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Now It's Our Time To Eat! Stakeholder Perceptions of Influences on the Development of Leaders in Malawi

Kanton T. Reynolds

North Carolina A&T State University

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department: Leadership Studies

Major: Leadership Studies

Major Professor: Dr. Chi Anyansi-Archibong

Greensboro, North Carolina

2014

The Graduate School
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
This is to certify that the Doctoral Dissertation of

Kanton T. Reynolds

has met the dissertation requirements of
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

Greensboro, North Carolina
2014

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Biographical Sketch

Kanton T. Reynolds is a native of Columbia, South Carolina and received his Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering from North Carolina State University, where he was also initiated into Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated and later became a life member of the organization. After a brief stint as an Industrial Engineer at the Delco Chassis Division of the General Motors Corporation (GM), Mr. Reynolds matriculated to North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University where he obtained a Master of Science in Industrial Engineering in December 1997.

In September 2005, Mr. Reynolds completed his Master of Business Administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Kenan-Flagler Business School. Mr. Reynolds is employed by International Business Machines (IBM) where has worked in variety of roles with nearly 17 years of service. Currently, Mr. Reynolds holds the title of Senior Manager and is responsible for Performance Verification and Design Guidance within the Systems and Technology Group where he leads a group of twelve technical professionals. Mr. Reynolds is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and a certified Project Management Professional (PMP®) and Six Sigma Green Belt (CSSGB).

Dedication

To my mother Diana B. Reynolds, who has persevered through her medical issues, and while her stroke may have impacted her motor skills it has not affected her determination, resolve, or joyful spirit. Also, to my father, Robert G. Reynolds, who taught me the value of hard work and its ability to trump talent or skill every single time. My nephews, Reynolds and Carson who patiently waited until 'Uncle Kanton' was done with his studies so we could have fun! To my sister Jocelyn & my brother-in-law Mandrile, when I had nowhere else to go and no one else who believed in me, you were always there and supportive.

To my brothers of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, when I didn't have anyone else to turn to you lifted me up toward the light. So many people told me I could not be successful, that I wasn't smart enough to be an engineer (so I did it twice!) or I wasn't good enough to be a leader at the world's largest technology company or that an MBA from a top-25 business school was certainly out of my reach and of course, that I could not possibly ever earn a Ph.D. To all of you, this work is respectfully dedicated. Thank you so very much for the motivation!

If you live your life with the simply philosophy that you should always "enjoy enough success to keep you striving, enough failure to keep you humble, enough grace to keep you grateful and enough gratitude to pass on your blessings"; and you are fortunate enough to move through each of these phases slightly humbled but infinitely wiser, then you will have truly transcended the masses. God bless one and all!

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I am exceedingly grateful for all the assistance and support I received in this endeavor. For anyone I leave out, please know that your contribution was recognized and appreciated. From the beginning of my matriculation into this program, my fraternity brother Dr. Everett B. Ward welcomed me with open arms and ensured that I was encouraged and prepared. Dr. Toni P. Bradsher was always timely with sisterly guidance and support. Dr. Elizabeth Barber introduced me to Malawi and got me immersed into the culture while Dr. Chi Archibong stepped up and delivered a brilliant performance as my chair, orchestrating me through the final stages of the process despite several roadblocks. Dr. Owen Kalinga proved to be an invaluable addition to my committee after the untimely death of Dr. Thomas Smith. My carpool and cohort members Cindy Love and Paula Borden kept me focused along the way.

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Abstract

This study explored stakeholder perceptions of influences on the development of sustainable leaders in Malawi, in Sub-Saharan Africa. Narratives from three stakeholder groups—leaders of grassroots organizations including civil society groups, academics and emerging scholars, and professionals who represent the small but growing middle class—capture insights on leader development in the post-colonial period starting with the country's transition from single-party to multi-party rule in the early to mid-1990s. This multi-party movement galvanized disparate interests into political action for a democratic form of government, and set the backdrop for the current environment for leader development. Since then, the landscape for leadership in Malawi has been dynamic and fluid. Perceptions of leader attributes are contested as traditional customs, culture, and values increasingly collide with Western philosophies and an increasing Chinese influence. Informant narratives examined the role of internal and external influences on the leadership landscape, including educational institutions, social and community organizations, civil society and religious groups, transnational non-governmental organizations, and geopolitical groups, along with donor nations. In addition, the cult of personality and Big Man syndrome were addressed along with the relevance of ethno-linguistic systems and geographic factions in aligning the roles and responsibilities of emerging leaders with the goals and aspirations of their constituents. Finally, the effect of leadership principles and philosophies on economic conditions and development were evaluated in terms of empowering marginalized citizens and preparing their leaders to act globally while thinking locally. Findings contribute to the emerging body of scholarship on leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa by providing narratives from stakeholders who will play a key role in preparing the next generation of future leaders.

CHAPTER 1

Tracing Stakeholder Perceptions on Sustainable Leadership in Malawi

This collective case study explored stakeholder perceptions of influences on the development of sustainable leadership in Malawi. This research drew on narrative accounts from three stakeholder groups that provide leadership within the Malawian context in varying ways: leaders of grassroots organizations including civil society groups, academics and emerging scholars and professionals who represent the small but growing middle class. Its purpose was to capture insights on leader development in the post-colonial period starting with the country's transition from single-party to multi-party rule in the early to mid-1990s. This multi-party movement galvanized disparate interests into political action for a democratic form of government, and set the backdrop for the current environment for leader development. Since then, the landscape for leadership in Malawi has been dynamic and fluid: perceptions of leader attributes are contested as traditional customs, culture and values come into contact with Western philosophies, and an increasing Chinese influence.

1.1 A Contested Context

Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have faced multiple foundational issues in developing a functioning polity through the period of post-colonial independence. Malawi is located in East Central Africa, engulfed by Mozambique and sharing borders with Zambia and Tanzania. It is one of the smallest countries in Africa but also one of the most densely populated. Lake Malawi on the eastern border is the third largest lake in Africa (see Figure 1). Largely controlled by Malawi, it is a source of pride, heritage and commerce with neighboring countries.

Figure 1. Map of Malawi.

As with most African nations, subjugation and colonization eroded traditional institutions (Eggen, 2011). The lack of political stability has been particularly acute as regimes have come and fallen without leaving behind a sustainable foundation to facilitate an orderly transition from one leader to the next (Englund, 2002). While the traditional leadership provided by ethnic tribes and chiefs constitutes a powerful parallel form of government in Malawi, its character is complex. A multitude of different ethnic groups inhabit its landscape as a result of the boundaries inherited from colonialism that lack ethnic or cultural sensibilities. Unable to fully retreat to pre-colonial governance methodologies, the remaining Western management practices provide little support as these individualistic philosophies do not travel or integrate well (Bagshaw, 2009) into a collectivist society (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010) with communal tradition and values (Hippler, 1995).

Because there is a dearth of literature that addresses leadership development in emerging post-colonial, Sub-Saharan countries like Malawi (Lokkesmoe, 2011), research is scant that examines outside influences on the political process. Thus a major problem in attempting to understand the context for leadership development in Malawi is lack of relevant scholarship. Absent significant volumes of research conducted by Malawians themselves, most accounts are authored by Westerners who enter the Malawian context with their own agendas (Lokkesmoe, 2011). The accounts that are authored by Malawians usually include members of the educated elite whose studies at foreign institutions, associated credentials and resulting paradigms have been framed by external considerations and others whose perspectives also require some thoughtful unpacking. From the existing work authored by Westerners or Malawians, nothing can be taken as thoroughly accurate as nearly every available account can be framed as politically situated and thus open to contestation. This research begins in sand and is built upon shifts in that sand when the prevailing political winds change. That said, the goal is to take a bricolage of information from diversely located stakeholder viewpoints with the caveat that this construction should also be taken as shifting, questioned and questionable yet valuable because of the timing (near a tri-partite election cycle) and comparative nature of the analysis between co-cases and differently-situated informants.

In Malawi, the post-colonial coterie of leadership has largely come from those within the elite who have access to resources and benefactors that afford them educational opportunities abroad (Lwanda, 2006). These citizens often have come to hold influential positions in areas including medicine, economics and education in dispersed global locations before returning to their native country to assume positions of power and authority as political leaders. Under colonialism, tribal structures of family, order and *umunthu* or the traditional collective spirit and

goodwill toward all humanity were often coopted by European powers for their own benefit (Englund, 2002). The power and influence of traditional leadership was usurped or eroded in an effort to entrench Western ways of doing business, and exploit the indigenous population and resources (Englund, 2002).

As part of this subjugation model, some indigenous groups were favored over others, placing them in positions of authority that allowed them to allocate scarce resources for their personal benefit while consolidating power (P. Williams & Chrisman, 1994). There was little room to explore alternate conceptualizations of leadership outside of the entrenched hegemony. Malawi has increasingly become a recipient of assistance from non-governmental organizations, donor nations, transnational entities and other benefactor groups, resulting in exposure to notions of democracy as well as capitalistic globalization. Interest in democracy has laid the groundwork for greater numbers of community-based leaders to achieve a modicum of success in ascending to entry-level political leadership positions. However, these leaders generally fail to advance beyond this point unless they suborn themselves to the prevailing environment of political patronage, or are fortunate to receive support from a powerful benefactor (Chinsinga, 2005). Such a process renders invisible the extent of outside influences manipulating the political system (Lwanda, 2006). A system of leadership ascendance that cannot be unpacked for examination and critique stands as a roadblock that can limit the contributions other potential, future leaders might have made to political and economic sustainability in the country (Gaynor, 2010). This study examined stakeholder perceptions of internal and external influences on the development of leaders who have the ability to cross ethnic and regional divides, transcend cultural norms, and work to develop strategic plans for the future. Such research informs

leadership development efforts in Malawi, as well as in other similarly situated Sub-Saharan countries.

1.2 Theoretical Orientation

The study is grounded in the research traditions of critical theory (Giroux, 1982) and constructivism/interpretivism (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), informed by indigenous research methodology (Chilisa, 2012). Critical theory looks for structural and historical insights, and is judged by the criteria of deep historical situatedness, erosion of misapprehensions, and usefulness of the research project as a stimulus for action. Constructivism/interpretivism views knowledge as both individual and collective reconstructions of multiple truths that sometimes coalesce around consensus. It is judged using the criteria of trustworthiness, authenticity, and utility as a catalyst for action. The indigenous research process is guided by accountable responsibility, respectful representation, and reciprocal appropriation. Informants are understood as knowledge bearers who are named in the work, as a way of tracing the knowledge made back to its sources. Indigenous research is judged using the constructs of fairness, ontological and educative authenticity, voice, and self-reflexivity (Chilisa, 2012).

Critical International Relations Theory (CIRT) is used to focus on the social and political activities around which stakeholder perceptions are formed. CIRT incorporates the element of power as a requirement for generating understanding of global political issues and social structure (Hopf, 1998). It allows examination of patterns of institutional influence on leadership development, especially regarding potential impacts on cultural issues. CIRT guides the analysis of external influences that impact sustainable leadership practices. This theory illuminates how external influences including transnational non-governmental organizations, Western and

Eastern donor nations, and globalism impact the environment and conditions for leader development.

Critical Social Theory (CST) is used to focus on internal influences. It supports a questioning of prevailing schools of thought and institutional practices relating to justice and power issues (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996; Kincheloe, 2007). CST examines how the economy, racial/ethnic issues, classism, gender equity and other factors interact to construct a social system informed by cultural dynamics unique to the stakeholders' context (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996). CST allows a view of the research problem from the perspective of internal influences on sustainable leadership practices such as colonialism/post-colonialism, tribalism, regionalism, and socio-economic disparities. CST supports stakeholder efforts to advocate for social change, and assists in understanding and documenting the perceptions of each group. This theory provides a framework to engage in emancipatory discourse allowing a critique of the underlying ideology and communicating possible rectifying actions.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study explores stakeholder perceptions of influences on the development of leaders able to sustain leadership across leadership transitions in Malawi. Hopen (2010) defines viable leaders as those who assert authority over others by employing a variety of tools to legislate, execute and enforce regulations. The viable leader maintains the position of leadership through rules, procedures, laws or the extension of customs and social structures, by espousing or subscribing to the tenets of transformational leadership: s/he leads in order to build a better future. Leaders in post-colonial Malawi have tended to enter with potential for transformative practice, operate in transactional ways, and end their regimes with power hunger that moves toward despotism. When they leave office, they leave behind chaos, a power struggle between

vying interests that can result in upheaval in the provision for the most critical needs of the people, rather than more sustainable transitions of leadership. The inquiry draws on relationships with key educated elite and emerging scholars, professional and leaders of grassroots/indigenous organizations to document their perceptions. Once documented, these insights can be shared with audiences including other scholars, grassroots leaders, professionals, change agents, educators, donor nations, transnational non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and others who have a vested interest in leadership development in this region of the world. A criterion of all three theories grounding this work—critical theory, constructivism/interpretivism, and indigenous research methodology—is that the research product is immediately useful to individuals in the local context. Collective case study (Stake, 1995) is concerned with representation while providing balance and variety that allow the researcher to learn about the phenomenon under study.

Informants were initially interviewed and/or observed in their working environments in a manner that allowed them to display their connectivity to their respective group without disturbing or disrupting their normal course of activity, wherever possible. The goal was to give voice to the perspectives of three stakeholder groups (Creswell, 2009) by creating a platform to dialogue.

1.4 Research Focus

This research focused on the narratives of three stakeholder groups—scholars, leaders of grassroots organizations, and professionals—to examine the landscape for leader development in Malawi in 2013–14, just prior to a presidential election. This focus allows an examination of factors that influence how leaders are developed, in order to look for ways to build models for more sustainable leadership than currently exists in Malawi. Informant narratives portray leader

development in post-colonial Malawi at the transition from single-party to multi-party rule in the early to mid-1990s. The multi-party movement galvanized disparate interests into political action for a more democratic form of government which sets the backdrop for the current leadership environment. Chapters 2 through 4 review the literature on the evolution of leader development in Malawi. The central research question was: What are stakeholder perceptions of influences on the development of leaders in Malawi? The following secondary research questions further guided the study and were used with informants in interviews and conversations:

- What influence do educational groups, social institutions and community organizations (cultural associations, welfare clubs, traditional authority, etc.) have on leader development?
- What ideals, characteristics and behaviors do constituents look for when considering potential leaders in a developing country like Malawi? Have those things changed over your lifetime?
- How do traditional customs, values and cultural considerations influence leaders in a developing country like Malawi?
- What roles do NGOs, donor nations, and transnational groups play in the preparation and development of future leaders in Malawi?
- How do leaders in emerging countries like Malawi balance Eastern and Western leadership influences within their cultural context? Are any aspects of these influences useful to leaders in Malawi? If so how and why? If not then why?

- Do you believe that traditional leadership styles like the ‘cult of personality’ (African “Big Man” syndrome) influence contemporary leader development? What impact does this or other leadership styles in use in Malawi have on political sustainability?
- In a multi-ethnic country with regional allegiances like Malawi, what special issues must leaders or political parties consider when navigating the environment?
- What is the effect of civic & community leadership on political sustainability? What effect does this have on good governance practices? How has Malawi avoided the pitfalls of other nations in the region?
- What is the relationship between political leadership and economic development? Why is it important and what has been the effect on Malawi?

1.5 Definition of Terms

The following include language that can everyday meanings but will be utilized for specific purposes in this research effort.

- Academicians—individuals including emerging scholars who provide intellectual capital legitimized by academic credentials achieved at an institution of higher education (Kerr & Mapanje, 2002). These individuals are the first generation in their respective families to have obtained formal education.
- Achikulire—from Chichewa meaning “elder” or “older person,” used as a synonym for the system of political patronage that enables the distribution of resources to the informal economy as a method of influencing or solidifying political power (Lwanda, 2006).
- Axiology—analysis of values to better understand their meanings, characteristics, origins, purpose, and acceptance (Chilisa, 2012).

- Constructivist paradigm—relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), subjectivist epistemology (researcher and respondent co-create understandings) with a naturalistic set of methodological procedures (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).
- Chi—when used as a prefix in combination with an ethnic group describes the language of the people referred to. For example, Chewa speak Chichewa, Lomwe speak Chilomwe.
- Educated elite—individuals who provide intellectual capital legitimized by academic credentials achieved at an institution of higher education (Kerr & Mapanje, 2002). These privileged individuals are not the first generation in their respective families to have obtained formal education.
- Elected/non-elected political officials—individuals who hold political or management positions within the system of government and are subject to bureaucratic accountability (Chinsinga, 2005).
- Epistemology—Defines what the relationship is between the inquirer and the known phenomenon and describes what ways of knowing exist that inform and validate the sources of knowledge (Chilisa, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).
- Ethnic tribal leaders/traditional authority/Chiefs—individuals who hold positions of leadership based on culture, custom or lineage according to the beliefs of their respective ethnic group (Phiri, 1983).
- Foundational issues—the basic prerequisites of an orderly society including food security, fresh water availability, economic viability, political stability, educational opportunities, adequate logistical systems, and transportation networks and energy

continuity. The immediate lack of any combination of these elements can create a tenuous and chaotic environment (Bagshaw, 2009).

- Global normative synthesis—moving toward a blend of values and behaviors that combine various aspects of Western and Eastern culture. The West – respect for individual rights and choices, preoccupation with autonomy, legal and political egalitarianism, rejection of grand ideologies and utopianism, secularism. The East – respect for social obligations, social order, authoritarianism, normative behaviors (do's and don'ts), transcendental meanings found in belief systems & traditions, submission to a higher purpose and authority (Etizoni, 2004).
- Grassroots leaders—individuals who are active in civil society or community-based organizations independent from the machinations of the formal governmental structure. Influence both internal (indigenous norms and ideals) and external (outside, non-native) groups that seek to exert control over another group by interjecting their formal or informal power into the hierarchy either directly or through proxy individuals or organizations (Banik, 2010).
- Marginalized leaders—influence and power of a group of individuals that has been eroded as a result of internal or external forces working against a cohesive, collective and mutual beneficial policy for development (Nkomo, 2011).
- Methodology—how we know the world or gain knowledge of it, and what is the appropriate approach to systematic inquiry (Chilisa, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).
- Ontology—worldview that is informed by the philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality. Describes what it means to exist and how the researcher approaches the world with a given set of ideas or framework (Chilisa, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

- Paradigm—interpretive framework or basic set of beliefs that guide action and contain the sum of epistemological, ontological and methodological premises (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).
- Professionals—individuals who have obtained some level of economic independence through attainment of higher education credentials, and provide their livelihood in a primarily knowledge-based position.
- Stakeholders—any group or individual who can affect or are affected by a set of objectives prescribed to an interrelated system. Stakeholders are denoted for their relationships to powerful influencers, the legitimacy of their roles in the operation of the system, and the precipitative effects of their respective actions (R. Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997).
- Sustainable leadership—building capacity to ensure smooth transitions related to changes in leaders and the ability to manage unequal distributions of income and power (Barkin, 1998).
- Transactional Leadership—exchanges that occur between leaders and followers wherein effort is expended and resources consumed in return for something of value as perceived by the recipient (Northouse, 2010).
- Transformational Leadership—process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower. Leaders are attentive to the needs and motives of followers and try to help them reach their fullest potential. Includes assessing follower motives and treating them as ends in themselves, instead of as means to a specific, tactical end. Transformational leadership is grounded in acknowledgement of the importance that emotions, values,

ethics, standards, and long-term goals play in leader/follower relationships. It involves a level of influence that allows followers to transcend the previous level of expectation and move to a higher level of competency that increases the level of motivation and morality for both the constituents and the leaders (Northouse, 2010).

- Umunthu (or Ubuntu)—a worldview or state of being that implies goodwill toward all humanity and the interdependence of the citizens of a society to ensure that order and meaning are preserved for a specific cultural group (Englund, 2002).
- Viable leaders—persons who assert authority over others by employing a variety of tools to legislate, execute and enforce regulations. The subject maintains the position of leadership through rules, procedures, laws or the extension of customs and social structures by espousing or subscribing to the tenets of transformational leadership (Hopen, 2010).

1.6 Limitations of the Study

Study informants are delimited to include grassroots leaders, academicians and professionals in Malawi. While the Chewa constitute a major ethnic group in Malawi, a number of other ethnicities exist; there is no single Malawian ethnicity. However ethnic groups in Malawi have members throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, especially the dominant Chewa group which is also found in significant number in eastern Zambia and its capital, Lusaka. While the study's findings may not generalizable outside of Malawi in any positivist sense, they may be understood as transferable much more broadly (O'Leary, 2005).

For this research case study methods include three co-cases of a sample size of up to six informants each. Given the small sample size, the study's results should not be taken as a representative of the entire population (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). However the methods of

documentation used should render the findings dependable, according to the criteria of disciplined qualitative inquiry (O'Leary, 2005).

This research employs a convergence of multiple data voices, along with member checking and the use of ideographically rich, thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973), to establish authenticity. The data reported by informants in multiple participatory modes ranges across a variety of continuums (Creswell, 2009), and was indexed during the analysis process using ATLAS.ti Qualitative Analysis Software Version 7. Malawi is part of Anglophone East Africa along with Zambia and Zimbabwe, and shares a common colonial heritage of British rule. The findings, while drawn from Malawians, are transferable (Creswell, 2009; O'Leary, 2005) across a wide range of populations.

Another limitation of the study was the lack of indigenous ethnic leaders surveyed during the data collection period. The three co-cases have distal elements of this group included as multiple informants acknowledged being active members of their respective ethnic heritage groups. However, no traditional leaders were interviewed. Practical considerations such as the time and cost required, along with geographic distance and ground travel limitations and restrictions made it impossible for me to include an additional case of informants who were ethnic leaders. Having spent the summer in Zomba and Domasi in 2011, I recognize the importance that traditional leaders play in the daily lives of their constituents. Their sphere of influence allows them control over land, the adjudication of disputes, and a variety of other aspects of village life, outside the formal governance structure. However, given my location in the capital city of Lilongwe, at the time of my fieldwork and my responsibilities as an intern at the US Embassy that included some weekend work, it was impossible to build relationships with the requisite number of informants to construct a cohesive case. Another consequence of being

attached to the US Embassy was the inability to approach leading political leaders due to the proximity of the impending May 2014 election and the potential conflict of interest.

The indigenous staff members of transnational NGOs were originally conceptualized as a viable co-case but they were removed after I was unable to reach the request number of informants in keeping with the tenets of case study methodology according to Creswell (2011). As I only spent a week in the northern part of Malawi and a full day at Mzuzu University, I was unable to compile a comparative list of academics to participate in my study at this institution as I have for the University of Malawi/Chancellor College. While I was able to secure some contacts for informants, there simply was not enough time to fully engage with this potential group of scholars and academics to formulate a coherent case element.

Finally, as I examine the depth and breadth of participants in my study, I must also acknowledge my inherent bias as a Western-informed research with a positivist background and how it frames my thoughts and perceptions of potential informants and their responses, even with a background and understanding of indigenous research methodologies. Also, the issue of power distance between the researcher and the informants as described by Hofstede et al. (2010) could also be a contributing factor in how I apply the theoretical perspectives to my research. In either case, there are surely some implicit and tacit elements in the discussions that I missed because of my frame of reference. What is most important is that the accounts are truthful, accurate from the perspective of the informant and thoughtfully constructed and relayed. Judgment on their veracity or fidelity is withheld as inappropriate for the researcher to make.

1.7 Significance

Chronicling the perceptions of stakeholders on influences impacting the development of viable leaders for political sustainability holds potential to provide insight on issues relating to

the creation of a cadre of informed, prepared and compassionate leaders able to push the country forward in an era of increasing globalization. The study's findings can be used by various groups to bring light to emergent issues in leader development by providing alternate approaches of engagement and informing participants of potential barriers. The ultimate goal is to convey an account of stakeholder perceptions that can provide a call to action in terms of decreasing barriers to the development of viable leaders in Malawi and encouraging the creation of a sustainable in which leadership is allowed to flourish instead of stagnating as transitions in government occur. The political process should be resilient against forces that manipulate it for the benefit of one group over another, especially when marginalized constituents have no alternate means of redress or recourse.

1.8 Summary

Chapter 1 has introduced the research focus, context, theoretical orientation, terminology, significance and limitations of this study. Chapters 2 through 4 unpack diverse and contested accounts of events during and since Malawian independence in 1964 to provide a backdrop for understanding informant narratives. It is important to note that all accounts of Malawian history need to be understood as politically and socially situated documents; they cannot be taken for truth. The same applies to histories of locations all around the globe, but in Malawi in particular, the writing of history can at times be heavily implicated in efforts to suppress some voices and lionize others. There is neither time nor space within this document to unpack the political and social situation of each author cited, however author names in and of themselves serve as simple indications of who wrote what: British names, African names, and Scandinavian names populate this literature. Some of the African authors may be politicians as well as academics. Scandinavians represent the perspective of donors, as that region of the globe has provided large

amounts of aid to Malawi since 1994. The British represent the viewpoints of a former colonial power with continuing large tea and coffee plantation holdings in the country. The bricolage of literature compiled in this text is a particularly colorful one, in every sense of the word. That said, Chapter 2 examines the existing historical record for internal influences on political sustainability in Malawi; Chapter 3 looks at external influences, and Chapter 4 examines approaches for documenting accounts of leader development in Sub-Saharan Africa. The review of the literature in these three chapters demonstrates the gaps and inconsistencies that make an argument for my study. Chapter 5 details the methodology employed and Chapter 6 provides the context and prevailing environment for leadership. Chapters 7, 8 and 9 set out informant narratives from each stakeholder group. Chapter 10 details the analysis of narrative findings across co-cases and Chapter 11 discusses implications for practice and policy as well as suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

Internal Influences on Sustainable Leadership in Malawi

According to Williams and Childs (1997) the goal for former colonized countries is to replace imperialistic discourses with those that allow for a transition into modern international relations based on localized concepts and paradigms. The regime of Malawi's first post-colonial president, Kamuzu Banda, however, merely shifted the discussion by replacing the colonial with the patriarchal.

Malawi is generally divided into three regions: the North, the Central, and the South. The Chewa ethnic group is dominant in the Central and to a lesser degree the Southern region. These geographic areas represent the locations where the largest number of British had settled and set up plantations during colonialism. The Kamuzu Banda regime intentionally set out to downplay the multiplicity of ethnic differences among Malawian citizens in favor of an orthodoxy built upon the language and traditions of the Chewa, from which he claimed to ascend. He did so to align himself and his administration to glide on the numerical plurality of the Chewa for consensus building and his own purposes of ideological subjugation based on preconceived notions about the cultural proclivities of the group. This included moving the capital of the country from Zomba to Lilongwe, located in the largely Chewa, Central region of the country. Ironically, while Kamuzu Banda alleged that he was Chewa from the town of Kasungu (on the outskirts of the Central Region), throughout his 30 years as self-proclaimed "President for Life" he never once gave a speech in that language (Thompson, 2012). An enduring question is whether Kamuzu Banda eschewed speaking in Chewa and used British English instead because of its decorum and formality (which was largely indecipherable by the uneducated populace), or because he did not know the language.

During the shift from colonialism to Kamuzu Banda's regime, a number of indigenous scholars were ostracized because their ethnic or geographic background, and/or because their status as emerging scholars made them appear as potentially seditious. Most of these scholars, whose origins were in the Northern Region (considered by some to be the intellectual center of the country), were summarily dismissed. These included teachers, intellectuals, and civil servants who were perceived as enemies of the state (Englund, 2002). The balance of the educated populace posed a limited to non-existent threat to Kamuzu Banda's consolidation of power. According to Englund (2002), civil servants were able to accumulate wealth using their official offices as a resource for patronage or achikulire (distribution of resources to the informal economy as a method of influencing or solidifying political power). According to P. Williams and Chrisman (1994), civil servants existed "among the oppressors' most loyal allies and leveraged their place of prestige at the top of the social pyramid to inhibit significant changes" (p. 58) in status or opportunity for those less fortunate. The coterie of advisors with which Life President Banda surrounded himself implemented an economic system based on cronyism, which stifled growth of the economy and limited opportunities for those outside of his hierarchy to capitalize on their education or training to achieve a livelihood or financial independence that would pose a significant threat to the entrenched form of hegemony.

Critical Social Theory calls for questioning such institutional practices around power and justice while critiquing the systemic forms of domination and injustice that are propagated through the use of state resources to institutionalize specific ideologies. Formulating my inquiry around socio-economic disparities, regionalism, tribalism, and even classism, the study arrays varied stakeholder viewpoints on ways to achieve shifts in how leaders are prepared, nurtured,

and acculturated in Malawi (Alvesson & Willmot, 1996; Kinchelow & McLaren, 2003). Informant narratives counter the hegemony presented by these embedded forms of subordination.

2.1 Scholarly Activism

Students and scholars played a significant role in the Malawian campaign for multi-party democracy that arose during Kamuzu Banda's reign (Kerr & Mapanje, 2002). Their access to literature and ideas was limited but not fully impeded by policies enforced at state-controlled institutions. Young intellectuals provided a conduit to the less educated, especially in their home villages. At various times in 1992, as the call for multi-party elections was growing, the Kamuzu Banda government closed both the University of Malawi and Blantyre Polytechnic to shut down the flow of ideas they deemed seditious. Student leaders were pursued in an effort to disperse their organizations, suppress their momentum, and prevent further galvanizing of the pro-democracy movement. These attempts at oppression demonstrate the credible threat formed by scholarly activism as a counter-voice to that of a repressive government.

The Catholic Student Association at the University of Malawi unequivocally voiced their support of multi-party democracy through firm support of the Catholic bishops' 1992 Lenten Pastoral Letter decrying the government's lack of care for the country's citizens. According to M. Mitchell (2002), the Catholic Student Association described the bishops' Lenten Letter as "a mouthpiece for the voiceless and powerless and a clear indication of care for the poor and the oppressed. The people of Malawi need more than just political freedom; they also need social and economic emancipation" (p. 14). Students and faculty had grown weary of curtailed academic freedom and derailed research initiatives. They lamented the loss of colleagues, among them expatriate scholars arbitrarily deemed hostile to the government and deported, and indigenous scholars who were indefinitely detained. Kerr and Mapanje (2002) state that such

acts “seriously diminish[ed] Malawi’s intellectual capital and prevent[ed] the creation of indigenous meritocratic elite” (p. 82), which might have been a driving force for self-sustaining post-colonial development initiatives.

Enthusiasm from the students to topple the Kamuzu Banda regime was noteworthy. Local efforts in Zomba, Blantyre, and Lilongwe (respectively the colonial capital, business capital, and post-colonial capital of Malawi) were supplemented by the Student Christian Organization of Malawi Annual Conference, which propagated the message across the country. However the protest of scholars did not carry forward as a cohesive movement to promote more democratic leadership.

Accounts of the creation of the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) which originated as a pressure group and evolved into the voice of activism for church organizations in the public affairs space including political engagement, civic education and election processes neglect to mention a significant role for scholars. As PAC moved to a centrist position in the political spectrum, it also captured a role as an intervening factor to help assuage political tensions between various parties and groups including the United Democratic Front (UDF) and Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) both of which split from PAC shortly after the referendum to focus purely on political agendas. There is little mention of scholars in that effort as well.

While the Public Affairs Committee first worked with the President Kamuzu Banda’s Committee on Dialog to formulate processes for the referendum on multi-party elections, there is a failure to indicate any significant involvement of scholars in this initiative (Newell, 1995). There also exist no accounts of collective organizing among scholarly activists beyond the Malawi Writers Workshop, a source of resistance to the regime which, post-Kamuzu Banda, did little to encourage development of a sustainable, youthful political leadership cadre. In one of

the few accounts available that discusses the post-Kamuzu Banda period, Kerr and Mapanje (2002) indicate that the prevailing atmosphere was “devoid of opportunities to create intellectual linkages between local student issues and broader macroeconomic or social imperatives” (p. 85). The circumstances around why the scholarly leaders, who rose to the forefront of the pro-democracy movement, then abandoned the effort after multi-party rule was achieved still remains largely under-researched. While eventually during the Mutharika and Joyce Banda administrations, there was a resurgence of scholarly activism the discontinuity in the interim was an opportunity lost to promote the virtues of freedom and democracy through scholastic engagement.

The president, who followed Kamuzu Banda after the country’s first multi-party election in 1994, Bakili Muluzi, failed to incorporate significant numbers of indigenous scholars in his governing infrastructure. In a sharp contrast to Kamuzu Banda who earned a medical degree in Great Britain, Muluzi according to the account of several informants, was threatened by the presence of scholars who surpassed his intellectual capabilities. Kaspin (1995), recounts that critics of the Kamuzu Banda regime who were eventually released from prison with the change in leadership returned from exile and retrieved from infamy did form opposition parties after the referendum. However these individuals lacked a clear vision and their personal flaws such as having previously advocated for increased relations with communist China during the height of the Cold War era, as well as their regional and ethnic identifications became the focus, instead of their leadership abilities. This fracturing of organized dissent allowed President Muluzi to dominate the electorate. He relied on colleagues from the business community and his charismatic, personal appeal in marginalizing and or suppressing the divergent voices of constituents. The ability of labor to organize had been obstructed by government support of the

estate sector (formerly plantations, which after colonialism operated like a sharecropper system). Government kept wages low, refused to regulate working conditions, and outlawed trade unions. Support from business and the estate sector, along with comrades from his soccer club, allowed Muluzi to win the subsequent election and fill vital roles in his administration with his confidants (Forster, 2000) instead of competent administrators.

In constructing this oligopoly that concentrated power in the hands of business interests, Muluzi failed to heed the advice of civic leaders and religious groups. As a result Malawian academics had to restart the process of leveraging informal pressure groups to work toward an environment of accountability and transparency. This time around Malawian dissidents gained allies in the form of musicians and poets who used their platforms as artists to advocate for the poor against exploitation and oppression. The range of the artistic influence is contested; some argue that the metaphors and allegory used were beyond the comprehension of the uneducated (Forster, 2000), which made the arts less useful tools in reaching the masses, especially during the Kamuzu Banda regime when such activity was punishable by death. During the Muluzi administration, while artists and musicians could more widely express their beliefs and concerns through the use of media, which had expanded exponentially after the post-colonial period during which both the *Malawi Broadcasting Corporation* and the *Malawi News* had been controlled by Kamuzu Banda's ruling Malawi Congress Party and lacked significant infrastructure and access to unbiased information. Some artists established cohesive counter-narratives to the prevailing established sentiment. For example, Lucius Banda is a popular Malawian musician whose influence and talent forced discussions about a wide range of issues including corruption that destroys the economy and undermines justice; and efficacy of IMF and World Bank structural adjustment programs that remove subsidies on farm inputs and affect the

ability to provide food for sustenance and export (which eventually results in a lack of forex—foreign currency—for medicines and other durable goods). Lucius Banda exemplifies how leaders emerge from grassroots efforts that may not be associated with traditional forms of leadership.

2.2 The Catholic Bishops' 1992 Lenten Pastoral Letter

While both Presbyterian and Catholic churches are recognized as key protagonists in the struggle for democracy at the national level in Malawi (VonDoepp, 2002), the Catholic bishops' Lenten Pastoral Letter stands as the inflection point that precipitated the end of Kamuzu Banda's 30-year rule. The Catholic Church held unique positionality within the community wielding influence yet managing to remain detached from the political fray. During Pope John Paul's visit to the country in 1989, Catholic bishops were urged to tackle issues that were relevant to the health and welfare of their congregations, reinvigorating the resolve of clergy to participate in the social and political affairs that consumed their parishioners. Newell (1995) recounts how, when the Association of Theological Institutions of Southern and Central Africa Conference followed soon after, delegates were castigated to engage in leadership that was "prophetic, disinterested and yet courageous enough to speak up for justice freedom and dignity even if it has to share in the suffering of the people because of its ministry" (p. 247).

The search for social justice was sparked by Catholics because Presbyterian ministers, whose denomination forms the largest Christian group in Malawi, are by church covenant inextricably tied to their local congregations. Presbyterian elders sit on councils and exercise control over the church, including financial management. Their ecclesiastical location and charge limits the type and extent of political activity they can undertake at the grassroots level. Such activism within the Presbyterian Church community could generate confrontations that

disrupt clerical authority and the unity of the community. Englund (2002) explains how the Presbyterians' Catholic counterparts had no such restrictions as their authority is "derived from the church hierarchy and they are correspondingly insulated to a higher degree from potential challenges by parishioners without threatening their economic interests" (p. 125). For this same reason, Catholic bishops did not fear clashing with local government officials who might hold sway within the church ranks. Their independence played a fundamental role when they relayed through their Lenten Pastoral Letter that the time had come for the government to provide long overdue functions to its constituents. M. Mitchell (2002) notes that among the rights delineated in the document were the "God given right to speak and be recognized as well as the inclusion in the free and full participation in the public life of the nation" (p. 8). The Lenten Pastoral Letter called for freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom to peacefully assemble, and freedom to create and engage in political representation outside of the ruling Malawi Congress Party.

According to M. Mitchell (2002), the bishops and their allies sought the elimination of "any condition that limited human potential whether political, social, economic, psychological or physical" (p. 8). Newell (1995) recounts how the bishops and their allies aspired to alleviate a "growing gap between the rich and poor, improve a grossly overcrowded, understaffed and underfunded educational system and improve the inadequate health service" (p. 249). These demands were articulated in such a manner that attracted attention to their cause and engendered sympathetic support that galvanized a variety of forces on their behalf. The Lenten Letter constituted a seminal moment in the construction of a post-authoritarian leadership environment in Malawi. It is at this point that the bishops remind Kamuzu Banda's government that they have failed the people through their lack of leadership and collectively entreat them their responsibility to advocate for the best interests of the citizens who are suffering under their

policies and practices. The bishops accomplish this task by asserting a type of selfless servant leadership that portended the development of a movement from which emerged the underpinnings of democracy.

Educated constituents supported the movement and were allied with the diplomatic community whose respective missions informed Life President Banda that any *accidents*—staged car crashes which were the preferred way of disposing of contrarian individuals—involving the bishops would result in the prompt end to foreign aid. The bishops received support from other influential international bodies that crafted policy and galvanized public support by issuing statements on their behalf. Each of these transnational and religious organizations drew on the efforts of educated Malawian dissidents to strengthen their standing and further the cause. M. Mitchell (2002) describes how the initiative behind the bishops' letter and the leadership that it entailed was "home-grown and fiercely independent as based on their spiritual grounding and indoctrination in the church's precepts involving the duties and responsibilities of evangelizing believers" (p. 7). According to Forster (2002), the Catholic Church held a unique position to influence local indigenous groups outside of urban areas because of "its mission policy which involved deep penetration into the rural areas giving it the structure and platform to challenge the status quo" (p. 860). This presence provided the framework for credibility of their Lenten Pastoral Letter. The Presbyterian Church, with support from some other minor denominations, eventually joined the cause but not without controversy as the Central Region CCAP (Church of Central Africa – Presbyterian), which had close connections to "Life President" Banda refused to endorse the movement. The balance of church leadership issued their own letter entitled, "The Nation of Malawi in Crisis: The Church's Concern." Such influences kept the momentum against Kamuzu Banda's regime alive by uniting

the largest Christian groups in an overwhelmingly majority Christian country (80%) firmly against the government.

