seat. Kwale and Taita-Taveta similarly saw disputed ODM nominations.[56] In the elections in both counties the race for the governorship was

families evicted in Changamwe slum', *The Star,* 23 Oct. 2012 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-92339/100-families-evicted-changamwe-slum> (11 June 2013); 'Squatters clash with surveyors on disputed land', *Digital Standard*, 31 Jan. 2013 <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000076261&story_title=Squatters-clash-with-surveyors-on-disputed-land> (10 June 2013)

[52] 'Balala faults Kimaiyo over land debate gag', *The Star*, 7 Feb. 2013 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-106270/balala-faults-kimaiyo-over-land-debate-gag> (11 June 2013)

[53] 'Joho, Shahbal in close battle for Mombasa County governorship', *Daily Nation*, 3 Feb 2013 <http://elections.nation.co.ke/news/-/1631868/1683446/-p89accz/-/index.html> (10 June 2013)

[54] 'Joho supporters heckle VP Kalonzo,' *The Star*, February 11, 2013 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-106980/joho-supporters-heckle-vp-kalonzo> (11 June 2013) ; 'Joho, Shahbal rivalry mars Mombasa rally', *The Star*, 26 Feb 2013, http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-109363/joho-shahbal-rivalry-mars-mombasa-rally >(11 June 2013)

[55] 'Kilifi: Controversy as Kingi Clinches ODM Governor Ticket,' *Daily Nation*, January 18, 2013< http://elections.nation.co.ke/news/-/1631868/1668808/-p9dshrz/-/index.html>'; 'Kilifi aspirants ditch Kingi for Katana's camp,' *The Star* (print) 18 Feb. 2013, p. 13.

[56] 'Aspirant calls for Msambweni ODM repeat poll', *The Star,* 21 Jan. 2013 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-103647/aspirant-calls-msambweni-odm-repeat-poll> (11 June 2013).

allegedly decided partly by ethnic voting: in Kwale, Duruma and Kamba voters united to elect Salim Mvurya; and in Taita-Taveta, Taveta and Kamba came together in support of John Mruttu. [57]

In neither Tana River nor Lamu was ODM an effective organization, since there was no local patron to sponsor it. In Tana River, local politics took a violent turn. About 118 lives were lost and 35,000 people were displaced in 2012 during a period of violence from August to December.[58] The opportunities created by the county government had clearly upped political stakes.[59] Speculative land deals connected with sugar and bio-fuel plantations exacerbated latent conflict between Pokomo and Orma. The series of raids and counter-raids have been some by some as a strategy to disenfranchise the Orma community which has always threatened the political position of Pokomo legislators; though Pokomo politicians have vigorously denied involvement.[60] In the end, voting in Tana River seems ultimately to have followed ethnic lines very closely, with the rivalry between Pokomo and Orma/Wardei resulting in a conclusive electoral win for the candidates from the latter community, standing for a variety of parties.[61]

In Lamu, ODM had never established a presence. The significant feature of the election here was the considerable population in Lamu West constituency, many of whom are Kikuyu. Concentrated around the Lake Kenyatta settlement scheme, they seem to have displayed considerable sense of political community in the campaign and in the vote; and while the more sparsely-populated constituency of Lamu East saw much popular concern about the development of the new Lamu port – which presumably was a factor in the very high turnout there - the substantial voting bloc from

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[57] 'Zoning, tribes and party waves dominate search for Kwale CEO', *Digital Standard*, 4 Feb 2013 <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000076579&story_title=Zoning,-tribes-and-party-waves-dominate-search-for-Kwale-CEO> (10 June 2013); Interview, Mwambi Mwasaru, Mombasa, 9 March 2013.

[58] 'PS: Violence in Tana Delta sparked by boundary dispute', *Standard on Saturday* (print), 15 Dec. 2012, p. 5; 'Seven killed in fresh Tana attacks', *Digital Standard*, 9 Jan. 2013 <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000074622&story_title=Kenya-Seven-killed-in-fresh-Tana-attacks> (11 June 2013); '11 killed in Tana revenge attack', *Daily Nation*, 10 Jan. 2013 <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/1662196/-/x7t4s8z/-/index.html>(11 June 2013).

