# Preaching politics: Islam and Christianity on the Kenya coast

Gregory Deacon (corresponding author)

*Independent, Schenectady, United States*

George Gona

*History and Archaeology, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya*

Hassan Mwakimako

*Philosophy and Religious Studies, Pwani University College, Kilifi, Kenya*

Justin Willis

*History, University of Durham, Durham, United Kingdom*

Correspondence: University of Durham, Durham, United Kingdom;
gregory.j.h.deacon@gmail.com

# Preaching politics: Islam and Christianity on the Kenya coast

Focussing on the Kenya coast, this article analyses the developing contrast
between the place of Islam and Christianity in public politics. It argues that
Islam's association with criticism of the political order contrasts with Christianity
but that this is not the result of inherent difference between the religions. Both
have previously provided a language, and space, for political commentary and
activism in Kenya. The contrast is rather the contingent result of particular
circumstances in Kenya. Christianity has become increasingly associated with
affirming clientilism and the accumulation of wealth in a way which is avowedly
non-political but in practice legitimates the current political order. Meanwhile,
although individual Muslims are more likely to enjoy high political office than
was previously the case, Muslims are also more likely to located their experience
as symptomatic of a wider pattern of exclusion in Kenya and link this sense of
local injustice to global inequalities. Regional and global conflicts have shaped
that discourse and propelled a steady increase in terrorism, which has in turn
heightened the contrast.

Keywords: Islam; Christianity; Kenya; politics; conflict; dissent

## Introduction

There is, on Youtube, a video entitled 'MRC [Mombasa Republican Council] pastor
holds meeting in church'. It shows the speaker – wearing a plain purple shirt and white
dog-collar which suggest that he is a minister in a Protestant church – urging his
audience not to register as voters for Kenya's general elections, which were to be held
in March 2013.[1] The building in which he spoke appeared bare and unfinished, with
holes for windows; the white cloth with a cross and a cloth sign bearing the message
'My God is Able' were the only signs that it was a church. The speaker offered no
theological explanations for his argument; indeed, his talk did not really touch on
religious questions at all. He encouraged the audience, almost all of whom were young
men, to become life members of 'MRC' - the Mombasa Republican Council, a group

that calls for the secession of Kenya's coastal strip. Furthermore, he suggested that MRC meetings should be held in mosques and churches. This, he argued would allow members to avoid direct harassment from police or officials, and would make them less vulnerable to disruption by crowds of youths hired by local politicians.

The MRC campaign, which was briefly very active in 2011-12 and still simmers in the background, has been seen largely as a Muslim phenomenon, just as 'the coast' generally tends to be seen by other Kenyans as a Muslim area: a recent article erroneously calls the MRC 'the latest Muslim separatist group' in Kenya (Oded 2013). In fact, significant numbers of the people who live on Kenya's coast profess Christianity, practising the same exuberant and occasionally rivalrous forms of Christian worship which are common, if not ubiquitous, across Kenya. Those who speak for the MRC have never explicitly identified it as Muslim, and the speaker in the video above was at pains to stress that this is not a sectarian movement, announcing that 'I have no boundaries, I go to the pastors, I go to the imams' (*sina mipaka, naenda kwa mapastor, naenda kwa maimamu*). But despite the interfaith, non-denominational logic behind the making and posting of the video it is the case that political activism at the coast, and the articulation of a distinctive sense of coastal disaffection, has been largely associated with Islam in recent decades.

This paper discusses this phenomenon. It is our contention that the litany of coastal complaints – over landlessness, exclusion from political power, lack of access to government services and employment, poor education – has become almost indistinguishable from the grievances expressed by Muslim activists. It is not a coincidence that the loudest voice in the MRC has been that of Mohamed Mraja, a preacher in a Mombasa mosque. This has not always been so. The most famous coastal political leader of the independence period for example, the KADU politician Ronald

Ngala, was not a Muslim. Yet since the early 1990s the perceived 'marginalization' of the coast has tended to appear as a particular expression of the wider grievances of Kenyan Muslims. In local terms, it is notable that even in the midst of political activism in the 1990s Kenya's churches did not become significantly involved in political mobilisation at the coast.

The pastor in the Youtube video makes an explicit argument about the ability of the religious buildings to provide physical space for dissent: meetings in mosques and churches are less likely to face violent disruption than those held elsewhere. We argue that in Kenya, both Islam and Christianity have at certain times and in certain places been able to provide an institutional and social, as well as physical space, for political debate. Churches and mosques have protected those who comment from at least some of the dangers of public political speech – though this protection has not been consistent or complete. But more importantly both Christianity and Islam have authorised public commentary, and provided multiple media for the communication of that commentary – not just from the pulpit, but through pastoral letters, local committees, and latterly through DVDs, the internet and mobile phones – in ways that command attention. This history of religious engagement with politics makes even more pressing our core questions: why it is largely Islam, rather than Christianity, that has come to be associated with the expression of coastal dissent, and what does this reveal about the place of Islam and Christianity in politics at the coast – and in Kenya more widely? We argue that the factors that have produced this situation are local, national and international. The political involvement of Muslims and Christians has developed in a contrapuntal fashion, increasingly coming to emphasise the contrasts between the two, and undermining the 'general atmosphere of tolerance and respect' that David Sperling identified as a distinctive feature of religion at the coast (Sperling 2000, 158). And we

argue that this is the contingent result of particular local circumstance, and the very nature of the spaces provided by religion, rather than any innate or inevitable conflict.

## Churches, Christianities and politics in Kenya

Kenya is formally a secular state. But its political and administrative elite have been largely Christian; in this, as in much else, independent Kenya closely reflected the political culture of the colonial state. It was from this position of established influence that, in the late 1980s and 1990s, Kenya's churches – or at least, some of them – established a leading role in the campaign for political reforms which led to the return of multi-party politics (Gifford 1994, 528). Clergymen from what Gifford calls the 'mainline' churches (also known as 'historic' churches) – Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian – were persistent critics of the ruling party and the incumbent president; they preached sermons whose Old Testament tales of abuse of power invited comparison with the present, and – less elliptically - they called directly for change (Sabar-Friedman 2002; Hofmeyr 2005, 372-4)). Galia Sabar-Friedman, whose work has emphasised the importance of the leadership provided by clergy in this period,  has described the role of the physical spaces provided by churches in a time of often brutal government repression: these were 'the only available loci for public discussion of civil liberties and the limits of power'(Sabar-Friedman 1997, 31). More sceptical accounts of the churches' role in this period – which have argued that the churches never espoused anything like a 'liberation theology', and that church hierarchies were considerably less bold than the most outspoken preachers – have nonetheless shared the sense that the physical and institutional presence of churches made space for political dissent in a manner which was profoundly important at the time. As David Throup has pointed out, 'only church leaders had the freedom to criticize government without risking detention' (Throup 1995, 159; also Maupeu 2001).

Sabar-Friedman also shows that the space provided by churches was not merely physical; as institutions, churches provided a degree of protection to outspoken clergy, and they possessed a range of publications, social networks, and an ability to command media attention through which they could speak to a wide audience. However, as Gifford has emphasised in a much more critical appraisal of the relationship between churches and political reform in Kenya, other churches were at the same time supporting the incumbent government and its supporters (Gifford 2009, 216-220). Moreover, since the era of agitation for multiparty democracy, the number and variety of churches in Kenya has also seemingly grown even more swiftly than has the number of professed Christians (Gifford 2009, 109). The nature of these churches is particularly salient here. Many are vigorously physical in their forms of worship, and have a strong focus on individual salvation in their theology: while scholarship has struggled to develop a categorization for them, Gifford has suggested that a characteristic of what he calls 'new' churches has been to blur the boundaries between Pentecostal and Evangelical (Gifford 1994, 524-525).

