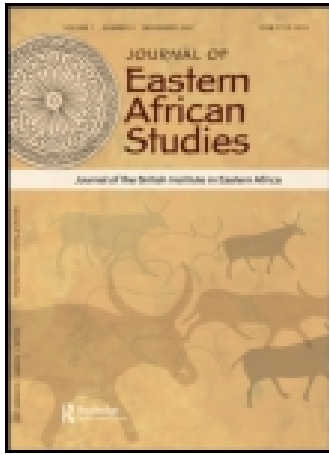


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The cosmopolitan tradition and fissures in segregationist town planning in Nairobi, 1915–23

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This article argues that the attempts to institute segregation in Nairobi faltered because the process of urban land allocation, use and exchange and the legislation supporting this process did not support segregation. It uses the example of the removal of the Somali settlement in Ngara and the debates around the removal of the Indian Bazaar to demonstrate this failure. Through a study of the emergence of Eastleigh, the paper demonstrates that business-inclined settlers demanded a system of town planning that was class-based rather than race-based. In 1923, the colonial state conceded that segregation between European and Asiatics is not absolutely essential for the preservation of the health of the community. Overall, the article exposes a particular futility in the history of Nairobi – the attempt to achieve segregation using a planning vision that was suffused with cosmopolitan realities.

Keywords: segregation; town planning; Indian Bazaar; Nairobi; cosmopolitanism; Eastleigh

all these rules of uniformity in a town like Nairobi, which is growing as best as it can under pioneer conditions would be very admirable in a quarter of a big metropolis; but very restrictive on owners and builders who have to meet the demand of a cosmopolitan and polyglot population.¹

[T]he whole difficulty has arisen out of the . . . introduction of segregation of races . . . at a somewhat late hour in the history of East Africa.²

Introduction

The years after World War I in Kenya have been described as the “years of revolutionary advance”.³ This was a time when the settler advance towards white supremacy in Kenya seemed attainable due to their role in the war. But, in 1923, this possibility was deflated by a combination of factors. There were “important internal cleavages within the European settler community that interrupted their strategies of securing and maintaining white dominance”.⁴ Second, there was a new surge in African nationalism, a surge that came almost simultaneously with heightened Asian struggles against white dominance. These factors combined to challenge white dominance. While, on the African side, new developments in leadership led to the founding of the first major African political organizations, the resultant Afro-Asian political liaisons raised political stakes in the colony leading to political mobilization

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that culminated in the first major act of African nationalist rebellion, the Thuku riots, in Nairobi of 1922.⁵

The mobilization that led to these riots took place in various linked political spaces within the African and Indian locations of Nairobi, but they also drew from the rural grievances in central Kenya and the Rift Valley.⁶ The Thuku riots pointed to the central position Nairobi was poised to play in the wider struggle against colonial domination. In Nairobi, the fight was against segregation in its various manifestations. If segregationist town planning was meant, in part, to control Africans in Nairobi and, perhaps, check any such riotous eventualities, the fact that the riots occurred raises questions about the efficacy of this form of town planning.

Analysts have long recognized that urban areas generally are bastions of political mobilization and activity against domination. They view the urban crowd as generally disposed to such mobilization for nationalist and related struggles.⁷ This leaves the important question of what there is in the urban context that leads to this disposition. Other studies show how rural concerns intersect with urban grievances leading urban-based political actors to mobilize.⁸ Although these studies use a spatial vocabulary, few pose the theme of political mobilization from a perspective that privileges “space” while recognizing that spaces are “permeated by social relations”.⁹

Furthermore, except for a few studies, the literature on nationalism in Nairobi tends to focus mainly on the post-war period to the extent that they seem to forget, or ignore, that nationalism ought to be traced back to the initial sprouting of African political consciousness in early Nairobi.¹⁰ Those who study the early time period generally use it as a backdrop against which to understand the urban manifestations of Mau Mau.¹¹ As such, they are more interested in Mau Mau than the spatial context within which aspects of the rebellion originated and manifested. These studies treat the roles of different political actors as if they operated in a realm above the urban geographical spaces.¹²

This article argues that the attempts to institute segregation in Nairobi faltered because the process of urban land allocation, use and exchange and the legislation supporting this process did not support segregationist town planning. By focusing on the politics of forced removals that touched on the Indian Bazaar, the Somali settlement in Ngara and on Eastleigh’s early development, the article shows how attempts to institute segregationist town planning through the Public Health Ordinance (PHO) in 1913 were undermined by a cosmopolitan tradition that had existed in the town since its founding at the turn of the century. The article demonstrates that business-inclined settlers demanded a system of town planning that was class-based rather than race-based. In 1923, the colonial state conceded that segregation between European and Asiatics is not absolutely essential for the preservation of the health of the community. Overall, the article exposes a particular futility in the history of Nairobi – the attempt to achieve segregation using a planning vision that was suffused with cosmopolitan realities.

The Indian Bazaar (hereafter bazaar) provides a useful site for this argument. It was one of the earliest commercial and residential quarters in colonial Nairobi and a melting pot of classes, ethnicities, races, and genders. When, in 1913, the colonial administration introduced a segregationist town planning model through the PHO, the bazaar stood out as the only officially recognized area for non-Europeans in the town. Located in what became the town centre, it consequently became a site of struggle between conflicting urban visions, the cosmopolitan and the insular.

The first was embodied in the bazaar's social and ethnic composition and its location at the commercial heart of the emerging town. It was located at the centre of the burgeoning, if ill-planned, town and became an important engine for Nairobi's commercial activity.

The location at the centre of the town opened the quarter to the "hygienic gaze"¹³ – a gaze that revealed its record of poor sanitation and susceptibility to epidemics.¹⁴ This susceptibility rationalized the second vision – the racially insular idea that segregation aimed to protect. This idea supported the zoning of people into locales on the basis of race or ethnicity.¹⁵ The ideologues of insularity hoped to minimize social contact through residential segregation. They relied on forced removals of specific locations to sites away from the town centre and/or relocation of "undesirable" or "redundant" people from the centre of the town. By 1914, these two trends were counterpoised in a complicated politics that focused on the bazaar, and the Somali settlement in Ngara Plains. The politics pitted European settlers against Asians,¹⁶ at times with Africans as pawns in this imperial chess game and, at other times, as beneficiaries of the struggle.¹⁷

Thus, the bazaar encapsulates an important aspect of the political struggle against segregationist town planning that I mobilize to explore the contestations over this form of planning. The overall idea to analyse how the bazaar became a formidable bulwark against insularity is served by a conceptualization of how the interactions between actors and their spaces produced a social geography in the bazaar that encouraged cosmopolitanism and countered insularity. This task is not easily served by the "many nuances and meanings" of cosmopolitanism in contemporary usage.¹⁸ Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen identify six senses whereby cosmopolitanism can be viewed or invoked: as a socio-cultural condition; a kind of philosophy or world view; as a political project towards building transnational institutions; as a political project for recognizing multiple identities; as attitudinal or dispositional orientation; and as a mode of practice or competence.¹⁹

The understanding of cosmopolitanism that best captures our task combines elements of the socio-cultural condition of the bazaar as a site with the "dispositional orientation" of its dwellers that compelled them into "a mode of practice" that transcended the ethnic, gender, class and racial boundaries. Thus, Ulf Hannerz's definition of cosmopolitanism as "an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other..."²⁰ is apt as it sufficiently centres the common themes of acceptance and solidarity that ought to be at the core of most meanings of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism implies the necessity of building new groups or communities whose existence depends, ultimately, on the social solidarities bringing people together. A "public discourse" or "conversation" that attenuates differences and creates understanding is therefore necessary for the sustainability of these communities.²¹

