



Mazingira Yetu, Fahari Yetu – Our Environment, Our Pride

A case study on how young Kenyans
perceive and react on environmental
degradation and climate change

Linn Rabe

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Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

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Source of pictures on the front cover: Kanga fabric, Sausage tree in Masai Mara, boy scouts at clean-up with Discovery, women planting tree with S.I.C.O, man listening to inspiration talk with MUESA – Linn Rabe

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“Mazingira yetu – we are surrounded by the environment, we live in it, it is our home - it is ours, so we have to take care of it.

Fahari Yetu – When we take care of the environment it becomes beautiful and we can be proud. Once the environment is our pride we will naturally do our very best to keep it clean so we can continue to be proud of it.”

MUESA member, 2010-02-09

Abstract

This paper aims to explore how young Kenyans involved in environmental organizations understand the issue of environmental degradation in general and climate change in specific, as well as how the youth environmental organisations possess space of action in order to mobilize themselves in line with this point of view. The research is based on a case study exploring how three clubs in western Kenya interpret and act on environmental issues and climate change. By using a combination of frame theory, resource mobilization theory and norm diffusion this research captures the expressions and practices of the clubs. The clubs find deforestation and solid waste management to be Kenya’s biggest environmental problems and emerging into activities such as tree-planting and clean-ups. Those activities might be chosen because they, for the moment, seem to be politically neutral or supported by the authority. The Kenyan society’s view on youth are mainly as ‘trouble makers’ and the clubs are therefore negotiating their way through administrative obstacles and potential risks. Their space of action is controlled and the decisions made in the club are influenced from external forces, but the members are active within the system, carving out room for themselves and their visions within the Kenyan political system. The paper is also exploring how the clubs are introduced to global discourses like climate change and connected to the global environmental movement.

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And as always: Gratitude and love to Asim.

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Part 1: Introduction and research question

Youth of today run the risk of being heavily affected by the ongoing and long-term impacts of climate change. Their health, security and ability to secure their livelihood risk being jeopardized (Children in a changing climate, 2009: 3-4). In the present climate change debate experts, governments and NGO's stress the importance of short and long term solutions. Young people will have to live with and adapt to both short termed and long term effects of climate change, but despite this fact their needs and roles are seldom addressed in the debate nor are they encouraged to participate.

The Secretary General of UNICEF Denmark argues that

“To children and youth everything is at stake in the international negotiations on climate change. As they will need to live with climate change and the consequences of decisions taken by adults today, they have a right to make themselves heard in the debate”.

So why are no youth participating in the formal political settings? Are contemporary youth uninterested to participate in the official arena or is something restraining them from getting involved in the debate?

At the official website of the Cop 15 negotiations in Copenhagen 2009 the response is univocally negative to the news that a youth forum will be held in relation the negotiations with the aim to present a youth statement at the official meeting. The username Jack Huges expresses what seems like a common opinion, writing

“Children are not mini-adults. They are immature - they lack judgment and are unable to make rational choices” (www.cop15.dk).

The only one on the website who challenges the statement is the youth delegate Trevis Milles, who writes

“As one of those "immature not mini adults" attending the forum in December, I am deeply saddened that many of you believe that our views don't count! With nearly half the world's population under the age of 25, I think that it's a must that we get a say. [...] Believe it or not but we actually have some great ideas!! [...] I'm 15 and have a lot to give. But please put us down all you like but we are coming and are going to be heard” (ibid).

The unwillingness expressed on this official website to allow youth (in this case in the age span between 15 and 19 years old) the right to participate in the debate regarding their future put a discussion on age as a non-visualized category of discrimination in place. It is also

important to discuss what category of “we” that Trevis have declared himself a spokesperson of. Is there any common denomination among the heterogeneous group of youth all over the world concerning interest, needs and abilities to participate?

Climate change, as indicated by the name is an abrupt change in the weather conditions on earth. In a social scientific perspective an abrupt change is something that is experienced within the time period of one generations and result in a drastic disruption of the way current human civilization is organized (Levin and Tirpak, 2009:3). Climate change is happening faster than most researchers have predicted and more people are likely to be negatively affected worse than was expected at an earlier stage (CCCD, 2009:4). Carbon dioxide and methane, the two most discussed greenhouse gases, are now reaching a levels in the atmosphere unmatched for at least 800 000 years (385.57 PPM in 2008) (Levin and Tirpak, 2009:2,4). If the level continues to increase up to 700 PPM the hot seasons daily maximum temperature are predicted to rise to 40 degrees in U.S. Midwest and Southern Europe, and exceed 50 degrees in Australia, India, the Middle East and parts of Africa, while the daily minimum temperature is expected to rise even more by the year 2100 (ibid:2,6). International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts that up to 250 million people in Africa will face increased water shortages by 2020 (ibid:6). Unreliable weather conditions are already a troublesome reality in Africa, a continent where over 70% of the population depends on rain-fed agriculture for their livelihood (Huho, 2010:35). In Kenya over 80% of the population subsists on agriculture and are at present facing severe loss of livelihoods due limited adaptation to increased rain-falls variability and extreme climate events, drought being the major one (ibid:36).

Drought is defined as a shortage of precipitation over an extended period, long enough to cause crop failure. Drought is not unusual in Kenya, since over 80% of the land mass is arid or semi-arid, but during the last 35 years the impacts of the droughts have increased severely (Huho, 2010:36). The reasons for the development can be many, but climate change occurs as one of the most frequent explanations.

Table 1. Recent droughts in Kenya and number of people affected.

| Year | Number of people affected |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 1975 | 16,000 |
| 1977 | 20,000 |
| 1980 | 40,000 |
| 1984 | 200,000 |
| 1992 | 1.5 million |
| 1995 - 1996 | 1.4 million |
| 1999 - 2000 | 4.4 million |

2004 - 2006 3.5 million
(Huho, 2010:36)

Developing countries, especially in south Asia and Africa is at risk of being worst affected by climate change, according to the Commission of Climate Change and Development as well as the World Bank (CCCD 2009:xx, WDR 2010:5). South Asia and Africa is also the part of the world with the youngest population and the weakest voice in the global climate change negotiations (BBC, 2009:1). How is environmental degradation in general and climate change in particular perceived by these young populations, who have the most to lose, but the least input to the discussion? Is it perceived at all? Do, for example, African youth understand the environmental hazards affecting their countries as a result of climate change?

At the youth forum in Copenhagen I had the opportunity to meet a delegation of young teens from Kenya. Their aim of participation at the youth forum was to gather enough information to help their communities stop devastating the environment. They wanted to start so called youth environmental clubs, where they would teach their fellow youth the importance of keeping the environment clean. They express great confidence in being victorious. The optimism was inspiring and I wanted to find out more about their possibilities to have an influence on the local habitats where they lived.

The term ‘youth environmental clubs’ are used by youth, governmental institutions and organizations working in Kenya to describe a growing phenomenon in the country, where youth, as a school activity, in relation to an organization or on their own, establish groups with the aim to spread awareness about and take actions against environmental degradations in their geographical area (Polack, 2010:28).

Description of the problem area, statement of objective and research questions

In Africa a major part of the population is young (nine out of ten of the countries with the world’s youngest populations are found in Africa. In 2005 the median age of these countries was around 16 years. The average age in Kenya 2009 was 18.7 years old) (UN, 2007:66; CIA, 2010-05-15). Youth are often central in social interactions of all kinds but even so, they are economically, politically and socially marginalized (Honwana & De Boeck, 2005:1). Youth in Kenya are seldom seen as active agents and therefore not offered space in the democratic system, resembling stories can be found all around the world (ibid). At a first glance, the environmental youth clubs seem to challenge the assumption of this paper that youth are marginalized in the debate concerning environmental degradation and climate change. How

do the members of these organizations perceive their role in the society and their ability to have a voice in the environmental movement and climate change debate? Do they feel that they are a part of a global environmental movement?

The objective of this research is to get a better understanding of why young Kenyans choose to become members of environmental organizations, how they experience and imagine ecological systems, challenges and degradation; as well as if and how they are taking action.

- How and why are some Kenyan youth organising themselves into so called Youth Environmental Clubs?
- How do members of Youth Environmental Clubs, interpret and articulate their opinions about environmental issues and climate change in particular?
- Which environmental discourse is dominating in the Youth Environmental Clubs and what kind of activities do the members engage in? How do the members of the Youth Environmental Clubs perceive global discourses, such as the climate change debate and what impact do these discourses have on their rhetoric and action?

The structure of the essay

The research questions will be explored in this essay according to the following structure:

The next part will cover the conceptual framework and theoretical platform and a discussion of the highly heterogeneous category of ‘youth’. In part three I will introduce the organisations that are conducting my case study: MUESA in Maseno, S.I.C.O in Kabianga and Discovery Life Program in Makuru, Nairobi. I will also explain the methods I have used in order to answer my research questions.

Parts four to six combines the results presented with a deepened theoretical discussion. Part four is focused on the informants’ comprehension and reflection on environmental degradation and what issues they perceive as their main concerns. Part five discusses mobilisation, trying to explore how and why some youth choose to organise themselves in youth environmental clubs. Part six discusses how Kenyan youth become aware of and concerned about global environmental discourses, such as the climate change debate. This chapter will also investigate if those clubs are linked to the global environmental movement. The essay ends with a conclusion of my discussion points in an attempt to answer the research questions and give a better understanding of how Kenyan youth perceive and react to environmental degradation and climate change.

Part 2: Conceptual framework, theoretical platform and methods

“When people think of youth, they think of violence...”

The quotation above could be from almost any of my informants, but in this case the words were uttered by Maseno’s Divisional Youth Officer, employed the Kenyan ministry of youth affairs. She admits that the general public in Kenya have a negative view of young citizens and that this idea affects the relationship between the younger and older generations. In such a political climate it is especially interesting to explore why some youth challenge the notion and establish organisations that aims at benefiting the public common good. In this chapter I intend to present the conceptual framework of the thesis, mainly the theory of resource mobilization, which is complemented by frame analysis and norm diffusion.

Resource mobilization theory is a framework, which is used to understand the collective behaviour motivating people to take collective action and form movements. A dominant model in the resource mobilization theory is the so called political process model that highlights three concepts as fundamental components (Morris, 2000:446):

1, “Mobilising structure” illustrates the institutionalized and non-institutionalized networks and organisations, which people use when they mobilize and take collective actions (Morris, 2000:446).

2, “Political opportunity structure”, refers to the notion that movements are most likely to emerge when the political context changes in their favour, e.g. when the state apparatus weaken; or factions develop among the political elite, or when a new space of political opportunities in the political system opens (ibid). The introduction of new international norms of environmental protection and climate change adaptation into Kenya could have opened up such new democratic space. The transfer of objects, processes, ideas and information from one population or region to another is sometimes labelled ‘norm diffusion’ (Alldén, 2009:17). I found it especially interesting to discuss norm diffusion in relation to my case since the issue of climate change seems to have been enforced by the help of international actors and donors such as the United Nation, but also since the process of establishing new norms might have created political opportunities for the youth environmental clubs.

3, The last theoretical component supporting the model of resource mobilization theory is framing processes. The framing process is the least developed part of the model (Morris,

2000:446), but it is used in many other theories in order to explore the linkages between perceptions and political activities (Beland Lindahl, 2008:68). The common denominator, the concept of frames are used with an ambition to make sense of people’s multiple understanding of a situation or phenomena, the collective organization and the actions motivated by this understanding (ibid).