Attitudes to other religions aside, for the leaders of these churches, campaigns over social justice and governance were a distraction from the much more pressing task of preaching salvation. This difference in theological focus is furthermore emphasised by a contrast in material position. Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist churches have all been sustained by estates of land and buildings which had been built up under the colonial period – while Gifford calls them 'mainline', one might call them 'established', in the very physical sense of having acquired substantial assets as gifts from, or carved out within, the colonial state. The multiple newer churches – there were quite literally thousands of them by the 1990s – lacked these inherited assets. They relied rather on the contributions of their followers, and on the patronage of the post-

colonial state and politicians. That some benefitted from the support of evangelical missions, notably from the US, is clear. As Julie Hearn has pointed out, the late twentieth century seems, ironically, to have been 'the greatest missionary era' (2002, 32). But to see this external support as the driving force for the success of such churches is to understate significantly the power of their local appeal.

These 'new' churches tended not to involve themselves in challenging the government; indeed, some of them were explicit in their support for the regime, and for the incumbent president, Daniel arap Moi (Deacon and Lynch 2013, 110). As Mutahi Ngunyi has argued, in the case of both what he calls the 'loyalist' churches, such as the Kenya Assemblies of God, and the 'Africanist' churches such as Legio Maria, this was partly the consequence of a theology which advocated disengagement from temporal issues (Ngunyi 1995, 126-29). Whilst Moi finally retired from politics in 2002, the acquiescence by and co-option of these churches continued, along with a creeping similarity in role on the part of the mainline churches. In the elections of 2002 Moi's chosen candidate as successor - and his party - suffered a heavy defeat. In retrospect, this looks more like managed transition than a dramatic victory for a political opposition, since the new government included many politicians who had occupied senior positions at various points during Moi's long incumbency (Anderson 2003). The reformist activism of the churches had already weakened since 1997, as a result of government manipulation and internal rivalries (Maupeu 2001). Under the new president, Mwai Kibaki, even the mainline churches seemed increasingly at ease with the government, and more concerned to involve themselves in development projects than in politics. In the election of 2007 many clergy – including some quite senior figures - were drawn into partisan politics in very apparent ways (Gifford 2009, 43-45; 221-23). The alleged role of some churches in ethnic partisanship and even incitement

to violence is indicative of a general move away from civil society activism or movements for social justice outside of the established political order.

The churches' change of attitude to political reform was most vividly displayed in the debates over the new constitution – which had been a key demand of the churches in the early 1990s (Mapeu 2001, 58-59; Sabar-Friedman 1997, 52). When a draft constitution was put to popular referendum in 2005, the churches opposed it on the grounds that it was too liberal; they argued that it should absolutely preclude abortion and gay marriage. The churches were also opposed to its offer of formal recognition to what are called Kadhi courts, which have long existed in Kenya as courts dealing with matters of domestic law between Muslims, but were not mentioned in the previous constitution (Gifford, 2009: 41). Some clergymen argued publicly that this was part of a wider Muslim conspiracy to take over not only Kenya, but Africa as a whole (Mwakimako 2007). On this, almost all churches were agreed - from the major 'established' churches to the new ecstatic churches that had sprung up since the 1990s in urban areas to the multiple, fragmented rural churches born of local rivalries and family schism all across the country. In the referendum the draft was defeated, but this seems to have been the result of popular feeling that it did not offer enough devolution, rather than the consequence of the churches' attitude (Kimenyi 2006). Tellingly, when another draft was put to referendum in 2010, proposing substantially more devolution of power, the churches opposed it again – but this time it was approved with a significant majority.

Given the previous enthusiasm of the mainline churches for reform, their opposition to the two drafts was a surprising decision. It appears to have been significantly influenced by Kenya's evolving religious and political circumstances. In particular, established churches in Kenya – like those elsewhere in Africa – had been

concerned that their adherents were turning to the mushrooming new churches (Asamoah-Gyadu 2002, 23-27). Christians in Kenya had become very willing to involve themselves with multiple different churches at the same time, and the presence – and the collection-money – of worshippers in the mainline churches could no longer be assumed (Gifford 1994, 521; 524). The attraction of what has been called 'neo-Pentecostalism' for ordinary people has multiple explanations: Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, writing of Africa more widely, has seen this as driven both by aspiration and by hardship, by an 'ardent desire to respond to problems and frustrations for which Africans seek answers'(Asamoah-Gyadu 2002, 35). Deacon and Lynch, writing specifically of Kenya, have similarly located the rise of neo-Pentecostalism in a sense of crisis and uncertainty: they suggest that 'neo-Pentecostalist narratives help ordinary people assert some control over their own lives' (Deacon and Lynch 2013, 125). Asamoah-Gyadu has also observed, more critically, the power of the 'desire to be successful', and an assumption that material prosperity will be the reward for faith (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2002, 28). In consequence, devotional practice - including that seen in established churches – increasingly takes a neo-Pentecostal form. While Catholic or Anglican clergy with a thorough training in scripture might still look down on the preachers of many other churches as lacking in scriptural training, they were uncomfortably aware that congregations did not share their scepticism (Deacon and Lynch 2013, 115). Thus, while Kenya's multiple Christianities have continued to be marked by a multiplicity of churches there has been a degree of convergence in practice driven by the expectations of churchgoers. This is the religious context in which local and national issues are predominantly played out.

Kenya's politicians have shown themselves as flexible in their religious allegiances as are the populace, attending multiple churches. Bluntly put, while there is

no official religion in Kenya, this convergence has produced a set of devotional practices and attitudes towards politics which permeate public culture and have come to be involved in authorizing power.  This 'domesticated' form (Gifford 2009, 241) has combined the 'conservative evangelical' tradition of the mainline churches with what Gifford drily calls the 'very materialist understanding of favour or blessing' associated with the newer churches. This is characterised by conservatism over key social issues, and by a concern with individual salvation, and prosperity. It has also tended to be hostile to Islam, in line with the wider pattern of new churches (Gifford 1994, 530). This approach – and is – also inclined to conservatism in political terms; overtly depoliticized, but in practice closely involved in and reproducing, the political order (Deacon and Lynch 2013, 112). National and local politicians attend church services – and act as patrons at church fund-raisers – in a very public way; they are photographed for the media at these events, and often make statements after them.[2] These activities are very often political, in a narrow sense, used by politicians to score points off one another and criticize rivals – but they are not calls for systemic change or dramatic political reform.[3]  Kalonzo Musyoka, for example - former vice-president and now senior opposition politician – attended services and fund-raisings, and made political statements,  at many different churches in the three years 2011-14: among them Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, Africa Inland Church, as well as very 'new' churches like the Jesus Celebration  Centre.[4] Appearing at these Christian events is clearly important to politicians, but not because they offer protection for the articulation of radical criticism: instead, they affirm involvement in a shared political culture which revolves around patronage and the overt display of the material trappings of success.