Even though the bazaar provides a compelling case for rethinking Nairobi's history using the notion of cosmopolitanism, studies of the Asian question in Kenya have hardly conceptualized the Indians in such terms. Asians were intimately involved in the emergence of Nairobi town. Most studies of Asians focus on their marginalization or on the commercial image of Indians and seek to explain anti-Asian opinion as a product of a negative commercial image which was "circulated and embellished" from a few cases to become "an integral aspect of African folklore..."²² On his part, Atieno-Odhiambo underscores the diversity of the Asian community by distinguishing five groups among Asians and shows that the

“low standard of commercial integrity” of its large class of petty traders trumped the rapport that the more politically inclined Asians had with Africans. Thus, the general “portrait that emerges then is one of a racial group harassed by the settlers and distrusted by the Africans, a group whose political attitudes towards the Africans was patronizing and naïve”.²³

There are few studies that accord due attention to the role of Indians in introducing the money economy, but they do not discuss this in the spatial context in which business was conducted.²⁴ Garth Myers, however, uses the biography of Ajit Singh to present a nuanced discussion of Indians as a “class of in-betweeners” who “engaged in the construction and maintenance of colonial urban order”.²⁵ Only one study has used this approach to map the growth and spatial distribution of Asians in Kenya, but its nationwide focus distinguishes it from this study.²⁶

The cosmopolitan orientation in the Indian bazaar

Historically, the objective of town planning is to maintain order in the urban space. Urban land allocation processes and the legislation that facilitate it are integral aspects of urban order. In Nairobi, the authorities acknowledged the importance of town planning, but work towards laying out a planned town remained minimal, half-hearted and oftentimes conflicting. Nowhere was the disconnection between legislation and implementation as consequential for town planning as in land allocation and use. In Nairobi, the challenge of urbanization was first marked out in the pattern of urban land allocation and use. Land allotment processes were irregular and ad hoc mainly because Nairobi started without a proper land allocation scheme and effective follow-up mechanisms to oversee the transfer of plots and ensure they were over time used for the designated purposes. The demand for quick land allotment that by far surpassed the ability of the land survey personnel to adequately allocate plots and ensure their designated use are cited as reasons for these irregularities.²⁷

The irregularities in land allotment and use were part of a larger land use policy problem. Land was allocated on concessionaire basis – the rationale being to attract men whose influence would encourage rapid European settlement in the protectorate. However, concessionaires encouraged land speculation. In 1906, Lord Delamere articulated the option thus: “either you [the government] must allow speculation or the government must be prepared to do a great deal more than it has done in helping the settler”.²⁸ When government allowed land speculation, the concessionaires ensured a pattern of land settlement that satisfied their interests but did not facilitate proper town planning. As settlers like Ewart Grogan took large land grants, they also took up government nominations, including nominations to the Land Board, the Municipal Committee or the Legislative Council, and began to influence land policy in their favour.²⁹ In 1907, the colonial state allowed land sales by auction “thus creating the commercial land market sought by the speculative interests”. Most of this land, acquired on freehold, was later subdivided and resold at a profit. By the end of the 1910s, it was clear that some settlers received grants of land “as a speculation in the hope of getting something for nothing”.³⁰

The initial planning errors spawned other challenges that complicated town management. Uncoordinated planning accounted for improper drainage system, poor road and street network, debilitated buildings, inadequate lighting system, etc. Further, there was limited follow-up on land use once urban plots were allocated; the

administration and the township committee were unable to effectively control the use to which the town plots were put once these changed ownership. Thus, when the speculators began to sell land that had been allocated on freehold, the Municipal Committee (MC) (formerly Township Committee) was unable to effectively control inter-racial transfers of urban land located on sites designated for specific races. Consequently, the concerned settlers pushed the administration to initiate repeated adjustments in (urban) land use legislation and building codes in order to meet new demands, face new realities or simply legislate new rules to cater for previously unforeseen situations.³¹ These adjustments significantly influenced the outlook and social organization of the town and opened the way for a system of commercial and residential organization that did not augur well with the vision of segregationist town planning embodied in the PHO. The existence of the bazaar in the town centre did not help matters.

The bazaar was the product of early Asian influence in the town. After the railway and the administration, Asian merchants were the first among the other arrivals to develop interests in Nairobi. They arrived in the Protectorate well before British colonialism and established themselves at the East African coast. They developed a recognizable urban culture while others ventured inland arriving in Nairobi with the arrival of the railway. Their role in the commercial opening up of the Protectorate is known. Indians dominated the commercial sector in the colonial era.³² They established themselves mainly in the urban areas where they became an influential force “in a town’s position in the hierarchy of urban places”.³³ Since Asians were among the first to arrive in Nairobi in large numbers, they spread aspects of their values and traditions as they moved upcountry. They named Nairobi’s earliest neighbourhoods. The merchants among them occupied Nairobi and, by the turn of the century, were recognizable property owners in the town. A few of them had been contracted to supply the railway and were responsible for bringing indentured labourers to construct the railway.³⁴ While the labourers were technically the responsibility of the railway administration that employed them, the 1898 *Plan for a Railway Town* “only took into consideration the European employees of the railway and European and Asian traders who were expected to come” along with the railway. The Plan “completely neglected the Asian labourers or coolies and Africans” and forced them to seek alternative shelter and build symbiotic relationships amongst themselves and with the Africans.³⁵

The choice of settlement and the social milieu that developed in the settlements of these neglected groups reflected their experience and adjustment to exclusion. The Asian labourers and Africans were led into engaging with each other by the sheer force of necessity. They relied on cheap housing provided in this settlement and entered into new relationships not just with each other but also with the merchants who owned the site where they lived. That is why the social composition of residents in the bazaar included poor-class Indians whose interests dovetailed with those of Africans. The bazaar housed many Indian traders and their families as well as African populations of various ethnicities and social status including prostitutes, traders, dhobi men, clerks, domestic workers including those working in European residences, lawyers, doctors, etc.³⁶

The records are not clear on how the merchants acquired land in the bazaar on which the marginalized groups lived but the extent of their property gave them a voice.³⁷ Most Asian merchants acquired land and property in Nairobi on the concessionaire basis. Jeevanjee, for instance, acquired land as a result of his

favourable disposition to the early administrators. He built government housing in exchange for an informal agreement that the government would rent them “for a fixed term of ten years with option to purchase”.³⁸ He owned much of the land occupied by the bazaar and, together with other Asians traders like Shiekh Noor Din, Dharamsay Khayow & Co., Syed Imtiazali and Allidina Visram, they became prominent landlords.³⁹ It is estimated that by 1910, Alibhai and Jeevanjee owned over two-thirds of the shop sites in the bazaar. His properties in Nairobi included the slaughter house, the kerosene store, municipal market, town hall site and livery stables.⁴⁰ Given the extent of their property, these men soon sought to have a say in town planning, if not, at least, in the planning of the bazaar.

The desire to influence the growth of the town was captive to colonial politics in Nairobi. At the centre of this politics were the “men of standing” who, according to McGregor Ross, had specific privileges that allowed them to “ruthlessly divert the course of legislation, as far as they are able, to strengthening of their positions and the enlargement of their opportunities”.⁴¹ They operated almost as if they were a law unto themselves and, in so doing, roused the anger of merchants like Jeevanjee. Yet both men benefited from a system that neglected urban planning codes. In this context, the bazaar became the site of intermingling, bonding and the emergence of a multi-ethnic community. As it developed with such a multi-ethnic bias, actors within Nairobi debated what the best town planning model would be.

