



Searching for a New Kenya

Searching for a New Kenya analyses public discussion in urban Kenya, focusing on the gatherings of citizens, both in person and online, where people discuss issues of common concern, to shed light on the role public discussion plays in politics and how social media affect political movements. Through rich ethnographic study of politics on the ground and online in Mombasa, Stephanie Diepeveen brings a fresh perspective on the wider challenges and dynamics of negotiating political narratives across protracted historical debates and changing digital media. Based on a critical revision of Hannah Arendt's ideas about action and power, this study explores the different dynamics of public talk in practice. It contributes to wider debates about the place and limitations of the Western canon in relation to the study of politics elsewhere, while also offering a nuanced view of why and how certain terms of debate persist in Kenya, and where the potential for change lies for public talk across changing media.

Stephanie Diepeveen is a researcher at the University of Cambridge. She is co-editor of the *Journal of Eastern African Studies* special issue on 'Publics in Africa in a Digital Age'. Stephanie was previously a postdoctoral research associate at Darwin College, Cambridge (2017–2020). She has been researching everyday expression of politics in Kenya since 2008, both individually and through interdisciplinary collaborations, supported by, among others, UKRI-GCRF, the Alborada Research Fund and the Centre of Governance and Human Rights, Cambridge.

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Politics and Social Media on the Streets of Mombasa
Stephanie Diepeveen
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STEPHANIE DIEPEVEEN
University of Cambridge



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*To my grandparents, Dirk and Nell, and Fred and Shirley,
with much love and appreciation*

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	x
<i>Note on the Text</i>	xii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xiii
 Part I Rethinking Publics from Kenya	
1 Introduction	3
1.1 Public Discussion and Shared Imaginaries in Mombasa	6
1.2 Conceptualising Publics from Africa	11
1.3 An Arendtian Approach to Publics	18
1.4 Studying Publics on the Street and Online	25
2 The History of Publics in Mombasa: People, Media and the State	33
2.1 Setting the Stage for Political Hierarchy: Portuguese and Arab Rule	35
2.2 Hardening Racial and Ethnic Divides: Mombasa as a British Protectorate	37
2.3 The Coast within Independent Kenya	42
2.4 Citizen–State Relations in the 2000s and 2010s	49
 Part II Characterising Publics	
3 Publics in the Streets: Mombasa’s Street Parliaments	63
3.1 Street Parliaments in the Central Business District	64
3.2 Street Parliaments Outside the Central Business District	72
3.3 Characterising Publics in Mombasa’s Streets	78
4 Publics in Civil Society and Online: Mombasa’s Youth Parliaments	84
4.1 Convening Publics through Civil Society	85
4.2 Convening Publics on Facebook	90
4.3 Diverse Ways of Being Public and Plural	105

Part III Situating Publics in Time and Space	
5 Our Turn to Starve: Material Insecurity, Idleness and Publics	109
5.1 Publics in the Modern City	110
5.2 Material Insecurity and Idleness in Public	113
6 Publics and the Contested State of Land in Kenya	125
6.1 Land Ownership in Kenya	126
6.2 The Occupation of Mombasa's Streets	130
6.3 Strategies to Secure the Right to Place	136
7 The Obfuscation of Spatial Constraints on Facebook	141
7.1 The Physical Infrastructure of Networked Spaces	143
7.2 The Ownership of Social Media Spaces	146
7.3 The Nature of Freedom Online	150
7.4 Contingent Spaces Online and Offline	151
Part IV The Power of Publics	
8 Popular Politics and Publics during the 2013 General Elections	159
8.1 Division in the 2013 Kenyan General Elections	161
8.2 The Street Parliaments during the 2013 General Elections	164
8.3 The Youth Parliaments during the 2013 General Elections	169
8.4 Individual Agency and Animated Publics	180
9 In the Presence of Fear: Violence and Publics in Kenya	183
9.1 Violence in the Streets	186
9.2 Violence on Social Media	189
9.3 Violence and the Precariousness of Publics	193
10 The Individual Spectator and the Role of Imagination in Publics	196
10.1 The Spectator in the Street Parliament	199
10.2 The Spectator on Facebook	206
10.3 The Spectator's Challenges on Facebook and in the Streets	215
11 Conclusion	219
11.1 The Nature and Power of Publics in Kenya	220
11.2 New Directions in Normative Theory on Publics	223
11.3 Rethinking Arendt from Mombasa	224
<i>Appendix List of Interviewees</i>	228
<i>References</i>	244
<i>Index</i>	265

Figures

2.1	Political map of Mombasa prior to the 2013 general elections in Kenya	<i>page 53</i>
2.2	Street map of Mombasa with approximate locations of people’s parliaments	57
4.1	Membership in Mombasa Youth Senate, recorded between January 2014 and April 2015	92
4.2	Mombasa Youth Senate group discussion, recorded on 17 November 2014	95
10.1	An excerpt from MYS retrieved on 22 February, 23 April and 20 October 2015	214

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xi

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Note on the Text

With the exception of public figures (e.g. President Uhuru Kenyatta, or Governor Ali Hassan Joho), pseudonyms are used throughout the text, including in quotations, to protect the anonymity of individuals.

Abbreviations

ATPU	Anti-Terrorism Police Unit
CBD	Central Business District
ICC	International Criminal Court
KYP	Kisauni Youth Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament
MRC	Mombasa Republican Council
MYA	Mombasa Youth Assembly
MYP	Mombasa Youth Parliament
NCCK	National Council of Churches of Kenya
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
PNU	Party of National Unity
RC	Republican Congress Party