The mainline National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) still issues

occasional political statements, although these have tended to take a form so generalized

as to be unobjectionable from almost any standpoint (Gifford 2009, 61). In the 2013

general election clergy still involved themselves in governance programmes and

espoused the need for good governance. However, the churches also largely confined

their activities to support for an overriding emphasis on 'peace' which came to

dominate civil society electoral work (Cheeseman, Lynch and Willis 2014). When the

NCCK did issue a statement which seemed to question the presidential ambitions of

Uhuru Kenyatta – on the grounds that he was at the time facing international charges

(later dropped) for complicity in the 2008 post-election violence – there was a brief

furore, followed by a confused and messy retraction.[5] Otherwise, the mainline churches

steered away from explicit political statements other than the generalized call for peace

– though candidates for local and national office attended church in more or less

ostentatious ways, and offered comments to the press after services.[6]

Some of the newer churches took a more active role in the 2013 elections, and in

certain cases their involvement took a distinctive form.  As with the mainline churches,

candidates addressed congregations at services.[7] 'Prayer rallies' were also organized

for candidates; nominally interfaith, these were in tone and style very much 'new'

church events, at which prayers were said for candidates and/or they received blessings;

the winning candidates, Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, also received public

blessings after their victory.[8] The Catholic hierarchy in Kenya declared that 'we will not

allow our churches and prayer meetings to be turned into political platforms', but this

did not deter other clergy.[9] In some instances this was very evidently done in return for

money; but more generally it evoked a set of ideas about the importance of individual

salvation and success:  those who repent and accept Christ will be blessed, and will

prosper – whether this was in terms of material wealth or political office. Again, this was a message which was both overtly depoliticized and profoundly political: success is the reward for accepting Christ, and those who possess power or wealth do so because they are blessed.

**Christians and Politics at the Coast**

A significant proportion of the population of the coast profess Christianity; indeed, some Christian leaders have claimed privately that Christians are a majority there.[10] Yet the defining characteristic of the churches there is an apparent sense of vulnerability. This is perhaps surprising: Christian evangelism began on the coast earlier than in other parts of Kenya, and by the 1890s there were a number of mission stations in and around Mombasa. But this early mission experience itself established the sense of vulnerability. In the early years, the missions existed with the uneasy approval of the Sultan of Zanzibar and came repeatedly into conflict with a local Muslim elite, partly of Arab origin, who objected to their evangelism and to their willingness to harbour runaway slaves (Strayer 1978). The missions' initial aim had been the conversion of non-Muslim peoples of the coast, notably those now known as the Mijikenda, but their lack of success there led them to build Christian communities by taking in slaves, some freed by British anti-slave trade patrols and some runaways. This was a venture in which they received the (occasionally grudging) support of the British officials who administered the coast from the late 1880s, and whose assistance allowed the missions to build up significant communities on land granted to them. This pattern of sometimes reluctant official support endured throughout the colonial period, during which the number of Mijikenda Christians grew a little, and a modest population of migrant African Christians from up-country developed at the coast.

Since independence – and especially since the 1970s – the number of Christians on the coast has increased greatly, as it has elsewhere in Kenya. Partly this is because more Mijikenda now profess Christianity; but there has also been a substantial movement to the coast of Christians from elsewhere in Kenya, many of whom are now second or third generation coast dwellers – though some still refer to them as 'up-country' people (Sperling 1978, 158-159). This migrant population is largest in and around Mombasa, with other concentrations around Malindi and Mpeketoni. This Christian growth has had one other distinctive feature: broadly, it is people from elsewhere in Kenya who have been most prominent in the leadership of 'new' churches at the coast. This particular history has shaped Christian political involvement.

In the debates over secession and regionalism around the time of independence in the early 1960s, Christianity played a limited, though not insignificant role. As explained below, secessionism was very much associated with Muslims, but the opposition to it was expressed in racial, not religious terms. The alternative, regionalist movement - which sought substantial devolution of power and had a brief moment of success in the independence *majimbo* constitution – was strong on Kenya's coast, where it was led largely by men with Christian names, who had been baptized and educated by missions. But it was their education rather than their faith which made them leaders. These mission-schooled men were a minority in their own communities, and their successful mobilisation of a following played first to the emerging idea of a collective Mijikenda identity and then to a wider idea of 'coastal' identity (Willis and Gona 2013a). Aware that they were a religious minority, they did not use Christian language or religious issues to make their arguments or mobilise followers; their arguments turned rather on autochthony, and the danger that people from 'up-country' would use

their political power in an independent Kenya to appropriate coastal land and monopolize government employment (Willis and Gona 2013b).

The idea of a distinctly 'coastal' politics, with its own agenda, did not reemerge until the 1990s, when the complex consequences of the return of multi-partyism sparked a resurgence of the debates over devolution which had been quashed when Kenya's first president, Kenyatta, engineered the dismantling of the *majimbo* constitution in 1964-65. It is evident that people within President Moi's ruling KANU party encouraged a revival of the debate over devolution in search of immediate political advantage (Mazrui 1997). But this was an idea which found a ready reception at the coast. In terms of educational attainment and wealth, the coast had fallen well behind some other parts of Kenya; and landlessness had become an ever-more pressing problem. There was a sense among some of those who considered themselves 'indigenous' coast people that the worst fears of the early 1960s had been realized, and many argued that 'up-country' people – particularly Kikuyu – had exploited political power to enrich themselves at the expense of 'coast' people. The belief that much land at the coast had fallen into the hands of 'up-country' people – whether through well-connected individuals acquiring large plots, or through landless families from the highlands being given preference in settlement schemes – was an increasingly powerful force in coastal politics(Kanyinga 1998).

For Christian churches, this sense of coastal grievance was problematic. In so far as the mainline churches had been advocates of political reform in Kenya, this had been within an explicitly national frame. These were, after all, national churches in terms of their structures, and the consultations between the major churches took place in a national forum, the National Council of Churches of Kenya. That some churches were stronger in particular regions was apparent, but all these churches were avowedly

Kenyan in their political perspective; the politics of local particularism might be lively within these churches, but they were never open. The leadership of these churches was in the hands of 'up country' people, who lacked the credibility to reframe coastal grievances as national ones; and the established churches were themselves the beneficiaries of colonial land policies and so were poorly-placed to argue the case of landless squatters. The leadership of 'new' churches on the coast tended to be drawn from people who were considered 'up-country', and their approach was dominated by a theology of personal transformation. This combination left no space for Christian activism over the notion of collective coastal marginalisation. Symptomatically, during the 2010 debate over the new constitution – which was broadly popular at the coast because of its provisions for devolution – it was a body representing new churches at the coast which took legal action to try and delay the referendum: the Mombasa Pastors' Association argued (unsuccessfully) that the public had not been given time to consider the implications of the provisions on Kadhi courts, marriage and the 'right to life'.[11]

What is most notable for our present purpose is that no significant Kenyan Christian voice emerged to champion the coast or argue for devolution (although the redoubtable Father Gabriel Dolan has consistently campaigned over land issues). Instead, over a period of more than decade in which a series of violent incidents provided sporadic reminders of the intensity of disaffection, Islam provided the physical and institutional spaces for talking about this; and there has been a conflation of the grievances of coastal people and the grievances of Muslims. This has occurred despite the profound divisions amongst Muslims at the coast, which have been repeatedly noted by the literature (Ndzovu 2012). This process has been encouraged by an international narrative of Muslim marginalization, but it also reflects the very particular Kenyan

context of Christian domination nationally. This is why we have deliberately chosen to set out the national, Christian context before considering the role of Islam itself – in order to emphasise that we see the contrast between Islam and Christianity as the product of particular political circumstance, rather than as the inevitable consequence of religious difference.