In the meantime, the bazaar grew into the commercial hub of Nairobi. It occupied a core area that stretched on both sides of Government Road (today’s Moi Avenue) all the way towards the railway. At the Railway end, Government Road became Station Road. As the town grew, the bazaar expanded towards the bed of Nairobi River at the South East end near Race Course Bridge. The area from River Road towards Nairobi River was known as River Road area. That lying between Government Road and River Road was the bazaar.⁴² But the two overlapped into each other. The bazaar and River Road were convenient for those workers for whom the railway did not provide housing. Yet, still, this location was in the commercial hub of the emerging town. This in itself demonstrated the centrality and significance of the bazaar in Nairobi. It also illustrated the spatial “anomalies” in colonial Nairobi with respect to the vision of segregation.

The anomaly was that a town slated to become a white settler city had a racially mixed Asian and African settlement dominating its core business area, an area located at the centre of the town and owned largely by Indians. This was possible because the allocation or acquisition of property in the Nairobi was ad hoc at best, characterized by inadequate control on surveying, laying out the drainage, enforcing building controls, providing sewerage and latrine facilities, lighting, etc. The consequences of lack of enforcement of basic town planning regulations and an absence of rudimentary governance structures in the bazaar had led to repeated public health problems including, most importantly, three plague epidemics in 1902, 1905 and 1906. The plague emanated from a pattern of urban development that “resulted more from chance than from any cohesive planning effort”.⁴³ There is no way the bazaar would have been where it was located had European settlers had a say in advance of Indian settlement on this site. If the site of the bazaar and the way it was settled compromised its sanitary status, this very process also accounts for the cosmopolitan nature of its social composition, norms and social surroundings.

Though the cosmopolitanism of the bazaar was a result of oversight or neglect, we cannot ignore the fact that none of the communities or people in Nairobi were

self-sufficient to make it in early Nairobi by themselves. “The administration and the trader,” wrote Ehrlich, “formed an oasis of potential economic development in a desert of backwardness.” Through the duka-wallas:

the [Indian] merchant was buying all kinds of local produce and continued to open up the market for buying as well as for selling. He was – and still is – a money-lender to his customers, giving them credits on terms that no bank in the towns would accept.⁴⁴

These commercial interactions necessitated inter-racial, -ethnic and -class alliances; alliances whose value was strong in the early days but only diminished as Nairobi grew to become an important administrative and commercial centre and a self-sufficient place where many of the services and wherewithal needed for social reproduction and personal sustenance could easily be accessed through purchase. Before that, most people relied on each other for survival in the harsh realities of a new town and in these realities lay the cosmopolitan pedigree of the town.

Segregationist impulse gathered momentum after the rudiments of Nairobi as a town had been established. Indeed, the insular attitude could not survive the challenges of Nairobi’s incipient environment. Racial zoning could not withstand the penury common in the burgeoning town. Indian shopkeepers and European railway workers had to rely on African supplies for food and other necessities. Such reliance guaranteed the “inescapable physical proximity” between people of different races in colonial society. Richard Geater, one of Nairobi’s earliest architects, “was impressed in 1908 at how civilised everything was but in particular marvelled at the ability of the African *mpishi* [cook], the skill with which cooks could produce bread and three-course meals in oven contrived from two *debes* placed side by side”. He correctly concluded that the ability of Europeans to survive early Nairobi rested on a “natural gift” of African cooking, on his ability to make “other European recipes with the barest of equipment and from memory”.⁴⁵ In other words, the networks and alliances forged in the early days witnessed to a specific reality of colonial society – that it “functioned in the context of constant physical proximity between Europeans and Africans in the field, the office, and the home”.⁴⁶

Consequently, historical antecedents conspired to establish Asians at the commercial centre of Nairobi. They owned major properties in the town, supplied the railway, assisted the initial administrative efforts, started the first newspapers, helped the early European business class to establish itself and, above all, shouldered the cost of service provision in the town until 1908 when they challenged the system of rates “charged on landowners on the basis of plot value”. This was a “cumbersome system” of rating that “placed greater burdens upon the town’s vibrant and highly competitive commercial sector, dominated by the Asian communities”.⁴⁷ But the symbioses of the early days gave Asians a commercial head start that became the envy of tardy settlers. Most Europeans later leased from Indians. Tommy Wood, for instance, leased his first building from Jeevanjee on Victoria Street. Wood started the first ever hotel in Nairobi that soon became the “acknowledged centre of [settler] wheeling and dealing”. Most settlers stayed in this two-storey wood-and-iron building whenever they were in Nairobi. The hotel had four rooms, a butcher and tailor shop. Wood also ran a post office and messenger service. Ironically, it was also at Wood’s place that the Colonialists’ Association was founded in July 1902. Its aim to encourage white settlement soon galvanized settler

opposition against Indians. Wood became a leader of the Nairobi settlers, a long-serving member of the Nairobi MC and first mayor of Nairobi.⁴⁸

Though Victoria Street grew into the hub of the European commercial district, the initial interdependence with the bazaar is significant. Apart from European businesses sprouting with the assistance of Indian property owners here, the bazaar housed professionals who attended to everyone irrespective of race, class, ethnicity or gender. Dr Rosendo Ayres Ribeiro, a Goan and another long-serving member of the Nairobi MC, was the first private medical practitioner in Nairobi. He arrived in Nairobi in 1900 and lived in the bazaar with his assistant Mr C. Pinto. He left after the plague outbreak of 1902 to stay at the station but “visited the sick among all communities”. He diagnosed and reported the 1902 bubonic plague among two of his Somali patients. None of the Somali patients are mentioned by name, but Kitching writes of some Somali based in Nairobi and grazing around the settlement before 1903. By 1906–07, they had started butchery businesses and supplied meat for Nairobi’s population.⁴⁹

Functionally, the bazaar and River Road were residential as well as commercial sites. Ainsworth estimated that by September 1899, there were 150 Indian traders in Nairobi most of whom lived in the bazaar. For Africans, the bazaar and River Road were sites of booming business and residential places. There were African women who rented houses in the bazaar to practise prostitution and provide for all kinds of domestic services. But this site took a great share of African businesses of all kinds in Nairobi. “To the native generally speaking,” wrote one observer:

Nairobi means the bazaar: the bazaar exists in virtue of the native trade, the volume of which is enormous. There is the daily influx of thousands of natives, of whom the greater number come by road from Kyambu [*sic*].⁵⁰

This dimension indicates that African urban women were not simply urban dwellers; some did their businesses in the bazaar and returned home to their families.⁵¹

From the foregoing, it is clear that the bazaar catered for a wide variety of commercial, residential, storage, medical, and socio-political needs and activities of Nairobi dwellers, be they Europeans, Asians or Africans. These functions set it as a place of intense interaction among people of different classes, ethnicities, genders and races. It was described as “varied and lively, famous throughout East Africa. Merchants, artisans, confectioners and restaurateurs mingled with tailors, shoemakers, barbers, carpenters and blacksmiths”.⁵² This mix led to a complex milieu that was anything but insular. It is only after Nairobi had grown to become a major and accessible commercial centre and after more settlers arrived and became relatively comfortable about the prospects of making it in the Protectorate that they intensified their advocacy for segregation. But first, to what extent is the bazaar a microcosm for the rest of Nairobi with respect to cosmopolitanism?

Speculation in land and the origins of Eastleigh

By the second decade of the twentieth century, Nairobi had become a jumbled terrain characterized by numerous planning errors and omissions. Most, as argued above, were due to uncoordinated planning and improper land allocation processes.⁵³ These errors were exacerbated by the speculative greed for land on the part of individual settlers. Compounded by procrastination, inertia, and lack of

funds for town improvement, the consequences of speculation in land snowballed into other areas of Nairobi's history as demand for urban land increased, as land acquired new uses or was put to different uses and as people exchanged ownerships rights to land, at times without reference to the administration. The nature of transactions in land became a major issue of concern for the colonial administration in the 1910s. The intention of the administration was to protect white property owners by giving them preferential treatment in ownership and by reserving the best parts of the town for Europeans. This was meant to ensure exclusive racial privilege for settlers in the town.

