

REPRESENTATIONS OF DEVELOPMENT IN DISCOURSE:

THE CASE OF MALAWI, 1964 - 1998

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STUDENT DECLARATION

I, Charles Harley Bright Mphande, declare that the thesis entitled ***Representations of Development in Discourse: The Case of Malawi, 1964 - 1998*** is no more than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, figures, appendices and references. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

CHARLES HARLEY BRIGHT MPHANDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	vii
Timeline	x
Map: Malawi and Neighbouring Countries	xiii
List of Acronyms and Abbreviations	xiv

PART I: INTRODUCTION – A DISCURSIVE APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 1: CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction	1 - 6
1.2 Aims and Justification	6 - 11
1.3 Definition of Key Terms and Analytical Tools	11 – 27
1.4 Summary and Outline	27 – 29

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction	30 - 31
2.2 Development Theory and Communication Since WW II	32 - 38
2.3 Critical Perspectives of The Development Enterprise	38 – 40
2.4 Discourse Analysis and Social practice	41 – 48
2.5 Conclusion	48 – 49

CHAPTER 3: ANALYTICAL APPROACH, TOOLS AND DATA TEXTS

3.1 Introduction	50 – 51
3.2 Analytical Approach	51 – 61
3.3 Object of Analysis: Texts	61 – 66
4.0 Conclusion	66 – 67

PART II: FRAMING DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 4: DEVELOPMENT IN MALAWI: AN OVERVIEW

4.1 Introduction	68 – 69
4.2 Establishment of a Socio-economic Order	69 – 87
4.3 Conclusion	87 – 88

CHAPTER 5: IMAGES OF MALAWI

5.1 Introduction	89 – 93
5.2 Macro-analysis of Discourse Framing on Malawi: The 1962 – 1965 Development Plan	93 – 117
5.3 Micro-analysis of Discourse Framing on Malawi: The 1962 – 1965 Development Plan	117 – 128
5.4 Conclusion: Discursive Resources for Depicting Agricultural Malawi	128 – 129

**CHAPTER 6: REPRESENTING IMBALANCE: A VIEW OF THE
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY**

6.1 Introduction	130 – 136
6.2 Macro-analysis of Discourse in IRDP and NRDP Programmes	136 – 147
6.3 Language in Representation of Agriculture and Development	148 – 177
6.4 Conclusion: Linguistic Representation and Development Strategy	177 – 178

PART III PURPOSES WITHIN PURPOSE

Introduction	179 - 179

**CHAPTER 7: THE AGRICULTURAL LINK IN THE RURAL
GROWTH CENTRES**

7.1 Contextualising Rural Growth Centres in the Rural-Urban Divide	180 – 181
7.2 Framing Malawi's Rural Centres: A Macro- Discourse Analysis	181 – 201
7.3 The Language of Multiple Purposes: A Micro- Discourse Analysis	202 – 216
7.4 Conclusion: Linguistic Representation and Development Purposes	216 – 217

CHAPTER 8: DEVELOPMENT AND HEGEMONY

8.1 Introduction	218 - 218
8.2 Some Elements of Gramsci's Hegemony	218 – 224
8.3 Uses of the Development Agenda: Hegemonic Rhetoric	224 – 237
8.4 Conclusion: Oblique Hegemonic Rhetoric and Development	237 – 238

PART IV: A CONCERN TO DEVELOP PEOPLE**CHAPTER 9: REPRESENTING PEOPLE CENTREDNESS**

9.1 Introduction	239 - 243
9.2 Representing Refocused Development: A Micro-analysis	243 – 258
9.3 Linguistic Resources in Representation of Empowerment	258 - 266
9.4 Conclusion: Emergent Discourse of Developing People	267 - 268

**CHAPTER 10: THE SUM OF DEVELOPMENT REPRESENTATION
IN DISCOURSE**

10.1 Introduction	269 – 270
10.2 Socio-political Contexts and Representations	270 – 278
10.3 Conclusion	278 – 279
10.4 Suggestions for Further Research	280 – 282

REFERENCES	284 – 302

APPENDIX 1 List of Documents Analysed	303 - 303

ABSTRACT

Comparative socio-economic reviews on developing regions consistently show Sub-Saharan Africa's growing poverty, characterised by unsustainable economies burdened with debt. Malawi's socio-economic standing within Africa reflects this bleak analysis. The rapid economic growth registered from independence in 1964 to 1979, attracting international attention to Malawi's "alternative pattern of development" (McCracken, 1984a), was not accompanied by significant improvement in people's quality of life (Harrigan, 2001). These socio-economic trends are paradoxical given the determined efforts of nationalist governments to improve people's quality of life through an agriculture-led strategy.

This thesis seeks to understand the basis of the enduring under-performing agriculture-led development strategy, and the paucity of innovation and reflexivity in matters of socio-economic change in Malawi. Situated in the qualitative research tradition, the study seeks to examine social meaning, its construction and consumption in Malawi's community/national development strategy. The study proceeds in this quest to examine representations of development in discourse in Malawi's two contrasting political cultures, namely, the repressive single party era of Dr Banda and his Malawi Congress Party Government, and the democratic era marked by the onset of political pluralism in 1994, and stretches from Malawi's independence in 1964 to the first term of Malawi's democratic governance in 1998.

Adopting Critical Discourse Analysis as the framework, and incorporating techniques and tools from Discursive Psychology, the study's rhetorical and lexico-grammatical textual analysis focuses on the importance of ideology in framing Malawi, its socio-economic problems and interventions; and the depiction of social actors in various development programmes, to understand how social practices in development programmes close(d) down or open(ed) up opportunity for socio-economic change. The objects of analysis include government development plan documents, yearly development programme submissions and government-controlled public communication texts that

carried development information focussing on development projects and programmes that had or still have national importance, such as the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), National Rural Development Programme (NRDP), Rural Growth Centres Programme (RGCP) and Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF).

From the analysis, the thesis argues that Malawi's narrow-based economy with its agriculture-led development strategy has a historical socio-political basis traceable from colonial times. Furthermore, socio-political factors in post-independence Malawi have contributed significantly to a dependent and non-innovative national mindset, and paucity of reflexivity in socio-economic development approaches. Two points emerge from the analysis of the paucity of innovation and a dependent psyche. The first is that the under-delivering development strategies were highly popularised textually and otherwise in development discourse associated with the various programmes. Second, overemphasis on the physical and economic dimensions of development has been detrimental to the human/social dimension and, indeed, consequently, to the entire development project in Malawi. The analysis shows also that the change of national political culture is reflected in the approach to development. In the democratic era development is human-centred, using the physical and economic dimensions as catalysts. The contrast in the discourse of the approaches in the two political cultures is significant in demonstrating the relevance of discourse analytic approaches to understand development and the dialectics of socio-economic change in Malawi, and by extension Sub-Saharan Africa and the developing world at large.

The thesis considers social practices in national development to be important determinants of the course and outcomes of development strategies adopted in any developing nation, and discourse is shown to play an important role in shaping those social practices and development strategies. The thesis concludes by arguing that discursive approaches, alongside more traditional approaches, contribute significant new understandings of maldevelopment

and how social practices in development-related social events can promote or discourage development.

Further research with specific suggestions regarding some areas of representational language has been proposed as a way forward in understanding social meaning and its creation and consumption. Outcomes of such research may better inform initiatives in rural community capacity building, including attitude change, within current human-centred development strategies.

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The discourse that obtains in this part of the thesis is often trite and ritualistic. As I have undertaken a constructivist study, I do not intend to contribute to such discourse. This does not mean I am ungrateful, as I demonstrate in the following paragraphs.

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If the reader would bear with a personal outlook to life, this much good is more than good luck, or coincidence. As Voltaire once said “Chance is a word void of sense;

nothing can exist without a cause," I conclude on a constructivist's note that behind the scenes God has been at work. Blessed be His Holy Name through our Lord Jesus Christ.

MALAWI: SOCIO-POLITICAL AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME TIMELINE

This thesis shows that there are links between socio-political issues and socio-economic development strategies that have been adopted in Malawi, and the course and outcomes of those strategies. It has been argued also that these socio-political issues can be historically traced from colonial times.

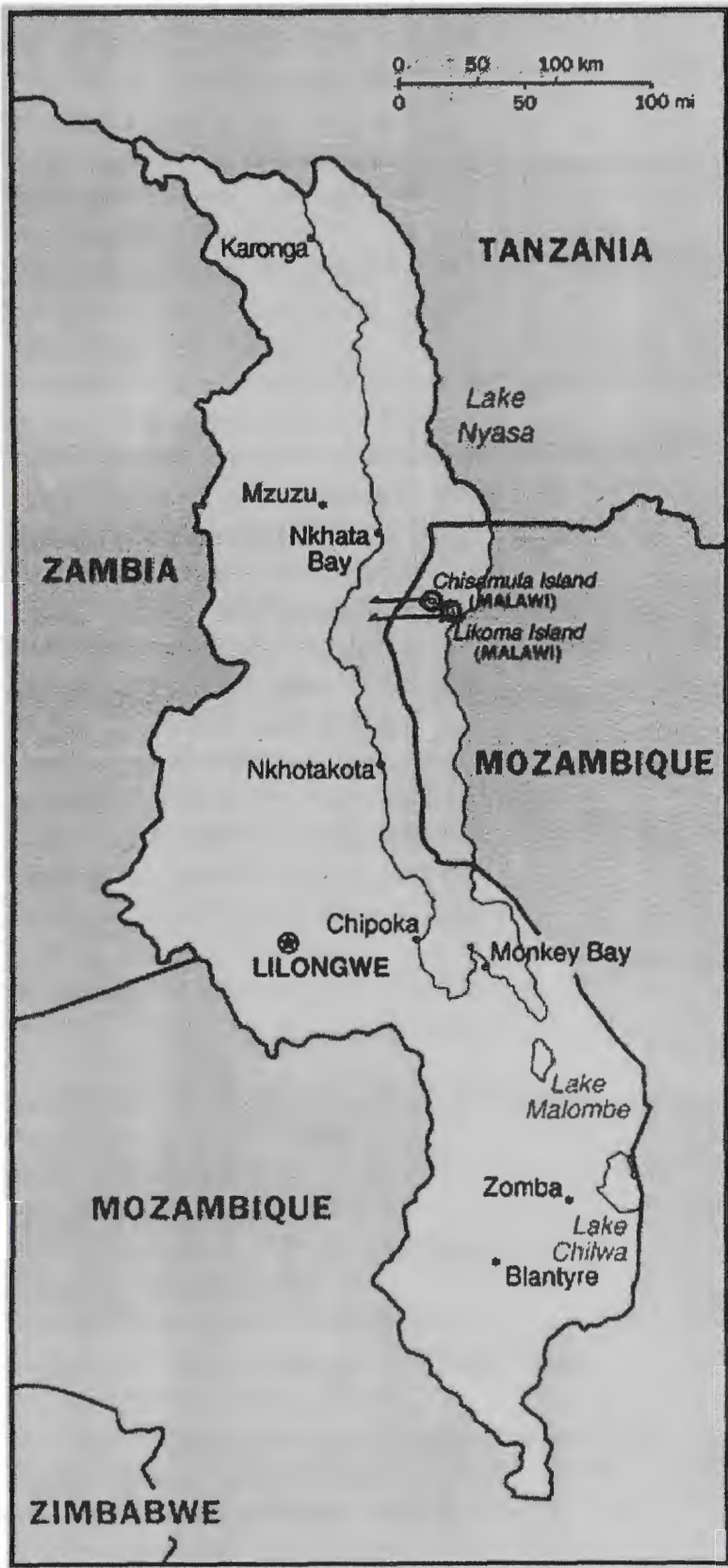
This timeline gives a sketch of socio-political developments from colonial times, and from the Nyasaland General elections of 1961, which set stage for self-government and independence. Socio-political developments are juxtaposed with development programmes. The sketch is intended to be an aid to the reader's judgment of the influences of social practice on the development represented in the discourse of the time.

Time Period	Socio-political Developments	Development Plans and Programmes
1859, 16 September	Scottish missionary explorer David Livingstone reaches Lake Nyasa (Malawi) and regions around it. Witnessing slave trade, Livingstone determines to open up the region to Christianity and legitimate trade	
1878	In response to a failed Anglican Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) mission after a short stint (1860-64), Scottish Protestant Churches send the Livingstonia Mission, which commences work along Lake Nyasa, followed by the Blantyre Mission along with traders and planters.	
1891	Britain establishes the Nyasaland and District Protectorate	
1893	Name is changed to the British Central Africa Protectorate. White European settlers are offered land for coffee plantations at very low prices. Taxes imposed on Africans force them to work on these plantations for several months a year, in difficult conditions.	
1907	British Central Africa Protectorate becomes Nyasaland.	
1915	Angered by the suffering of African natives at the hands of white settlers and what he saw as the Protectorate Government's complicity, American trained Baptist Reverend John Chilembwe leads a revolt against British rule, killing the white managers of a particular brutal estate. The police shoot Chilembwe dead.	
1944	Nationalists establish the Nyasaland African Congress	

Time Period	Socio-political Developments	Development Plans and programmes
1953, 23 October	Defying strong opposition from the Nyasaland African Congress and white liberal activists, Britain imposes the Federation of Nyasaland, Northern and Southern Rhodesia (now Zambia and Zimbabwe respectively). Africans in the three territories immediately challenge it.	
1958	After forty years, Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda returns from the US and UK, where he studied, via Ghana, to lead the Nyasaland African Congress in the fight against the imposed federation, and eventual political freedom.	
1959, 3 March	In a politically charged atmosphere, colonial authorities shoot dead some supporters of the Congress, imprison many leaders, including Banda, ban the African Nyasaland Congress and declare a state of emergency.	
1959, 30 September	Orton Chirwa, recently released from Khami prison in Southern Rhodesia, forms the Malawi Congress party as a successor to the Nyasaland African Congress. With Banda's approval the Malawi Congress Party is launched.	
1960	Banda is released from Gwelo prison and attends talks on constitutional reform in London with the British Government.	
1961	General elections held for a new Legislative Assembly. Banda's Malawi Congress Party wins 94% of the vote. Dr Banda and five members of the Malawi Congress Party are appointed ministers.	
1962		1962–1965 Development plan crafted
1963	Britain grants territory self-government as Nyasaland and Banda is appointed Prime Minister.	
	Independence	
1964, 6 July	Nyasaland declares independence as Malawi	
1964, September	Tensions within Malawi Congress Party erupt into the open. Dr Banda sacks some of his ministers while others resign in solidarity with the dismissed.	

Time Period	Socio-political Developments	Development Plans and Programmes
1965 February	Dissident minister launches an armed struggle against Banda, which is crushed quickly. Banda carries out wide ranging purges in the party and entrenches himself politically.	
1966, 6 July	Banda becomes President of the Republic of Malawi. The constitution establishes a one-party state, and opposition movements are suppressed and leaders are detained. Foreign governments and organizations raise concerns about human rights.	
1968		The 10 year (1968 –1978) Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) begins.
1971	Banda is voted president-for-life	The first medium term plan "Statement of Development Policies (DEVPOL)" covering the period 1971 – 1980 drawn.
1975	Lilongwe replaces Zomba as Malawi's capital	
1978	First elections since independence held. All candidates must belong to the Malawi Congress Party and be approved by Banda.	The National Rural Development Programme (NRDP), establishing 8 Agricultural Development Divisions across the three administrative regions as the new machinery of the agricultural strategy, supersedes the IRDP.
1980s	Several ministers and politicians are killed or charged with treason. Banda reshuffles ministers regularly to prevent emergence of a political rival	
		The second more coherent medium term plan, "Statement of Development Policies (DEVPOL)" covering the period 1987 – 1996, is drawn.
1992	Catholic Bishops publicly condemn Banda followed by mass demonstrations. Many donor countries suspend aid over Malawi's poor human rights record.	
1993	Single party rejected in a referendum, paving way for political pluralism.	
1994	Muluzi of the United Democratic Front is elected president instead of Banda for 5-year term. Banda announces his retirement from politics.	
1995		Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) phase 1 (1995 – 2001) begins.
1996		National Long Term Planning (Vision 2020) supersedes DEVPOL (medium term planning).
1997	Banda dies	
1999	Muluzi re-elected President for a second and final 5-year term.	

MAP OF MALAWI AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES



ALPHABETICAL LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED

ADD	Agricultural Development Division
ADMARC	Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation
AFORD	Alliance for Democracy
BCGA	British Cotton Growing Association
BSA	British South Africa Company
CA	Conversation Analysis
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDF	Commonwealth Development Fund
CSP	Community Sub-Projects
DASP	Discourse Analysis in Social Psychology (Discursive Psychology)
DEVPOL	Statement of Development Policy
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECLA	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America
EDF	European development Fund
EEC	European Economic Community
FRELIMO	Liberation Front of Mozambique (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique)
GNP	Gross National Product
GoM	Government of Malawi
GTZ	German Technical Assistance
IDA	International Development Agency
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IRDP	Integrated Rural Development Programme/Projects
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
KRDP	Karonga Rural Development Project
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LLDP	Lilongwe Land Development Programme
LRDP	Lakeshore Rural Development Project
MANA	Malawi News Agency
MANR	Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources
MASAF	Malawi Social Action Fund
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NLTPS	National Long-term Perspective Studies
NP	Nyasaland Protectorate
NRCP	National Rural Centres Programme
NRDP	National Rural Development Programme
NWEO	New World Economic Order
NWICO	New World Information and Communication Order
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OPC	Office of the President and Cabinet
PAP	Poverty Alleviation Programme
PCD	Project Concept Document
PS	Poststructuralism
RGCC	Rural Growth Centre
RGCP	Rural Growth Centre Programme/Project
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAPEM	Southern Africa Political Economy Monthly
SAPES	Southern Africa Political and Economic Series Trust

SARIPS	Southern Africa Regional Institute for Policy Studies
SCC	Systematic Client Consultation
SCDP	Secondary Centres Development Programme
SSP	Sponsored Sub-Projects
SVADP	Shire Valley Agricultural Development Project
UDF	United Democratic Front
UIA	Union of International Associations
UMCA	Universities Mission to Central Africa
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, and Scientific Organisation
W W II	World War Two

PART I: INTRODUCTION – A DISCURSIVE APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 1: Concepts and Context

1.1 Introduction

The socio-economic standing of Sub-Saharan African states since their attainment of independence in the 1960s, more than anything else, is a tale of the failure of the development project to raise the quality of life on the continent. Arrighi (2002:5) captures aptly the abundant pessimistic assessments of the effects of underdevelopment that are in the political economy literature on Africa in the statement “Over the last quarter of a century, the African crisis of the late 1970s has been transformed into...the ‘African Tragedy’.” The worsening of the poverty situation in Sub-Saharan Africa is well documented in both serious and popular literature. For example, UNDP (2000) has detailed comparative aggregates of human development indicators (based on 1998 data) of the developing regions of Arab States, East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, South Asia and the Pacific and Sub-Saharan Africa. Those of Sub-Saharan Africa clearly show that the region’s performance has been on the worst side from the 1970s to the close of the 20th century. *The Economist* (2000) in its May 13 – 19 issue, dedicated mostly to the analysis of the African tragedy, had as its front cover title ‘The hopeless continent.’ Furthermore, the exacerbation of the crisis is captured in UNDP’s (1996:17) assessment statement of the 1980s decade: “The decade of the 1980s [was]...the ‘lost decade’ for Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa. Several indicators register[ed] the decline.” These grim assessments

were also highlighted in the *Lagos Plan of Action* in which African leaders stated that:

The effect of unfulfilled promises of global development strategies has been more sharply felt in Africa than in the other continents of the world. Indeed, rather than result in an improvement in the economic situation of the continent, successive strategies have made it stagnate and become more susceptible than other regions to the economic and social crises suffered by the industrialised countries. Thus Africa is unable to point to any significant growth rate, or satisfactory index of general well-being, in the past 20 years (OAU 1981:4).