‘Youth’ as an age, identity or curse

While investigating youth understanding and actions concerning environmental degradation it is important to remember that youth have only recently been considered a significant category in the social science. Studies of youth have mostly been focusing on *youth culture*, meaning the ideas and practices created by youth, while interacting with other youth globally and locally (Christiansen et al. 2006:15). The amount of researches that investigate youth as political actors in the environmental movement are limited and I hope my study can contribute to the overall understanding and narrowing the gap between youth and movement.

‘Youth’ is often expressed as a psycho-social stage of development, but what is misrecognised by this usage is that youth is not a fixed nor stabile phase, nor is the generational category neutral or natural (Christensen et al. 2006: 10-11). Age is often used as a way to categorise children, adults and the ones in between. “Age provides a precise method of calibration for states administrative practices as the means to define subordinate populations in order to effect their control” (Maira and Soep, 2005:xxiv). Indeed the term youth popularly refers to people between the ages of 15-25, even if this age-interval has little correlations with the legal classification of childhood and adulthood (Sketon and Valentine, 1998:5). The legal age in Kenya is 18 years old, but in many tribes the traditional entry to adulthood is after the circumcision at the approximate age of 15. I have deliberately left out a biological definition of youth in my problem formulation and am instead focused on a group of people that are defining themselves as youth. My informants are between the ages of 20-29, with a strong sense of belonging to a youth group. They define youth in a much broader way than the previously mentioned definition, including persons from the age of 13 up to 35-40 years old, arguing that as long as they are “energetic and strong” they ought to be classified as youth.

The concept of youth is differently constituted and configured in distinct contexts of space and time as a part of a struggle for influence and authority within the society (Christensen et al. 2006: 10-11). In this sense it is important to realise that age do not necessarily follow a

linear biological time, but shift according to socio-cultural contexts of power and positions (Christensen et al. 2006:11-12). Neither are people passive parts of their socio-generational category, but trying to own, escape and move within it in a meaningful way. ‘Youth’ is a socially constructed position, a being, and a social and generational process of becoming (Christensen et al. 2006:11). But equally important as recognising the unique experiences and space possessed by young people, it will be of importance to recognise the roles which they play in the society at large (Skelton and Valentine, 1998:7).

According to James (1986) the use of the physical body to define, control and order the action of the social body is just an unsuccessful attempt to tame time by squishing it into measurable frames (referenced to by Skelton and Valentine, 1998:5). Especially considering that age can be negotiated, e.g. with parents when children have proved themselves trustworthy of responsibilities and privileges, as well as when legally defined adults articulate an identity which is read as younger than their actual age (ibid:5). Still the social constructions and peoples’ imaginations embedded in the classification prescribe age groups with attributes and symbols. One of the more stigmatic social meanings attached to youth is the view that young people are inadequately formed adults, lacking the ability to be regarded as subjects with own expression of rights and needs (Maira and Soep, 2005:xxii).

But there is a ambivalence concerning the stereotype of youth; event as the Kenyan post-election violence 2007 and the Kenyatta University strike 2009 reveals a perception of youth both as un-mature citizens, unable to act efficiently and at the same time fearing that youth are powerful enough to enforce a political change that the population in large might not desire. Similar examples can be found worldwide and this kind of ambivalent views of youth has resulted in a moral panic concerning the young population in many countries (Maira and Soep, 2005:xxiii). The international youth literature over and over again demonstrates that many societies identify anxiety about the un-controlled nature of youth, which influence on the definitions of youth and youth culture during the last 150 years (Skelton and Valentine, 1998:4). The club members presented in this paper, as well as teachers and youth leaders, can witness about a public moral panic and even fear of young people as a group, they also confirm a common image of youth equalled to trouble. This is visible in the school system where youth are kept under strict discipline with little if any exposition to the outside world. High schools are sex-divided boarding institutions located in the remote countryside; also universities are seldom seen in an urban centre. The disciplinary system is deeply internalized by the students and themselves argue for ‘responsible caning’ as the best way to guide

children and youth in their process towards the ultimate goal of becoming a mature adult. The high schools and universities are often closed due to internal strikes or a fear that the students will turn into violence as a result of external political events. International studies have shown that adults in general consider teenagers in gangs on the street to be a polluting presence as they represent a potential threat to public order (Skelton and Valentine, 1998:7). This is confirmed in Kenya where young people can be arrested by the police for ‘aimless walking’¹.

Also their family homes are a setting where young people find their time and space controlled by adults. Researchers have exposed the inequalities in gender division of domestic resources and labour, but generational power inequality is still relatively neglected (Skelton and Valentine, 1998:9). Sibley (1995) argues that the most likely reason for intergenerational conflicts within the household is the limited opportunity for youth to have privacy within the home, and that adults find youth’s presence and their ‘limited sense of order’ irritating (ibid:9). The time at a university campus is a moment of relative freedom for most young Kenyans. The supervision from adults is limited and the interaction with other youth as well as the impulses from the rest of the world is fairly high.

Friday night is movie night. The end of a long week is celebrated in the company of some good friends. Outside almost every room in the long, light-blue corridor in the boys’ hostel there is a pile of shoes – white sneakers and high-heeled sandals. It is raining, so some ruffle treated umbrellas are drying off and creating streams of water on the concrete floor. From behind the numbered wooden doors you can hear the base pumping and the sound of action scenes as well as occasional love songs. The rooms are never larger than 17 m² and inhabited by two to four students, but at the movie nights the space is shared brotherly and at least four friends occupy each bed. The cold light from the luminous lamp is turned off and only flashes from the data screen makes it possible to glimpse at the neighbour or the posters of British football teams and pop singers like Beyoncé on the walls. The body heat and dampness from slowly drying hoodies and tight leather jackets create a heavy layer of condensation on the bared windowpane. We are watching the latest Hollywood movies, distributed by an informal hiring out organised by one of the students down the hall. Someone is treating the rest of us with popcorns. The rain makes music on the tin roof and someone is snoring silently half way

¹ I cannot with certainty say that this is an actual law, but it seems to be the rule of practice all over the country. Students are never leaving campus area without their student ID, hoping it can clear them as ‘good citizens’ in a police confrontation and reduce the risk of being arrested.

through the movie. The same kind of scenario can simultaneously be seen at so many other places around the world.

Researchers are debating whether this is an expression of local culture or a part of an emerging global youth culture (Skelton and Valentine, 1998: 122). Global (mainly North American) attributes are found everywhere – computer games, T-shirts with Homer Simpson, sitcoms like Prison break, Lost and Big bang theory; hair gel and 2pac, but they are in this case mixed in with distinct local expressions, such as bongo music and kanga fabrics. Massey (Skelton and Valentine, 1998:122) argues that youth culture of today often is a product of interaction between local and global elements. Youth worldwide might wear the same kinds of t-shirts, but the meaning of it will vary. Interpretations of symbols and given status depend on cultural background, resulting in a global-local mix making the ‘global’ youth culture differentiated from place to place (ibid). In the home setting of most Kenyan university students the combination of local custom and global influences is severely different from the one at campus, and it can be a struggle for the individual to interlock those different ‘cultures’ in a way that feels true to one self. Christian services² at campus is one example of where the students draw from there different backgrounds in order to come up with a unique ‘hybrid culture’ to practice fellowship beyond traditional borders.

The way in which cultures borrows ideas, symbols and statements from new influences and incorporate those with the existing system might be labelled ‘creolization’. This concept originates from linguistic theories, but is now also used to explain situations in social science (Hannerz, 1996:65). Creolization describes that a bit of this and a bit of that is how newness enters the world (ibid), but that the newness has to fit in to the existing structure so the base will remain the same. In linguistic this means that the grammar is fixed, but new words can be added on. In Kenya the young generation have their own language called ‘sheng’, the structure of the language is similar to old tribe languages, but the words have new meanings and will not make sense to an elder person. Creolization can also be used to explain the global environmental movement; different claims, symbols and practices from all over the world will be embedded in the common strive, but the structure on which the movement is built remains.

² Religion is of a high importance in the Kenyan society and ceremonies are integrated in almost any part of the daily life. The church is highly ranked and is in many cases more influential than the government. Since there is so much power incorporated in the religious system there are also a lot of struggles to possess it. Almost daily you could hear how separatist groups founded new congregations with their own unique touch. The effort to combined the multiply background of the students into a unit will have to be seen as a tour de force.

Some borrowed concepts and Resource Mobilization Theory

In order to understand how youth can move from a point of individual thoughts to common action I will base myself on the resource mobilization theory, combined with concepts from frame analysis and norm diffusion.

In the last decade social movements have emerged to become a common, even if not always welcomed, part of the political landscape (McAdam et al, 1996:1). Social movement theory consists of many forms of research from distinct disciplines using different kind of models and concepts to understand the core of those movements as well as how, why and when they occur. The political process model has absorbed the key insights of resource mobilisation theory and thus become the dominant model of social movement theory (Morris 2000:446). The model involves the three parts of mobilizing structure, political opportunity structure and cultural framing. By using these three components researchers claimed to cover the origins, power generated by, emerging cultural content within, as well as the outcome of the movement (ibid).

Mobilizing structures are “those collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and emerge in collective actions” (McAdam et al. 1996:3). Movement mobilization occurs within the structure of informal network, like friends and neighbours; pre-existing institutional structures, like schools and churches, as well as through formal organizations, like NGOs and youth clubs. The political process model is challenging the earlier assumption that collective behaviour and social movement occurred unorganized– as a form of mass hysteria (Morris, 2000:445).

Supporters of the model will also argue that the origin of a successful movement is context related, and a result of opportunities in the political environment. A political opportunity means “consistent – but not necessary formal or permanent – dimensions of the environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective actions by affecting their expectations for success or failure” (Sidney Tarrow, quoted by Morris, 2000:446). Such favourable changes can be competing factions among political elites, emergence of new external allies or a weakening of the state (ibid). Movements are arising in the carved space of new or expanded opportunities, like rings on the water the collective actions will signal an opening of new space for others. The state’s responses will in one way or another produce a new opportunity structure (McAdam et al. 1996:59). The political environment in which the movement is embedded will continue to dictate constraints and opportunities for the

movement's organisations, affecting their development and strategies during the organisations whole lifetime (ibid:12).

The last piece remaining in order for collective action to emerge from political opportunities and mobilizing structures is the cultural framing, i.e. the collective understanding and motivation attached to the issue. People need to feel both aggrieved about a situation in their life (injustice) and optimistic about the common possibility to change the situation (agency) in order to make the effort of being mobilized (McAdam et al. 1996:5, Beland Lindahl, 2008:74). A shared definition of "we" (identity) within the group creates a stronger ability to alter the situation. (Beland Lindahl, 2008:74). The identity in the movement is built upon 'frames', which in this context is action oriented sets of beliefs, perceptions and meanings that inspire and legitimate the movement's activities and campaigns (ibid:69, 73).

The concept of frames can be found in a number of different research traditions and contexts, but are generally used in order to explore people's numerous understandings of different situations and phenomena (Beland Lindahl, 2008:68). Frames is a wider and more bounded term than perceptions or interest, as it organises all kind of knowledge and experiences of a person into a framework of interpretation, creating preconceived notions directing actions (ibid 69,71). Frames appear in social movement theory to explain the underlying beliefs that motivates action, with the understanding that those perceptions are not free floating, but grounded in the institution that construct them (ibid:74). The frames are strongly influenced by the structure of social organisation (the social positions, relations and roles), which comprise the agent. It is even argued that an individual will adapt to a new location and start to think differently if being relocated in the social organisation (ibid:89). An example can be the clash between the 'home culture' and the 'university culture' mentioned earlier, where students seems to change cultural expressions depending on location (Gumpertz, 1986). To sum up, it is possible for an individual to move within and between frames. We shall also be alert to the fact that there is a division between rhetorical frames and action frames, consciously or subconsciously motivating saying and doing (Beland Lindahl, 2008:74). An understanding of the collective action frame can visualise the emotions and rationales behind mobilization into organisations.