**Islam and the politics of the coast**

The state had come to the coast as a Muslim phenomenon: in the independent little city-sultanates of the pre-Portuguese period, and again under Omani/Zanzibari rule from the early eighteenth century. Under British rule, the Islamic identity of the state had been both subordinated and maintained – since the coast was, nominally, the territory of the Sultan of Zanzibar and only under British 'protection', Muslim administrators and a Muslim judicial system remained in place, though the former were increasingly circumscribed in their role and almost vestigial by the 1960s (Salim 1973). The politics of secessionism in the early 1960s explicitly turned partly on issues of religion. Advocates of secession feared that Islamic education and Kadhi courts would be abolished by an independent Kenya (Brennan 2008). But this religious issue was trumped by race and ethnicity: while the economic and political elite of the coast were Muslim Arabs or Swahili, they were a minority of the population. There were many other Muslims on the coast – but in the political debates of the time they overwhelmingly identified themselves as Africans and/or as Mijikenda, and rejected the idea of secession, which they suspected to be a device to preserve Arab dominance (Willis and Gona 2013b).

In the following decades, Islam played a role in factional coastal politics – along with race and ethnicity – but it did not become major mobilizing force. While the passage of the Succession Act in the early 1980s was widely resented by Muslims, the

16

campaign against this was decidedly low-key (Ndovu 2009). Most governments included one or two Muslim ministers, appointed on a more or less explicitly token basis; two mildly rivalrous national representative organisations for Muslims emerged in succession, each of them studiously loyal to the government (Bakari 1995; Mwakimako 1995). What one Muslim called 'the struggle of Islam in a Christian-dominated country' was waged in a very quiet way in these years (Mwakimako 1995, 294). The two regions of Kenya with significant Muslim populations – the coast, and the north-east – remained marginal in different ways. The prolonged *Shifta* war in the north-east, waged by Somali irredentists who wished to unite their territory with the then Somali Republic, left the north-east very much on the boundaries of Kenya – minimally administered, subject to extreme coercion, and poorly integrated with the rest of the country economically or culturally (Mburu 2005; Whittaker 2008). The coast, on the other hand, was very much a part of the Kenyan economy and – as noted above – many Kenyans from other parts of the country moved to live and work there. Coastal people may sometimes have resented other Kenyans, but there was not the cultural and experiential gulf that marked the north-east.

Throughout this period, however, significant changes were occurring in coastal Islam. Movements of Islamic reform, financed by a variety of bodies, challenged a range of religious practices which were denounced as innovations; these issues also provided a way to challenge entrenched social hierarchies. From the 1980s, a sometimes countervailing programme of education was pursued by Shi'ite organizations (Kresse 2009, 2007). These debates over practice and 'proper living' were sometimes combined with a wider political sense of a need to create the right conditions for the Muslim community: which might be seen as requiring reform of an international system dominated by the west, or as involving more local political action. This new sense of a

need for reform provided a point of consensus for a Muslim population – on the coast, and in Kenya more widely – which has been characterized by multiple, chronic divisions which run along ethnic and regional lines. Those divisions have encouraged the multiplication of rival leadership organizations, and persistent political disunity amongst Muslims (Constantin 1993; Ndzovu 2012; Mwakimako and Willis 2016); yet despite that disunity, Islam became a way to express criticism of the existing political and economic order.   What Joseph Wandera calls the resulting 'renewed assertiveness' of the Muslim community could very easily be combined with the grievances of a coastal community more widely – over educational provision, employment and  land (Wandera 2008-2009). And so, in the early 1990s, Islam became associated with the articulation of this coastal dissent: Muslim institutions made a 'belated appearance in popular struggles' (Ngunyi 1995, 143)  in the context of what Sara Thordsen (2009) has called a 'new Muslim activism'.

The immediate manifestation of this was the formation of the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) in 1992. Created in Mombasa in the first months after Kenya's constitution was changed to allow multi-partyism, the party was never permitted to register formally. But it retained a sort of existence – as an organization, and as a rallying-point for disaffection – for several years thereafter, despite a prolonged wrangle over leadership between its original founders and a vocal preacher called Khalid Balala, who sought to hitch his own political ambitions to IPK (Oded 1996). IPK claimed to represent all Muslims in Kenya, but it was very much dominated by coastal Muslims, and the wave of demonstrations, riots and graffiti-spraying associated with it were almost entirely confined to the coast, and especially the southern coast, with Mombasa as the epicentre.

Much of the language of the IPK was explicitly Islamic, and the formal reason for the refusal of registration was that Kenyan law does not permit sectarian parties. Balala's street-preaching, in particular, placed much emphasis on issues of morality and behaviour within the Muslim community. But this was combined with a wider critique of government policy, and demands for reform; and for a time the IPK cooperated with secular national parties in the campaign for political change (Bakari 2013; Oded 1996 Wandera 2008-2009).[12] IPK's leaders struggled to counter the accusation that they pursued an exclusively Islamic agenda: in a conversation with a journalist, Balala insisted that he was a Kenyan nationalist, and that imposition of *sharia* law was not his aim: 'Ours is to show the people that we have a path, a solution to their grievances and to their economic, political and all other problems'.[13] This was, at least formally, a party which demanded political inclusion and full participation as the remedy for a range of social and economic grievances. It was very largely a coastal, regional, phenomenon, but it was not a separatist movement (whatever the ambitions of some of its youthful followers). In 1993 the IPK called for protest against ethnic violence elsewhere in Kenya, declaring that 'If democracy is the rule of the people by the people and for the people, is it not time that the people decided to take their fate in their hands?'[14] Wandera's argument that 'Muslim public identity has emerged in Kenya based on a common experience of marginality' is both perceptive and suggestive – for, as it implies, Muslim politics could lend itself to the expression of multiple kinds of marginality (Wandera 2008-2009, 21).

The government response to IPK agitation combined direct repression and the 'vulgarization' of violence to proxy gangs with some limited concessions to Muslims. Khalid Balala was detained repeatedly, on a series of charges – treason, incitement - and was for a time deprived of citizenship (Oded 1996). IPK meetings were broken up by

police; a counter-organization called the United Muslims of Africa (UMA) was created, with money channelled from government through the coastal politician Emmanuel Karisa Maitha – not himself a Muslim, as he admitted (Ngunyi, 1995; Ndzovu 2009, 6-7).[15] UMA launched an explicitly racial campaign against IPK which exploited the perennial weak-point of coastal solidarity, the divide between Africans and 'Arabs': Maitha alleged that 'Arabs were funding the IPK to enslave black Muslims'.[16] The two groups' followers engaged in vicious street battles for a period in 1993-94; and by 1996, the heat had gone out of the IPK campaign.

This did not end Muslim political activism, however; nor did it discourage the identification of Muslim grievances with other forms of perceived marginalisation. These have been consistent features of coastal politics in particular, and Kenya politics more widely since the 1990s, as Islam's place in Kenyan politics was further affected by the complex consequences of the conflict in Somalia and the spill over from an international campaign of terrorism and the 'War on Terror' launched in response to this(Mwakimako and Willis, 2014). Muslims in Kenya found themselves newly vulnerable to the often arbitrary violence of the state, and were increasingly involved in confrontations with police and government (Open Society Justice Initiative/Muslims for Human Rights 2013). At the same time they were increasingly exposed to denunciations of both the Kenyan state and the international order which were delivered by preachers, expressed in terms of Islam, and delivered in a rapidly-proliferating range of media, from lectures in mosques to CDs to the internet.[17] While leading Kenyan politicians might rail against interference by Western governments who sought to promote multi-partyism, Muslim activists  have denounced the Kenya government as a servant of Western interests, and insisted that 'the West' is fundamentally hostile to Islam; though it should be emphasised, not all these radical critics call explicitly for violence.[18]

Occasional acts of terrorism became more common; but, partly in separation from this, Islam became something like a default language of oppositionism. It could take violent and revolutionary form, in the language of some preachers or the internet postings of virtual jihadists; or it could be simply defiant, persistently questioning the legitimacy of established power.