While all assessments agree on the failure of the development project to provide better quality of life, interpretation of responsible factors for these trends have been a subject of heated debate and shifting opinion (see for example Arrighi 2002; Edozie 2004 and Mkandawire 2001). According to World Bank (1981:v) responsibility for the African crisis is on African governments and their bad policies, chief of which were mismanagement of (peasant) agriculture, excessive state intervention in free market operations and inefficient “use of scarce resources – human and capital, managerial and technical, domestic and foreign”. Bates (1981:101) extended this argument to include two additional factors, arguing firstly that African governments “artificially increase[ed] the value of the domestic currency, thereby cheapening the costs of capital equipment which is scarce domestically and must be imported from abroad.” Secondly, critical of African state officials’ selfish motives to enrich themselves and their collaborators at the expense of the agricultural industry, in their crafting of policies, Bates (1981:42) argues that these “policies offer[ed] joint gains through corruption.” Both World Bank (1981) and Bates (1981) saw minimising state power of intervention in free market operations and persuading African states to adopt what they considered ‘good’ policies, defined basically as a reverse of what they called ‘bad’ policies, as some of the ways to lift Sub-Saharan Africa out of the crisis. However, these internalist and state minimalist diagnoses of the African crisis and their prognoses, to use Arrighi’s (2002) terms, were challenged by African leaders. Their position and diagnosis of the African crisis was set out in the *Lagos Plan of Action* (OAU 1981). Attributing the source of Africa’s woes

mostly to external shocks, African leaders were of the view that instead of relying on world market mechanisms, “Africa must cultivate the virtue of self-reliance...[and] mobilise her entire human and material resources for her development” (OAU 1981:7). Although the African leaders, shortly later, “openly acknowledged the responsibilities of African governments for the crisis, and the limitations of ...actions undertaken by African states on their own” (Arrighi 2002:9), they insisted external shocks were largely to blame for the deepening crisis, and saw a way forward in Africa’s greater self-reliance. Providing an alternative perspective, Arrighi’s (2002:11) analysis of the African socio-economic crisis “attributed a key role to world capitalism in constraining and shaping developmental efforts and outcomes at the national level.”

An inference that may be made from these brief examples of arguments and counter-arguments is that development is a complex activity, and interpretation of its operations, a highly contested field. As Roe (1999:1,2) asserts

Because African...development is genuinely complex, it is saturated with development scenarios deployed to stabilize decision making in the face of that complexity. In their simplest form, development narratives are the rules of thumb, arguments, “war stories” and other scenarios about rural development...the challenge is to come up with counternarratives to replace those development narratives that do such a disservice in stabilizing practice.

A worthwhile starting point in tackling the complexities of development is to clarify conceptions of development and their strategies that obtain at programme level. Indeed the term and concept *development* itself remains elusive to definition (see Baster 1972; Patterson 1999; Rist 1997; Schech and Haggis 2000; Seers 1972) even though development has grown to be a thriving activity with experts of various interests. Ellis and Biggs’ (2001) chronological study of the concepts of development that have been in use since the end of World War II, and Patterson’s (1999) historical examination of metaphors and analogies of social change and development thought that have been used from classical times to the present attest to the variety of shades of meaning that development, as a preoccupation with improvement

of quality of life, can assume in various contexts and time periods. Remenyi (2004) has gone further to give an account of the chequered historical course of development thought that has led to the people-centred view taking centre stage today (see also UNDP 1996). Remenyi (2004) advances a people-centred view of development that incorporates good governance and human rights as instruments within a poverty alleviation focus, as a “challenge to revise thinking on development” (p23). Such a call to revision of development thought is an indication of how development lends itself to multiple conceptualisations and interpretations.

Mabogunje (1989:14) argues that failures in development intervention among the world's poor have opened up space for disciplines that were traditionally either marginally associated or not associated at all with issues of the development process, to “find greater receptivity to their points of view and to the alternative perspectives on the problems of development which they provide.” In agreement with this observation, Crush (1995) points to a burgeoning field of scholarship that is offering “new ways of understanding what development is and does, and why it seems so difficult to think beyond it” (p4) by way of analysing “texts of development...as a form of writing” (p4). This interest in a discursive approach to development is in keeping with Fairclough's (1995a:3) argument for the “inclusion of a substantial element of textual analysis within discourse analysis as a method of social research in various disciplines.” The growing interest in the discourse of texts of development that Crush (1995) has noted is spurred on by characteristic features and form of their “representational language – a language of metaphor, image, allusion, fantasy, and rhetoric” (p4) and content. However, Crush (1995:5) is quick to add that “Though development is fundamentally textual it is also fundamentally irreducible to a set of textual images and representations.” Following Foucauldian techniques, some useful analyses and critical commentaries have emerged in this scholarship (see for example Ferguson 1990; Escobar 1995 and Crush 1995). These scholars, working from the premise that “texts of development have always been avowedly strategic and tactical – promoting, licensing and justifying certain interventions and practices, delegitimizing and excluding others” (Crush 1995:5) - attempt

to understand this persuasive and enduring feature of development discourse despite the observation that it “bear[s] very little resemblance to any commonsense reality... or, at best, have only limited referential value” (Crush 1995:4-5) of the world it constructs.

The present discursive study of representations of development aims to explicate development activity from a non-traditional perspective on development thought. A major contention that this study advances is that the development arena is open to contextual social influences and interests, often inexplicit and contingent, that have an important bearing on the operationalisation of particular programmes as well as their final outcomes. As development is situated in human society, which is itself subject to people’s shaping (see Arndt 1984), development is realised as a function of societal dialectics. The shaping practices or influences in development work are largely accomplished through what Potter (1996:203) refers to as “human descriptive practices,” at least at the conceptual level. Schech and Haggis (2002) argue that these constructive descriptive socio-cultural practices can be examined in discourse. Thus, as Potter (1996:205) urges, this study takes as a topic, as opposed to an assumption, the construction of descriptions that are designed to accomplish specific desired ends as factual. In issues of development, desired ends have been as varied as they have been difficult to attain in various geopolitical contexts.

The present study’s focus is the *constructive* element that is involved in the conceptualisation of what are conceived of as development problems, and strategies towards attainment of envisaged development. As development problems are constructions from perceptions of particular interest groups (Schön 1979), I argue that a contextualised examination of how social/human factors shape and reshape conceptualisations of development in a broad sense, and attendant notions, such as participants and their identities, and role assigning, would be beneficial in understanding workings of power relations that obtain among interest groups and how these relations impact on the course and outcomes of the development programmes concerned. This view finds support in Marston (2004:2) who argues that “Struggles and conflict

over the distribution of social and economic resources goes far beyond a concern with material measures...[they] involve struggles over social identities, discourses, values and concrete practices.” Borrowing Marston’s (2004) language, this study attempts to demonstrate *how* development problems and their interventions are constructed, to advance the view that development policy problems and solutions can be constructed differently with different interventions, at least at the conceptual level. Such discursive analysis projects would go some way to address what Rossi (2004:3) laments as one of the shortcomings in the work of scholars that apply Foucauldian techniques to analyse power relations in development programmes (for example, Ferguson 1990), that is, to look at “‘development’ as the outcome of struggles and negotiations between actors controlling different stakes of power.” Thus the main interest of this study is to analyse social meaning and its construction and negotiation by social actors, who do so “not...so free of interpretative constraints that are part of their own histories” (Meinhoff and Richardson 1994:18). This thesis takes discourses not as reflections of underlying structures, but a powerful dimension in constructing the political parameters and social identities that are used to plan and operationalise development programmes in developing world contexts.

1.2 Aims and Justification

The broad aim of this study is to investigate linguistic realisations of the social dynamics of power and knowledge in development planning and practice that are otherwise taken for granted, and how these contribute to the current state of development in the developing world, using Malawi as a case study and focusing on the period between 1964 and 1998. Specific objectives that are required for achieving the general aim are as follows.

- (a) Analyse layers of larger (international) discourse in its representation of the developing world, its problems, and strategies as contributing factors to the state of development in the developing world.
- (b) Examine the manner in which *development* is represented first in government and other development agencies' plan documents and how these

notions translate into specific discourse types, such as the language of public communication (radio and print media campaigns).

(c) Investigate how power and discourse practices were articulated in various development "apparatus" in the socio-cultural setting of development programs/projects. This, in effect, is an investigation of the way various players in development were/are socially constructed and the "extent to which development practices close/[d] down or open/[ed] up lifestyles and...[opportunity for socio-economic change]" (Brigg 2002:426).

A constructionist study of representations of development falls within the current developments in linguistics, communication studies and social theory which focus on discourse studies as a way of studying social dynamics in contemporary societies that emerge in language use, either explicitly or implicitly, in various communicative events. Among several features of discourse that have preoccupied linguists, media scholars and social theorists and analysts, the question of representation features abundantly in all works (see, for example: Fairclough 1995a; Fowler 1991; Gow 1996; and Mills 1997). It is notable, though, that while discourse analysts acknowledge the centrality of the concept of representation, most studies have so far concentrated on race or ethnic relations, gender relations, minority rights and inequities, war and deprivation – especially in media texts. The question of representation in development communication studies has not been given much attention, despite the fact that development communication has admitted failure along with the dominant developmental theories it has been serving in the post-World War Two era (Tehrani 1997).

Detailed accounts in development communication studies describe theories and practices that have been employed in developing countries so far (Melkote 1991). However, discourse studies that involve linguistic analysis looking at construction as a topic are rare. Examples of such studies include Ferguson (1990) and Pain (1996). Because of this rarity the studies are (justifiably) "bounded in [terms of] time and space" (Ferguson, 2002:97). This study is a contribution in this tradition. Most anthropological studies and

development communication works that have shown interest in discourse studies, such as Ferguson (1990), Long (1992), Moore (1995), Rossi (2004), and Tehranian (1991 and 1997), do not concern themselves with linguistic analysis to locate discursive functioning of linguistic resources in text that appear disinterested *prima facie*. In other words, they do not examine the strategic functions of lexico-grammatical elements as sociocultural resources for achieving discursive efficacy as interest groups contest or negotiate for position of advantage in the development “apparatus”. As a result, the discursive analysis in such works, drawing on Foucauldian techniques, works mostly at the rhetorical level, outlining discourse as orchestrations of “regime[s] of rationality...historically rooted...work[ing] as...structure[s] of knowledge, allowing, at any particular time, certain events and patterns of agency...and rendering unthinkable, unsayable, and undoable others” (Rossi 2004:2). In addition to rhetorical analysis, this study undertakes a nuanced linguistic analysis to tease out strategic use of lexico-grammatical elements among interest groups. This discursive analysis of linguistic socio-cultural resources is intended to be a contribution towards some means of examining “multiple effects of discourse on material realities” (Marston 2004:vii).

Evaluation of development work in Malawi has more often than not shown poor performance (see for example Harrigan 2001; Kandawire 1984; Kydd and Christiansen 1982). It is my view that examination of development discourse on Malawi as a case study will contribute towards understanding issues at work in largely failed development programmes work. Judge (1992) claims that representational language is associated with people’s ability to avail themselves of available opportunities or not. In particular, Judge (1992:12) claims that “There are strong indications that implicit metaphors condition thinking so as to divert attention from vital opportunities.” A discursive approach to development may, therefore, throw some light on the factors that fail development in Malawi, and by extension, the other developing world contexts.

Although societies that are classified as ‘developing’ in Africa and elsewhere offer a wide choice for case studies, the choice of Malawi is significant. It is

important to point out here too that there is a growing literature in the human/social sciences that examines the performance of development, *inter alia*, in the Southern Africa region (see SAPES¹ publications; Mhone 1992; Mhone 1996; Mwanza 1992). While Mhone (1996:267) asserts that the “economic experience of the countries of the [SADC] sub-region differ in many respects,” Kajiyani (1992:1) points out that “During the past two decades economic development has been slow in most of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa.” Kajiyani (1992) further notes that the mid-1970’s world economy recession had greatest impact in this region. In addition, some features of Malawi’s political economy over the years offer challenging substance for a case study, and these are outlined below.

From its independence in 1964, which led to the break-up of the 1953 British Central Federation comprising present day Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, Malawi adopted capitalism among neighbors who either experimented with socialist forms of government (for example, Tanzania) or were torn by civil war, for example, FRELIMO’s liberation war in Mozambique (Rist 1997). This being the Cold War era, Malawi’s political alignment made her one of the friendly nations (Joffe 1973) that the West supported with development aid. In fact, Kajiyani (1992) states that almost all the development projects in the 1970 - 1980 decade were financed by “donor countries and multilateral agencies” (p47). Sturges (1998) further points out that foreign aid contributed 85% of development funding. Despite this flow of development aid, Malawi

¹ The acronym stands for the Southern Africa Political and Economic Series Trust. This institution is based in Harare, Zimbabwe. SAPES Trust started in 1987 as a project under the auspices of the African Association of Political Science (AAPS). A year later the project was transformed into a non-for-profit trust. One of the basic arguments for the establishment of SAPES was the need to mobilise scholars and activities around the most relevant economic and political issues of the time. SAPES’s mission is to promote the development of an autonomous and indigenous capacity for intellectual and scholarly discourse, research, dialogue and policy, through and informed by, the organization’s research, policy dialogue, information dissemination and publication activities. SAPES’s publications include books and the *Southern Africa Political Economy Monthly* (SAPEM). SAPEM is a monthly publication of the Southern Africa Regional Institute for Policy Studies (SARIPS) which was the research and teaching arm of SAPES until 1999 when it was established as a separate institution.

has been consistently classified among the lower end of low-income countries (World Bank 1990, 1991, 1995, 1999).

Second, Malawi's first republic (1964-1994) was a repressive regime under Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda. This part of Malawi's history is well documented (Joffe 1973; Short 1974; Williams 1978; Sturges 1998). During its time in power, the regime censored heavily all information. Because of the concentration of power in the hands of the President and his immediate advisors and the effects of mechanisms to deter dissent, information which was publicly directed towards national development was detached from the planning requirements. Government departments and personnel carried out a cosmetic exercise that suited the political sensibilities. Sturges (1998:192) points out that "The process seems to have become academic, producing information which was interesting in its own right, but not always giving direct answers to the questions planners were asking." Perhaps more attractive for a critical discourse analysis is the point that "information and related flows to farmers in Malawi...served a group of power-related imperatives not generally visible when information was looked at as a discrete element" (Sturges 1998:198-199). Women, with their very high illiteracy rates, were probably the most disadvantaged (Kaimila-Kanjo 1992; Sturges 1998). Furthermore, because Malawi's economy was agriculture-based, Kajiyani (1992) points out that the ruling Malawi Congress Party devised a system where there was a privileged estate sector and a disadvantaged smallholder sector. This classification dictated the types of crops that could be legally grown, access to subsidised inputs and the marketing channels that could be used. The institutional support that gave advantage to one group and disadvantaged the other sector created similar discrimination in terms of access to information. Sturges (1998:197) points out that the estate sector was "explicitly targeted as the recipients of agricultural information flows, credit and other assistance, in effect at the expense of their subsistence-farming neighbors." Regarding the smallholder sector, the "government has at times even cynically remarked that ...[they] can learn by listening to the radio or emulating their better-endowed and better-supported neighbors in the top group" (Sturges 1998:197). The

realization in language of these issues of power relations and their effects on development planning and practice are a subject of interest in this study.

Third, with the end of the Cold war at the beginning of the 1990s, the Malawi Congress Party government came under strong internal and international criticism over its poor human rights record. This is another well documented part of Malawi's recent history (Harrigan 2001; Nzunda and Ross 1995.) Now aid and preferential trade deals had the condition of good governance (principles of free-market economics and democracy) attached to them. This eventually led to a national referendum that introduced multi-party politics in 1993. The May 17, 1994 presidential and parliamentary elections led to the defeat of the Malawi Congress Party government. The United Democratic Front government, twice in office now, is learning good governance with such institutions as IMF and the World Bank as 'schoolmasters'. During its time in power, issues of development have been associated with such concepts such as *participation* and *poverty alleviation* (Opp 1998; Jenkins and Tsoka 2003). In connection with the latter, Kajiyanike (1992) posits that this is one of the objectives that the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) regards as forming what it calls a human-centered development, which is preferred by most African nations in general. This study enables the examination of the social dynamics in development practice in two political cultures - a repressive single party and a multiparty democracy - from a critical discourse perspective.

1.3 Definition of Key Terms and Analytical Tools

This critical discourse analytic study examines data that is drawn from various government documents and public communication materials dealing with issues of national/community development. The study is multidisciplinary within the humanities and social sciences. One area that may be problematic in such a multi-disciplinary study is definition of terms and concepts that are in use, as the social sciences and humanities are replete with terms and concepts that elusive to neat definitions. In this regard, I offer in this part of the study, definitions of key terms as they have been understood and used in this study, and which are tools that are used for the discourse analyses.

Discourse and Representation

Because the concept of discourse is used in several disciplines, it is important to situate this study in relation to these different conceptions of the term *discourse*. The understanding of the term *discourse* in this study may be looked at from four related disciplines: critical theory, mainstream linguistics, discursive psychology and critical linguistics.

Discourse in Critical Theory

Torring (1999) situates the origins of the concept of discourse in the theoretical movements associated with Saussurean linguistics at the turn of the 19th century, glossematics, structuralism and post-structuralism. However, Mills (1997) and Macdonnell (1986) contend that the term and concept of *discourse* in its current influence on the humanities and social sciences can be attributed to scholarship associated with critical theory, probably the most influential being Foucault, as Marston (2004:24) argues "Foucault can be credited for putting the concept of discourse firmly on the social science agenda" (see also Danaher 2000 and Hepburn 2003). According to Macdonnell (1986:1) "Dialogue is the primary condition of discourse: all speech and writing is social." As such, following Foucault, Fairclough (1989:2) takes *discourse* to refer to "language as a social practice, meaning that language is a part of society, not somehow external to it and that language is conditioned by other non-linguistic features of society." Conceptually, in the Foucauldian sense (Rabinow 1984:54) *discourse* has to do with "what governs statements, and the way in which they govern each other so as to constitute a set of propositions." These broad domains of language use condition and mobilise historically specific strategic possibilities of meaning, understanding and practice. Danaher (2000) posit that it is in this sense that Foucault speaks of particular discourses of medicine, or criminal punishment that operated during certain periods of history in ways which were highly conventional and regularised. As such these conventions governed which institutionally accredited personnel could legitimately say what about, for instance, mental illness and its treatment, and in which appropriate

contexts. It should be clear that discourse in this sense (or discursive formations), in this sense is authoritative and deployed in the interests of existing structures of authority and power. As Fairclough (1992:64) argues,

discourse is shaped and constrained by social structure in the widest sense and at all levels: by class and other social relations at a social level, by the relations specific to particular institutions...by systems of classification, by various norms and conventions of both a discursive and a non-discursive nature...