Scholars tend only to study one of the aspects of the movement, but formulators of the political process model (e.g. McAdams et al. 1996) argues that it is in the relationship between these factors that we find the full understanding of the movements dynamic. For

example: the political process model stresses the importance of political opportunities as the ultimate stimulator to collective actions, but if there is no group with the structural capacity to deal with the potential opportunity, or if there is a lack of sentiments attached to the issue, no movement of collective behaviour will emerge (McAdams et al. 1996:2,5).

As all models, also the political process model have been criticised for leaving out factors that might influence the creation of a movement in specific cases. A model should be seen as a tool to analyse empirical data that of course will vary from case to case and the model should not be seen as a blueprint of reality. Even so, it can be of interest to discuss some of the points challenging the political process model. It has mainly been criticised for giving too high importance to powerful external actors for the social movement agency and origin as well as its success or failure (Morris, 2000:446). Aldon Morris disagrees with the assumption that an opportunity will have to be available before a group can mobilize into action; instead he believes that the collective action itself can create space for others. He continues by stating that the internal capability – for example agency-laden institutions, protest tradition, frame lifting, tactical solutions and leadership configuration is neglected in the model and need to be enhanced by the social movement theory in order to get a real understanding of collective actions (ibid:452).

Morris (2000:450) argues that charismatic leadership is of core importance for the development of movements, since they can use their personal magnetism to attract followers and express powerful, mobilizing visions. Charismatic leaders situated in agency-laden institutions (institutions based on arrangements of beliefs and practices that potentially can be mobilized to launch collective actions) play a significant role in the cultural farming. The choices made by the leaders shape the organisation and the outcome of the movement. In order for collective action to occur and the movement to reproduce itself, the leaders will have to develop tactic solutions to face challenges. The tactic is often built upon familiar themes attracting the potential followers and providing them with an ideological high ground. Usually there is an interaction between tactics, pre-existing organisations and cultural frames, which makes it adoptable and rapidly spread in the target group (ibid:449). The nature of inter-organizational relations, external alliances, reading of external political structure and how to deal with oppositions is also questions that shape the character of the movement. In contradiction to Morris it has been declared that the importance of charismatic leaders in social movements mainly is a result of fragmentation and lack of structural stability

(Bartholdsson, 2007:245). Too charismatic leaders risk building the whole organisation around its presents, and the organisation might not survive a transfer of power.

Morris furthermore argues that not all acts have the same effect on the political order; some events will turn out to have a fundamental importance because they produce a turning point that affects the outcome of the social movement – called transformative events. In the case of the Kenyan environmental movement the 2004 Nobel Prize award to the Green Belt Movement’s leader Wangari Maathai, might have been such a transformative event since the tree-planting activists got a global recognition and were welcomed in from the cold.

Global recognition, norms and agreements might also be of relevance, while discussing the development of youth groups in Kenya. As stated in the objective of this study, one interest is to find out if the local youth groups are connected to the global environmental movement and in what way: are strategies and discourses influenced by international norms? Already while reviewing literature it seems clear that the concept of climate change have been brought to Kenya by the international community. For example is there no word with the equivalence of ‘climate change’ in the national language Kiswahili³. The transformation of objects, processes, ideas and information from one population or region to another is called ‘norm diffusion’, and in a case where the international community brings the norm to a receiving country the process is referred to as ‘norm enforcement from above’ (Alldén, 2009:17). The literature argues for two different directions when international actors, e.g. UN and Sida, enforce an international norm and pressure the national elites to perform according to it. Either the norm diffusion is successful since it becomes a subject for elite learning, where the national decision-makers adopt and refers to the norm in political rhetoric and eventually also will have to conduct rule-consistent behaviour (ibid:23, 26). On the other hand, the norm can be rejected due to a lack of national support/commitment/political will, lack of awareness, cultural mismatch, insufficient institutions or lack of support from the civil society in order to root and spread the norm (ibid: 26). It is crucial how the norm is introduced.

Norm diffusion is often linked to a process of socialization, where the norm breakers become norm followers (Alldén, 2009:18). To achieve a similar social change, where a specific behaviour is recognised as the preferable one, is often also seen as a goal of social

³ Descriptive terms, such as “kabadilika kwa hali ya hewa” or “mabadilika ya hali ya anga” can sometimes be used, but most people confess that they never thought about climate change in Kiswahili. They argue that a respective level of education is needed to grasp the concept and since all such education is given in English there is no need for translation. In oral communication with e.g. Tiger and Jones.

movements. The processes of international norm diffusion may be interlinked with mobilisation in the civil society, giving political opportunities for example when a society evolves to the next stage in a norm diffusing process.

A bunch of methods

In view of the fact that the aim of this research is to capture the complexity of norms, ideas and understandings within a heterogeneous group of people (youth), qualitative methods are a preferable way to deal with the task. Since the time in field was relatively short, nine weeks, an ethnographic approach with open-ended and semi-structured interviews, participating observation, focus groups and Participatory Rural Appraisal- exercises (PRA) have been used.

By using interviews, PRA and group discussions it is often possible to comprehend ‘the natives point of view’ (Geertz, 1973), their so called discursive consciousness. Since there sometimes can be a difference between what people say and what they do participative observation have been used in order to get an understanding of the informants’ practical consciousness and the logic of practice (Giddens, 1977).

Conducting interviews is one of the most commonly used forms of rapid, qualitative data collection (Rudqvist, 1991:17). In a fairly short time the researcher gets the insiders view on what their system of memory look like. Even so, it is important to understand that the interview is a speech-event, meaning it is immediately constructed in the context of the specific setting and relationship between the interviewee and the interviewer (Bartholdson, 2009-09-22). Both the interviewer and the interviewee interpret the situation, basing the communication on their individual agendas. For the researcher it is vital to mind the interviews’ context while analysing the results.

In this research the interviews varied from 30 minutes to 1,5 hours and were built on different themes covering personal motivation, the club, environmental issues and climate change. In all interviews the interviewee was asked to associate freely about the words youth, environment and climate change. The session ended with some time to answer any question the informant might have about the research, the case in Kenya, life in Sweden or the Swedish environment. The questions brought up new angles and topics of interest to discuss in a larger group. For focus group discussion PRA tools such as SWOT-analysis of the organisation, ranking of organizational matters, an attitude exercise called four corners dealing with

political views on the environment; and a problem tree exploring deforestation was used⁴.

Generally it was an even representation of men and women in the groups, but with MUESA I also had separate discussions with men and women in order to get a better understanding of their gender situation.

PRA is an array of approaches and methods combining reflective participation with research in order to get the concerned people's view of the situation. Experience with PRA in cases with previously marginalised groups have proved that people in general possess the ability to express and analyse the complexity in their own situations in a way that external top-down experts fail to do (Chambers, 1997:xviii, 108). PRA can be used in management to create a democratic process, but in academia it is more common that the method facilitate the extraction of an insider view. I highly value the importance of an insider perspective, have critically reflected on my concepts, values and methods in relation to the information given to me, but even so – PRA can only be seen as a toolbox of inspiration in this case and not a fully incorporated method since the aim of the research, the questions stated and the final decision-making power in writing, analysis and conclusion will be held by the researcher (Cleaver, 1999:605).

Reflections

To have access to a setting is not simply the possibility to be present, but also the ability to be included and the informants' willingness to share insight information and practises with you (Hammersley, Atkinson, 2007: 43). In this case trust was built over time as I proved to be a reliable visitor at meetings and functions. I tried to be as open and transparent as possible with my research, experiences and own culture as well as returning favours of hospitality and friendship. I believe this was successful mainly in the case of MUESA. Unfortunately, due to external factors, the time spent with S.I.C.O and Discovery was shorter with less time to hang-around and get an insider's logic of practice. The Kabianga Campus students went on strike half way through the research and since the administration feared that the students would burn down the university everyone was sent home on a definite period⁵. The situation was described to me as a typical case where adults do not want to listen to youth and rather

⁴ More information about the methods can be found in the appendix.

⁵ During April 2010 the campus gradually re-opened, but at least 11 students were expelled permanently. The students were accused of “discussing matters of the school”, but the official reason for expelling them was that they failed to be accompanied by a parent before the disciplinary board. The students are above all 20 years old and their parents live on an unrealistic distance concerning the time limit given.

call for the police than for a meeting in a conference room. The students argued they had done nothing wrong and that they only expressed errors in the system and wrongs that have been done to them. They believed it always have to be a fight before anything changes. The stay with Discovery was complicated because of logistical arrangements. Due to uneven amount of data the cases will not be represented with the same in-depth in this report.

I aimed to interview members, ex-members and non-members in the youth environmental clubs, as well as founders and supporters of those clubs. Unfortunately, it turned out to be difficult to get hold of individuals, who for some reason did not participate in the clubs activities. The members were not too keen on linking me to non-active course mates since they thought it would be an act of “selling them out” and the non-members I did found were not too eager to interact with me. All the earlier mentioned methods are built on the informants’ willingness to participate; even so the literature dealing with those methods is often rather vague on what kind of incentive that will motivate people to participate (Clever in Cooke and Kothari, 2001:48). The members of the clubs seemed to be motivated by the pride of being recognized for their work and the possibility to share information with a foreigner. Since the incitements for the non-members were not as clear and I failed in recognizing or live up to personal agendas encouraging participation (Helstead, 2001:314-315) their level of participation were low.

Stakeholders do not have to participate and it is a code of conduct for researchers to inform and get concerns from the informants on how the material will be used (AAA, 2009-10-28:3). Though there is a big question mark concerning how informed consents actually can be. Before starting any interview I explained my work and asked for their consent to collect and use material. Even if I have done my best to express my attempts, my informants might neither understand the academics context I am from nor the practical meaning of the concepts, but since many of my informants are undergraduate students I can assume that they have an idea of the process. As a researcher I have a responsibility not to jeopardize the well-being and security of my informants by the way I am conducting my project (ibid:3-4). It can always be a risk involved in collection of opinions, actions and attitudes, especially when the informants can be involved in political mobilization and opinions opposing the government and local administration might appear. I have been asked by students to keep sensitive information to myself, since it might result in disciplinary matters if the source of information comes out. The data will therefore be presented anonymously – the name used in this paper is not the informers’ real names.

My entering-point to the subject of youth's voice and participation was through the debate of climate change, though since my interest is to discover the main interest of my target group I tried to listen with compassion for the issues closest to their hearts. Even so, I realize that some topic might never been discussed in depth if I had not brought them up in interviews or group discussions.