The experience of involvement in IPK changed the nature of formal Muslim political activism, on the coast and elsewhere in Kenya. The attempt to form a separate party was not repeated until 2012 (when it attracted little interest) and organizations tended to avoid the assertive – indeed, egocentric – confrontations of which Balala had been so fond. Instead activism was channelled into civil society work. In 1997, after the effective demise of IPK, an organization called – not coincidentally – CIPK (the Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya) emerged, again based in Mombasa initially, though it developed a much wider coastal and then national presence. CIPK was, as its name suggests, an organization of Muslim preachers, rather than a political party, but its aims echoed the idea that the campaign against the 'marginalization' of Muslims could be pursued alongside that for reform more widely: as its leaders retrospectively explained, CIPK 'started as an idea of various Muslim leaders who realized that there was urgent need to come together and find avenues to provide a voice of relief and reason for marginalized communities and a unified voice for Muslims in particular'.[19]

The overall effect of this has been that while Christian churches have become increasingly reluctant to criticise the holders of power, Muslim voices, on the other hand – especially at the coast - have been ever more willing to challenge government, whether through radical sermons or through workshops and press releases. The pattern has been self-reinforcing: as oppositionism has come to be associated with Islam, Christian leaders have become increasingly reluctant to criticize government. In 2010,

the arrest and expulsion of a visiting radical preacher, Sheikh Abdullah al-Faisal,

sparked off violent protests in Mombasa and Nairobi. CIPK leaders worked the story

into their narrative of oppression – calling it 'an assault on Muslims'.[20] 'We are tired of

systematic harassment by this Government', one was quoted as saying; while another

reportedly declared that 'it has come to a point where we as Muslims have to start the

second liberation.[21] One of these leaders also explicitly compared the preacher's

detention to the situation in Guantanamo.[22]

This radicalism was not, however, completely uniform, nor did it inspire Muslim

unity. Persistent rivalries over positions of leadership – driven by personal ambitions

and by ethnic, regional and racial divides, as well as by class – encouraged the

emergence of multiple organizations claiming to work for the interests of Muslims,

nationally and on the coast. Some of these have been studiously loyal to the government

of the day, seeing this as a more effective route to influence than strident public

activism. Even as the CIPK were rushing to denounce the government over the al-Faisal

case, some organizations were much more cautious. In recent years, there have been

more Muslims in government, as senior civil servants and as politicians (Bakari 2013).

This is partly a deliberate attempt to reverse the previous severe underrepresentation of

Muslims; to some extent it also reflects Kenya's particular politics of regional alliance,

in which rival national leaders seek the support of particular local allies. Somalis, in

particular, have achieved a new political prominence; this has, if anything, increased

rivalries, and the persistently expressed hope that Muslims might actually act as a

collective bloc has been confounded by these divides.

The role of religious opposition has also carried its own perils. CIPK and similar

organizations have been able to develop reach and influence partly by successful

cooperation with international donors anxious to provide funds which might

simultaneously promote human rights and good governance and discourage 'radicalization' (Lind and Howell 2008). That support has compounded a fundamental problem for Muslim activists, who have trodden a difficult path. Criticism of government is popular, and can effectively be wound together both with a narrative about the international subordination of Muslims, and with the position about plight of the marginalized in Kenya, generally. These languages of victimhood have great emotive power, and they locate Islam as the natural recourse and support of the oppressed. But public expressions of radicalism risk arrest, or worse. Muslim NGOs accused of links to terrorism have been closed down (Mwakimako 2007, 293). In the last few years a number of known or alleged radical Muslims have been shot dead by police, have disappeared, or have been killed by unknown attackers (Open Society Justice Initiative/Muslims for Human Rights 2013, 28-35).[23] Islam still has an ability to authorise political comment – the media are generally quick to give publicity to those who claim to speak as 'Muslim leaders' – but it does not necessarily offer protection. Yet those who are too temperate in their critique, and who explicitly distance themselves from violence, are likely to be outflanked by more radical speakers.

While Muslim formal institutions have been cautious, the internet has offered ample space for radical expression. More strikingly, it has become apparent that mosques as physical spaces are relatively easy to access, because of the extreme decentralization which is the characteristic of their organization. Historically, mosques have often been associated with particular individuals or families; but the proliferation of mosques in recent years – often sponsored by overseas donors – has left many in the hands either of salaried imams or of very *ad hoc* committees which are often weak. Some committees have very limited power over who is permitted to speak in the mosque, or what they say. A determined preacher or preachers with a relatively small

but organized group of supporters can effectively insist on their right to speak, and use the space to denounce government, the West, and the moderation of Muslim civil society - the involvement of the latter with western donors offers a ready focus for those who accuse them of having betrayed the cause of Islam, and of the oppressed.[24] In 2013-14, struggles for control of mosques in Mombasa – in which imams accused of cooperation with the state were physically attacked and driven out by organized groups with a more radical agenda – demonstrated how mosques may be taken over as platforms (Mwakimako and Willis 2014).[25] While Muslim civil society organisations willingly pursue 'interfaith' programmes with Christians, these more radical preachers are more likely to explicitly see the churches as allies of the Kenyan state, and as a threat to Islam. The prominence in coastal Christianity of people from elsewhere in the country allows churches to be seen as symbols of the oppression both of Islam and of the coast; explicit hostility to Christianity has grown, contrapuntal to the evangelical Christian denunciations of Islam. Islam has come to provide the principal public space for opposition; but this has made leadership, and its messages, even more fractured and contested.

These are some of the issues, historically rooted and constantly changing with unfolding events, which are vital in understanding coastal and national politics in Kenya. They represent far more than, for example, simplistic descriptions of the importation of jihadi ideologies allow. The coast witnessed vigorous arguments before and after the elections of 2013, largely cast as a Muslim debate, over participation, democracy and the relationship of the coast to the rest of Kenya. Christian debates and activism were much more muted – and were strikingly conservative and defensive in nature, focussing on the preservation of peace and order, and the need for the government to protect churches. Ironically, both Christians and Muslims portrayed

themselves as vulnerable, but they conceived the remedy for that in very different ways: Christians demanded that the Kenyan state should protect them from radical Muslims; Muslims sought to protect themselves from the state.

**The 2013 elections and after**

In some ways, churches on the coast behaved just as other churches in Kenya did. The mainline churches involved themselves explicitly in campaigns for peaceful participation in the election, and offered guidance which was generalized to the point of cliché, though in some cases it did hint at popular discontent: the Anglican bishop of Mombasa urged voters to choose 'competent' politicians but also 'elect leaders who will deliver them from their misery'.[26] Candidates for office attended church services or inveigled their way into funerals, and sometimes were allowed to address worshippers or mourners. Clergymen in mainline churches were expected to avoid partisan statements from the pulpit, and mostly seem to have done so, but the political views of some were an open secret. Some church workers were recruited as campaign agents by one (or sometimes more than one) candidate; arguably, their role in these cases was not very much different to that of the multitude of other low level intermediaries who turned their modest local social capital to election purposes in return for reward.