The lurking possibility of inter-racial transfer of land threatened this privileged living and fuelled antagonism between whites and Asians. There were in Nairobi wealthy Asians who could afford property in European areas. Also, some "unscrupulous" whites were willing to sell land to Asians while some wealthy Asians wished to purchase land in white only residential areas. Thus, Asians constituted the most serious threat to the privileged pattern of property ownership for Europeans since some of them were wealthier compared to some white settlers.

The antagonism in Nairobi with respect to land transfer started early in March 1903 and persisted well into the 1940s. In 1903, a European owned estate of 140 acres was purchased at an auction by an Indian firm. The local press protested against an Indian "being allowed to possess this property . . . at the heart of Nairobi".⁵⁴ From then onwards, the administration required sellers to insert conditional clauses in advertisement and agreements prohibiting inter-racial land transfers. This prohibition in Nairobi targeted Asians who were making significant inroads in the European business area on Government Road. Subsequently, there were further attempts to formalize such inter-racial restrictions to land alienation expressed by a Nairobi Committee in 1905, the Nairobi Chamber of Commerce in 1910, the Nairobi Sanitary Commission report and Simpson Report of 1913.⁵⁵ This culminated in the alteration of the land laws in 1915 that introduced "a veto clause" requiring the Governor's approval for inter-racial land transfer. The alterations were in turn codified in the Crown Lands Ordinance of the same year.⁵⁶ Yet, by the end of the war, concerns about such transfers still prevailed and grew in intensity in the 1930s and 1940s.

These concerns over inter-racial land transfers were compounded by a second problem; the use of land for purposes for which it was never intended in the original lease. This occurrence was common as land changed hands. A memo circulating within the Medical Department (the last page with author's name is missing from the file) dated 25 July 1918 to the PMO discussed the issue under the theme "change of purpose". The author argued that the use of land differing in degree and purpose to that for which the original grant was obtained was "an important factor" that had "produced the undesirable state of affairs obvious in Nairobi East and other townships today". He added that such change of purpose went "without any obligation being placed upon the owner to perform any act that such conversion necessarily implies".⁵⁷ This memo touched on an important explanation for the confusion in planning Nairobi, but it stopped short of exposing the key offenders in this regard who were mostly the "men of standing" who had acquired land for speculative reasons and were now selling it to the highest bidder.

Speculation occurred in a context where legal regulation on land lagged behind allotment and use. The legal framework did not adequately guide land allocation, use and exchange. When speculators started selling off land, especially the ones

originally acquired on the basis of freehold titles with rights of free transfer, they looked for the highest bidder, race notwithstanding. It became difficult to control inter-racial land transfers especially in cases where Asian buyers offered better terms than Europeans or where no European buyer was willing to buy land on sale in the first place. In some cases, this amounted to Asians buying land and owning property in areas where they could not reside like Parklands. In other cases, such as I will show shortly, several townships like Egerton Estate, Nairobi East Township, Upper Nairobi Township, Groganville and Kilimani Estate were allotted on freehold basis with rights on free transfer. This was the basis on which the Somali claimed their right to reside in Nairobi East Township rather than Mbagathi.

Matters were not helped by the fact that the key speculators in Nairobi (the men of standing) had over time been incorporated into government or related appointments and were therefore charged with governing a process in which they had vested interests. Prominent settlers, like Grogan, are cited severally as recipients of concessions of huge chunks of land in Nairobi which, at some time, they sought to sell to the Municipal Council under terms that favoured them.⁵⁸ Much of the land they wanted to sell had been left unused and undeveloped for long as plot owners waited for the value to appreciate exponentially as to allow them to sell at huge profits. Because of the speculative rationale for land acquisition and the fact that speculators were also overseeing the decision-making process, it became difficult to appropriately manage urban land development.

Furthermore, the administration lacked up-to-the-date knowledge of who owned land, where and to what use it was put. The state had ineffective control over private land owners, how they used it and to whom they sold it. Such control only came into operation after an initial *laissez faire* interlude and only when it became clear that the town had begun to grow “in a very piecemeal and uncoordinated fashion”.⁵⁹ In other words, the physical development in Nairobi lagged behind determination of rights and responsibilities in urban land ownership and use and this opened avenues for inter-racial interactions that did not permit racial insularity.

In a nutshell, the concessionaire approach and speculation in land compromised administrative attempts to establish an effective regime of rights and responsibilities in urban land as a basis of enforcing racial segregation. Worse, the administration was unable to impose rates on the use of land in a systematic and fair manner, or, when it did, it failed to exact penalties for unused land or for failure to comply with sanitary and building codes. By the time a semblance of order was imposed, there had developed enough confusion on plot ownership and use. Elliot Fitzgibbon, the municipal and town planning engineer for Nairobi stated that “town planning must be based on a detailed contour survey for the whole area involved” but no such survey was ever taken for Nairobi.⁶⁰ A mood of resignation set in and, as Ainsworth appropriately stated: “[O]ur trouble was due to the fact that we had no definite scheme of lay-out approved, consequently things just moved on and were liable to alteration to suit some particular fad or fancy”.⁶¹ Concurring, another memo concluded that “Inability of government to exercise legal control and supervision both prior to, during, and subsequent to occupation of the area [in this case Nairobi East Township] is largely responsible for existing conditions.”⁶²

Lack of a definite town layout meant that important public infrastructure, such as drains and roads, were constructed as a response to emerging challenges to town planning rather than as part of an envisioned plan for the town. In other words, infrastructural development was reactive and hasty rather than deliberate and

forward looking. Township rules meant to guide this process were often issued after the fact. The township rules of 1904, for example, were a response to earlier planning problems in Nairobi. They focused on assessment, streets, roads, erection of buildings, sanitary matters, slaughter houses, markets, lodging houses, preservation of order, etc. But, soon after, the rules were mutilated through amendments and additions as the administration adjusted to new challenges or emergencies. The cumulative result was a hotchpotch of regulations and ordinances characterized, in Williams's commentary, as "useful" but "vague and difficult to follow, and some that are absolutely senseless". "Their greatest defect," he concluded, "is that they contain no instructions with regard to legal proceedings, and in practice they appear to be almost dead letters."⁶³

Thus, Ainsworth's statement that "things just moved on and were liable to alteration to suit some particular fad or fancy" illuminates how the growth of Nairobi assumed a cosmopolitan outlook. It remains to be understood how segregationist town planning could be grounded in an urban infrastructure that did not support such a form of town planning. We will now focus on its strategy of forced removal as it was applied to the Somali settlement and the bazaar.

Forced removals, the Somali and the emergence of Eastleigh

The story of how the Somali came to occupy Eastleigh illustrates how the administration's segregationist plans foundered on the cosmopolitan inclination in the town. Before the attempted removal, there were Indian and Somali residences along Ngara Road area. The Somali had been reluctant to occupy Pangani or the bazaar in large numbers as they were keen to carve out their identity separate from the larger group of "natives". Indeed, they fought to be defined as "non-natives" rather than "natives". The colonial state did not help matters; it allowed some ambiguity on the Somali question, a point illustrated by the fact that it allowed them to occupy sites other than the "native" locations.