Part 3: One case, three sites

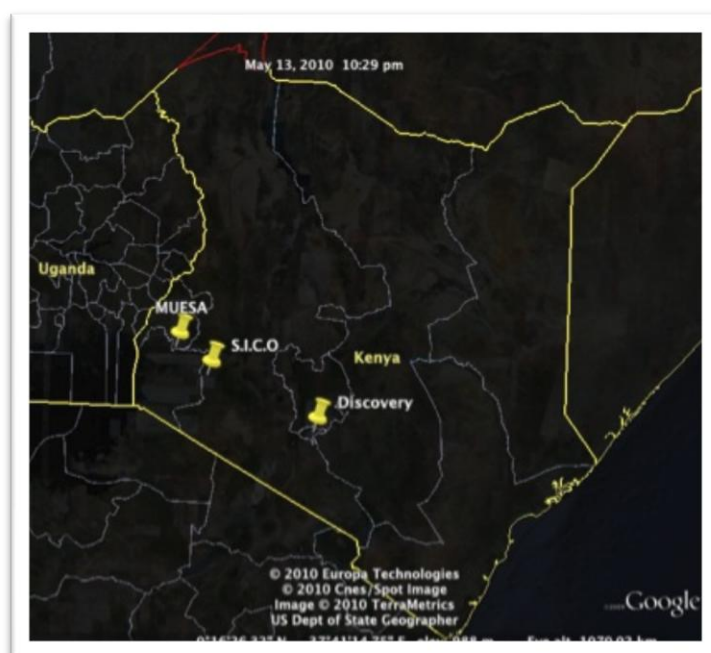
In this chapter I will introduce the three organisations in which I have conducted my case study. Since the aim of the research is to explore how young Kenyans understand environmental degradation and organise themselves in order to make an impact, I found it crucial to have first hand information –Especially considering that few similar researches have been done and that secondary information sources are very limited. This chapter is compiled on data mainly from observations, SWOT-analysis, interviews and informal discussions.

A case study

Environmental destruction in general and climate change in particular are global phenomena affecting most parts of the world in more or less drastic ways. Children and young people also live all over the world, more or less recognised as specific groups with outspoken rights. A study of youths' understanding and commitment to environmental degradation and climate change could be maintained anywhere, so the selection of sites is a combination of scientific interest and pragmatic opportunities, described by ethnographer Ulf Hannerz (2003:13) as ‘the art of the possible’. I realise that I will not have the possibility to grasp the entire field, so my intention was to pragmatically choose a number from those places that could potentially be included in the study (Hannerz, 2003:8). A nine weeks field study can never claim to have covered all aspects of the informants social life, instead the research have been focusing the members notion of environment, actions organisation and social context (ibid:9). I had only a little time order to establish relationship and personal credentials with my informants, a relationship important in order to get access to information. The fact that I am a fellow student, in some cases even in a similar course, introduced to the groups by trusted friends made access relatively easy. My situation have also been improved by the fact that I have a similar experience of environmental commitment as many of my informants, with girl scouts, nature clubs in school and an university education in environmental science. My personal

experiences have probably influenced the area selected for study and I believe they are informing the research and my commitment to the subject (Skelton and Valentine, 1998: 17).

The clubs have been recommended to me by informal sources and sampled through the snowball effect⁶. I first got in contact with Muesa, than Sico and finally Discovery Life Program. There are many youth environmental clubs in Kenya, specially connected to high schools. I have chosen these three groups in particular because they appear to be quite independent.



MUESA – Maseno University Environmental Students Association

MUESA is a student organization at Maseno University. Maseno University has approximately 7 000 students, most of them living on campus. The university is spread over a big area with two main campuses on a 3 km walking distance. The surroundings are green, the air is fresh and the water fairly clean – it’s an area made for environmental science, according to most students taking this course. The university is located in a rural setting, but on the highway between Kisumu and Busia, which somehow gives hint of city pulse. Since the students do not afford to travel to town daily, most kind of services, activities and arrangements are organized within campus area. The university have a number of associations, where the business students’ association is the most well known. This association organizes the semester-end party and other well-visited functions. The environmental students association, MUESA, was founded in the year of 2005 by the students

⁶ The snowball effect is a sampling method where the information given from the informants leads the process forward – analogous with a snowball rolling down a hill.

and soon become acknowledged as a school association by the department. The start was a bit slow for the organization and it basically existed only on paper until about two semesters ago when present officials made an extra effort to conduct activities. MUESA has about 30 active members, but is still not especially well known and strives to reach the level of the business students' recognition.

Even though the organization for some years have admitted members from other courses than environmental science the majority is still from within their own program, most of them recruited by elder students approaching first years students in a classroom. Officials are elected to the board on an annual basis. First-third year students can be elected for positions, but 4th years are not allowed to possess a position, mainly because their workload is expected to be high during this last year, but also to make the transition to younger students smoother. The active members are presently mainly from the second year, followed by the first year students. Third and fourth year students are rarely represented at the meetings. All officials are strongly convinced that they will remain in the organization until they graduate and hopefully be connected to the group through future employment.

The main goal of MUESA is to create environmental awareness in and outside of the Maseno University campus. This is done through awareness activities, including clean ups and tree planting. The group conducts approximately two events per semester. The response from the surrounding villages is positive and the expectations high since university students are seen as experts in the making. To recruit man-power from the other students is a bit trickier. The informal information channels are well developed and a message can reach all students within a day, the only problem is to motivate the students to do voluntary work. Students come in great numbers if there are official certificates from the university or refreshments.

Unfortunately for MUESA, the dean does not see signing student documents as his main task, and the process of distributing certificates can be severely delayed or even canceled.

The biggest challenges of the group is how to maintain the interest of the members between the activities, since it mostly is the officials and some few committed members that runs the day to day activities of the organization. The group also states that lack of finances and unreliable partners are issues that hold the organization down. If they received more economic support they could conduct tree-planting repeatedly during the semester and would not have to rely so much on others good-will in order to carry out the ideas. Members' fee and in-group fund-raising currently finance most expenses.

Even though about half of the members have developed their environmental interest since childhood it is a clear minority that actually applied for the program as a first or even fourth-hand choice – engineering, business, law and teaching were all higher up on the wish-list. But after the first disappointment of lost opportunities, lecturers convinced them all that the environment is the foundation for all other functions of the society, and they are now passionate environmentalists. They feel inspiration by spending time in the nature, planting and nurturing trees, as well as cleanings public places, but a deeper understanding comes from lectures at the university.

Most of the active members are also engaged in the Christian Union. All meeting starts and ends with words of prayer and gratitude. To care for the environment is to assist God in his work and to fulfill the mission he gave to mankind.

S.I.C.O – Students In Community Organisation

S.I.C.O is a newly established group at the Kabianga constituent college of Moi University, located in Kericho’s tea district. The campus was founded only three years ago and no students have yet graduated. It is small; approximately 700 students and all students live on site. The campus is located in a very remote, rural area where there are few if any activities for the students. Infrastructure is limited and it is a time consuming and costly expedition to visit the closest urban center. The environment is favorable for student associations and during the past two years the administration and the fellow students have recognized a number of unions. S.I.C.O is one of the most renowned examples. It is open for all students, but has a core of about ten active members.

The present chairmen of S.I.C.O was stunned by the beautiful surrounding in the tea district of Kabianga and longed for an opportunity to do something for the local community, which neighbors the campus. He presented his idea of a community supporting student organization for some friends and lecturers who all gave him their full support, shortly after S.I.C.O was founded.

The officials are still the friend group that established the organization; a majority of them are studying business and management, even if they all express a long lasting wish to work with environmental issues. The officials express a mixed anxiety about the survival of the organization after their graduation, but also see member recruiting as an opportunity for the organization. The group had its first activity in the beginning of February 2010 – a community day with activities such as tree planting; clean up at the campus and the

community health center as well as reparation of the bridge. The event was very successful when it came to attendance from students, villagers and local officials. The following weeks the group got requests to participate in activities arranged by the University board and at least 10 new members signed up with more on the way. The group is now struggling to develop a strategy of how to manage the members' enthusiasm. Lack of far reaching strategies is expressed as one of their major weakness, along with dependence of external economic support.

The goal of S.I.C.O is to connect the university with the local society in the struggle of a more sustainable development. The fact that the area is remote and lack many basic services encourages the group since small achievements can result in great improvements. The group is not a pure environmental organization, but the notion of the environments basic interaction with social well-fare made it natural for the group to approach the society in this way. The group is also cooperating with national networks to bring attention about HIV/Aids to the students. The organization's next big activity is planned to be a major tree planting in the highly degraded and politically contested Mao forest in cooperation with local authorities. S.I.C.O is the most political group of this research's three cases: some members criticize national and global leaders for not taking their responsibility when it comes to environmental degradation and climate change. The club believes in the strategy of putting pressure on present leaders and bringing awareness to the future ones (youth), at the same time as they conduct direct action to minimize the negative environmental effects in their local area, by planting trees and collect waste.

Discovery Life Program

Discovery is the only group in this study who is not affiliated to a university. The group is organized by seven youth living and working in Mukuru Kwa Ruben informal setting, in Nairobi East. The group was founded in the year 2007 with the hope that the youth could create something more for themselves and their community than the current situation of crime and disbelief. They wanted to bring dignity and positive solutions to their area, since moving is not an option for most people and external organizations seems to fail in order to see, what Discovery argues to be 'the real needs of the people'. Discovery's goal is to increase the life standard and improve the environmental conditions in the slum, by offering a diverse program of activities, including skills training for young mothers and drug addicts, community awareness programs in sanitation, HIV and Aids as well as protection of environmental health. Discovery is not an environmental organization, but have realized that clean ups is a

good way to reach the community. They identify themselves as the only organization that has physically gotten dirty in order to clean up the mess in the slum. Almost all the members have personal experiences of a destructive lifestyle involving drugs and violence, but have managed to turn their lives around and are now dedicated to help others do the same. They have received training and background in other organizations, but have ended up disappointed by the lack of commitment from other members and results of the activities. The members put a lot of hope in Discovery.

The duties are presently divided within the group based on interest and ability. Even if it is a conscious choice to keep the group small, is it also a risk. For the moment most of the members are in life positions where they can spend a lot of time with the club, but new personal commitments, such as university studies, job opportunities and marriage all threaten to decrease the devotion to Discovery's activities. In the likely event of someone having to leave the group for a while, the members prefer to manage with those that remain ones before recruiting a new person. The members state that they are not yet ready to open up the organization for others than those who were part of the initial group. The process of making decisions is based on discussion and conclusion; since they all have the communities best interest at heart they assure that they it have never been an issue to establish consensus.

In the middle of February Discovery organized their first clean up. They had invited local school children and scouts in advance by visiting them and informing them about their aims and activities. The attendance was beyond all expectations and the kids asked if they could not arrange cleanings every week-end instead of every other as planned. Discovery realized that to recruit participants is not the problem; the challenge is to obtain equipments and snacks to the activities. The activities have continued up to present date and the interest and trust among the participants towards Discovery appears to be large⁷. Some parents have raised critical voices that the children should be paid for their labor, but since no money is available and most pupils find the activity fun and rewarding the program proceed unchallenged. Discovery argues that it is possible to see a difference already two month after the first clean up. One challenge, though, is to make the community maintain the standard and not be fooled by the delusion that it is okay to litter, since someone now will take care of it.

⁷ For example are the class teachers not any more monitoring the activities, but trust the Discovery members to take care of the children during the whole program.

Discovery’s members are optimistic about the future. According to them their challenge is to establish economical support for the activities and to get an office where they can store equipment and receive visitors and possible partners. For the moment all meetings is held in the members’ private homes, which they believe are not giving the group the seriousness they require for meetings with potential partners and sponsors. They are presently supported by the local nuns’ health center to run the clean- ups for a period of six month.

Representativity

What social categories of youth do the youth environmental clubs consist of? Clearly the members of the clubs presented in this report represent a minority of the Kenyan society, since all of them have higher educational trainings and almost all of them are studying at a university. Even if the students origins from mixed social backgrounds and sometimes very poor conditions, their possession of a university degree will most likely result in a class mobility⁸. The level of education, influence of a global culture and connection to the surrounding world gives the university students the attributes of a middle class. In discussions the student affiliations give a more abstract description of “the poor” and “the elite” as something out there, while discovery almost only talk about people they can feel and touch. Even so the understanding of class is rhetorically only expressed in terms of the poor (the masses/farmers) and the elite (the politicians).