Some 'new' churches played more openly partisan roles. The Mombasa Pentecostal Church openly endorsed one of the candidates for the Mombasa governorship – principally, it seems, because he was the only Christian candidate. The bishop of the Kisima cha Neema ya Mwana Daudi ('Well of the Blessing of David's Child') church, Mary Kagendo, publicly blessed the presidential candidate for the Jubilee Coalition, Uhuru Kenyatta – continuing an association with Uhuru's running-mate, William Ruto, which stretched back to the 2010 referendum, when they had together denounced the constitution for going against 'Biblical teaching'.[27] Bishop

Wilfred Lai prayed for Uhuru and Ruto at his Jesus Celebration Centre in suburban Mombasa, and 'declared their innocence' of charges brought against them in connection with the 2007-8 post-election violence.[28]  After his election victory, Uhuru returned to Mary Kagendo's church: addressing the worshippers as 'my fellow Christians', he went on to 'thank God for all he has done for us'.[29]

At the coast, however, the churches were principally concerned to demand that the state protect them, and to situate themselves as good citizens whose concern was to promote peaceful political participation rather than to demand change. Their language was increasingly hostile to Islam – though not always entirely publicly. A post on the Facebook page of a (Muslim) candidate for the governorship of Mombasa alleged 'that there r some pastors who have started asking xstians not 2 vote 4 amuslim leader here in msa county fearing that this county will b governd using sharia law [sic]'.[30]  When Aboud Rogo, a radical Muslim preacher, was murdered by unknown attackers in August 2012, rioters burned down the Salvation Army church on Mombasa Island. The Mombasa Church Forum – a new organization, which brought together mainline and new churches  - held a meeting at which it demanded an apology from the 'Muslim leadership' for the burning of the church, and called for (unspecified) government action, declaring that 'enough is enough'.[31] In line with the practice of churches cross Kenya, the Mombasa Church Forum organized an 'interdenominational prayer and peace rally' in the run up the elections, and it also organized a debate for gubernatorial candidates, which provided the opportunity for public demands that all candidates promise to protect Christians.[32] With the exception of the pastor mentioned at the beginning of this article, it seems churches at the coast preached a largely consistent message: urging peaceful participation and acceptance of the results of the elections;

while at the same time positioning themselves as loyal citizens, threatened by radical Islam.

Mosques saw much more debate – which was also pursued on the internet and through news conferences. A vocal, if apparently small, body of opinion demanded a boycott of the elections, denouncing the very idea of elections as *kufr,* 'unbelief'; graffiti in Mombasa declared *kura ni haramu*, 'voting is forbidden'.[33] One website explicitly located its denunciation of the election in the context of global injustice:

> These politics are a colonial tool used by the West ... Western countries compete in getting their political puppets from these countries and sponsor them so as to win elections and later on form their governments that help achieve their colonial objectives.[34]

At this point, the campaign of the MRC and the propaganda of international Islamism intersected, each seeking to assert the illegitimacy of the Kenyan state. An opposed argument for Muslim participation was much more widely made, though this still turned on an idea of oppositionism: Muslims had to vote, it was argued, to protect themselves from mistreatment by the state.[35] In the event, there was no evidence of a general boycott  - more people voted at the coast than in any previous election; we do not know what proportion of these voters were Muslim though (Willis and Chome 2014; Mwakimako and Willis 2016).

In the aftermath of the elections, these two very different patterns of religious involvement in politics have persisted. A very public politics of overtly Muslim discontent has been apparent: radical Muslim speakers have continued to attract crowds, mostly of disaffected young men, to certain mosques at the coast, and have preached messages which intertwine local grievances with what they see as the wider international oppression of Islam by its enemies. Their critique has fed into growing violence at the coast, involving attacks by radical Islamists and an apparent campaign of

targeted assassination by security forces, which has become increasingly entangled with al-Shabaab  (Anderson and McKnight, 2015; Mwakimako and Willis, 2014).

Government attempts to suppress such preaching, such as the breaking up of a 'jihad convention' in Mombasa in February 2014, have often been clumsy. [36] But they have apparently had the tacit support of some mosque committees and other organizations who find their position undermined by the preachers, and so have been seized upon by some Muslim critics as further evidence of the government's bias, and of the complicity of 'moderate' leaders – leading to new divisions within CIPK, for example.[37]  Other prominent Muslims have struggled to strike a balance between distancing themselves from radicalism while condemning state violence – and have attracted fierce criticism for doing so.[38] Meanwhile, Christian churches have continued to present themselves as the vulnerable victims of radical Islam.[39]  In 2014 a murderous attack on the congregation of a 'new' church in the southern Mombasa suburb of Likoni (and bomb attacks in Nairobi not long after) was closely followed by the arrest of hundreds of Muslim 'suspects' in large-scale round-ups in Mombasa and Nairobi.[40]

In the wake of the Mombasa church attacks, a senior administrator called publicly for police to shoot to kill when dealing with possible terrorist suspects.[41] Muslim organizations have criticized such threats, and mass detentions. [42]  In turn, they have then been denounced for sympathizing with terrorism when they challenge arrests, and have faced increasing harassment from the state.[43] Such bluster suggests how the security forces have struggled both to cope with the challenge of radical violence, and to distinguish between critical Muslim activism and terrorism.  Violent radicals play on and encourage that failure, using terror to polarise. After an armed gang massacred nearly 100 civilians in a series of brutal attacks around Mpeketoni in July 2014, they disseminated a video which showed them ostentatiously sparing Muslims, and

justifying the murder of non-Muslims by reference to the raids on mosques in Mombasa, and with the claim that Mpeketoni is Muslim land, seized by Christians.[44] The apparent division between Christian and Muslim attitudes to the state has become increasingly stark.

**Conclusion**

Writing in the UK's *Observer* newspaper on the 26th of January 2014, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair argued – echoing Samuel Huntington – that '[t]he battles of this century are less likely to be the product of extreme political ideology – like those of the 20th century – but they could easily be fought around the questions of cultural or religious difference.' In this article, we have suggested that on Kenya's coast, the distinction between an obedient, conservative, nationalist Christianity, and a Muslim community which is routinely associated with opposition to the government, has never been more apparent. But, unlike Blair, we do not see this distinction as fundamentally the product of religious difference. Our argument is that this contrast grows from political circumstances, which have offered Muslims and Christians very different ways of engaging with the state.

Mainline Christian churches in Kenya – fearful of losing followers to 'new' churches, have become increasingly reluctant to criticize the holders of power. They are closely connected with the politically powerful, and espouse theology that is both explicitly apolitical and immensely political in its reflection and reproduction of the inequitable status quo; and on the coast, church leaders express their loyalty to the government by emphasising their vulnerability. Islam, on the other hand, has increasingly come to be associated with a critique of the established order, a position which arises both from particular local circumstance and from a wider, international language of radicalism. This does not mean that all Christians on the coast are

enthusiasts for the established order, nor that all Muslims are critics; neither religion constitutes a homogenous political community, and Muslim politics remain fractured, ambiguous, and riven by the discordant factors that challenge collective action throughout Kenya. Yet a pattern of political involvement has clearly been set: the public spaces created by Islam are associated with political opposition, while those associated with Christianity are not.