[59] Mayoyo P., and B Jenje 'How politics of tribe and rivalry over land fuelled bloody conflict in tana river' September 16, 2012, *Daily Nation*, < http://www.nation.co.ke/News/politics/Politics-of-tribe-and-rivalry-over-land-fuelled-Tana-conflict-/-/1064/1509124/-/vew6ep/-/index.html> See for example, "Tana violence a slap in Moi's face." Daily Nation 15 Jan. 2002.11; Ndunda Ernest, Orma, "Wardei win posts over Pokomo in Tana River," *Standard Digital*, March 9, 2010 <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000078945&story_title=Kenya-Orma,-Wardei-win-posts-over-Pokomo-in-Tana-River>

[60] 'MPs threaten to sue CID chief over Tana killings', *The Star,* 12 Jan. 2013 < http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-102577/mps-threaten-sue-cid-chief-over-tana-killings> (16 June 2013).

[61]Ndunda Ernest, 'Orma, Wardei, win posts over Pokomo in Tana River,' *Standard Digital*, March 9, 2013 <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000078945&story_title=Kenya-Orma,-Wardei-win-posts-over-Pokomo-in-Tana-River>

the settlement scheme shaped the campaign and its outcome.[62] In Lamu West, the constituency was won by a Kikuyu candidate, presumably because the Bajuni vote was divided between candidates; Kikuyu candidates also won a series of county ward seats, and the successful candidate for governor had a Kikuyu deputy.[63]

Electoral problems and appeals

The coast saw the same technical problems as other parts of the country: the electronic voter identification kits (EVIDs) were slow to get working (because of password problems) and soon ran out of power in places without mains electricity; and the printed paper register was not quite the same as the version on the EVID, or that in the 'green book' record held at constituency level. On the coast, as elsewhere, these difficulties slowed down the polling, and voters had to queue, sometimes for long periods. But these difficulties were no greater, and no less, than those elsewhere, and the queues at the coast were generally shorter than those up-country, because the turnout was slightly lower.

The count, too, saw the same problems that were experienced elsewhere. Transmission of results from the polling stream by text message proved impossible; results and ballot boxes went together to the constituency tallying centres, where the process moved very slowly and tiredness created many possibilities for human error. That each polling stream had six boxes, and associated paper records; and that most polling stations had several streams, created a situation ripe for muddle. Candidates and agents showed a strange combination of laxity and hyper-sensitivity: some evidently anomalous results were announced without comment, but rumours of ballot boxes lost, and of ballot papers spotted floating out to sea, were circulated with feverish excitement. At the Nyali constituency centre one complete set of ballot boxes arrived, apparently without polling staff or police guard; almost a full day passed before the presiding officer was found. A stray single ballot box, for a county ward representative, was eventually reunited with the rest of the boxes from that stream. When results started finally moving from the constituency to the county level tallying centre, confusion continued: in Mombasa, bemused observers watched as a set of presidential poll results for Likoni constituency were projected; and then removed before being replaced with another set of results which Paul Muite had done implausibly well. When results were finally published at the national level, Muite's mysterious surge had vanished again.

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[62] 'Lamu port, land key issues ahead of polls', *Digital Standard*, 23 Jan. 2013 <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000075649&story_title=Lamu-port,-land-key-issues-ahead-of-polls> (11 June 2013).

[63] Babo Awadh, 'Lamu Voting Altered as Non-Local Mp is elected,' Standard Digital, March 9, 2013 https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000078921&story_title=Kenya-Lamu-voting-patterns-altered-as-non-local-MP-is-elected

The confusion created a fertile atmosphere for suspicion. In Mombasa, almost from the close of the polls, the other gubernatorial candidates were accusing Hassan Joho of every conceivable form of malpractice, from vote-buying to the stuffing of ballot boxes. Two days after the election, while the tallying was still in process, they held a collective press conference (evidently organized by Suleiman Shahbal) in which they rejected the as-yet unannounced results and announced that they would go to court. Najib Balala took the opportunity to accuse ODM of seeking to rig the presidential poll as well; Shahbal announced that he would be contesting all the ballots except the presidential one, and subsequently went to court.[64] The other counties did not see quite this level of drama, but the delays, muddles and accusations were common across the coast, with almost all of the attention being focussed not on the presidential poll but on governors, MP and county representative positions. A flurry of legal challenges to results was evidently driven by the same bitter local rivalries and jealousies - between individual candidates, their patrons, and the communities which they sought to represent - which pushed electoral participation.