The complexity of the Somali question was worsened by the colonial state's inability to fully distinguish "native" from "non-native" identities. It left a realm of ambiguity that worsened the Somali case in Kenya. Further, the state often allowed preferential treatment for some local groups including the Arab-Swahili.⁶⁴ This preferential treatment explains why the Somali actively fought to construct themselves as non-natives and to be recognized as such by the state from 1919. To achieve their goal, they took advantage of the definitional ambiguity that the Somali Exemption Ordinance, 1919, the Definition of the term "Native" Ordinance, 1921, the General Revision Ordinance, 1925, and the Interpretation (Definition of Native) Ordinance of 1934 facilitated. While some of these ordinances considered the Somali (as well as the Arab-Swahili) as "natives", others considered them as "non-natives".⁶⁵

Ambiguity did not solve the Somali issue in colonial Kenya. They arrived in town with cattle prompting a council member to intimate that "the majority [of the Somali] were cattle dealers and really ought not to be in a municipal area".⁶⁶ Their removal to Mbagathi was meant to locate them closer to grazing fields. But the Somali aspired to a privileged position in colonial hierarchy due to their government service as clerks and interpreters or as members of the King's African Rifles. Indeed, many colonial administrators acknowledged this and recorded their gratitude to the Somali for their government service. Those who were not in government service were

stock traders, at times acting as factotums to large settler stock owners. In both roles, they tended to reside in towns and to claim privileged status. Turton estimates that “the largest concentration of Isaq Somali was to be found in Nairobi” and Isiolo town.⁶⁷

Ainsworth allowed the Somali to occupy Ngara Plains area under temporary occupation license. The site, reserved for higher-class Indians, became another eyesore to the image of a colonial town as the Somali persisted in grazing their cattle in the town. In 1916, the administration decided to move them to a new location near Mbagathi River. They argued, first, that the relocation was because of an alleged incidence of smallpox in which, according to Dr Cherrett, 55 cases were reported in a few weeks of August 1917.⁶⁸ Further, a number of medial department officers thought the Somali had outlived their usefulness to the administration. In a letter dated 28 August 1916 to the PMO, the Principal Sanitation Officer (PSO) stated that “the Somali is not an economic factor to the community in Nairobi”, that “neither the town nor the Somali community would economically be adversely affected by their removal”. The PSO “advocate[d] most strongly the entire removal of these villages”. “[I]f a Somali desires to reside within the township limits,” he added, “he should be amenable to the existing building rules, and erect a sanitary building for which he can well afford to pay, as the community is a wealthy one.”⁶⁹

The final push to move the Somali to Mbagathi came after residents of Parklands pitched in. Following a public meeting held at the Chamber of Commerce, the residents of Parklands drafted a memorandum to the Governor demanding the removal of the Somali and native villages in the Ngara Plains area. They were concerned that houses in these villages had grown from two to over 200 on land that was initially reserved for Europeans and in a context where there was no law and order and no police protection.

The memo, and indeed the meeting that preceded it, provoked debate in the MC on the Somali issue. Focusing on the special provision accorded to the Somali to reside outside the native locations, the MC noted that their residence in Ngara was based on the assumption that they would be “temporary squatters” until a site for the native location was identified for them to be moved into alongside other “natives”. Given that the location had not been properly identified and laid out, the MC did not know how to deal with them. In the meantime, pressure mounted from Parkland residents who demanded that the Somali be removed. One option the MC considered was to move them to Mbagathi. New developments complicated the Somali issue in Nairobi. First, the administration hesitated from moving the Somali owing to the special privilege the administration accorded them. In their deliberation, the MC concurred with the PMO’s suggestion cited above, that the Somali who did not want to go to Mbagathi be allowed to seek alternative places but on condition that they bought them privately. But some members of the MC differed on this. Mr Allen contended that there was “a mixed population in Nairobi” and the MC could not “turn around” and give special privileges to any one community.⁷⁰ No consensus was arrived at on this special provision. Yet, in responding to the memo from Parklands residents on 6 September 1916, the Governor “caused instructions to be issued for the removal, forthwith, of the Somalis residing in Ngara Plain and in the temporary location to some suitable site on the Commonage”.⁷¹ But the Commonage had to be surveyed and laid out to acceptable sanitary standard first.

Less than two weeks later, these Somali under the leadership of their headmen contested this order. They filed an appeal through Messrs Shapley & Schwartze

Advocates and Solicitors that enumerated seven reasons for contesting this instruction.⁷² In a telegram dated 19 September 1916 to the Secretary of State, they argued that they had been in the Ngara Plains “before the advent of Indians”, and that Ainsworth had allowed them to settle on the site 17 years ago.⁷³ Noting that they had faithfully paid the Land Office for the area, and were better provided for with water and lighting in several of their houses which were “almost entirely wood and iron, wood panelling and ceilings mostly with cement floors, and some stone building”, the Somali protested their removal to Mbagathi stating that it was eight miles away from Nairobi in a General Game Reserve yet, they claimed, the inhabitant at Ngara “include women folk” “engaged in military and administrative work as askaris”.⁷⁴ They requested postponement of this decision and proposed their willingness to move to another site close to Nairobi so long as the administration pays compensation. However, the Colonial Office rejected provision of any compensation to Somalis “except the families of those absent on Government service”.⁷⁵

The Director of Public Works and the Director of Surveys Office proceeded to lay out Mbagathi for the Somali. But while they proceeded, the Somali headmen Hussein Ali and Hassan Hersi informed the Assistant District Commissioner (DC) that “very few of their people are likely to proceed to the proposed new location at Mbagathi”. Having taken note of the provision that they could remain in Nairobi as long as they purchased their own plots and built their own houses, many Somali acquired plots in Nairobi East Township and built houses. On 5 May 1917, the Provincial Commissioner (PC), Mr F. Traill confirmed that “none [of the Somali] have settled in Mbagathi”.⁷⁶ The DC, Mr Kirby, provided a list of Somali who had acquired land in Nairobi East Township.⁷⁷ It was ascertained that between 1 January 1917 and 1 February 1917, some 30 plots were purchased by the Somali in Nairobi East Township.

Nairobi East Township, it later emerged, was private property developing on freehold land. The property was part of the 2003 acres of land that had been purchased freehold by a member of the MC, Mr G.P. Stevens and three others in two lots at the cost of one Rupee in 1904–05. Of these, 654 acres were subdivided into 3332 plots in 1912. Though they undertook to construct seven miles of frontage streets and 14 miles of lanes, the owners disposed it off without accomplishing their part of the bargain.⁷⁸ Since there were “no restrictions or conditions attached to the sale of the plots”, the Somali could buy plots without contravening any town regulations.⁷⁹ The original purchasers, adds one memo, “received an unrestricted freehold title containing no development clauses, or sanitary obligations such as road drain construction or water supply”. As a result, the township had grown into an unsanitary site that lacked the basic infrastructure including sanitary services. The problem this time hinged on the conflict between the ideal of private property and public intervention when private owners fail to provide infrastructure and other services. For as long as it had existed, the government had failed to ensure infrastructure developments in the township because it was privately owned. It is only with the Somali occupation that the question of building standards, sanitation and infrastructure was raised. An alarmed state belatedly discovered that there was no legal provision to compel owners to improve the township.

Lacking a clear basis for intervening in the township, the administration started to draft regulations under the Township Rules. Interestingly, these rules had been pending since 1914 when it was first noted that the PHO did not apply in the enforcement of sanitary control in Nairobi East Township. But rather than confront

this issue as an omission on the part of government, alarmed medical officers resorted to their predictable invective about the dangers to public health posed by certain groups; only this time, they included poor whites in the group. According to Dr Cherrett:

A large population of Asiatics, Somalis, ordinary Natives and poor whites inhabiting an area immediately outside the Municipal area: without any sanitary control, and with extensive communication with inhabitants of Nairobi, does in my opinion, constitute a grave menace to the Public Health [*sic*].⁸⁰

Yet, without guiding regulations for the township, the Somali buildings in the township were erected without an approved plan.