---

**Notes**

1. 'MRC Pastor afanya mkutano ndani ya kanisa', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhcE3_ImTeE doi: October 4, 2012.
2. "Kizito tells off Mudavadi critics." *The Star*, May 16, 2012; "There is no rift in Jubilee over posts, says Ruto." *The Standard*, December 9, 2013.
3. "Kalonzo supports Muthaura over Raila in law review row." *The Standard*, December 6 2009; "We shall not gag media – Ruto." *The Star,* November 4, 2013).
4. "Kalonzo attacks Jubilee over jobs." *The Star*, December 17, 2013; "VP Kalonzo says ID card processing to be normalised soon." *The Star,* July 26, 2011; "CORD says county cash be made law." *The Star,* September 9, 2013; "I don't need to be in the House- Kalonzo." *The Star,* May 14, 2013; "This is going to be a crucial week, says Kalonzo." *The Star*, March 14, 2014; "VP Kalonzo hits out at Ruto over Mutunga." *The Star*, May 24, 2011.
5. "NCCK warns Uhuru, Ruto over Hague." *The Star*, February 14, 2013; "Clerics say it is too late to stop Uhuru." *The Star*, February 15, 2013.
6. "Kalonzo still keen on G7 deal." *The Standard*, November 5, 2012; "Jubilee hold extensive campaigns at North Rift." *The Star*, February 11, 2013; "Kenyans are the real pollsters, says Kenneth." *The Star,* January 14, 2013.
7. "I'll overcome hurdles, says Ruto." *Daily Nation,* August 19, 2012; "Mudavadi dismisses Raila plea." *The Star,* August 26, 2012.
8. Final prayers for Uhuru, Ruto." *Citizen TV*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKIXvOHIYOE doi: April 4, 2011; "G7 Ngong prayer rally." *Citizen TV*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZiRPQb-6Rg doi: 11 February 2012; "G7 rallies head to Kisii and Kericho." *The Star*, March 29, 2012; "Presidential hopefuls heighten campaigns." *The Star*, May 11, 2012; "Ruto hosts Uhuru at his Turbo home." *The Star,* March 25, 2013.
9. "Zaccheus Ooth, Archbishop of Kisumu, speaking in Catholic Church condemns 'prayer rallies'." *NTV Kenya*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUuJUcKg370 doi: May 3, 2012
10. "Ambassador Bellamy visits Coast Province." *Wikileaks* http://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06NAIROBI919_a.html doi: March 1 March 2006.
11. Constitutional petition No. 4 of 2010, at http://www.kenyalaw.org/caselaw/cases/view/70143/, viewed February 7, 2014.

12. See also "Balala challenges opposition on unity." *Daily* Nation, June 27, 1994.
13. "Why is Balala on the warpath?" *Sunday Nation,* March 28, 1993.
14. "Stay in on Monday, IPK urges Kenyans." *Daily Nation,* September 15, 1993
15. See also "Defiant Maitha freed on bail, attacks Balala." *Daily Nation*, June 1, 1993
16. "Two killed as fighting rages on." *Daily Nation*, September 10, 1993.
17. "Mombasa trader on al-Shabaab charges." *The Star,* January 28, 2011.
18. See, for example 'Hague's visit to Kenya is to consolidate British imperialism in Kenya', Hizb ut Tahrir East Africa. http://www.hizb-eastafrica.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=29:hagues-visit-to-kenya-is-to-consolidate-british-imperialism-in-kenya&catid=31:press-release&Itemid=128
19. 'The Council of Imamas and Preachers of Kenya', 7 April 2010, http://islaminafrica.wordpress.com/category/local-islamic-associations-and-organizations/cipk-the-council-of-imams-and-preachers-of-kenya-c-i-p-k/
20. "Imams criticize detention of Jamaican cleric." *The Standard*, January 4, 2010.
21. "Deadly protests." *The Standard*, January 16, 2010.
22. "Muslim leaders disagree over cleric's woes." *The Standard*, January 13, 2010.
23. See also "Chaos as Rogo is murdered." *The Star,* August 28, 2012; "Ukunda Muslim preacher shot dead." *The Star*, December 7, 2013.
24. "Mosque that Aboud Rogo preached sought to ban lectures they say radicalize youth." *The Standard,* October 24, 2013
25. "Armed youths raid mosque in Mombasa." *The Star*, November 30, 2013; "Police tracking radical youth who attacked imam." *The Star,* March 15, 2014.
26. "Bishop says coast needs managers." *The Star,* January 9, 2013
27. "Jubilee pledges to bring reforms, democracy." *The Standard*, January 28, 2013; "MPs: we'll reject Mutunga, Baraza in parliament." *The Standard*, May 16, 2011; "Riot confident of a "red card" win." *The Standard*, July 5, 2010.
28. "I am not engaged in hate speech as claimed – Ruto." *The Star*, February 6, 2012.
29. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oT73bgb6LY8, viewed February 7 2014.
30. Post by Ferdinand Owen: http://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=468572126534472&id=215892765135744 doi: January 13, 2013.
31. "Churches demand apology over attacks." *The Star*, August 29, 2012.
32. "Governor hopefuls assure Christians of protection." *The Standard,* February 4, 2013.
33. See for example "What should be done: change leaders or change the system?" *Hizb ut-Tahrir East Africa*, http://www.hizb-eastafrica.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=554:what-should-be-done-change-leaders-or-the-system&catid=31&Itemid=128. doi: 27 Dec. 2012.
34. "Who is better in judgment than Allah?" *Hizb ut-Tahrir East Africa*. http://www.khilafah.com/index.php/analysis/africa/15721-who-is-better-in-judgment-other-than-allah. doi: April 5 2013.
35. "Scholars on Muslims participating in voting." *Friday Bulletin,* March 1, 2013.
36. "Two killed in Mombasa Masjid Musa fighting." *The Star*, February 3, 2014.
37. 'Lobby warns rebels following polls, new officials take office', *The Standard* 19 Jan. 2015.
38. "Coast leaders say they have sufficient evidence to take action against the state for Masjid Musa raid." *The Standard*, February 10, 2014.
39. "Explain attack on church, says cleric." *The Star*, October 7, 2013; "Lenku meets Mombasa leaders over insecurity." *The Star,* October 19 2013; "Clergymen raise concerns over spate of attacks on churches, priests." *The Standard*, October 22, 2013; "Suspected terrorists kill four people at Mombasa church." *The Standard*, March 24, 2014.
40. "Suspected terrorists kill four people at Mombasa church." *The Standard*, March 24, 2014; "Death toll in Eastleigh blast rises to six." *The Standard*, April 1, 2014; "Security Crackdown: Police questioning hundreds arrested in Eastleigh swoop." *Daily Nation*, April 8, 2014.

41. "Police issue shoot to kill order on terrorism suspects." *The Standard*, March 26, 2014.
42. "Fury over shoot to kill order," "Concern over harassment of Likoni residents." *Friday Bulletin*, March 28, 2014; "Muslim leaders criticize security swoop as Coast remains calm." *Daily Nation,* April 6, 2014.
43. 'Kenyan institutions linked to terror have less than five days to clear their names', *The Standard*, 13 April 2015.
44. 'Al-Shabaab releases chilling video about Mpeketoni attack', *The Standard,* 9 Mar. 2015,

**References**

Anderson, David. 2003. "Briefing: Kenya's elections 2002—the dawning of a new era?" *African Affairs* 102 (407): 331-342.

Anderson, David M., and Jacob McKnight. 2015. "Kenya at war: Al-Shabaab and its enemies in Eastern Africa." *African Affairs* 114 (454): 1-27.

Asamoah-Gyadu, Kwabena. 2002. 'Pentecostalism in Africa and the changing form of Church mission'. *Mission Studies*, XIX (2): 14-36

Bakari, Mohamed. 1995. "Muslims and the politics of change in Kenya." In *Islam in Kenya: Proceedings of the National Seminar on Contemporary Islam in Kenya* edited by Mohamed Bakari and Saad Yahya. MEWA: Mombasa. 234-51.