2.3 Urban Versus Rural Polities

Englund (2002) argues that the Malawian political-economic legacy of colonialism has been not only inherited, but exploited and perpetuated by African elite. Forster (1994) describes how during the fight to end colonialism, certain urban educated citizens were "somewhat ambivalent about certain aspects of indigenous Malawian culture. They regarded [village] headmen as stooges and disliked any reference to things which might give the impression that Africans were primitive" (p. 486). Their elitist attitude resulted in their downfall. Kamuzu Banda, able to exploit culture for political ends because he could straddle both elite and traditional publics (Lwanda, 2006), rallied traditional leaders around him upon assuming power, co-opting their indigenous values to justify his actions. Kamuzu Banda's approach stands as an example of how developing world elites are pitted against less fortunate citizens in a bid to retain the autonomy and sovereignty that come with financial wealth (Kelly, 2008). The elite may be unwilling to relinquish the preferential status that comes with the stratification of economic groups, and use their power to sideline rural and less affluent citizens.

The political elite in post-colonial Malawi are loathe to explain themselves to their constituents (Englund, 2002) and use patron-client political networks to further the unresolved acrimony between rural agrarians whom they exploit, and urban elites whom they court ardently. The result is an inequitable distribution of resources that forms a socio-economic problem compounded and masked under a cultural façade (Lwanda, 2006). The financial arbitrage that results allows the ruling establishment to distort prices and reallocate wealth and benefits to the urban areas at a cost to disenfranchised rural citizens (Bates, 2012). The agrarians, as opposed to

those in the urban areas have the most tentative connections to the power establishment and cannot always rely on their Chiefs, Group Village Heads or other Traditional Authorities to advocate on their behalf. During colonialism some number of indigenous leaders were co-opted by the British and failed to regain their full stature after the decline of colonial rule because their power had been so deeply diminished as to marginalize them as a cohesive leadership force (Forster, 1994).

There is much debate around Chiefs and their positionality as leaders in the post-colonial period under Kamuzu Banda and this area forms a particularly contentious line of scholarship. While Chiefs were given some role in the judicial affairs of the country, this occurred only to sideline trained lawyers and judges who didn't capitulate to Kamuzu Banda's decrees. Forster (1994) supports the assertion that Kamuzu Banda based his blueprint for Malawi on old African institutions including chieftainship. Forster further suggests that the power of village headmen (Chiefs) increased, along with their assertiveness and self-confidence, with Banda's ascension to power. These traditional rulers were more often than not leveraged as a hedge against the young and educated. As Kamuzu Banda slipped from power, he called on chiefs to intimidate opposition organizers by using traditional dancers to disturb their rallies, seizing voter registration forms and ballots from villagers, and reclaiming arable land from those who voted against him (Kaspin, 1995). As accounts of the past are deeply contested, my study explores stakeholder accounts of the current role of indigenous groups including ethnic officials in developing of leaders for the next generation of Malawians. The vestiges of the practice that allows presidents to sublimate Chiefs by stripping them of powers and consolidating them in the hands of the government remains today as the 1967 Chiefs Act conveys to the president supreme authority over all indigenous leadership, including the power to regulate pay as well as to bestow

promotions which increase wealth and influence for a largely undereducated group. This act has been further used to develop hierarchies among chiefs with no basis in the indigenous culture, thus serving purely political purposes.

Education or lack thereof also played a role in the division of citizen groups. Public primary education was not a universal goal in Malawi until 1994. The education gap systematically created a group of haves that alternately struggle to empower or subjugate the have-nots (Kerr & Mapanje, 2002). Without access to education, the process of initiating change fell to urban-based constituents, especially those with formal educational credentials. Rural citizens had limited involvement in the formative stages of the multi-party movement. They have been depicted as stalwarts in Kamuzu Banda's regime because that is where he drew much of his support (Newell, 1992). Newell (1992) recounts how through Banda's claimed status as an elder in the Church of Scotland—later repudiated by the church in March 1992—he "commanded a lot of moral authority especially in rural areas where age and authority continued to engender a considerable amount of deference" (p. 250).

Religion also played a role in transforming the country. As discussed earlier, the structural differences between the two major Christian denominations in the country (Presbyterian and Catholic) allowed them to exercise disparate degrees of influence over their respective parishioners. The centralized authority of the Catholic Church was more effective in stimulating participation among marginalized citizens than the Presbyterian model that failed to offer empowering experiences because of is decentralized and democratic structure (VonDoepp, 2002). The Catholic tradition of missionary programs fostered deep penetration into the country's interior, allowing 16,000 printed copies of the Lenten Pastoral Letter to be widely read, which revealed a less than flattering picture of the government. Rural citizens knew their

government had shortcomings, but now increasingly saw it as packed with excesses and unworthy of their trust.

The Malawi Broadcasting Corporation was monopolized by the ruling party during Kamuzu Banda's rule, and its propaganda and deception were common and widespread. Censorship was widely practiced and dissenting views were denied exposure. The media was used exclusively and extensively to spread misinformation and undermine opponents of the regime (Englund, 2002). This reason alone necessitated wide printing and delivery of the Lenten Letter. M. Mitchell (2002) points to how the conscious awakening and reflection on the power of media was reinforced by the improving capability of "ordinary Malawians to access unfiltered international radio news particularly the British Broadcasting Company World Service which led to un-tempered criticism of Banda and his monolithic Malawi Congress Party" (p. 6). The BBC inserted an international viewpoint into the multi-party democracy debate. Through photocopy journalism several new daily, weekly and monthly periodicals appeared on the streets to further dissipate pro-Banda propaganda (Newell, 1995). According to M. Mitchell (2002), the result was a quest for a more inclusive democracy that "reflected the true needs of the people, would be accountable to public opinion" and that heeded "the voices of the simple and uneducated for they may possess insights or gifts that could prove useful to all" (p. 8).

2.4 Language and Ethnic Groups

Pressure groups included language, district, and native associations, which allowed those of like mind to form loose networks and come together for the preservation of their culture or promotion of ideals. Leadership was provided from two core constituencies. Galvanized by their students, several university academics promoted and engaged in the work of these groups, which drew on cultural and ethno-linguistic ties. These organizations served as the precursors to

opposition political parties (Englund, 2002). Groups like the Phwezi Educational Foundation, helped initiate this process. The Phwezi group was funded by Scandinavian and American NGOs from a network of contacts their founders developed by way of their education and economic pursuits (Lwanda, 2006). The Muslims were funded by Middle Easterners who sympathized with the plight of their brothers. The sporadic nature of these pressure groups as lead by students and academicians limited their impact, but also made them less susceptible to government interference. Church organizations provided leadership positions and critical learning experiences—especially for Catholic women—that provided opportunities to develop skills that transferred to farm or tobacco clubs. Such opportunities eventually enhanced political efficacy and thus allowed these groups to contribute to the movement in small ways through grassroots participation (VonDoepp, 2002). Both linguistic/ethnic and church organizations survived; the former mainly by using the strength of personal ties with and through the support of international aid organizations. However their symbiotic relationship with international aid organizations made these groups susceptible to influence from and beholden to the stated imperatives of their foreign benefactors, which might be at odds with their own initial objectives.

As early as the 1980s Malawians who worked for international NGOs drew on their economic independence from the state to criticize the government. Political prisoners got in on the act by holding seminars to discuss the efforts to inject change into the government apparatus (Lwanda, 2006). Both groups appealed to general dissatisfaction with the status quo during the Kamuzu Banda era, particularly regarding constraints on trade and politicized economic and agriculture policies. Groups like the United Democratic Party (UDP, precursor to the United Democratic Front Party), which existed only as an underground organization, published a manifesto in the *Africa Political and Economic Monthly*, in Zimbabwe, and joined with other

opposition leaders at a meeting in Zambia to discuss prospects for a truly democratic Malawi prior to the action of the Catholic bishops. The UDP had significant encouragement from pro-democracy diplomats where donor support was contingent on plausible and experienced opposition leadership. Lwanda (2006) states however, that the UDP was reticent to accumulate any significant financial assistance until a marriage of convenience between "new blood politicians and intellectual activists with businessmen" (p. 533) was consummated. Thus existed the tenuous relationship between how internal groups were formed and structured, and how external groups influenced their composition.

Continued funding by external donors came with stipulations and an imperative to promote specific programs of the funder's interests. The growing presence of NGOs led to an even more prominent role for the educated elite as academic credentials became increasing important to the functioning of this system. Activism moved from pressure groups, to coordination of protests, to developing expertise in policy and analysis. While some of these groups transformed into endeavors that enabling the marginalized, the rest devolved into community-based and civil society organizations, concerned with filling the gap between authorities and local people where the structure and "language of rights and entitlements remained a relatively recent import" (Gaynor, 2010, p. 808).

The influence and aspirations of pressure groups, with help from transnational NGOs, resulted in a coalition among various religious organizations, lay groups, and business owners, spurred on by continuing protests of college support staff, textile workers and the like, to the establishment of a Political Action Committee in summer of 1992. This group's primary goal was to promote a national referendum on multi-party democracy. It also served as an umbrella organization for political pressure groups and opposition parties while eventually becoming the

Public Affairs Committee. My study draws on informant accounts regarding whether and how, after the referendum and transition to multi-party rule, this group of leaders integrated themselves into the political structure, and what efforts have been made to maintain a consortium of leaders as a balancing force to the shortcomings of government.

Educated citizens, while forming the vanguard of the multi-party movement, opened up only limited space to the lower tier of citizens, and they did so using different approaches. The Phwezi Foundation and the Alliance for Democracy Party (AFORD), supported by British and US interests in the Northern Region, educated both indigenous and repatriated Malawians to further their cause. While they had knowledge of local dynamics, their inexperience in organizing grassroots efforts and translating that into a sustainable domestic political infrastructure was evident. The UDP/Southern group relegated lower tier citizens and women to assisting at the ceremonial levels only (Lwanda, 2006). These citizens were eventually included in charcoal-vending, running minibuses, and selling staples in local markets, to assist in fundraising when needed, thus integrating them into the fabric of the group although only on the periphery. AFORD in the North decreased in scope and influence while UDP in the South continued to thrive while gaining relevance and importance.

Minor inroads were made into political sustainability at the lower levels of the democracy. However the capability to move from simple community-based action to engaging in the formal political process was not reliable. Northerners and southerners each felt some fear of being marginalized, sidelined or betrayed. Internal to their disparate groups, issues occurred which caused competition between businessmen and intellectuals within the UDP. Businessmen worked their networks recruiting supporters and raising money. New blood politicians jockeyed for position among each other and by default ceded overall leadership to the businessmen

(Lwanda, 2006). The lack of vision, and presence of selfish in-fighting by new blood politicians, created a clash of agendas resulting in another missed opportunity to develop viable leaders for political sustainability.

A minimal number of vibrant, active community-based organizations exist that have a national presence and the ability to affect significant change. This lack impedes the organization and communication necessary for a credible, cohesive counter-movement to popular politics (Rakner & Svasand, 2010). The organizations that do exist are limited by tensions and contradictions between the imported tenets and norms of Western forms of democracy, citizenship and participation, and political and cultural legacies (Gaynor, 2010). The educated constituency made some inroads in becoming an influential voice for political sustainability. Gaynor (2010) describes the community-based organizations' increased efforts to minimize government's "short-sighted, self-indulgent resistance to the emergence of a critical, socially responsible vanguard of academicians" (p. 802).

VonDoepp (2002) argues that whatever benefits derive from participation in civil society organizations are likely to be monopolized by those with previously existing social power. He relates that a change in power relations between indigenous groups maybe a necessary prerequisite to political empowerment, even for those organizations that conform to the ideal of internal democracy. Understanding shifts in influences on leadership development over time is paramount in comprehending how social power can be more evenly distributed in an environment where regional differences trump those ascribed to ethnicity. Regionalism has long been an issue in Malawian politics. It is most obvious in political party constituents' support, as well as how candidates are elected into office, and how government executes employment, hiring and deploying of staff. The Presbyterian Church with its decentralized leadership model has

been deemed complicit in perpetuating this regional mentality as its administrative boundaries replicate the political ones, including their policy on reviewing transfers of clergy intra-region (Englund, 2002). Regionalism continues and discriminatory behavior toward outsiders from other geographic areas in-country prevails. These practices flourish within specific socio-economic and political conditions nourished by the government for its own self-serving purposes (Englund, 2002). The result is an intersection of ethnicity, regionality and citizenship in which multiple identities are possible. My study draws on stakeholder accounts of how leaders cross those boundaries to assert and further develop their leadership.

CHAPTER 3

External Influences on Sustainable Leadership in Malawi

Rakner and Svasand (2010) contend that within Malawi's presidential system of government exists constant jockeying for position among "ambitious politicians to either win the presidency (major groups) or become a needed player in the coalition game" (p. 1257) in order to extract favors and concessions from ruling authorities. Tribalism typical of identity politics in Africa also plays a role. Kaspin (1995) argues that where ethnicity is the salient issue consolidating political constituencies, the inevitable result is strife and conflict, which then has a detrimental effect on promoting sustainable political leadership in a multi-ethnic context. The typology of tribal characteristics inherited from colonial administrators is said to have influenced Kamuzu Banda's effort to create national identity using Chewa language and political iconography (Newell, 1995). The hegemony of his regime made geographic identification a significant component of the Malawian political environment.

According to Forster (1994) this phenomenon is said to have been cultivated earlier through the work of Scottish missionaries in the North who had a high regard for able Africans and took care in creating a group of indigenous scholars that could not be rivaled by the basic education provided by Dutch Reformed Church missionaries in the South who held low regard for African potential. The contention between North and South is rife with opportunities for misinterpretation, but embeds the effect of populist appeal and Big Man politics in Chewa-dominated areas.

Kamuzu Banda's Chewa-based identity policy extended and exacerbated North-South rivalry. The environment grew toxic as the government-sponsored Malawi Youth Pioneers and MCP Youth League—both ruthless organizations of juvenile henchmen—"charged with the task

of safeguarding discipline and obedience while employing physical violence as necessary to suppress dissidence" (Englund, 2002, p. 13) set out to castigate Northerners, demoralize Southerners, and marginalize villagers as well as educated constituents. Kamuzu Banda's policies fueled friction between ethnic and geographic groups which has been continually perpetuated by various elements of the electorate. Critical international relations theory (CIRT) interrogates the workings of power within culturally-situated institutions, and aids in gauging the effects of economic power on social structure (Hopf, 1998), including the effects of economic power as prescribed by a neo-liberalistic approach to development (Kelly, 2008), or neo-colonial exploitation characterized by underdevelopment (Vengroff, 1975). Finally, educated constituents and the business community both play important roles via their connections to external entities.

3.1 Socio-Economic and Cultural Influences

Newell (1992) argues that Kamuzu Banda's efforts to establish social uniformity deadened indigenous cultural developments and failed to build the national identity that a more subtle policy might have achieved. According to Kaspin (1995), the Chewa-first policy promoted an environment in which "cultural inclusion exists only from the standpoint of the privileged group while the rest must negotiate ambiguous identities as citizens who are not fully national" (p. 609). The lack of a core of uniquely Malawian values and a cohesive identity framed at the intersection of ethnicity/region/nation makes leaders open to a variety of external influences that can alter their perceptions on issues affecting the sustainability of the political process.

According to VonDoepp (2005), the resulting neo-patriarchal context exhibits "high levels of donor dependence, weakly institutionalized political [infrastructure] and a relatively

high degree of fluidity in political allegiances" (p. 287). These conditions converge in a process that allows subjugation of critical development priorities for a suboptimal approach that is open to manipulation and interference. Instead of creating opportunities to grow the economy organically, political patronage to loyal cabinet ministers and members of parliament subsidizing their entry into Malawi's small commercial economy using money gleaned from donors and disseminated through state entities such as the Agricultural Development & Marketing Corporation (ADMARC; Newell, 1992). As a result, a host of external influences both directly and indirectly prevent normalization of political processes to achieve sustainability. Chinsinga (2008) argues that this is an especially egregious violation of the social contract between constituents and their representatives in which "parliament is regarded as privileged in that [they] embody the will of the people and carry all of their expectations that democracy will be truly responsive to their needs" (p. 11) is especially egregious considering the lack of local councilors resulting from the failure to adherence to the requirements of the Malawian constitution by the most recent presidential administration (Constitution of Malawi, 1994; Local Government Act, 2010).

The lack of a human-rights based development philosophy is also an external influence that exerts immeasurable impact on sustainable leadership. According to Banik (2010), by analyzing inequalities, discriminatory practice,s and de-facto imbalances in power relations, leaders can promote the stability of society as a whole and ensure the ability for the marginalized to participate in civic engagement. Ensuring that outside groups adhere to a human rights-based development philosophy might provide long-term viability for institutionalized leadership as opposed to acting in concert with a cadre of high-level politicians who are motivated by self-interest. Allowing the poor and other adversely affected groups' opportunities to participate in

defining their democracy can ameliorate issues around power and access. According to Englund (2002), the Japanese, as a primary governmental donor to Malawi through their International Cooperative Agency (JICA) fervently espoused "human-oriented development as the prevailing strategy for twenty-first century" (p. 32). Their development priorities are reflected in the Domasi School Complex where I worked as a study abroad student in 2011, which includes a primary school, secondary school, and college largely constructed with funding from their organization.

3.2 Donor Nations and Non-Governmental Organizations

Other external influences include donor nations that insert themselves into sovereign affairs, directly and indirectly. The Law Society of Malawi serves as an active source of advocacy, and is powered by British and US support. Such an influence can work for or against the needs of citizens. For example, in the quest to end autocratic rule, in late 1991 the European Community set strict political and human rights conditions for aid. Consequently, in mid-1992 Malawi's most important donors suspended new aid until progress was made on improving Kamuzu Banda's record on human rights (Newell, 1995). Without this external pressure, the former Life President would not have capitulated to a referendum on the status of single party rule.

VonDoepp (2005) recounts how in February 2002 after censure from the Swedish, British, and Danish governments proved insufficient, the Danes "removed their aid mission to Malawi and criticized the assault on judicial independence. In addition, global watchdog groups including the International Commission for Jurists and the International Bar Association sent investigative missions" (p. 290). These efforts in response to undue influences against the justice system were effective and ultimately successful. While effective in motivating Malawian

government to stop abusive practices against the judiciary, outside interventions are only marginally reliable because they require action from an engaged and interested third party to ensure compliance.

3.3 Expatriates and Indigenous Non-Governmental Organization Staff

Expatriates working in Malawi have called attention to issues of transparency and abuse and play instrumental roles in the reconciliation process by virtue of their perceived impartiality (Rakner & Svasand, 2010). However, it is primarily transnational NGOs that are active in this sphere of influence and specialize in this area of advocacy. While their work in this regard is usually deemed as being helpful, their activities can serve to align them with some portion of the political spectrum which can compromise their neutrality. Similar to the aforementioned umbrella organizations like the Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) and transnational groups such as the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) provide a platform for various political parties to interact free from the scrutiny of an overtly political agenda in the face of distrust between horizontal groups (Rakner & Svasand, 2010). The goal is to dispel the façade of independence projected by disparate groups or individuals and lessen the influence that keeps them beholden to the incumbent party.

Gaynor (2010) argues that because of their material disconnect from the realities in-country, most transnational NGOs characterized by "high levels of donor support targeted at facilitating the smooth and swift importation of Western liberal democratic institutions and norms to African contexts" (p. 801) may initially jumpstart citizen participation through involvement in their initiatives, yet generally fail to achieve material success due to their lack of practical application in the rural, uneducated areas. The activities of these NGOs may simply reinforce existing inequalities because somebody is always speaking for the marginalized rural

poor, without giving them access to mechanisms to advocate for themselves, thus devaluating indigenous leadership and stifling the growth of homegrown, creative solutions to the leadership crisis (Chisinga, 2005). Forster (1994) states that this phenomenon replicates the premise established by some missionaries first arriving to the area—that Africans "were simply empty jars to be filled with Western learning and that they would eventually recognize the inferiority of their indigenous beliefs, systems and ways of life" (p. 478). This thinking renders Africans as permanent slaves of a foreign culture which keeps them mentally colonized, lacking the capability to propose their own existence and shape their future within the reality of their circumstances (Munyenyembe, 2013).

An additional byproduct of NGO involvement is the ability of indigenous NGO staff members, who are compensated through donor funds to advocate for change on behalf of themselves as well as their employer. According to Gaynor (2010), these citizens are "informed, networked and keen to maintain their improved standard of living" (p. 805). Emboldened by their lack of connection to the entrenched clientelistic practices of the formal government, NGO staff members have a relatively risk-free platform from which to advocate for leadership changes that are action-based and include opportunities to achieve sustainability and continuity.

3.4 Agency Impact of Transnational NGOs

Banerjee (2011) contends that while NGOs play "a crucial role in mediating political conflicts and representing community interests; their power and legitimacy to represent marginalized groups must be scrutinized along with their motives and intentions" (p. 331). The emphasis should be on aid and assistance, not outcomes resulting from imposed Westernized ideals when these are not appropriate for the prevailing context (Bagshaw, 2009). Otherwise, constituents are less receptive to proposed changes and ill-prepared to manage shifts in

paradigms. The agency role of transnational NGOs can represent a threat to political sustainability of indigenous communities. Not all policies and procedures advocated by NGOs represent the best interests of their intended audiences (Banerjee, 2011). Sometimes NGOs cater to the agenda of the host government simply to strike a conciliatory chord that allows them to function and still provide some level of utility to intended recipients. For example, the NGO may want to build capacity for citizens to be self-sufficient in a particular area, but the donor nation wants to focus on infrastructure building that meets specified performance metrics (Rusca & Schwartz, 2012). NGOs increasingly emphasize outputs or the degree to which they are able to achieve specified results, over normative legitimacy, or the vision or mission of their organization. Every aspect of how they approach, engage, map needs, execute, and deliver services to constituents must be balanced with reconciling the upward accountability to the funding agency, and the downward accountability to beneficiaries and partners, which can present a moral/ethical paradox.

Transnational NGOs should advocate for community-generated responses to crises and provide infrastructure that assists in the free determination of an evolving political ecosystem that encompasses respect for individual rights while consolidating and distributing power in a transparent, democratic fashion (Banerjee, 2011). Robins, Cornwall, and VonLieres (2010) describe this way of working as *citizenship from below* in which the marginalized actively engage in political life by taking up issues and causes and advocating for access to tangible development results. As NGOs grow in importance and are increasingly utilized by donor nations and quasi-legislative bodies like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations Development Program, and World Bank to enact formative programs, their influence on the growth of weaker groups and those in remote areas, and on leader development, becomes

paramount. Rusca and Schwartz (2012) argue that NGOs need to focus on people-centered development with participation and empowerment as objectives. Success should be predicated on local legitimacy, good governance, and support for democratization, transparency, sustainability and shared learning.

CHAPTER 4

Approaches to Leadership Development

VonDoepp (2005) argues that the political processes of some Sub-Saharan African countries are dominated by "neo-patrimonialism [in which] political life revolves around a single individual who maintains power through patronage forces and personal ties" (p. 282). Bagshaw (2009) reveals that the environment in these countries prevents the development of lasting institutions consistent with and agreeable to Western-idealized democratic governments. VonDoepp (2005) further asserts that while strong ethnic affinities have created a basis for relatively durable political blocs, co-ethnics can fall into opposing political camps. As a result, ethnic leaders must deal with increasingly heterogeneous groups of followers hailing from different ethnicities and all three major regions of Malawi. Each group comes to the collective with their own ideals and perspectives. According to Nkomo (2011) it was hoped that African socialism steeped in traditional values and cultural practices would liberate the marginalized from the excesses of capitalism and materialism, resulting in tangible social and political change. Lwanda (2006) argues that instead, the roles of the Chiefs, the Traditional Authority, and their adherents have at times been reduced or derailed as Chiefs "have historically had little say in socio-economic matters and both groups were tamed and marginalized" (p. 530) by the holders of executive office.

Featuring in Malawi's ability to emerge from a post-colonial state is what Lwanda (2006) calls the "failure of young cadres of politicians to emerge in sustainable and effectively independent forms because of the role that money has played in Malawian politics" (p. 535). The arrival and ascendancy of legitimate political leadership can get derailed by the neo-patrimonial conveyance mechanism known as '*achikulire*' (Lwanda, 2006). This system allows

aligned parties to channel money and resources to individuals or causes without accountability. Achikulire involves financial influence exercised by a coterie of the privileged which impedes progress toward democracy because it cannot be matched or surpassed by financial support conveyed to non-affiliated NGO groups, leaving the multitudes dependent on patronage to survive (Rakner & Svasand, 2010). Lwanda (2006) points to social stratification that permits the wealthy to extract political concessions from the marginalized is evidenced by economic domination in which "20% of the population—the hybrid elite—consumes 47% of the resources" (p. 530).

4.1 Cultural Considerations

Achikulire has had a profound effect on leadership development in Malawi, especially for rural constituents isolated from the centers of power. Their inclusion in the process allows them some foray into the formal economy which constitutes a step-up in status. The resulting affluence, although minimal and marginal, surpasses the desire to be engaged in the political process and removes some stigma associated with confinement in a subsistence level barter economy. Socio-economic benefit is closely tied to political affiliation. The opportunity to participate exists only as a result of political support (Banik, 2010) attributable to the patronage of a benefactor. Such exercise of economic and political power operates in concert with the deployment of cultural power to engineer consent (Forster, 1994). According to Rusca and Schwartz (2012), that power is sealed with legitimacy derived from culture, values or patrimony that "includes societal acceptance of regimes and institutions that enable those groups to exercise power and authority effectively" (p. 683).

Traditional initiation ceremonies and dances like the *nyau* and *malipenga* (Forster, 1994; McCracken, 1998) were co-opted by the Kamuzu Banda government to influence citizens to

support Chewa political ideology. Co-optation is expected when leaders absorb Western culture yet attempt to demonstrate that they can still feel with the people (Forster, 1994). Kamuzu Banda's degradation of cultural ideals other than Chewa glorified his position and the authority of the state, and was allowed to occur despite the presence of the Chiefs and the Traditional Authority Council, who were used to "ensure passivity if not enthusiasm and loyalty" (Kaspin, 1995) from the village population. Rural development policies provided the means for extending patronage (achikulire) into the Chewa-dominated geographic areas. The goal was to:

> Target its most high status members, namely territorial chiefs and village headmen whom were the first and most frequent recipients of state aid. As such, development aid flowed along the same channels as the administrative hierarchy adding to the ruling party's structure and strengthening the regimes base of support among a strategic group of clients within the Chewa population securing them as an instrument through which the state could control the rest. All while giving the impression that the Chewa in general were recipients of governmental aid to the neglect of everyone else. (Kaspin, 1995, p. 607)

Such policies of implied regional privilege heightened ethnic discord. The Chiefs' association with the Kamuzu Banda regime damaged their long-term credibility and led to issues around governance and leadership capacity that can be relevant today in some instances. According to Lentner (2005),

> their use of ideology as a tool of political action include[d] the use of ideas, stories, explanations and words to guide both political action and to justify claims to domination. It is a structural conception that [can be] imbedded into state institutions that turn individuals into subjects. (p. 743)

4.2 Internal Institutions

Churches gained encouraged the integration of tribal practices into their religious rituals. Africanization of church liturgy ingratiated the clergy with the local village Chiefs and provided opportunities for indigenous religious personnel to develop under the tutelage of expatriates, bringing a trans-cultural religious experience to the community (Mroso, 1995; Munyenyembe, 2013). This trans-cultural religion was steeped in local context and formulated from a range of options available to the people on how they chose to worship and the configuration of their way of life. The goal was to create an authentic tradition of the church that is respectful of traditions and languages as well as of African philosophies. The resulting relationship between parishioners and their religious groups simultaneously erodes the direct influence of the Chiefs and Traditional Authority Council by abdicating some power to the churches, but also reserves some level of reverence for the indigenous governing structure. In a country where spiritual affiliation is as important as ethnic ties or regional origin (Eggen, 2011), how some leaders are perceived is greatly connected to their standing with the church and overarching religious beliefs. However, even the church is not without some form of external influence. While external influence slowly dissipates as indigenous religious figures establish themselves and their credibility, Mroso (1995) lamented:

> Our ministry cannot survive without the money of the Western church. The training of ministers is done with Western money. The upkeep of the ministers is met thorough Western money. The building and running of parishes is done mainly through Western money. The whole machinery presupposes a Western economy. (p. 203)

Rural groups that largely lack formal education rely on the influence of their leaders for direction and information on the political process. Their lack of political sophistication and civic

education gives them little basis to oppose the hierarchy and limits critical intellectual discourse on issues of importance. Gaynor (2010) argues that local political leadership rests on "support afforded through a combination of 'big man' rule and a complex network of clientelist relations where political expression is mediated by the tribal leaders upon whom the constituents' access to resources and means for daily survival rests" (p. 811). The needs of the people can get lost in such a power-wielding hierarchy. Described as the *democratization of disempowerment,* the repressive politics of the Kamuzu Banda regime has been replaced with a system that sidelines average citizens. Because the benefits of participation in the democratic process have been few and fleeting for marginalized groups, they have played minimal roles in the political discourse of the nation. In contrast, the politically influential citizenry work towards their own ends neglecting the needs of the proletariat. Such ethically indefensible practice is a result of the average citizen lacking a conduit to channel their concerns and the skills to remedy the deficiencies of their status.

As technology and globalism have expanded the ability of ordinary citizens to become knowledgeable about the internal political affairs of their nation, younger generations are embracing the challenges of moving beyond a subsistence existence. Gaynor (2010) argues that traditional loyalties and deference to authority—primary characteristics of indigenous Malawian society irrespective of ethnic identity—are weakening as this "evolved political astuteness" challenges both the legitimacy and intentions of traditional leadership (p. 814). This new vanguard is demanding greater accountability and responsiveness from the traditional authorities. According to Gaynor, the result is "a hybridized political complex sitting between citizenship and clientship whereby the collective interests of communities clashes with the individual interests of leaders seeking to enhance their personal status and prestige" (p. 815). This

transition is occurring despite the presence of well-entrenched neo-patrimonial, clientelistic, patronage systems which serve the interests of the few to the detriment of the many.

In addition to undermining the political process through the use of the patronage system, elected and appointed officials also manipulate it for their own benefit by refusing to delegate authority, which serves as a roadblock in the education and maturation of the next generation of leaders. This process preserves these officials' ability to convey favors and consolidate their power, but prevents the development of political stability by undermining valuable learning experiences upon which to base future leadership assignments for entry and mid-level officials. This impediment to the political process appears to be changing, however. Cammack (2011) has cited studies indicating that:

> Malawians are no longer voting simply along regional lines and are prepared to support candidates who appear to prioritize development. This has the potential of weakening the neo-patrimonial logic driving the structure and behavior of political parties. This may incentivize the formation of political parties based around programmes not personalities and of a National Assembly comprising MPs selected not because of patronage but because they deliver public goods. (p. 12)

The neo-patrimonial system diminishes the ability of indigenous leaders to demand changes on behalf of their constituents, as their influence is tainted by their culpability in the achikulire system. Gaynor (2010) argues that these leaders operate with a mindset rooted in the past with no plan for the future. The result is a dynamic political era in Malawi in which leadership space remains open, contested and under scrutiny while facing innumerable challenges. Forster (2000) unless Chiefs and Traditional Authority Councils become more astute politically and resist

patronage, they risk the permanent deconstruction of traditionalism and paternalism that makes them relevant.

Political leaders who fail to facilitate the ability of at risk citizens and other vulnerable groups to contribute to the democratic process reduce them to a means to an end. According to Price (2008), such failure denies them equality and equity and stands contrary to Kantian ethics which some argue may be a viable framework for leader development regardless of culture. The idea that traditional ethnic leaders, especially those in paternalistic cultures, are omniscient is waning. Younger citizens balk at this endowed leadership while older citizens chafe at cultural indoctrination that infuses Western values and human rights-based notions. According to Banik (2010), those who are especially culturally grounded argue that "maintaining traditional culture is of paramount importance even if this means overriding universal human rights" (p. 41). The path to the future is a contested one, through and through.

4.3 Summary of Approaches

Chapters 2 through 4 have explored three strands of scholarship central to the conduct of this study. They have illuminated the internal and external influences on political sustainability in Malawi, along with approaches to leadership development in Sub-Saharan Africa as these relate to cultural, economic and political institutions. The objective of my study is to document the perspectives of three groups of stakeholders on factors in the development of sustainable leadership for Malawi.

The scholarship reviewed in Chapters 2 through 4 suggests various influences on political leadership in Malawi. Internal influences include religious organizations (M. Mitchell, 2002), and how barriers to access—resources, education, and geographic location—contribute to the difficult transition for community-based change agents to engage in full-fledged political

leadership (Chinsinga, 2005). Umbrella organizations composed of educated constituencies combine the tactics and goals of pressure groups, and cultural societies and ethno-linguistic associations serve as instruments of change (Englund, 2002).

External influences include support from transnational NGOs which import Western ideals that may not make sense in indigenous communities (Bagshaw, 2009), especially in attempts to resolve issues of power, access and authority. According to Munyenyembe (2013), an outsider may have her/his own way of envisioning what is good for the people, but that vision may or may not coincide with the vision of the people, themselves. Malawi needs an indigenous, organic leadership capable of moving the country forward in an increasingly globalized society.

The introduction of alternate conceptions of leadership through interactions with expatriates and Eastern as well as Western donor nations (Robins, Cornwall, & VonLieres, 2010) allows for new ideals on civic leadership to be cultivated creating friction between traditional and institutionalized political structures. Some argue that a human rights-based development philosophy (Banik, 2010) helps equalize the playing field by promoting long-term stability through empowerment and accountability. The environment for leadership development in Malawi is characterized by several factors including the political patronage system of achikulire (Lwanda, 2006), and cultural preservation among ethnic groups which causes them to draw on tribalism or regionalism when contemplating future political leaders (Eggen, 2011).

Neo-colonialism and globalization (Nkomo, 2011) transform even the most isolated communities with technology and increased information flow that minimizes reliance on a singular Big Man for guidance (Gaynor, 2010). Lwanda (2006) and VonDoepp (2005) argue that the decline in power of traditional chiefs and their marginalization as a political force contributes to an inherently neo-patrimonial society that prolongs the cycle of inconsistent

leadership by investing in weak institutions within a volatile political hierarchy. Further complicating the picture is the lack of a strong ideological grounding that makes Malawian politics historically transitive and tenuous (Lwanda, 2006).

With those disparate conditions as a backdrop, umbrella groups like the Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) formed. Composed of a loosely-knit association of 27 Malawian NGOs, religious groups, academics, trade unions, and community groups, since 2000 they have attempted to focus the efforts of their members into a cohesive voice for the most marginalized members of the populace in order to challenge prevailing paradigms (Gaynor, 2010). Working more closely together, this collective of organizations hopes to develop stronger relationships with a broader range of prospective donors to increase funding and accelerate the opening up of the political arena (Malawi Economic Justice Network, 2014). One objective of my study was to draw on stakeholder narratives to determine their view of how effective such groups are in counteracting some of the societal and environmental conditions that can impede leadership development, and what preparations they have undertaken to help guide and develop future leaders. This study also explores the informant perspectives on the impact of the business community on generating leaders and influencing their development. My interest is in documenting stakeholder narratives on whether and how this alternate leadership influence has resulted in economic improvements and impacted the country's overall development.

CHAPTER 5

Qualitative Research Conducted from a Critical Theory Worldview

Chapters 2 through 4 reviewed existing scholarship to provide a backdrop for this inquiry into leadership development in Malawi. Chapter 5 sets out the research perspective and methods. Discussion around the data collection and analysis techniques, and trustworthiness of the research are provided.

5.1 Social Constructivist Paradigm

This study is situated within constructivist/interpretivist (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) ways of thinking and working. Constructivist/interpretivist understandings are "co-created by the researcher and the respondents" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 22). Multiple realities exist, as each informant crafts accounts situated within her/his social world. The findings from constructivist/interpretivist research rest on the credibility of the accounts, the dependability of the informants, the confirmability of the researcher's renderings of their observations, and the transferability of the generalized themes (O'Leary, 2005).

Social constructivism is said to encompass "subjective meanings that are negotiated socially and historically" (Creswell, 2009), and allows the researcher to "look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas" (Creswell, 2009). This perspective works well considering the varied groups of stakeholders who serve as informants in this study. Educated elite, emerging scholars, elected and nonelected officials, and grassroots/indigenous leaders all have varying perspectives on the influences related to the development of viable leaders for political sustainability.

5.2 Qualitative Research Conducted from a Critical Theory Worldview

Qualitative research allows investigators to search for the understandings of a particular group and explore how these understandings are applied to a particular issue or problem (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative and especially ethnographic inquiry is useful when a question lacks a readily applicable theory and benefits from the deployment of a series of iterative questions to navigate the issue at hand. Using inductive analysis techniques, qualitative investigators move from specific to general themes and back again recursively (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2009). A layering of different source of evidence (Ronai, 1995) and thick description (Geertz, 1973) provide rigor. My project deploys qualitative methods from a critical theory perspective.

Critical Theory provides a lens to interpret or illuminate social action while exploring the transformation of social institutions characterized by the historical ailments of domination and alienation, situated within the confines of race, class or gender (Creswell, 2009). The end goal involves understanding, transforming, or reconstituting emancipative discourses that provide revelation while serving as activist voices for advocacy, empowerment, and liberation. Critical Theory is shaped by a realist ontology that includes social, political, cultural, economic, and ethnic values which have become indefatigable over time (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Critical Social Theory (CST) and Critical International Relations Theory (CIRT) serve as foundations for this research study.

5.3 Critical Social Theory

Critical Social Theory is used to examine internal influences such as neo-colonialism, tribalism, regionalism, classism, socio-economic disparities and the positionality of the domestic business community. It incorporates elements of justice and power to question the conventional

wisdom of prevailing schools of thought and institutional practices. CST is concerned with "the critique of systemic forms of domination that are supported through institutionalized ideologies. The goals of Critical Social Theory are to advocate for radical social change free from these forms of domination by leveraging an emancipatory discourse" (Hansen, Berente, & Lyytinen, 2009, p. 39) with the hegemonic power structure.

5.4 Critical International Relations Theory

CIRT has several iterations but from a research perspective, the interest is in political economy and the intersectionality of the elite and working classes. This theory espouses the notion that elites form the political and moral leadership through a coalition of social forces bound by both coercion and consent. The construction of this hegemonic relationship confers power to a ruling class that is exercised less by propaganda and manipulation than by intellectual and moral capacity to win the consent of the people. It is a product of negotiation between the classes that is continually reevaluated within the prevailing cultural context and eventually becomes ingrained in the fabric of the social structure (Moolakkattu, 2009). CIRT is used to understand the effects of external influences such as the transition to a post-colonialism environment, transnational NGOs, the global normative synthesis, and the relevance of globalism and multinational corporations.