The unwillingness of particular candidates to accept defeat offers an interesting counterpoint to the apparent wider resignation at the coast in the face of the presidential outcome. As elsewhere in Kenya, there were rumours of possible discontent in the run-up to the announcement of the results, and prior to the Supreme Court ruling on Raila's legal challenge. In the event there were no significant popular demonstrations; partly, no doubt, because the police had made clear that these would be violently repressed. The weeks after the elections saw some further sporadic attacks on police by 'raiders', but these lacked the apparent coordination and scale of the election eve attacks. More than a quarter of respondents in a survey at the coast in June 2013 thought that the presidential elections had been flawed; only 55% thought them 'generally free and fair' – slightly below the national average of 60%. Strikingly, levels of confidence in the other elections at the coast were considerably higher, with only 10% of respondents thinking that the governor and national assembly polls were 'not free and fair' – this broadly reflected the national pattern.[65] Evidently, acceptance of the presidential results was not based on widespread faith in the process.

Conclusion

Across Kenya, the 2013 elections were much more peaceful than many had feared; and across Kenya, they saw generally high levels of participation, though with some significant regional variation. The coast was very much in line with this national pattern. Violence was horrific in

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[64] 'Shahbal files petition challenging Joho's win', *Daily Nation*, 12 April 2013
<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/politics/-/1064/1746246/-/b1cit4/-/index.html> (10 June 2013)
[65] Infotrak opinion poll, carried out 23-30 June 2013; further details available from authors.

intensity where it occurred, but was very localised; the results were generally accepted by the electorate (though not by some defeated candidates); and – most significantly – there was a high level of participation by voters. The elections revealed the failure – for now, at least – of the attempt to mobilise a secessionist coastal movement which was united by the legitimating power of colonial treaties. That failure may partly have been due to the weakness of the historical claims involved, which entirely misrepresent the treaties concerned. But it is more likely a result of the fundamentally divided nature of the imagined 'coasterian' community. Perhaps unsurprisingly, within weeks of the election one of the 'leaders' of the MRC was asking to meet with Uhuru, and offering to abandon the aim of secession.[66] While those who claimed to speak for the MRC insisted that the coast was not Kenya, the elections had showed that in a very profound, everyday, way the coast is part of Kenya – its population woven into the neo-patrimonial fabric of Kenyan political life, with its emphasis on personal contact, the giving of gifts and the seeking of favours. Participation levels were undoubtedly raised by one of the innovations of the 2013 elections: the simultaneity of the poll for multiple kinds of office (some newly created), which encouraged multiple, overlapping contests over patronage and clientilism, significantly increasing both the overall cost of the elections and the incentives for voter participation. Party affiliation and political programmes were largely irrelevant in the great majority of these contests: candidates won partly by showy distribution of gifts, but also by persuading voters that they could be relied on to respond to future requests for assistance in dealing with financial troubles, or with the multiple manifestations of Kenya's state – which is bureaucratic in shape, but profoundly patrimonial in the face which it presents to most of the population.

The elections at the coast might, therefore, be seen as broadly positive in terms of Kenya's political stability: violence was (mostly) avoided; Kenyans at the coast reaffirmed their involvement in a political culture shared with rest of the country. But increased political participation is entirely compatible with a continued sense of 'marginalization', as the moral compact between candidates and voters is partly based on a popular sense of the unreliability and opacity of government. The statistics on the presidential vote suggest the power of that sense of marginalization. At the coast, the presidential campaign was the only element of the elections which really did raise questions of national policy, with devolution and land as the central issues. Raila offered little detail as to how he would solve the complex, layered (and often contradictory) grievances over land at the coast, nor much on devolution beyond a promise to implement it. But his very vocal expression of intent to address these issues favoured him; and there was evident popular scepticism over Uhuru's

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[66] 'MRC want to meet Uhuru', *The Star,* 26 April 2013 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-118033/mrc-leaders-want-meet-uhuru> (16 June 2013).

commitment to either devolution or land reform. While people at the coast are very much a part of Kenya's political culture, their sense that they remain at the fringes, economically and politically, is still a potentially potent political force.

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