The club members have a mixture of heritages and even if discrimination based on ethnicity and tribalism still is common in Kenya it does not seem to be the case within the clubs. The approach to the issue of ethnicity is a bit different in the groups – at Kabianga Campus the origin (which almost always gives away the tribe) is incorporated in casual introductions; at Maseno, or at least in MUESA, different tribal belonging is only spelt out to me during the last weeks; while in Nairobi, which is a mega-city with high immigration, it is argued that citizens since long looked past the issue of tribes. Discrimination or limited access due to religion seems closer to hand, since no group members confess to other beliefs than Christianity, even if there are other religious world views represented at the universities and in the society at large. Most of the officials in the clubs are men, even in cases where men and women are of equal numbers as members. Women are generally not speaking at meetings and

⁸ One informant confesses that he is only the second person in his community with a university education and that he, because of his education, has received a high social status. People come to him for advices on matters which not necessary is part of his education and he is unusually high ranked, both by parents and potential brides, on the wedding market. For the moment his economical situation is the same as earlier but even if contacts, class and ethnicity continues to be important on the labour market, an education opens up numerous of earlier unreachable doors.

are assigned with ‘female-like’ tasks. The way which men and women speak about the other gender, both in public and private makes it appear that females are being looked down on by men. Male officials of MUESA even say to the face of their female colleagues that women are inferior to men, since women are stupid. The female members of MUESA do not agree with the statement, but seems to accept that men reason in such way. Even if arguments have been raised that societies with high gender equality is both more peaceful and efficient than those who are not (Hobsbawm, 1995), the impact of gender equality is seldom incorporated in the social movement theories (Morris, 2000:450-451). Internal power relations and discriminations when it comes to class, gender, age and ethnicity is little spoken about within the model itself, even if used as a tool to express the movement fight for those courses (e.g. the civil right movement in the U.S.A) I do believe that inequality of all kinds default creativity and intelligence of capable individuals. With this remark I will have to leave the discussion of gender equality to another paper, and continue with a presentation of the members’ (both men and women) environmental understanding.

Part 4: Youth understanding of environmental degradation

This part presents and analyses how the environmental club members interpret and express their opinions about environmental issues and climate change in particular. The dominant discourse of the group is explored and also what kind of activities this results in. The chapter also elaborates on how the members’ understandings of the issues are linked to their own experiences. The analysis is supported by the concept of frames.

A sharp blue light, a loud thunderclap and the whole corridor of girls are screaming. Shiela makes the highest shriek of all and receives a reproaching look from Fatuma.

– But this just isn’t normal... Shiela defends herself and the others have to agree. Fatuma cracks a joke that Kabianga always has been God’s bathroom, but lately he must have some kind of issues with the prostate because the rains are really not like they used to be.

Already in the taxi on my way from the airport I get a first testimony on how climate change has affected Kenya. The taxi driver Peter gives a long and detailed talk on how old farming practises have turned out to be useless because of unreliable rainfalls. Interviewing farmers in the close surrounding of Maseno this statement is supported:

“Until three years ago we knew exactly when to plant, the rain was always on time. Now we never know. We have to gamble, wait and pray”.

The middle-aged, small-plot farmer leans against his pick, wipes the sweat from his forehead and squints uneasily against the blazing sun. It really has to start to rain soon, he mumbles to the clear blue sky. Most, but not all of his neighbours agree that they are facing new challenges due to a change in the weather, even if they are contradicting each other on how. Some argue that there have been worse droughts lately while others state that the main change is the intensity in the rainfalls. A few of them address the phenomena's as part of a global climate change, but most have not heard of such things at all. According to the African-led research and communication initiative “Africa talks Climate” current climate change terminology is inaccessible to most Kenyans (BBC, 2009:1). The term global warming is more familiar, but even so most Kenyans fail to connect the concept with their daily struggles of drought and floods (BBC, 2009:2).

Members of Discovery, MUESA and S.I.C.O agree that a lot of people are uninformed and unaware of the situation, but they also think that a great number of Kenyans, and especially Kenyan youth, do know how human actions are connected to negative environmental effects, but that people are either unwilling to change their behaviour or out of alternatives due to poverty and lack of power⁹. A majority of the members in the three clubs are criticising the power elite and the politicians for using the peoples' ignorance to develop weak strategies and management systems that facilitate their own interests in business and industry¹⁰. To prevent pollution and to put pressure on decision-makers, the clubs agree that raising sensitivity about the environment among the people is a necessity.

The two major environmental problems facing Kenya today is, according to the members of Discovery, MUESA and S.I.C.O, deforestation and waste management. MUESA and S.I.C.O, who are located in the rural areas and are first hand witnesses of drought and floods, emphasize for deforestation, while members of Discovery who live in the slum stress the importance of cleanness further. Both issues have their roots in weak policy implementation and poverty according to the clubs. They argue that politicians do not have the will to change the situation and that people are ignorant. Members of MUESA explain that poverty not only limits economic abilities, but also the mental capacity to gather new information. Discovery has a different approach to poverty believing that it mostly affects one's self-esteem and attitude towards life. Shiro even says she “does not believe in poverty”:

⁹ Communicated during focus group discussion (4-corner 1,2,3) and interviews with for example Christine, Humphrey and Charlie.

¹⁰ Communicated during focus group discussion (e.g 4-corner 1,2,3).

“Many people don’t want to see a change because they believe they are poor. They believe they are in a hole from which they can’t get up. They have the mentality “we are poor, so what?” and then they drink and use drugs instead of working to change their lives. I believe you can come out from nothing to something.”

When the members of Discovery talk about the environment they mean the physical and psychological surrounding of a person. Shiro explain environment like this:

“Mostly people maybe think of the garbage, the drainage, you know, but for me the environment means a lot. To me it is the people in the area, what goes on in the area, what activities that take place – that is the environment. Because if you grow up like me, I grow up in an alcoholic house, my parents were drunkards and sold brew, in that environment I picked up characteristics of the surrounding that affects my life. When I say I want to work with the environment I mean everything, from garbage to people’s life. Everything has to change.”

Discovery recognises the importance of economic and ecologic sustainability, but more as a base to enrich the society and the people living in it. MUESA also motivates environmental protection from an anthropocentric point of view, but they use a more ecological way to define the environment. A majority of the officials in MUESA describe the environment as the general surrounding we live in and the eco-system services. Some end the definition there while some continue by adding that humans are also organisms on earth and therefore a part of it. Human activities, such as politics can be included in the concept of environment¹¹. The members confirm that they use the same definition in the club as they were taught in class already during their first semester.

S.I.C.O is in many ways similar to MUESA, but they use a more pragmatic language when they talk about the environment. S.I.C.O members associated the term environment with pollution, drought, food security, planting trees etc. Most of them start to discuss the need of conservation and the environments importance to politics nationally and globally (the only exception is a natural management student who uses the same definition as the MUESA). Charlie, chairperson of S.I.C.O, explains that

“I want to believe; I wasn’t there so I don’t really know, but I want to believe that God gave us such a beautiful place, which we now have destroyed. We have to try to make it as beautiful as possible again”.

The S.I.C.O members express to a great extent than the other clubs’ members the beauty of nature and its role for peoples’ relaxation¹². They are using many superlatives describing the

¹¹ Oral communication by Juma, Faith, Gabriel and Phoebe

¹² In oral communication with, among others Charlie, Edhna and Christine.

landscape around the campus area and the tracking they use to make during the week-ends. Even so, few, if any of the members have had the opportunity to visit the great game parks of Kenya, arguing that they are mainly for foreign tourists. Tourism is addressed as one of the biggest incomes for Kenya, but at the same time the club members believe that only a minority of the Kenyan citizens are able to appreciate the glory of the savannah, big lakes and forests that Kenya has to offer. They argue that Kenya needs to reinvestigate the natural resources of its own country, so people can realize they have a lot to be proud about. Pride seems to be a key word for all clubs.

Other key words are ‘planting trees’. The low percent of forest cover in Kenya, which according to the groups are between 1-2% in relation to the 10% that they state is recommended by the UN, is the major reason for most environmental related problems¹³. The club members are directly linking deforestation to loss of biodiversity, lack of fuel and timber, imbalance in the hydrological circle, soil erosion, food insecurity, water shortages, drought, human-animal conflicts, human-human conflicts and global warming¹⁴. The groups are addressing tree planting as one of the more efficient, cost-effective and participatory ways of fighting deforestation.

Climate change and global warming is, as explained by all members, a result of increased levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Most members say that human kind has an even blame and a common responsibility to solve the issue¹⁵, but some members argue that the industrialised world is mainly to blame for the emissions¹⁶. For example Charlie says that

“We are not responsible for climate change, yet we are the ones who suffer the most because we lack the mechanisms to avoid its effects. That is what is so disappointing about climate change. The western world, or actually the developed countries, will also suffer the consequences of climate change, but they have the mechanisms, the services, the power, the technical know-how to revert, that we don’t. So I think we should recruit those who are responsible of climate change to help us. They should give us the know-how to mitigate climate change”.

Except from the way that mitigation is used instead of adaptation in this statement little is said about Kenya’s own industry in relation to climate change and environmental destruction. The Club members seems positive, or at least not negative to industrialization and globalisation, stressing the importance of economical growth in order to lift the country from poverty. When

¹³ In oral communication with among others Humphrey, Juma, Matthew and Edhna.

¹⁴ Expressed during focus group discussion (4-corner 1,2,3 and problem tree).

¹⁵ In oral communication with, among others Phoebe, Dickson and Matthew.

¹⁶ In oral communication with Juma, Charlie and Humphrey.

being asked why it is important to protect the environment MUESA is internally starting an intense discussion about how sustainable development actually can be, creating two fronts:

“Our economy is based on the environment that is why we need to take care of it: to prevent from economic crisis (1).”

“Sustainability and growth cannot go together; we need to protect the environment for future generations (2).”

“We can’t take care of the future if we are in poverty now. The future will take care of its self (1).”

“How far into the future do the future starts (2)?”

“Stop talking about the future; we don’t even know if it will happen, what future (1)?”

“You are selfish! We must use the environment to develop but without compromising the possibilities for future generations. Economy creates pollution, it is that simple (2).”

“No, there is no limit of growth. We just need to take some extra care of the environment because agriculture is the backbone of our nation. So in the future we can crash poverty with our wallets (1).”

“Aha! So now you do believe in the future (2)! “

[...]

“I’m looking at the ethics. My existence is built on my relationship to other people and this relationship is built on ethics. We are also a part of nature and have a relationship with it. That relationship should also be built on ethics. Nature has rights for its own curse. It has the right to be protected”.

Marceline seems to be happy with her statement, knowing that she is a bit provocative towards the others. The comment is not passing unrecognised. There is a general reproduction in the group of Marceline’s uncharacteristic statement.

“You have never implemented such thing!”

“Maybe not, but it is my belief...” Marceline replies a bit grumpy.

The discussion became heated, but it seemed like the members agreed on that some environmental destruction would have to be the price to pay for development. Kenya is facing other challenges, like HIV/Aids and poverty, which are seen as bigger problems also by the club members. Still, both members and non-members are willing to interlink environmental problems and global warming to other burning issues in the Kenyan society. A non-member believes that climate change is one of the main reasons for increasing campus pregnancies at

Maseno, since the warmer weather makes the female students wear less clothing and the sudden rainfalls during semester create an ambience for more intimacy. S.I.C.O officials hope that their environmental activities will reduce HIV/Aids; first and foremost because planting trees will develop a respect for living things and secondly since members will be too busy with the club so that they will not have time for sex¹⁷. MUESA officials see a natural connection between protecting the environment and being opposed to abortion, since it is the duty of an environmentalist to protect life. When talking about life it soon becomes clear that it is human life we are talking about. None of the club members are, or consider being, vegetarians with the main argument that God gave human the earth to master and enjoy.