5.5 Collective Case Study Method

A collective case study strategy of inquiry (Stake, 1995) is used to document the perceptions of stakeholders regarding influences on the development of sustainable political leaders in Malawi. This method is appropriate in that it selects multiple groups concurrently while engaging them independently to learn about the phenomenon under study and then evaluating the respective effects while coordinating between the cases to address the disparity in

perspectives. This method aligns with the researcher's goal of examining the viewpoints of three distinct groups—grassroots leaders, academicians and professionals—to provide diverse feedback. For example, academics may leverage relevant literature or scholarly research to define and frame their perceptions, grassroots leaders may use oral history or observations, professionals may use analyses compiled by the governmental ministries or informal networks of peers that have access to or expertise on contemporary issues that align with this research inquiry. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) argue that cases "should be designed to produce as many categories and properties of categories as possible and to facilitate the emergence of relations among categories" (p. 33). They further recommend maximizing the differences between cases as a concerted effort to increase the depth of the properties as they relate to the core categories previously identified. While some researchers eschew the benefits of the case study methodology and deride it for lacking the rigor of quantitative methods, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2011) it has the advantage of focusing on contemporary applications while testing views in direct relation to the phenomenon under study as it unfolds in real-time. This is supported by Yin (1992) that outlines case study as "an empirical inquiry that: Investigates a contemporary phenomenon with-in its real life context when boundaries are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources are used" (p. 123). According to Yin (1992) the case study method is distinctive in its ability to provide useful and intermittent feedback while developing lessons generalizable to the major substantive themes in a field which makes in a natural complement to my research on the variety of influences on the development of leaders in Malawi.

5.6 Application of Indigenous Research Methodologies

Because I am studying an environment that is very different from my own upbringing, it is imperative that I approach this study grounded in an innate understanding for and appreciation of the prevailing circumstances of my target population of informants. According to Chilisa (2010), indigenous research methodologies purposely interrogates elements of "othering ideologies such as imperialism, colonialism and globalization to denote the struggle non-Western societies suffered that marginalized their ways of knowing and disenfranchised and dispossessed their languages cultures and philosophies" (p. 12). Indigenous research methodologies provide an integrative perspective to moderate cultural arrogance, scholarly imperialism and other forms of subjugation that casts as superior that which is Western in origin over that which is native.

5.7 Role of Researcher

As researcher, achieving a balance between Western-based paradigms of inquiry like social constructivism and critical theory and indigenous research methodologies is difficult. I endeavored to valorize the voices of my informants while not characterizing their responses in a deterministic way. This process was made easier by the level of familiarity I had obtained with the Malawian context. In summer 2011 I traveled to Malawi to conduct participatory action research and waded into research on leadership in that context. I spent a month in the Zomba region working daily in the Domasi-area schools as well as at Domasi College of Education conducting interviews and engaging in power sensitive conversations (Haraway, 1988) with leaders in varied fields including business, politics, education, and indigenous ethnic groups. Since that time I have remained in communication with a number of these informants while continuing to build relationships and learn some of the cultural nuances. However, as my background is in science and engineering, which makes me new to conducting social science

research, I am still learning to negotiate the intricacies and complexities that undertaking a project of this magnitude requires.

In summer 2013, I travelled back to Malawi to collect further and more focused data for this study. I accepted an internship with the United States Department of State and was stationed at the United States Embassy in Lilongwe, from which I was able to engage in interviews and conversations with new groups of informants. The additional access provided to me by my posting with the United States Government provided a wider variety of stakeholder informants from which to initiate my inquiry. Based on long-term interactions with my previous contacts in the Southern part of Malawi, I was able to gain some prescient perspectives about the potential roadblocks of collecting data within the informant pool. Their guidance allowed me to foreshadow possible pitfalls and narrow my research focus as well as more aptly discern potential reasons why some leaders get derailed from achieving sustainability. Such contacts and experiences ground my inquiry in substantive ways.

The challenge as outlined by Creswell (2012) is to avoid being led by preconceptions (whether from literature or previous experience) and to collect etic data more likely to provide an insiders' view of the phenomenon. According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), the best entry into an environment for research purposes is one in which a trusted and respected gatekeeper provides sponsorship for the activity and helps the researcher maintain an appearance that is impartial yet nonthreatening. My entry into Malawian cultural and political space was primarily facilitated by trusted gatekeepers with whom I had become acquainted during previous there. In addition, I supplemented those contacts with assistance from faculty researchers known to me from Western universities. My position as an intern at the United States Embassy provided me credibility with certain groups particularly the civil society leaders with whom I came into

contact as a function of my work in the political section, and some professionals such as the staff at the Malawi Human Rights Commission who had reason by virtue of their scope and job responsibilities to interact with United States Government officials on a variety of topics.

5.8 Reflexivity and the Case Study Strategy of Inquiry

As I demonstrate the utility of gatekeepers as a conduit to my informants, I must also evaluate my role in facilitating their narratives. As a part of this process, I must consider all aspects of my research methodology and how it could possibly influence my work. Noy (2008) cautions that sampling within a given community of practice or social network can pre-configure both the power relations between the researcher and informant as well as the pool of subsequent informants thought to be hospitable to the inquiry. The potential loss of social capital as a result of not conforming to the prevailing narrative as articulated by the referring participant is a lingering factor that could serve to intimidate or overwhelm some informants. Additionally, because of my diplomatic affiliation with a large Western donor nation, the perspectives of my informants could be compromised by the perceived power distance between us. Power distance describes a context-specific view of the social distance appropriate between leaders and followers that differs across cultures (Hofstede et al., 2011). While striving to be on equal footing with an outside entity, some informants may inadvertently neglect important parts of their accounts so as not to adversely impact my perceptions.

The time and space of my interviews and observations were undoubtedly influenced by various parties and their proxies positioning their ideal candidates for the upcoming tri-partite elections. However that can also be construed as an opportunity to extract richer and more reflective insight from the informants as they may be more willing and eager to share details or

minutiae that would ordinarily not be reflected in a discussion around leadership paradigms within Malawi.

Finally, just as my own analysis is socially situated, so are the individual perspectives of informants informed by their personal experiences. For example, at least three of my informants were jailed by the regime of the late President Bingu wa Mutharika for speaking out and sharing their thoughts and viewpoints. Their narratives, as well as how they negotiate boundaries related to power and leadership are surely influenced by such experiences. My goal in conducting this study and structuring it with three co-cases was to reveal the convergence and divergence of dimensions of leadership. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), "the key issue is not to capture the informants' voice . . . but to elucidate the experience that is implicated by the subjects in the context of their activities" (p. 309).

5.9 Informants

Participants for this collective case study were defined by three major categories:

1. Academicians
2. Professionals
3. Grassroots leaders

This purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002) of participants defines the limits of this *bounded system* by setting the key attributes and co-cases that are easy to get to and hospitable to the inquiry (Stake, 1995). Mapping the perceptions of these stakeholders in terms of various influences on political sustainability in Malawi yielded rich and diverse data. The composition of the group included the intellectual elite/educated, the self-educated/not formally educated and the foreign-educated. This diversity serves to provide a measure of balance and weight to the inquiry.

At the conclusion of my field work I had collected narratives from over 50 informants. I started with an initial group of informants graciously provided to me by Dr. Patricia Kelly from the Center for the Study of International Education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University from her 20 years of collaboration on education initiatives in Malawi. I subsequently provided additional contacts by the staff at the United States Embassy in Lilongwe, Malawi as well as Dr. Joey Power (Ryerson University), Dr. Elizabeth Barber (North Carolina A&T State University) and Dr. Lisa Gilman (University of Oregon). From there I leveraged community nomination (Foster, 1990) and snowball sampling (Chilisa, 2011) to secure access to the remaining informants that participated in my study and addressing gaps to meet the requisite number of informants for each co-case.

5.10 Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected in a variety of ways at locations mutually convenient to my informants. While observations are a primary method of evaluation in a case study, my research relies on the narratives of informants situated within the context.

5.10.1 Sampling procedures. A number of sampling procedures were used to construct the cross-section of informants for each co-case. While there are some schools of thought that would discourage the use of anything outside of positivist frameworks to generate samples there are compelling reasons to use the techniques I have identified as vital to this study. Foster (1990) describes community nomination as being specifically designed to capture emic data. According to Kottak (2006) emic data captures "how people think, how they perceive and categorize the world, their rules for behavior, what has meaning for them, and how they imagine and explain things" (p. 47) in terms of the researched phenomenon. The use of snowball sampling is justified by Noy (2008) which suggests that "when viewed critically, [snowball

sampling] can generate a unique type of social knowledge which is emergent, political and interactional" (p. 327). This method also provides access to difficult to reach or marginalized populations of potential informants in emerging countries like Malawi where communication networks, congregational places for exchange of ideas and information as well as transportation systems limit opportunities to engage and interact with potential informants. My use of these methods to interrogate the environment around the development of leaders in Malawi is appropriate.

5.10.2 Interviews and power sensitive conversations. Using diffuse study parameters (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews and power sensitive conversations (Haraway, 1988). I developed an interview guide constructed based on the prevailing elements espoused by Creswell (2009) which provided key topics and prompts to be used in the discussion with each informant (Appendix A). This guide was not all-inclusive because of the inductive nature of qualitative research. Early interviews generate new focal topics and emerging issues become apparent; theoretical sampling was used to explore these new leads (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) as they arose. Progressive focusing was employed to isolate and identify salient questions for use with the participants (Parlett & Hamilton, 1976; Stake, 1981). Interviews are conducted face to face with exceptions only when necessary due to time constraints or conditions that could compromise safety of either the informant or the researcher. Interviews are audio or video recorded whenever possible and the records retained in compliance with North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies and protocol. As much as possible, I logged responses to the questions and prompts used during each interview—both scripted and iterative—and composed deeply descriptive field notes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) immediately upon return from the field, in order to

capture each event in thorough detail. The goal was to elaborate on any perceptions, ideas or thoughts that occurred during the interview process (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). As needed and possible I convened small focus groups (Morgan, 1996) in order to elucidate additional information and context from the informants.

5.10.3 Field observations and document/artifact analysis. Field observations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Emerson et al., 1995; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2009; Patton, 2002) allowed me to collect data, especially during informants' performance of their duties, to capture the practical applications of their perceptions. Document and artifact analysis (Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) was conducted using materials available from such varied sources as political parties, pressure groups, transnational organizations, non-governmental organizations and donor nations as well as scholarly works created by the informants themselves.

5.11 Data Analysis Procedures

Creswell (2009) prescribes a linear approach to evaluating data while Hammersley and Atkinson (2009) alternately suggest that it should be an interactive, iterative process. While leveraging elements of both approaches, I created transcripts of interviews from the audio/video recordings and compared them to written interview responses logged by me during the face-to-face interviews and field notes from each event. All written materials were indexed and compared for emergent themes using ATLAS.ti Qualitative Analysis Software Version 7. Theoretical sampling was used after the data was collected and during the analysis, to assist in "rounding out the disparate characteristics of an emergent conceptual category while helping to discover variation and differences between categories" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 363).

5.11.1 Culturally contextual conversation analysis. Culturally contextual conversation analysis (Moerman, 1988) draws on conversational events to point out larger features of the

social world by evaluating what was said or meant or deriving meaning from what was not said. This technique allows the researcher to understand how events in society are constructed by extracting individual viewpoints and activities from the discussion. This data is then used to anticipate potential points of interaction and comprehend the narrator's understanding of the ongoing operation of the social order.

5.12 Trustworthiness of the Study

Following Gibbs's (2007) procedures for ensuring the trustworthiness of qualitative research, several steps were taken to ensure the integrity of the research process. First, as described above, transcripts of the audio/video taped interviews, conversations and focus groups were layered with written notes taken by the researcher during each session, and deep field notes drafted immediately upon return, to capture patterns. An index of salient themes was constructed for every piece of written data including transcripts, field notes, and documents (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2009). Summaries of indexed data were provided to the participants where possible and practical for member-checking (Creswell, 2009) to ensure as much as possible that these reflected their intended meanings (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Self-reflective researcher field notes completed after each experience were compared to transcripts and recordings to provide additional context and layered evidence for the inquiry (Flick, 1992).

These recursive methods provided convergent sources of data that add to the integrity of the findings because the results are co-constructed through the integration of a variety of threads. Because I was undertaking a collective case study analysis with multiple co-cases, the results should be transferable within the scope of the inquiry to form a cohesive account of stakeholders' perceptions of influences on the development of leaders in Malawi (O'Leary, 2005; Yin, 2003).

5.13 Organization of the Research Report

Chapters 1 through 5 provided background on the research context and methods used. The chapters that follow discuss the basis for leadership and the framework for analyzing the data (Chapter 6) the emergent themes extracted from the data (Chapters 7, 8, and 9), a cross-case analysis of the data (Chapter 10), and Chapter 11 shares implications of the findings for further practice, policy and research.

CHAPTER 6

Findings and Results

During the summer of 2013 (approximately nine weeks) I worked as intern in the Political and Economic Sections of the United States Embassy in Lilongwe, Malawi. During the course of my in-country assignment, I was able to visit other large cities including Blantyre & Mzuzu as well as Chancellor College/University of Malawi in Zomba. This opportunity allowed me to observe first-hand how leadership is perceived by Western organizations in the country. I also had access to scholars and leaders interested in or directly involved with grassroots, academic and professional ranks within the country. My expectation was that grassroots leaders would see themselves as indispensable to the process of leader development almost as an extension of the traditional hierarchy but with more gender-appropriate roles and a global perspective. Professionals in my estimation would be more pragmatic and espouse the need for an environment that was reliable, capable and predictable within the constructs of an emerging nation which valued democratic principles and needed to achieve a greater balance in the economy by improving non-agricultural sector employment and growth. Finally, I posited that academics would take a synergistic approach by calling on leaders to adapt modern principles and techniques in their governance structure while respecting the heritage of indigenous leadership. Critical International Relations Theory and Critical Social Theory informed my analysis of the disparate threads of cultural/political and justice/power/social change respectively. In Chapters 7, 8, and 9, I use these two theories to examine narratives from the three co-case groups while allowing space for emerging themes to prevail outside of my pre-conceptions.

6.1 Basis for Leadership

According to my informant Dr. Kings Phiri, noted Historian and Professor Emeritus at the University of Malawi and Mzuzu University, there exist three distinct periods in the political development of Malawi:

1. Struggle for independence
2. Rise against single-party rule
3. Advent of multi-party democracy

Dr. Phiri argues that each of these periods is significant as an elemental facet in the evolutionary nature of leadership development in Malawian society. For example, the independence struggle was highlighted by a nascent leadership that

> *. . . must be well educated in Western terms, yet courageous and brave enough to challenge colonial administration and British imperialism. Understanding this ideology and political philosophy which is a conduit to understanding Western patterns of thought and political development meant arguing from a point of strength on the inadequacy and exploitation of the system while enabling external contacts in the form of linkages with other nationalist leaders elsewhere in Africa in a united moral and ideological struggle.*

This period of strife culminated with the ascendency of Kamuzu Banda to the Presidency as the first post-colonial leader of Malawi. His three decades in power in many ways sits as the cornerstone of some of the more important leadership principles in practice today in Malawi. Billy Mayaya, program manager for the Central Church of Africa Presbyterian – Nkhoma Synod argues that Kamuzu Banda's four pillars of Loyalty, Obedience, Unity, and Disciple still resonate with the population more than two decades after his final administration yielded power to a multi-party democratic system. Barclay (2011), a journalist for *Think Africa Press* wrote

that Kamuzu Banda's establishment of Kamuzu Academy, in the finest tradition of British boarding school education, endeavored "*to provide the most intelligent and capable Malawians with the classical education thought necessary to create future leaders in industry, business and politics.*" Banda endeavored to build an elite institution that would embody the noblest ideals of leadership in Malawi while reflecting the composition of its constituents as a microcosm of the society.

While the current iteration of the academy is populated primarily with students who come from privileged families, the headmaster has slowly been able to rebuild the infrastructure which deteriorated after Banda's ouster and subsequent evaporation of financial support. The results of his efforts have allowed the academy to return to the practice of admitting two of the most talented students from each district to the institution without regard to their socioeconomic status (Kamuzu Academy, 2014). The influx of high achieving yet less affluent students serves as a mechanism to avoid allowing the elite whom Barclay (2011), describe as being "entrenched and dynastic" (p. 112) from furthering their monopoly in stewardship of the country. A precarious balance exists between the moneyed and privileged who want to retain the benefits that are conveyed with their status and a new group of potential leaders who are academically prepared, intellectually engaged and ready to craft their own place in Malawi as future leaders. This phenomenon is especially acute in the context of a third-world country like Malawi in which large economic differences exist between the proletariat and the upper class.

Multi-party democracy resulted from the construction of pressure groups and other civil society organizations defined by and launched around the overarching theme of ending Kamuzu Banda's autocratic tenure. While these groups orchestrated a successful campaign against a virtual dictatorship, according to Dr. Blessings Chinsinga, Professor of Political Science at the

University of Malawi, "*they were equally ill-prepared for the transition to democracy. This created a power vacuum.*"

Exacerbating this condition, at the time of transition to a multi-party state, the institutional constructs normally associated with democracy were simultaneously in a state of transformation, themselves. Dr. Chinsinga argues that devoid of these "cornerstones of democratic governance . . . the prevailing [ecosystem] served to aggravate the gloomy conditions that already existed including:

- Extremely low levels of economic and social development
- Very weak foundations for a market economy
- Very low levels of education even by African standards,
- A high degree of social inequality
- A barely existent civic tradition
- Inefficient government administration
- Very weak rule of law tradition. (Chinsinga, 2008, p. 8)

Bakili Muluzi, the first Malawian president after Kamuzu Banda's ouster, emerged from this politically chaotic environment displacing fellow activist Chakufwa Chihana as the standard-bearer for the newly born democracy. President Muluzi as was as noted Malawian historian, Dr. Kings Phiri,

> *was a shrewd businessman . . . an affable, affectionate leader who succeeded in liberating the people from Banda while creating space for an openly democratic society including respecting the freedoms of religion, speech and association while ending one-party rule.*

That alone provided him the bandwidth and mandate to reform the country in the manner he saw fit while according to Dr. Blessings Chinsinga, simultaneously ". . . *causing civil society organizations to drift from . . . their naturally antagonistic relationship with the state . . .* [by eschewing] *a platform of human-rights and democracy to focus on service delivery.*" This stance that sacrificed a focus on human rights and democracy for service delivery is one from which civil society has yet to fully regain its footing. Unfortunately, President Muluzi's regime eventually turned to a policy of consolidating power around both regional (South) and ethnic (Yao) identity—his own socio-cultural location within Malawin society—as a means of maintaining control over the allocation of resources within the nation. As a result, constituents have continued to rely on region and ethnicity when selecting leaders.

Finally, according to Dr. Kings Phiri, as Muluzi was unceremoniously denied his bid to revise the constitution to allow for an open-term or third-term by the Malawian electorate, he advocated for advocated for an environment in which citizens looked beyond political freedoms to leaders who could "*help improve lives and impart economic improvements and technological enhancements.*" Muluzi demonstrated an increased efficiency with the limited resources available to improve the status and timeliness of development. This demonstration of economic acumen was not a benevolent act on Muluzi's part as much as it was an orchestration of the prevailing circumstances to promote the candidacy of his hand-picked successor for the next Presidential election, Bingu wa Mutharika. Muluzi touted Mutharika's credentials as a critical thinker, and geopolitical leader by virtue of his work at the World Bank and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), as well as the United Nations Development Fund for Africa as conduits for economic transformation of Malawi. No matter that Mutharika's roles were largely managerial or ceremonial than technocratic, they ushered in a new era within the

political continuum of appealing to the electorate based on aligning oneself with formal institutions that bestow a heightened measure of credibility to bolster leadership credentials. These external attributions along with the usurping of traditional titles and mantles continue to proliferate within Malawian society and are even more readily apparent as the May 2014 presidential election sits on the horizon.

6.2 Intersection of Fieldwork and Theoretical Application

These concepts as outlined above along with feedback from my co-cases of informants will be examined by leveraging the transformative nature of indigenous research paradigms to support my two undergirding theories. This construct assumes knowledge systems of the colonized—in this case African and specifically the tribal ethnicities that comprise Malawi society, have been marginalized through the triumvirate of colonization, imperialism and globalism. According to this paradigm, an emancipatory dialogue that transcends ethnicity, region, class and socio-economic status is required to balance indigenous methodologies and the colonizing influence of the Western-academy. This emancipator dialogue requires

> an ontology that is in [fluid] based on [constantly evolving concepts around] power and privilege, an epistemology that empowers and transforms the lives of people and an axiology that values social justice, human rights and respecting cultural norms, while employing methodologies that empower people to transform their society. (Chilisa, 2010, p. 36)

I draw on the constructivist position of Critical International Relations Theory (CIRT) for its discursive power to interrogate the ideas, consciousness, culture and ideology [which] are linked to the exercise of political and economic power (Hopf, 1988), as a prominent element in my analysis. The premise is that potential future leaders in Malawi derive their ideals from an

indigenous environment that is influenced by British-style institutions and Western methods of leadership which permeate the environment and impact how these leaders approach their craft. Understanding how this post-colonial framework infuses into the prevailing leadership environment is imperative. CIRT focuses the discussion of leadership in Malawi on how power is challenged long-term by indigenous institutions. The narratives of grassroots leaders, academics and professionals were evaluated using ATLAS.ti Qualitative Analysis Software Version 7 to establish prevailing themes based on relational paradigms provided by Critical International Relations Theory for cultural & political elements and Critical Social Theory for justice, power, and social change elements.

6.3 Delineation of Theoretical Scope

As discussed in Chapter 1, Critical International Relations Theory focuses on the social and political activities around which stakeholder perceptions are formed. CIRT incorporates the element of power as a requirement for generating understanding of global political issues and social structure (Hopf, 1998). CIRT allows examination of patterns in institutional influence on leadership development, especially regarding impacts on cultural issues. I use this theory is to illuminate how external influences including transnational non-governmental organizations, Western and Eastern donor nations, and globalism impact the environment and conditions for leader development in Malawi. In addition, CIRT informs my analysis of some elements of political and economic practices as well as the ideals, values and customs that are derived from external sources and replicated in a post-colonial context.

Critical Social Theory, which focuses primarily on internal influences, supports a questioning of prevailing schools of thought and institutional practices relating to justice and power (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996; Kincheloe, 2007). CST also examines how

political/economic and racial/ethnic issues inform leadership practices. It allows an examination of how regionalism and ethno-linguistic preferences help construct a social system that under develops its constituents. CST supports stakeholder efforts to advocate for social change, through the engagement of community organizations, social institutions and educational groups. This theory provides a framework to engage in emancipatory discourse allowing a critique of the underlying ideology as well as identifying and defining possible rectifying actions.

CHAPTER 7

Grassroots Leadership

For this co-case I drew on the purposeful sample (Patton, 2002) of interviews I collected during summer of 2013 used theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to select narratives from those informants who fit the profile of holding a leadership position in a civil-society organization as recognized by the Malawi National Institute for Civic Education, the umbrella group for such endeavors in Malawi. Accounts from the following informants in Table 1 undergird this part of the study:

Table 1

Grassroots Leaders

Name	Position	Organization
Chris Chisoni	National Secretary	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
Robert Phiri	Executive Director	Public Affairs Committee
Billy Mayaya	Programme Manager - Church & Society	Central Church of Africa Presbyterian - Nkhoma Synod
Kondwani Kaunda	Activist	Malawi Economic Justice Network
Gray Kalindekafe	Executive Director	National Institute for Civic Education
Moses Mkandawire	Director- Church and Society	Central Church of Africa Presbyterian – Livingstonia Synod

ATLAS.ti Qualitative Analysis Software Version 7 was used to correlate the themes from the narratives of informants and as I expected, grassroots leaders viewed community organizations, social institutions and educational groups as central to the development of future

leaders. As the community is their functional sphere of influence; this is a natural occurrence. However, these institutions were also in some ways viewed by my informants as possible roadblocks to good governance. Chris Chisoni, National Secretary of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace argued that community based as well as civil society organizations should refocus themselves on "*identifying the needs and design responses and interventions that are necessary to bring out desirable change in their communities*." He stated his view that this change can only occur when the citizens demand a participatory discourse that is rooted in an inherent understanding of development processes which leads to the issue of education.

7.1 Education

Grassroots leaders were especially critical of the educational system in Malawi. At times the educational system has been used as a political tool as when former President Kamuzu Banda forced all teachers from the Northern Region to leave the Central and South to return to their home districts so as to maintain some level of control and cultural homogeneity over future constituents. Chris Chisoni contends that education needs to be a transformative process that sublimates the influences of tribe and region and allows individuals to move beyond their family situations. He further laments that education is undervalued by some and that it should not be viewed as simply a conduit to a job but rather as a form of "*social emancipation that helps people to reflect on their own existence as well as the realities required to move forward.*"

Moses Mkandawire, Director of Church and Society for the Central Church of Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) – Livingstonia Synod takes Chris Chisoni's point a step further as he contends that leadership development needs to be infused throughout the educational curriculum from Primary through Secondary school. He argues that leadership characteristics that are instilled at a young age then allowed to percolate through experiences gained during the

maturation process make for more robust and competent leaders that are not only able to "*help their communities, but help the country and subsequently the continent*" (Chris Chisoni, personal communication, July 2013).

However, Moses Mkandawire suggests that education needs to move beyond literacy and coursework so that young leaders are "*able to understand and analyze issues then advise. This requires the capacity to articulate, communicate and listen while being accountable, open and following fundamentals principles of governance*." Kondwani Kaunda, activist with the Malawi Economic Justice Network, emphasized that "*education must inform in the way that decisions are made . . . using empirical evidence to formulate a policy, channel efforts and energies, setting goals and crafting ideas for maximum potential*." For a developing nation like Malawi, empirical evidence is an imperative for decision-making regarding the use of scare resources the country has available for the maximum efficiency and benefit to the citizenry. Kondwani Kaunda argues that the ability to synergize structural efforts for the common good requires a background that has at its core some formal educational component. These elements include communication skills, analytical skills, and critical thinking skills, some of which lack development in academic settings in an emerging country in which public education was not available until 1994.

7.2 Social and Community Institutions

Social institutions provide cohesiveness in an emerging country. Hippler (1995) argues that in the communal societies of rural Africa, it is more useful to speak not of laws but of rules of conduct, which "encompass values, norms, customs, and taboos. They encapsulate the society's total experience—ontological, religious, epistemological, moral and ideological. They are not rules of convenience, but the articulation of the order of things" (p. 89). Social and

community organizations are the backbone of a society that epitomizes these elements. Chris Chisoni supports Hippler's proposition by reflecting that "*tribes, faith groups and traditional leadership help define national identity. These characteristics play a role in the socialization process because they are a source of values which help define leadership*." Religion is a central factor in the social fabric of Malawi. Moses Mkandawire notes that "*almost 90% of the people are religious and as a result, expect their leaders to [uphold] those sentiments . . . such as thou shall not cheat.*"

7.3 Leader Characteristics

From the perspective of Chris Chisoni, Malawi to date has had a litany of leaders who have been

> *recycled* [through the ranks] *and are not innovative. They fail to address the challenges the country faces or improve people's lives. The initiatives they bring are often times done for immediate results. There is no long-term planning so you don't communicate effectively and there is no* [preparation] *for what the country might need in the next five years. This reactionary leadership has been* [embedded in the culture]. *Now we are saying, no, we need leaders that can comprehend challenges, grapple with issues, address them in the immediate, short-term and long-term perspectives.*

My grassroots informants pointed to the following characteristics as desirable for leaders in Malawi. Malawi needs leaders that are comfortable enough in their style and substance to give people the opportunity to be critical about their leadership and insightful about what they plan to bring to the table. The presidents Malawi has had have run the gamut. Kamuzu Banda was a virtual dictator but he initiated development projects and understood how to navigate Western systems of governance. Bakili Muluzi eased the social constraints and fed the emotional needs

of his constituents but economically wrecked the country. During Muluzi's two terms in office, inflation moved from single digits to almost 37%, according to Moses Mkandawire. In contrast, late Bingu wa Mutharika set Malawi on a road to recover economically during his first term and won the backing of donors and transnational NGOs but curtailed social freedoms and academic pursuits in his second. As of this writing in early 2014, President Joyce Banda has achieved incremental process in both economic and social issues but unlike her predecessor, her strength is not in the technocratic management of government. She has struggled to gain traction as a political leader. Her attention has been derailed by her campaign for re-election and by news coverage of the "Cashgate" scandal (Nyasa Times, 2014, March 11) which occurred under her watch. My informant narratives attest to certain redeemable qualities of accounts each of these presidents, yet relate that none have been capable of delivering sustainable, enduring change that can move the country forward systematically. The overwhelming preference among grassroots leaders was for someone who would bring development to the country in a tangible way. There is a natural synergy to this position in that many grassroots leaders work in the rural areas where Malawian citizens desire opportunities to expand beyond agriculture and subsistence farming to improve their position in society. Table 2 provides additional insight into the descriptors used by grassroots leaders in examining the desired characteristics of leaders in Malawi.

Table 2

Grassroots Leaders: Summary of Perceived Salient Characteristics for Potential Leaders

Communication skills	Problem-solving/Decision-Making	Critical-thinking	Accountability	Transparency
Confidence	Trust	Rapport	Negotiation skills	Integrity

7.4 Cultural Values and Customs

Customs values and culture play a significant role in the lives of most Malawians, determining everything from choice of spouse and place of living to wedding ceremonies, funeral proceedings and initiation rites. A collectivist nation as described in Hoftstede et al.'s "*Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*," Malawian society is structured upon familial and ethnic ties. According to Chris Chisoni:

> *The challenge is that once [individuals] become socialized they are always cognizant that the family must benefit. This leads to the practice of tribalism and other divisive practices where preferences go to certain groups even if the positions require some technocratic expertise. Because transcending that familial foundation is taboo, the importance of national issues is sublimated. This practice is reflected in the geographic segmentation of the various political parties where "this party belongs to us and if this leader [from our group] goes into power we are going to share those powers." If there are new facilities to be built, they are going to be in our territory where our party is strong. Other people are seen from a competitive perspective and not in a collaborating perspective.*

Malawian collectivism is grounded in a Bantu cultural practice known as *umunthu* or unbuntu. Loosely translated, it means "I am because we are/I exist because of you" and implies connection among all things past, present and future, living and non-living. Collectivism in general undergirds community life in environments where individuals working along would have narrow margins for success. Also, a collectivist worldview minimizes the opportunities for the influence of 'othered' individuals (whether of ethnic or regional differentiation) who might aspire to bring new ideas and agendas to the forefront. Collectivism can result in cartels vying for power as

organizations coalesce around their ethnic, regional or religious identities as a way of maintaining continuity or uniformity among their respective groups.

Kondwani Kaunda posits that:

> *In Malawi, our culture is rooted in tradition. We don't question elders because it is impolite . . . a chief is not answerable to his subjects. You don't question a chief. There is no space to ask critical questions because our culture does not allow us to. Our political leaders hide behind* [this] *tradition and use it as propaganda.*

Supplanting this traditional perspective is the current evolution of young people. Demographically, the largest constituent group in the country is under age 15 representing 46% of Malawi's population (National Statistical Office, 2010). Youth have greater access to technology and information than previous generations could dream of. Urban youth especially, have the benefit of both social networks and closer proximity to share information that empowers them. As a consequence, they are stepping out and asking questions and subverting the traditional power and roles reserved for elders by demanding changes to the status quo.

This change in the traditional beliefs regarding respect for elders is more readily observed in the urban areas. More and more, urban youth are rebelling against traditional leadership that is largely autocratic, unavailable and non-personable. Youth are also defying the monolithic gender roles and providing a space for women like Seodi White who is a Malawian lawyer and human rights activist to credibly take on the establishment and refuse to conform or curtail their beliefs to fit the aforementioned stereotypes. Kondwani Kaunda argues that

> *In democratic traditions, you must question certain things. Leaders must account to their electorate and answer to the people. The lack of these elements in our culture has*

contributed to aspects of our political dimension where the electorate may vote but doesn't hold political leaders responsible for implementation.

The net effect is that Malawians who are generally regarded as culturally reserved according to Kaunda do not want to impose or bring conflict, which is the essence of democracy.

In contrast, a rising tide of individualism and entitlement has led, in some corners to an adoption of a Western way of life that is extremely difficult to link to modern African existence. Moses Mkandawire laments that this lionization of Western ways has taken away from "*the connectivity that is actually at the fabric of most African nations . . .* [Instead] *it is better to just borrow some few key models from the Western community and interlink them with* [indigenous] *beliefs and practices*." However, most contemporary leaders are refusing to moderate their approaches and continue to take their cues from leaders like the former Life President Kamuzu Banda who was the first to use traditional titles to extract the strength, power and deferential treatment that came with them while minimizing the space for dialogue on key issues. According to Chris Chisoni, this practice relegates otherwise intelligent if not educated constitutes to the role of "*subjects as opposed to citizens*" without the ability to fully participate in their democracy. Activist Billy Mayaya concurs with this viewpoint indicating that: "*culture seems to be antithetical to the democratic outcome. Therefore it serves as a major impediment to the progress of democracy.*"

Robert Phiri, Executive Director of Malawi's Public Affairs Committee states that the key is to change the political character in Malawi by replacing "*transactional leadership with transformational leadership.*" Phiri further indicates that "*because the political culture is so strong that most who enter into it, even with the most benevolent of intentions eventually must conform to survive. Otherwise, they are unceremoniously exited from the system.*"

He advocates setting benchmarks and defining the agenda upfront and collaborating with leaders who are supportive of the platform to move beyond the morass of political failings and put the country on an upward trajectory, building a culture of political behavior that represents the values and priorities of the people. Otherwise, leaders will continue to personalize and politicize development in a way that credits them for ownership of an otherwise state-sanctioned and citizen-funded endeavor. According to Billy Mayaya, to reach this level of advocacy Malawians will need to shift their perspective and develop a demeanor that allows for "*a constant questioning of leadership systems and processes.*" However it must be done in a manner that is respectful of culture. Simply "*accepting policy transfer from the West without applying it to the unique attributes of the Malawian context*" is problematic. Retaining some cultural symbolisms and preserving identity should go part and parcel with the transformative process that characterizes the evolution of a democracy.

7.5 Big Man Syndrome and Patronage Systems

Achikulire, patronage politics or as it is more commonly referred to in Sub-Saharan Africa, "the Big Man syndrome" is endemic in Malawi. According to Gray Kalindekafe, Executive Director of the National Institute for Civic Education, the idealized leader in Malawi as associated with traditional culture was "*born with that particular power or inherited from family. These traditional leaders are always right. Their word is final and they cannot be criticized or allow for different views.*" As a group, grassroots leaders express the view that chief executives hold too much reverent authority over constituents. Chris Chisoni stated that

> *Presidents have too much power and preside over a very big spectrum because of their appointment powers. They tend to manipulate the structures of governance to extend*

> *their rule for personal gain. Big men also perpetuate a lack of understanding that leads to a degradation of the appreciation for the values and principles*.

The values and principles that Big Men allow to become degraded under their watch are nevertheless fundamental to leadership and decision making processes. In Malawi, the Big Man stifles dissent in even the most innocuous issues under his/her purview and fails to readily accept accurate information that might better inform positions. The Big Man syndrome is endemic to the societal structure in Malawi in which elders and those who possess power and wealth are not simply respected, but revered. Moses Mkandawire elaborates on this phenomenon:

> *Most leaders are epitomized like a Jesus, like a God, that you have to bow before him or her. And that person does not become your servant; he becomes the master instead of you* [holding that person accountable]. *He or she is* [supposed] *to serve you and that concept has largely been missing in Malawian society. Any person who emerges then becomes to epitomize everything. And resources, we say they are from the people but what we have done is because the position he controls the resources and comes to think of them as personal resources. That's why leaders come and say you need to appreciate what I'm doing for you. There is a lot of that . . . 'vote for me because I will give you this.'*

With a deferential disposition propagated by constituents who are unable to detach themselves from the fray, the result is a system based on the politics of personality or patronage instead informed, issue-based civic involvement and engagement. Moses Mkandawire argues that poverty, ethnicity and family ties are the geneses of patronage networks and that accessing resources through the Big Man has increased in the political landscape in Malawi. The lack of private enterprise perpetuates this phenomenon as most businesses are reliant to some degree on

government contracts to maintain profitability. Engaging in conflict against the Big Man, while simultaneously attempting to access the economic opportunities afforded to entrepreneurs by virtue of entre into the public space, is an exercise in futility. Moses Mkandawire describes this as a system where "*the ability to control resources, distribute resources and deny people opportunities based on holding those resources for people from your ethnic group or to a lesser degree from your region*" is all encompassing. Further complicating Big Man politics is the type of democracy that Malawi employs. The parliamentary system was intended to employ local councilors who would espouse positions and viewpoints on behalf of the people but this form of representation has been virtually non-existent since 2004 and is only being reincorporated back into the government with the upcoming tripartite (Presidential/Parliament/Councilors) elections in 2014 (Constitution of Republic of Malawi, 1994/Local Government Act 2010). The current environment where the president is singularly responsible for and not obligated to the duly elected representatives of the people creates a sub-hierarchal arrangement that undervalues the direct input of the people. The fact that the cabinet ministers are required to be members of parliament further erodes the power of citizens, as most legislatures will make moves that either protect or enhance their opportunities to be promoted, thereby making their constituents even more vulnerable to misguided or even nefarious policy implementation at the local level.

The first post-colonial president, Kamuzu Banda usurped traditional titles as a method of re-appropriating customs to suit his all-encompassing rule. According to Gray Kalindekafe, Kamuzu Banda leveraged:

> *values and culture as his protectors . . . because nobody will question it. According to culture, this is our God-given leader. His ability to eradicate opposition through the use of pressure tactics, mysterious deaths and accidents still resonates in people's minds.*

> *The practices associated with torture, imprisonment and elimination loom fresh as the current leadership similarly refuses to accept reviews* [of their authority].

That particular method of cultural hegemony persists today with contemporary leaders patterning their effort after the practices of former President Kamuzu Banda to manipulate an otherwise fragilely constructed electorate. The obfuscation of traditional values and culture mixed with modern, Westernized methods of indirect rule inherited from British governance contributes to the perpetual assemblage of inferior leadership. Gray Kalindekafe argues that what is required to transcend this predicament is the same methods used with other culturally sensitive taboo such as the HIV/AIDS epidemic. That is to "*keep the belief, while transforming the practice*" (Gray Kalindekafe, personal communication, August 2013). From a leadership perspective, that kind of practice might embody a system in which cultural imperatives like respect for elders are maintained, but their power curtailed or modified in a manner that represents a more democratic method of governance.

7.6 External Influences: East/West Global Normative Synthesis, Transnational Non-Governmental Organizations and Donor Nations

According to Chris Chisoni, leaders in Malawi sample the values and opportunities of Western and Chinese influences insofar as they are going to benefit. The Chinese loathe intervening into domestic issues that have political ramifications including those that might impact the safety and security of indigenous people. In contrast, most Western governments refuse to support a leader in a developing country if she/he does not conform to basic standards of human rights and enforce the rule of law. Chris Chisoni contends that African leaders seemed to be "*more comfortable aligning themselves to the Chinese because they don't want somebody who will ask them to account in how they are leading their countries.*" African leaders would

prefer to leverage Chinese funds as a hedge against Western neo-colonialism. According to Chris Chisoni, the grants, loans and foreign direct investment provided by the Chinese

> *create a space where leaders can relax on common basic values of leadership because the Chinese have a different mindset about the importance of human rights, accountability and transparency In essence, a lot of human rights-related issues will be sacrificed for dealing with the Chinese.*

Western countries typically want to support development that enables human capital to evolve and grow. They want to establish a direct correlation between aid and issues of governance. Doing so becomes problematic in that most African leaders prefer an alternative arrangement in which they can decouple aid from issues of transparency, accountability and human rights. Even when these leaders acquiesce to the stated conditions, often there are other issues that prevent funding for initiatives to take place. For example, leaders often find Western donor expectations too onerous or impossible to support given the prevailing cultural context and public sentiment. Such a set of circumstances was evidenced by the fallout between the British High Commissioner and late President Bingu wa Mutharika on the issue of homosexuality in 2010 (BBC News, 2010) which among other acrimonious events eventually led to a loss in British aid.