It is in this sense that discourse is seen to be closely related to ideology (see, for example, Deacon 1999). Discourse in this respect is connected with culturally ingrained and institutionally powerful ways of looking at, experiencing and understanding particular areas of social life. It follows also that by way of this connection, discourses deeply permeate what passes as legitimate knowledge in particular domains of social life, and exclude other possibilities and other perspectives on those domains. This power - knowledge relation as propounded by Foucault and other scholars in the post-structuralist movement has had significant influence on the human sciences over the last quarter of the 20th century to the present. The other disciplines work around this notion of discourse with relevant modifications of one sort or another.

Discourse in Mainstream Linguistics

Mills (1997:116) outlines the notion of *discourse* for many theorists who draw on mainstream linguistics as a method of analysis, for “a structure which extends beyond the boundaries of the sentence.” Brown and Yule (1983) provide an example of this conception of discourse. The main concern in this tradition is to analyse language use in context, rather than invented abstract versions of language to suit analytical purposes of linguists, as well as describe structural units within spoken or written texts (McCarthy and Carter 1994). This type of discourse analysis, according to Mills (1997:119), “can be seen as a reaction to traditional linguistics (formal, structural linguistics) which is focused on the constituent units and structure of the sentence and which does not concern itself with an analysis of language in use.”

Discourse analysis in mainstream linguistics is underpinned by the assumption that just as a sentence has grammatical relations that are crucial for meaning making, longer texts have larger units and structures which are "implicitly recognized by speakers and hearers at the level of discourse" (Mills 1997:120). Thus, according to this tradition, an extended piece of text that has some form of internal organization, coherence or cohesion, is discourse. The Birmingham School espouses this notion of discourse (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975). For example, Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) analysis of classroom discourse sought to show the functional value of participants' words rather than the meaning of words or utterances. Drawing from the analogy of the sentence as comprising a hierarchy of units, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) saw a hierarchical relation in descending order between transactions, exchanges, moves and acts.

Another grouping of scholars within mainstream linguistics looks at discourse as defined by contexts of production or occurrence of utterance. In this tradition, there is designation of particularised discourses, for instance, the discourse of advertising. The contexts determine the internal constituents of specific texts that are produced. Some of this work includes Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993), both of whom look at genres in professional and other similarly specific settings.

The underlying principle of discourse in these strands of mainstream linguistics is language description. Deacon, Pickering, and Murdoch (1999) group discourse analysis with its different strands as conventional approaches "preoccupied with the technical rules and principles of language structure, and which have regarded language as an abstract system in isolation from its concrete social, cultural and historical contexts" (p146), but point to these approaches being "sociologically and historically sterile for media studies, where a concern with questions of context is central" (Deacon et al 1999: 147).

Discourse in Discursive Psychology

Mills (1997) observes that social psychologists (like the critical linguists I discuss below) fuse meanings from mainstream linguistic discourse analysis, conversational analysis (CA) and ethnomethodology. Like discourse analysis, this tradition has been concerned "with structural units above the level of the sentence whilst at the same time trying to deal with the type of questions with which post-structuralist theory has engaged...such issues as power relations and the production of knowledge" (p132). Mills (1997) points out the differences between discourse analysis, critical theory, and social psychological work, arguing that social psychological work concerns itself with questions of power in its textual analysis while discourse analysis in mainstream linguistics does not. However, because of its position among social sciences, social psychological work concerns itself with questions of data collection and analysis - which cultural theory does not. In the words of one of the leading scholars in the discursive psychology tradition, discourse is taken to mean:

the concern with *talk and texts as parts of social practices*. This is somewhat broader than the conversation analytic concern with talk-in-interaction, but rather more focused on the specifics of people's practices than the Foucauldian notion of a discourse as a set of statements that formulate objects and subjects (Potter 1996:105).

I draw considerably on some central concepts and notions that have been developed in Discursive Psychology.² These include interpretative repertoires, attitudes and attributions as discursive accomplishments, practices of fact construction, the workings of descriptions (Wood 2000:19), and empiricist repertoire (Potter 1996:152). Later in this section are definitions of the concepts and notions that are used in this study.

Discourse in Critical Linguistics

Critical linguists use the term *discourse* in a slightly different way from the two previous definitions and to cultural theory. Critical linguists analyse texts

² Discursive Psychology is sometimes referred to as Discourse Analysis in Social Psychology (DASP).

for political purposes – to achieve social change (see Fairclough 1992 and Pennycook 2001). Luke (1998:54) explains the scope of critical discourse analysis' engagement with the socio-political

Discourse and language in everyday life may function ideologically. They may be used to make asymmetrical relations of power and particular portrayals of social and biological worlds appear given, commonsensical, and "natural." Accordingly, the task of critical discourse analysis is both deconstructive and constructive. In its deconstructive moment it aims to disrupt and render problematic the themes and power relations of everyday talk and writing. In its constructive moment, it has been applied to the development of...capacities to critique and analyze discourse and social relations...

Thus, critical linguists (like social psychologists) attempt to integrate post-structuralist questions of power, truth and knowledge within their current linguistic analytical methods. Their concern is usually less with content-analysis or thematic analysis and more with questions of "the possible meanings of different discourses used by participants" (Mills 1997: 134). In fact, Fairclough (1995a: 16 -17) defines discourse as "an attempt to show systematic links between texts, discourse practices, and socio-cultural practices". The basis of such a definition, according to Luke (1998:55), is that "Critical discourse analysis begins from a recognition of language and discourse as nontransparent, opaque ways of studying and representing the world." Thus, people build a sense of the social world through the language they use, and hear used, enabling social action and interaction in specific cultural and historical contexts. According to Mills (1997:134), it is in this regard that critical linguists argue that:

Language is a central vehicle in the process whereby people are constituted as individuals and as social subjects, and because language and ideology are closely imbricated, the close systematic analysis of the language of texts can expose some of the workings of texts and...the way that people are oppressed within current social structures.

Critical linguistics is also dissociated from Chomskyian (1976) linguistics, with its conception of universal properties in language and its biological explanation of language acquisition. In studying language, Chomsky (1976:4) sought to

discover abstract principles that govern its structure and use, principles that are universal by biological necessity and not mere historical accident, that derive from mental characteristics of the [human] species...language [being] a mirror of mind in a deep and significant sense...a product of human intelligence, created anew in each individual by operations that lie far beyond the reach of will or consciousness.

This view of language does not attach any social practice to language use. Rather, language is taken to be a biological phenomenon that is not influenced by the social context of use. Fowler (1991:27) aptly describes the Chomsky's theory of language (development) as a "formal, structuralist account of an abstract system which is cut off from communicative interaction." Contrary to this view, critical linguistics regards the linguistic patterning of texts and utterances as social in character, regardless of the ways in which particular texts and utterances are expressed. Critical linguistics differs also from sociolinguistics in its perspective on language use because it sees language as itself a social practice, and not something which can be objectively correlated with sociological factors because these are external. Deacon (1999) points out that the concern of critical linguistics is with the ways in which speaking and writing encode relations of power, authority and status, as is evident for example in the type of speech act or modality of utterance deployed in particular contexts, or in the naturalisation of common-sense assumptions (in media discourse). Pennycook (2001: 7) elucidates this point: "a crucial component of critical work is always turning a skeptical eye toward assumptions, ideas that have become 'naturalized', notions that are no longer questioned."

This study examines discourses of development within the traditions developing in critical linguistics because the political nature of development work makes it suited to such analysis. As Pennycook (2001:7) suggests:

critical...linguistics is an approach to language-related questions that springs from an assumption that we live in a world of pain and that [critical] linguistics may have an important role in either the production or the alleviation of some of that pain. But it is also a view that insists not merely on the alleviation of pain but also the possibility of change.

It is important at this point to point out that to study representations of development in a developing world context, this study uses the critical linguistics perspective broadly, while drawing on the other discourse analytic perspectives, particularly the discursive psychology tradition. As Deacon et al (1999:146) advocate, "Critical linguistics is a field which is still in the process of development, and [one may] adapt the ideas and techniques...in ways which best suit [one's] own analytical tasks and materials." Critical linguistics postulates that language, among other semiotic codes, has a cognitive role: it provides an organized mental representation of human experience (Fowler 1991). This representation is not a value-free reflection of facts. Fowler (1991) further postulates that differences in expression (wording, syntactic option, etc) carry ideological distinctions. As a result, differences in representation are not only a language feature, but also an issue of social values (knowledge, belief and ideology). Any representation involves deciding what to include and what to exclude, and what to foreground and what to background. Ideologies in the critical linguistics tradition are conceived of as "propositions that generally figure as implicit assumptions in texts, which contribute to producing or reproducing unequal relations of power, relations of domination" (Fairclough 1995a:14). Critical linguistics has also taken upon itself to connect the analysis of language with fundamental concerns of social analysis: questions of social relationships and power, and questions of identity - that is, versions of 'self' and cultural values, say, of individualism, consumerism (Fairclough 1995a:17). Critical linguistics, therefore, is considered to be a useful analytical tool to examine what representations of development have been presented to the developing world context of study, and what ideological underpinnings these representations have. In the process, it should also reveal what social relationships have been presented as concomitants of development at local and international levels as well as what values have been associated with the slants of development that have been presented.

Ideology and Representation

Another term, highly current in critical linguistics (and the humanities and social sciences in general), is *ideology*. The concept of ideology has its origin

in the French Enlightenment thought (Plamenatz 1970; Larrain 1979). According to McLellan (1986:7), the concept of ideology was added onto by thinkers in the German Romantic movement, who held that "human beings collectively and individually created their own reality in response to changing circumstances." Especially Hegel's historicist contribution influenced Karl Marx, and "it was Marxism, uniting both French and German trends, that put the concept of ideology in the forefront of political discourse" (McLellan 1986:7). However, neither the earlier thinkers nor Marx clarified the concept of ideology. This has led the concept of ideology being one of the most elusive to definition in the social sciences (Larrain 1979; van Dijk 1998). Even later attempts to define the concept of ideology in the structuralist movement have not been fruitful. Commenting on Althusser's efforts to explicate the concept of ideology, Larrain (1979:154) notes that "His numerous attempts at explaining ideology are not exempt from contradictions, and change considerably over the years." Although the concept defies definition, it has continued to "happily live the fuzzy life inherent in such catch-all terms that denote complex sets of phenomena" (van Dijk 1998:1). In this fuzzy existence, the concepts and terms ideology and discourse have an uneasy history reflecting orientational differences between Marxist structuralist thinkers, such as Althusser (1971) and later developments among cultural theorists, especially Foucault (Rabinow 1984). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a theory and method of analysis has drawn from three broad theoretical orientations and this theoretical basis has implications on the understandings of concepts such as ideology and discourse that are used in analyses of textual practice and language use as socio-cultural practices. Luke (1998:53) outlines CDA's theoretical bases.

First, it [CDA] draws from poststructuralism the view that discourse operates laterally across local institutional sites, and that texts have a constructive function in forming up and shaping human identities and actions. Second, it draws from Bordieu's sociology the assumption that actual textual practices and interactions with texts become "embodied" forms of "cultural capital" with exchange value in particular social fields. Third, it draws from neo-Marxist cultural theory the assumption that these discourses are produced and used within political economies, and that they thus produce and articulate broader ideological interests, social formations, and movements within those fields.

For purposes of this study, a brief explanation of the concept of ideology in critical linguistics (in the light of the Foucauldian discourse) is important because this study is concerned with the examination of the role of ideology in development work viewed from a critical linguistic perspective. As such, it is important at this point to highlight the difference of meaning that the term has acquired in linguistics and the understanding in cultural theory.

Historically, the term *discourse* among cultural/critical theorists developed as a reaction to the meanings associated with the term *ideology*. Pennycook (2001) spells out differences between conceptualisations of *ideology* (and discourse) among critical linguists and cultural/critical theorists, arguing that critical linguists such as Fairclough, Wodak, van Dijk and others "employ the term *discourse* in the common linguistic sense as language in use and ideology as a particular framework of knowledge that is tied to social power and may be manifested in language" (p82). Therefore, critical linguists look for manifestations of ideology in discourse. However, as Pennycook (2001:83) points out, for cultural and critical theorists "a major point has been not so much to relate discourse to ideology but rather to choose between the two as competing terms". Mills (1997:17) states that Foucault's notion of discourse is not a text but "something which produces something else (an utterance, a concept, an effect), rather than something which exists in and of itself and which can be analyzed in isolation." Discourses are tied to power, knowledge and truth, but as Pennycook (2001:83) shows, "they do not either represent or obfuscate truth and knowledge in the interests of pre-given powers (as in the case of many versions of ideology)." Foucault (1984:60) rejects the concept of *ideology* in favour of *discourse* because ideology

always stands in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth...[and that] ideology stands in a secondary position relative to something which functions as its infrastructure, as its material, economic determinant, etc.

Foucault's rejection of ideology as a notion in opposition to truth is based on his conceptualisation of knowledge (what is 'knowable') that he considers to be "determined by a combination of social, institutional and discursive

pressures" (Mills 1997:33). Furthermore, tying ideology to social and economic factors is restrictive; Foucault argues for the accommodation of a non-material base to issues of social dynamics. Thus what in linguistic studies are separate notions of ideology and discourse, in cultural theory discourse subsumes ideology.

The currency of the notion of ideology in linguistic and other studies that focus on issues of representation has led to operational definitions for practical use. One such definition is in Van Dijk's (1998) socio-cognitive framework that "integrate[s]...ideas of contemporary discourse studies, linguistics, cognitive science, political science and new developments in the other social sciences" (p.ix). According to Van Dijk (1998:8) ideology is "the basis of the social representations shared by members of a group". Van Dijk's (1998) conceptualisation of *ideology* is considered relevant and useful for this study for several reasons. Considering the fact that the concept of ideology has occupied various scholars since Destutt de Tracy conceived it at the end of the 18th century to the present without "going beyond [the] classics, repeating, reformulating and reinterpreting this Master Narrative of the Story of Ideology"(p.4), Van Dijk's (1998) work is a step in getting out of the tangle of classical debates, as he offers a way to study "*how exactly* ideology shapes text and talk, and conversely, how it is formed, acquired or changed by discourse and communication" (p.iii). Second, much as van Dijk's conceptualization of *ideology* is critical - that is, "articulating an explicit position of dissent in relationships of societal dominance and inequality" (p.11) - the concept does not limit itself to seeing ideology as only an instrument of domination. Rather, it allows for probability of existence of ideologies such as those of opposition/resistance, competition between equally powerful groups, or ideologies that only promote the internal cohesion of a group, or ideologies about the survival of humankind. This conceptualisation is useful when we consider (in Chapter 2.3) social movements as alternatives that post-developmentalists are turning to. Third, van Dijk's definition shows that *ideology* within discourse studies is a basic factor in (social) representations, and representations are the subject of inquiry in this study. Thus, for

purposes of studying representations in discourse, this conceptualisation of ideology is preferred because it is latitudinous.

The study of ideological workings in representations has been given notable attention in critical linguistic studies. Fairclough's (1989;1995a; 1995b,) threefold approach (textual analysis, analysis of relationship between text and the processes of production and interpretation, analysis of shaping influence of contextual factors) has provided a further advancement in attempting "to develop a social analysis of media language and discourse [social practice]" (Deacon *et al* 1999). In his work, Fairclough (1995b:2) highlights the power of the mass media:

The power to influence knowledge, beliefs, values, social relations, social identities. A signifying power (the power to represent things in particular ways) which is largely a matter of how language is used.

Fairclough (1995b) acknowledges that media's power is both linguistic and discursual in nature. He further posits that "In any representation, you have to decide what to include and what to exclude, and what to 'foreground' and what to 'background'" (Fairclough 1995b: 4). Working within his rather limited conceptualisation of *ideology* - meaning in the service of power (adopted from Thompson (1984, 1990 cited in Fairclough 1995b:14) - Fairclough adopts Gramsci's notion of commonsense³ to argue how politically ideology is employed in the service of sustaining unequal relations of power. He argues that although commonsense assumptions are common to many people, it is not the same as saying that they are universally shared. This is where Fairclough (1989) sees the ideological work of texts. According to Fairclough (1989:92) "Naturalization is the royal road to commonsense. Ideologies come to be ideological common sense to the extent that the discourse types which embody them become naturalized...In this sense,

³ The notion of Commonsense in Gramsci's formulation "is not a single unique conception, identical in time and space...Its most fundamental characteristic is that it is a conception which...is fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential, in conformity with the social and cultural position of those masses whose philosophy it is" (Forgacs1988:343). Thus, Commonsense refers to ideas, beliefs, values, and meanings, rather than a coherent refined philosophical position, which implicitly motivate everyday practical activity.

common sense in its ideological dimension is itself an *effect of power*." Thus, in their ideological work, texts naturalise

conceptions and values which, directly or indirectly, support existing divisions and asymmetries in the relations of power and authority in society, and which limit the thinking, and action of subordinated groups and classes...rather than stimulat[e] the development of alternative conceptions and values critical of the social and ideological bases of their subordination (Deacon 1999:153).

In Fairclough's (1995a) threefold structure of textual analysis, first, the content of a text may be examined for the traces and cues it provides of its value as a social experience, and thus of the knowledge and beliefs which are meant to be attached to such experience. Second, textual features may have a relational dimension, enacting in discourse some aspect of social relations which the analysis should bring out. Third, texts can be studied for the traces and cues they offer for expressing evaluation of the aspect of social reality the texts relate to, and for acting on social identities through this expressive dimension. It is in connection with such an analytical procedure that Deacon *et al* (1999) posit that the analysis of grammatical structure developed by Fowler, Hodge, Kress and Trew (1979) can be absorbed into the broader framework developed by Fairclough which they acknowledge as the "more successful in integrating the social dimensions of language and the linguistic dimensions of the 'social' into the procedures of textual analysis" (p.154).

Fowler's (1991) work, though primarily a textual analysis, underlines the importance of ideological workings in representations in (media) texts. According to Fowler (1991:4) "Differences in expression carry ideological distinctions and thus differences in representation." Working within critical discourse analytical framework, this study examines influences of both larger ideologies of international dimensions as well as more local ideological workings operating within contextual socio-cultural practices.