Bakari, Mohammed. 2013. 'A place at the table: the political integration of Muslims in Kenya, 1963-2007'. *Islamic Africa*, 4, 1: 15-48.

Brennan, James. 2008. "Lowering the Sultan's flag: sovereignty and decolonization in coastal Kenya." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50 (4): 831-861.

Cheeseman, Nic, Gabrielle Lynch and Justin Willis. 2014. "Democracy and its discontents: understanding Kenya's 2013 elections." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8 (1): 2-24.

Constantin, Francois. 1993. 'Leadership, Muslim identities and East African politics: tradition, bureaucratization and communication', in Louis Brenner (ed.), *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University: 36-58

Deacon, Gregory and Lynch, Gabrielle. 2013. "Allowing Satan in? Toward a Political Economy of Pentecostalism in Kenya." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 43 (2): 108-130.

Gifford, Paul. 2009. *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*. London: Hurst.

Gifford, Paul. 1994. "Some recent developments in African Christianity." *African Affairs* 93 (373): 513-534.

Hearn, Julie. 2002. "The invisible NGO: US evangelical missions in Kenya." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 22 (1): 32-60.

Hofmeyr, J. W. 2005 'Mainline churches in the public space, 1975-2000', in Ogbu Kalu (ed.), *African Christianity: An African Story*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria: 361-87.

Kanyinga, Karuti. 1998. 'Politics and struggles for access to land: "grants from above" and "squatters" in coastal Kenya', *European Journal of Development Research.* 10 (2): 50-69

Kimenyi, Mwangi. 2006. "The Demand for Power Diffusion: A Case Study of the 2005 Constitutional Referendum Voting in Kenya." *Economics Working Paper* 200611.

Kramon, E and Posner, D. 2011. "Kenya's new constitution." *Journal of Democracy* 22 (2): 89-103.

Kresse, Kai. 2009. "Muslim politics in post-colonial Kenya: negotiating knowledge on the double periphery." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15 (3): 576-94.

Kresse, Kai. 2007. "The uses of history." In *Struggling with History: Islam and Cosmopolitanism in the Western Indian Ocean* edited by Edward Simpson and Kai Kresse. London: Hurst. 223-60.

Lind, Jeremy and Howell, Jude. 2008. Aid, Civil Society and the State in Kenya since 9/11. London: LSE.

Maupeu, Herve. 2001. "The churches and the polls." In *Out for the Count. The 1997 General Election and Prospects for the Democracy in Kenya* edited by Marcel Rutten, Alamin Mazrui and Francois Grignon, 50-71. Kampala:Fountain.

Mazrui, Al Amin. 1997. *Kayas of Deprivation, Kayas of Blood: Violence, Ethnicity, and the State in Coastal Kenya*. Nairobi: Kenya Human Rights Commission.

Mburu, Nene. 2005. *Bandits on the Border. The last frontier in the Search for Somali Unity.* Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press

Mwakimako, Hassan. 1995. "Muslim NGOs and community development: the Kenyan experience." In *Islam in Kenya: Proceedings of the National Seminar on Contemporary Islam in Kenya* edited by Mohamed Bakari and Saad Yahya. MEWA: Mombasa. 224-33.

Mwakimako, Hassan. 2007. "Christian-Muslim relations in Kenya: a catalogue of events and meaning." *Journal of Christian-Muslim Relations* 18 (2): 287-307.

Mwakimako, Hassan and Justin Willis. 2014. *Islam, Politics and Violence on the Kenya Coast*. Observatoires des Enjeux Politiques et Securitaires dans le Corne de l'Afrique, Note 4.

Mwakimako, Hassan and Justin Willis. (2016, in press), 'Islam and democracy: debating electoral involvement on the Kenya coast', *Islamic Africa,* 7, 1

Ndzovu, Hassan. 2009. "Muslims and party politics and electoral campaigns in Kenya." *Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa Working Paper*.

http://www.bcics.northwestern.edu/documents/workingpapers/ISITA_09-001_Ndzovu.pdf.

Ndzovu, Hassan. 2012. The politicization of Muslim organizations and the future of Islamic-oriented politics in Kenya', *Islamic Africa.* 3 (1): 25-53.

Ndzovu, Hassan. 2014. Muslims in Kenyan Politics: Political Involvement, Marginalization, and Minority Status. Evanston. Northwestern University Press.

Ngunyi, Mutahi. 1995. 'Religious institutions and political liberalization in Kenya', in P. Gibbon (ed.), *Markets, Civil Society and Democracy in Kenya*. 121-177. Uppsala: Nordiske Afrikainstitut.

Oded, Arye. 2013. "Islamic extremism in Kenya." *RIMA Occasional Paper* 1 (14). http://muslimsinafrica.wordpress.com/2013/07/05/islamic-extremism-in-kenya-dr-arye-oded/

Oded, Arye. 1996. "Islamic extremism in Kenya: the rise and fall of Sheikh Khalid Balala." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 26 (4): 406-15.

Open Society Justice Initiative/Muslims for Human Rights. 2013. '*We are Tired of Taking You to Court': Human Rights Abuses by Kenya's Anti-Terrorism Police Unit.* New York: Open Society Foundations.

Sabar-Friedman, Galia. 2002. *Church, State and Society in Kenya: From Mediation to Opposition, 1963-1993*. Abingdon: Franck Cass.

Sabar-Friedman, Galia. 1997. "Church and state in Kenya, 1986-1992: the Churches' involvement in the 'Game of Change.'" *African Affairs* 96 (382): 25-52.

Sperling, David. 2000. "Religion and society." In *The Kenya Coast Handbook. Culture, Resources and Development in the East African Littoral* edited by J. Hoorweg, Dick Foeken and R.A. Obudho, 157-171. Hamburg: LIT Verlag.

Salim, Ahmed I. 1973. *The Swahili-speaking peoples of Kenya's coast, 1895-1965*. Nairobi: East African Publishing House.

Strayer, Robert. 1978. The Making of Mission Communities in East Africa: Anglicans and Africans in colonial Kenya, 1875-1935. New York: SUNY Press.

Thordsen, Sara. 2009.  *New Muslim Activism in Kenya* http://www.specialer.sam.au.dk/stat/2009/19990725/19990725.1.pdf

Throup, David. 1995. "'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's': the politics of church-state conflict in Kenya, 1978-1990.' In *Religion and Politics in East Africa* edited by Holger B. Hansen and Michael Twaddle, 143-176. London/Nairobi/Kampala/ Athens, OH: James Currey/EAEP/Fountain/Ohio UP.

Wandera, Joseph. 2008-2009. "Muslims, Christians and the state: the contest for public space in Kenya." *Annual Review of Islam in Africa* 10: 17-22.

Whittaker, Hannah. 2008. 'The socio-economic dynamics of the Shifta conflict in Kenya, c. 1963-68', *Journal of African History*, 53 (3):  391-408

Willis, Justin and Chome, Ngala. 2014. "Marginalization and participation on the Kenya coast: the 2013 elections." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8 (1): 115-134.

Willis, Justin and Gona, George. 2013a. "Tradition, tribe and state in Kenya: the Mijikenda Union, 1945-80." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55 (2): 448-473.

Willis, Justin and Gona, George. 2013b. "Pwani C Kenya? Memory, documents and secessionist politics in coastal Kenya." *African Affairs* 112 (446): 48-71.