In contrast, according to Moses Mkandawire, the Chinese provide resources like "*roads, buildings, bridges and stadiums without attaching similar types of conditionalities. Leaders are not pinned down to respect rule of law which opens the door for corruption or obligating the nation in other ways* [economically]." Most recently, the Chinese have been focused on financial arrangements which are contingent on securing interests for themselves, such as providing labor and expertise without enabling the indigenous population to benefit in the process. They are desirous of having a specific number of Chinese settled in the area and to

secure preferential treatment for commercial enterprises through bypassing regulations and pushing out indigenous entrepreneurs in the process. While constituents see tangible resources flowing from the Chinese presence, they fail to recognize the long-term ramifications. It is hard to question the Chinese form of progress in Malawi as quick and tangible development resonates readily with the people and represents a definitive step forward in the short-term, even if there are concerns about how it occurred and the quality of the work provided in the long-term. Moses Mkandawire poses that the issue for both political leaders as well as traditional and religious groups is discerning how to "*properly balance between the two forces and craft solutions that are analytical, critical and have the ability to create programs that satisfy both sets of benefactors without unduly burdening the people.*"

External forces contribute to the under-development of leadership in Malawi when involvement in Western strategic restructuring programs or Chinese infrastructure development results in presidential accolades for the progress achieved under their leadership. When the voices of outside factors outweigh those of the constituents, leaders lose sight of the original goal which was to improve the lives of their people. They become beholden to the voices of the external group instead of heeding the needs of their constituents. According to Chris Chisoni, the result is an

> *international community that seems to endorse or be happier than what the citizens are seeing for themselves on the ground or what's happening in reality.* [These external forces are] *dictating the type of leadership that is required for the country to prosper from their perspective while legitimizing a certain type of government that has a global dimension.*

Such forces might not be aligned with the tactical needs of the people and in essence amount to the creation of another form of indirect, hegemonic rule that is neo-paternalistic in nature. This indirect undermining of leadership transpires because there is no common agenda that unites leadership. As regimes change so do development priorities. The ongoing failure to achieve what Chris Chisoni refers to as the modern state (open, encouraging debate, listening to viewpoints) versus the traditional state (omniscient, paternalistic, assumptive) wastes opportunities and leaves little room to move forward.

Robert Phiri noted that during his first term, President Mutharika was methodical, focused and clear about his plans for economic development. This level of preparation and organization made him "*a darling to all international partners. As a result, he became a star of the region and donors stopped funding civil society organizations dealing with political governance because he was so good*." However, the donors failed to maintain a proper system of checks and balances. With his legacy in the eyes of Western donors perpetuated by ego, Mutharika formed his own political party and won a landslide re-election. With civil society marginalized by reduced external funding, Mutharika became increasingly dictatorial, which resulted in conflict with the British, a primary aid partner along with fuel shortages, forex rationing and infringement on the rights of media and academia. According to Robert Phiri, Mutharika's dictatorial inclinations "*ate into the values of the people which are essentially their rights and freedoms.*" According to Phiri, when Mutharika "*appeared to eat too far*" and was forced to switch away from the West and accept help from the Chinese, his sustainability as a leader was called into question. His untimely death saw the situation end prematurely.

A lasting foundational component that has contributed to the relative stability of Malawi and ostensibly other Anglophone African countries is the British colonial policy of recognizing

the pre-colonial power of local leadership and administrating through that legacy. As Gray Kalindekafe explained,

> *The British use of indirect rule recognized the local leaders as coordinating authorities (they are now called traditional authorities or chiefs). These leaders worked on behalf of the colonial government to* [collect] *taxes, mobilize people and organize projects for the central government. Because of this strong local central government there is a* [legacy] *of building local capacity.*

This tradition of local leadership continues to empower communities with decision-making although it occurs in a more collaborative form with leaders consulting elders and advisors before advancing initiatives. While the system of indirect rule provided a lasting mechanism for governance, the fundamental political structure of the country wherein the central government controls revenues and resources leads to dissent in how those are applied across the nation. When citizens see a lack of investment in their region while the infrastructure in other areas is improving, the inequity stifles the government's ability to collect taxes, and improve the formal economy. The perception of unequal distribution of resources also erodes confidence in the underlying fairness of the government. The challenge to dissolve regional inclinations and advocate for one Malawi, runs contrary to the foundational philosophies of the various ethnic groups. In Malawi, region often translates into ethnicity which translates to ancient understandings and expectations of government. According to Moses Mkandawire, decentralizing some aspects of government and "*letting these smaller* [local] *governments be able to generate, plan and implement their own programs*" would allow some degree of autonomy to craft unique solutions that affect the local population as well as hold leaders that are closer to the constituents more accountable for their actions.

7.7 Regionalism and Ethno-linguistic Differences

Regionalism is a byproduct of the colonial divide and rule methodology. The British favored certain tribes or marginalized some ethnic groups for a variety of reasons including but not limited to perceptions around acumen and temperament. They subsequently leveraged these ethnic divisions to cut cost, save work, delegate power and divide Africans into competing communities (Vail, 1989) while providing for ease of administration in the subdivided territory. The enduring belief that a citizen who resides in your geographic region of the country and shares a future that is inextricably linked to your own success, reinforced by ethno-linguistic differences, was propagated during Kamuzu Banda's single-party era, and constrains the achievement of cohesive leadership development to the present day. Moses Mkandawire relates that:

> *Malawi is a country that has different ethnic groups. It is important to build a nation out of these* [disparate] *groups. Leadership should look at the principle of humanity and dignity. The* [current environment] *where leaders have policies in place that elevate their own group above others is a time bomb. Others are saying do we really belong to this country when we are not protected? A leader should operate within the principles that were agreed upon when the 1994 Constitution was adapted including Section 10 which states that you cannot discriminate in any form including ethnicity or language. Malawi will not be a democracy until it embraces meritocracy.*

In studying post-colonial presidential leadership in Malawi, Chris Chisoni portends that only the 2008-09 campaign which denoted Mutharika's second elected term provides a representative example of democracy in Malawi. Because Mutharika was from an ethnic group the Lomwe that did not have the influence to propel him to an electoral victory on its own, he needed to form

coalitions. He transcended typical geographic politics and won significant support throughout the country based on the strength of his economic record after having to compromise in his first term with a parliament that was not infused with significant numbers of MP's from his party. Chris Chisoni relates that:

> *people saw the fruits of quality leadership gave him a mandate and moved beyond the well-established precedent [of regional loyalties] to elect a leader that delivered results.* [This principle stands in contrast to the prevailing sentiment that allows] . . . *tribesmen, kinsmen, extended family and traditional leaders to play outsized roles in the decision making process while manipulating the leadership.*

Chisoni argues that this bedrock of advisors can "*feed you lies*" while creating an environment that insulates the leader from reality. The intrinsically blind trust of those closest to the leader prevents the challenging of assumptions and opinions and stifles constructive debate. Chris Chisoni states that this clannish behavior, "*where people are so reliant* [upon ethnic kinship] *that they don't look to see other people with skills or abilities that could help push the country forward outside of their group*" is endemic and comes from a background of distrust for those whose objectives or goals maybe inconsistent with the leader's, along with an inherent obligation to maximize benefits for one's own group while in power. After his re-election under the noble sentiments of advocating for all Malawians, Mutharika reverted to the common theme of ethnic politics when he became the patron for Mulhako wa Alhomwe, ostensibly designed to be the Lomwe cultural heritage and preservation group but leveraged to create opportunities to advance the agenda and upward mobility of Lomwe's through a readily available and assessable pool of like-minded, supportive clansmen.

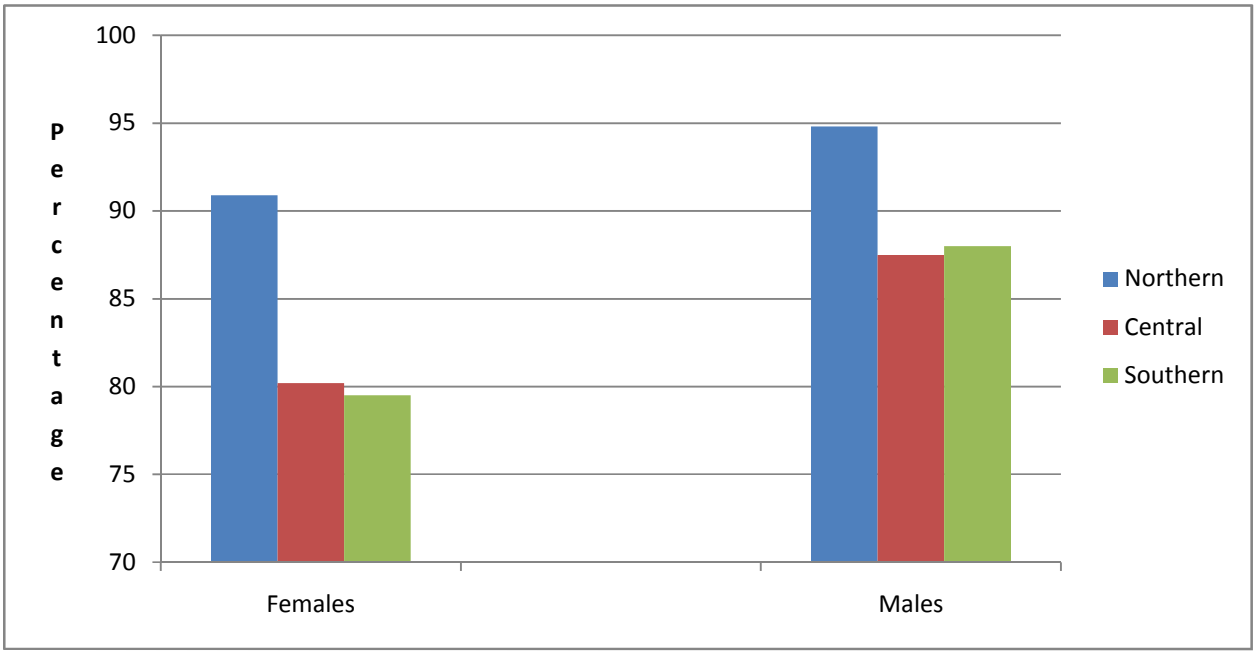
As long as the quest for identity is not a national one and politicians reflect regional divisions to their followers and inculcate that mindset in their political parties, marginalized groups will not be accorded opportunities and the leadership development of diverse individuals will not happen. For example, from the beginning of the drive for multi-party rule, Chakufwa Chihana, a paragon of leadership during the drive to end Kamuzu Banda's reign who eventually came to lead one of the first post-dictatorship political parties—Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) was widely acknowledged as being instrumental in advocating for the implementation of a fully democratic system in Malawi. Moses Mkandawire explains that once this goal was achieved however,

> *identity politics played its role and* [Chihana]*was only supported by his own people, Northerners and his policy positions didn't attract wide-spread support. While he was regarded as a fighter, liberator and champion of democracy, people voted instead for Bakili Muluzi who had no education but where he came from,* [the Southern region] *the people were the majority.*

Chihana's primary deficiency was putting all the strategic leadership of his nascent party in the hands of fellow Northerners. This move prevented AFORD from becoming a national party of noteworthy significance. According to Gray Kalindekafe, instead of reflecting on the party "*manifesto and evaluating the organization and its leadership based on issues and ideology,*" the process devolved into a vapid exercise in political futility.

Following the Kamuzu Banda who claimed to be of Chewa lineage and hailed from the Central region, Muluzi, Mutharika and current President Joyce Banda all came from the South. Thus Malawians from the Northern region in which a large number of people speak Chitumbuka as opposed to the dominant Chichewa or Chiyao in the other regions have struggled for elected

positions of leadership even though their historical inclination toward education yielded a significant number and outsized proportion of what Lwanda (2006) described as the "professional, academic . . . and civil service experience" (p. 531) which forms the mechanism for a functioning government. To date, there has not been a president elected from the Northern region of the country. Literacy rates are very high in the Northern part of the country (see Figure 2), where a lack of agricultural opportunities has made education the primary catalyst for upward mobility.



Adapted from Malawi National Office of Statistics, 2010.

Figure 2. Malawi Educational Attainment by Gender/Region.

Additionally, in the North there exists a dearth of population which equates to less representation in political bodies. According to Moses Mkandawire, this lack of representation creates a mindset that "*allows Northerners to think of themselves as being penalized and/or victimized by the government*." The response mechanism for Northerners is to band together and thrive by clinging to this commonality of origin. Moses Mkandawire further relates that the university quota system wherein students are given access to tertiary education based on their

geographic location of origin, results in an attendance distribution that creates ethnic "*resentment and animosity between groups. While population density is a valid method for applying resources,*" a quota exacerbates the fragile balance achieved in distributing opportunities in a constrained environment. It also creates mistrust and prevents the growth and development of strong friendships and relationships across cultural boundaries that would prove beneficial given the small pool of educated, qualified future leaders. Gray Kalindekafe validated this perception around regionalism by reflecting on how it impacts

> *the distribution of resources. Leaders tend to favor their places of origin. Because most leaders come from the South, you see more roads there, more infrastructure. It is a very big virus in our political dispensation and democratization process. Leaders are not voted on merit but on place of origin.*

This inequitable distribution undermines development and sub optimizes growth of the country.

7.8 Political Economy

The challenge for a post-colonial country is to be fully independent; to do so it must be both politically and economically self-sufficient. It must create opportunities that benefit the whole wherein the politics of parties is sublimated to the economic benefit to the majority. Gray Kalindekafe relates that

> *the sad factor is that our [political] parties don't have a clear policy or ideology. They don't know if they are left right or center. Most of the manifestos produced are done by a few elites and only in English.*

Political parties make no attempt to appeal to the masses in the local languages of the nation. In many cases, these political parties produce no guiding doctrine and simply coalesce around a founder who manages the organization like a personal possession. The ideas they do provide are

inscrutable or obfuscated from the electorate because party members fear these would be appropriated by their rivals. In the case of Malawi, because 40% of the national budget is provided by donors (finance.gov.mw) political autonomy has a direct correlation to economic autonomy. The government is always balancing policies based on the dictates of either the Western community or China. Until leaders transform their thinking around strategic relationships, become fiscally accountable, and manage the natural resources available within their borders things will not change. According to Moses Mkandawire, the next step would be to "*put in place policies which are inclusive and able to attract investment*" to achieve some modicum of economic sustainability without reliance on foreign support.

> Chris Chisoni views political leadership and economic development as *two sides of the same coin. There is a need to have skills and competencies and understanding around economic governance as well as policy framework . . . politicians become* [leaders] *with populist regimes lacking any clear policy which results in economic stagnation.*

Regionalism and ethno-linguistic differences as noted above do not allow for a critical look at circumstances that generate novel solutions that might move the country forward. Moses Mkandawire argues that "*leaders who fail to be inclusive of other viewpoints and consider alternative strategies for advancement are likely not to be able to attract investment such that the economic side grows and complements their political leadership.*"

Leaders who fail to attract investment end up driving a poorly conceived political agenda that affects economic governance. Economics and politics are inextricably connected. Moses Mkandawire cites the principles of accountability, transparency and collaboration as hallmarks of a growing economy led by dynamic leadership, and "*poor conformance to the rule of law,*

disregard for the principles of human rights and corruption as the primary detriments to political and economic growth." Gray Kalindekafe takes this analysis a step further and leverages the use of the terms:

> *transformational versus transactional to describe the differences between action-oriented leaders who articulate inclusive policies and leverage a self-discovery approach which allows them to be open to and consult with the people. This is contrasted with a transactional approach for those leaders who are self-absorbed and interested in simply attaining the benefits provided by the office.*

Transformational leaders understand how development is situated in terms of access to resources and potential solutions that can be cascaded throughout the nation to collectively improve communities. Transformational leadership requires moving past the current ideation around transactional leadership in which there exists an expectation of exchange that would increase the prevailing quality of life in exchange for political support. Leaders should curtail the use of short-term strategies that satiate demand for change while only temporarily ameliorating problems, in favor of long-term strategic plans that depersonalize development, so that when leadership changes occur, national priorities are not substantially altered leaving only implementation strategies to be modified.

CHAPTER 8

Academicians on Leadership

The co-case for academics as it relates to leadership development in Malawi is constructed from citizens who currently or previously have worked in tertiary education within the country and have a terminal degree in their field of expertise. Key informants include the contributors illustrated in Table 3. Their responses narratives were compiled using ATLAS.ti Qualitative Analysis Software Version 7.

Table 3

Academician Leaders

Name	Position	Institution
Dr. Jessie Kabwila	Professor of Literature	Chancellor College (University of Malawi)
Dr. Justin Malewezi	Former Vice President – Republic of Malawi	Retired –Minister of Education
Dr. Wiseman Chirwa	Professor of History	Chancellor College (University of Malawi)
Dr. Boniface Dulani	Professor of Political Science	Chancellor College (University of Malawi)
Dr. Kings Phiri	Professor Emeritus of History	Chancellor College (University of Malawi)/ Mzuzu University
Dr. Blessings Chinsinga	Professor of Political Science	Chancellor College (University of Malawi)

This chapter examines the perspectives of informants with regard to education, community and social institutions, the characteristics of leaders, cultural values and customs as well as patronage systems. I also draw on the narratives of indigenous academia to review external influences such as donor nations, transnational non-governmental organizations, and Western/Eastern philosophical influences along with the intersection between politics and the

economy. This group of informants is particularly attuned to the role of leadership development in Malawi given their position at the intersection of academia and politics. According to the Malawian constitution, the Chancellor of the higher education system in the country is the President of the Republic (Constitution of Republic of Malawi, 1994). As a result, politics can conflict with academic freedom as evidenced in the University of Malawi faculty strike in 2011 during which Dr. Blessings Chinsinga, Professor of Political Science at Chancellor College was held by the Inspector General of the Police and questioned about a lecture he gave comparing political conditions in Malawi with the Arab Spring uprising (Mudika, 2011). Dr. Jessie Kabwila, Professor of Literature at Chancellor College, was leader of the academic staff union at the time and vehemently and unequivocally condemned the action and organized protests along with student groups which led to the closing of the institution until a compromise was reached with the Mutharika administration which guaranteed academic freedom at each of Malawi's universities.

8.1 Education

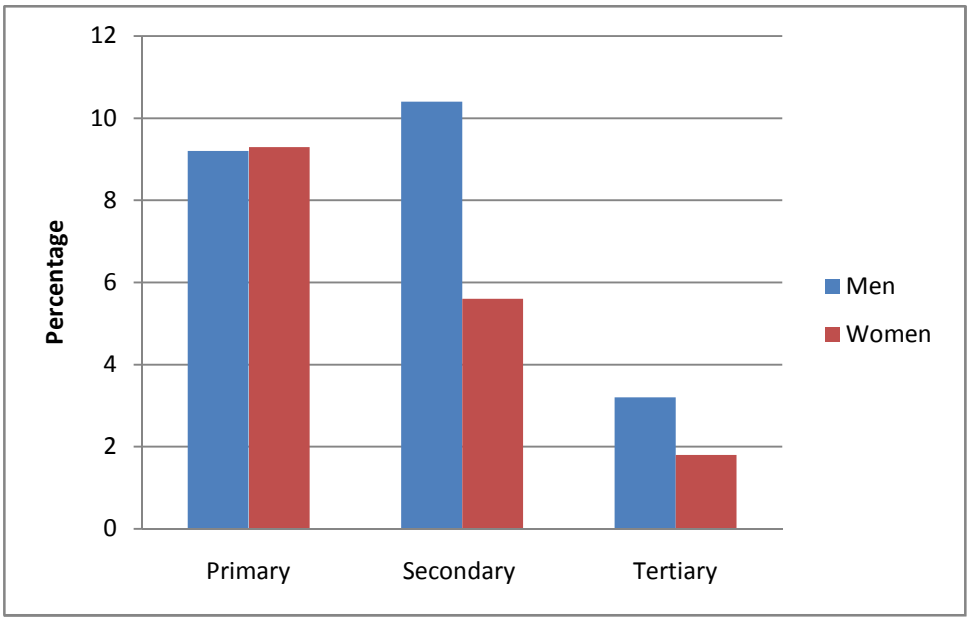
Horace Mann described education as being the "great equalizer, the balance wheel of the social machinery" (Taylor, 2010, p. 43). Nowhere does his adage hold truer than in a society in which privilege and poverty alternately populate the landscape. In some communities, while status and position convey a level of authority and autonomy, education allows one to garner respect when those other advantages are absent. Lack of education is not a barrier to leadership at some levels or even higher office as evidenced by the fact that Bakili Muluzi and Joyce Banda both served as president of Malawi without obtaining formal tertiary education. However, Dr. Boniface Dulani, Professor of Political Science at Chancellor College, postulates that there is no coincidence that the most effective presidents in Malawian history were those who had strong

academic credentials. Dr. Dulani reflects that "*certain minimum levels of education are important to add anything constructive or meaningful*" to the process of governance. However, education is no guarantee of improved legislation or governance. Dr. Dulani cites the 2012 parliamentary elections as an example:

> *There was a lot of excitement because parliament* [now] *has a lot of doctors and professors but now there is disillusionment because they have not done a good job. So it's not just* [about] *the academic paper, it getting people training to learn the art and skill of legislating . . . which our school system does not do well.*

According to Dr. Justin Malewezi, two-term Vice President of the Republic of Malawi, under former President Bakili Muluzi, and retired Minister of Education, the quality of education varies so tremendously within the country that large numbers of students are ill-prepared for the demands of earning a secondary certificate (Malawi School Certificate of Education–MSCE) and university-level work. Within the public education sector, teachers themselves are generally ill-prepared. While the aim of the government is for all teachers to hold an MSCE certificate, in reality due to the radical teacher shortage since the beginning of Malawi's universal public education initiative in 1994, many teachers only hold a Standard 8 certificate, especially in rural areas. College-level preparedness is reflected in the educational attainment levels of individuals age 15-35. Keeping in mind that a free primary education was not introduced until 1994, the number is still appreciably small, according to Figure 3.

Dr. Malewezi argues that in order to have better and more qualified leaders, Malawi needs to produce more people who are well educated. In addition, the ability to involve specialized management schools, seminars, institutes and other supplemental and experiential learning mechanisms would help augment the formal educational curriculum.



*Tertiary includes university as well as technical/vocational training.

Figure 3. Educational Level Attainment in Malawi. Malawi Demographic & Health Survey, National Statistical Office, 2010, p. 28.

8.2 Social and Community Institutions

Community based organizations (CBOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) form tangible links with their communities by advocating for issues of importance or concern to segments of their constituents. Dr. Dulani notes that "*CBO's are increasingly being viewed as launching pads for government careers*." Once grassroots leaders ascend to certain level of notoriety, the government attempts to co-opt them by offering positions in the administration in order to subvert the external pressure derived from their leadership. This observation is supported by feedback from Dr. Blessings Chinsinga who added that the "*NGO Act of 2000 was used as a threat*" to community-based organizations (CBOs) and civil society organizations (CBOs) and other groups that the administration could not easily subdue.

Dr. Boniface Dulani credits the success of the CSO-to-government conversion phenomenon to two points. The first is that in general, civil society organizations have a difficult

time in raising funds to finance their activities so it is a lot easier to simply capitulate to the status quo and take a salary and benefits from the government. Secondly, given the tremendous obstacles to change, the path of least resistance is one that allows an individual to benefit from the stature obtained through initial efforts in a non-profit arena by simply coasting along in a governmental position in which little or no tangible work is required. Lack of training and organizational skills were also cited by Dr. Dulani as an obstacle to community organizations having a larger effect on society. Leadership appears to have no problem formulating at the grassroots level but it gets derailed as a result of extraneous factors including self-interest or a lack of proper training.

Because of their intimate relationships with the communities in which they operate, CBOs and CSOs hold the power to shape the choices made by people in elections especially those in rural areas where people are much more likely to be illiterate and/or unable to access information sources that provide wide coverage and insight into political issues. Dr. Wiseman Chirwa, Professor of History at Chancellor College and a strong proponent of the efficacy of local, traditional leadership opined that there exists

> *very little trust in high-level political and state institutions because of the nature of* [their] *leadership. The result is a population that has less trust in elected officials generally because their image seems to be one of temporal leadership that doesn't deal with rehabilitation issues but is more technical and does not connect with people on a personal level like traditional leaders do.*

From his perspective as a two-term vice president, Dr. Malewezi was far more critical of CBOs and their leadership structure. He lamented that the space is "*clotted with pseudo-political surrogates and that many of the groups are not respectable.*" Because the space is largely

unregulated, people with "*material motives [overshadow] those who are genuine, useful and effective*." Dr. Malewezi further notes that "*the HIV/AIDS epidemic brought in a lot of CBOs and concurrently, donor funding that bypasses the government which has proven quite useful*," but portends that greater "*organizational training and accountability are important*." Malewezi notes that efforts to improve the professionalism and operational capabilities of CBO's are critical in maintaining the trust that these groups have developed with constituents.

Dr. Jessie Kabwila, indicated that first and foremost, community and civil society organizations must be teachers. They should serve as bridges to those who are less educated and informed, by taking their work directly to the people. For a largely rural country like Malawi, that means visiting the villages and explaining how in the absence of elected councilors, what government functions at a national level look like and what the role of government should be in the lives of citizens based on the constitution of the republic. Only then can citizens be active participants in their democracy. Dr. Kabwila states that:

> *Citizens* [should] *understand that they will get the quality of governance that they construct and it is proportionate to how much they speak truth to power. Governance is a conversation between citizens and institutions of the state. It is a constant dialectic that has to be incrementally negotiated through continuous discourse but it is required to get the kind of leadership that* [they] *approve of and what* [we] *tolerate is what we are going to get. It's time to stop looking for people to come and save us and do something about it* [inequities].

The proximal form of leadership provided by community-based organizations has the benefit of being organically formed and chosen by the people, and answers to them directly. It provides a vehicle where by these leaders can serve as a bulwark against dictatorial inclinations as

evidenced by the active role they played in 2002–03 during the campaign by then-President Bakili Muluzi to enact a constitutional amendment that would allow him to run for a third term in office. Their ability to "*demystify leadership and provide opportunities and alternatives for other leaders*" (Boniface Dulani, personal communication, July 2013) like youth and women-led groups helps balance the scales in an emerging country like Malawi. They provide tangible evidence of progress and role models to which even the most obscure village has access.

One of the more notable aspects of Kamuzu Banda's tenure is his use of imagery and symbolism to characterize himself and capture the hearts and minds of his constituents. He actively usurped traditions and customs for his benefit. A self-identified Chewa he leveraged the influence of the nation's largest ethnic group by "*project*[ing] *himself as the national chief so that people who would ordinarily have respect for traditional leadership*" (Boniface Dulani, personal communication, July 2013) would show even more deference for the head of state. One of the titles he bestowed upon himself was that of *Nkhoswe Number One*. Nkhoswe means the leader of a family or clan unit. The Nkhoswe is situated at the apex of familial power as the counselor or the one that is responsible for the well-being of a family. According to Dr. Dulani, Kamuzu Banda's use of this term was the beginning of "*the transmigration of traditional concepts and social institutions into the* [political arena]." Most recently, the last elected president, Bingu wa Mutharika elevated himself using the traditional title of Ngwazi meaning 'conqueror' or 'father.' He also used the title *Agama* which is a clan name and is used as a term of respect in place of one's surname. This usage of the term Agama transformed his position among his native Lomwe people, especially after the establishment and ascent of the Mulhako wa Alhomwe cultural group dedicated to the advancement and preservation of Lomwe tradition of which Mutharika became chief patron of the organization or *malupale*. Dr. Kabwila finds this

latest development most problematic because in her view, politicians are using these social organizations in an attempt to "*homogenize that which is not homogenous. Instead of preserving culture, they are advocating for one strand of an ethnic group by declaring it to be a dominant one,*" which is a problem with repercussions that will eventually have to be reckoned.

8.3 Characteristics of Leaders

Dr. Wiseman Chira discussed the expectations associated with leaders by lamenting that Malawians "*tend to praise strong-willed characters, such as Hastings Kamuzu Banda and Bingu wa Mutharika.*" In response to my follow-up question which asks about them being commonly labeled as two of the more malevolent actors in Malawian politics, Dr. Chirwa's response was "*good or bad, we can access the leader and unite around his leadership . . . at which point a decision will have been made and whether it's good or bad, a direction forward presented*." This view resonates with that of those who find organizational inertia a primary cause that hampers the ability to make sustainable progress while demonstrating tangible results in the heart of Africa.

Dr. Jessie Kabwila, who since the time of her interview with me has ascended to the position of spokesperson for the Malawi Congress Party as well as a candidate for parliament representing the Salima district, expressed her thoughts about the qualities required of a leader in Malawi:

> *Somebody who respects the citizen and understands that they work for [constituents]. A leader is also someone who respects the right to information and consults with those whom they ultimately answer to. It includes someone who facilitates discussions on key issues and speaks on behalf of the people but not for them. A skilled [political] leader*

believes in constitutionalism. They respect the document, the power it confers and the responsibilities that come with it.

Dr. Kabwila is a firm advocate for civil rights, inviolable freedoms and a government that is beholden to the wishes of the people. In her view, a leader must not cower in the face of external forces or apologize for being authentic within the context of the prevailing culture. From Dr. Kabwila's perspective, future leaders should be "*well-informed, technocratic, well read, culturally astute and engaged with both urban and rural constituents alike*." They would be educated but not necessarily academicians while possessing "*capacity on both economic and governance issues.*" Dr. Kabwila cited Pan-Africanism along with the ability to engage on equal terms with established, first-world powers as paramount for future leaders in Malawi. Lastly, she noted the importance of understanding the tenets of post-colonial theory and the colonialism and imperialism on the historical domination and exploitation of the country; and the ability to discern how forces put in place during that period currently impact Malawi's navigation of global issues as being paramount for future cadres of leaders. Table 4 represents the characteristics most cited by academicians to describe the requirements of leaders.

Table 4

Academic Leaders: Summary of Perceived Salient Characteristics for Potential Leaders in Malawi

Fairness/ principled	Understand/ Transcend Traditional Ethnic Friction	Respectful of traditions/ community	Accountability	Servant mindset
Technocratic	Respect for Constitutionalism/ Rule of Law	Understand Civil Rights/ Social Justice issues	Educated, critical thinker	Globally engaged & respected

Dr. Kabwila noted that it was important to view "*class justice as the root to solving problems experienced by the masses in Malawi*" while ignoring or minimizing the accolades that many leaders require as legitimizing attributes such that they pursue those to the detriment of their constituents' well-being. An example cited by Dr. Kabwila was the devaluation of the currency. While she agreed that it needed to be done, in her judgment, it should have occurred in stages to ease the impact on the people. From her perspective former President Mutharika wanted to appease his Western allies so he implemented their directive without considering the consequences to the poor and working class.

Dr. Kabwila's idealized leader looks for alternate and innovative solutions and abhors the waste that prevents maximum use of available resources to help alleviate poverty. Dr. Kabwila cites poverty as not just a lack of resources as attributable to a certain segment at the lower end of the socio-economic stratosphere but rather a "*poverty of ideas and implementation.*" She laments the lack of "*strategic planning and economic innovation* [in Malawi] *that comes with efficient and principled leadership.*" Dr. Kabwila opined that someone who works from an issues-based perspective demonstrates an understanding of the challenges facing the country and a capacity to negotiate solutions. She also noted that having the courage to stay the course as long as it "*improves the lives of a majority of the people*" while "*selflessly sacrificing for them*" as hallmarks of a worthy leader.

8.4 Cultural Values and Customs

Dr. Justin Malewezi observes that differences between ethnic groups provide a pride and strength among them. It is here that young people are taught: "*our ways of behavior and ethics. How to relate to others, morality, importance of family including extended relatives, the role of the maternal uncle as a socialization force, the position of grandparents as guardians,*

caregivers and advisors." He cites the initiation ceremonies within which young people are taught to respect those in authority as well as the elderly as a key ingredient in positioning traditional leadership as the unquestioned authority. In contrast, Dr. Dulani cites the case of Inkosi Gomani V from the town of Ntcheu, the new Paramount Chief for all Ngoni people from the Central Region of Malawi. As a teenager he became a traditional leader and was given the title 'Inkosi ya Makosi' which means chief of chiefs (Chiumia, 2012). Dr. Dulani stated that the fact that at his coronation ceremony you have "*the president and other important people bowing to [him] shows the power of traditional authority and how it shapes our perception of leadership.*" Traditional leaders are born into their position and are according to Dr. Dulani, projected as leaders from the earliest possible stages so that the "*people who created them preserve their own interests. They are put on this pedestal and it is claimed that they have qualities that no one else does.*" There is no differentiation in skill that allows the leader to employ strategies or initiatives to ensure success. Instead, they rely on the elders who themselves may not be formally educated and are oftentimes "*calculative in that they create a phenomenon around a particular leader while leveraging their position in providing advice and counsel hoping to reap some benefits.*" Thus there may be a selfish motivation in the long term for a certain group of influential constituents to advocate for a particular leader and positions on issues that affect their potential to extract rewards while the leader is preoccupied dispensing with the various vestiges of their authority. The 'mbumba' those who are attached or beholden to a particular traditional leader, are culturally obligated to observe the directives of the leader and that respect translates to the political arena. This translation of obligation from the cultural to the political holds especially true in matrilineal societies like the Chewa; the dominant ethnic group in Malawi particularly in the central region. Coincidentally, Chewa culture is also the

model for which Kamuzu Banda, the first post-colonial president built the foundations of his vision for a singular Malawian identity.

Dr. Dulani notably points out that "*social status, religion, wealth as well as other cultural factors that embody the respect of others . . . increase your standing in a very hierarchical society.*" Dr. Dulani does not differentiate between the importance of religious groups and cites both the Bible and the Quran as influential elements in the overall belief systems in Malawi. His lack of preference in indicating one religious influence over another denotes the respect that people have for religion in general, largely without regard to denomination. Dr. Dulani also uses religion to characterize why some argue that there is a divine right of chieftainship in the country.

Dr. Kabwila does not share Dr. Dulani's view on the role of religion and in fact cites the growing dominance of Rev. TB Joshua, an evangelical pastor with nebulous connections to President Joyce Banda as proof that religion is eroding Malawi's position as a secular state. It should be noted after making this assertion on the construction of organized religion and its perceived impact on governance Malawi, Dr. Kabwila aligned herself politically with the Malawi Congress Party serving as their spokesperson, which is led by Reverend Lazarus Chakwera, an evangelical pastor from the Assemblies of God Ministries.

8.5 Big Man Syndrome and Patronage Systems

My informants from this co-case lament that patronage systems and Big Man politics continue to thrive in Malawi. Votes are often cast based on the ability to provide communities with tangible support in exchange for their political backing. Dr. Malewezi argues that from the first democratic elections in May of 1994, "traditional chiefs were subjected to pressure to support the ruling party. Maize donated by [NGOs] as food aid was distributed to party

supporters under the pretext that it was provided by the president [Banda]" (Malewezi, 2013, p. 3). According to Dr. Dulani, the patronage system then trickled down from the presidential level to the legislative officials, eventually reaching people in the villages. Dr. Dulani describes patronage as a pyramid wherein the president, ministers and members of parliament use their positions to secure financially beneficial opportunities for themselves and their associates while straddling the line with "*corruption, assuming that it differs significantly from patronage*."

The mystique behind the Big Man is fed by tales of omnipotence originating with former President Kamuzu Banda and his reputed abilities to have insight into even the most mundane of occurrences. Some of this imagery is consistent with an authoritarian leader attempting to maintain control of his subjects but nonetheless, according to Dr. Dulani, there is a sense of "*reverence, especially for those who go through the informal education structure like initiation ceremonies (as noted earlier), that you must respect your elders so someone in a position of power along with the advantage of age*" will have carte blanche authority regardless of how illogical or unfounded their constructs may seem. Dr. Malewezi notes that when Kamuzu Banda became the first president, he brought both Western concepts of leadership and the traditional concept of a Chief. Dr. Malewezi states that some of the problems related to Kamuzu Banda's duration in office are correlated with "*how people related to him as more of a chief than a president. Since elections were not an option to depose him and the traditional rules of retire chiefs were not applicable*." Kamuzu Banda ruled for an extended period of time—30 years. He took advantage of the traditional respect for leaders and ignored or sublimated his cabinet as members synonymous with the leadership council or advisors assigned to Chiefs, who often became complicit in his wrongdoings while their authority became unchallenged for decades. A good example would be that of John Tembo, who served as an advisor to Banda during his

tenure as Life President and until 2013 led the Malawi Congress Party. Tembo was implicated in several acts of wrongdoing during the Kamuzu Banda era but still held a relatively high profile position in the mainstream political ecosystem. According to Dr. Malewezi, Malawians are renowned for their kindness and patience and thus people did not get rid of Banda until his conduct became so egregious and the "*tension in Malawian society so severe that no other choice remained*."

Dr. Boniface Dulani asserts that as the population begins to embrace and appreciate the value of democracy, they are less likely to blindly support a leader who does not advocate for their best interests. By moving beyond the social and formal institutions of patronage as well as the all-encompassing faith in traditional leaders, they undercut various vestiges of big man politics. Dr. Dulani further notes that the best response to a decline in patronage systems is advocating for leaders who actually engage with the people and understand what their problems are. According to Dr. Dulani, this comes from a place of "*empathy and linkage with the people as well as having principles and strong ideological positions*" that resonate with the masses while giving people definitive choices in electoral campaigns without reducing politics to personalities and rhetoric.

The eventual demise of patronage networks and Big Man syndrome lies in their genesis which was part of the indirect rule system implemented by the British. According to Ngwenyama, Truex, and Davis (1997), Critical Social Theory is the basis for "questioning the prevailing wisdom of traditional leadership while seeking an emancipatory discourse that fundamentally alters the status quo between these leaders and their membership that will transform the taken-for-granted condition" (p. 47). According to Dr. Boniface Dulani, careful examination of traditional leadership finds a "*contradictory struggle where most citizens believe*

they are corrupt but they are also the most trustworthy." The lack of government involvement at the local levels, especially the lack of councilors, has left traditional authorities to fill the gap. Not having the resources or strong local institutions has defaulted disposition of some civic functions including the enforcement of law, settling of disputes and arbitrating disagreements to the traditional leader as the sole point of reference. Traditional leaders are accessible and carry the necessary moral authority to assuage most situations. While the law may require certain communication and elements of project or programs to proceed through certain channels, projects or implementation strategies must pass through the indigenous leadership if they are to have any chance of being successfully received and deployed in the area. According to Dr. Dulani, the dichotomy of traditional leadership where it is revered while it sometimes displays questionable ethics, is not lost on constituents but is also not overwhelming enough to allow them to "*divorce themselves from those social institutions that have served us . . . even if not well.*"

Dr. Malewezi relates that the constitution should be reexamined in an effort to rebalance the power and authority between the president and parliament: "*We have made the president very strong with few checks and balances. He can do virtually anything. The use/abuse of that power*" has further fueled the patronage system. The ability to control money, without transparency and the lack of mandatory reporting requirements leaves the system ripe for abuse and perpetuates a sense of entitlement. Dr. Dulani provides the following example: the Madzi Trust Fund currently promoted by President Joyce Banda as a mechanism to reinvent Malawi in her vision, is financed with Chinese backing and perpetuates the Big Man culture because "*the Chinese are not going to ask questions on how the money has been used.*" According to Dr. Justin Malewezi, by decentralizing the government, "*stepping away from a colonial-model of*

responsibility and authority while integrating the traditional and political leadership will make it more sustainable." In the long term, such a decentralized system would serve to integrate both indigenous and elected leadership and increase accountability and responsiveness while providing a measure of autonomy at the local level.