Gramsci's Concept of Hegemony

One of the concepts that Marxist thought has contributed to political and social theory is hegemony. The Italian Marxist thinker, Gramsci, reflecting on Italian, and indeed, Western European socio-economic relations among political/social classes during the nineteen-twenties and nineteen thirties, observed that the “popular masses had become a key factor in political life” (Torfing 1999:110). Torfing (1999) argues that the importance of the popular masses in politics led to Gramsci's conception of hegemony as “embracing political as well as moral intellectual leadership...aiming to articulate a collective will with a national-popular character” (p108). Thus, the new politics, unlike that of the feudal order which traditional Marxist thought had so far addressed, necessitated a change of tactic among dominant classes; continuation in power was not only dependent on force, but also on exercising effective and subtle influence on social relations and cultural values in the entirety of society in a “process of production of a new collective identity” (Torfing 1999:108). Gramsci's analysis was an attempt to understand “the political and ideological resources of capitalist societies [and] the sources of their extraordinary resilience” (Forgacs 1988:189). In particular, Gramsci's analysis was a response to the post World War 1 political reality of Western nations where, contrary to the general predictions that characterised the Marxist traditions,

socialist revolutions had either been defeated or had failed to take place in the West, where capitalism had managed to survive the post-war economic crisis and stabilize itself, where parliamentary regimes had stood firm or had been replaced with authoritarian ones (Forgacs 1988:189).

Perhaps Gramsci's major departure from earlier Marxist thinkers such as Marx, Lenin, Croce and others (Williams 1960) was his addition of an ethico-political (cultural) dimension to the philosophy of praxis, which had heavily depended on economism (Forgacs 1988) hitherto. According to Gramsci's conceptualisation of the philosophy of praxis

the moment of hegemony [was/is] essential to its conception of the state and to the ‘accrediting’ of the cultural fact, of cultural activity, of a cultural front as necessary alongside the merely economic and political ones (Forgacs 1988:194).

In Gramsci's (1971:55-59, 106-14, 129-33) concept of hegemony, two forms of hegemony are possible, namely transformism and expansive hegemony. For purposes of this study, I briefly outline the distinction between these two forms of hegemony. Transformism refers to passive revolution which "can...be seen as a defensive type of politics pursued by the hegemonic force in a situation of political and economic crisis...[whose] goal is the formation of a passive consensus which neutralizes antagonistic political forces and disunites the masses" (Torfing 1999:111). Unlike transformism, expansive hegemony "involves the formation of a collective will with a national-popular character, which is able to promote the full development of particular demands and lead finally to the resolution of the contradictions they express" (Torfing 1999:111). Torfing (1999) explains that in Gramsci's view, transformism is the hegemonic strategy of the bourgeoisie to counteract political and economic crisis, whereas expansive hegemony is the strategy of the proletariat to fight exploitative bourgeoisies.

In examining the Malawi socio-political context at independence in 1964, and the cabinet crisis that ensued between late 1964 and early 1965, some features of Gramsci's thought are relevant for studying the nationalist government's subtle uses of the development agenda as a resource to gain popular acceptance, and create nationhood. As Malawi emerged from colonial status, the effects of the British colonial practice of divide-and-rule, enshrined in the system of Indirect Rule that was formally established in 1933 (Vail and White 1989), made Malawi's nationhood little more than a fragile loose coalition of ethnic groups. The development agenda proved a useful resource in the task of 'building the nation' – the unchanging theme for the Malawi Congress Party's annual convention. The study will show that as much as development was represented as primarily concerned with raising quality of life, hegemonic purposes were subtly embedded within the developmental quest. The discursive resources that were used to accomplish the subtle use of development for political legitimation of the nationalist government are examined in this study.

Interpretive Repertoires

A concept that is gaining currency in various disciplines that have taken to discourse analysis is *interpretative*⁴ *repertoires*. According to Potter (1996:115-116) "Interpretative repertoires are systematically related sets of terms, often used with stylistic and grammatical coherence, and often organized around one or more central metaphors." Although several repertoires are employed in various disciplines, a lot of attention has been paid to the *empiricist repertoire* that is used in scientific discourse to project a disinterested presentation of 'facts.' It is important to note that with the tendency towards scientific scholarship in many other disciplines, the empiricist repertoire is not uncommon in the social sciences and the humanities.

Fact Construction, Descriptions and Reflexivity

An object of this study is to analyse various descriptions of places, people, and ideas. These descriptions serve particular functions in the texts and the social world. A study of descriptions looks at what interested groups present as 'facts'. The view that is consistent with this study in regards to fact construction, descriptions and reflexivity is elaborated in the Discursive Psychology perspective (Potter 1996). For purposes of this study, as Potter posits, "Reality enters into human practices by way of the categories and descriptions that are part of those practices. The world is not ready categorized by God or nature in ways that we are all forced to accept. It is *constituted* in one way or another as people talk it, write it and argue it " (p98). He refers to discourse that construct substantial and factual versions of the world as *reifying* discourse while the discourse that undermines versions are *ironizing*.

Perhaps more analytically important for this study are the functions of descriptions. They do not simply depict or represent some reality; they are

⁴ In other works, such as Wood and Kroger (2000), "*interpretive* repertoires" is used.

used to accomplish various intended actions. Furthermore, descriptions build their own statuses as factual versions of reality – person, object, idea, event, etc. Potter (1996) identifies two principal ways descriptions are enlisted to achieve intended rhetorical goals. Descriptions are cardinal tools in categorisation; they formulate objects, events as particular things with specific qualities. Potter notes that “The description presents something as good or bad, big or small...often with more subtle options” (p111). An equally common role of descriptions is to routinise, that is, present versions as “*mere* descriptions, reports which *tell it how it is*” (p108) or conversely exceptionalise actions, objects, ideas, etc. A point to underline is that in examining the accounts of various data texts in this study, the intention is not to “assess whether [they] are right or not, but to explore the practices” (Potter 1996:114) through which issues in development are constructed and the resultant workings of development in the Malawian context.

1.4 Summary and Outline

Issues of community/national development have been studied largely following the principles in economics and its related disciplines. The obvious disillusionment in development circles and among the poor regarding development has brought about such notions as donor fatigue and, of course, aggravated poverty. These occurrences have attracted attention from various disciplines and other interested parties. Hence, linguists, anthropologists, communication experts, sociologists, and many others, seek to understand the workings of development. The growing interest in discourse analysis as a tool to understand development across various disciplines is a departure from the conventional approaches of schools of economics, which grossly ignore human societal shaping within social practice (Gondwe 1992). In the emerging studies (see, for example Apthorpe and Gasper 1996; Fischer and Forester 1993), social practice is considered to have a strong bearing on the workings of development planning and practice. This study falls within the tradition of critical discourse analysis, which is interested not only in social practice but also the language through which social practice is realised and

propagated. I draw on various perspectives of discourse analysis for tools of analysis within the critical discourse analysis framework.

The study is divided into four major related parts. Part I is introductory and provides a context and framework for the research, following a conventional format. The remaining three parts are organised in a less conventional way with the material being structured thematically. I have opted to adopt these two formats for pragmatic reasons. The study is examining development through its different phases of thought. Because development work is characterised by programmes or projects, objects of analysis through the chosen period are different programmes/projects. A programme/project analysis, it was felt, would provide for a self-contained discussion as much as it continues the narrative. **Part I Introduction – A Discursive Approach to Development**, incorporates three chapters: Chapter 1 dealing with concepts and context; Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature in development thought and practice, and (critical) discourse analysis; and Chapter 3, which explains the analytical framework and the object of analysis. **Part II Framing Development** looks in depth at the framing of development in Malawi. This part includes four chapters. Chapter 4 “Development in Malawi: An Overview,” is an overview of Malawi’s development narrative from colonial times. Chapter 5, “Images of Malawi”, examines the construction of Malawi as a helpless land-locked country with few resources, highlighting the recurrent images, and motifs which serve(d) to justify a narrow based (agricultural) economy. The final chapter in this section, Chapter 6 “Representing Imbalance: A View of the Agricultural Economy,” examines how the rest of the economy was made subservient to crop growing, and the resultant effects. My contention here is that while agriculture was/is important, it was/is constructed as an end in itself and that alternatives were neglected or deliberately suppressed. I demonstrate how this has led to a fixated mentality regarding strategies for development, and to a sense of helplessness. **Part III Purposes within Purpose** examines extraneous and inexplicit motivations that worked within the development agenda. Chapter 7 “The Agricultural Link in the Rural Growth Centres Project” examines agricultural motivations that inexplicitly impelled the growth centres project while a ‘conventional industrial

thrust' argot was textually explicit. Also examined are the illusory notions of participation that were carried textually as well as procedurally in development planning. Chapter 8 "Development and Hegemony" in the main explores how the national political machinery legitimated and entrenched itself through development work. These are issues that development institutions do not take into account, but have significant contribution in deflecting attempts towards targeted goals. My contention in this part is that concerns of political legitimisation seemed to override practical issues of building capacity among the citizenry and bringing them to a level of awareness that would clarify goals and strategies in the nation's development agenda beyond the immediate euphoria of liberation from colonial domination and its evils. **Part IV A Concern to Develop People** includes the last substantive chapter, Chapter 9, and the concluding chapter, Chapter 10. Chapter 9 "Representing People Centredness" examines much later attempts to redress the failed development. With changes in socio-political culture, the chapter surveys problem setting as a crucial step of a poverty-focused development agenda. Locating poverty in the neglect of the human/social dimension, emergent development notions emphasise capacity building and empowerment through participation, along with the international attachment to aid of such issues as human rights, and good governance. These notions are examined in contrast to the earlier development notions that emphasised economic growth with its neoclassical "trickle-down" philosophical underpinnings. The final chapter, Chapter 10 "Summary: Development Representation in Discourse" summarises the study thematically, and concludes the entire study highlighting the discursive and constructive element in the shaping of the Malawi economy in general that has led to significant paucity of innovation and reflexivity. The chapter also makes suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature pertaining to the two major disciplines that are the interest of the present study, namely: development thought, practice and its communication and secondly, discourse analysis in social life.

Glaring failures of the modernising development mission and the increasing debt burden among Less Developed Countries (LDCs) led to mounting frustrations through the 1960s and 1970s (Amin, 1990; Patterson, 1999; Woods, 1992). Escobar's (1995:4) graphic representation of the failure of development spanning over forty years including the 1960s and 1970s decades is a tale of despair:

This book tells the story of this dream and how it progressively turned into a nightmare. For instead of the kingdom of abundance promised by theorists and politicians in the 1950s, the discourse and strategy of development produced its opposite: massive underdevelopment and impoverishment, untold exploitation and oppression.

These frustrations brought about theoretical twists and turns within development thought, guided by either capitalist or Marxist ideologies. By the late 1980s, development theory and practice had nothing else credible to offer as poverty was obviously getting worse and the lot of the poorer countries was sinking in despair. Woods (1993:3) describes various desperate attempts of the decade indicative of inadequacy of strategies:

The 1980s saw increasing disillusionment with the conventional approaches. It saw a casting about for solutions in 'basic needs'; 'institutional development', 'women's development', 'food security', 'structural adjustment', and belated attention was paid to previously unheeded warnings of growing debt, population, water shortage, unemployment, and environmental degradation. The omission of these ingredients of development from earlier approaches suggested inadequacies in the underlying rationale of those approaches.

The failure of development theory led to what is commonly referred to as the *impasse* (Tehrani, 1997). These are the circumstances that led to some

theorists seeking alternative ways out of the crisis. One result of this search for alternatives is the emergence of a highly critical *post-development* line of thinking with its theoretical base in 'post-modernist' / 'post-structuralist' theory¹. The resultant post-modernist thinking has ranged between a totally dejected outlook towards development leading to an outright rejection of the whole enterprise (Crush, 1995; Escobar, 1995; Rist, 1997; Sachs, 1992) to an accommodating critique of aspects of development (Cowen & Shenton 1996; Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997).

What comes out clearly here is that *development* is a contested field and as such, ideological crosscurrents in debates are a major feature. Each of these ideological perspectives is persuasive in one way or another.

This review intends to outline the march of development thought, and the element of persuasion therein as manifested in language, and the response of some perspectives of discourse analysis to issues of social life or practice to situate critical discourse analysis (CDA) which this study has employed as a framework of study. I am using social life and social practice synonymously here, drawing from Fairclough (1989:28) who views practice (as well as discourse) as referring to "what people are doing on a particular occasion, or what people habitually do given a certain sort of occasion. That is both can refer either to action, or to convention."

¹ While Parfitt (2002: 1-2) regards post-modernity to be too diffuse to be referred to as a school of thought, he gives a simplified characterisation of its tendencies, or themes. Post-modernity tends to be critical mainly of two "habits of thought associated with modernity." One of them is the belief that human history is teleological; that is, it displays a process of progress towards greater levels of civilisation, or human emancipation. The other is the faith in human ability to improve their condition through science, incorporating "moulding and shaping their world through the application of technology and such methods as rational techniques of planning."

2.2 Development Theory and its Communication Since World War II

A necessary starting point for this study of discourses in development is to trace the course that development theory and practice has taken and the role of communication in the process, in developing countries. While Patterson (1999) and Schech and Haggis (2000) trace notions of development in operation to classical Greek times through the industrial revolution, other scholars (see for example Tehranian, 1991; Escobar, 1995; Rist, 1997) are particularly concerned with the modernist strain of development which they claim began to attract scholarly attention after World War II.

It is important to mention that in Malawi and most of the developing world that was under colonial domination, development followed after attainment of independence from colonialism. Thus, there are contextual differences in the development experience. Unlike the Latin American and Asian experience, in the case of Malawi and several other sub-Saharan African countries, the frustrations of the 1950s and 1960s were outside their experience (Amin 1990). Unlike the general picture of the underdeveloped world, the 1970s were for Malawi hopeful years as far as economic growth was concerned. However, by the turn of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, largely due to latent weaknesses in the economy and exogenous shocks associated with the oil crisis, the promise of development that Malawi hoped would continue had lost its lustre and the downward trend has been irreversible so far (Harrigan, 2001; Kajjyanike, 1992).

Three major paradigms of development, each with their communication approach, have emerged between the end of World War II and the present, viz: the dominant paradigm, the dependency paradigm, and the alternative paradigm (Dwivedi, 1994). These paradigms have not escaped critical commentary. The first two have been criticized principally for being production-centred. The needs of the production system have been elevated above the needs of people. The

latter has been criticised mainly for its apparently utopian quest (see Korten & Klaus, 1984; de Beer & Swanepoel, 2000).

Dominant Paradigm

Inspired by results of the Marshall Plan in reconstruction of war-torn Europe (albeit without regard to contextual and experiential differences), Western industrialised nations sought to westernise developing nations – which mostly were a legacy from the pre-war colonial order dominated by few European powers. This concerted effort to transform the developing world (which were regarded as traditional societies) to modern societies following the pattern of western nations was the basis of what came to be known as the *dominant paradigm*. In this perspective, development was viewed as a type of social change in which new ideas were to be introduced into a social system to produce higher per capita incomes and higher levels of living through more modern production methods and improved social organization (see Tehranian, 1997; Dwivedi, 1994). In this paradigm, societies were identified as either traditional or modern. Traditional societies were considered to be in a general state of underdevelopment and poverty, while modern societies were industrialised, materialistic and democratic (Servaes, 1999). Therefore, modern societies could assist traditional societies to develop by transferring their technology and socio-political systems.

Communication scholars following the dominant paradigm believed mainly in a one-way flow of information and a top-down approach to development. Mass media were considered as major vehicles for dissemination of information to a diverse public within a short period of time (Lerner, 1958; Melkote, 1991; Tehranian, 1997).

Critics (mostly from Latin America) have severely criticised the dominant paradigm. Blomström and Hettne (1984) show that major criticisms center

around: its ethnocentric nature, placing internal blame on the individuals and the developing societies; the negative consequences of 'modernity'; the failure of the top-down, one-way and 'big' project approach; and inattention to message content (see also Melkote, 1991; Servaes, 1999).

Dependency Paradigm

Dwivedi (1994) shows that by the late 1960s a spirit of frustration and despair with development in general had set in among the providers of development aid. It became evident that externally induced modernization had failed to eradicate the basic problems of underdevelopment that it purported to solve; while some significant increases of GNP had taken place, poverty, disease and hunger had either remained unaltered or worsened. The *dependency paradigm* arose as an antithesis to the modernization perspective. According to Larrain (1989:111)

the new wave of pessimism which led to trenchant criticisms of modernization theories and ECLA's [United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America] policies...were at the center of the new dependency theories which emerged in the mid-sixties as a radical challenge to the optimism of the old established theories.

Dependency was viewed as the conditioning situation in which the economies of one group of countries are conditioned by the development and expansion of others (Servaes, 1999). Proponents of the dependency theory viewed the process of development under the modernization perspective as a continuation of the old colonial type. Patterson (1999:125) notes that "dependency theorists believed that the underdevelopment of Third World countries was a consequence of unequal exchange with the developed capitalist countries of the West. They challenged the idea that international trade was equally beneficial to all the participants." Thus, dependency theorists and activists called for developing countries to rally together in their own processes of development, while maintaining economic development as their goal (Servaes, 1999). The dependency paradigm derived its theoretical tradition from Neo-Marxism and structuralism (Mabogunje, 1989; Patterson, 1999).

The literature on development and communication identifies two main schools of thought that concern themselves with the role of communication in development in this tradition: the culturalist, and the political economy view points (Tehrani 1991; Singhal & Sthapitanonda, 1996). The major interest of these scholars is to investigate the issue of equality, and identify the factors that create inequality, especially in terms of communication between the industrialised nations and the developing countries. According to Singhal and Sthapitanonda (1996:16) the “culturalists...seek to interpret culture, communication and ideology...document[ing] the imbalance in information flow in a global perspective” (see for example, Tunstall, 1977; Varis, 1985). Thus, the culturalists’ concern is the unbalanced flow of information between North and South in explaining why intra-regional and intra-national communication is limited in developing countries. In regards to communication scholars using a political economy approach, Singhal and Sthapitanonda’s (1996:16) analysis is that they “look at the political and economic contexts in which communication and culture exist among other factors of domination” (see for example, Servaes, 1989; Schiller, 1981). The political economy approach, therefore, argues that the existing global communication order reflects an imbalance of global power that needs to be corrected.

According to the *dependency* paradigm, to attain an advanced level of development, developing countries must separate themselves from Western countries. They should be aware of Western values that come with the Western concept of development. At international fora, such as United Nations Educational and Scientific Organization (UNESCO), and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), representatives from developing nations attempted to challenge Western countries by asking for a more balanced flow of information in and out of their nations. They also asked for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), along with the New World Economic Order (NWEEO), to increase their share of information products and to enhance economic equality between the developed and developing nations.

They envisaged that developing countries could develop on their own if they were independent, and if Western countries did not dominate their political, economic, and socio-cultural ideology and values (Rist, 1997).

The dependency paradigm was criticized for its overconcentration on external factors that cause underdevelopment, and overlooking a nation's internal causes, such as inequality between social classes, corruption among elites of the developing countries, and the failure of development projects planned and undertaken by the national governments themselves (Patterson, 1999; de Beer & Swanepoel, 2000). Notable too is that while critical, just like the modernization perspective, the dependency perspective was concerned with economic development as its top priority and it depended on quantitative methods, which overlook socio-political influences, to analyse the issues of development and underdevelopment (Gondwe, 1992; Arndt, 1984).