The presented views of environmental degradation and climate change are fairly similar in all three groups. Discovery, MUESA and S.I.C.O are facing different challenges, but the common solution is a strategy involving tree planting, clean ups and inspiring talks. The similarities can be based in comparable factors in the structure of social organisation, in which the groups exist – such as age, diversity of background, relationship to the locals, aspiration of expert position and schooling. It may also demonstrate that the environmental movement in Kenya, with the Green Belt Movement in the front line, have secured ground and that the youth groups are influenced by actions elsewhere.

According to discourse analysts there always exist at least two discourses in a society, and if only one seems to be found the analyst will have to consider a demonstration of a situation where one frame strive to dominate, achieving almost a state of cultural hegemony (Naumann, 2003:56-57). There are a number of informal and formal practices a carrier of a discourse can use in order to maintain and border the representations included in the normative frame, the most obvious being censorship. The youth clubs affiliated to universities admit that they risk facing sanctions if challenging the view of the administration and that they are afraid of disciplinary outcomes. A society that can be considered open when two, or more, frames or stand points are represented without being dominated by one (ibid). In politics, where the actors are defined by one's friends and enemies, such a situation is uncommon (ibid). Environment is stated by all groups to be permeated by politics and they all agree that politic in Kenya is messy and corrupted. Can it be that tree planting is an accepted action strategy, safe enough for the clubs to be engaged in?

¹⁷ Oral communication by Charlie.

It has been stated in this episode that the youth organized in the clubs are feeling aggrieved at the environmental situation in Kenya and especially in the area where they presently are located. The youth are using the words “strong and energetic” when they define themselves as a group. They are optimistic that they are able to take actions in order to improve the environmental situation. The youth have a strong identity both as ‘youth’ and as members of their respective club. Injustice, agency and identity are together forming a cultural frame supporting further actions.

Part 5: Mobilisation, organisations and movement

This chapter is discussing why and how some Kenyan youths choose to organize themselves into so called Youth Environmental Clubs. The motivation to form a group, network used and tactics chosen will be explored more, along with the opportunities that gave room for action at this particular time. The analysis is supported by resource mobilization theory.

As discussed in part 4 the members have a common understanding of the environmental situation and a rationale for action. Numerous stories are given on how natural experiences gave birth to a love for the environment, or how nursing for a plant/animal started a will to care and protect¹⁸. But the stories are not unique, similar transforming experiences are described by the non-members¹⁹. So a question arises: why do the members choose to organise themselves?

Coy (2001) is criticising the social movement theories for highlighting ‘collective actions’ and downplaying what Coy argue is more common forms of response to dissatisfaction, namely inaction (meaning nothing is done to change the situation) or individual action (meaning that the individual is taking measures on her own) (Coy, 2001:180). He argues that the most commonly used form of individual action is the model of public choice and found the social movement theories emphasizing collective action misleading. He argues that human actions are rational and can be understood by cost-benefit calculations and that people respond to dissatisfaction in terms of notion of relative cost and benefit of each (Coy, 2001:181). This model of ‘the rational man’ is also stressed during lectures with the environmental students of Maseno and in MUESA. According to Coy the most common version of individual action is the consumer choice, meaning that the individual’s

¹⁸ Oral communication by e.g. Christine, Humphrey, Shiela, Edhna, Leonard, Phoebe and Faith.

¹⁹ Oral communication by Stella, Tom and Ali.

consumption habit makes a statement. For example can an environmental friendly product be more attractive than a cheaper one, since the consumer also values its production methods. Even if the academic arguments are used in discussions with MUESA, no one is discussing public choice or consumer impact as a relevant tactic in their situation. This can mean that other tactics are considered more efficient. The students might very well use cost-benefit calculations, but since they rarely have any money to spend they use time or commitment to evaluate with instead. This can also be an argumentation that identity, being and belonging, is evenly important and lacking in the cost-benefit model. This research will not go in to details about how youths in Kenya generally express dissatisfaction, but it is interesting to note that the youths participating in the club have chosen the common action method instead of others.

The groups state that there is a higher probability of succeeding within a group than as an individual.

“As an individual you cannot achieve anything, you need to come together as a group or association in order to make a change”²⁰.

A clear majority of the members who were asked why they joined the club state that it was because they had a possibility to act along with their beliefs and, as a group have a greater possibility to create change in the society²¹.

For members of Discovery their involvement of the club is a life style choice and they hope to continue as professionals or semi-professionals within the club for as long as it exists or they live²². Membership in MUESA and S.I.C.O have a natural deadline at the time of graduation, they are therefore also using the clubs as a working experience for the future. The clubs are offering a fun and stimulating environment, where personal skills and arguments can be polished and networks can be made for life outside the club. While recruiting new members, network opportunities with national and international organisations are one of MUESA’s main arguments²³.

²⁰ Oral communication by Obunga.

²¹ Expressed by 7/10 in Focus group discussion (e.g. 4-corner discussion 1,3).

²² Oral communication by Tony, Shiro and Francis.

²³ Oral communication by e.g. Leonard and Obunga.

The members’ network is an important factor when talking about the establishments of the clubs. According to the political mobilization model movement mobilization occurs within the structure of informal networks, like friends and neighbours; pre-existing institutional structures, like schools and churches as well as through formal organizations, like NGOs and youth clubs. Discovery, MUESA and S.I.C.O are all established from a mixture of those contact areas. Discovery is formed by friends and neighbours, which in different constellations also have been colleagues in other NGOs. MUESA is officially open for all environmental students at the Maseno University, but it is clear that friends are more likely to join together. A majority of the officials are also active members in the Christian Union, influencing the club meetings with behaviours and rhetoric from this institution. S.I.C.O is outspokenly founded by a tight group of friends and is recruiting new members within the close setting of the Kabianga Campus. In S.I.C.O, as well as MUESA, many of the members can be found in other organisations, such as the Christian vocal group. In MUESA and S.I.C.O a majority of the members have experiences of tree-planting since early age, because they have attended to nature clubs in primary, secondary and occasionally even high school.

The environments from which these groups have emerged have most likely influenced the way they internally have organised themselves: Discovery has chosen the form of project management, with responsibilities divided according to themes, e.g. clean-ups, trainings for young mothers or HIV/aids awareness. Its members argue that this management form is preferable in NGOs²⁴. The coordinator have the mandate to make program related decisions, but when it comes to strategic decisions influencing the whole of Discovery consensus among all members is aimed at.

MUESA was originally formed as an environmental science student association at Maseno University. The organization is more traditional concerning its organization than the other two clubs. The officials are elected on an annual basis and every class is represented by a commissioner. Representatives have meetings approximately once a week depending on work load and open meetings are held when ‘suitable issues’ occur. Even if the meetings can be casual and friendly, the chairman (who is called Mr. Chairman) is leading the meeting according to a fixed order and the discussions are often concerning practical details and formalities.

²⁴ Oral communication by Tony.

S.I.C.O has a looser structure than both MUESA and Discovery. Tasks have been divided among the core group, but it seems likely they take one issue at a time trying to figure out how to deal with it as they go along. The atmosphere in the group is welcoming and it appears to be only a very small difference when it comes to the core group, new and old members. Even so S.I.C.O identifies the intimacy of the group both as strength and a threat, since it might be hard to make the group survive the graduation of the original members.

It can be argued that S.I.C.O is still in a phase of establishment and those much weaker in its structure than its older sibling organization MUESA. It can also be argued that S.I.C.O, that originated in a much smaller and informal setting than MUESA do not have the same need of formality as MUESA, that emerged in a university with longer and stronger traditions. It can also be a question of memory. The memory is a central, if not the most central part, in which a identity (or frame) is constructed (Neumann 2001:55). MUESA has a heritage, even if the members claim that the club became what it is only during this period of mandate, they still have a collective memory on how things have been done previously. S.I.C.O has not created a collective memory, since it just started and can therefore experiment more with methods and expressions.

Even if the clubs have chosen different internal forms of organisation, their approach towards the outside is relatively similar. Deforestation and solid waste management is, as presented in part 4, the main environmental problem in Kenya according to the clubs. They have thus found it quite natural to choose tree-planting and clean ups as core activities. They present the activities as visually hands-on, with an immediate result, something that is appreciated by the villagers, who believe that the organisations are mostly a way spending time talking²⁵. Tree planting and clean ups are also fairly cheap giving the economically constrained clubs an opportunity to act without external funds. Not least important is the symbolic value given to the activities, especially the planting of a tree, which is compared with the delivery of a baby²⁶. Members state that a good human should at least plant 50 trees in a life time²⁷. Morris argues that the tactics chosen by the organisation are essential for the establishment and

²⁵ Oral communication by Tony, Charlie and Juma.

²⁶ Oral communication by Humphrey and Leonard.

²⁷ Oral communication by Shiela and Rebecca. Approximately 50 trees is also the number of trees I planted while participating in activities during this research.

survival of a movement (Morris, 2000:449). The choices made by the leaders shape the organisation and the outcome of the movement. Morris also argues that the tactic often is built upon familiar themes attracting potential followers and providing them with an ideological motivation for action (ibid). This might be the reason why MUESA are giving their events slogans such as “Celebrating Easter with style” reminding of God’s exhortation to mankind to care for the environment, and “our environment, our pride”, which is associating to the national campaign ‘Proud to be Kenyan’, which aims to prevent tribe related conflicts.

Another nationwide, governmentally initiated campaign in the recent Kenyan history of relevance for this report is “Ukikata mti moja, panda mwili”, which means that if you cut one tree, you should plant two. The message was pumped out in media and in all governmental institutions like a mantra during the late Moi-regime. Even so, the message seems to have been received by the people just recently. During the last three years an extended drought has hit Kenya. Illegal logging was claimed to be the reason and all eyes turned on the Mau Forest where almost 20 000 families lives in informal settings (BBC 2010, UNEP). The Mau forest is the biggest forest and water catchment area in Kenya, supporting the big lakes (e.g. Victoria and Nakuru) and over 10 million people along the rivers with fresh water (ibid). It is argued that during the last 15 years illegal logging have reduced Mau with over 100 000 hectares of biomass, in the eyes of the government the farmers settling in the forest is causing the drought and the government have therefore forced a great number of families to leave their homes (ibid). Just before the Mau became Kenya’s hottest crisis the country had been shaken by the worst post-election violence in many years. Both incidents are, according to the university students, results of land grabbing enforced by powerful politicians. Coincident or result: Shortly after the Mau forests hit the news Discovery, MUESA and S.I.C.O all started their environmental activities for real.

The media coverage of the Mau Forest could have worked as a transformative event, or a political opportunity, but at the same time it is quite likely that a mobilization was just about to happen anyway. As shown on a number of places in this report Kenyan youth have a low reliance for the Kenyan political system. According to youth in this study, people involved in the ‘dirty game’ are corrupted, selfish and tribal-oriented, which leads to Kenya being a country lead by corruption, faction struggles and fragmentation. Having a strict control of youth in primary school (described in part 2) fresh in mind, it is not far to draw the conclusion

that when youths come together in a setting of limited authorial repression they find it natural to act upon their frustration in non-parliamentary organisations.

The campus life can offer what Tarrow explains as a “consistent – but not necessary formal or permanent – dimensions of the [socio-political] environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective actions by affecting their expectations for success or failure”, in other words a political opportunity (quoted by Morris, 2000:446). As argued in the two recent parts of this report the youth environmental clubs seem to have emerged within a mobilizing structure, political opportunities and a cultural frame suitable for collective actions.