Dr. Jessie Kabwila stresses the need for a systems-based approach to governance that would dissipate the patronage system. In her view, a systems-based approach would provide a measure of stability and accountability while separating powers and focusing on justification and documentation with regard to expenditures and resources. According to Dr. Kabwila, when the president has control over the other branches of the governance system: "*They are going to appoint people that are beholden to them especially when their longevity in office is at their discretion. People aspiring to that office compete on how to make the president happy*." In the process, these aspiring appointees sublimate the needs of constituents with the intent of trying to displace a current appointee for personal gain. According to Dr. Kabwila, systems and issues should dominate any discussion on political imperatives in Malawi but all too often ancillary concerns appear to override the welfare of constituents. Dr. Kabwila argues that the patronage system "*sets itself up as a self-regulatory system where those who are not for the establishment are kept out and reduces holders of public office to* [peons] *of the President instead of officers of the state*." In stating her remedies for dismantling the patronage system, Dr. Kabwila indicates that "*being goal-oriented, standing on principle and pressing forward despite the potential repercussions*" are imperative. However, she acknowledges that this solution is based on the socio-economic privilege of education. Her education gives her the ability to speak out on issues with more autonomy than those who are dependent on the state or the patronage mechanism to survive. By modeling this behavior, which refuses to accept the status quo, Dr. Kabwila hopes to

give courage especially to uneducated and vulnerable populations by "*translating the issues and giving them voice.*"

Dr. Blessings Chinsinga also touched on privilege and power while indicating that the small private sector in Malawi was virtually dependent on the machinations of the state to survive. The lack of diversification and depth of private enterprise conveys too much power to the president. The symbiotic relationship between money and influence funnels the president's expansive patronage network and keeps the private sector in-line by ensuring adherence to the mantras of the state. It also leaves the poor and largely rural constituents increasingly removed from the centers of power without a framework to establish their own mechanisms around leadership development, as they are further displaced by self-serving elements in the political eco-system.

In Dr. Kabwila's view, poverty and lack of resources does not always equal ignorance. Sometimes a lack of access is all that separates rural citizens from being active participants in the political system. Indeed, what rural citizens lack in formal education can occasionally be compensated for with indigenous knowledge systems and contextually based judgments. Dr. Kabwila noted that when the masses see that "*you have clarity of purpose and resilience on principle*" then they are even more supportive of your efforts as evidenced during the faculty strike of 2011 to support academic freedoms that Dr. Kabwila co-led at the University of Malawi campus. This attitude of collective responsibility extends the notion of community while dispelling the very nature of hierarchical patronage which can sometimes characterize relationships between leaders and constituents in a rural context.

8.6 External Influences: East/West Global Normative Synthesis, Transnational Non-Governmental Organizations and Donor Nations

From a historical perspective, Dr. Wiseman Chirwa describes external influences as the driving force that both protected and dismantled the Kamuzu Banda regime. Because he had been educated in the United States and United Kingdom, Kamuzu Banda garnered a large amount of support especially given his pro-Western, individualist anti-communist approach. His eventual collapse came at the hands of the same institutions that initially supported him: foreign donors and NGOs who could no longer tolerate the human rights violations that occurred under his regime. This same sequence of events would occur again with late President Bingu wa Muthrika. Using these two scenarios of leadership ascendance and downfall as points of reference, it can be said that there will always be external influences especially when human rights, good governance and leadership discourses are paramount. What is new according to my informants is the phenomenon of Asians, as opposed to Westerners coming to Malawi. Dr. Chirwa explained that the Chinese strategy is to "*embed themselves into* [Malawian] *society which is not the traditional Western way or that of the European communities.*" The Chinese presence is a relatively recent occurrence and according to Dr. Malewezi there is minimal social contact with the new emigrants and Malawians. Academic connections are fleeting as well with Nyondo (2014) pointing out that only "*8 Malawians* [were] *reported to be studying in China in 2013 along with 3 female Malawi School Certificate of Education holders whom were awarded scholarships by the Chinese Government."* Dr. Malewezi argued that the influence of the Chinese on Malawian culture and leadership is slight to non-existent, and that there remains a much larger Western influence on the leadership styles and trends among Malawians, at least at this juncture in history. His position is that any Chinese interest is strictly economic and that

"*Western donors are more concerned with governance issues*" so much so that in his estimation they have forgotten development.

The Chinese approach is more attractive to African leaders because of the lack of stipulations and conditions on the resources and aid they provide. Thus they have been more successful in their entrance into the country within a short timeframe they have endeavored to be highly active in development of the region. Dr. Chirwa sees the Chinese "*physical presence expanding into influence at the community level because of the inevitable cross-cultural exchanges*" that occur when people are in such close proximity. Many African leaders have been quick to reap the benefits of the arbitrage situation that the opportunity for Chinese development support presents. Dr. Blessings Chinsinga in particular is quick to note that

> *Access to resources without conditionalities negates democratic principles . . . and makes it more difficult to consolidate* [an emerging] *democracy . . . while creating an antagonistic situation between the desires of the leadership and the* [inclinations] *of the people.*

Dr. Chinsinga has a more hopeful perspective and envisions a prevailing political environment where "the rules of the democratic game are respected and rendered legitimate by the normative actions of all significant stakeholder groups" (Chinsinga, 2008, p. 9).

Dr. Malawezi articulated his perception of the stark contrast between the Western and Eastern approaches by indicating that the Chinese have the advantage when it comes to speed of execution. When dealing with organization such as

> *USAID or World Bank, you have to do a feasibility study, then an engineering study, receive this delegation, meet with that delegation, negotiate, get legal opinions, bid for the contractor and then 2.5 years later, maybe something will take place.*

Most politicians need to show some progress for the next election, they don't have the time or the inclination to wait for this type of development to occur. According to Dr. Justin Malewezi, the Chinese move much faster and simply "*analyze the cost; give you the numbers and provide you a loan*." The problem with this mode of development lies in the fact that the Chinese bring their resources including their own labor pool which excludes most Africans and their businesses from participating in the development process. The project maybe completed quickly but it doesn't provide a return on investment for the entire community. This contradiction is slowly becoming evident in many of the areas in which the Chinese have established a presence within Malawi. According to my informants, the consensus is that the Chinese influence has the effect of pushing out indigenous business owners and in some cases providing inferior goods to the marketplace. In contrast, the longer-term deep involvement type of development in which Western governments engage does not show the quick outcomes that benefit politicians in an election cycle. According to Dr. Justin Malewezi, building a road or a bridge that facilitates immediate change in lifestyle for constituents is imperative in a

> *competitive political environment* [it] *is a matter of expediency . . . moving fast gives results to the people and gets them addicted* [to the leadership]. *Not getting the road till next election will get you kicked out* [of office] . . . *We want to train young people in vocational* [arts] . . . *health, education; the Chinese will not do that.*

Dr. Malewezi takes a strategic view that the West is ultimately a better development partner for the above reasons, despite the shortcomings of their approach.

However Dr. Malewezi cautions about the continued paternalistic attitude that most Western nations have towards Africa. He notes that "*systems with checks and balances which makes leaders transparent and accountable are necessary.*" However, in his view, Africans

need the ability to "*decide things on our own instead of being treated as children*." He indicated that in lieu of a parent/child approach, where the poor Africans need saving through the assistance of the altruistic Westerners, a neighborly disposition would be better received by Africans. "*If a neighbor needs something, you help him. Eventually this benevolence will come back to you. Until the colonizer attitude changes, the West will continue to lose Africa.*"

Dr. Kabwila articulates a similar viewpoint when she relates that, "*the prescriptive culture which accompanied colonial education installed an attitude that the continent would crumble without the West and that the uneducated Africans know nothing and depend on the colonizers*." She rejects that sentiment and notes that leaders should position themselves so as to be regarded as bridges connecting the global to the village. In Dr. Kabwila's view, the role of Malawian leaders is to

> *enlighten people by serving the poor while not infantilizing them or inferiorizing them. The goal is to translate the concepts propagated by Westerners while giving access to those who are not as connected or established not to save them. Being mesmerized with a [foreign culture] instead of appreciating your own is the equivalent of having chains and saying thank you for having given me these beautiful handcuffs.*

Dr. Kabwila goes further by describing Malawi as a:

> *supermarket for the Chinese . . . they are coming to buy, to get launched to do business without giving back to the infrastructure. Malawians are anxious as the government advocates for more Chinese investment but there is a lot of resistance because they are taking jobs from people and not employing local labor on the projects they do initiate. In fact, there has been some [conjecture] that many of them are prisoners which reflects on their human rights record.*

While in most cases, Western governments will not typically fund a regime that oppresses people, Dr. Kabwila states that the Chinese are "*problematic because they don't care . . . their position is you people can kill each other as long as you buy from us.*"

While the Chinese projects yield grandiose structures that serve a variety of purposes - the Bingu Convention Center and Golden Peacock Hotel Complex in Lilongwe are good examples, as iterated earlier several of my informants assert that the general perception around their work is that they take shortcuts that result in poor quality and durability. While Dr. Kabwila acknowledges that it's not her place to development styles, her preference is for a balance wherein European and Western countries and their human-rights approach is moderated by a more laissez-faire Chinese approach. In her view, too often the Western methodology of development provides a continual perpetuation of colonialism by tying aid to social issues, such as the government's policy on homosexuality, that have nothing to do with the daily existence of a majority of citizens. On the other hand, she argues that the Chinese development model too closely resembles exploitation and leads to oppression because it remains largely unchecked. According to Dr. Kabwila, finding this elusive balance begins with "*ownership of the process, being policy driven, and working with the instruments (procedures) that are available*" and implementing new ideas in a manner that is acceptable to the recipients not beholden to the benefactors.

Because Malawi is an aid-dependent nation where a large portion of the government budget comes from donors, according to Dr. Dulani, if you "*get into bad books with the donors and they decide to withdraw aid . . . which basically ends your political career*." For example, in 1992 when donors removed aid from the government of Kamuzu Banda, he was forced to agree to a referendum on multi-party rule which gave strength to that movement and foreshadowed his

demise. In 2003 when Bakili Muluzi began advocating for a third or open term, donors again removed their support which torpedoed that effort and set the stage for the next transition in power. Dr. Chirwa notes that even the late Bingu wa Mutharika who was initially lauded by the international community, invited abroad and presented with various honors for his work, by the middle of his second term in office had the average Malawian citizen

> *questioning his worth with regard to the tangible benefits of his leadership. His credibility was built on a foundation of international support not domestic backing as he skillfully spoke the donor language of anti-corruption and fiscal discipline through his career opportunities at international institutions like the World Bank, UN, and COMESA.*

When Mutharika expelled the British High Commissioner in spring 2011 (BBC News, 2011), for among other transgressions, criticizing his increasingly autocratic style of governance, again donors withdrew their aid funding which precipitated a significant erosion of his support. According to Dr. Dulani this cycle is repeating itself as

> *at this stage,* [current] *President Joyce Banda probably has more support among the donors than she has within her own country. You hear more good words about her externally than you do from the average Malawian . . .* [there is a sense that] *she is a success only because the donors have framed her that way and they play a critical role in shaping the face of leaders especially at the presidential level.*

Donors, especially geopolitical groups in particular those like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank clearly play a significant role in framing and shaping the type of leadership that is accepted and revered in Malawi.

In contrast, the role of international NGOs as opposed to donor nations is built on the concept of service delivery to needy constituents. According to Dr. Wiseman Chirwa, the

linkage to NGOs to government resides in their ability to craft methods and plans that allow them to work constructively with the administration to implement interventions that assist at risk citizens while "*bolstering the power and credibility of the leadership*." While my informants related that solutions for Malawian problems need to be generated and owned by Malawians, there is some consensus around the value of accepting assistance as well as interacting with people from other cultures. Dr. Malewezi, who received his Ph.D from what is now Columbia University in New York, notes that "*we [need] support from other people; from outside . . . I would put emphasis on exchange visits to see how other countries do it as a way of building up leadership.*"

8.7 Regionalism and Ethno-linguistic Systems

Dr. Boniface Dulani indicated that language is the primary differentiator between cultural groups within Malawi. His view is that people "*mobilize along language rather than ethnicity*" and that linguistics as associated with region forms the source of group cohesion within the country. The North/Central/South regional alignment is a clear remnant of colonial rule. However ethnic groups overlap the geographic regions so identifying the determinant tribe in each area is critical in understanding their electoral behavior. For example, according to Dr. Justin Malewezi states that in the Northern region

> [Chi]*Tumbuka is the dominant language as well as ethnic group. The Ngoni adopted the language and coexist in the area. The center is almost all Chewa. The South is the most diversified with Yao, Lomwe, Sena and Bantu Chewa* [Nyanja].

Dr. Wiseman Chirwa supports this description and reinforces the point by commenting that Malawi has not had a civil war like other African nations because it is inherently a

multi-culturalist country not dominated by big ethnic groups. This actually magnifies the importance of regionality because there are so many differences on a local level; you cannot use ethnicity to mobilize on group against another for the purposes of civil strife.

While the Chewa influence might be viewed as the common denominator, in reality, different ethnicities and localities have co-existed peacefully leaving individual communities to determine how they want to run their affairs. The safety and security associated with autonomous traditional leadership is almost as important as development and progress.

However, nearly all former presidents leveraged ethnic group differences to further their own political ends, either to unite disparate groups in coalition efforts or more prevalently, pitting them against each other depending on their political motivation. Dr. Dulani while reflecting on the Kamuzu Banda regime, indicated that "*there is a conception that the center benefited a lot then you look at the* [movement] *of the capital* [to Lilongwe] *the government & ministry appointments*" which were all made from within the Chewa, Kamuzu Banda's ethnic group which dominates in the Central and parts of the Southern regions. When the transition was made to multi-party rule, the new political parties perpetuated regional blocks and results of the first democratic election in 1994 reflected the same with the United Democratic Front led by Muluzi representing the South, the (ruling) Malawi Congress Party the Center and Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) led by Chakufwa Chihana the North. Dr. Dulani related that "i*n terms of population and dynamics of the country the South has more people than the Center and the North with the Center catching up fast*."

The large Chewa population when exercised as a voting bloc gives an advantage to parties based in the South and alternately the Center to win elections but creates disillusionment in the other regions. When other regions do finally galvanize enough support to prevail in

political scenarios, according to Dr. Boniface Dulani, they tend to think "*maybe it's our turn now* [to run the government], *which reinforces the politics of patronage*." Given the lack of private enterprise in the country, patronage is increasingly important as a method of ensuring survival. The more significant revenue generating opportunities in country have some connection to the governance structure and by definition, the leadership for the country. Those who do not engage in the process are effectively blocked access to the vast majority of potential private enterprise engagements.

Michael Schatzberg (2001), in his book *Political Legitimacy in Middle Africa: Father, Family & Food* discusses politics in Africa using the metaphor of eating. He describes "the moral matrix or root paradigm [of leadership] as a mental or emotional understanding rather than a coherent intellectual boundary" (p. 24). One of the premises of the matrix is the ideal of a 'father-chief' who provides protection, care, advice, guidance and security for his metaphorical children. In exchange, the father-chief is "entitled to 'eat' part of their labor or its byproducts" (p. 150) in the form of allowances or reallocation of resources to his benefit. This metaphor is extended to encompass the limit on how much the leader can and should consume in a legitimate fashion before he exhausts the permissible range of acceptability and reaches a "level of consumption commensurate with gluttony or corruption" (p. 151). The end result is the degradation of the leader's authority and eventually a decline in influence making the leader vulnerable to imposed regime change.

Dr. Dulani propagates this metaphor of eating by declaring: "'*You have had your turn, now it is our turn to eat.' But really, how much do they need to eat?*" Dr. Dulani further indicated that patronage has increased the likelihood that ethnic politics emerges but does not see ethnicity as supplanting regionalism because as discussed by Dr. Chirwa,

> *it's difficult to mobilize strictly on ethnicity due to the language barrier. For example, most of the Lomwe people that were aligned with former President Mutharika and came to be associated with his Mulhako wa Alomwe cultural group don't even know how to speak Chilomwe.*

However, Dr. Malewezi notes that in Mutharika's second term, after achieving a wide-spread, cross-region electoral victory the late President "*clearly exacerbated the problem which sparked resentment and awakened the other tribes to the inequities of the system*" by favoring his tribe and not balancing appointments or alternately allowing space for other ethnic groups to benefit while evening out the stakes.

From his perspective, Dr. Chirwa argued that the

> *ethno-regionalist divide is composed of two fundamental issues: 1) class formation and how ethnic identities manifest and 2) the material base of each region. The North is associated with education, the Center with agrarian, peasant communities and the South with trade and wage labor on plantations.*

Dr. Chirwa further articulates that divisions in what he calls 'the material base' have created artificial delineations and led to divisions in Malawi around geography. His premise involves the following:

> *The North and its educated elite in both the civil service and the private sector with their focus on avenues for accumulation and advancement, the Central region and its objective of encouraging and supporting issues that benefit the landed class and then the South its business people are all subject to how ethnicity is used and regionalist identities are transposed into ideologies as a method of contesting political space and access to resources. The regionalist fault lines are created and articulated only when there is a*

material issue at stake. To view it as simply an ethnic issue is a superficial analysis. It is really about class formation and the influences of colonialism and economics as it relates to advancing disparate areas of the country.

Dr. Jessie Kabwila views ethno-regionalism from a perspective that is aligned with that Dr. Wiseman Chirwa and Dr. Justin Malewezi. She argues that when the head of state becomes a patron and gives preferential treatment to his ethnic group and their cultural organization develops close links with the party, partisan leadership takes over, which is a problem for both democracy and development. While Dr. Kabwila does not imply that Malawi will ever reach a point where ethnicity is not a salient issue, her concern is how to "*employ ethnicity in order to construct the national*." She uses the term *positive ethnicity* to embody the ability to celebrate your identity without denigrating or *othering* competing groups. In her view, the fabric of the nation is constructed with threads from the various ethnic groups joined together just as the red, black and green colors of the Malawian flag, with a rising sun of hope. While the fundamental concept of regionality in which groups celebrate their geographic space is in and of itself innocuous, Dr. Kabwila laments the way potential economic game-changers like Mount Mulanje (in the South) or the Karonga uranium mines (in the North) hold those benefits for their own region without distributing the opportunities to the rest of the nation.

According to Dr. Kabwila, when politicians, civil servants or even religious and civic organizations note the emergence of an Eastern region, it is simply a way of "*mobilizing people by giving them a feeling they have their own region and* [in the process] *reinvigorating ethnic politics.*" This nascent geographic division was conceptualized by former President Muluzi to consolidate his ethnic Yao and mostly Muslim brethren into a cohesive political element. The area as denoted by the combination of the Zomba, Mangochi, Machinga, and Balaka districts is

culturally and philosophically delineated from the rest of the Southern region but in practical terms only the Police and Road Traffic departments have a separate administrative structure supporting those areas. According to Dr. Boniface Dulani, this is simply an attempt to "*have more opportunities to create positions of patronage to make people feel important*" and ensure their loyalty in the process.

Dr. Malewezi argues that the parallel system of traditional authority and political leadership is unsustainable. His position is that the 1967 Chiefs Act which sublimates all native authorities to the president should be revamped in favor of an established and respected fourth branch of government which includes all traditional leaders. The ability to elevate Traditional Authorities by creating positions like Senior Chief is all too often used as a political tool and patronage process that does not respect the core heritages of the groups involved. Indigenous belief systems should not be used for political expediency or subjected to alteration by outside influences. Dr. Kabwila indicates that the key is to:

> *operate in a language that transcends the divisions that humankind has brought and use mediums that reach the masses. Everybody knows what a smile is. Everybody understands what tears mean. These are the things that connect us at a very basic level regardless of artificially constructed barriers like ethno-linguistic or regional differences. The difficulty lies in organizing in a way that everybody can enjoy their identity without judgment.*

Dr. Kabwila contends that all citizens should have the space to partake in the political system and bring their leadership skills to the table in a manner that allows them to feel valued, appreciated and understood. From that perspective, citizens should revel in the opportunity to contribute knowing that they may ultimately have a positive impact that benefits the whole of

their society which is in keeping with the tenets of a collectivist framework (Hofstede et al., 2010). Dr. Kabwila further articulates that "*being afraid to critique ourselves, evaluate the systems that have been put down and embracing difference is where change is imbedded*."

Given this collectivist perspective, it would ordinarily be unconscionable to be satisfied with the prevailing environment knowing that a kinsman or even countryman is being left out of the process. However, regionalist and ethno-linguistic divides have usurped the normative power associated with collectivism by shrinking the size of the moral circle into a microcosm of society that covers only those with whom proximal, ethnic and/or language commonalities exist.

8.8 Political Economy

The link between politics and economics is constantly evolving in an emerging nation like Malawi. Dr. Wiseman Chirwa points out that after the transition from Kamuzu Banda's centrally-planned and executed economic policies the economic development philosophies of the late 20th and early 21st centuries in which outside interests like the World Bank advocate or implement frameworks that intervened in the internal economic processes of the country were commonplace and rarely questioned. There is no doubt that the wholesale and unquestioned transfer of these development philosophies served to undermine Malawian leadership and called into question its capacity to truly take responsibility for the growth and development of the nation. Dr. Chirwa argues that given this context, it is difficult to ascertain the nature of the Malawian operating environment from an economic standpoint and determine whether it could be aligned with political and economic performance without compromising relationships with,

> *the very donors who supplied the funding for the aforementioned frameworks including the agricultural policies, structural adjustments and rural development initiatives in the first place. This calls into question whether or not you can have a developmental state*

> *that coexists with democracy. Autocratic leadership or a benign dictatorship might be required to reach that level of development . . . a hard choice is on the horizon. It consists of a decision between strong leadership* [and that which] *is insulated from political forces where technocrats and* [cabinet] *secretaries can do their jobs without fear of retribution.*

In Dr. Chirwa's view, such an increased level of independence and autonomy would be moderated by improved transparency and accountability. The method to achieve the balance is not yet readily apparent but surely requires an acknowledgement from both sides -international donors and indigenous government officials- that there is a need to build capacity that cultivates solutions by recognizing the gap between resources available and opportunities to excel.

The scholars who participated in my study espoused that the other side of the development dilemma, the Chinese; have minimal direct influence in terms of leadership and political dynamics. The Chinese role is more of a balancing counterweight as provided by their economic impact against continued paternalistic disposition by Western donors. My academician informants cautioned against the arrogance and exploitation that the added Chinese influence can bring. Dr. Dulani in particular points to the second term of late President Bingu wa Mutharika as an example:

> *His first term he was controlled by parliament. Lacking a clear majority and mandate he needed to cooperate with the legislative branch which probably made him a better leader and showed what Malawi can achieve given the right circumstances as it relates to economic development. But his second term was a disaster because there was no* [check to his power in the form of] *Parliament and he walked away from the West in favor of increased ties with the Chinese. What resulted was an economic disaster*

Dr. Malewezi contends that the "*economics have to be right for the politics to be right*." The electorate is getting more sophisticated. He further notes that the availability of information is sparking an increasing interest by citizens in understanding "*how you are going to bring economic growth in your country as compared to others.*"

In the current context for leadership in Malawi, the ability of the leader to bring tangible development to the country is an absolute requirement. Simply establishing financial viability as a candidate and obtaining name recognition among those contending for office, and delivering salutatory speeches will no longer suffice. Potential leaders must carefully examine the challenges, the economy being the most prominent, and face them forthrightly. If the potential leader is not endowing the nation with policies and programs that will uplift the lives of the people and impart something tangible to their communities then their platform is vapid and their candidacy imperiled. For example, according to Dr. Justin Malewezi,

> *if you are not exporting more than you are importing, have financial institutions which can lend at good rates and stability among food prices, then people will vote for a leader that is able to rise up and articulate means and methods to meet those challenges.*

Dr. Kabwila indicates that there is a need to create policies and processes that undergird the convergence of political and economic praxis but also to divorce such policies and processes from the direct connection to the ruling establishment. In her view, Malawi should

> *put structures in place so that there is a clear difference between what a party is doing and what the country is doing . . . the face of government has to be protected and inculcated so that it is inclusive of everyone.*

Ideally in a democracy, policies and processes should stand as independent structures outside of party politics. There should be a clear delineation between where partisan activity ends and

government begins. The sanctioning of party colors during official governmental functions is one of the more egregious abuses of the firewall that should exist between differing interests.

Within the current democratic framework, the constitution only provides for authority and leadership that is electoral-based. Most of that power rests with the president who has few checks and balances against his/her power. Anything outside of that dynamic does not fit in with the organizing document of the nation however the challenge is aligning reality with practice. Because presidents have virtual monopolies on power, according to Dr. Wiseman Chirwa, "*there exists this huge contradiction between what occurs on the ground and what we assumes takes place based on the constitutional or legal principles*."

Dr. Kabwila advocates for a systems-based approach to governance that provides continuity and accountability across regimes. Using that methodology, technocrats would be identifying:

> *. . . what programs are supposed to attain, what processes are in place to get them there and what types of improvements can be made. Programs would be evaluated using quantitative methods and subsequently modified or adapted to improve implementation and execution. Instead of looking at who did what and who is benefitting from it, the focus would be on how it was done and what did it do to* [ameliorate] *the problem.*

Tactical programs would be replaced by strategic plans that offer a wider, more substantial vision and institutionalize change while preserving the checks and balances required in a democratic, representative system of government. None of the changes suggested by informants reduces the responsibilities of the president who, according to Dr. Kabwila would still hold an outsized amount of power, "*to be a champion of economic development while working to stem*

corruption, redundancy and patronage systems" that extract valuable resources from an already overburdened and inadequate governance structure.

Dr. Kabwila relates that in order for political and economic programs to yield successful results, "*you must* [first] *have a target. You must work towards it and you must be able to weather the storm of critics without shifting philosophy or modifying implementation*. Such a change in tactics should occur only after careful examination and if the program or practice doesn't ultimately better serve the people then it should be repositioned or replaced. The issue lies in the ability of leaders to reconcile a long-term vision that was constructed by a predecessor with the current leader's aspirations and plans for the nation. Doing so requires a level of selflessness that is not often seen in leadership. Dr. Kabwila argues that policies should transcend regimes especially if they are constructed by people who coherently and overtly put the national interest ahead of their own predilections and personal inclinations.

CHAPTER 9

Professionals on Leadership

This co-case includes informants whose professions require some level of formal education or training beyond the Malawi School Certificate of Examination (MSCE) such as a university degree which positions them as knowledge-based workers whom have ascended to their positions as a result of their skills, abilities and intellectual acumen. The group of informants whose narratives inform this part of the study include the participants listed in Table 5. Their feedback was indexed for recurrent themes using ATLAS.ti Qualitative Analysis Software Version 7.

Table 5

Professionals as Leaders

Name	Occupation	Employer
Wisdom Chimgwede	Journalist	Zodiac Broadcasting
Fiona Mwale	Judge	High Court of Malawi
Habiba Osman	Lawyer	Norwegian Church Aid
Sophie Kalinde	Politician/Civil Servant	Former Malawian Ambassador to Ethiopia & African Union Ambassador to the United Nations
Grace Malera	Executive Director	Malawi Human Rights Commission
Charles Mhango	Program Manager	Malawi Human Rights Commission

9.1 Education

Wisdom Chimgwede, a journalist with Zodiac Broadcasting argues that education is the foundation of leadership. To be a leader, one must be knowledgeable, well informed all of which come with some type of formal education. Those qualities provide the ability to "*become*

an influential person that encourages people to actually follow you. Even traditional leaders who have their [mantles] *conferred upon them are going to school now because the knowledge required even in those areas is changing*." Even traditional leaders need to proactively and dynamically adapt to this new environment. From Wisdom Chimgwede's perspective, the problem is that education is not yet truly universal. The slots at the university level are tightly constrained based on the lack of tertiary education options. Demand for these slots in terms of the number of students who pass the MSCE with scores that might allow admission is high, despite the fact that free primary education is not yet available nation-wide and secondary education is available only to those whose families can afford to pay for it. Further, most families cannot afford to send all of their children to the existing primary schools, because children are needed at home to care for infants and the sick, and to help with subsistence agriculture and the selling of products in local markets. When sheer survival comes first, education takes a back seat. The constraints on preparation for university education, along with the university quota system that admits students by region instead of purely on merit creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. Those families who already have education are not ceding the opportunities in that space to a wider audience in consecutive generations. They closely guard that privilege which stifles the introduction of new thoughts or ideas. What emerges from universities can be a reiteration of previous espoused values, ideals and beliefs. In essence, the current lack of educational opportunity propagates a coterie of leadership within a small, close-knit group of elites who have similar goals, objectives, thought processes.

Judge Fiona Mwale of the High Court of Malawi indicates that education not only "*plays a big role in terms of where you get in life, it makes a difference on whether or not you are going to be taken seriously*" when you arrive. With a large population of young people -according to

the 2010 Malawi Demographic Survey, 82% of the population is below age 35, the difference resides now not in secondary or even tertiary degrees per se, but in credentials that provide the ability to differentiate from the large number of other qualified individuals who aspire leadership roles in Malawian society. Judge Mwale cited the United States Government's International Visitors Leadership Program as an example of an investment in leadership development that has the potential to make a difference in lives of future leaders. She contends that it is this type of distinguished experience that conveys the tangible leadership skills that set you apart from the masses. Grace Malera, Executive Director of the Malawi Human Rights Commission and another participant in leadership programs sponsored by the United States Government as well as the United Kingdom professes that the efficacy of such programs

> *differ*(s) *from classical training in their ability to . . . nurture skills of impartiality and independent functioning through interaction with other like-minded individuals. These skills allow you to transcend political divisions, regional and religious orientation in a way that provides a unique platform to constructively interact with and still criticize the government.*

While qualifications are indeed important, Judge Mwale indicates that "*you need to show something different about the way you think about the way you interact with people. That quality doesn't feature here, we've never even heard of it.*" From Judge Mwale's perspective, in Malawi "*it's about checking off the boxes but we don't challenge people to critically think outside the box.*" Grace Malera agrees with Judge Mwale's assessment and posits that education has to be more than sitting in a class working through a module but rather "*reaching out to your creativity and adapting to different situations as they come up. There is no manual saying 'this is how you do it.'*" Education should be a matter of imparting tangible leadership skills within the context of

earning your first tertiary degree while serving as an entry-point for future potential economic and political empowerment.

It is difficult to get access to supplemental educational opportunities and garner venues to employ those emergent skill sets when those situated at the top do not want to act as mentors to share what they know and how they got there. Mentoring is a critical component of the educational process albeit in a practical, non-traditional sense. Sophie Kalinde, former Malawian Ambassador to Ethiopia and African Union Ambassador to the United Nations relates that while leaders need formal education, they also need the benefit of training systems that impart decision making-skills as well as "*professionalize the process around leader development*." Such training should allow the beneficiaries to gain skills preparing them to communicate with a wide variety of audiences and handle the diverse and voluminous amount of information that is directed to them in their leadership capacity. In her Sophie Kalinde's view, training in such skills is critical in allowing leaders to learn and grow in a constructive fashion that supplements the formal education process. Habiba Osman, a human rights activist and lawyer with Norwegian Church Aid, agrees that a "*fundamental shift in the educational system needs to occur in order to inculcate attitudes and ways of thinking that address issues of leadership to ensures that policy and practice reflect reality*" given the cacophony of ethnic, regional and cultural differences that make Malawi unique. Despite the current constraints on educational opportunities in the nation, Judge Mwale sees positive change upon the horizon.

Judge Mwale has been educated and employed internationally, and from the perspective of her experiences in diverse settings, reflects on how things are changing in her native Malawi. Judge Mwale senses a subtle shift in thinking among those who hold the reins of power. According to her,

> *there was a time when you could never be a judge unless you had been a solicitor general and usually there was an implied age requirement of at least 55. More recently, if you look at me and one of my peers as well as the three judges appointed after us, it appears the state is ready to put responsibility in the hands of younger people as long as they have the qualifications.*

The older more established leaders, those with lots of practical experience and yet fewer formal qualifications are dying out. They are being replaced by a younger contingent of educated constituents who are investing in their futures by continually pursuing educational opportunities as they present themselves. These younger leaders and potential leaders recognize the benefits of accruing education and training as well as the increased competition that is forcing them to take a step beyond how the previous generation of leaders prepared and presented themselves. For women, who as a group are socially and culturally marginalized in Malawi, the need for education and training is especially acute. Even women who ascend to leadership positions in government or civil society after acquiring educational credentials, have to endure some level of subjugation and may be exposed to ridicule by the establishment because they are unmarried or are viewed as supplanting their husband's place in society and the home. According to Judge Mwale, the gender dynamics of leadership in this context requires "*assertive women who are comfortable in their skin and realize that none of these things really matter*."

9.2 Social and Community Institutions

Most of the people who are currently members of parliament today were at some point leaders in community based organizations and according to journalist Wisdom Chimgwede, and "*simply moved up the ranks.*" He describes community and social institutions as crucial in that they are:

> *Influential beacons especially in rural villages . . . youth groups and the volunteers that work with them are breeding grounds for growing serious leaders . . .* [and are credited with] *maintaining pressure on the accountability issues with government as well as standing for the people by being a voice for the voiceless.*

Because community and social institutions are in close proximity to the people, in Wisdom Chimgwede's estimation they are genuine political instruments. They provide information and guidance to the villages and have the credibility to influence the indigenous leadership in some circumstances. Community and social institutions are tools within, yet removed from the political system, and can be mobilized based on issues or platforms according to the will of their leadership. Wisdom Chimgwede cites the example of the Malawi Public Affairs Committee (PAC) as a paragon of community leadership. PAC is the largest church-affiliated group (www.pacmw.org) in Malawi and includes Catholic, Protestant and Islamic faith members and holds enormous sway in a country where nearly two-thirds of people acknowledge adherence to or participation in some type of organized religion according to the Afrobarometer 2012 R5 survey data. Messages and declarations from PAC filter through the various parishes and down to the individual churches and are delivered with what Wisdom Chimgwede describes as "*fervency and legitimacy that could never have come from a politician*." From a variety of angles, community and social institutions play a large role in shaping leadership in Malawi. Wisdom Chimgwede acknowledges that there is the potential for corruption and self-aggrandizing behavior in these organizations, but opines that the occurrences are relatively isolated for those institutions that are grounded in religious or civic issues. He cautions however that when these organizations become focused on certain segments of the population to the detriment of the overall well-being of constituents, then the belief is that "*they are* [simply]

positioning themselves as training grounds for politicians and they [subsequently] *lose the trust of the majority of the people.*"

Charles Mhango, Program Manager at the Malawi Human Rights Commission validates Wisdom Chimgwede's perception by indicating that if "*you put in place wrong people with no respect for citizens, no respect for democracy, no respect for rule of law, then there is the question of whether they will sustain democracy.*" The importance of civic organizations, especially in the rural areas is in their ability to help people make informed decisions that are in their best interests.

Judge Fiona Mwale takes it a step further and indicates that she "*has lost all trust or hope in civic and political leaders because they become an extension of the ruling party.*" She cites the early multi-party era as the only time that Malawi had "*vibrant civic and political leaders.*" At that time, everybody was poised to ensure that multi-party rule was engrained in the culture of the nation moving forward. She opines that because community and social institutions all suffer from a constant lack of funding, they may end up compromising their core values in the effort to attract funding and as a result tarnish their independent voice. To silence the voices of civic and community groups the government often buys them off with top political positions or the threat of defunding. To make the impact of the groups that cannot be bought off negligible, the government attacks them as being vindictive and disgruntled as a result of not receiving opportunities in the incumbent administration. Judge Mwale sees government manipulation of the voices of community and social institutions as merely an extension of the corruption of the political system which she purports can be traced back to the traditional Chiefs who accept compensation for advocating the ruling party's talking points without scrutinizing the proposed benefits or detriments to their subjects. Malawians in Judge Mwale's view "*have an inability or*

unwillingness to risk anything of value unsure of what the consequences will be" including publically contradicting leaders by speaking truth to power.

The primary benefit derived from community organizations according to Habiba Osman is the "*ability to get information and work with others to transform your thinking and viewpoints with information that you may not have had access to or considered before*." That, along with practical experience in leadership, makes community and social organizations great incubators for future leaders. They also provide an alternate route for women to take on positions of leadership by empowering them in organizations of their own making and removing the social constraints about masculine dominance in leadership.

Habiba Osman discusses the problem of leaders who found organizations and then refuse to make room for other people to develop by holding on to the reigns and not grooming successors. Such leaders may refuse to mentor or pass on their knowledge and skill in an attempt to make themselves indispensable and integral to the operation of the organization. According to Habiba Osman, they develop *founders syndrome* in which the leaders views the organization as a "*personal property that they are able to repurpose and maneuver according to their wishes instead of acting on behalf of and in the best interests of their constituents.*" The same notion of the leaders' personal investment in and ownership of the organization was described in the narratives of grassroots leaders in terms of the evolution of political parties in Malawi. The opinions of both groups converge when articulating that the founders of these parties which had initially evolved from the pressure groups that were central to the pursuit of multi-party democracy in Malawi during the Banda era had in fact overstayed their usefulness and become anachronisms within their own creations.

9.3 Characteristics of Leaders

Wisdom Chimgwede prefaces his feedback on the characteristics of leaders by discussing the fact that Malawians are generally "*not sophisticated enough to know what the qualities of a good leader are*." He refers to constituents who want a leader who is rich and has money to share with them as relevant examples of the naive constructs around leadership. Wisdom Chimgwede argues that for the educated who ascend to power, truly speaking for the people is as important as having an in-depth understanding of the problems that affect them. He makes a contrast between rural and urban constituents who have differing priorities and outlooks on the importance of certain qualities in leaders. Table 6 represents an overview of the characteristics needed in future leaders, as articulated through the narratives of my informants in the professionals' case.