Alternative Paradigm

The alternative paradigm, known also as the *pluralist perspective* or *multiplicity-in-one-world*, emerged in the mid-1970s as an alternative to the dominant paradigm (Melkote, 1991; Rogers, 1978). The rise of various movements – civil rights, peace, environmental and feminist; emergence of liberalizing movements in communist countries; and national liberalizing movements in developing countries - created a context for the birth of this paradigm. Common concerns shared by these historical events were freedom and equality among the public. In addition, the growth of the humanistic/interpretive and cultural approaches to social sciences, and the lessons learned from earlier development projects, encouraged scholars to reconsider the role of communication in development (Rogers, 1978).

In this paradigm development is more generally defined. Singhal and Sthapitanonda (1996:18) point out that the scope of development in this

paradigm "is less economic-development-oriented and more social-oriented; it rejects the concept of universality of the development concept and economic-based perspectives". Melkote (1991) explains that the thinking in the alternative paradigm is that each society, region, or group should identify its own pathway to development. In this framework, nations should rethink their needs, goals and measures of development. There is a shift also in magnitude of projects. In the alternative paradigm, development projects should be designed in the form of small manageable projects that suit popular needs. The primary goal is to improve the quality of people's life. Servaes (1999) points out that unlike in the other paradigms, several elements of target communities are considered in the alternative paradigm. These include the following.

- Local cultures, values and norms should be adequately considered as they provide the context for development.
- Development should originate from a society's identified need, and popular participation should be promoted.
- Development projects should promote equal access to development and natural resources, and be sensitive to local ecological systems.

Singhal and Sthapitanonda (1996) argue that the alternative perspective uses communication in different ways, depending on the way development has been defined in a particular society. They further point out that the new approach favours an interchange of sender-receiver roles, and horizontality of communication at all levels of society and interaction.

The role of communication research in the alternative perspective tends to focus on problem solving and on qualitative research methods. Melkote (1991) points out that mass media and folk media are designed to work together to play a facilitator role. They are meant to provide information about development and circulate information among diverse cultural groups. The thinking is that in this

way people have a chance to obtain information rapidly, and they can be proud of their cultural heritage.

2.3 Critical Perspectives of the Development Enterprise

The post-development line of thinking is perhaps the strongest response to the theoretical *impasse* in development thought at present. Numerous periodical articles, monographs as well as anthologies have been written within this line of thinking (for example Cowen & Shenton, 1995; Crush, 1995; Escobar, 1995; Sachs, 1992). The stand-point of this group is rejectionist - development has failed totally and all its interventions among the Less Developed Countries should be abandoned. I will look at some key works in the post-developmental school.

Parfitt (2002) traces the emergence of the post-developmental school of thought. An early display of the post-developmental critique was the 1992 publication of the Wolfgang Sachs edited *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. In this volume, both Sachs' (1992) and Esteva's (1992) powerful critiques consider development not only as an obsolete ideologically loaded Western concept in service of imperial domination, but also associated with "Delusion and disappointment, failures and crimes" that tell "a common story: it did not work" (Sachs, 1992:1).

One of the strongest post-developmental voices is that of Arturo Escobar. Escobar's (1995) *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* followed after Sachs (1992). Using Foucauldian critical techniques, Escobar dismisses development as a "discourse [that] results in concrete practices of thinking and acting through which the Third World is produced." He contextualises developmentalism "within the overall space of modernity, particularly modern economic practices" (p11). In the same year as Sachs (1992), Crush (1992) edited *Power of Development* – a collection of articles that

took a similar approach to the analysis of development. Crush (1992:3) posits: “The *discourse* of development, the forms in which it makes its arguments and establishes its authority, the manner in which it constructs the world, are usually seen as self-evident and unworthy of attention. This book’s primary intention is to try and make the self-evident problematical.” To do so the articles focused on “the texts of development and only secondarily on its projects and practices” because “The primary purpose of the development text...is to convince, to persuade, that this (and not that) is the way the world actually is and ought to be amended” (p5).

Works that came after, though highly critical too and using Foucauldian analytical techniques, did not take a totally rejectionist stance. They took a “more nuanced [and perhaps sober] approach of criticising what they [saw] as the negative and repressive content of the concept of development in the hope of liberating it for a more progressive and emancipatory reading” (Parfitt, 2002:4). These include Cowen and Shenton’s (1996) *Doctrines of Development*, and the Rahnema and Bawtree (1997) *The Post-Development Reader* in which the readings were critical of aspects of development. An important point to note about the post-developmental school of thought is that in seeking alternatives to development, they advance the idea that “emancipation of the world’s social majority” should be left to new social movements² (non-institutional protest collectivities that are as diverse as they are complex) originating in the Third World, such as the Zapatistas of Mexico (Parfitt, 2002: 4).

² Goodwin and Jasper (2003) assert that while social movements were largely ignored or feared as irrational mobs until the 1960s, they have now attracted the attention of scholars, and activists. They have also made such an impact on established politics and other power holders that they cannot be ignored. The composition of new social movements is more inclusive than it is restrictive of groupings that resist one sort of domination or another, oppression, or exclusion from participating in a meaningful or self-fulfilling social life. For a fuller understanding of concepts, cases, diversity and complexity of social movements refer to Pakulski (1991); Porta and Diani (1999); Cohen and Rai (2000); Burbach (2001); and Goodwin, and Jasper (2003).

What characterises the new social movements is the call for a democratic transformation directed by civil society. The conceptualisation of democratic transformation is open to “adaptation and the continuous elaboration of an alternative social project” (Jeffries, 2001:134). Perhaps what is particularly attractive about new social movements (such as Zapatistas) is their call for democratic change and social justice for the “the global majority excluded from decision making on the one hand, and ...the modernizing state and an increasingly small global ruling class on the other” (Jeffries, 2001: 134). In effect, this is a critique of the neo-liberal globalization move.

A pertinent point that Jeffries (2001) makes about the uniqueness of the Zapatistas social movement and its survival technique, in relation to this study, pertains to its mass-mediated politics and communicational practices. Jeffries, (2001: 131) notes that:

A worldwide dialogue has opened up among a range of movements on the meaning of democracy, liberty and justice in the new world order. Here discourse and praxis are interwoven through the appropriation of a variety of communication media and the elaboration of an alternative social project.

In the light of the foregoing, it would appear that the failure of development has opened up space for other discursive practices and ideological oppositions, such as those that are championed by new social movements. As such, the important position that discourse analysis is assuming to explain social and other practices is a practical response that is being adopted beyond the humanities and social sciences. As we will see in section 2.4 other disciplines that have otherwise hitherto regarded discourse analysis as a preserve of linguists have taken to discourse analysis with notable zest. The next section below (2.4) considers the literature that deals with (critical) discourse analysis as a tool in understanding social processes and practices.

2.4 Discourse Analysis and Social practice

The main interest in this section is to show the wide currency of discourse analysis in various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, beyond the traditional linguistics discipline. Furthermore, it will be shown that in an age where democratic values and issues of human rights, particularly, fairness, justice, and equity, are household notions, contestations over power and inequality are issues of wide interest. The review of the literature on discourse analysis and social practice is intended to show that adoption of discourse analysis results from struggle over meanings, otherwise referred to as the political process (Laclau & Mouffe 1985) in social as well as other issues. In regards to development issues, the failure of development to change the lot of the poor and the heavy debt burden that Third World countries are struggling under, have led to a questioning of the *status quo* – in planning, implementation, and related practices. The questioning of the *status quo* in development has been discussed in Chapter 1.1 to be a result of divergent interpretations of factors that have led to the failure of the development project in the developing world. Other disciplines seek to contribute to understanding the workings of development at different levels, times and in geographical regions. The currency of Discourse Analysis as a broad field is one such contribution from a non-traditional discipline as far as development is concerned. This section situates Discourse Analysis as a theory and method that offers a way forward either complementary to or instead of traditional scholarship.

A point to note regarding Discourse Analysis is that different perspectives reflect differences in their investigatory purposes, objects of investigation (e.g. talk or texts), as well as their origins. In some cases there are overlaps among these varieties, but in other cases, they involve incompatible assumptions. Fairclough (1992) has classified, though not exhaustively, the various discourse analysis perspectives into critical and non-critical, aligning Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) along with some perspectives of Poststructuralism (PS) and Critical

Linguistics (see Fowler, 1979; Kress & Hodge, 1979) within the critical approaches. What characterise the critical perspectives is a concern for not only describing discursive practices but also

showing how discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies, and the constructive effects discourse has upon social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief (Fairclough, 1992:12).

Working from a rather different standpoint, Wood and Kroger (2000) have given a clear account of perspectives of discourse analysis, singling out for their practical usefulness in social practice (and change) research, four major perspectives. I will not attempt reviews of the varieties beyond pointing out some influential studies in each case³. One of the perspectives they differentiate is Discourse Analysis in Social Psychology – DASP- which is acclaimed to have broad utility as much as it has been influenced by several perspectives and disciplines outside of social psychology (see for example Potter & Wetherell 1987; Edwards & and Potter 1992). Another variety is Conversational Analysis – CA – whose object of study is how orderliness of social interaction is achieved in talk, with some detail regarding how particular action (e.g. refusal) is accomplished (see for example, Sacks, 1992; and Heritage, 1997.) A third variety considered is Pragmatics (for example Grice, 1975; Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996.). Wood and Kroger (2000) regard pragmatics as important for:

Both foundational notions (e.g., the way in which utterances can be interpreted to mean something more or different from their conventional or literal meanings, i.e., conversational implicature...and for its attention to a wide variety of discourse features that play a role in analysis (e.g., grammatical devices, markers) (p22).

Finally, work in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) along with some perspectives of poststructuralism (PS) is regarded important for its theories and methods for the empirical study of the relations between discourse and social and cultural developments in different social domains (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002). The

³ For more elaborate accounts of different varieties (others refer to them as traditions) of discourse analysis, see: Fairclough (1992); Levinson (1983); Phillips and Hardy (2002); Phillips and Jorgensen (2002); Wetherell, Taylor and Yates (2001).

current popularity of the critical discourse analytical approach in many disciplines may be explained by what Van Dijk (2001:352) notes: that “critical discourse analysts...want to understand, expose and ultimately resist social inequality.” Phillips and Jorgensen (2002) further point out that CDA is a broad movement with several approaches including Fairclough’s (1995a, 1995b), which, in their view, is the most developed theory and method for research in communication, culture and society.

Important for purposes of the present study is the point that these major perspectives, different classifications notwithstanding, have three main features that are most important for research activities (Wood & Kroger, 2000). First, all emphasise the notion discourse as practice. This emphasis accords researchers (and analysts, in general) the flexibility in dealing with various sorts of social practice, ranging from “conventional, substantive concerns (e.g., identity, racism) to metatheoretical issues” (Wood & Kroger, 2000:23). It is notable also that some themes appear to be more characteristic of particular perspectives. Of particular interest in this study is the point that issues of power and inequality are likely to be addressed in CDA or PS work. Second, discourse researchers work with various data, such as written text, talk. CDA and PS put emphasis on written texts, media (written) discourse, interviews and fictional work of various kinds (including films), with some attention to talk in institutional settings and in everyday interaction. DASP includes all the mentioned possibilities. This point should clarify interest in discourse analysis and choices of which perspectives that analysts of various disciplinary interests make for particular investigatory work. Third, all of the perspectives singled out are sensitive to linguistic features, despite differences in the origins of the perspectives. The focus is on social functions of linguistic features, not on the linguistic features in their own right. That is, the interest is in examining how “social meanings are grammatically encoded” (Wood & Kroger, 2000:23).

In view of these interests, researchers draw upon different perspectives, guided by their research questions. We will now look at some notable studies that have employed discourse analyses in various disciplines within the social sciences and humanities. As it will become clear, most of the studies that do not come from a linguistic background (including the poststructuralist perspectives that are aligned within the critical category) have tended to bypass close linguistic analysis, arguing that they focus on content as opposed to linguistic structure. Phillips and Jorgensen (2002) point out that this lack of close linguistic analysis is probably a major deficiency in method with such approaches, for example, DASP.

The Linguistic Turn: Application of Discursive Analyses

Phillips and Hardy (2002) attribute the linguistic turn in the social sciences and humanities over the last thirty years to what they call “a revolution of sorts [that] has swept across”(p12), which is characterized primarily by two developments. The first is the recognition of the constructive role of language – arising from the work of linguistic philosophers that influenced sociologists, such as Berger and Luckmann (1966), and anthropologists, such as Geertz (1973), whose work formed the foundation of a constructionist view of social phenomena. The second development pertains to broader changes in society (referred to above), such as issues of equity, environment, globalisation. These have emerged as new topics of study in different disciplines. In certain cases subjects have been reconceptualised, necessitating new approaches. In researching these new or reconceptualised topics, discourse analysis has been used effectively as a research methodology (Phillipson & Hardy, 2002). Escobar (1995) notes that “discursive analysis of development started in the late 1980s.” Much of such work was within anthropological studies. However, since then, there has been a proliferation of studies that employ one perspective or another of discourse analysis. As Phillips and Hardy (2002) point out:

This new and renewed concern with power has not only been confined to organization and management theory. Researchers

in areas such as social movement theory, communications, psychology, and gender studies are also increasingly attuned to the dynamics of power (p15).

Bearing in mind the point that various discourse analytical approaches are preferred for particular research questions, we cannot sensibly seek to review every work that has touched on power relations in general and development, in particular. Below I will point out some influential studies across disciplines that have been hailed as deconstructionist (critical), despite the fact that most of them lack close linguistic analysis. I regard these works as touching on broad issues of development. This is the tradition the present study extends to examine representations of development in discourse.

Although not directly concerned with development as a subject, McCloskey (1985) was an early work with such a deconstructionist quest. He sought to expose the centrality of persuasion and ideological workings that are often unnoticed in the language of economics as a discipline. This was a rhetorical analysis of Economics discourse. McCloskey's work was inspirational to several later works that have taken to discourse analysis, such as Fischer and Forrester (1993), while it provoked unhappy responses from fellow economists (see Heilbroner 1986). Fisher and Forrester's (1993) collection is one set of influential studies that adopted perspectives of discourse analysis with essays in the collection including cases and theoretical explanations. Although the disciplinary location of this work is in policy analysis and planning, it has influenced several other works in various disciplines, as their own breadth of coverage includes social, political, economic, and environmental concerns. In their introduction, Fisher and Forester (1993:2) are clear about their quest:

We need to understand just what policy analysts and planners do, how language and modes of representation both enable and constrain their work, how their practical rhetoric depicts and selects, describes and characterizes, includes and excludes, and more.

This quest emanates from the understanding that "policy and planning arguments are intimately involved with relations of power and the exercise of power" (p7)

which situates such analyses within the interests of critical perspectives of discourse analysis, as indeed the essays set out to “study critically the production of analysts’ claims – not to take them as ‘truth,’ and not to take every claim to be valid as any other” (p3).

Among early anthropological works that have been hailed as “sophisticated [an] example of the deconstructionist approach” (Escobar, 1995) is Ferguson’s (1990) *The Anti-Politics Machine: “Development,” Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Ferguson’s relevance to the present study is his explication of the difference between what he calls development discourse and academic discourse, using Foucauldian techniques. He notes that “‘development discourse’ [has] its distinctive regularities” (p67) to meet the needs of development institutions, namely: to “make out [the target of planned development] to be an enormously promising candidate for the only sort of intervention a ‘development’ agency is capable of launching: the apolitical, technical ‘development’ intervention”(p69). He notes that due to this objective, ‘development discourse’ “would be considered absurd in academic settings” (p67). The present study takes interest in this feature of ‘absurdity’ that development discourse displays.

Another work that followed was Sachs (1992). Escobar (1995:12) outlines Sach’s enterprise in this work: analysing “central constructs or key words of development discourse, such as market, planning, population, environment, production, equality, participants, needs, poverty, and the like.” In studying constructionist discourse these constructs/terms are of interest in this study.

As it may be noticed, much of anthropological discursive analysis hardly extends beyond dealing with content. An explanation of this feature may be Foucault’s (1972) influence about which Fairclough (2003:123) notes that “The analysis of discourse for Foucault is the analysis of the domain of ‘statements’...But that does not mean a concern with detailed analysis of texts.”

Apthorpe and Gasper (1996) is another set of studies that demonstrate that "there are significant opportunities for the application of such methods as critical discourse analysis and critical linguistic analysis to a variety of settings" (Phillips & Hardy, 2002:15). Apthorpe and Gasper's (1996) anthology combines theoretical chapters with case studies of development policy discourse in national and international settings. It is a step in the direction of deconstruction and careful review of language by which development discourse constructs the world in distinct ways. The collection has some interesting rhetorical analyses of (development) policy documents pertaining to developing countries that draw on Foucauldian techniques (see for example Pain, 1996; Moore, 1996.).

To examine representation(s) of development in discourse, this study incorporates both rhetorical and more nuanced linguistic analysis. The motivation for a close linguistic analysis is the strong indication in the growing body of literature that underlines the significance of metaphor (representational language) in governance (see Morgan, 1986; Schön, 1979; and Winter, 1981) that implicit representational language (particularly metaphor) "conditions thinking so as to divert attention from vital opportunities" (Judge, 1992:12). In fact, Schön (1979:255) argues powerfully that:

the essential difficulties in social policy have more to do with problem setting than with problem solving, more to do with ways in which we frame the purposes to be achieved than with the selection of optimal means for achieving them...Problem settings are mediated...by the "stories" people tell...in which they describe what is wrong and what needs fixing. When we examine the problem-setting stories...it becomes apparent that the framing of problems often depends upon metaphors underlying (*Sic*) the stories which generate problem setting and set the directions of problem solving.

Morgan (1986:336) extends the argument further by contending that "taken-for-granted images or metaphors shape understanding and action...Our images are...conceptual frameworks." Drawing from foregoing indications that "the language of problems and opportunities...needs to be reviewed"(Judge, 1992:12)

for effective social change planning and practice, a linguistic examination of representations of development in discourse may provide a relevant starting point for insights into factors that promote or hinder development programmes in the developing world. As it will be seen in the analyses of context and development programmes/projects in Parts II through to IV, development has fallen short of expectation. In this regard, it is my view that a critical discursive approach to development analysis that pays attention to representational language is relevant as Morgan (1986:337) asserts:

People who learn to read situations from different...points of view have an advantage over those committed to a fixed position. For they are better to recognize the limitations of a given perspective. They can see how situations and problems can be framed and reframed in different ways, allowing new kinds of solutions to emerge.

The activities of framing and reframing of situations and problems is rooted in language as a discursive resource. In considering the relationship between metaphors and thinking, Barton (1994:17) succinctly captures the importance of language as a constructive resource:

crucially, there is an internal world, there is an external world, and there is some relation between the two. I will be taking a constructivist view of this, where people construct a mental model of the external world, with language at the center of the construction.

Considering that language is crucial in constructing what 'world' people aim at, and that implicit representational language may condition thinking to limiting horizon of opportunities, I consider a nuanced linguistic analysis of representations of development in discourse relevant for shedding some light on factors that have contributed to a trend of socio-economic change characterized by paucity of innovation, reflexivity and wide-ranging appropriation of community capital in the Malawi context of study.