Part 6: Global discourses and local perceptions

This part investigates how the environmental clubs are interlinked with the global environmental movement. By using concepts of norm diffusion the chapter also discusses how the members are introduced to global discourses such as the climate change debate.

Members of all clubs express an opinion of doing something new and unique, but as a matter of fact there are other groups doing almost the same kind of activities, even within MUESA and S.I.C.Os own campuses. In Kabanga the Christian union and the agro forestry student association approach the community with tree-related information and at Maseno the Business and Administration- and Infrastructural Planning- student associations, as well as the Christian Union are planting trees in the close campus surrounding. This is strengthening my argumentation that there is an environmental movement with a tree-planting strategy currently being established in Kenya. It is also typical for the global environmental movement to be diverse and decentralised (Castells 2009:340-341). The movement’s disability to construct a control centre in charge of the collective action has both been a weakness and a strength. While it has been proven impossible to build a permanent “anti-globalisation” organization from the World Social Forum arena with a core aim, the platform have been monumental in the mobilisation of an innumerable amount of local struggles and ad hoc global network (ibid). The networking form of the movement, with its greatest expression through Internet connections and cell phones creating “small worlds” , have become a networking norm – the networking practices of the movement goes beyond coordination and distribution and is now strategic, organizational and normative (ibid:342-343, 348). With this in mind, lets continue by discussing the active network of Discovery, MUESA and S.I.C.O.

All clubs believe that cooperation with other organisations is an opportunity to develop but even if they see some of their existing partnerships as strength, frustration with unreliable partners and competition from clubs doing activities that “should have been carried out by us” are among the clubs major threats²⁸. A weakness identified by all clubs is a lack of sufficient funds, which result in sponsoring being the most common reason to approach another group next to authorial recognition²⁹. S.I.C.O and Discovery both believe their success is context specific. They argue that their areas are so neglected and undeveloped that even the smallest effort improves the situation and encourages the people, who are developing a trust and respect for the organisations³⁰. MUESA is also appreciated by the communities for advice and support, but have not yet the same status, or are at least not recognising it. Even if the aims of all clubs are focusing on the local situation they have an aspiration to reach a national or a global level:

“It would be most important for MUESA to be linked with global organizations even if we start with local organizations in order to reach to the global level. Environmental issues, as climate change, can only be solved globally. Some local attempt will not change the situation globally. But we start locally as we climb”³¹.

None of the clubs are taking the issue of climate change lightly (as expressed in part 4), still MUESA and S.I.C.O seems to be more eager to make relations between their local day-to-day problems and CO²-emission than what Discovery is. One reason can be that city life is not as affected by changes in the nature as the rural area, Shiro for example says that she will still buy food, weather it rains or not. Another reason, also described in part 4, is that climate change is not common knowledge.

Members of Discovery got their understanding from the media, who mainly write about climate change in the context of international negotiations³². Members of S.I.C.O first heard of the concept in class and environmental clubs at high school, and since they found it interesting they started to follow the news more carefully³³. During the two past decades climate change have grown from a relatively ‘obscure scientific issue’ to a global public

²⁸ Expressed during focus group discussions (SWOT 1,2,3,4) quotation by MUESA SWOT 2.

²⁹ Expressed during focus group discussions (SWOT 1,2,3,4)

³⁰ Expressed during focus group discussions (SWOT 1,4)

³¹ Oral communication by Obunga.

³² Oral communication by Tiger.

³³ Oral communication by e.g Christine, Nelson and Charlie.

concern and even a policy matter mainly thanks to mass media (Castells 2009:316). It has been shown in numerous studies that mass media were the primary source of information for most people worldwide during this period of time and that media coverage are directly linked to a change in the public opinion (Castells 2009:315). Mass media has plays a key role in identifying and interpreting scientific findings into a language that the public can understand and access. It has even been argued that media have a direct agenda setting or at least indirect public opinion-shaping effect (ibid:317). Even so; mass media’s main goal is not to educate the public, but to attract audience. This goal is mainly achieved by raising emotions, preferably negative emotions since those tend to create a greater focus from the reader/viewer/listener than positive feelings. Fear has been proved to be the most successful emotion to play on while attracting a crowd and it is therefore not surprising that mass media have let the apocalyptic horsemen march under the flag of climate change with devastation and horror left in its track (this statement made not to deny the seriousness of the climate change threat but to illustrate how scientific projections are translated into a media language) (ibid). Mass media’s interest in selling fear is closely connected to their picture of violence. For example does the minority that use violence in the environmental movement get a greater media exposure than those who use non-violence, so even if street theater performances, clowns and balloons is more common the whole movement have gotten a “violent tag” (Castell:344). The moral panic facing youth in Kenya might be another example of a media driven fear operation.

The mass media have double seats, as expressed by Castells (2009:318) “The media are simultaneously the conveyors of the movement’s message and the producer of these message in a format that fits the rules and goals of their business trade”. Presently politicians, celebrities and activists have taken the role of information source from the scientists. Also when the scientists are heard, the journalistic norm of ‘balance’ can make issues more controversial than they actually are, for example the existence of global warming was heavily debated in media long after a consensus had been reached within the scientific community (ibid:316). Mass media has been of crucial importance in creating a platform for debate about climate change, but is reporting with a self-interest interest, which can create confusion. MUESA-members state that, even if some of them had come across the concept in media, it

was not until they started to study environmental science at the university they understood what it meant³⁴.

Comments like the one from Shiela, Fatuma and the small-plot farmer in the beginning of part 4 illustrates that Kenyans for sure feel the negative effects of climate related change, but as stated just later on that very same page few of them link their hazard to a global phenomenon. In Kenya climate change still seems to be a complicated word, used in the academy, among politicians and in the international donor community.

Early in part 1 climate change is described as “an abrupt change in the weather conditions” where “abrupt” means something that is experienced within one human generation. At the same page it is argued that we now are reaching an atmospheric level of green house gases unmatched for 800 000 years. A generations lifetime, not to mention a period of 800 000 years, are time-lines very hard to grasp for a single persons mind. Climate change comes in circles that are difficult for humans to actually experience (understand me right: humans are indeed experiencing hurricanes and tsunamis, but it is hard for individuals to put those events in relations to weather circles loping on hundreds of years). So in order to grasp and understand we interpret our life world and put together individual experiences of single events into a complex picture which can illustrate the discourse of climate change. The way we have decided to outline the concept of climate change and how we now are embedding it into policy documents is a social construction. Beck (1995) is for example expressing the dominance of social constructionism in the climate change debate by arguing that the environmental movement is not an ecological movement, but a social movement which utilises ‘nature’ as a parameter for certain questions” (quoted in Delanty, 1998:120), meaning that the problems, effects and also suggested solutions in the environmental debate are permeated with traditional politics and new social movements’ issues.

In this essay it has been possible to see that Discovery adds slightly different questions into their mobilisation than MUESA/S.I.C.O. This might be explained by the different ways in which the members interpret their life world. The understanding of the life world is, as been argued in part 2 enabled or constrained by the social and cultural frames that delimit interpretation and actions. Arguments have been given through the essay showing that the different frames that encapsulate Discovery respective MUESA/S.I.C.O can relate to socioeconomically and politically formed classes. In the university students, drive of

³⁴ Oral communication by e.g. Juma, Obunga, Gabriel, Matthew and Faith.

becoming an enlightened middleclass, they feel attracted to the abstract global discussion of climate change, while Discovery who is representing the “little people” aims to discuss matters that people experience directly in their daily life.

During the literature review and field study of this report, no evidence contradicting the statement that the concept of climate change is imported to Kenya from the international community were found. For example the taxi driver Peter, who has 99% of his customers in the UN-block, insured that everyone discusses climate change, while random people on the street in another part of city never heard of such discussions. Even the Green Belt Movement, which a majority of the members refer to as a great inspiration, states a bit sarcastically on their webpage, that they surely see forests’ importance in an adaptation strategy, but that they planted trees long before climate change reached the top of the political agenda (GBM).

As described in part 2 the transformation of a conception from one population to another is called “norm diffusion”, and in a case where the international community brings the norm to a receiving country the process is referred to as norm enforcement from above (Alldén, 2009:17). I believe Kenya is still in the process of embracing or rejecting the concept of climate change. International actors, e.g. UN and Sida, have adopted climate change as a top priority issue, and are now stressing its importance for the national elites to perform according to it (UNEP, Assiago, Tufvesson). It can be noticed, for example among university students (who are likely to be represented within the nation’s intellectual elite in a short future) that climate change is a subject of elite learning. Also official leaders, not least Professor Mathaai during her mandate in the parliament, has incorporated climate change in their political rhetoric, which, according to the theory of norm diffusion, eventually will lead to a state where the elite will have to act accordingly (Alldén, 2009:26). Anyhow, the concept of climate change can only be truly incorporated in a society (especially in a weak-trust state like Kenya) if the civil society acts to spread and root the norm (ibid). Interesting enough university students organized in groups like MUESA and S.I.C.O seems to work as grass root movement to root the concept as well. To educate university students about climate change seems crucial so as to make the image accepted both from below and above.

The last part is an end-note: Passive victims or active agents?

In the previous parts I have used resource mobilisation theory, the concepts of frame and norm diffusion to explore why young Kenyans become members of environmental organizations, how they perceive the issue of ecological systems, challenges and degradation; and how they are able to mobilize direct actions, particular in the climate change debate.

The members of Discovery, MUESA and S.I.C.O have identified deforestation and solid waste management as the most alarming environmental issues of Kenya. The youth are combining own experiences with scientific knowledge in order to rationalise and motivate their priority. A shared cultural frame involving environmental understanding, a dissatisfaction about the present situation and a drive for change; mobilising structures of informal and formal networks, such as neighbourhoods or the church; as well as political opportunities created by a relatively weak authorial control at the universities and the Mau Crisis have led to reasonable conditions for youth to mobilize in common actions. The clubs have context specific organisation models but similar tactics – tree planting, clean ups and awareness campaigns, which makes it reasonable to think that those activities are both accessible for the target group and sanctioned by the authority. The Kenyan official society's view on youth seems to be mainly as ‘trouble makers’, the clubs therefore have to negotiate their way through obstacles presented by the adult world. Their space of action is circumscribed and the decisions made in the clubs are influenced by external forces, but the members are active within the political system, carving out space for themselves and their visions.

The youth environmental clubs are mostly focusing on local challenges, but those issues are connected to global environmental problems. In the same way are the clubs actions on the local level of relevance for the global environmental movement. The Kenyan youth are interconnected with a global youth culture, but they are reinterpreting symbols and attributes in order to create their own context dependant hybrid culture – appropriating it can be argued that the youth environmental clubs are utilizing international norms and ideas so as to articulate their own identity within the Kenyan political system.

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Appendix

Table 1: methods used during the case study in numbers

| | MUESA | S.I.C.O | DISCOVERY | TOTALY |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| <u>Observations</u> | | | | |
| Activities | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| Meetings | 7 + 2 university lectures | 1 | 1 | 9 |
| <u>Interviews</u> | | | | |
| Members | 10 | 6 (+2 follow-ups by email) | 5 | 21 |
| non-members | 2 | 2 | Non applicable | 4 |
| ex-members | 3 | non-existing | 0 | 3 |
| Public officials e.g. UN-habitat | | | | 4 |
| <u>Group discussion</u> | | | | |
| Swot + Ranking | 2 + 1 | 1+1 | 1+1 | 4+3 |
| 4-corner exercise | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| | | | Problem tree | Problem tree |

Interview questions

Themes to consider for interviews with members

The youth club

Why are you a member of the Youth club? How were you recruited? Which parts of the clubs activities do you find most appealing? How did you become interested in the questions? How successful is the group in reaching its goal? How do you think your surrounding pictures the group? For how long do you think you will become a member of the club? Will you continue to engage yourself in similar questions after leaving the club?