Table 6

Professional Leaders: Summary of Perceived Salient Characteristics for Potential Leaders in Malawi

Educated	Knowledgeable	Accountability	Honesty/Integrity
Articulate	Commands respect	Strong Constitution	Stable Family

Judge Fiona Mwale observed that those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds "*tend to line their pockets when they get into power*." In her view, "*the better leaders are those who have been slightly comfortable and not looking out for themselves from the beginning.*" From her perspective, family financial stability is important as it provides a different outlook on life and a foundation that allows a leader to counter attitudes of bitterness and resentment that may come their way as a result of jealous colleagues, temperamental political appointees, and

other factors that can cause people to become bad leaders as well as followers. Grace Malera echoed that sentiment and credited her family with

> *nurturing* [me] *into the leader that I can be. Growing up with only sisters, things that were restricted to boys we had to do them. There was no preferential treatment and thus no confinement or limitations based on social roles that would prevent* [me] *from going through the hierarchy.*

Habiba Osman surmised that

> *servant leadership is the key to having constituents engage with the political system in a thoughtful manner . . . citizens are steadily demanding leaders who will be a part of the community by engaging with them instead of talking to them or making idle promises during election season.*

The problem from her perspective and as previously diagnosed by Wisdom Chimgwede, is that a large part of the electorate is "*not very educated or enlightened and the transition to a system that diligently and objectively evaluates leaders instead of simply glorifying and idolizing them takes time*" (Habiba Osman, personal communication, August 2013). Those, who hoard the opportunities as well as the potential benefits from changes in how Malawians view leadership, pose a serious obstacle to the advancement of the leadership development in the country.

9.4 Cultural Values and Customs

Sophie Kalinde argues that the dialog is open for communication about different aspects of culture and customs that alternately define or constrict leaders. From her perspective, change has come to Malawi. Her view is systems and political ideologies influence leaders and followers in a manner that ordinary citizens are reticent to question. For example,

> *from independence until now you will find women dancing for leaders. Nobody has sat down to see if this is developing a woman. Is it giving her courage* [to lead] *or making her a follower waiting for handouts? What does this do for the* [benefit or detriment] *country?*

While these customs have persevered along with other traditions they have done so through the normative controls that community members submit to as part of their deference to the prerogatives of the larger societal group. While they are beneficial in some ways, such as bringing community members back in line if they violate the core values they also inhibit the types of leaders that can develop by preventing out of the box, arch-typical leadership constructs from coming to fruition.

Judge Mwale laments that integrity is a big problem and that corruption is endemic at all levels of government. She blames a cultural system in which everybody turns a blind eye to the practice and in which pointing out the shortcomings or misdeeds of the leader discouraged. Judge Mwale also notes that accountability is lacking and thus some staff members expect to reap the personal benefits of a poorly constructed leadership hierarchy that includes little management oversight. From her view,

> *having open, accessible institutions with systems of monitoring would help alleviate some of the issues around corruptions and accountability but the funding for even essentials is so lacking that there is no conceivable way to get there in the short-term.*

Wisdom Chimgwede complements this perspective with his view that "*corruption so entrenched that it cannot be avoided.*" However, he goes on to indicate that the polity cannot simply cede this space permanently. His perspective is that a lack of leadership at the top has allowed corruption to spread such that it now runs unchecked through most government entities. Sophie

Kalinde recalls coming from a "*fiercely chauvinistic background in a patrilineal society where men think they have particular, very distinct attributes from God*." In her view, it requires a different level of assertiveness and tenacity to become successful and transcend this systematic *othering* which occurs inside one's own culture. She professes that the trials and tribulations she went through because of deeply held cultural beliefs helped her build stronger relationships with other women leaders, as well as command respect when stepped outside of her environment. As a result of the struggles she initially endured to become a successful leader, Sophie Kalinde's approach was to "[focus] *on people and not customs or culture.* [From there,] *you break down barriers that create opportunities for substantial change at the ground level*."

Habiba Osman relates that there is indeed a hierarchy to leadership and as an example, older women are expected to role model and pass values on to younger women. This positionality demands that individuals respect elders, but the effect of HIV/AIDS and the generational gaps created by massive deaths among elders, has dissipated this notion to some degree. Some stigma from cultural practices that negatively affected younger leaders especially women has disappeared. Newer generations of increasingly educated youth are more carefully scrutinizing customs and values. They are buoyed by the explosion in communication technologies that provide increasing access to information. Habiba Osman, argues that the additional perspectives provided by improved availability of information have the effect of "*transforming people's views by enlightening them with timely data to shape their perspectives in a more constructive and judicious manner*."

9.5 Big Man Syndrome and Patronage Systems

Wisdom Chimgwede notes that the cultural system in Malawi is set up traditionally to respect Chiefs and elders. In his view, a leader garners a commensurate

> *amount of respect in direct correlation to his office and does not necessarily stand on his own* [accomplishments]. *The* [accoutrements] *that come with this* [level of deferential treatment, like] *stepping aside when the Chief is passing by or clapping {in a certain manner—with hands clasped} when he speaks, are transposed on political leaders in much the same way.*

When leaders engender this level of follower commitment without earning respect through actions, they can gain a sense of entitlement which obfuscates their obligation to work on behalf of their constituents rather than themselves. Leadership in which there is an overwhelming amount of deferential respect for elders and leaders, and they are not to be questioned, appears detrimental to the development of both followers and leaders when viewed from a individualistic, Western lens. Wisdom Chimgwede argues that because Malawian leaders know the strength of these cultural dispositions, they often use them to hide ulterior motives "*knowing that people will miss the substance by focusing on the fact that the leader was called into question in the first place.*"

Judge Mwale contrasts this stance by indicating that she has always found leadership in Malawi to compromise on principles.

> *Anybody aspiring to be a leader will have to compromise something along the way and that has become an accepted practice. Nobody wants to go* [all in on principles] *because you are not going to get the support you need. Once you get into power it's now very difficult to start eating your words; the whole* [process] *is really disturbing.*

Judge Mwale draws an example from the circumstances and travails of her mother-in-law who is a member of parliament. According to Judge Mwale's description, "*by the time she wins a seat, she has depleted her bank account. She is the Big Man in the village . . . everyone comes*

to the 'Ama' (mother figure) with their needs. Big Man politics creates a dependency culture according to Evans and Stevens (1988). As a result, the practices become so prevalent, that political figures make grand gestures in attempts to outdo each other as they maneuver to achieve public favor. Their largesse does not buy loyalty, as there is no enforcement mechanism for such ignoble transactions but it does garner attention and accolades that can boost candidate credibility among the electorate.

Even when patronage systems and Big Man rule are not manifest in practice they are implied in ideals that have the net effect of eroding trust in democracy and leadership. In Judge Mwale's view, that civic disengagement

> *affects everything from getting a driver's license to applying for a passport. It's not about following the system or adhering to the processes. It's about knowing the Big Man that has made themselves a cornerstone such that they are indispensable or control the means of executing the service that you need provided.*

Those who resist paying homage to the Big Man get their requests sidetracked and delayed. Rule of law, good governance practices, accountability and transparency all suffer in the interim.

Big Man rule and the patronage process are so ingrained that people have come to accept this form of institutionalized corruption as the cost of doing business. They know that resources are scare in a poor country with an inefficient government that is dependent on external funding simply to balance their budget. With everybody struggling for access to the same pool of finite economic resources the implication according to Charles Mhango is that citizens will "*do everything or anything to please the leader or the person who is in front so that they can benefit.*" There is little to no alternative outside of cooperating.

While the view from informants in my other co-cases was that village Chiefs had been corrupted and were a major deterrent to normalizing civic processes and procedures in Malawi, Judge Mwale saw them as having enormous potential because of the power they wield in their respective communities.

> *Very little gets past them, they have their finger on everything going on, they are revered by the people and everyone has to come to them to get their support for initiatives or campaigns. Without their support or engagement as leaders, no one will follow.*

Judge Mwale concedes that this same visibility and power makes it possible to corrupt them calling it

> *"good currency" once they are bought off. No matter how many complaints come in, if the chief de-campaigns you then* [any initiative is] *dead in the water. The older population wants things the way they've always been and if you are an emerging leader and your ideas are considered too radical by the chiefs then you aren't going to get very far.*

Being restrained or curbed by the Chief and Traditional Authority can put a halt to the development of a potential future leader in a variety of ways. Their motivation or drive to become leaders is stagnated or underdeveloped as a result of frustration at their inability to move past the obstacles placed in their path by the overwhelming influence encompassed within the indigenous leadership system.

Sophie Kalinde relates that,

> *you have to look at the Chieftaincy not as a cohesive system but as an extension of the Big Man. Malawian society is big on addressing the shortcomings of the small fish at the*

criminal level but the big man system really traps the imposition of cultural leadership into politics by allowing the big fish to go free.

She looks forward to a day when Malawian society evolves beyond Big Man politics, and the older generation gives way to newer generations that have less connection to this.

9.6 External Influences: East/West Global Normative Synthesis, Transnational Non-Governmental Organizations and Donor Nations

Donor nations by virtue of their financial support have a large amount of influence of leaders in Malawi. Wisdom Chimgwede indicates that Malawi's status as a former British colony and long-time dependent of the U.S. and other Western nations has resulted in citizens' shaping their viewpoints around Western epistemologies. From his perspective, the strong ties, common language, cultural and educational attachments that have grown from collaboration with the West outweigh the new Chinese influence. While he acknowledges that the Chinese are making inroads, their influence on politics appears to affect only incumbents at the most senior of levels. According to him, "*influence and qualities that ordinary Malawians associate with worldly leaders*" are still largely derived from Western values but only to the extent that indigenous paradigms are no longer deemed relevant. China is playing catch up in almost every relevant area of mutual interest and is attempting to fast track their way into the lead by changing the cultural dynamic, and providing scholarships to potential leaders for study in Asia as a method of evening out the scales. However, the small numbers of Malawian students participating in their programs indicate that they have a miniscule effect. Wisdom Chimgwede's overriding concern is that the Chinese offer "*grants and loans with minimal conditions that give leaders an opportunity to obtain quick wins with constituents by directing money to infrastructural needs.*" Chinese financial support comes without any Malawian obligation to

ensure good governance practices which provides a conduit to further entrenching methods of corruption.

> Judge Mwale compares British and Chinese development efforts as follows:
>
> *colonial leadership that was based on a benevolent attitude of trying to develop a primitive group that should be grateful and furthering the cause of humanity. This is contrasted with the Chinese where there is only a commercial relationship; where nothing is free.*

Neither is preferable or remotely acceptable in her view. Judge Mwale articulates that some politicians are naive in expecting Chinese support to be simply another handout. Once the conditions and concessions are revealed, the Chinese will have extracted resources and repayments that will affect future generations of Malawians, -for the inferior goods and services that they provide.

Judge Mwale laments the political elite's lack of intellectual sophistication and inexperience in dealing with the cultural nuances that come with the Chinese. She contends that relationships with the Chinese are built strictly on business aspirations instead of some common cause or greater good. She argues that quick and easy money has expedited a partnership that should have been thoughtfully and carefully analyzed beforehand. In Judge Mwale's view, Chinese development plans are devoid of a strong commitment to study problems and invest strategic resources in investigation and analysis. The Chinese simply work to solve immediate tactical problems while providing no plans to ameliorate future concerns associated with their projects. The lack of connection, commitment and investment in Malawian culture is a cause for concern among those who value a deliberate, thoughtfully constructed development process.

Sophie Kalinde surmises that the new East/West development dynamic provides an arbitrage opportunity for Malawi and likens it to a "*shopping basket where the country gets different things from different donor nations to support their overall development agenda*." The Chinese provide infrastructure support; the British aid; the Japanese, economic development opportunities; and the United States, training and education. The contrast is in how that support is provided and what it entails from the respective perceptions of how each side -East or West chooses to allocate aid.

Habiba Osman sees the Chinese influence as a malevolent factor in Malawian politics. In her estimation, they do not promote the best interests of the people. She reflects on the negative symbolism of their involvement in the country:

> *Parliament is a symbol of rule of law . . . but it* [the modern parliament building] *was built by the Chinese. I don't know how you look at it positively? We are a British colony. A democracy with a constitution, a bill of rights. The Chinese say . . . you can't eat human rights. All this engagement with the Chinese is at the expense of relations with the traditional powers. . . . As* [President] *Joyce Banda is seeing, you cannot serve two masters at once. The Chinese don't even interact with the other diplomats . . . because they don't share the same values or goals. Their construction projects are wrought with human rights violations for the few Malawians they employ. Their treatment of Malawian staff in their other business ventures has been deplorable. Their response has been 'your government has given us this freedom.' They come here and dictate their own rules.*

The Malawian government and its leadership should be ensuring that the Chinese follow Malawian laws while providing a fair and equitable playing field for citizens to work and

conduct business. Leadership begins with advocacy for and engagement with those who are unable to do so for themselves. Unfortunately, political expediency and self-preservation intersect have intersected for many leaders in Malawi, without regard for the downstream effects to those who live with decisions made at the top. By allowing the Chinese to subvert the political structure and rule of law, Malawian leaders degrade the influence conveyed by their office.

Judge Mwale observes that simply going along with the status quo is "*endemic in Malawian culture, regardless of level that it is very difficult to find somebody who doesn't simply walk along the trodden path. It's very hard to find leadership that stands up*." Those in positions of authority want to preserve the status quo to ensure their continued access to the resources and accoutrements that come with power. As a counterbalance, Judge Mwale cites the example of the Peace Corps "*reaching into the rural areas, building relationships with indigenous leaders and talking about what leadership really means and how it is represented in a manner that differentiates it from simply being educated.*" In an emerging society like Malawi; education and leadership can come to be synonyms. Culturally, because the focus is usually on the Chief and the elders, Malawians are accustomed to a system that places these leaders as the unquestioned authorities on nearly every conceivable subject. According to Charles Mhango, indigenous practices such as initiation ceremonies that transmit values and transform adolescents into adults reinforce the concepts around omniscient leaders and the authority of elders. These practices serve as a double-edged sword in that

> *initiation is the ultimate* [achievement culturally] *for young people . . . once you go through the ceremonies there's nothing else . . . you don't have the desire, the yearning to*

be a better leader because according to the culture you have graduated into wo/manhood.

That background does not translate so easily when Western epistemologies are introduced in conjunction with and sometimes in competition to these indigenous systems. As Sophie Kalinde relates, "*it is a part of* [us] *and the behavior of leaders including that of the head of state mimics this ideology.*" The values taught in the villages and ascribed to during initiation ceremonies cannot simply be displaced with Western ones without undermining core tenants of the culture. Indigenous traditions that ground the culture should be blended with Western and global influences. One example is the accommodation made for indigenous songs and dances with Western spirituality found in churches and mosques in Malawi. Another is the adoption of British educational system methods in Malawian primary and secondary schools. As demonstrated through these two examples, the goal is determining how to moderate between these traditional and external (Eastern or Western) elements while providing for continued relevance in an increasingly globalized society. As culture adapts over time to assimilate and accommodate new influences, the cacophony of world views in Malawi continue to negotiate this space while vying for prominence.

Some of my informants indicate that NGOs play only a small role in influencing leadership in Malawi. From their perspective, the role of NGOs should be more informal: working with children and other vulnerable groups and assisting good governance practices by helping leaders provide services to their constituents. These informants saw the most utility in the funding transnational NGOs provide for projects and programs that can make a difference in the lives of others at the most fundamental levels, such as: access to education and support for family development and democratic ideals. NGOs present themselves as models for the

behaviors and attributes of future Malawian leaders. According to Wisdom Chimgwede, NGOs provide a "*more passive approach than 'overt leadership development,' which could be construed as taking part in domestic issues and tantamount to interfering with indigenous political structure*."

Habiba Osman insisted that NGOs were another iteration of what she framed as *checklist diplomacy* in which transnational groups and donor nations provide solutions to problems and Africans readily accept them without negotiation or constructive debate. In this scenario both parties simply

> *check the item off of their respective lists and get back to what interests them most . . . leaders enjoying the trappings of prestige and donors announcing that they made a large commitment and huge effort to support less fortunate Africans.*

NGOs affect structural change by providing training programs for local staff internal to their organizations. These seminars almost always facilitated by Westerners, tend to articulate the kinds of leadership qualities and values a leader should possess, and to prescribe the behaviors to which leaders should aspire based. These paradigms, based on non-indigenous models may not resonate with the audience they are ultimately intended to assist. Donors and transnational NGOs affect and alter the leadership ecosystem in Malawi by inculcating these methodologies in their local staff members. These values and behaviors are then available to trickle down to others in the organization and their communities in a manner that has the ability to shape how they view and value differing approaches to leadership.

Because some transnational NGOs command so much wealth their ability to decide the methodologies and principles of project implementation provides a transformative mindset that incorporates critical thinking, analysis and accountability. Judge Fiona Mwale opined that

exposure to NGO projects and ways of working actually helps develop Malawians "*to their full potential because they can work to the best of their abilities and not worry about ancillary issues affecting their standing and performance*." As a graduate student, Judge Mwale conducted research on how bodies like the IMF and World Bank impoverish rather than improve the countries in which they work. Based on her analysis, these organizations often come in with prescriptive remedies and fail to align themselves with what the people really want or need. The net effect is more detrimental than the status quo, because it tarnishes relationships and discourages use of the remaining resources in future potential engagements. Sophie Kalinde suggests that transnational NGOs should "*move beyond guidance and advocacy and move to empower the disenfranchised especially women. Taking a systematic approach and training people to lead should be paramount*." The modeling of needed values could serve as an intermediate step on the path to a formal system of leadership development that benefits all segments of the population and covers the expanse of the nation.

Habiba Osman sees the role of transnational NGOs as analogous to the internal pressure groups that supported the push for democracy in Malawi during the early 1990s. She perceives that NGOs should be to hold leaders accountable and ensure that they are assisting women and other underserved populations by applying resources to those segments and following up to ensure that results are achieved by the programs they fund. Habiba Osman surmises that this form of *results-based management* which is being enacted by some of the larger NGOs differs from simply offering training and then walking away by requiring "*thoughtful engagement and tangible results in the form of improved structures and people that are capable of not just managing but truly innovating to lead.*"

9.7 Regionalism and Ethno-linguistic Differences

My informants from the professionals group speak fervently about the divide and rule tactics of the colonial system and how these bled over into the post-independence government as evidenced in Kamuzu Banda's rule. Judge Mwale credits Kamuzu Banda's longevity in office to an ingrained mentality which had "*Northerners fighting Southerners and Southerners mistrusting Northerners,*" keeping both groups powerless and unable to create a united platform against him. Similarly, Kalinga (1998) points to the "fear and uncertainty in the minds of people . . . generated from the imprisonment without trial and innumerable other infringements of human rights . . . which divided people and tended to follow ethnic and regional lines" (p. 544). Kamuzu Banda intentionally perpetuated practices that originated with the British of regional and ethnic division as a means of control. Kamuzu Banda furthered their original efforts by leveraging region to improve the positioning of his self-proclaimed Chewa group at the expense of others but especially well-educated Northerners who he feared were too entrenched in the civic and political establishment of the republic. According to Englund (2002), Kamuzu Banda summarily "imprisoned, dismissed or exiled" the vast majority of Northern scholars during his regime, while demanding that teachers from that region return to their home districts in an "ethnic cleansing" of the civil service (p. 55).

Grace Malera argues that while Kamuzu Banda was indeed a revered figure for helping pave the way to the end of colonial rule, once the "*common enemy was defeated and the common goal achieved then his personal interests and that of his* [cronies] *became paramount*."

The long held and contrived acrimony involving region has resulted in dysfunctional communication in a society that has not readily forgotten Kamuzu Banda's reign. The lasting effects of his autocratic approach left freedoms largely constrained or non-existent and large

numbers of citizens reluctant to speak on or engage in discussion of controversial issues. While reviling imperialism, Kamuzu Banda fed into the stereotypes of the colonists who according to McCracken (1986) "didn't trust certain people with certain jobs and declared them only good for certain purposes" (p. 137). In that regard as a large number of my informants observed, Kamuzu Banda was true to his British inculcation and education to a fault.

In order to move forward out of these constraining conditions, according to Judge Fiona Mwale, the

> *lingering resentment from the end of the single-party era* [still] *needs to be addressed. There are so many wounds that had to be buried and so much repression that's pent up that people are not truly free. Some* [segments of the population] *are retrospectively romanticizing his* [Kamuzu Banda's] *leadership and praising him while conferring* [posthumous] *accolades.*

According to Judge Mwale, Malawians need leaders who can guide them to collectively engage in dialogue as has been done in South Africa and Rwanda about where they are coming from while addressing past rivalries in a constructive manner. Some characters from the Kamuzu Banda era are still in the spotlight including John Tembo, a former Banda confidante who was recently defeated in his attempt to maintain leadership of the Malawi Congress Party. With so many reminders of subjugation, Judge Mwale argues that a healing process needs to take place in an effort to move the country forward. Her concern is that the remaining tension based on region is "*now bubbling underneath but [that] this ethnic thing could still erupt at any moment.*"

Judge Mwale theorizes that in addition to Kamuzu Banda's contempt for Northerners, his disdain also extended to the Eastern portion of the country considering that the "*Cabinet crisis of his first term was brought on by a group of ministers who were mainly from Mangochi* [in the

East].” The cabinet crisis involved the group of politicians who had invited Kamuzu Banda to Malawi during the push for multi-party democracy, and worked collaboratively with him in constructing the Malawi Congress Party as a dominant force within the political framework of country. Their support was critical in elevating him to the status of revered leader within a country he had left decades earlier. However, as he grew in power and prominences, he feared their ascendance as potential rivals. When their influence was no longer needed, Kamuzu Banda forced these politicians from their posts and assumed complete control of the government. Kalinga (1998) argues that in doing so Kamuzu Banda

> thereby [deprived] Malawi of a generation of able politicians who besides producing ideas could provide constructive criticism . . . most of the cabinet ministers who replaced them were ill-educated and became increasing sycophantic towards Banda, elevating him to the deposition of a demigod. (p. 546)

Kamuzu Banda was able to depose these cabinet members without much consternation on the part of the electorate as he “appealed to older Malawians who treasured traditional values by arguing that the younger Western-educated politicians were arrogant and not respectful of elders” (Kalinga, 1988, p. 547). The cabinet crisis set the tone for increasingly authoritarian stances on Kamuzu Banda’s part as he strategically positioned himself as a cultural and spiritual icon.

According to Charles Mhango and Judge Mwale, the increasing occurrence of intermarriages between young people across ethnic and geographic lines is a welcome phenomenon that has the potential to ameliorate the issue within a generation. In addition, Judge Mwale posits that more accessible means of conveyance and improved technology are also dispelling some of the barriers between these regions and ethnic groups. She relays that

> *Northerners tend to be very proud of their identity . . . when you have been marginalized for so long it's* [natural]. *They* [Northerners] *are marked people because of their language. In the South, we just merge and it's not very easy to tell one from another.*

Judge Mwale compares the linguistic isolation of Northerners to the immigrant communities she saw while in the UK. "*There is no integration, there is a common language spoken at home, it creates a sense of isolation by exacerbating the differences and increasing the tension with the external groups.*" These enclaves within the larger community promote the negative connotations of *other* or *different* making collaboration across the boundaries even more arduous. While embracing cultural heritage is noble and innocuous in and of itself; doing allowing the nation's leader to directly or inadvertently designate a preferred ethnicity or region is problematic. According to Grace Malera, Kamuzu Banda made the situation worse by

> *essentially declaring the rest of the citizenry as second class and allowing the preferred group the bandwidth to own and drive the national agenda eventually deters development in the sense that others feel alienated and outside the formal governance structure.*

Cultural differences affect others in Malawi as well including the non-African communities that are growing in the country. Asian groups, especially the Chinese have continued to export people along with capital in increasing numbers. The presence and needs of these communities should be addressed as they constitute a growing potential influence in domestic affairs at the grassroots level.

The late President Mutharika in his second term in office engaged in favoritism for his ethnic group or his region. To the extent that it lead to corrupt practices and the enriching of his cronies in a manner that Wisdom Chimgwede labels as the *business of leadership*. When national leaders neglect the spreading of opportunities and wealth by promoting one part of the

country for development and benefit, to the detriment of the rest of the country, this favoritism can spread to all facets of the government, including the Judiciary where Judge Mwale prior to her tenure, "*saw appointments that were turned down because they were not from the right district. Where you came from really mattered*" more so than other qualifications or accolades.

Sophie Kalinde echoes earlier sentiments from the academic informants in my study, that the lack of large ethnic groups prevents conflicts as there is no critical mass to carry the day in that regard. She articulates that Malawians have always been able to talk about issues peacefully "*primarily because of the strength of their communities and the organizations and even local councilors that have represented them*." As Sophie Kalinde points out, there is very little ideological difference between the various political parties. The political infrastructure is not focused on policies or programs that the various groups espouse. It focuses instead on relationships and the strength of the patrons who financially support political party activities. To maintain this network, it is imperative to get into government and *control all the chips*—to replenish your coffers for the next campaign and election cycle. Sophie Kalinde reveals that in her opinion,

> *regionality is a political identity rather than an individual one . . . because the issue of ethnicity has never been discussed or sorted out it has become politicized and you get rifts in the electoral system as a result.*

Sophie Kalinde adds that that with this richness of diversity in Malawi, there also comes some level of discomfort. Even in the Southern region, where a sizable portion of the population speaks Chichewa as their primary language, social factors and cultural differences divide them in other ways. For example, the quota system in education is divisive and should be reframed not

based on region or district of origin but according to Kalinde, "[a process] *based on gender and socio-economic status to better develop those whom are most in need*."

> Wisdom Chimgwede recalls that
>
> *during the* [second] *Mutharika regime, the political people wanted to fill up their bellies and had no interest in the* [welfare] *of the people. They were all from the Lomwe tribe and the president felt like he could do that because nobody could touch him. He was well protected, safe, because he was surrounded by his tribesmen.*

As described by Wisdom Chimgwede above, during the second Mutharika administration, the Lomwe ethnic group, seeing their language and culture evaporating, banded together to form the Mulakho wa Alhomwe (meaning 'door of opportunity') society under the ultimate patron—the sitting president. From his perspective, Mulakho wa Alhomwe served as a buffer against anything that could potentially harm Mutharika. In return, he rewarded them with lucrative business opportunities involving state entities. As regional and ethnic divides influence national politics, it becomes an epic exercise in intra-country diplomacy to get the most trivial of tasks accomplished. Sophie Kalinde suggests that with a lack of clear-cut intraregional cleavages, some fundamental basis for commonality exists in that all four leaders of the post-colonial republic have come from "*matriarchal lineages* [Chewa, Yao, Lomwe, Yao] *this shapes the set of living values presented to them at different stages of their lives . . . impacting their leadership philosophy*."

However, regionalism and to a lesser degree, ethnicity still have the potential to tear the country apart if not checked by progressive leadership development practices. Fiona Mwale notes the difference between these two is important as she declares that "*regionalism a function*

of national events like voting and ethnicity a fact of everyday life which affects relationships, perceptions and practical engagements on a daily basis."

In contrast, Habiba Osman declares that patronage and the boss syndrome are the more retrogressive elements hindering development. She articulates that the political parties are still polarized along ethnic and regional lines and that the upcoming May 2014 election has the opportunity to be the most contentious ever because the leaders (Atupele Muluzi, President Joyce Banda, Peter Mutharika (brother of the deceased president) and Reverend Lazerus Chakwera are resorting to tactics that appeal to the fractures within Malawian society along geographic and cultural lines instead of focusing on the merits of their platforms and the experience they bring to the table. Several informants in my study called for a fundamental shift in attitudes especially among the educated constituents to examine the skills and qualifications of potential leaders by questioning their platforms and manifestos in lieu of blindly following their rhetoric.

9.8 Political Economy

When politicians' primary aim is personal enrichment while paying lip service to constituents, it is hard for a country to develop economically. Self-interested leaders do not see the value in the wisdom and experience of technocrats who provide the knowledge base for service delivery. Judge Mwale suggests that providing public reports detailing how parliament acts on behalf of constituents and expends government funds for the improvement of their communities, would encourage more accountability and transparency. She again cites the example of her mother-in-law who keeps a log of her activities and uses it when she speaks to constituents to showcase her accomplishments. In this case, her mother-in-law is taking a stand to dispel the rhetoric and show tangible accomplishments against those who would "*disparage her and attempt to decampaign her based on gender*." Shifting the public mindset from

handouts to hand ups is not easy. But by providing some personal accountability in how she spends her allowance from the state, this politician has gained some credibility with her constituents. Sophie Kalinde relates that leadership involves not only "*empowerment but how you conduct training that focuses on developing a professional cadre of leaders irrespective of gender.*" Only by embracing every facet of society can an agrarian nation like Malawi move forward and harness all the potential resources at its disposal. Sophie Kalinde articulated the concern is that there is no structured way of declaring "*I am going to go into leadership*" at any level. People are often trusted with jobs for which they have very little qualification, based on a sense of personal loyalty or ethnic/regional preference, which ultimately can have negative effects on the country where politics intersects economics. According to Kalinde, "*under Kamuzu, everything was so compartmentalized, and compressed there was no room for any leadership other than his.*" As a result, economic progress was disappointing especially given Kamuzu Banda's predisposition to reward loyalists with plantations and other agricultural concessions that they were ill suited to manage. As indicated by several informants, in the end the politics got the better of Kamuzu Banda's ethics.

When Bakili Muluzi succeeded Kamuzu Banda, there was a renewed focus on the economy based on Muluzi's business background and that of his associates who by and large were from his region and ethnically Yao. Sophie Kalinde posited that "*with business you have time to be trained and look at systems and courses to develop those skills.*" In Muluzi's case, those skills did not translate directly to the political environment. Sophie Kalinde indicates that the vacuum of leadership during this era existed in such a way that "*Malawians didn't know what it was to have serious leaders.*"

Under the late Bingu Mutharika the economic outlook of the country changed dramatically for the better during his first term in office, but then as Sophie Kalinde relates, "*the tendency of despotism crept in and his vision was tarnished by his actions limiting democracy.*" Mutharika resorted to funneling everything through his Lomwe compatriots and the results were regressive for the rest of the population.

Current President Joyce Banda ascended into the position as head of state and removed some of the tension and conflict that was prevalent but in the eyes of my informants from the professionals group, with only a background in community-based organizations, not much more is natural to her. Decisions that President Joyce Banda has made under the influence of geopolitical groups like the World Bank and IMF have seemingly negatively impacted the economy and lives of constituents, which has led other organizations to work in filling the perceived void of leadership that her decisions have created. However, Sophie Kalinde argues that within these organizations there exists a profound lack of "*professionalism in leadership, some of which comes from overreliance on cultural and in some cases sexist ideology. The turbulence that is created from this ignorance affects not only economic but political philosophies and perception of the effectiveness of leadership.*"

In Sophie Kalinde's view, where you come from, how you grew up, the boundaries set at home and in your community, as well as the type of deference expected by elders and proximal leaders shape the respective leadership philosophy of the people. This has a profound effect on politics and economy based on the concept of each region bringing a different perspective to the overall leadership framework within the country. Northerners, who rely on education and civil service opportunities, and private sector, will differ from agrarians in the middle or those involved in services or trade in the South. Under duress, most people default to their

fundamental beliefs and the basic principles that guide them. They revert to those familiar traits and rely on those with whom they have the most in common: ethnic or regional preferences determine who will be their trusted advisors and ministers. Those leaders will propagate the philosophy that is most accommodating to their networks.

Judge Fiona Mwale opines that political and economic development cannot go hand-in-hand because there is a dearth of qualified and motivated leaders to make it happen. She views economic development as a bonus, and argues that Malawi has been saturated with leaders "*who are solely concentrated on keeping themselves in power*." In her view, Muluzi did nothing constructive with his time in office. He was a populist president, beloved by the people because of his charismatic personality, infectious demeanor and self-deprecating humor, but he was undereducated for the role and accomplished little of substance outside of simply creating a more hospitable environment for civic engagement and political activism. Judge Mwale concedes that "*Bingu* [Mutharika] *made important strides during his first term, but he did so begrudgingly because he didn't have a majority in Parliament and he had to do something to justify his existence.*" Once Mutharika had the majority in parliament that he needed to rubber stamp his initiatives, all the positive momentum he had created ceased and his agenda shifted. Development fell by the wayside in favor of business as usual patronage politics which he leveraged to enrich his fellow Lomwes including building the proposed Malawi University of Science and Technology on land near his home village of Thyolo instead of near the capital where it was initially slated to be built and funding provided by the Chinese to do so (Malawi Today, 2011, April 11).

As Mutharika moved to consolidate power and pass laws to restrict dissent, the destabilizing effects of his policies on the economy were evidenced by petrol and forex shortages

in the summer of 2011. His legacy serves as a case study on the dichotomy of leadership in an emerging country as evidenced by the stark differences in how he led during his first and second terms. In his first term, he demonstrated the potential and power of cooperation between branches of government when held accountable. Mutharika also worked to reach the goals of economic independence, food security, and national sovereignty. However his second term exemplifies the way his predecessors used second terms to enrich themselves and their cronies financially, while consolidating power. In a collective society like Malawi, the traditional approach to leadership is one of service to the people, who have entrusted their leader with great responsibility while endowing them with even greater authority. Previous leaders including Mutharika eschewed this path of servant leadership for a path of avarice.

My informants argue that for a developing nation like Malawi, it is imperative to align the political agenda with the economic realities at hand. Leaders are dealing with increasingly complex problems that require high intellect and leadership skill for engagement with indigenous stakeholders and external contributors to fashion policies for the provision of subsidies and assistance while improving the quality of life for all constituents. At the community level leaders deal with people and services while representing the hopes and dreams of those who struggle to get by on a daily basis. Leaders have to engage in political activities which also result in improved economic performance. Sophie Kalinde argues that when "*human beings are respected and are not judged as simply a commodity but an ends upon themselves that are able to be nurtured and properly motivated then everything else falls into place*."

CHAPTER 10

Cross-case Analysis

This chapter, compares the findings from my three co-cases around themes that emerged from the data including the myriad of internal influences on leader development- education, social, and community institutions, characteristics of leaders, cultural values and customs, Big Man syndrome and patronage, regionalism and ethno-linguistic differences and the Malawian political economy as well as external influences from donor nations, transnational NGOs and globalization. Information from diverse sources such as Afrobarometer, Freedom House and Global Integrity provides further validation for the assumptions constructed from discussions with my informants. Afrobarometer conducts survey research in 35 African countries using standardized questions that allow for a comparison of responses to provide an independent, non-partisan snapshot of the prevailing political, social and economic conditions in each country. Freedom House utilizes a numerical rating scale that ranges from Free to Not Free to provide data on political rights and civil liberties as measured by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Global Integrity provides an overview of six specific areas: "existence, effectiveness and access to laws, mechanisms and institutions that uphold the tenants of public integrity, protection from political interference and availability of resources" (Global Integrity, 2011, p.33). It uses an ordinal scale with possible scores ranging from zero to 100 at 25 point intervals moving from unfavorable to favorable. Data is aggregated into overall scores for each category by country.

10.1 Education

All three sets of informants emphasize the importance of education but from varying perspectives. The grassroots leaders argue that it is important to move beyond skills development for job placement and into a realm in which education actively prepares leaders

through experiences and training. Academic leaders see education as a requirement for competence in leaders, but stress a need for specific training in leadership skills. Both groups saw the need for a formalized method of imparting these skills onto future Malawian leaders. Moses Mkandawire, advocates for fundamental structural changes to Primary, Secondary and Tertiary educational systems to address the capacity gaps in terms of leadership skills. Habiba Osman, concurs with this observation and adds that the fundamental shift required should "*inculcate attitudes and ways of thinking that reflect the reality*" of ethnic, regional and cultural differences on the ground. The professional leaders collectively concentrate on the ills of the overall education system especially with regard to how regional quotas are administered for admission into university. They also comment on how supplemental training opportunities from external parties such as the US Government's International Visitors Leadership Program can enhance leadership capabilities and critical thinking skills. They reinforce the importance of education for women especially as they are perceived as being marginalized culturally and socially and need added credentials to even enter into the discussion when it comes to leveling the playing field with opportunities to serve in leadership roles.

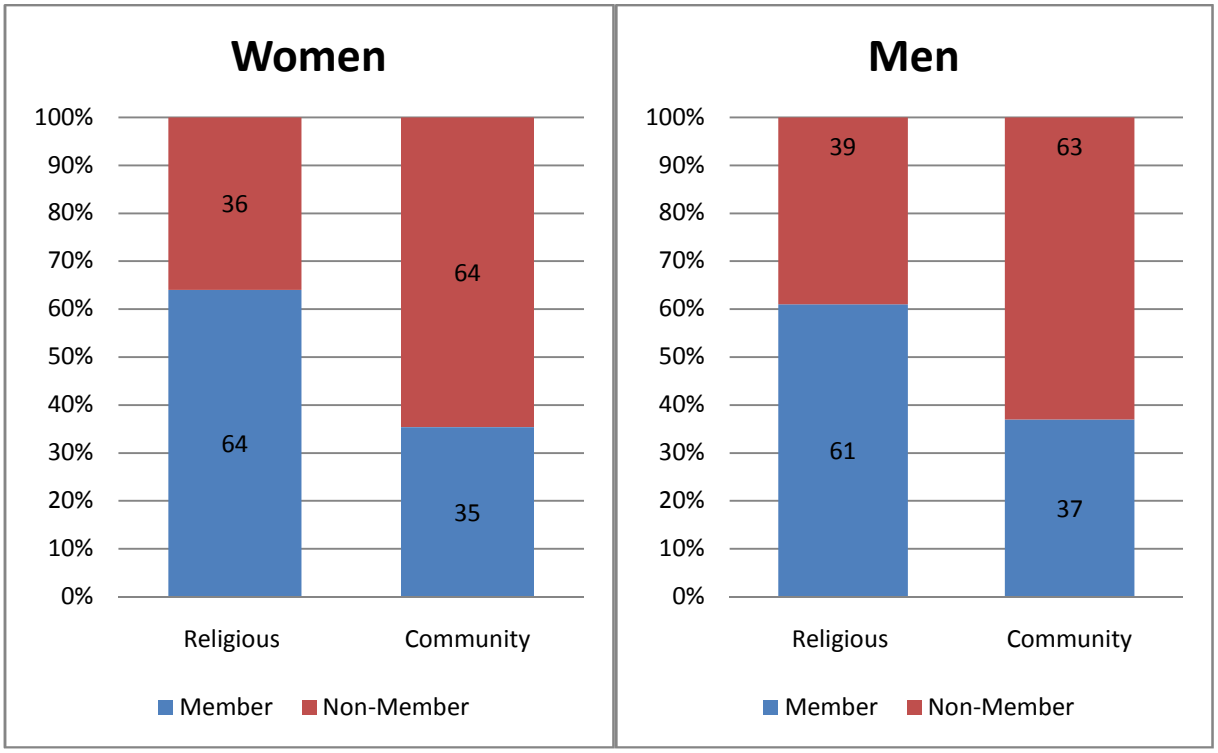
10.2 Social and Community Institutions

Community based organizations are intricate parts of the landscape in Malawi. They provide opportunities for leaders to grow their skills while advocating for better access to resources for their constituents. The informants in my study concur with Robert Phiri, that these groups "*contribute to the change in architecture of leadership in the country*" and that their advocacy had "*a direct correlation on the policies of leaders and resulted in influential changes in the focus of leadership.*"

Starting with the Lenten Pastoral Letter which was the seminal moment in redefining the political landscape in Malawi up to the upcoming May 2014 tri-partite elections, community, social and even religious groups have played a key role in ensuring that leadership conforms to the norms expected in a democratic society. Other successes attributable to the influence of these groups include the elimination of a third-term/open-term change in the constitution to accommodate the wishes of former President Bakili Muluzi to run again, and the recusal of current Vice President Khumbo Kachali as leader of the Malawi Electoral Commission during the process of coordinating the 2014 election process. In each scenario, according to Robert Phiri, there is a "*causal link in terms of how things changed and* [our] *contribution to influence leadership vis-à-vis the institutions* [civil society] *in place as it relates to operations and interventions.*"

These groups wield their influence over the current leader to help her/him change some of the decisions s/he has made, or help move that leader out to make space for new leaders who are incrementally better. Robert Phiri sees the role of these organizations as being, "*developmentally-conscious, with a focus on structures and basic rights . . .* [their] *awareness programs that train individuals, mobilize communities and organize for action*." The awareness programs within social and community organizations empower people to demand their civil rights in order to substantially influence policy. In Robert Phiri's view, community and civic organizations are indispensable in how they contribute to the overall climate for leadership development. This position is supported by that of Dr. Dulani who gives credit to the Public Affairs Committee for organizing the disparate civil society groups and exposing issues with governance, as they did with former President Mutharika prior to his death. Dr. Dulani notes that while the reach of most social and community groups is limited and localized because of

their concentration in predominately rural areas where there is less access to information and lower literacy rates, they can alternately serve to both "*prop up and undermine leaders*." The net effect is that while some community organizations are co-opted by governments as described by Dr. Dulani, in order to silence them, others organizations are simply looking to improve their immediate circumstances individually. Despite these obstacles, community, social, and civil society organizations hold a key place influencing the electorate and cannot simply be ignored. The importance of these organizations to Malawians is demonstrated in how they align themselves with these institutions (see Afrobarometer R5 2011 data in Figure 4).