2.5 Conclusion

The literature that has been reviewed in this chapter spans across development studies, anthropology and discourse analysis. Apart from outlining the major

paradigms that development is associated with, the literature in development studies shows the trend of development thought through the *impasse* to post-developmental thinking. Due to development's failure to change the socio-economic circumstances of the world's poor, a large body of research in the humanities and social sciences seeks to suggest alternatives towards social change. Among the methodologies and research tools that researchers have resorted to, discourse analysis is one of the most rewarding.

This review has also shown that discourse analysis is not a monolithic field; there are various discourse analytical traditions, or approaches. While there are differences, there are also points of overlaps. The variety is attributed to influences from disciplines of origin and also variability of questions that researchers seek to answer. It has been shown that in researching questions that pertain to issues of power relations and other social processes and practices, critical discourse analysis is preferred to other discourse approaches. Because development issues have much to do with issues of power relations, and social change in general, the present study is situated within the critical discourse analytic tradition. It has also been noted that a lot of discourse analytical work has been addressing gender issues, racism, and human rights concerns. There has been some work addressing development, mostly within anthropological research, employing Foucauldian techniques of discursive analysis and leaning more towards analysis of content than language. The present study takes language as a realisation of social processes and social practice. As the review of literature suggests that representational language and conditioning of thinking that may fail to recognise alternative opportunities may be related, it is my view that a linguistic analysis may provide insights into factors that have led to unsatisfactory development performance in Malawi, and indeed, the developing world.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYTICAL APPROACH, TOOLS AND DATA TEXTS

3.1 Introduction

Development has been conceptualised variably across geographical regions and times (Arndt, 1981; Rew, 1997; Gardner, 1997). Gardner (1997:133) argues that an “Understanding [of] development as a social construct...indefinable in any absolute sense is commonplace among social scientists.” Bearing in mind that the intent of this study is to examine depictions of development and attendant issues of power relationships, and that conceptions of development reflect a social constructive practice, it is my view that discourse perspectives that embrace a constructivist epistemology are most relevant in the analysis. The view of social constructionism is that people’s understanding of the world depends on language as well as communicative practices that are created through interactions and relationships (see Gergen 1994; and Gergen 1985). Thus, constructionist thinking views language as a tool not only for communication but also for defining and describing experiences. In this regard, Shamai (2003:546) elaborates that:

The semantics used (that is, words, metaphors, or sentences) constructs the narrative of a situation and the knowledge a person has of it. At the same time, the relationships that are constructed in the context of telling about the situation reconstruct the experience of it and modify an individual’s knowledge of it.

It is important at this point to highlight the point that social constructionist thinking is opposed to the positivist tradition of research in which “Facts are thought of as existing in the world to be discovered, and can be isolated by inductively considering a large number of cases” (Hepburn 2003:8). In this case, positivist thinking would have it that there is a notion of development that can be recovered by observation. However, Nicholson (1996) has aptly pointed out a pertinent difficulty with such a position in the social sciences and

humanities where we deal with people:

as human beings are conscious and conceptualising beings, one can argue that there is a fundamental distinction between a study of them and a study of inanimate objects. Human beings are conscious of and interpret their situation and actions (p131).

It is in recognition of the point that in matters of socio-economic change we deal with “conceptualising beings” that this study has adopted a constructionist approach. As social actors engage with problems that are in their societies and they devise ways to muster those problems, they engage in constructionist activities. Representational language is an important resource in depictions of the ‘world’ they envisage. Basing the study on constructionist epistemology, I present the analytical framework below.

This chapter serves a dual purpose: it delineates the framework of textual analysis, and describes the data texts. This is an extension of the description of the tools in chapter 1 (definition of key terms) as well as situating them within the critical discourse analysis framework.

3.2 Analytical Approach

I derive the theoretical framework of the project mainly from the discourse analytic perspectives that embrace a social constructionist epistemology (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Fairclough, 1992; Potter, 1996; Gergen, 1994; Gergen, 2001). While my text analysis is based on Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 1989, 1992), I draw significantly from Discursive Psychology (DASP) as practised by Potter and Wetherell (1987). Of the three strands of Discursive Psychology⁸, this strand, as it brings together a poststructuralist perspective founded on Foucauldian theory of discourse, power and the subject, and an interactionist perspective that builds on conversational analysis and ethnomethodology, “provides particularly useful and widely used tools for research in communication, culture and language” (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002:106). I

⁸ For an introduction to perspectives of discourse analysis, refer to Jørgensen and Phillips (2002); Yates (2001); Wood and Kroger (2000).

find the approaches compatible as they share interests in a constructionist epistemology and a concern for language, although DASP tends to focus more on content recovered from rhetorical analysis than on close linguistic analysis – a prominent feature in CDA. Both rhetorical analysis and linguistic analysis are useful in this study, the former as a platform on which the latter builds to examine discursive functions of the particular texts under scrutiny.

Resources for Textual, Discursive and Social Practice Analysis

As much as this study has adopted a multi-perspective discourse analysis, the basis of the linguistic analysis is Fairclough's (1992, 1995) three-dimensional "analytical framework for empirical research on communication and society" (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002:68) that draws upon social theory and Hallidayan functional grammar (Halliday 1985). The three dimension analytical model is intended to analyse relationships between texts, processes and their social conditions, taking discourse as a contributor to the construction of social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and meaning. The three dimensions are as follows:

- ◆ linguistic features of a text (text)
- ◆ processes relating to the production and consumption of the text (discursive practice)
- ◆ wider social practice to which the communicative event belongs (social practice).

The principle behind this three-dimensional analytical framework is that "texts can never be understood or analysed in isolation – they can only be understood in relation to webs of other texts and in relation to the social context" (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002:70). These three dimensions are derived from the first of two focal points in discourse dimensions, viz: the communicative event and the orders of discourse (Fairclough 1995a). The former is an instance of language use such as a government report, while the latter is a configuration of all discourse types (encompassing discourses and genres) which are used within a social institution or a social field – "the historical impress of sociocultural practice on discourse" (Fairclough 1995a:

10). On a more practical level, Fairclough (1992:71) explains that “discursive practice is manifested in linguistic form...as ‘texts’, using ‘text’ in Halliday’s broad sense.” He goes on to assert that “‘Discursive practice’ does...not contrast with social practice: the former is a particular form of the latter” (p71). In this regard,

Analysis of a particular discourse as a piece of discursive practice focuses upon processes of text production, distribution and consumption. All of these processes are social and require reference to the particular economic, political and institutional settings within which discourse is generated (p71).

Thus, analysis of linguistic features of a text involves analysis of discursive practice. The reverse is also true. In **Tables 3.1** and **3.2** below are specified formal linguistic and other textual features that function as discursive resources covering aspects of text production and interpretation in Fairclough’s (1992, 1995a, 1995b) framework which this study has used for analysis of discursive/social practice. The tables lay out abstracted linguistic and rhetorical features of text that Fairclough (2003) has developed as tools for the analysis of linguistic realisations of social as well as discursive practice in text.

Area of Analysis	Formal elements concerned
4. Text structure	large text organisational properties
↑ 3. Cohesion	clause and sentence links
2. Grammar	words combining in clauses and sentences
1. Vocabulary	words and semantic relations
↑	-alternative wording (political/ideological)
	-Relations between words and their meanings(hegemonic)
	-metaphors and political/ideological import, and alternatives

Table 3.1: Headings for Textual Analysis in Ascending Order

Social/Discursive Focus	Linguistic/interpretive Realisation
1. Force of utterance/Speech Act	Context dependent Interpersonal meaning
2. Text Coherence	Episodes, sentences, markers of logical relationships, other interpreting principles/presuppositions (ideological)
3. Intertextuality of Texts	Presence /snatches of other texts -sequential -embedded -mixed

Table 3.2. Headings for Discursive/Social Practice Analysis

Specifying Tools for the Study

In view of the object of analysis, representations of development and contextual social practices that have been associated with development work in Malawi as they appeared in print media sources, radio, or policy submission texts, interplay or dynamics of discourses are a feature that is of interest in the present study. Fairclough (2003:124) posits that:

The relationships between different discourses are one element of the relationships between different people – they may complement one another, compete with one another, one can dominate others, and so forth. Discourses constitute part of the resources which people deploy in relating to one another – keeping separate from one another, cooperating, competing, dominating – and in seeking to change the ways in which they relate to one another.

Thus, on an analytical level, I have elected to elevate the concept of *Orders of Discourse* (whose elements include genres, styles, discourses) (Fairclough 1992, 1995a) to the main pillar of the discursive/social practice analyses. It has been noted already above that these discursive/social practices are linguistically realised and as such analysis of one feature involves the other feature too. This is the pillar around which other elements of analysis, namely: intertextuality and/or interdiscursivity with their ideological investments, are examined using the specified linguistic and rhetorical tools in tables 3.1 and 3.2 above. Thus, discursive as well as social practice are examined from genre features of the text under examination in relation to

other texts in draws on whether ostensibly or not. As a concept, *order of discourse* has analytical advantage in empirical research in that it provides the researcher a tool to examine how

discourses, by representing reality in one particular way rather than in other possible ways, constitute subjects and objects in particular ways, create boundaries between the true and the false, and make certain types of action relevant and others unthinkable (Jorgensen and Phillips 2003:145).

Both, CDA and DASP are agreed that discursive accounts of reality have social consequences. In the case of this study, the interest is in what social consequences various representations of development have had, and also what consequences would be noticed if one understanding instead of the other were accepted. Fairclough (2003:124) aptly extends this thought: "Discourses not only represent the world as it is (or rather is seen to be), they are also projective, imaginaries, representing possible worlds which are different from the actual world, and tied in to projects to change the world in particular directions." This points to the interplay of discourses and their social consequences. Drawing on Fairclough (1992, 2003), examination of formal linguistic features, which provide for linguistic realisations of discourses in genres, follows a kind of scheme which functions as a checklist. Although text analysis utilises the scheme below, the analysis does not necessarily follow the scheme's sequence.

Identifying and Characterising Discourses

To identify discourses, (or particular *repertoires*, in DASP terminology) by examining their ways of representing the world in relation to other social elements, Fairclough (2003) proposes to focus on the following range of linguistic features.

- (a) To distinguish how vocabulary 'lexicalises' the world in particular ways, a productive step is to examine how lexical semantic relationships are employed in different discourses to structure the world differently. Features to look for include: relexicalisation (rewording); hyponymy; synonymy; antonymy; and collocations (patterns of co-occurrence of

words). This step is especially rewarding when conflicting discourses are being examined, as

What is centrally contested is the power of...preconstructed semantic systems to generate particular visions of the world which may have the performative power to sustain or remake the world in their image (Fairclough 2003:130).

- (b) Analysis also involves distinguishing discourses by the way they employ lexical and grammatical metaphor - noun-like entities (nominalisations) to represent processes as 'things' or entities, or process nouns (nouns with the verb-like quality of representing processes and relations). As for the importance of metaphor as a discursive resource, Fairclough (2003:131-132) notes "metaphor is one resource available for producing distinct representations of the world. But it is perhaps the particular combination of different metaphors which differentiates discourses." I discuss further the importance of nominalisation below in the section *Identifying Representation of Social Events and Actors*.

Another important point of analysis in relation to discourses is that a particular discourse (or *repertoire*) "can...generate many specific representations" (Fairclough 2003:124). This calls for observations of levels of abstraction that discourses or *repertoires* have in terms of degree of repetition, commonality, stability over time and scale (how much of the world they include, and therefore the range of representations they can generate).

- (c) Another feature of analysis is the determination of underlying *assumptions* (Fairclough's rendering of *presuppositions*) as varieties of implicitness, that include also logical implications, standard conversational implicatures, and non-standard conversational implicatures and *intertextuality* as parallel features (two sides of one issue) in their connections to other texts. According to Fairclough (2003:41), *intertextuality* "accentuates...dialogue between the voice of the author of a text and other voices" whereas *assumptions* "diminish...[dialogicality]." The

importance of issues of *assumptions* and *intertextuality* is that they open up examination of what a text includes and excludes. This characteristic relates to ideological interests in interaction, taking van Dijk’s (1998) definition of *ideology* that I have adopted for this study. As Fairclough (2003) puts it: “All forms of fellowship, community and solidarity depend upon meanings which are shared and can be taken as given, and no form of social communication or interaction is conceivable without some such ‘common ground’.” I will first map out tools for examining *assumptions* and thereafter those for examining *intertextuality*.

Three main types of assumptions in this model of CDA have been mapped out. These include:

- ◆ Existential assumptions – assumptions about what exists
- ◆ Propositional assumptions – assumptions about what is or can be or will be the case
- ◆ Value assumptions – assumptions about what is good or desirable.

Although linguistic features are noted to mark assumptions textually, some assumptions may not be marked. Some examples of linguistic markers and type of assumptions are tabled below.

Assumption Type	Linguistic Markers
Existential/Propositional	Definite articles and demonstratives (e.g. the, this, that, those, these), and assertions
Factual	Factive verbs ¹
Value	Verbs that indicate some value judgement/evaluation (of desirability/undesirability; etc).

Table 3.3: Assumptions and Linguistic Markers

¹⁹ Verschueren and Blommaert (1998:33) refer to constructions (and not just verbs) in this category as “conventional presupposition-and-implication-carrying constructions. They include such examples as ‘I’m sorry that...’ or ‘I regret that...’ typically presupposing that what follows is both factual and known to the interlocutors.”

For the unmarked assumptions, a DASP type of rhetorical analysis has been used, along with pragmatic principles, such as adherence to Grice's (1975) cooperative principle (four maxims) and principles of information dynamism (Halliday 1967, Danes 1974, Nwogu 1995).

Regarding *intertextuality*, the study sought to identify for particular texts other texts or 'voices' that were incorporated. In particular the study was interested in examining "tension between what is going on in the reporting text, including the work which the reporting of other texts is doing within that text, and what was going on in the reported text" (Fairclough 2003:49). In this regard, three features were sought in the texts, as elaborated below.

- 1) Examining whether or not the incorporated 'voices' or texts were attributed.
- 2) Examining *framing*, that is, choices about how to contextualise the incorporated 'voice' or text in terms of other parts of the text, taking intertextuality to be a kind of recontextualisation.
- 3) Examining selectivity of what was included or excluded from the events and texts represented, in the use of intertextuality.

Identifying Representation of Social Events and Actors

Apart from examining representations of *development*, this study was also interested in representations of *actors* within development frameworks. With regard to this interest, selections from Fairclough's (2003) tools of analysis of representational meanings were considered relevant and these are discussed below.

In representational meaning, the study was interested in aspects of the social world, particularly social events. A pertinent feature of interest for textual and social analysis was how texts represent *agency* (that is, whether agency of actors is specified or elided) and the possible social and political significance of such textual choice.

Central to representational meaning is analysis of the clause elements. Drawing on Halliday (1985), clauses have three main types of element, namely,

- Processes - generally realized as verbs
- Participants - realized as subjects, objects, indirect objects of verbs
- Circumstances - realized as various types of adverbial elements such as time or place.

Fairclough (2003) notes that clauses differ in terms of selections of process types, participants and circumstances. Linguistic tools of analysis covering the three areas are specified in categories below.

Linguistic analysis of process types include examining the following.

(a) Transitivity

Transitive material processes can be active or passive (with the option of having passive 'agents' or not). Transitivity gives insights into how subjects are linked to (or detached from) objects or processes (Jorgensen and Phillips 2003:152).

(b) Nominalisation

Characteristically, nominalisation involves 'loss' of semantic elements of clauses, namely: tense and modality. It may also involve exclusion of participants, that is, subjects or objects in clauses (Halliday 1985). As such, nominalisation "can obfuscate agency, and therefore responsibility, and social divisions" (Fairclough 2003:144).

(c) Representation of Social Actors

Representation of social actors also involves choices, as I list below.

Inclusion/Exclusion

Clausal inclusion or exclusion of social actors is realized in three ways.

- (i) Suppression – social actors are not in text at all
- (ii) Backgrounding – social actors are mentioned somewhere in text, but having to be inferred in one or more places.

- (iii) 'Activated'/ 'Passivated' – determining whether the social actor is **Actor** in processes (loosely, the one who does things and makes things happen), or the **Affected** or **Beneficiary** (loosely, the one affected by processes).

Personal/Impersonal

In clauses social actors may be represented personally or impersonally

Named/Classified

Clauses may represent social actors by name or in terms of class or category

Specific/Generic

Where clauses classify social actors, they may be represented specifically or generically.

(d) Textual Analysis Strategies

The use of text analytical tools that have been specified above was underpinned by three strategies for focussing (discourse) text analysis. One of the strategies is text *comparison*, based on a structuralist principle that theorises that “a statement always gains its meaning through being different from something else which has been said or could have been said” (Phillips and Jørgensen 2002:149). Basically the researcher examines differences between texts and resultant consequences. A text comparison accords the researcher the opportunity to examine also understandings of the world that are taken for granted (i.e., assumed) and those understandings that are occluded. The second strategy, namely, *multivocality*, is based on the discourse analytic principle concerning intertextuality that “all utterances inevitably draw on, incorporate or challenge earlier utterances” (Phillips and Jørgensen 2002:151). Employing this strategy the researcher can generate questions to pose to a text pertaining to what characterises different voices in a text, the pattern of their occurrence, and the contribution of the different voices to meanings produced. The third strategy is exaggeration of detail. The strategy is used when there is an isolated feature whose significance is not known in relation to the whole text. Phillips and Jørgensen (2002:151) explain that in such cases “To explore the significance of the feature, one can over-exaggerate it, and then ask what conditions would be necessary in order

for the feature to make sense and into what overall interpretation of the text the feature would fit.” However, because the texts under examination did not show isolated features, the third strategy was not relevant for this study.

3.3 Object of Analysis: Texts

Data texts for analysis were collected guided by considerations that I relate below. First, the literature in development studies point to three major paradigms of development and their communication approaches that have emerged between the end of World War II and the present: the dominant paradigm, the dependency paradigm and the alternative paradigm (Dwivedi 1994). In this study, representations of development and the participants/actors and the politics of knowledge (Pennycook 2001) that operate(d) amongst them across these three paradigms in the Malawian context were points of interest. A second guiding point was associated with the prevailing nature of development work. Development work is often associated with projects/programmes. Thus, working within what Taylor (2000) refers to as collective case studies, projects of a national scope were selected in accordance with the major paradigms I have referred to above. A third point pertained to enabling the “researcher to collect information in an orderly and systematic way, as well as to cross-validate information” (Taylor 200:88). To this end, two sets of data were sought for selected development programmes and these are described below.

One set of materials consisted of copies of development plans. These formed the base material for rhetorical and linguistic analysis of representation(s) of development, and the depiction of the generic beneficiary within particular development ‘apparatus’. This material was also the basis for analysing global organising discourses of major players (such as international aid/donor agencies) in development to determine the politics of knowledge. The second set of materials were programmes campaigns in the media available then (mostly the national radio and print media).¹⁰

¹⁰ In Malawi television was introduced only on 1 April, 1999.

Development Programmes Selected

Four development programmes were selected for analysis of their data texts and these are described below.