If the idea was to remove the Somali from Ngara so as to conform to the segregationist ideas outlined by Prof. Simpson and the Sanitary Commission's report,⁸¹ the Somali circumvented this by making their private arrangements to buy residences in Nairobi East Township. But their ability to circumvent the rules would have been harder were it not for several acts of omission in allotting land for speculation. The administration had sanctioned the sale of land in Nairobi East Township to Asiatics only but the legal position held "no restrictions on the owners as to the race or class of population which may reside there".⁸² They ended up creating a mixed township known as Eastleigh Township.

Eastleigh was proclaimed a township by gazette notice of 13 April 1921. This amalgamated formerly Egerton Estate, Nairobi East Township and the area known as Egerton, Eastleigh and Eastleigh Extensions.⁸³ This amalgamation was preceded by several developments that compromised its projected status as a segregated "residential area for better class [Indian] artisans and traders and workers".⁸⁴ What is discussed above concerning Nairobi East Township is part of the story of Eastleigh. But the Indian dimension to it is equally intriguing.

For some time, there had been a protracted struggle to relocate the bazaar from the city centre in order to alleviate the alleged dangers posed by its location within the town centre. In 1911, following the plague epidemics in Nairobi, most settlers urged the need to create a place for Indians to relocate to so as to remove the nuisance in the bazaar. On this point, they faced powerful challenge from Asian landlords who still preferred to remain in the bazaar. In an interesting twist of events, Allidina Visram applied to the MC for "a location for the erection of buildings for that portion of the Asiatic community at present crowded in the Bazaar".⁸⁵ The proposed allocation was in Eastleigh. In doing so, Visram met even stiffer opposition from Indian merchants who insisted that any grant should be vested in the community. Amidst this protracted debate, some Indian merchants eventually agreed to buying plots in Eastleigh from 1917.

By 1921, that part of Eastleigh formally known as Nairobi East Township was already predominantly populated by the Somali who had moved from Ngara Plains. In preparing Eastleigh for Indian artisans, the government had to deal with plot owners and their own failure "to provide amenities" for its settlement. The terrible state of the roads to the township deterred the higher-class Indians, who were expected to settle there, from doing so. The result was the amalgamation of the township but with a significant racially mixed population of Indians and Africans, including the Somali. In Eastleigh as in many other sites in Nairobi, the administration found it difficult to create insular enclaves for specific races.

Most of the Indians who failed to go to Eastleigh remained in the bazaar and Ngara areas. Those in the bazaar were driven by the booming business they had in this locality. Their presence received a boost from unlikely quarters – Europeans who had ventured into joint business enterprises with Asians. This was possible because, from 1913 onwards, joint businesses had grown in the bazaar and Sixth Avenue (Kenyatta Avenue) area to a level where “complete separation of Asian and European areas was not then possible”.⁸⁶ This interlocking was the basis upon which Jeevanjee contested the segregation of people on the basis of race and proposed a class-based pattern of commercial and residential organization of the town. In his proposal, Jeevanjee preferred the organization of the town around high- and middle-class areas with separate residential areas for Asians and Europeans.⁸⁷ Although the MC did not adopt Jeevanjee’s suggestion, subsequent development of the town more or less followed this class-based pattern.

The failure of forced removals

The idea of removing the bazaar to a site out of the commercial hub of Nairobi was first proposed by the Bransby Williams report of 1907. From 1915 onwards, a vigorous push for its removal was led by settler citizens of Nairobi. This renewed push stemmed, first, from the plague epidemic of 1916–17 which killed one European and predictably brought to the fore the old question of the relationship between Asians and epidemics. Second, changes emanating from developments during World War I entrenched European settler demand for favoured treatment in Kenya and emboldened them to rebuff Indian demands for equal treatment.⁸⁸

But sections of the European community began to question the assumed link between plague and Indians. They instead focused on the failures of the state and the MC to make proper provisions for sanitary living. Some settlers even raised concerns on what the removal of the Indians from the bazaar would mean for Nairobi’s commercial activities. Eventually, this debate on the removal of the bazaar also became a discussion on the usefulness of complete segregation among the urban-based and business-inclined Europeans.

It is the urban-based and business-inclined Europeans who disputed the assumed link between plague and Asians. But why did this become an issue? After lull period of three years, plague mortality spiked in 1916 and 1917. It was followed by the administration pointing an accusing finger at “inherently unhygienic races”. In response, Mr J.M. Camps, in a letter to the editor of *The Leader* pointed out that “This question is not of a recent growth. For the last 12 years, there have been several outbreaks of plague and, curious enough, every periodical outbreak has been followed by some agitation in the press or by a public meeting, with unfortunate result that not a single move of the kind has been productive of any tangible result.” Camps continued:

In this respect we stand today just in the same, if not worse, condition as we were in years ago. The Indian Bazaar in its present state is a standing menace not only to the townspeople but to the Indian community which lives there as in a concentration camp under most adverse circumstances.⁸⁹

Camps reaction was responding to the “indignation meeting” held in October 1916 in which a call “to turn the bazaar into a lock-up business quarter” while “giving to its Indian inhabitants a suitable residential area outside the actual town” was made.⁹⁰

The white residents of Nairobi at the indignation meeting had acknowledged the “bad and ineffective methods of sanitation referred to [which] are errors both of omission and of commission” in sanitary administration. They had referred to “the apathetic attitude adopted by the government in regard to the epidemic of bubonic plague which breaks out from time to time”. They therefore underscored government culpability in the menace of “excessive overcrowding in several localities”, the “existence of dwelling houses and other structure which are filthy and incapable of being kept clean, dilapidated, ill-planned and ill-constructed, which harbour and encourage the breeding of rats and other vermin with consequent disease, and which are totally unfit for human occupation”. They came up with five recommendations to ameliorate the situation.⁹¹ In effect, the meeting urged the need to go beyond “the monumental imbecility of our original ‘Town Planners’ who”, as H.B. Camps asserted, “failed to realize that water won’t run on a flat plain”.⁹²

The indignation meeting suggested interventions that provoked further discussion on the nature of the public health regulations and their effects on the maintenance of the town’s sanitary situation. The debates questioned the role of public health regulations in creating a better and liveable town. There was renewed questioning of the principle of segregation upon which Prof. Simpson’s report was based. It also questioned the role of an MC constituted by appointment rather than elections pointing out that this did not allow the resident enough say in matters affecting the town. In particular, *The Leader* questioned the value of stringent public health regulation in a town that “is not financially endowed with the means to carry out any peregrinating expert’s recommendations”. Citing the “cosmopolitan and polyglot” nature of Nairobi’s population, the author questioned the uniformity that the township rules seemed to require.⁹³

In response, the MC noted that “their representations [on the issue raised at the indignation meeting] have been most sympathetically received by the protectorate Government” but the delay in rectifying existing conditions is attributed to lack of funds and also because:

views upon the town planning of Nairobi held by the Municipal Committee and the Protectorate Government on the one hand, and Prof. Simpson, the expert advisor of the Colonial Office on the other hand are in several vital points at variance, and that final decision between the conflicting views has not yet been arrived at to the serious detriment of sanitary conditions.⁹⁴

On what basis, then, would forced removals be undertaken?

Further discussion of the insanitary conditions led to intense questioning of the thesis that plague is “inevitable where the Indian is, or where a place is in close intercourse with Asiatic centres”. This thesis, rearticulated by Major Southern (who had 15 years experience in India and was visiting Kenya at the time) and upheld by the MC in 1916 was dismissed by one Nairobi settler as a “thesis, which it is sought to reduce to a theorem, in order that we take the matter ‘lying down’”. Wondering whether every town in India is a plague endemic area, the writer concluded that “a tremendous responsibility rests on this government in permitting the plague endemic areas to multiply”.⁹⁵ This acknowledgement meant that the bazaar was in itself not the problem.