Adapted from Afrobarometer 2012 Round 5 Data

Figure 4. Membership in Community and Religious Groups in Malawi by Gender.

According to Afrobarometer, nearly two-thirds of men and women are active members of religious groups which, as has previously been discussed, play a key role in advocacy of democracy in Malawi. Also, more than one-third of men and women work closely in

community-based organizations which provide grassroots leaders with opportunities to hone their craft and develop networks that allow them to seek redress of grievances with the government on behalf of constituents (especially those in rural areas) who are unable to speak for themselves collectively. According to the Afrobarometer 2012 Round Five data, 32% of citizens had initiated contact with a member of a civil society organization far outpacing their efforts to contact Members of Parliament (15%), other government officials (11%), and political leaders (15%) reflecting the importance of this conduit of advocacy for Malawians, as well as the level of trust in these institutions among the people. Dr. Chirwa observes a

> *distinction between high-trust institutions and low-trust institutions. There is a lot of* [intrinsic] *trust in local institutions with traditional values and traditional leadership . . . they tend to have a very high level of trust at the local level.*

Wisdom Chimgwede, one of the professionals who participated in my study echoed this sentiment as he cited community and social institutions as "*breeding grounds for serious leaders and credits them with . . . being a voice for the voiceless . . . along with maintaining pressure on accountability issues with government*." The view of civic, social and community organizations articulated by both Dr. Chirwa and Wisdom Chimgwede is supported by data from Global Integrity, in which half of the surveyed population (50% favorable) posited that "in practice the government did not create barriers to the organization of new anti-corruption/good governance NGOs and that those groups have the ability to actively engage in the political and policymaking process" (Global Integrity, 2011, p. 13). Clearly there does exist a space for groups to organize and challenge the status quo through concerted opposition to the ruling establishment. Organizations like Catholic Center for Justice and Peace and the Public Affairs Committee are particularly important in rural areas as they provide information and guidance with what Wisdom

Chimgwede describes as a "*fervency and legitimacy that could never have come from a politician.*" Habiba Osman, an informant from the professionals in leadership group further indicates that community organizations not only provide information and perspective that may not have been considered initially when evaluating an issue but also serve as a vehicle to "*empower women in organizations of their own making by removing the social constraints around leadership.*"

10.3 Characteristics of Leaders

When comparing characteristics for leaders in Malawi, grassroots leaders stick to practical descriptors including: *trust*, *confidence*, and *transparency*. Academic leaders take a nuanced approach using more complex constructions like understand *civil rights/social justice issues, respect for rule of law,* and *globally engaged and respected*. Where the input of all three groups converged is on the topic of accountability, which they agree was lacking in Malawian leaders. In addition, *critical thinking* is cited by both grassroots and academics while *integrity* was important among grassroots and professionals. The rest of the characteristics cited cover a large spectrum and included notions *like understanding the ethnic friction* to having a *stable family structure*. Discussed in their respective chapters, the findings from all three groups are comparatively listed in Tables 7–9.

Table 7

Grassroots Leaders: Summary of Characteristics for Potential Leaders in Malawi

Communication skills	Problem-solving	Critical-thinking	Accountability	Transparency
Confidence	Trust	Rapport	Negotiation skills	Integrity

Table 8

Academic Leaders: Summary of Characteristics for Potential Leaders in Malawi

Fairness/ principled	Understand/ Transcend Traditional Ethnic Friction	Respectful of traditions/ community	Accountability	Servant mindset
Technocratic	Respect for Constitutionalism/ Rule of Law	Understand Civil Rights/ Social Justice issues	Educated, critical thinker	Globally engaged & respected

Table 9

Professional Leaders: Summary of Characteristics for Potential Leaders in Malawi

Educated	Knowledgeable	Accountability	Honesty/Integrity
Articulate	Commands respect	Strong Constitution	Stable Family

10.4 Cultural Values and Customs

Robert Phiri relays that customs and culture are paramount in defining the type of leadership that exists in Malawian society. He points to the traditional focus on

> *communal aspects not individuality and how leaders are shaped first at the family level. He articulated that traditional values which form the basis of thinking and moderates the way leaders behave is inextricably linked to the community and stakeholders of the organizations they serve.*

His view is consistent with that of other grassroots leaders about the importance family structures and indigenous initiation ceremonies play in shaping and molding future generations of leaders. His points are directly connected to Dr. Malewezi's discussion on the strength and pride derived from the origins of the various ethnic groups and how young people are socialized within that context. Ethnic pride is embedded with the significance of traditional culture and the connection

that national leaders make to it by conferring grandiose titles upon themselves to project an image of omniscience and use cultural respect for indigenous leaders to block criticism.

Dr. Chirwa sets this tendency to revere leaders in Malawi within the context of the country's history:

> *seventy years of colonialism (1891-1961) immediately followed by thirty years of de-facto dictatorship gives you a century of a very closed society. Because the dictatorship and the colonial regime shared similar characteristics of being law and order institutions with powerful executive leaders, there is a tendency to take leadership as a revered institution.*

The cultural predilection for revering leaders can prevent constituents from standing up to them by speaking truth to power, when legitimate concerns exist around rights and freedoms. In Dr. Chirwa's view, the tendency is for Malawians to persevere through any leader difficulties and wait until the infractions become so egregious that citizens revolt in protest. According to Dr. Chirwa, it has essentially become a Malawian tradition to "*put leadership above everybody else or any other institution but it is a constructed product of a historical origin rather than a true tradition*." According to Critical International Relations Theory, power relationships like these are constructed and propagated historically and informed through the continuing influence that global entities like former colonial powers and neo-colonial doctrine can have on social structure and thus leadership development.

Dr. Chirwa laments that if you examine the traditional elements of particular ethnic groups you will find that's strong central leaders is not the norm. According to him, "*including the Tonga, Tumbuka and others have a history of ruling by consensus. Even with those ethnic groups that do in fact have strong Chiefs; leadership is contestable and contested in a variety of*

ways." Critical Social Theory allows a focus on how justice is administered and power distributed from indigenous groups in a manner that allows room for leaders who maybe outside the formal, traditional lineage to emerge. Chan, Chen, and Triandis (1998) refer to this specific cultural phenomenon as "vertical collectivism, where individuals submit to the norms of their in groups and are willing to self-sacrifice for their in-group" (p. 280), but do so in adherence to a sense of hierarchy.

Vertical collectivism corresponds with Sophie Kalinde's perspective that some traditional elements have a detrimental impact on the country, and that they are anachronisms that have been preserved as a normative control over community members who submit to the prerogatives of the group in order to maintain the sense of community and the ability to reap the benefits of association. Kondwani Kaunda and Billy Mayaya jointly posit that without substantial change in how traditional authorities behave, with the powers that they have and how they lord it over society, then Malawi has just "*displaced the white masters with the black masters*" (Kondwani Kaunda, personal communication, July 2013). What is left is a system that has projected a façade. It appears to have transitioned but has not transformed in practice. It may be a democracy. But it is according to Billy Mayaya, it is a "*democracy without freedom, democracy without transparency, democracy without freedom and processes*."

Addressing prescriptive traditions and their role in societal interaction is fundamental in understanding the landscape for leadership in Malawi and moving beyond situated elements that have served to deter or impair the process of leader development. Each of the above perspectives finds relevance based on Lentner's (2005) examination of hegemony and autonomy wherein he indicates that "leadership is constituted largely by persuasion and consent when the leading group articulates and proliferates throughout society a cultural and ideological belief

system whose teachings are accepted as universally valid by the general population" (p. 741). The question arises in how to articulate an understanding as Dr. Chirwa puts it of "*universal sovereignty, democracy and governance while making space for issues of suffrage, accountability and transparency,*" particularly as these relate to elected leadership versus traditional leadership and the accompanying benefits and detriments of each form of governance.

10.5 Big Man Syndrome and Patronage Systems

From a grassroots leadership perspective, Moses Mkandawire concurs with former vice president Dr. Malewezi that the Big Man syndrome is inherently "*the result of a lazy polity that are waiting for the government to do things for them*." While opinions between co-case groups vary on the other institutionalized cultural practices that affect leadership, the rise of social institutions and their related cultural preservation groups whether it was Mulhako wa Alhomwe (Lomwe), uMthetho (Ngoni) or Gonapamuhanya (Tumbuka) is not lost on any of my informants. In fact, two organizations, Chiwanja cha Ayao and Ndamo sya Yao were at the time of my field research battling to position themselves as the home of Yao culture with both organizations courting the current president for her approval and patronage based on her familial ties to that ethnic grouping. From his perspective, Dr. Malewezi espouses that social networks should be used to assist those who are "*genuinely in need like the infirm instead of allowing the masses to abdicate their rights and power through the conveyance of gifts. This type of system never demands accountability from leaders as long as the largesse continues to flow*." Handouts fuel the 'Big Man syndrome' and undergird the patronage systems that prevent Malawi from taking tangible steps forward in development. According to research conducted by Global Integrity (2011) in Malawi, it was overwhelmingly apparent that the following were serious issues with the existence of controls around the potential for corruptive practices:

- In practice, regulations restricting post-government private sector employment for civil servants are not effective.
- In law there are no requirements for the independent auditing of the asset disclosure forms of senior members of the civil service.
- In practice citizens cannot access the asset disclosure records of senior civil servants in a reasonable time and cost or that the records which are available are of high quality.

These factors are indicative of a system in which there are loose accountability controls that allow patronage systems to flourish. As Robert Phiri eloquently noted, "*If there are institutions then there must be rules in use. Because Malawi does not have strong institutions, you can't hold leaders to account or take them to task when they have done wrong.*"

An important issue in Malawi is political financial transparency. Malewezi (2013) describes "opaque financial contributions, as well as poor intra-party democracy as affecting the quality of elections and denying citizens access to the democratic ideals of universal suffrage and political equality" (p. 7). According to Global Integrity (2011) survey data, laws on financing political parties are virtually non-existent coinciding with Malawi scoring at the bottom of the scale in the following areas:

- Limits to donations to political parties and candidates
- Limits on political party and candidate expenditures
- Disclosure of donations to parties and/or candidates
- Independent auditing /financial monitoring of parties/candidates
- Quality and availability of campaign finance reports

Chinsinga (2008) writes that such results come from a prevailing culture of apathy and provide a

> clear indication that Malawi still grapples with an inherent docility that was cultivated during the single party era. It highlights the leadership problems, destructive power struggles and domination by singular leaders that has contributed greatly to the progressive disengagement of the electorate from parties. It also is characterizes the lack of viable institutional mechanisms for succession and reflects the extent of the struggle for subsistence that consumes the vast majority of Malawians such that they have little time or interest in actively engaging in the convoluted political environment. (p. 16)

Based on Dr. Chinsinga's writing, it should be no surprise that in both law and practice Malawi is deemed by Global Integrity as insufficient with regard to how it regulates political engagement. Lack of regulation reinforces the ability of external influences to affect the outcome of elections. Malawians are ambivalent as to whether their president can or should be held accountable for his/her actions; only 75% were favorable for such accountability according to the Global Integrity report. Fifty percent of Malawians agreed on the survey that a large number of leaders find reasons not to explain their policy decisions, use executive orders to bypass government procedures and are generally not subject to criminal proceedings.

The opportunity for patronage systems and Big Man rule to flourish appears to be perpetuated with each election cycle. Global Integrity (2011) reports that Big Man politics is exacerbated by the lack of "legal requirement for independent auditing of the executive branch as well as a lack of restriction on former government officials as well as legislators entering private sector after leaving government" (p. 19). According to Global Integrity (2011), the few regulations that do exist are not effective and these senior leaders receive "gifts and hospitality

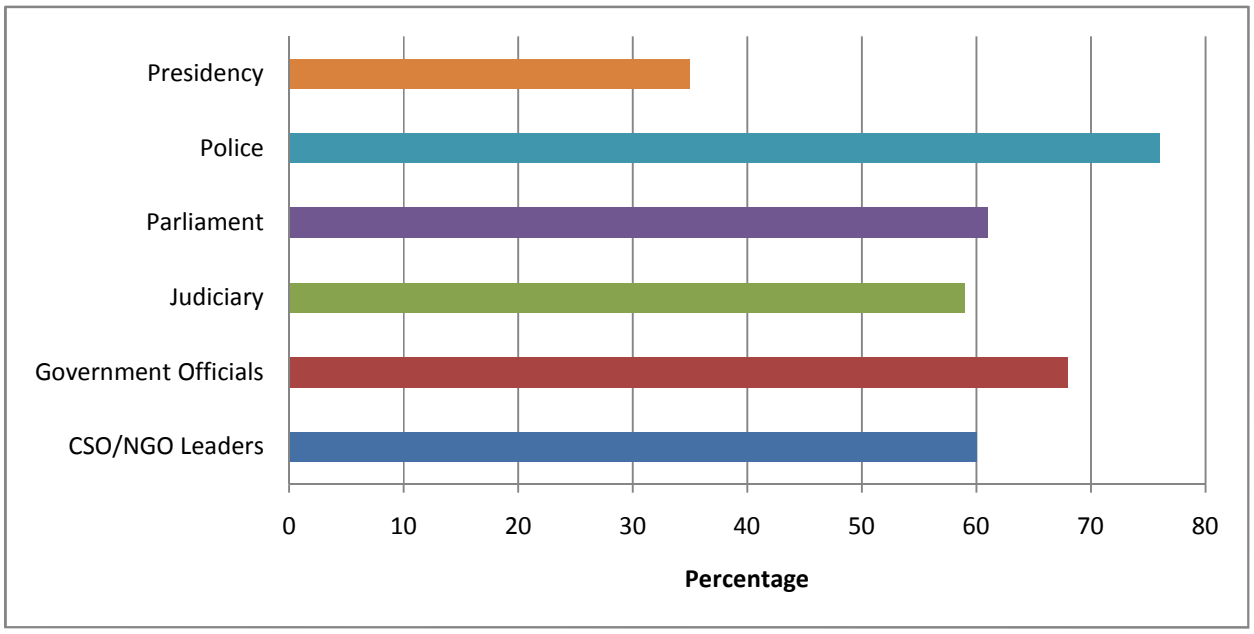
that are unchecked, unaudited and the few poorly constructed records that do exist are generally protected from disclosure to citizens" (p. 19).

Ironically largesse only flows so far, in that there are restrictions in place for civil servants, and according to the same Global Integrity (2011) survey data: "those regulations which govern gifts and hospitality are effective and requirements for civil service recusal from policy interests affecting personal interests are also effective" (p. 23). Those who shoulder the burden of administering the rules and regulations of the republic are less likely to reap the benefits of a corrupt, inefficient system. Politicians hold the rank and file to a higher standard than they do themselves. Sophie Kalinde echoes that sentiment when she relates that "*Malawian society is big on addressing the shortcomings of the small fish . . . but allows the big fish to go free*."

Global Integrity (2011) data indicates that Malawians were only 50% favorable (agreed) with the statement that in practice, the groups that are responsible for providing lavish gifts to influence government officials are barred from participating in future government procurement activities. The lack of substantial consequences raises the bar in terms of risk/reward for inappropriate solicitation of leaders and political officials which further allows the patronage system and corruption in general to propagate. All three co-case groups agree on the problems with patronage, with academicians having the most angst about how the current system has eroded trust in government. Their sentiment about the effectiveness and reliability of government is reflected in the perceived levels of corruption in Figure 5 as extracted from Afrobarometer 2012 Round 5 data.

As demonstrated in Figure 5, the fissures within the governance infrastructure in Malawi reinforce Dr. Wiseman Chira's perception that formalized leadership as evidenced in the current political environment framed by is

> *inaccessible, corrupt and therefore lacking the confidence of the public.* [This is contrasted with] . . . *traditional, values/custom-based leadership* [which] *has a lot of trust because it's accessible within the community, it operates on the basis of permanent values as well as the dominate beliefs of the community and is empowered by or invokes submissions that actually rehabilitate people at the individual and community levels during times of crisis.* [As a result] *there is a stark contrast between the perception of local, community based-structures along with religious institutions in comparison with those of the state.*



Note. Presidency refers to current administration of President Joyce Banda. Adapted from Afrobarometer 2012 Round 5 Data

Figure 5. Perceived Level of Corruption for Selected Groups in Malawi.

Dr. Chirwa's assertions are supported by data from Global Integrity (2011). For example,

> the appointment and evaluation process for civil servants is seen as flawed (only 50% favorable) according to the survey data with the same proportion of citizens viewing this group as marginally effective and subject to political interference, nepotism, cronyism, and patronage. (p. 44)

The independent redress mechanism for civil servants, which should in theory, protect them as well as evaluate and remedy perceived deficiencies around governance and integrity is viewed in the same manner with "only 50% of respondents favorable. However, when examining the level of protection provided to whistleblowers they responded at 75% favorable" (Global Integrity, 2011, p. 48).

When evaluating the efficacy of institutions around governance and accountability, it important to examine whether issues of malfeasance are rectified or adjudicated in a manner that achieves some level of closure as a part of a robust, coherent process. Global Integrity (2011) found that 75% of respondents were favorable with a statement that mechanisms existed to exclude those convicted of corruption. Unfortunately, according to Freedom House (2012), there are no legal regulations around asset disclosure or restrictions for those entering the private sector after leaving government for any group (politicians, civil servants, etc.). Thus the effect of exclusionary and punitive measures is viewed as being virtually useless with those disqualified from holding office simply re-entering the system from another frame of reference especially when ethnically-related patrons control varying aspects of the public works portfolio and consolidate those functions under their clients (Freedom House, 2012).

Dr. Chirwa makes an important differentiation in the use of the term *patronage systems* in Malawi. While he concedes that patronage systems are not unusual to the region and can be

found in various forms across the continent, he articulates that it is important to distinguish between "*a system that is rooted in loyalty to the person*" or individualistic behavior. Dr. Chirwa uses Kamuzu Banda as an example and the distributed behavior "*or those rooted in class or politics as practiced by former President Bakili Muluzi*." Under the former, the *cult of personality* effect (Power, 2010) gained prominence. Cult of personality describes a situation in which an individual places him/herself above the group because of the nature of his/her position as was the case with Kamuzu Banda, the self-proclaimed "Life President." In the scenario, involving Bakili Muluzi, the purpose was to ensure that a certain group benefited from occupation of the favorable position of power through contracts, business interests, concessions and other economic opportunities for a select group of followers.

Dr. Chirwa points out how the late President Bingu Mutharika leveraged a coterie of individuals around him primarily marked by their "*ethnic affiliation and association with the Lomwe cultural group 'Mulhako wa Alhomwe' to distribute the benefits of patronage. His use of an ethnic ideology and to a lesser extent his political party*" solidified the use of patronage as a divisive force in Malawian politics. Former President Mutharika also ardently supported use of the university quota system to provide more opportunities for his Lomwe clan to reap the benefits that naturally follow with an improved level of education training. Nowhere was this more evident than his decision to relocate the fledging Malawi University of Science and Technology from the suburbs of Lilongwe in the Central Region to his native Thyolo in the south (Malawi Today, 2011, April 11).

While there are nuances in the approaches of these various leaders, people who position themselves as 'Big Men' within the patronage system do so because as Dr. Chirwa relates, it "*serves their interests to exploit the situation in order to benefit directly*." In a deeply poor

country on a largely impoverished and underdeveloped continent, there exists no more powerful motivation.

10.6 External Influences: East/West Global Normative Synthesis, Transnational NGOs and Donor Nations

Grassroots spokespersons, as well as academic leaders expressed concern about the demise of local institutions in favor of external groups or influences. The backlash against that which is considered Western in origin has been pronounced from the perspective of each group. Instead of discarding one for the other, Robert Phiri articulates that Malawians should "*take what we have learned from the West and improve those systems*." According to Robert Phiri:

> *What is paramount is the "enforcement and consolidation of institutions at the interface of traditional society and modern society." By negotiating the space between them . . . as the two forces collide and eat into each other, they along with social institutions will moderate behavior and influence leadership accordingly.*

Informants from my three co-cases are also consistent in their assessment that China is an emerging threat to both Western interests and those of Malawians. But they disagreed on the severity and importance of the incursion. Professional leaders in particular argue that the ingrained British influence and commonality in language and customs derived from it, cemented Western epistemology as the continued cornerstone of development at least in the near-term. However because the Chinese emphasize physical development and support of infrastructure, African leaders are quickly aligning themselves with this newest benefactor to the continent. Billy Mayaya asserts that the Chinese model "*actually works in favor of African culture which does not like being embarrassed openly. They* [Chinese] *find a tactical way of addressing concerns and veiling critical conditions*." The Chinese way of working sits well with Malawian

leaders who want to show that they can make fast, observable improvements to the country instead of adhering to the incremental changes that come with most Western-backed projects. Former President Bingu Mutharika noted the speed and relative ease of working with China and changed Malawi's allegiance from Taiwan to the communist nation so as to reap these types of benefits. Robert Phiri voices what several informants referred to when he describes

> *what China does not do is enforce or push for leadership in terms of good governance or human rights. The implication being, that the more influence the Chinese have, there is increasing potential that dictatorial leaders can do certain things because they have an alternative* [to Western funding].

The Chinese eschew what Robert Phiri terms the *invisible software aspect* which encompasses behaviors, rights and principles along with developing the whole person as is found in transformational leadership and aptly described by Hofstede et al. (2010) in their book "*Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind,*" which focuses on the differences in global cultures and the importance of intercultural cooperation. While Western governments continue to focus on behaviors when they provide budgetary support, with China as a development player, the dynamic has shifted. African governments now have more power in negotiating agreements that work for their unique circumstances instead of simply accepting the terms and conditions dictated by donor nations. According to my informants, Western and Chinese influences both have benefits and detriments. They argue that the key is to understand what you are giving up to secure the desired outcome. As Judge Fiona Mwale has pointed out, "*noting is free and the Chinese are only interested in a commercial relationship*" not the growth and development of the people. To paraphrase a popular metaphor, they are interested in the buying and selling of fish, not in the art and science of fishing.

Some of my informants, notably Kondwani Kaunda, articulated a view that the Chinese are simply looking for markets to dump inferior goods and expanded geographical territory that is capable of absorbing their numbers. Kondwani Kaunda refers to the Chinese as

> *a chronic virus that perpetuates dependence instead of letting people stand on their own. Instead of a help up it's a help to themselves* [Chinese] . . . *without transparency and accountability the* [leadership] *will continue to get filthy rich in the process.*

Dr. Chirwa refers to the Chinese incursion as a form of

> *cultural imperialism or exporting human capital . . . in response to their demographic issues at home . . .* [the Chinese] . . . *have no qualms about intrinsically allying themselves with the locals by removing that paternalistic connection that Africans have always contended with as a part of the West's racialized ideology around African inferiority.*

My informants argue that ingraining themselves in the country and constructing infrastructure in businesses, entertainment and other activities that are inclined to provide a cultural outlet and context for new emigrees, allows the Chinese to gradually transform a community to their own ends. In essence the Chinese are co-located but not integrated into the fabric of society. Their enclaves insulate them from social interaction with native Malawians. This is a step beyond Westerner approaches at integration but far removed from indigenization. While the West continues to have a strong formal cultural influence on Malawian society, the Chinese are steadily making inroads. Even while congregating in their insular communities, as previously noted by Dr. Malewezi, the Chinese continue presence can still be felt as they tend to push out indigenous entrepreneurs and rarely provide residual or tangential benefits to the areas within which their projects are situated. My professionals group of informants found this behavior

especially egregious, as Habiba Osman laments when she discusses how the Chinese do not interact with other diplomats and expatriates because there is no commonality between their goals and values. She further discusses how Chinese construction projects seemingly violate human rights obligations, and their treatment of Malawian staff in their business ventures is subpar. Meanwhile the Malawian government does little to protect or enforce infringement upon its citizens as they are beholden to the Chinese and the power and influence of their financial support. Kondwani Kaunda emphasizes that while Western donors, especially the United States were not as egregious in their conduct as the Chinese, they too were ultimately, "*still here for themselves but instead of looking for a market for their goods, they want to make themselves feel good and* [dictate to] *you*" because they think they know better.

The Chinese pattern of bending the indigenous culture to suit their needs can be interrogated by use of Critical International Relations Theory. Fueled by the enormous financial resources that they bring to the continent, instead of embracing and propagating Malawian *umunthu* and Malawi-centric adjudication of issues around poor treatment and cultural interaction, the Chinese have used the power conveyed by their wealth to influence the cultural institutions within the country. They have altered the social structure by injecting a new element into the ecosystem that needs to be contended with as an emerging political issue in terms of the acquisition of land. During my summer experience at the US Embassy, one of my assignments was to research the Land Act of 2012. One of the purported reasons for the bill was the fact that 'freehold' land by foreigners was being sold by the traditional Chiefs and other corrupt officials for personal financial gain (Nyasa Times, 2013, June 1) upsetting the delicate societal balance and the importance that land holds in a largely agrarian country. Action was taken in the form of a policy debate and subsequently, the conditions that would be required by CIRT were met. A

consensus was formed on the need to make changes with regard to stemming the tide of foreign held lands, that consensus cascaded through the hierarchal structures and institutions of the republic and ultimately coalesced into a new national policy that was ratified by parliament and transformed the practices around land ownership in Malawi.

The group of professional respondents in my study expressed concerns about the transnational NGOs and their place in the leadership landscape in Malawi. Charles Mhango related that even though they come to assist with benevolent intentions,

> *if we rely too much on the NGOs . . . they bring their own agenda . . . instead of developing our own leadership skills and ideals. We become consumed with manifesting their institutions . . . when it might not be in our best interests . . . they can actually influence the landscape you can have.*

By leveraging the power of their financial support, the Chinese utilize the concept of soft power to generate a convergence of interests (Etizoni, 2004) then proceed to 'incentivize' the leadership structure to enact programs that are to their liking or benefit. When the leadership fails to conform to the articulated development assistance goals then the proletariat eventually suffers.

10.7 Regionalism and Ethno-linguistic Differences

While regionalism and to a lesser degree ethno-linguistic issues fray the seams of a united Malawian cloth, Moses Mkandawire relays that the formula for success includes

> *a constructive engagement between Malawians debating issues and avoiding any pretenses of region or ethnicity as it provides a recipe for violence in the future. Currently people look at candidates from the north and even if they are good leaders and meet all the qualities and characteristics that a good leader should embody you cannot be voted into nation office.*

Because people are inextricably linked to their region of origin, they are identified first and foremost by where they come from. As Moses Mkandawire states, the focus has to migrate away from supporting someone "*who is a son of the soil, even in the absence of good leadership.*" According to Moses Mkandawire, this form of identity politics "*occurs at all levels from development, recruitment, and even vocational people into public positions.*" The triumvirate of region, ethnicity and religion must not dictate the decisions of leaders who desire a critical, analytical element from their staff. Continuing to perpetuate a culture of *them*, *us*, and *others* by leveraging the language of exclusion can only negatively impact growth and development of leadership in Malawi.

An example involves the university quota system used to determine admission to the university system in Malawi. It was implemented in response to large numbers of students from the North consuming the limited spots available in the tertiary educational system well beyond their proportion of the overall country's population. Instead of a meritocracy, Malawi has a system that perpetuates regional differences in educational opportunity. Afrobarometer (2012) Round Five data demonstrates that the Southern (45%) and Central (43%) regions were more favorable on the subject of quotas than the North (19%) who lost university admissions slots as a result. Moses Mkandawire conveys that the quota practice chips away at the foundation of the republic and allows geographic, and to a lesser degree ethnic tensions, to inhibit leaders from building bridges across communities. Moses Mkandawire also related that if ethnic tensions related to the quota system and geographic location continue to manifest, the animosity could result in a catastrophic event along the lines of the 1994 devastation in Rwanda. Judge Fiona Mwale echoes this view and calls for a truth and reconciliation process that mimics those that took place in post-apartheid South Africa and post-genocide Rwanda as an opportunity to engage

constructively on the issue of ethnic division while providing a space for dialogue and healing. Moses Mkandawire shares that simply adhering to the rule of law as most academics respondents indicated when they discussed salient characteristics of leaders would alleviate this issue. He specifically cites Section 20 of the Malawi Constitution that "bans discrimination of any type" (Constitution of Republic of Malawi, 1994, p. 42) as the basis for eliminating the discussion on quotas and pushing the country forward by distancing itself from these divisive practices. Sophie Kalinde reframes the university quota and admission system as a socio-economic and gender argument instead of one based on ethnicity and advocates for a system that improves access for disenfranchised citizens who are less likely to have the resources available to ascend to and benefit from educational opportunities.

Dr. Jessie Kabwila takes a different approach and advocates for the adoption of systems-based leadership models. From her perspective this is the

> *kind of leadership that speaks from institutions and processes rather than from personalizing issues maybe ethnic-based arguments or religious affiliation based arguments, but more from what are the systems that have been laid out, who is accessing them and what are those institutions saying. I'm trying to get to what I would call an evidence-based kind of leadership.*

Dr. Kabwila argues for leadership that reflects on statistics and other tangible evidence to make determinations about future practices. In taking these best practices and applying them to incoming problems, her argument is that Malawians would build structures and apply diverse perspectives based on previous research which might ideally result in more robust processes and institutions. This type of leadership according to Dr. Kabwila,

> *. . . transcends personal views and can survive the change of governments, can actually survive change of office because I think one of the major problems in our country is that when we have a change of government after five years, we get people who're starting afresh again and this is very, very—we lose a lot of time.*

With regard to institutions and systems around governance, Global Integrity's (2011) results showed that 90% of citizens surveyed reported understanding that they were able to participate equally in the politically process, with a slightly smaller number 75% who reported agreeing with the idea that in practice all citizens can form a political party and run for office. Election integrity was judged as being high with 88% of respondents favorable, while the Malawi Election Commission received adequate marks at 75% favorable for effectiveness, professionalism, making information available and imposing penalties on those who violate the elections laws. Global Integrity (2010) reviewed other constructs vital in determining how open systems are to promote and elect leaders, and that results were that the voter registration system and judicial oversight of the election process were judged as being acceptable with 75% favorable ratings. It appears that the foundation exists and the appropriate infrastructure is in place to deliver governmental services to constituents in an effective manner that capitalizes on committed, dedicated and organized leaders.

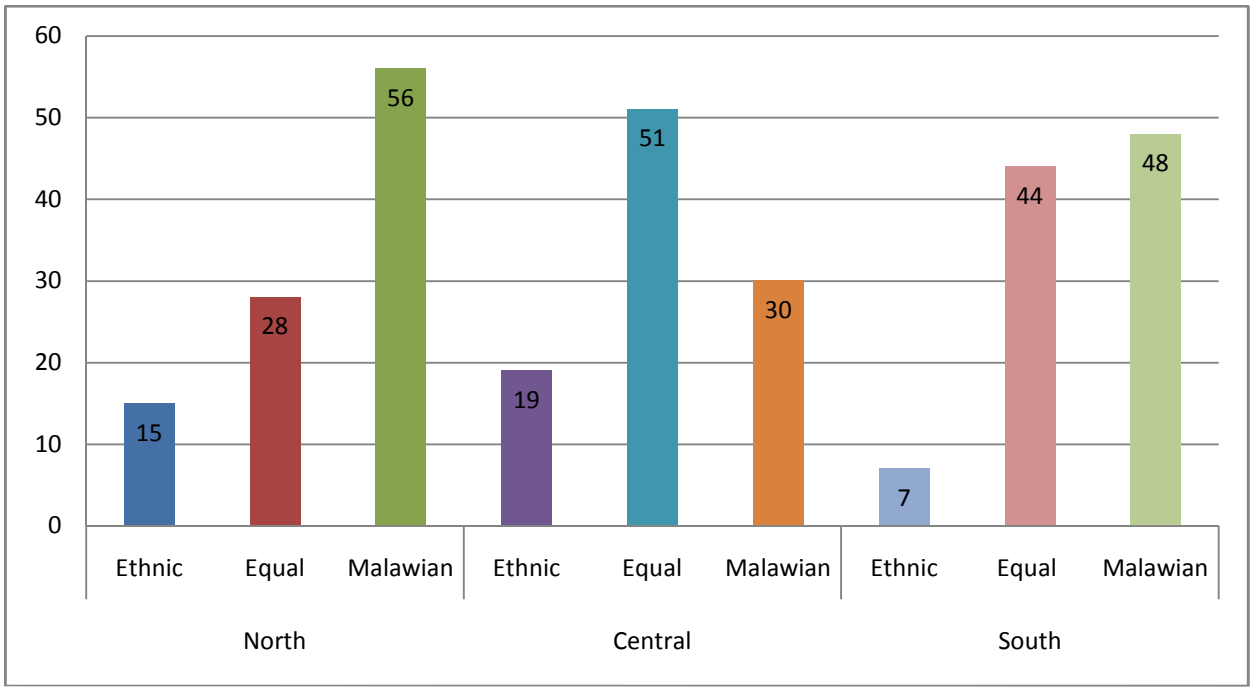
However, as has been reported by my informants, Global Integrity's data finds that in practice official government functions are not often kept separate and distinct from the functions of the ruling political party; respondents were only 50% favorable. This is finding correlates with observations from Grassroots leaders like Robert Phiri who note, "*because there is no institutional thinking that separates a person from an issue they are combined*." In this environment, justice and judgment are personalized rather than rationalized. Because the

political structure is constructed largely through patronage the ruling political party is seen as government. In Malawi, the activities of the two are inextricably linked. The attack on a client/follower is equivalent to an attack on a patron. Robert Phiri gives an example of a state function at which party colors predominate and opposition leadership are prevented from attending, eroding the delicate balance of power, "*where a state institution is positioned tantamount to a personal property in a manner that becomes a challenge for advancing democratic development*."

It has been hypothesized by Malewezi (2013) that "the boundary between legitimate government functions and campaign activities is so thin that it is nearly invisible" (p. 9). These types of conditions make it difficult for the people to demand accountability and hold leaders responsible for their actions. The inequitable use of public resources clouds the judgment of officials, confuses the constituents and makes a mockery of the institutions that are in place to prevent it. Global Integrity (2011) identifies the lack of regular public reports by the government audit agency and citizen ability to access those reports within a reasonable time as potential issues in stemming the tide of corruption and patronage. Global Integrity (2011) data also demonstrated that the Malawi Anti-Corruption Bureau is viewed as only marginally protected from political interference while having only adequate funding and power to carry out its mandate. These observations were supported by additional data from Freedom House (2012). The result is a system that is underfunded with leaders who are disempowered.

Dr. Kabwila's account testifies to one of the major barriers to implementing systems-based approaches to governance in Malawi, the prominence of regional and ethnic divides that affect cohesion in the country. Dr. Dulani related that it was difficult to divide Malawians based on ethnic identity because of the prominence of Chichewa and Chitumbuka as the most

commonly spoken languages for the Central/South and Northern Regions respectively. Because of this unity around language, people are slightly less polarized on race and ethnicity. The Afrobarometer (2012) Round Five survey shown in Figure 6 supports that assumption by demonstrating that only between 7 and 15% of Malawian respondents report holding consciousness of a purely ethnic identity.



Adapted from Afrobarometer 2012 Round 5 Data

Figure 6. Ethnic vs. National Identity in Malawi.

According to the Afrobarometer report, while citizens appeared to lend some credibility to the salience of ethnicity in their society, they first and foremost saw themselves as Malawians. In contrast, it should be noted that in a separate study on comparing the most recent two presidents—Bingu Mutharika and Joyce Banda—in April of 2013, Afrobarometer also found that there was a significant regional element to the partisan support each president received (see Table 10).

Table 10

Presidential Support by Geographic Area

President	North	Central	South
B. Mutharika	10%	7%	26%
J. Banda	51%	27%	21%

Adapted from Afrobarometer 2013

The conclusion drawn by Afrobarometer was that regional partisan differences not only "have a strong impact on citizens perceptions of democracy but may that regional biases may also affect assessments of trust, corruption and performance" (p. 5). President Joyce Banda's overwhelming support from the North can be attributed to the familial links she has to the area - her husband is from the region. There is no doubt that regionality plays a role in how leaders are perceived and embraced by the electorate. How regionality will play a role in the upcoming May 20, 2014 Tripartite Elections remains to be seen.

Robert Phiri, voices his view that migration patterns will be key in the 2014 electoral process. More youth, especially those from the North who are generally well-educated, are leaving their villages and migrating to the larger cities in the Central Region where the nation's capital of Lilongwe is located and to the South, where the country's economic center, Blantyre is located. Along with the improved linkages as a result of more widespread access to technology, this group of young voters can influence future leadership by encouraging people to think differently regarding political issues, as well as leveraging their substantial numbers to dilute the established electoral tendencies of geographic areas. Lastly, as mentioned by several informants including Charles Mhango, Fiona Mwale and Billy Mayaya, an increasing number of intermarriages that transcend regional and cultural boundaries will assist in helping to dissipate tensions based on ethno-linguistic and regional proclivities.

10.8 Political Economy

Politics and the economy sit at the crux of leadership in an emerging country like Malawi. According to Dr. Wiseman Chirwa, "*the dominant element in the relationship between leaders and people is the issue of effective service delivery.*" Effective service delivery relies on a political system that not only provides space for dissonant views and options but promotes opportunities for self- sufficiency and prosperity within an immature economic climate. Dr. Chirwa argues that Malawi craves "*leaders that articulate needs and actually meet them by following through on those expectations*." Leaders who articulate needs and follow through are more likely to be viewed favorably by the electorate, which has a tendency to focus on short-term gains at the expense of long-term opportunities. Malawi's short term orientation might be expected in light of findings by Hofstede et al. (2010) on the long term versus short term cultural dimension for their region of Africa. A variety of reasons including but not limited to the decreased life resulting from the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and the immediacy of physiological needs including food, water, etc. may account for this short-term focus.