The Integrated Development Projects (1968 – 1978)

Characterised by large projects, the Integrated Rural Development Project (IRDP) strategy was implemented in four selected parts of the country up to the late 1970s. Under this strategy requisite farm inputs, social and welfare amenities were provided in an integrated and simultaneous manner. Secondly, an important element that was intended to be implemented was “genuine involvement of the populace...so that they evolve soundly-based institutional structure to maintain standards and further development in future” (Mercer 1973:9). It is important to point out that in Africa the World Bank experimented with this strategy first in Malawi, followed by Ethiopia. At the time (early 1970s), another, the Thaba Bosiu Development Programme in Lesotho¹¹, was being negotiated. Evaluation of the performance of this strategy (see for example, Chipeta and Mkandawire 2002; Kandawire, 1984) highlights several problems, including heavy capital outlay and by-passing most of the intended peasants. These deficiencies led to another strategy, the National Rural Development Project, which I describe below.

National Rural Development Programme (NRDP) (1978 –present)

By 1976 it was realised that the IRDP strategy had not made a significant impact. The idea behind NRDP was to stimulate rural development in a manner that would “produce balanced

¹¹ Ferguson, J. (1990). *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Cambridge: CUP is an anthropological analysis of this project which Escobar (1995) hails as “The discursive analysis of development...with attempts at articulating alternative regimes of representation and practice.” Although Ferguson’s analysis, following Foucauldian techniques, has little (if any) linguistic concern, this study draws upon some of his discursive analysis of development.

development between rural and urban areas, while also generating growth in all geographical areas throughout the country” (Chipande 1983: 49). Designed to have a development period of five years after which each project was expected to become self-financing (as opposed to IRDP projects that had on average 10-11 years of development), the programme was designed to cover the whole of rural Malawi within a twenty-year period. It had two phases: first, an intensive campaign involving extension services, and second, provision of credit facilities for inputs to interested farmers who would be further assisted to become predominantly cash croppers (Chipande 1983). In this programme were established eight Agricultural Development Divisions (ADDs) which continue to administer the programme.

The literature on evaluation of this programme (Kandawire 1984) shows that “the impact of the NRDP strategy on peasants’ productivity has so far fallen short of expectation. Also it has not yet promoted crop diversification” (Chipeta 2002:49).

Rural Growth Centres (1979- 1987)

Emphasising general poverty reduction and improvement of living conditions of rural people in Malawi’s national development plans, the Malawi Government, with assistance from the German Government, implemented the Rural Growth Centres Project (RGCP) on a pilot basis, in 1979. The pilot project covered ten (10) rural service centres: 4 in the Northern Region, 3 in the Central Region and 3 in the Southern Region. The broad aim of the RGCs project was to further community development among rural populations by providing focal points for integrated social and economic services. While some facilities and services provided basic needs of the rural population, others provided a nucleus for business promotion. After the completion of the pilot phase, the Malawi Government expanded and modified the idea into a

nationwide rolling programme known as the National Rural Centres Programme (NRCP). NRCP “placed greater emphasis on the service functions of rural centres (as opposed to their growth functions)” (Mutizwa-Mangiza 1999:6). Ngoleka Mlia and Kalua (1989) discuss a few planning and design problems the RGC Project showed that were to be corrected in the subsequent NRCP and the Secondary Centres Project that is on-going. (These latter two projects are not part of this study.)

Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) (1996 – ongoing)

Planned during the change of government and launched in 1996, the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) now in its third three-year phase, is a World Bank funded national development programme for alleviating poverty. It was designed to address community social needs through funding of community driven initiatives and the provision of cash income through safety net activities. Espousing community participation, MASAF was established as a demand driven programme that relies on beneficiary communities’ participation and empowerment for its operations. MASAF has three main components: The Community Sub-Projects (CSP) the goal of which is to provide financial and technical resources by funding the creation of community assets; The Public Works Programme the goal of which is to finance safety net operations by generating employment and thus providing income earning opportunities to poor communities; and the Sponsored Sub Projects (SSP) aimed at addressing the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (GoM 1995; Chilowa 2001).

Data Texts

The materials are in two sets as presented below.

3.3.2.1 Development Plan Documents (DEVPOL)

Because there is a historical element in Malawi’s development story, I provided for the overlap between the colonial administration and the

nationalist government in the collection of excerpts of development plan documents. The following Government Development Plan excerpts (relevant to selected projects) showing government submissions for the periods were collected: 1962 – 1965; 1969 – 1971; 1972/3 – 1974/75; 1975/76 – 1977/78; 1977/78 – 1979/80; 1981/82 – 1985/86; 1986/87 – 1990/91; *Statement of Development Policies* 1987 – 1996; 1995/96 *National Long Term Plan* (Vision 2020). These give an overall picture of national development plans. Here are contained details of national development priorities and programme phases of specific development submissions through the years.

Specific Project Concept Documents (PCDs)

The following concept documents were collected and parts of them analysed.

- The National Rural Development Project (NRDP)
- Rural Growth Centres
- MASAF Project Concept Document (MASAF PCD) and the Systematic Client Consultation document (SCC) – a research report that formed part of the procedures towards the establishment of MASAF.

The project concept documents belong together with the development plans, as they provide the conceptual part of the development programmes.

Public Communication Materials

Although data texts were not excerpted from all, public communication materials were of interest as they also articulate the concepts of development and social actors, as they serve as channels of communication.

Integrated Development Projects and National Rural Development Project

- Various entries from government controlled daily papers/magazines
- The Agricultural Extension Aids' publications included: *Farmers' Monthly (Za Achikumbi)*; *1970 Radio Schedule – Handbook for Coordinators of Radio Listening Groups*.
- Agricultural Extension Aids publications

Rural Growth Centres Project

- Various entries from government controlled daily papers and periodicals.

Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF)

- MASAF's own Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Unit's publications including MASAF News (in local languages), and brochures.

4.0 Conclusion

This chapter has covered three broad areas as bases for the analysis presented thematically in the following chapters. The first section of the chapter presented a charting of tools from the various (and sometimes overlapping) approaches to discourse analysis, within the multi-perspective framework of the study. There is a broad range of tools in CDA and DASP that may be used at different levels of analysis.

The second part of the chapter briefly described the development projects that have been selected to form a continuous narrative of depictions of development and social actors. The third part of the chapter then briefly outlined data sources, whose excerpts have been analysed. The following sections and chapters are the construction of the development narrative as it develops from the data within its historical setting. Part II Framing Development focuses on three major points about Malawi's development narrative. The first point covered in chapter 4 is the historical context of

Malawi's development traced from colonial times to post-independence. Following from the first point, chapter 5 examines the discursive representation of Malawi's limitations in natural and other community capital as a justification for a narrow based and non-innovative agricultural strategy to engender socio-economic change. Both larger discourses of metropolitan dimension and their ideologies and more local discourses revealing power relations and competition or negotiation for advantage are examined. Chapter 6 then examines the powerful discursive depiction of the agriculture-led socio-economic change strategy as virtuous and the power relations that, rather ironically, worked counter developmentally.

PART II: FRAMING DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 4

DEVELOPMENT IN MALAWI: AN OVERVIEW

4.1 Introduction

The story of Nyasaland's¹² neglect during the colonial period and her poverty is well documented (see for example Pike 1968; Vail 1977; Palmer and Parsons 1977; Kandawire 1984; Baker 1994). The neglect of Nyasaland made her disadvantaged within an exploitative settler economy of the Southern African region established from the 1860s with South Africa and Southern Rhodesia as its loci. Vail's (1977) assessment of factors associated with Malawi's poverty is that they were historically determined in the decisions and operations of the colonial administration. He observes that the Nyasaland Protectorate emerged from "the colonial situation to independence with a distorted and dislocated economy" (p365). From the literature, factors that led to this 'distortion' and 'dislocation' of the economy are associated with activities which were intended to result in some kind of development. This chapter attempts to highlight what characterised Nyasaland's (later Malawi's) development. To do so, I have gone beyond the period I am working within (1964 –1998) because there is a continuity in the practices from the colonial (1891-1964) to post-independence periods (Chanock 1977; McCracken 1984). This will provide a backdrop to discursive analyses of the specific development programmes that follow in subsequent chapters.

It is important to give a brief historical account of events and circumstances that led to Nyasaland's colonisation (refer to the timeline). Missionary explorer David Livingstone's visit to Nyasaland, and his appeal for missionary and entrepreneurial response to the ravages of the slave trade led to the introduction of Christianity and commercial interests in the latter half of the

¹² Malawi in her colonial past has been known by two names successively. In 1891 Harry Johnston was appointed HM Commissioner of the British Central Africa Protectorate, and Consul General to territories under British influence north of the Zambezi. On July 6, 1907, the British Central Africa Protectorate was gazetted as the Nyasaland Protectorate (Pike 1968).

19th century (see for example: Pachai 1971, Pike 1968). Some scholars argue that the occupation of Nyasaland was not all philanthropic, but also motivated by commercial gain (see for example, Pike 1968 and Pachai 1971). It is noted that industrialists formed a part of those that funded the Free Church mission to Nyasaland. In fact, Pachai (1971:46) notes with respect to the Free Church's non-evangelical motivation behind the Livingstonia Mission:

Livingstonia was deliberately placed in the hitherto unexploited interior near Lake Nyasa because Livingstone, and through him Stewart, believed that that region with its fertile soil, large population, and excellent waterway to the coast, was capable of rapid economic advance.

After initial failure of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) missionary establishment in the 1860s, other missionaries, planters, and traders established themselves in parts of Nyasaland in the mid-1870s to achieve Livingstone's aim of "combating the slave trade by rendering it economically unsound in the face of legitimate commerce and...helping to spread a civilising influence" (Pike 1968:77). A little later a civil authority was set up, without which slavers and other challenges were proving difficult for successful operation of commercial interests as well as missionary work.

4.2 Establishment of a Socio-economic Order

With the overarching aim of eradicating the slave trade and its evils, the missions, planters and traders set about their task of establishing a civilising influence in the region through evangelisation, plantation agriculture and commerce, respectively. When the civil administration was set up, it too charted its own vision of a political economy. The Blantyre Mission's reference to building up an "African Church" is telling in revealing the vision of missionaries:

not stop[ping] at the evangelical side of things. It concerned itself with the many-sided aspects of African society: with the spiritual, industrial, social and political upliftment of the people as a whole (Pachai 1971:53).

It should be pointed out that the establishment of the civil administration was a result of pressure of the missionaries and the entrepreneur settlers who were in British Central Africa for protection against Portuguese ambitions in the

region and slavers. An important point for the purposes of this study is that at that time the British Government followed what is generally referred to as a *laissez-faire* doctrine under which "Colonies and protectorates were expected to pay their own way" (Vail 1977:366). Pachai (1971:57) points out that the "question of finance looms large" in the British Government's foot dragging regarding the "extension of her protectorate and jurisdiction over the Shire Highlands." This brought Cecil Rhodes and his British South Africa Chartered Company into Nyasaland's affairs. At the start of the Protectorate's administration in 1889 the Commissioner and Consul General had only 10, 000 British Pounds which Rhode's BSA Company provided. There were additional provisions which Rhodes was prepared to make available to the Administration up to 1894 in the hope of personal business as well as imperialist gains. Specifically, Rhodes had "noted the possible mineral wealth and power that would emanate if a continuous stretch of territory which would include Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia were brought under his Company's control" (Pachai 1971:58). Enunciating certain provisos aimed at protecting natives and their land rights, Commissioner and Consul General Johnston had made several agreements with Rhodes that would have eventually made the "Company the prospective owner of four-fifths of Nyasaland" (Pachai 1971:59). However, strong opposition from missionaries and planters against the setting up of "another Rhodesia in Nyasaland" (Pachai 1971:59) led to Rhodes' withdrawal from Nyasaland. Thus Rhodes had failed to achieve his aim "to control the power of the Administration and the African Lakes Company" (Pachai 1971:58). Rhodes withdrew his money and influence to Northern Rhodesia, and left Nyasaland to fend for herself from 1896. It should be underlined that a significant possible direct investment in Nyasaland was turned away with the rejection of the BSA Company. Thus planters and traders, with missionary support, took centre stage of Nyasaland's economy. However, the African Lakes Company (the sole trader then) was a much smaller business entity, with a "nominal capital of 20, 000 British Pounds in shares of 500 Pounds" compared to the BSA Company's "1 million British Pounds in shares of 1 pound each" (Pachai 1971:55). It is on record that the African Lakes Company survived the early years because missionaries assisted it in many ways (Pachai 1971). What is

most important to note is that in Nyasaland investment, as such, had started on a poor note, and diversification was discouraged early.

Another point to highlight is that while Commissioner and Consul general Johnstone had initially envisaged Nyasaland to be the “European nuclei of civilisation in East Africa” (Pike 1968:92), he later changed this opinion. Among several reasons he had against encouraging large scale European settlement was the consideration he had that the “large African population...rights to a fair share of available land should be guaranteed” (Pike 1968:92). To this end Johnston put in place legislation to protect African land rights, a move which made him unpopular among Europeans in the country. A point to note is that a shift of interest from Nyasaland as a nucleus of progress in the region was significant to its chances of attracting settlers and investments. Deane’s (1973:75) observation of the transitory state of the European population in the Protectorate prior to the Rhodesia-Nyasaland Federal period (1953 –1963) is enlightening: “most Europeans in Nyasaland aim[ed] to retire abroad, a feature which [was] reflected in the relatively high proportion of people of working age.” (See **Table 4.1** below for Nyasaland’s population between 1911 and 1949.) There was, therefore, little chance of investing in Nyasaland when the stay was considered temporary; investment would be made in the home country, or elsewhere. This point is borne by the sentiments that were expressed in a report of the post war (WWII) assessment of factors that failed Nyasaland’s development: “ [Nyasaland] is too far from the centres of population and purchasing power to develop a substantial secondary industry” (Deane 1973:103). The centres that were being referred to were South Africa and Southern Rhodesia.

Census Year	Europeans	Asians	Africans
1911	766	481	969,200
1921	1,486	563	1, 199, 900
1931	1975	1591	1, 599, 900
1945	1, 948	2, 804	2, 044, 700
1949 (estimate)	3,500	4, 300	2, 300, 000

Table 4.1: 1911 – 1949 Population of Nyasaland - excluding absentees. [After Deane, 1973]

Now that the Protectorate’s political economy was dominated by planters, traders and missionaries, the Protectorate’s capability to run a viable economy was riddled with challenges. Decisions that were made during the early years of the colonial administration have had repercussions noticeable well into the postcolonial era. Two issues stand out. One is how the Protectorate Administration sourced labour for white settler plantations, to the detriment of the African population. The other pertains to the Protectorate Administration’s protection of plantation agriculture against any competition, again with dire consequences to the African population. This part of Nyasaland’s history is well documented too (see, for example, Pike 1968; McCracken 1984b; Pachai, 1973; Kandawire, 1979). Vail (1977:365) argues that one policy decision which was a factor in colonial underdevelopment of Nyasaland was “the imperial government’s decision to rely upon a small and undercapitalized white settler community on the Shire Highlands [that] resulted in the treating of the African peasant community as little more than a source of labour for these settlers.” Because colonies and protectorates were to be self supporting financially, the Protectorate’s Administration “viewed the settlers as economically paramount and endeavoured to satisfy their wishes and needs as best it could” (Vail 1977:366). To draw African labour to white settler plantations, the Protectorate’s Administration imposed on every adult male a poll-tax of six shillings which was reduced to 3 shillings (a month’s wage) after the Blantyre Mission’s intervention on behalf of the Africans arguing that the “tax was an enormous burden” (Pachai 1771:61). The literature on colonial agriculture policy shows that those Africans who lived within the perimeters of white settler plantations were expected to offer their

labour *in lieu* of tax (see, for example, Mandala 1995; Kandawire 1979). The system known as *thangata* developed. It appeared to be reciprocal assistance for living on the estate lands, but in reality it was forced labour that was enforced with evictions for non-compliance (Kandawire 1979). Thus adult male Africans from all over the Protectorate were forced either to be migrant or *thangata* labourers during the crucial farming season. Apart from the sheer physical stress due to walking long distances to plantations every year, other serious consequences of these practices were famine, malnutrition and deaths among Africans because they lost time working on plantations and not in their gardens. Vail (1977:374) states that “not only were taxed [*sic*] to be paid, but also a ‘labour certificate’ had to be obtained for each year, showing that the bearer had actually worked for a specified time within Nyasaland.” Thus food security for the African population was severely undermined.

It should be pointed out here that in the prevailing socio-economic circumstances, the welfare of the African was not part of the Protectorate Administration’s agenda. Pike (1968:95) notes that “all questions of education, health and agriculture were left to missionaries and economic development was left in the hands of a few small planters [*sic*].” A possible explanation for such a disposition on the part of the Protectorate’s Administration is that it was a replication of Whitehall’s practice. Whittingham (1998) states that:

During the colonial era, eradicating world poverty and working for sustainable development were not factors which impacted on Whitehall’s policy-making. Any improvement in the colonial subjects’ standard of living were incidental to the process of accumulating and extracting as much wealth from the colony as possible.

If this would seem an unfair assessment of one of the most successful colonisers in modern times, a few examples of colonial suppression of industrial development in the colonies would render support to this claim. The sections following look at some such examples.

Another point worthy of mention here is that because plantation agriculture “paid too little” (Vail 1977:374) compared to other employment opportunities within the Protectorate and farther afield in the Southern African region in the mining industry, most Africans were disinclined to sell their labour to the planters and within the Protectorate in general to meet their tax obligations and provide for their families. Within the Protectorate, the planters competed with various transport companies that operated within British Central Africa and, via Lake Malawi, served the areas around Lakes Mweru and Tanganyika which needed porters to carry head loads from the Lower Shire. The planters also competed against the mines of Katanga, the Rhodesias and South Africa over African labour.

Planters’ response to competition over labour was dramatic. Vail (1977) describes planter machinations to effectively preserve their pool of cheap labour. They successfully lobbied the Protectorate’s Administration in 1889 to forbid the recruitment of labour inside the Protectorate for work outside it. This policy remained in force up to the mid-1930s, after which the “[1935] Lacey Report, which drew attention to the depressed state of the rural areas, embarrass[ing] the Colonial Office thereby...called on the government of the Protectorate to allow the controlled recruitment of labour” (Vail 1977:389). Furthermore, to divert labour from transport companies to plantations, the settlers persistently pressed for the construction of a railway for goods to be imported and exported without the use of porters. Vail (1977) shows in considerable detail how this privately run railway, constructed for wrong reasons, became an untold liability on both the Protectorate Administration and the Foreign Office in London, and a source of misery for the indigenous Africans. Of all the tropical colonies Britain had in Africa, only Nyasaland had a privately run railway system (opened in 1908) because of Foreign Office’s reluctance to assume responsibilities of railway building.