The centrality of the bazaar to Nairobi’s economy changed the discussions about plague after 1915 as participants questioned received “wisdom” and blamed it on

government failures. This acknowledgement undermined Prof. Simpson's own proposals and deflated the idea of segregationist town planning. First, it pressured government to act on sanitation outside the discredited logic of inherently diseased races/places. The pressure came most prominently from the Nairobi Chamber of Commerce and the Indian population.

Second, it sharply divided opinion on the best way forward in sanitary matters. Most settlers retained the commitment to segregation and thought that the removal of the bazaar would facilitate the attainment of better sanitary standards while ensuring segregation. Others were less confident of this as a solution and recommended the selective identification of "those localities of an endemic character", "isolate them utterly", and resettle the inhabitants "to a site where segregation can easily be carried out." This option enjoyed greater currency than pure segregation. In the view of its proponents:

there is no need to drive out the Asiatics or unduly harass them. They are just as much committed to a remedy as we are. We all employ Asiatics or Indians and find them almost indispensable under existing economic conditions; but even were it not so, any design to discard them would be futile for a long time to come.

He concluded that the "well-to-do Asiatic just has much an horror of plague as the European".⁹⁶

The proponents of selective removal tended to be mostly urban whites "with distinct interest as a result of their close involvement with the Indian community".⁹⁷ The Nairobi Chamber of Commerce (NaCC) articulated this preference by roundly condemning urban segregation. Most of its members were Nairobi's European businessmen and were in fact contending with an important business reality in voicing their position; the fact that Indian commerce was the engine of Nairobi's commercial activity. For them, the bazaar remained central to Nairobi's commercial prosperity and some European business people were unwilling to let it go. "There can be no sanitary reason for excluding . . . capital from investment in a segregated area," argued the President of the NaCC in 1919. This is a fact that the administration and other white settlers came to grudgingly acknowledge. Even the MC was forced to dissent from Prof. Simpson's proposal and acknowledged that "practical considerations" must limit the operation of segregation. "It is impossible," they stated, "to prescribe one commercial area exclusively for Europeans and another exclusively for Asiatics. If this were done the principal manufacturing and business houses of Nairobi would be forced to close down." "[C]ontact with different races; *that is, cosmopolitanism,*" the statement concluded, "is an important essential and inevitable feature of life in Nairobi."⁹⁸

Concession over the commercial significance of the bazaar did not mean totally relenting on the need for segregation, it was simply motivated by a strategic acknowledgement that personal business interests trumped, at least temporarily, collective European interests. Such concessions lasted as long as these interests needed to prevail. This complicated the settler struggle to segregate Asians and Africans. In other words, the concession illustrates the difficult tussle between the insular tendency of the settlers and the countervailing cosmopolitanism of the bazaar, a tussle that was never fully resolved in favour of either side throughout the 1920s and beyond because the interests that lined up on both sides of the struggle were temporary. Thus, in 1913, the PHO legalized municipal segregation. In 1915,

the Crown Land Ordinance imposed a veto on the sale or lease of property in the highlands from Europeans to Indians or Africans.⁹⁹ Furthermore, new restrictions were imposed on immigration that made it necessary that the political struggle between settlers and Indians should move to a higher level of confrontation.¹⁰⁰

The entrenchment of settler demands during World War I coincided with the emergence of new political leadership within the Asian community. These leaders intensified demands for equality between Europeans and Indians. Some such as M.A. Desai also made strategic moves to link Asian dissent with rising African political demands.¹⁰¹ But of the numerous struggles this class of Asians mounted, none was as protracted as the fight against removal of the bazaar from the town centre. This struggle was energized by those who questioned the feasibility of segregationist town planning especially as it touched on the commercial well-being of the town and the place of Africans in the town. The weight of the argument must have informed the decision of the 1923 White Paper on the Indian Question which conceded that segregation between “European and Asiatics is not absolutely essential for the preservation of the health of the community; the rigid enforcement of sanitary, police and building regulations, without any racial discrimination, by the Colonial and Municipal authorities will suffice.”¹⁰² This concession obviously favoured the more commercially inclined settlers who preferred sanitary improvements in the bazaar through more effective control of its development as opposed to total removal. It also supported a position, previously articulated by Jeevanjee, that favoured the class-based system of town planning. In a nutshell, this concession was significant as an acknowledgement that the cosmopolitan tradition radiating from the bazaar trumped the insularity of segregationist town planning. Thus, even if the key aspects of struggle between the settlers and Indians were granted in favour of the former, on the one issue that determined the outlook of the town and that was at the centre of the future status of Africans in Nairobi, the colonial administration grudgingly conceded to the cosmopolitan force.

Conclusion

This article analysed how the settler vision of segregationist town planning that was codified through the PHO in 1913 came up, after World War I, against a cosmopolitan tradition that existed in the bazaar from earlier on. It argued that the inability of the colonial state to effect racial segregation in Nairobi is explained by the politics of land allocation in the town and the inability of the municipal authorities to issue legislation and follow up to ensure compliance. The study used the example of the Somali to show how local people took advantage of the acts of omission and commission evident in colonial urban development to undermine segregationist town planning. By the late 1910s, the business-oriented group among settlers in Nairobi had begun to question the logic of segregation. They challenged the assumption that Asians were inherently unhygienic and the cause of epidemic outbreaks. They also doubted how the commercial vibrancy of the town would be maintained if the bazaar was moved to Eastleigh. Ultimately, because of the questions and doubts, the attempts at forced removal from the town failed. In 1923, the administration conceded that segregation between European and Asiatics is not absolutely essential for the preservation of the health of the community.

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Notes

1. Commentary in *The Leader of British East Africa*, October 21, 1916, 16.
2. Sham Shar Singh commenting on the October 1917 prohibition of interracial land transfers (Redley, "The Politics of a Predicament," 87).
3. Maxon, cited in Ochieng' *Modern History of Kenya*.
4. Berman, *Control and Crisis*, 130.
5. Ochieng', *Modern History of Kenya*; Ogot and Ochieng', *Decolonization and Independence*.
6. Furedi, *The Mau Mau War*; Kanogo, *Squatters*; Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya*; Thuku, *Harry Thuku*.
7. Abdullah, "Rethinking the Freetown Crowd"; Furedi, "The African Crowd"; Hodgkin *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*; Rosberg and Nottingham *The Myth of Mau Mau*.
8. Kitching, *Class and Economic Change*; Lonsdale, "Town Life"; Obudho and Aduwo, "Rural Bias"; Stichter, *Migrant Labour in Kenya*.
9. Henri Lefebvre, cited in Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 41
10. Iliffe, "Creation of Group Consciousness."
11. The exceptions being Furedi, "The African Crowd," and Rosberg and Nottingham, *The Myth of Mau Mau*.
12. This is true of Furedi, *The Mau Mau War*, Throup, *Economic and Social Origins*, and Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*.
13. Craddock, *City of Plagues*, 11.
14. Murunga, "Inherently Unhygienic Races."
15. Coquery-Vidrovitch, "Residential Segregation"; Dubow, *Racial Segregation*.
16. The term includes people of Indian, Pakistani and Goan descent in East Africa. I use Asian and Indian interchangeably in this study.
17. Morris, "Indians in Uganda"; Morris, "Faction in Indian and Overseas."
18. Harvey, "Cosmopolitanism," 529.
19. Vertovec and Cohen, "Introduction," 9.
20. Hannerz, "Cosmopolitans," 239.
21. Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, 47, 56–7, 78, 85, 97; Calhoun, "Class Consciousness," 87–8, 98–9.
22. Furedi, "Development of Anti-Asian"
23. Atieno-Odhiambo, *Siasa*, 87–8; Atieno-Odhiambo, "Political Economy."
24. Ibid.; Patel, *Challenge to Colonialism*.
25. Myers, *Verandahs of Power*.
26. Bennett, "Persistence amid Adversity."
27. Kenya Land Commission, *Report*, 165–2; Sorrenson, *Origins of European Settlement*, 159–75.
28. Redley, "Politics of a Predicament," 38.
29. McGregor Ross, *Kenya from Within*, chapters 5 and 18.
30. Redley, "Politics of a Predicament," 39 and 60; Sorrenson, *Origins of European Settlement*.
31. Redley, "Politics of a Predicament," 152.
32. Tandberg, "The Duka-Wallas."
33. Bennett, "Persistence amid Adversity," 4, 17 and 89.
34. Lovegrove, "Asians and the Building," 36–47; Sorrenson, *Origins of European Settlement*, 23–5.
35. Emug and Ismail, "Notes on the Urban Planning," 9; Nevanlinna, *Interpreting Nairobi*, 93–4.
36. King, "Harry Thuku"; Singh, "Manilal"; Thuku, *Harry Thuku*, chap. 2; Trzebinski, *The Kenya Pioneers*, chap. 3.