Dr. Chirwa cites the popularity of former President Bakili Muluzi as a direct result of the poverty alleviation and social safety nets he implemented during his first term. When Muluzi began moving away from his focus on the immediate and urgent needs of the people, his popularity declined. Mutharika's, his responses to food security and infrastructure issues including the Farm Input Subsidy Program positioned him as an effective leader until issues of governance and human rights emerged which precipitated a colossal derailment in his second term. Dr. Chirwa credits the current government of President Joyce Banda with reversing some of the trends that plagued the end of the Mutharika's regime by eliminating poorly constructed laws and bad practices including Section 46 of the Penal Code commonly referred to as the

Media Act which restricted journalistic endeavors deemed "not in the public interest" (Constitution of Malawi, 1994). President Joyce Banda also engendered goodwill by sending her newly appointed, Police Inspector General to meet with the faculty at Chancellor College in an attempt to mend fences and ensure academic freedoms. While President Joyce Banda deserves credit for restoring some services, facilities and freedoms, Dr. Chirwa asserts that she has yet (at the time of my interview with him in August 2013) to be "*tested in actual delivery of services on her own. When there is less concern about the long-term perspective, the ideological basis of a regime is decreasingly important*" and is subsumed in favor of immediate gratification in the form of development and infrastructure.

The perspectives of my three co-cases of informants varied in regard to their hopes for the new leadership that could result from the scheduled May 20, 2014 elections. From the standpoint of professionals, Judge Fiona Mwale shares her view that economic development and political leadership were in diametric opposition in Malawi, given that most leaders were focused on their personal goals and maintaining a grip on power instead of on the well-being of their constituents. Chris Chisoni focuses on capacity by lamenting that there was a gap in the skills and abilities of Malawian leaders to understand how to compose sound economic frameworks that would improve circumstances in the country and called for better sources of training to help bridge the deficiencies. From an academic perspective, Dr. Jessie Kabwila is outspoken regarding how Malawians should chart their own economic destiny outside the direction of geopolitical bodies like the IMF and World Bank. She cites the example of devaluing the Malawian Kwacha currency incrementally, instead of immediately, as was done by President Joyce Banda's administration at the behest of these institutions without considering the full impact on the poor. Dr. Kabwila further indicates that getting the economy back on track post-

Mutharika requires hard decisions but should be done by leaders who are able to "*weather the storm of critics without shifting philosophy or modifying implementation*." Grassroots leaders also castigated the political establishment for not having clear ideology and manifestos which would help determine how their policies and practices would affect economic development. Moses Mkandawire cites the need to "*put in place polices that are inclusive and able to attract investment*" as a means of achieving increased economic stability while reducing reliance on aid and foreign direct investment to improve economic conditions within the country.

Charles Mhango articulated that there exists

> *a big leakage between politics and economy. Most leaders we have do not understand how it works and the impact decisions like devaluation of the Kwacha and inflation are going to influence economic decisions and impact buying power of the poor.*

My informants indicate that instead, leaders allow their basic understanding of the political impacts of the decision to cloud their judgment and overrule the economics. Instead of allowing technocrats to do their jobs effectively the politicos interfere and force inefficient decisions on resource distribution which undermine the very public they have pledged to serve. Where there are weak political structures, and no uniformity or continuity between the disparate priorities of elected government officials, economic growth is stifled. For an emerging nation like Malawi, taking a human-rights approach to development as articulated by Dr. Jessie Kabwila and Habiba Osman lends itself to a more thorough examination of the ethical and moral dimensions of development by providing what Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi (2004) refers to as a "normative framework to orient development cooperation . . . according to an internationally agreed upon set of standards that allows citizens to hold their governments accountable for their duties while enhancing access to rights and benefits" (p. 1425).

However the ethical and moral approach is in place is in contrast to Dr. Wiseman Chirwa's proclamation that a "*hard choice between strong leadership and political forces . . . which may require autocratic leadership or a benign dictatorship to maximize development*" as well as Billy Mayaya's declaration of a development state wherein "*development takes precedence over other processes and* [is] *not focused on politics or how democratic or undemocratic we are but rather the needs of the people at that given time.*"

Given the contemporary and continued influence of the Western donor nations and the transnational NGOs associated with them, if a rights-based approach is truly on the horizon, the problems of information management and availability must be addressed so that external groups can weigh in on how policies are affecting citizens and understand where resources are expended and the consequential return on investment. Kondwani Kaunda labeled this issue as a priority and equated it to the "*colonial mentality that you can't come and criticize, you can't come and ask questions and there are so many barriers to people to access their rightful information.*"

Global Integrity's (2011) scorecard for Malawi supported his viewpoint and indicated that 73% of respondents viewed public requests for government information as largely being met with 50% adding the caveat that the requests were generally not fulfilled in a timely fashion and were of inferior quality. There was limited enthusiasm (only 25% favorable) for the processes and infrastructure around the ability to appeal issues centered on resolving requests for information. Most often these requests were viewed as being generally slow to get processed, provided at an unreasonable cost, and in some cases outright denied by the government with insufficient explanation.

The branch of government that is most responsible for articulating the needs of citizens has been decimated by the absence of local councilors. In their stead, the members of parliament

(MP's) are responsible for representing the ideals and viewpoints of their respective districts while advocating on behalf of constituents to the central government. Unfortunately, even with the tripartite elections occurring in May 2014, the situation will not likely be rectified in the immediate future in that government expenditure proposals moving forward do not call for compensation inclusive councilors. It is difficult to comprehend how effective councilors can be if their primary focus is on providing for their own basic needs instead of on the problems and issues of those whom they represent as leaders. The Global Integrity (2011) scorecard reported that the legislature has insufficient capacity to monitor the budget process and provide input or changes and concluded that not all significant public expenditures require legislative approval, or are conducted in a transparent manner in which citizens can provide input. With this level of scrutiny on the financial affairs of the republic by external stakeholders as well as the electorate, it remains to be seen is how much progress an under-educated President Joyce Banda can make without significant support from a diligent group of technocratic leaders well versed in political engagement and financial policy. The remainder of her term may simply be focused on campaign strategies around the May 2014 election with stiff competition on the campaign trail from Atupele Muluzi representing the United Democratic Front, Peter Mutharika from the Democratic People's Party and Reverend Lazerus Chakwera, a pastor in the Assemblies of God denomination along with newly elected leaders and the presidential candidate of the Malawi Congress Party casting a shadow over her chances of retaining the post. In the interim, President Joyce Banda faces significant hurdles as a leader attempting to marry economic development and democratic governance in a meaningful way that can have a substantial impact on the growth and development of the nation. Table 11 contains a summary of the cross case analysis matching each theme with the elements articulated most readily by the informants in each category.

Table 11

Cross Case Comparative Analysis

Research Area	Grassroots	Academics	Professional
Educational System	Improved educational system	Training & skills development	Critical thinking and analytical skills
Social/ Community Institutions	imperative to leadership development, influence policy, improve climate for civil rights	more important in rural areas easily corruptible religious groups/strong attraction to ordinary citizens high trust institutions	breeding ground for serious leaders, maintain pressure & accountability on government
Characteristics/ Ideals	trust, confidence, transparency, accountability, critical thinking	understand civil rights/social justice issues, respect for rule of law, globally engaged & respected	understand ethnic friction, stable family structure, educated
Cultural Values/ Customs	communal aspects, indigenous initiation ceremonies	consensus and cooperation, vertical collectivism, balance traditional and contemporary	sense of community, neocolonialism, moderating traditional beliefs
Patronage Systems/ Big Man Syndrome	transactional leadership, culture of waiting, loose accountability controls, pervasive nature of collusion and corruption, inefficient transportation and information communication networks	poor disclosure rules and regulations governing financial transparency, auditing & monitoring, inaccessibility of leadership , lack of asset disclosure regulations or enforcement	making examples of small infractions instead of larger cases of malfeasance against senior officials, lack of formal consequences
Global Normative Synthesis/ Donor Nations	Improve upon knowledge gained by interaction w/West, natural evolution of democracy, Chinese culture is more closely aligned w/traditional African beliefs	Chinese-provided infrastructure is gaining influence, failure to impose conditions and requirements lets African leaders become more autocratic, dumping ground for inferior goods & extra people	Longtime Western influence is cemented, China can only make minor inroads, commercial relationship only no interest in cultural ties or education/training to improve development of people
Transnational NGOs/ Geopolitical Orgs	Here for themselves, personal gratification, markets for goods, virtual dictators on what is good for Africans	Prescriptive remedies for African problems evolve around conceptualization of inferiority	Overreliance on external groups that bring their own agenda and priorities

Table 11

(Cont.)

Research Area	Grassroots	Academics	Professional
Regionalism/ Ethnolinguistic	Need to separate regionality and ethnicity from development of good leaders, remove all vestiges of the quota system	Systems-based leadership models that provide evidence-based approaches to future practices, disrupt invasive discontinuities in leadership from regime changes	Truth and reconciliation process needed to address atrocities under single-party rule, minimize continued perpetuation of divide & rule tactics
Political Economy	Improve the capacity of leaders to address economic issues with training and education to bridge gaps in knowledge-base	Improve poverty alleviation and food security infrastructure. Reduce reliance on geopolitical groups who may not have best interests of average citizen at forefront	create additional opportunities for those that are educated to seek & obtain professional employment and extend the middle class

CHAPTER 11

Conclusions and Suggestions for Practice and Research

In July 1993, after 30 years of authoritarian rule, Malawi took its first steps toward eradication of the single-party era. According to former Vice President Dr. Justin Malewezi, this occurred due to the following reasons:

1. The international geopolitical environment changed. Malawi's cover as an anti-communist country disappeared with the fall of totalitarian regimes across the globe. Increasing democratic scrutiny.
2. The faith community openly aligned itself with multiparty democracy highlighted by the Catholic Bishops Lenten letter and the work of Protestant Churches and Muslims through the Public Affairs Committee.
3. Local pressure groups mobilized for change.
4. Malawian exiles exerted support on donors.
5. High dependency on donor aid made government vulnerable to pressure.
6. Malawians were emboldened by democratic transitions occurring on the continent especially in Zambia. (Malawezi, 2013)

According to Dr. Malewezi, these factors culminated in the end of single-party rule, a significant inflection point in the development of leadership in Malawi. With the demise of total authoritarianism, there was then space available for varying viewpoints and leadership styles to be cultivated, free from the autocracy that had dominated the country for the previous three decades. Education and advocacy could grow and flourish in ways never before imaginable.

11.1 Summary of Findings and Research Questions

According to Hippler (1995), while the "development of the public and the state [are] still rudimentary in Africa, there exists a strong sense of cultural identity derived from kinship and shared experience. This identity is constituted by ethnic, national and sub-national groups" (p. 88). My informants frame geographic alliances as an endemic problem in Malawi which permeates every aspect of identity and is most apparent in the university quota system as well as the formulation of the political parties. Regionalism is viewed as the primary factor for group cohesion in Malawi and serves as the fundamental basis for access to patronage systems, political influence and the procurement of other scarce resources in Malawi.

The 1994 multi-party referendum significantly and irrevocable altered the political environment. Making space available for new systems and methods of leadership to take hold unencumbered by previous practices yet significantly influenced by the prevailing cultural environment. The current goal is to create informed, educated leaders who can function in an increasingly globalized world while continuing to venerate traditional customs, values and cultural practices that ground society. Responses to the research question that focused on these practices indicate that region has a prominent place in determining which citizens ascend to leadership positions and how their roles are constructed, negotiated and articulated based on their standing in the eyes of the Traditional Authority. Chiefs may have been marginalized to some degree by political elements within the leadership ecosystem but they continue to wield considerable influence in their respective communities.

The period immediately following the conversion to multi-party rule was frenetic and tumultuous. Dr. Justin Malewezi in his August 2013 keynote address at the National Institute for

Civic Education's Pre-Election Stakeholders Conference indicated that the result was a fractious polity with sardonic constituents. He cites,

> the large number of independent candidates for office, the frequent splitting and formation of political parties, the re-emergence of personality cults, the dishing out of money by parties and candidates (tantamount to vote buying) and the visible use of state resources by incumbents to prevent balanced coverage by the public broadcasting system. (Malewezi, 2013, p. 5)

This system did not improve until 1999 during the second term of Bingu wa Mutharika when he transcended regional voting patterns by garnering support from across the country and ushering in an evolved sense of democracy within the nation. Lentner (2005), writing on hegemony and autonomy, states that

> Politics presupposes conflict among groups with different material interests, separate identities, was of thinking and unequal power. As a result, some groups rise to positions of domination over others partially based on their ability to persuade others and provide leadership. (p. 735)

Responses to my research question regarding ethno-linguistic differences indicate that this constitutes a strong secondary factor for group cohesion in Malawi, second behind regionalism. When combined with the emergence of cultural heritage and preservation groups that serve a secondary role as conduits for aligning political and economic interests along ethnic lines. It is becoming more prominent as a potentially divisive factor within Malawi.

The informants in my study argue that there should be no class, race, or geographically-based competition for resources. Conscious effort by enlightened leaders should determine how competing interests with defined agendas can work together to improve the lives of constituents

by best meeting the needs of the people in a way that builds capacity and ensures future opportunities for all citizens, especially for the masses struggling through impoverished circumstances. One method to achieve viable leaders is to better empower educational groups to have a stronger leadership impact at the ground level. Since free public primary education was not available until 1994, the field is limited with regard to resources, scope and opportunities. As a result, leadership is only incorporated into the formal educational system in a symbolic manner. There is a need for more formalized training including seminars, institutes, and exchanges to expand the practice of leadership. Malawi Institute of Education might fashion opportunities within the primary and secondary school curriculum to encourage and promote leadership outside of the formal hierarchal structure.

My research examined leadership from the perspective of three different groups: professionals, grassroots leaders and academics. Based on information provided by my informants, the electorate is beginning to demand leaders who will truly represent the people and make progressive policy decisions on their behalf that provide for the common good. According to Dr. Malewezi, that initiative must include better ways of engaging women and eliminating barriers to participation that are the result of economic, social, cultural or religious constraints. One method of doing so is to better engage with social and community institutions as well as civic and religious organizations that serve as *de facto* training grounds for future leaders. By working with these groups to professionalize leadership practice, their leaders could be trained in methodologies that build bridges in communities and empower them to engage more knowledgably in civic affairs. Social, civic, community and religious organizations are a foundational part of Malawian society. They are woven into in every aspect of life especially for rural citizens who are generally less educated and have limited access to information or wider

communication methods and might be left out of the process. Membership in these groups also allow future leaders to grow their skills and expand their scope while establishing their leadership style and building their confidence.

With the May 2014 tripartite elections impending at the time of my fieldwork, there is exists a significant opportunity to reshape the foundation of the electorate in Malawi. The question that remains is how to fortify and consolidate its democracy and what types of leaders are necessary to do so. The Mutharika regime in particular, as evidenced by his second term in office, stopped doing what was in the best interest of the people and concentrated on the interests of associates and benefactors, in order for the president to consolidate both economic and political power. At the time of his death, Mutharika was heavily promoting his brother as the next president of Malawi in an attempt to extend his own influence beyond the two-term limitation in office. However, development grows not from the leader alone, but according to Dr. Justin Malewezi, "*things that grow the economy and the people come from the bottom up.*"

Dr. Malewezi also discussed that:

> Elections are the roots of democracy. They anchor the tree of freedom. They provide nourishment in the form of accountability, rule of law, and respect for human rights. Elections allow citizens to choose the types of leaders they wish to govern them and represent the current wishes and future hopes of a nation. For leaders to be trusted by the people, the elections that place them into office must be independently organized, credibly and professionally conducted, and executed competently and with integrity and transparency. (Malewezi, 2013, p. 9)

Elections are meaningless unless the leaders who ascend are prepared, determined and focused. Moving toward a transformational leadership model that incorporates some of the characteristics

mentioned by informants from each of my co-cases, concentrating on accountability, transparency and critical thinking is the starting point as it disengages from traditional transactional leadership and immobilizes patronage and Big Man syndrome. Informant responses to my research question on the role of traditional leadership styles, cult of personality and Big Man syndrome indicate that these are conspicuous elements in Malawian social and political culture. The Big Man syndrome in particular is pervasive throughout every facet of life. According to my informants, everything from getting a passport to securing a bore hole for fresh water is subject to some type of extraneous compensation process. Each of the three co-cases lament the waste, fraud and corruption entailed in the patronage system, and articulate that Malawi is detrimentally impacted by its continued existence.

The narratives of informants in my study indicate that there is a relationship between stakeholder perceptions of leadership and societal conditions for the average constituent. In response to my research question regarding the political economy, my informants argue that there is a linear relationship between the quality of leadership which increases—as seen for example with the first Mutharika administration—when the economy prospers, and a more open, accommodating political environment. The opposite premise holds true—poor leadership results in economic problems for the people, evidenced by the turmoil with which Mutharika's leadership ended, including forex shortages, gas rationing and widespread food insecurity.

The growing number of youth, increasing intermarriages, especially in the rapidly expanding urban areas, along with improved technological and physical mobility can blur the lines that divide groups by ethnicity and region while helping to build bridges of cooperation and understanding across groups.

Informant responses to my research question that focused on the impact of Eastern and Western influences outline that China is becoming a larger factor in Malawi due to the financial wealth they bring without strings attached but that Western countries have long-standing cultural ties which allow them to maintain a small advantage in influence. Preparing future leaders by formulating opportunities that convey the ability to navigate outside influences from many sources while respecting the importance of indigenous systems is imperative in a developing country like Malawi. My informants noted that China will continue to put pressure on Western nations through their direct engagement philosophy, providing infrastructure and facilities in opposition to the Western model of programming and development support. My informants argue that leaders should refocus aid, regardless of the source on the development of people, and strive to attract technocrats, academics and other strong civil servants to work on development projects in order to build long-term stability and enhance future opportunities.

In response to my research question about the ideals, characteristics and behaviours that constituent good leaders, my stakeholder groups have contrastingly different views based perhaps on their particular frame of reference and position in Malawian society. There is some level of intra-agreement on characteristics for idealized leaders. The points of convergence include: *accountability*, c*ritical thinking*, and *honesty/integrity.* Informants express the need for more sophisticated leaders who can navigate political, indigenous, technocratic and policy-making spectrums. My informants convey that Malawi still has too many leaders like Bakili Muluzi and Joyce Banda who very formal education and are more populist candidates for office. They campaign based on personalities as opposed to issues and when they capture leadership posts provide opportunities for their undereducated associates to inefficiently and ineffectively manage the affairs of the republic. However these leaders still have wide appeal because of their

endearing demeanor and the patronage systems they have built during their respective tenures in office. Habiba Osman cites the lack of educated people participating in the governance of their country which allows less educated people to govern as a failure of the democratic system to work for the people that it is constructed to benefit. Along with this observation she offered a Voltaire quote as an analogy of where Malawi is as a country: "*It is difficult to free fools from chains they revere*."

My three co-case groups have differing responses to my research question about the influence of transnational non-governmental organizations, donor nations and geopolitical groups on leadership in Malawi. Points of consensus revolve around the notion that these organizations are in Malawi for themselves, whether it involves markets for goods, personal gratification or to make themselves seem benevolent by assisting the 'less-fortunate Africans.' Informants do recognize the ability of NGOs and donor nations to help moderate issues with the government, as well as provide infrastructure and service delivery at the ground level to vulnerable and at risk populations.

11.2 Theoretical Framework

My use of Critical International Relations Theory and Critical Social Theory to analyze my informants' narratives is analogous to Chaterjee's use of anti-colonial nationalism as relates to Africa. As discussed in Kalinga (1998), from Chaterjee's perspective, anti-colonial nationalism has two constituent components. The material is

> political and economic in nature and is the realm of the 'outside' in that it aspires to emulate Western-style government. The spiritual domain is internal and seeks to protect and advance indigenous culture while meeting attempts to tamper with traditional values and practices with [staunch] resistance. (p. 547)

Critical International Relations Theory provides a framework for me to examine perceptions around leadership as anchored by the triple lenses of ethnicity, regionality, and traditional customs, values, and culture. How power is understood and allocated based on the prevailing social structure, as well as the influence of external bodies from the post-colonial period to geopolitical bodies such as the World Bank, IMF and donor nations like the United States, United Kingdom and China are all important concepts. Critical Social Theory provided a framework to question those cultural practices and institutions that limit the ability of leaders to move outside the established hierarchy, leaving power in the hands of a small group of elites. Post-Kamuzu Banda leadership, while having a reasonable track record given the prevailing environment on justice-related issues according to the external data gleaned from Afrobarometer, Freedom House and Global Integrity also demonstrated a failure to share power by continuing to dominate the electorate through corrupt practices and Big Man hegemony. Malawian leadership's post-colonial track record on economic development was marginal given the continued dependence on foreign aid and the recent devaluation of the currency. In this regard, CIRT and CST are valued paradigms through which it is possible to cultivate an understanding of the prevailing environment for leadership development in Malawi as well as future efforts required to improve the vitality of leaders.

11.3 Contributions to the Field

My review of the existing literature demonstrates that subjugation and colonization eroded traditional institutions (Eggen, 2011), Western-style management practices provide little support as these individualistic philosophies do not travel or integrate well (Bagshaw, 2009) into a collectivist society (Hofstede et al., 2010). Hippler (1995), who wrote from the perspective underlying the problems of democracy in third world countries, observed that "the logic of

Africa's communal tradition and values is one for which the modern state is simply incompatible" (p. 89). These perspectives all align with Migdal (1988) and his perceptions on Social Control and Political Hegemony as relates to indigenous institutions. Migdal (1988) posits that "colonists came at the expense of the native African, upsetting his institutions and contravening his customs by exploiting ethnic groups and corrupting their leadership" (p. 102). According to his Migdal's work, this is the genesis of divide and rule tactics that perpetuate myths while erecting barriers to cross-cultural leadership.

The existence of democratic institutions does not ensure respect for human rights or engender rule of law. Use of the term democracy in and of itself is problematic as it means different things for various groups and the connotations do not always resonate with the same allure that Westerners would presume, especially when the prevailing administration and its affiliated patrons make "tactical use of the concept" (Hippler, 1995, p. 8) as it suits their needs. Neocolonialism as articulated by Vengroff (1975) engenders a transfer of power to the domestic ruling classes from their former colonial masters. It "prescribes under-development in perpetuity based on imperialist exploitation that is devoid of overt power" (p. 248). Neocolonialism can be viewed as an exercise of patronage powers by the indigenous elite. According to my informants, there is a dearth of roles that provide space for women leaders in this context, and sustainable leadership practices that could have a positive impact on emerging leaders are generally disregarded as they do not serve to perpetuate the strength and dominance of the patron.

Singer (1949) argues that dependency theory explains how emerging and modernized nations co-exist. From his perspective, an imbalanced relationship is always to the detriment of the emerging nation. It portends a vicious cycle in which impoverished nations provide resources and labor to wealthy countries only to have those same countries introduce goods at

inflated prices and inferior quality. According to my informants, the ability to build strong democratic structures that are able to withstand external influences as well as approaching problem solving and building leadership capacity within a framework that values indigenous methods is an imperative. Conversely, avoiding the temptation to impose paradigms that do not resonate with indigenous ethnic groups or fail to solve immediate problems, but instead gratify a desire to assist marginalized populations without taking into consideration their stated priorities should be avoided.

Vroom (1964) wrote that expectancy theory implies that "the intensity of work effort will depend on the perception than an individual's effort will result in a desired outcome. Expectancy theory suggests effort and performance must be aligned and linked to a person's motivation" (p. 72). In a meritocratic society, expectancy theory would resonate as a viable framework for successful leaders. Given the prevailing environment in Malawi, however, expectancy theory does not correlate. The linkages between intensity of work effort and performance and outcomes are often fleeting. For example, education is a primary conduit to many leadership roles but university quotas based on region distribute opportunity unevenly, create discord and discourage cooperation while derailing potential leaders.

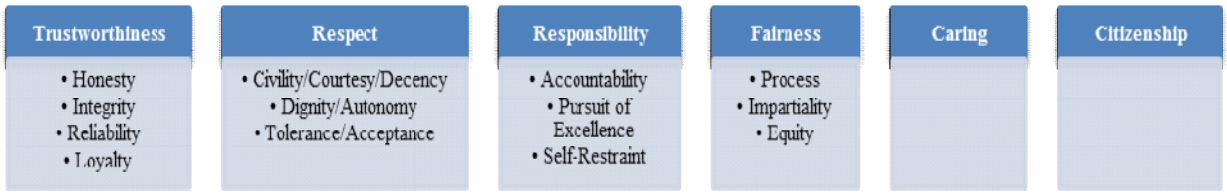
Wallerstein (1974) wrote on world system theory and views the world as being divided into core, semi-periphery countries and periphery countries. Wallerstein demonstrates the importance of improving the mechanisms that guide both political and economic development. The need is to create additional opportunities for citizens to become upwardly mobile, decrease the need for external budgetary funding and establish protocols that lead to economic prosperity instead of cycles of dependence and austerity. Based on the responses from informants in my study, there is a cascading effect of improving food security, shrinking the influence of the

patronage system and increasing the access to and delivery of services and programs that improve the quality of life through the use of culturally relevant methods that are attuned to what is actually occurring on the ground instead of in an idealized environment. The added benefit is an improved understanding of the prevailing leadership environment and knowledge of indigenous leadership practices that serve as gateways to underserved and marginalized populations.

11.4 Future Considerations

A recurring theme in my informants' narratives is that President Kamuzu Banda had instilled a sense of unity among Malawians such that they transcended ethnic and cultural boundaries. However, I agree with the findings of Kalinga (1998) who observed that "in reality, Banda had no [tangible] political or socio-economic ideology to unite Malawians so he defaulted to the importance of traditional values" (p. 544) to make up for his lack of statesmanship. It is here that Banda's four pillars of Unity, Loyalty, Discipline, and Obedience (Kamuzu Academy, 2014) take hold and become the center point of a Malawian culture superseding ethnicities that inhabit its artificially constructed borders.

Today, educational systems, technological availability and mobility give citizens access to information and each other as resources. Further research should be conducted comparing Banda's four pillars with other character frameworks such as those espoused by the Josephson Institute for example, especially when leveraging them to devise ethical decision-making behaviors and standards of conduct for leaders while making allowances for differences in perspective between Western and indigenous leadership concepts. See Figure 7 for Josepheson's framework.



Adapted from Josepheson's (2002) *Making Ethical Decisions*.

Figure 7. Six Pillars of Character.

Additional challenges remain in the quest to understand the environment for leadership development in Malawi. Other deficiencies in the literature include the following: Future studies might compare and contrast perspectives on my research questions from scholars at Mzuzu University in the North with those from the University of Malawi/Chancellor College in the South to understand how situatedness might affect perceptions of leadership within the academic community in Malawi. Another area for future research as delineated by Habiba Osman is the plight of Asian Malawians:

> *What are the challenges of those from non-African backgrounds that are born here? Are they engaged in society, do they participate civically? Are they just promoting their business interests? Have they isolated themselves intentionally or as a method of self/cultural preservation? How does this affect the electorate? Where and under what circumstances does a human rights framework for development finally over take the patronage and big man networks that are viciously ingrained in the civic and social institutions?*

Yet another concept that should be explored is how hegemony and ideology frame power relations between and across grassroots leaders, academicians, professionals, elected and non-elected leaders and indigenous leaders within transnational NGOs, as well as other potential cases or groups of informants. What role do leaders play in navigating these power continuums and how does a thoughtful process of leadership development help articulate the needs of both

the leaders and followers? According to Lentner (2005), "Hegemony is broader than just ideology in that it encompasses a wide range of social practices, including the institutional ensemble of the state, its' representative apparatus, education, welfare, economic processes and national institutions" (p. 741). According to my informants, when political parties operate as an extension of the state, leadership development and its constituent ideals are relegated to an assemblage of confederations whose primary source of allegiance is not ideology but rather regional and ethnic loyalty construction

A careful examination of the key cogs of customs values and culture should be undertaken leveraging Abercrombie and Turner's Dominant Ideology Thesis (1978). In their work, they posit that "in most class societies there is a pervasive set of beliefs that broadly serves the interests of the dominant class. This espoused dominant ideology is then adopted by subordinate classes which are consequently prevented from formulating any effective opposition" (p. 151). The relevance of the Dominant Ideology Thesis can be examined from the lens of the varying social classes in Malawi and extended to regionality and ethnicity based on Abercrombie and Turner's examination of roles cultural pluralism, common value systems and class consciousness that play as precursors to a rising but not yet situated class. From this perspective, the practical application would be how leadership follows the ideology and cultural constructs articulated to them by the ruling elite in a manner that is detrimental to the proletariat by subordinating them mentally and economically.

Finally, a further interrogation of the work done by Cianci and Gambrell (2003) on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and its applicability to collectivist cultures should be undertaken to determine how relevant the model is in emerging nations like Malawi. Cianci and Gambrell (2003) argue that when nominally altered to include the basic need of belonging, while

eliminating self-esteem and framing self-actualization as being attained through meeting the development needs of society, the model still holds value in collectivist societies. While these concepts can seemingly be related to indigenous identity as conveyed by ethnic origin along with a framework that reinforces the notion of *umunthu* where individual accolades are sublimated for the benefit of the extended group, Maslow's model is based on Western paradigms featuring an individualist cultural identity. Cianci and Gambrell (2003) based their analysis on modernized not emerging nations as delineated by Singer (1949) and their work would need to be validated through additional investigation for applicability in a developing country like Malawi.

It is inherently problematic to attempt to fit indigenous cultural constructs to Western paradigms. When introducing comparisons to Western concepts such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Josepheson's Six Pillars of Character as future research opportunities, the goal would be to examine the concepts in further detail through additional in-depth research including the introduction of new cases while understating the applicability of these respective principles in concert with the prevailing environment.

11.5 Summary

This study drew on informant narratives of how internal and external forces influence the process of leader development in Malawi. My informants argue that social structure as articulated by traditional customs, values and culture plays a major role in how leaders are nurtured, perceived and inculcated. But as Malawi grows, the strategies and structures around leadership development must also change. Chinsinga (2008) articulated it most eloquently when he wrote that the principles of good governance are underpinned

> by a leadership which is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and which follows the rule of

> law while ensuring that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable and marginalized are heard. (p. 18)

According to the narratives generated across the three co-cases from a multitude of informants, the landscape in Malawi is more region and culture-focused while evidencing a collectivist perspective as opposed to being meritocratic.

Countries like Malawi should work to fashion governmental systems based on indigenous understandings about the value and virtue of democracy. Dr. Malewezi in particular noted that this infrastructure should incorporate alternate approaches to leadership in the political process by ceding space to traditional leadership systems in some format or context. Additionally, future research on the discipline of leadership as it is instituted in Malawi should coalesce around the ideals of honesty, transparency, accountability and critical thinking recommended by my informants. The research should take into consideration the utility of the prevailing structures and the frameworks that currently exist as conveyed by the informants in my study.

11.6 Lessons Learned for Other Nations

The findings of my research holds promise to inform policy and practice in other nations based on the interconnectivity of ethnic groups in the immediate geographic area. According to Osei-Hwedie (1998), the environment in Malawi and Zambia are remarkably similar in terms of regionalism and ethno-linguistic conflict. Osei-Hwedie argues that when combined with the phenomenon of elite behavior, this triumvirate accounts for “some of the major difficulties arising in the process of the consolidation of democracy” (p. 229) in both former British colonies.

Orvis (2001) discusses political tribalism or voting characterized by dominant ethnic zones (synonymous with regionalism) as severely impairing the leadership landscape. Osei-Hwedie (1998) further posits that the communal cleavages which undergird societies in which

> political parties serve as the basis for group cohesion and are divided along ethnic and regional lines creates mistrust between groups and threatens the stability as well as the future of democracy. The unequal distribution of resources, as well as the manipulation of ethnic identity by elites. (p. 230)

to promote their own divide and rule interests along with the sublimation of the traditional for the modern are all key factors in the rise of regional and ethno-linguistic tension. These elements are remarkably similar to the prevailing conditions in Malawi. The data gathered from my co-case study might help to ameliorate these types of occurrences by highlighting the inequities brought about by patronage systems, and how they serve to under develop the population. As related by my informants , it is paramount to have robust enforcement mechanisms for rules and laws headed by strong, technocratic leaders who are not intimidated by senior officials that lack integrity and attempt to circumvent the system of checks and balances established to curtail such malfeasance.

Orvis (2001) also "contests the notion of moral ethnicity or what it means to be a good community member" (p. 9). In Malawi this is synonymous with and encapsulated by the spirit of *umunthu* as well as the four pillars constructed by Kamuzu Banda as the underpinnings of a national unity over ethnic affinities (Kalinga, 1998, p. 545). The informants in my study generally regarded the four pillars and *umunthu* emphasis of the Banda dictatorship as a benevolent one responsible for preventing wide-spread acts of violence among and between various ethnic groups. What remains is for other countries in the region to not simply adopt the

philosophy but to strengthen its appeal with some tangible heuristics resembling Banda's core tenets of Unity, Loyalty, Obedience and Discipline that interconnect citizens in a constructive, non-confrontational manner.

According to (Ndegwe, 1997),

> groups viewed today as monolithic entities were in fact not coherent communities before colonial rule. To assert a claim to ethnic citizenship, rests on evidence of identity, authority and legitimacy for members of a particular ethnic group and is accompanied by social customs, practices and non-bureaucratic structures that define and uphold this citizenship. (p. 601)

The constructs around this embodied citizenship frame the ability to engage in the community, be active in civic affairs, promote the relevance and importance of indigenous culture and most importantly engage in leadership practices that accommodate the changing demographics of the nation while providing a space for marginalized populations to have their voices heard.

Similarly situated, Posner (2004) posited that the Chewa and Tumbuka communities on the border between Zambia and Malawi are nearly identical. His work examines the conditions under which cultural cleavages become politically salient. My research builds upon this effort by identifying policies and practices that inform leaders and resonate with constituents in Malawi. Additionally, because the borders between countries in the Zambezi region as in most places in Africa are remnants of a contrived colonial construction, my study should have some level of relevance in Mozambique and other nations where the Chewa people are resident.

Comparatively, Kenya is ensconced in regional issues called 'majimbo' which is characterized by unequal distribution of resources, unequal infrastructure and living standards

across its eight provinces. Similar to Malawi, geography is used as a proxy for ethnicity as well as the influence that regional origin has on everyday life from government appointments to university attendance slots. Some of the lessons derived from the informants in my study include their advice to eliminate artificial barriers to advancement and achievement, while reinforcing the importance of a meritocratic society can be leveraged to formulate potential leadership frameworks for Kenya based on the prevailing leadership landscape in that country. In addition, the observations from my informants related to increasing the depth and sophistication of the political space in Malawi by encouraging parties to abandon geographic enclaves and regional strongholds in favor of constructing manifestos and action plans that provide tangible goals while depersonalizing politics is also transferable and imperative. As related by my informants, such a system would better incorporate ideas from the disparate elements across the socio-economic spectrum by leveraging grassroots organizations in conjunction with transnational NGOs to educate and train leaders in rural areas, while equipping them with leadership skills that would allow them to better serve the interests of marginalized populations.

11.7 Conclusion

The findings of this study add to the scholarship related to leadership practices in emerging countries in a variety of ways. First, it is differentiated by the combination of factors that examine the intersection of ethno-linguistic systems and regional differences and how leaders navigate those attributes in a contested cultural context. The gravity of regionalism in Malawi is relatively unique in a part of the world where religion and/or ethnicity are the primary defining attributes that resonate with citizens as relates to institutions, distribution of resources, political climate and leadership.

Second, leadership ecosystems in emerging countries like Malawi should not be constructed solely within an imported paradigm. Thoughtful consideration should be given to a balance that captures the essence of the indigenous while engaging the global and empowering citizens and leaders in a way that allows them to transform their society in a manner that engenders social change. Navigating this dual consciousness between indigenous and the political leadership is a delicate balancing act for future leaders as well as their followers who contend with external influences in a variety of forms that have a tremendous impact in shaping opinions and beliefs of younger generations in a growing nation.

Next, an examination of Banda's four pillars which established post-colonial (R. J. P. Williams & Childs, 1997) behavioural norms to serve as the underpinnings of a cohesive Malawian identity reveals a unique combination of the contemporary with the traditional that still resonates with large segments of the populace.

Finally, the wide-spread influence of patronage systems on access to goods and services as well as the framing of increased Chinese interest in contrast with the enduring Western influence in Malawi has been conveyed through the narratives of my co-case informants. The Chinese influence has been derided for its negative influence on the growth and development of leaders, while Western influence has been interrogated for its deficiencies as well as its underlying assumptions about the capabilities of indigenous leadership.

Informants have generally described the need for fundamental process changes to take place as relates to leadership development. Otherwise, resources are used less efficiently and are more prone to misapplication and mismanagement. Greater coordination among groups, especially by region and ethnicity is required to achieve this milestone. My goal in this research was to identify the truths provided by my informants and understand how they lead to new or

overlooked constructs on leadership while giving space to Western viewpoints that might remain applicable in this unique context.

From that perspective, the transferability of my findings may be constrained by the impact of several elements including the relative extent of Dependency Development as discussed by Evans and Timberlake (1985) as a factor in the hegemony and praxis of the leadership environment in the country when compared to others in the region. My position as an intern for the United States Department of State, my perspective and theoretical lenses which have Western-research frameworks as major components surely influence my analysis in some regard. The vitality of my findings rests upon the clarity with which I described my research methods, so as to make them reproducible; the authenticity of my informants narratives; the depth with which I have described the research context; my ability to construct a convincing analysis based on the feedback of my informants; and the convergence and divergence of the stakeholder narratives as well as the utility of their feedback in improving the discussion and flow of ideas around research, policy and practice in the area of leadership development in emerging nations like Malawi.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

North Carolina A&T State University
School of Education – Department of Leadership Studies
"Stakeholders perceptions of influences on the development of leaders in Malawi"

These questions are to be used as a GUIDE for performing a semi-structured ethnographic research interview. The nature of ethnographic analysis is that the questions are iterative and inductive, building upon each other to construct a conceptual framework. This type of theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) allows the research to explore topics in different ways with different informants either exploring deeply or creating bridges to comparison groups. As a result, these questions may or may not be used with each informant or in this particular order. Thus this list is considered to be a guideline such that the questions below reflect the nature and type that will be asked but should not be construed as an all-encompassing list that will be exhaustively examined in its entirety.

- What influence do educational groups, social institutions and community organizations (cultural associations, welfare clubs, traditional authority, etc.) have on leader development?
- What ideals, characteristics and behaviors do constituents look for when considering potential leaders in a developing country like Malawi? Have those things changed over your lifetime?
- How do traditional customs, values and cultural considerations influence leaders in a developing country like Malawi?
- What roles do NGOs, donor nations, and transnational groups play in the preparation and development of future leaders in Malawi?
- How do leaders in emerging countries like Malawi balance Eastern and Western leadership influences within their cultural context? Are any aspects of these influences useful to leaders in Malawi? If so how and why? If not then why?

- Do you believe that traditional leadership styles like the ‘cult of personality’ (“BIG MAN” syndrome) influence contemporary leader development? What impact does this or other leadership styles in use in Malawi have on political sustainability?
- In a multi-ethnic country with regional allegiances like Malawi, what special issues must leaders or political parties consider when navigating the environment?
- What is the effect of civic & community leadership on political sustainability? What effect does this have on good governance practices? How has Malawi avoided the pitfalls of other nations in the region?
- What is the relationship between political leadership and economic development? Why is it important and what has been the effect on Malawi?