Environmental issues

Which environmental issues do you find the most important? How is this issue affecting your life/ Kenyan youth? What is the course of this problem? Historic development of this issue/ when did it appear. How was it before? What could be done about it? What can you do about it?

Climate change

What is climate change? When did you first hear about the concept? How do you think climate change will effect at local/regional/national /global level? Have you noticed any changes yet? Who is responsible?

Themes to consider with the club as a whole

History

How and why where your group founded? What are the group’s major achievements during its existence? Have the direction of the group changed from the founding until this point? How and why? How are you structuring the work in the organisation?

Aim

What is the aim of your group? What kind of activities do you have? How do you decide what activities to do? How likely is it that you achieve the club goal? What kind of obstacles do you face trying to accomplish your goal? Who is your target group? What environmental issues are you not dealing with and why?

Members

How do you recruit members? Why do members join your group? Who is your typical member? Who does not want to be part of the group and why? Do you have any “enemies”? What are their main arguments and how do you face them? What is people’s general opinion about your club?

Network

How is your club cooperating with other organisations, institutions and clubs? Are local, regional or national connections most important to your work? Do you get economical or political support from anyone? What is your deal with this donor? What is the role of adults in relation to your club?

Focus group discussion – "4-corner exercise"

Three varieties of the same kind of statement are given by the facilitator. Each corner of the room represents the 'home' of a statement. The participants chose the statement they agree with the most by physically stand in the corner representing one's option. The fourth corner is an open-corner where the participants can give a different idea or a combination of the suggested once. The task is followed by a discussion.

- It is important to protect the environment:
 1. For future generations well-being. MUESA1) I, MUESA2) II, Discovery)II
 2. Due to its economic values and life supporting services (natural capital). MUESA1) II, MUESA2) III, Discovery) I.
 3. For its own sake. MUESA 1) 0 MUESA2) I, Discovery) 0.
 4. Open Corner. MUESA 1) III MUESA2) 0, Discovery) I.

- Deforestation is a problem because:
 1. The forest supports people with fuel and timber. MUESA 1) I MUESA2) I Discovery) III.
 2. Loss of biodiversity is eternal. MUESA 1) 0 MUESA2) I Discovery) 0.
 3. Lack of trees interferes with the hydrological circle. MUESA 1) II MUESA2) I Discovery) 0.
 4. Open Corner. MUESA 1) III, MUESA2) III, Discovery) I.

- I joined the club because:
 1. It is a good experience for future employment MUESA 1) I, Discovery) 0.
 2. By being organised I have the opportunity to create a change along with my believes. MUESA 1) III, MUESA2) I Discovery) III.
 3. It is fun. MUESA 1) 0 MUESA2) I Discovery) 0.
 4. Open Corner. MUESA 1) II, MUESA2) I Discovery) 0.

- The biggest environmental problem in Kenya is:
 1. Poverty MUESA 1) II, MUESA2) I, Discovery) 0.
 2. Ignorance/ Unawareness MUESA 1) 0, MUESA2) I, Discovery) II.
 3. Politics MUESA 1) I, MUESA2) I Discovery) I.
 4. Open Corner. MUESA 1) III, MUESA2) I Discovery) I.

SWOT Discovery Life Program

This analyze have been carried out by four members of Discovery’s initial group in April 2010.

Strength

1. Team work
2. Commitment / devotion
3. Workable strategies

Following points are unranked:

Prayers

Individual ideas and contribution

Cooperation with the community institutions

Strong partnership with other organizations, e.g. JPICFA

Contribution from partners and firms/companies i.e. Kartasi Brand

Weakness:

1. Sometimes personal commitment are weakening
2. Supply like computers, copy machines etc.
3. Financial problem so contribution to the group or dedication comes less.

Following points are unranked:

Slow response from different institutions.

Brilliant ideas but slow implementation

Manpower of members, less in the field

Lack of enough materials

Lack of administration and office

Opportunities:

1. Team capability
2. Team growth
3. Partnership with other groups or organizations

Following points are unranked:

Community cooperation

Members who are potential

Young groups in the community embracing what we have

Threat

1. Future personal plans or commitments
2. Financial drain
3. Frustration by partners such as backing off.

Following points are unranked:

Failing to meet community expectations in the future:

- Offering refreshments or sitting allowances
- To clean the place regularly
- The place to be cleaner then we found it

SWOT with MUESA # 1

Conducted by five present and former officials of MUESA, March 2010.

Strength

1. Most members are equipped with environmental knowledge
2. The association has impacted to the community through creation of awareness.
3. Environmental conservation.

Following unranked:

Good leadership

Strength in numbers

Weakness

1. Financial support. Muesa is unable to carrying out most of its activities due to financial constraint.
2. Lack of enough support by the administration.

Following unranked:

Time is limited for the students to balance their commitments.

Lack of proper access to external information.

Opportunity

1. A lot of environmental problems that exist creates an opportunity
2. Possibility to network with other organizations
3. Putting what one has been thought in class to practical measures.

Threats

1. Most members tend not to accept voluntary work.
2. Only one of the university staff members is ready to work with MUESA.

Following unranked:

Unreliable co-partners

We keep choosing student represents for Maseno who are not environmentally conscious.

Fourth years rarely attend the meetings because of heavy work load.

SWOT with MUESA # 2

Conducted by five female members and officials of MUESA, Marsh 2010.

Following exercise was not ranked.

Strength

Commitment by the few leaders and some of the members

Support from concerned student leaders

Ideas and mutual support from patrons, city council officers and local organizations

Opportunity

MUESA aids recognition in the job Dicksonet

MUESA gives us opportunity to apply what we have learnt from the class

MUESA gives an opportunity to meet other environmentalists and exchange ideas and environmental issues.

Weakness

Finance to fund the organization

Neglect by other environmental students

Inadequate connection with other organizations

Lack of sponsorship

Threats

The fear of facing disciplinary masseurs in a situation where students' ideas are conflicting with administration

Competition from other student organizations, like SIFE, PUP (peace unit programme), MUABS (Maseno University Association of Business Students) – those organizations produce activities which should be carried out by MUESA.

SWOT with S.I.C.O

Conducted by a cross-cut of members (officials, new members and school represents, evenly divided between men and women) in February 2010.

Strength

- 1) Dedicated officials.
- 2) Support from the student community
- 3) Support from the administration (the university)

Following unranked:

Community support

Readily available manpower during activities from the students

Easy access to governmental officials, i.e. district officer, councilors, chiefs.

Diversity background and education within the group.

We are young and energetic.

Weakness

- 1) Poor attendance by members at (ordinary) meetings
- 2) Lack/ inadequate funds
- 3) Lack of exposure to the outside world

Following unranked:

Preoccupation with students

Lack of links to related clubs

Lack of competition

Lack of strategy for future work and organization

Opportunities

- 1) Less developed society, so there is a lot to exploit
- 2) To an individual – the club improves innovativeness, creativity and enhances environmental conservation.
- 3) Recognition from the university management

Following unranked:

Links to local and international organizations and contacts

Diversity on activities

We can work with many different groups since we have a diverse agenda and variety of knowledge.

Getting external services due to lack of competition

Threats

- 1) Politics both in school and in the country
- 2) Overdependence on the community and other organizations good-will
- 3) Lack of funds

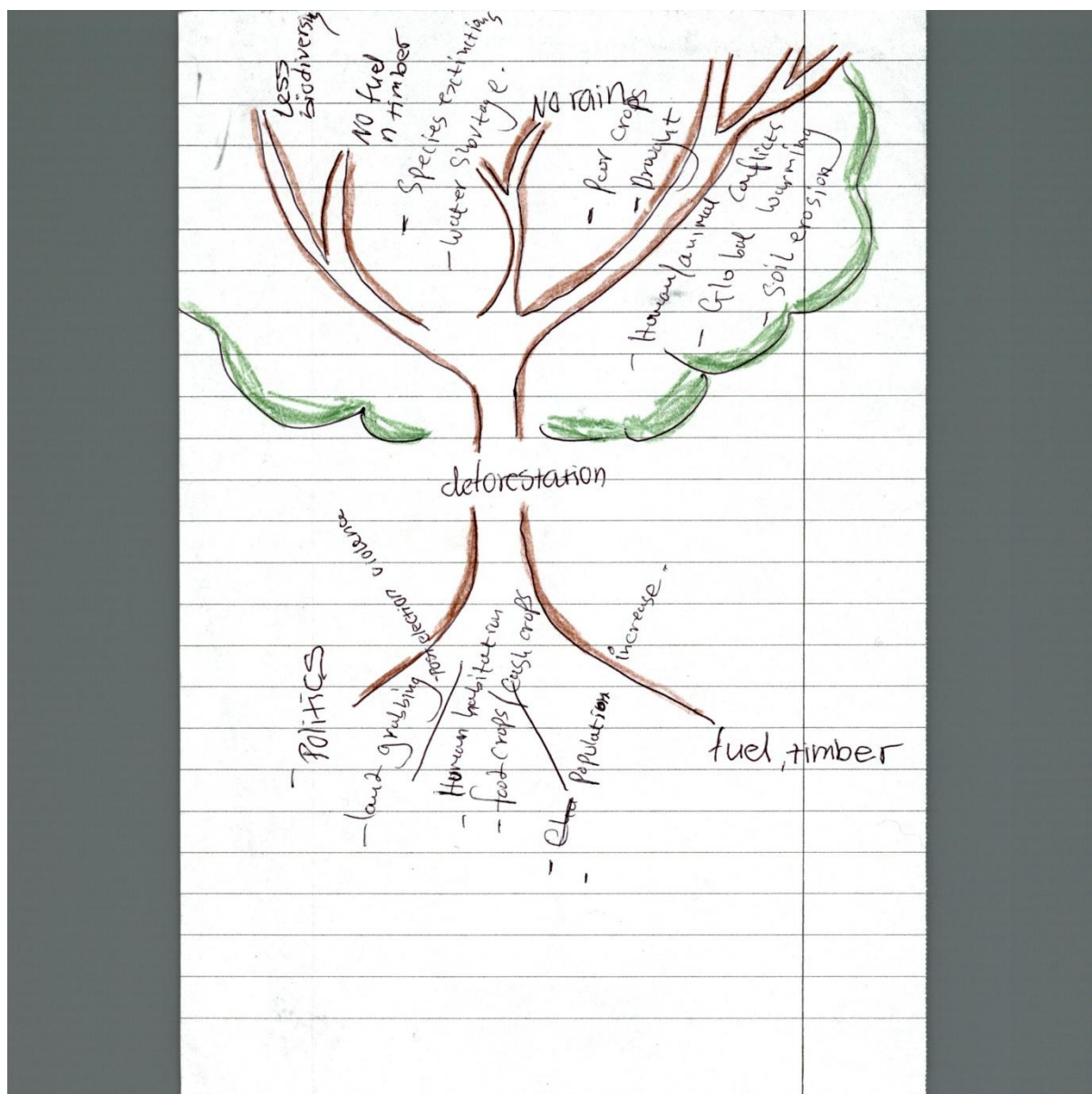
Following unranked:

Challenge in recruiting new leaders

Interference from other students and management

Challenge of bureaucracy

Problem Tree



Members of Discovery, Marsh 2010.