37. Maxon, John Ainsworth, 99; Patel *Challenge to Colonialism*, 40.
38. Redley, "The Politics of a Predicament," 36.
39. Patel, *Challenge to Colonialism*, 50.
40. Redley, "The Politics of a Predicament," 36.
41. McGregor Ross, *Kenya from Within*, 306.
42. For a postcolonial fictional perspective of River Road, see Mwangi *Going Down*.
43. Smith, "Evolution of Nairobi," 34.
44. Tandberg, "Duka-Wallas," 50
45. Trzebinski, *The Kenya Pioneers*, 75.
46. Kennedy, *Islands of White*, 148,152.
47. Parker, "Political and Social Aspects," 139–56; Anderson, "Corruption," 142–3.
48. Patel, *Challenge to Colonialism*, 22–41; Trzebinski, *The Kenya Pioneers*, 45–6.
49. Kitching, *Class and Economic Change*, 212–13; Trzebinski, *The Kenya Pioneers*, 44; Thuku, *Henry Thuku*, chap. 2.
50. Cited in Robertson, *Trouble Showed the Way*, 77.
51. Ibid.
52. Amratlal Raishi, cited in Patel, *Challenge to Colonialism*, 51.
53. Sorrenson (*Origins of European Settlement*, 25–26) shows that as early as 1896, the Indian Land (Acquisition) Act of 1894 had been applied to the Protectorate in anticipation for land acquisition along the Railway. Up to 12 Europeans had applied for land in Nairobi by 1897 and their claims were disallowed pending some policy decisions on how to distribute land.
54. Parker "Political and Social Aspects," 66; McGregor Ross, *Kenya from Within*, 300.
55. East Africa Protectorate, *Nairobi*, 22; Parker, "Political and Social Aspects," 66.
56. McGregor Ross, *Kenya from Within*, 76–7, 312–13.
57. Memo on Nairobi East Township to Principal Medical Officer dated July 25, 1918 in Kenya National Archives (KNA), MOH/1/3932, Removal of Nairobi East Township, 1916–19.
58. East Africa Protectorate, *Nairobi*, 4–5, 22.
59. Maxon, *John Ainsworth*, 100.
60. Cited in Smith, "Evolution of Nairobi," 34.
61. Ainsworth cited in Maxon, *John Ainsworth*, 100.
62. Memo on Nairobi East Township to Principal Medical Officer dated July 25, 1918 in KNA, MOH/1/3932, Removal of Nairobi East Township, 1916–19.
63. British East Africa Protectorate, *Report of the Sanitation of Nairobi*, p. 48 and White *et al.*, *Nairobi: Master Plan for a Colonial Capital*, p. 13; White, *Comforts of Home*, 13.
64. Parsons, "Kibera is our Blood"
65. Salim, "Native of Non-Native?"; Turton, "Isaq Somali Diaspora," 325.
66. *The Leader of British East Africa*, August 19, 1916, 16.
67. Turton, "Isaq Somali Diaspora," 326.
68. Letter from MOH to PSO dated February 14, 1917 in KNA, MOH/1/3932, Removal of Nairobi East Township, 1916–19.
69. Letter from Radford to PMO on Removal of Somali Village in KNA, MOH/1/3932, Removal of Nairobi East Township, 1916–19.
70. *The Leader of British East Africa*, August 19, 1916, 16.
71. Ibid., September 16, 1916, 16.
72. The telegram from Messrs Shapley and Schwartze Advocates and Solicitors cites their instructions as coming from "all Headmen of Somalis representing every tribe and every section of Somalis in the EAP." See KNA, MOH/1/3932, Removal of Nairobi East Township, 1916–19.
73. During the Kenya Land Commission proceedings, Ainsworth recalled that in 1907 "Somalis have arrived here from time to time; there are now over one hundred men here and rows are consequently frequent. I have therefore established a system of a headman of the camps, with three assistant headmen and ten volunteer police." Somalis, he added, do not mix with other people – particularly African people – and so these traders got located towards the stream (Mathare River) which bounds Muthaiga on the Nairobi side" (McVicar, "Twilight of an East African Slum," 14).
74. *The Leader of British East Africa*, September 23, 1916, 16.

75. See correspondence from Colonial Office to Chief Secretary in KNA, MOH/1/3932, Removal of Nairobi East Township, 1916–19.
76. Letter from PC to PMO dated May 5, 1917 in KNA, MOH/1/3932, Removal of Nairobi East Township, 1916–19.
77. See letter from DC to PC dated February 2, 1917 in KNA, MOH/1/3932, Removal of Nairobi East Township, 1916–19.
78. Anderson, “Corruption,” 142–3; Hake, *African Metropolis*, 38 and 255.
79. Letter from PMO to Chief Secretary dated February 7, 1917 in KNA, MOH/1/3932, Removal of Nairobi East Township, 1916–19.
80. Letter from MOH to PMO dated February 10, 1917 in KNA, MOH/1/3932, Removal of Nairobi East Township, 1916–19.
81. Murunga, “Segregationist Town Planning,” chap. 3.
82. Letter from Land Officer to PMO dated February 5, 1917 in KNA, MOH/1/3932, Removal of Nairobi East Township, 1916–19.
83. KNA, MOH/1/3932, Removal of Nairobi East Township, 1916–19. White, *Comforts of Home*, 67
84. Parker, “Political and Social Aspects,” 71
85. *Ibid.*
86. *Ibid.*, 67.
87. Jeevanjee, *Sanitation in Nairobi*
88. Maxon, “Years of Revolutionary Advance.”
89. *The Leader of British East Africa*, October 21, 1916, 15.
90. *Ibid.*, October 14, 1916, 23.
91. *Ibid.*
92. *Ibid.*, December 14, 1918, 21.
93. *Ibid.*, October 21, 1916, 16.
94. *Ibid.*, October 28, 1916, 15.
95. *Ibid.*, November 18, 1916, 13.
96. *Ibid.*
97. Redley, “The Politics of a Predicament,” 103.
98. *The Leader of British East Africa*, April 17, 1915, 1 (italics added).
99. Redley, “The Politics of a Predicament,” 83–7.
100. Gregory, *India and East Africa*, 179–82; Mangat, *History of the Asians*, 115–22; Zeleza, “Establishment of Colonial Rule,” 51.
101. Pandit, *Asians in East and Central Africa*, 70–1; Singh “Manilal,” 129–41.
102. Colonial Office, *Indians in Kenya*, 15.

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