Experiment with Peasant Agriculture Alternative

The literature assessing Nyasaland white settler agriculture as a sound base for the Protectorate's economy is agreed that it proved disappointing. As a result, the Protectorate failed to pay its own way; it remained under Treasury control – functioning under the so-called half-and-half principle (see for example, Chanock 1977; Mandala 1995 and Vail 1977). Factors that were responsible for this were varied:

the international markets were too unstable, the plantations depended upon undernourished and inefficient labour that was paid too little and was, as a result, disinclined to sell its labour within Nyasaland (Vail 1977:374).

In the years immediately before the First World War “serious thought began to be directed towards the possibility of using the African population for the production of cash crops at the village level – as the missionary Hetherwick had urged in 1903” (Vail 1977: 375). Early indications of such considerations became noticeable in 1909 when the newly established Department of Agriculture decided to turn its attention to fostering African cotton production. Again, the motivation behind this change was tinged with an exploitative spirit, as Mandala (1995:293) relates:

the director of the newly formed Department of Agriculture convinced other officials of the need to soften their prosettler position. Peasants could also contribute to the wealth of the “mother” country and to the financial viability of the colonial government.

Stocks at Liverpool and Lancashire mills were to be supplied with cotton at all costs. However, unsuspecting African response to cotton growing was enthusiastic and it did offer a lot of promise as a viable alternative to failed white settler agriculture.

This initial success notwithstanding, Mandala (1995) and Vail (1977) show that by the time of the outbreak of World War 1 and after, African participation in cash crop agriculture was not without serious setbacks. First, European settler planters offered stiff opposition to this move of the Nyasaland

Administration and the British Cotton Growing Association. Second, the war itself was a disruption as the African male population was heavily demanded as Carrier Corps in the East African campaign. Third, after the war, the Depression brought about other pressures. The deficit-ridden Nyasaland Administration killed the free-market benefits for African cotton producers by granting monopsony to the Manchester-based British Cotton Growing Association (hereafter BCGA) for promise of "50 per cent of the profits it would realize...during the contract [1923 – 1931]" (Mandala 1995:294). The BCGA did not offer prices that were consonant with cotton demand on the world market. Furthermore, "peasants bore the brunt of every decline in the world demand for cotton" (Mandala 1995:295) without the Nyasaland Administration's intervention of any sort. After the fatal 1939 floods in the Lower Shire Valley (where most cotton was produced), cotton production plummeted. Among the important reasons was the fact that cotton growing was only done in the upland areas while the lowlands remained water logged through 1940s and 1950s. In addition to high tax rates on producers, farming the uplands met a lot of soil conservation legislation of the Department of

Agriculture which were enforced ruthlessly.¹³ As a result of the legislation, intercropping was banned and non-compliance was punishable with a 5 shillings fine or imprisonment. The conservation measures and the country-

¹³ As the soil conservation legislation and its effects on indigenous Malawians was a powerful issue that nationalists used to discredit colonial rule, it is commonly documented in Malawi's decolonisation accounts. For example, Mandala (1990); Mandala (1995); Chipande (1983) and Joffe (1973) have given accounts of the workings of the legislation. For purposes of this study, I will only briefly give highlights of the legislation. After the 1939 floods that devastated most of the cotton growing districts of Chikwawa and Nsanje, the farming practices changed. Lowland cotton growing was not practicable; the lowlands remained waterlogged. In addition population pressure on the highland was felt as people left the flooded lowlands. Population pressure led to land degradation. Coupled with the high incidence of the cotton red bollworm (*Diparopsis castanea*), cotton production plummeted. Mandala (1995:296) notes that "In the ten years from 1939 to 1948, the Tchiri Valley exported only 28, 880 tons, which represented 74 percent of its total exports (39, 201) during the previous decade)." The colonial government intervened by passing "a barrage of legislat[ion]" (Mandala 1995:296) as intervention on local agricultural practices which were blamed for soil erosion and red bollworm pest infestation. To deal with soil erosion, measures included: bunding, grass stripping, terracing, construction of storm drains, and "above all, the making of ridges (*mitumbira*)" (Mandala 1995:297). Mandala (1990) details specifications for ridges that the Department of Agriculture laid down. To combat the spread of the red bollworm pest, the department of agriculture had several measures. To stop reviving the lowland (*dimba*) farming practices, especially intercropping cotton with food crops, intercropping was made illegal in 1951. Mandala (1995:298) states that "violations were punishable by a fine of 5s [shillings] or imprisonment of up to two weeks." In addition, to break the red bollworm life cycle, the experts determined a 4 months 'dead season'. Thus the experts determined a schedule for each farm activity, especially ridge preparation, and cotton stalk uprooting. Failure to complete ridging by the deadline so as to comply with the four-month 'dead season' was punishable again by a fine of 5s[shillings] or two weeks imprisonment (Mandala 1990).

Because the legislation came after the application of the 1933 Indirect Rule, the Native Authorities (principal headmen/chiefs) were responsible for enforcing the conservation laws. Mandala (1990) notes that although some chiefs initially resisted, in time they followed the lead of the Native Authority of South Shire (a collective of five chiefs) who collaborated enthusiastically. The South Shire Native Authority and their subordinates demanded strict compliance with the regulations. In their zeal they apprehended anyone who in their view was not hard working during the ridging and stalk uprooting periods of the farming schedule. Mandala (1995:299) points out that "Peasants had to work their gardens from morning to noon, and from about two o'clock to dusk." According to the regulations, the chiefs inspected gardens twice a year, accompanied by their subordinates (*akapitao-a-malimidwe*) and one or two white members of the district administration. However, the chief was responsible for sentencing the offenders; the two white administrators would only give advice. Mandala (1990) notes that during such inspection tours, the chiefs tried as many as ten cases per night during the first two-week tour. The sentence was six months imprisonment or thirty shillings fine. Thus, conservation regulations caused a lot of upheaval in the lives of the peasants.

wide 1948-1949 famine led to acute food deficits among the peasant population. When the Lower Shire Valley reached desperate levels of food shortage, the Nyasaland Administration :

sold 'relief' maize at obscenely inflated prices. Those without money had to work for it...Those who were both poor and weak had to survive on their own resources. They lived on roots and berries from the bush and marshland. Many perished (Mandala 1995:301).

Mandala (1995: 301) further shows that:

the British had adopted a minimalist famine relief policy during the first three decades of this century. They had explained the policy in terms of the need to guard against developing a dependency complex in the peasantry, although the real aim was to drive labor toward European agriculture.

This was an unhappy 'cost' that the peasantry bore for the Lancashire cotton mills to run at all costs. However, the Nyasaland Government planners blamed food crises on destructive peasant farming techniques and population growth – a Malthusian explanation that they used to legitimise their unhappy *malimidwe* (conservation) legislation to lead to a radical shift in the African's farming practices and social patterns. Chanock (1977:401) states that "European views on the technological capacity of African agriculture were generally highly unfavourable." A point to underline is that land alienation, the labour practices around white settler plantation agriculture, and the soil-conservation-legislation led agriculture became political rallying points in the nationalist fight against the Rhodesias-Nyasaland Federation and colonialism altogether, culminating in self-government and independence in the early 1960s.

Another change, in the social order, that the Nyasaland government attempted to bring about was the "creation of a landowning, individualist, profit-motivated yeomanry...[with] individual title in male hands as the key to economic advancement" (Chanock 1977:404). This was directed particularly at the matrilineal social order. However, several social scientists have disagreed with the claim that the matrilineal social order, with its associated

uxorilocal pattern of residence, contributed to the African's economic backwardness (see for example, Phiri 1984; and Kandawire 1984). What came out of this deliberate attempt to break the matrilineal social order was a class of 'advanced farmer'. Chanock (1977) states that this important legacy, which outlived the colonial period, privileged some Africans while many were disadvantaged. The advanced farmer was given permission to grow certain crops, and given tenure and title, while the less advanced was refused licence, marketing facilities and expert advice. These were the means designed to force the subsistence peasant from the cash-cropping system. In Chanock's (1977:404) view, this "importation of alien social values, linked in part with the adoption of new techniques in a parcel labeled 'modernization' has proved enduring well into the post-independence times." What is interesting for purposes of the present study is that some of the widely discredited colonial notions of viable economy and associated practices, or "forms of organisation for rural development," as Kandawire (1984) puts it, were carried over and adapted with a new set of actors by the nationalist government from 1963 when Nyasaland became self governing (see also Chanock 1977). These notions exhibit the following features, among others. First, the planter fraternity (a minority group) was not only a vocal sector of the community but it also subjected the rest of the society to their demands, and aspirations, regardless of their effects on the rest of society. This state of affairs was a result of a "looseness of [imperial] government control in the economic sphere and lack of strong directive from the centre" (Deane 1973:6). In fact Deane (1973:6) further states that this indeterminacy "sometimes meant that localized action by administrators or technical officers or entrepreneurs has been permitted to cause considerable local upheaval in the life of the community." This was true of the Nyasaland Protectorate where the entrepreneurs swayed administration and dragged the economy down as they were deficient of ideas. Second, the leadership of the protectorate and the imperial government lacked critical self-evaluation to re-direct the economy. There was disregard of diversity of resources in pursuit of what

was practically elusive except in the social imaginary¹⁴ of the social class that mattered then. In pursuit of economic growth, there was elevation of production above human needs; in fact the larger population was reduced to instruments of experimentation with an economy that was intended to liberate people from the ills of an illegitimate economy (based on ivory, slaves and peasant agriculture). This legitimate economy was itself a cause of upheaval in the life of the indigenous African population. Vail (1977:366) describes this restricted outlook that kept colonial planters' zeal unflagging:

Coffee, cotton, tea, and tobacco were all envisaged as crops that would turn the Highlands into a Central African El Dorado and thus provide the economic base that would pay for the costs of the local administration. None did, but the hope was always present.

These notions and practices, either nurtured or acquiesced to throughout the colonial period, ushered in a post-colonial mentality that failed to get over this elusive and restricted notion of development. The social workings that were involved in bringing these notions and practices onto centre stage, both in the colonial and post-colonial eras are the subject of interest in this discursive study.

Colonial Policy and Development

The view of economic development that Palmer and Parsons (1977:3) ascribe to in *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* – a collection of essays investigating modes of production and social formations in colonial Africa to explain causes of poverty that post-colonial states are grappling with – is that: “while economic growth is reflected in improved production statistics, economic development entails improved standards of living.” Working with a

¹⁴ For more on social imaginaries see for example, Taylor (2002:14) who defines it as the ways in which people “imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations which are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images which underlie these expectations.”

modified dependency theory¹⁵, the collection of essays shows general consensus that:

'Steel Age' penetration into Africa has been essentially a matter of enclave development – first of primary industrial enclaves linked by rail to the coast for export to Europe, secondly of enclaves of capitalist agriculture knocking out peasant competition to supply the industrial enclaves, and thirdly of secondary industrial enclaves in South Africa and partially farther north. All three required cheap and plentiful supplies of labour, which were extracted from the rural areas over the whole of Central and Southern Africa (Palmer and Parsons 1977:11-12).

This view of enclave development seems both interesting and relevant to the socio-economic order that resulted from the desire to stamp out slave trade with legitimate trade. The policies of establishing a viable economy that the Nyasaland Protectorate Administration and Foreign Office implemented (discussed above) appear to have much to do with this enclave development. It should be pointed out, though, that the Protectorate Administration and the Foreign Office regarded these policies and their implementation as developmental.

Whitingham (1998) and, especially, Cassell (2003) show the counter-developmental workings of British colonial development policy in colonies. The guiding principle was that colonies should be self-supporting while the wealth from the colonies benefited the 'home country'. Where the colonies failed to pay their own way, the severe conditions of 'grant-in-aid' from the United Kingdom applied. This was the case of Nyasaland; she remained a deficit-ridden Administration, failing to establish a viable economy based on Agriculture. Vail (1977:375-376) describes the half-in-half principle Nyasaland functioned under:

When she had a budgetary deficit, the Treasury granted her loans at 7 per cent. When she had a surplus of revenue over the base figure of 275, 000 [British Pounds], half of the excess had to be applied to the liquidation of past Treasury loans.

¹⁵Palmer and Parsons (1977) in the introduction to the anthology outline the dependency and modernization doctrines and their weaknesses that attract criticism. They maintain, though, that "dependency theory remains a useful tool, provided its crudest formulation is rejected"(p3). The crude formula is that dependence equals underdevelopment.

The issue of 'home country' benefiting from the wealth from the colonies needs a brief explanation at this point. The 'home country' benefited either in primary produce from the colonies for industries or by reducing unemployment when some 'development' projects were mounted in the colonies. The latter point is associated with Labour Government's passing of the Colonial Development Act of 1929 - "passed avowedly with the aim of relieving unemployment in the United Kingdom" (Deane 1973:6). This point should clarify the situation of dire poverty in the colonies even when mention of 'development' projects in colonies was made. During the period just before World War II, Cassell (2003) notes that the international community was critical of Britain's neglect of her colonies' development. Britain compared unfavourably to the performance of other colonial powers. The response to address these concerns was the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940. Passed during war time:

when the physical shortages of capital and skill were such as to make it difficult rather than advantageous to export them, had as its aim the raising of the standard of living of colonial peoples and their emancipation from economic dependence on the United Kingdom (Deane 1973:6).

However, conditions that were attached to the fund were counter-developmental; the local population had very little say over what was regarded developmental or not. It would appear, what counted as developmental remained what served the benefit of the 'home country.' Vail (1977) argues forcefully how in the period 1921 – 1929 the decision to build the Zambezi Bridge and not to construct a railway line to Quilimane in Mozambique (which had been requested since Johnstone's Administration to link Nyasaland to the coast, and encourage both settler and African peasant agriculture) was a clear political step of the imperial government to forestall public outcry at home over high levels of unemployment by 1928. Nyasaland was landed with a loan and interest on debentures from the Colonial Development Fund at the expense of the social services (such as health and sanitation, education and technical services) of the Protectorate which were scandalously low. Furthermore, Nyasaland's neglect was getting to be known as unacceptable. The coming in of Governor Sir Shenton Thomas was a move towards correcting imperial ills over the Nyasaland Protectorate. With

the prospects of enhancement of business with the construction of the Zambezi Bridge, a development plan was drawn up for the period 1931 – 1934. Among the targeted areas for development was expansion of African agriculture. However, the coming in of the new National government in the United Kingdom in 1931, and the Labour Passfield's replacement as Colonial Secretary by "protectionist Philip Cunliffe-Lister" (Vail 1977:386) killed this development plan. In 1932, with Britain's economic crisis and the failing of Nyasaland's economy, Treasury terminated the Protectorate's development programme. Furthermore, Vail (1977) notes that suggestions of encouraging maize production in Nyasaland for export were vetoed by Cunliffe-Lister, arguing that Nyasaland maize might compete with maize from Kenya and Southern Rhodesia. In general, "the imperial government was by now unwilling to devote any further expenditure on the encouragement of African agriculture, especially if the goods produced were going to compete with goods from other colonies" (Vail 1977:388). In fact, until after World War II no development took place in the country.

After the war there was another development plan, the 1947 Nyasaland Development Programme. Chanock (1977:402) states that "the first object [of the programme] was the 'conservation of soil, soil fertility, and natural resources'." This was the Department of Agriculture's coercive agriculture programme, as an answer to improving African agriculture and land shortage, especially in the South of the Protectorate. This approach did anything, but encourage African agriculture. In any case, the development programme had no promise for Africans' improved life standards. As it has been shown already, the primary products were shipped to the 'home country'. Peasant agriculture was hardly assisted in terms of marketing their produce in accordance with international demand of their produce. Worse still, any produce the 'home country' had from other colonies, was decidedly discouraged in Nyasaland. In addition, the British government rejected the proposal to allow the creation of a locally run cotton mill (Chanock 1977:407). Competition with the mills in the 'home country' would not be allowed. Such colonial practices were not unique to Nyasaland; they were a common feature

in the colonies. Cassel (2003) gives some examples of this counter-developmental parasitic exploitation of colonies for the 'home country' benefit, from Montserrat – a small and poor Caribbean island colony. In an attempt to benefit from the Commonwealth Development Fund (CDF), the Montserrat Administration proposed a construction project of a tuberculosis ward at an existing Glendon Hospital in 1932. The imperial government's response was that such a project was not warranting CDF assistance because it would not contribute to agricultural or industrial development in Montserrat. Thus, the health of the people in the colonies was subsidiary to the produce from the colonies which the 'home country' sought from the colonies. Another project which would have helped to establish an agro-processing industry was the electric light scheme. Submitted three times, in 1931, 1934, and 1935, the scheme proposal was rejected because it was regarded as an amenity and not a scheme contributing to agricultural or industrial development. Cassell (2003:6) argues that “

Getting the island to add value to its primary produce and so improve the revenue earning potential would have been a better approach to development. However, this was not the intention of the Act. There was no such vision for the colony.

These examples illustrate the point that what the colonial establishment viewed as *developmental* and so eligible to be funded was what benefited the 'home country' directly. If considered at all, the colony itself and the people were only on the fringes of consideration. Cassell (2003:12) is indignant about such counter-developmental policies and practices dressed up as developmental:

Development strategists need to be able to think 'outside the box' to identify untried paths possibly pregnant with development potential...Another essential requirement for the development process is that development agents make every effort to truly understand the cultural environment rather than resort to interpretations based on inappropriate yardsticks.

Post-independence Development

Malawi's economic performance especially between independence and the 1970s has attracted a lot of interest among social scientists for a variety of

reasons (see, for instance, Chipande 1983; McCracken 1984a; Pryor 1990; and Harrigan 2001). Among other reasons, McCracken (1984a:xi) points out that:

From the late 1970s...a number of factors have combined to bring Malawi into greater academic, though not yet popular prominence. The accumulating evidence of poor economic performance in the 'progressive' African states contrasted with Malawi's record of economic growth and agricultural self sufficiency has led some researchers, particularly those connected with the World Bank, to cite Malawi as an example of a successful 'free market' economy.

The claim that Malawi's was a 'free market' economy has been challenged by others, particularly Harrigan (2001), arguing that inadequate understanding of Malawi's political economy led to this "inaccurate and misleading" (p29) characterisation. However, there is consensus regarding the components of the economy. It was (and still is) agriculture-based. At independence in 1964, as Chipande (1983:44) states, the "new Government of Malawi was faced with a legacy from the colonial Government, that was largely characterised by its neglect of economic development, the economy being predominantly based on low productivity agriculture." This state of affairs provided the nationalist government with socio-economic material to adopt and/or adapt for its intended development. However, Baker (1994) and Chanock (1977) are unanimous about continuities in the economic set up of the latter colonial days in the nationalist government. Governor Colby who was in office between 1948 and 1956 (only 7 years before independence) had worked hard to reverse Britain's unacceptable neglect of Nyasaland. He was "determined both that increased agricultural production and exports should be at the hub of his development strategy and also that never again would hunger be permitted to divert the country's attention, energies and resources from the prime task of economic development" (Baker 1994:85). Governor Colby's objective was to raise living standards of the people of Nyasaland. Baker (1994) states that the means that Governor Colby proposed to accomplish this objective through government machinery were four: improving social services, raising individual incomes, extending public utilities, and expanding the supply of consumer goods. In fact Baker's

(1994:xiv) summative view of Colby's contribution is that:

he laid the economic foundation upon which independence was later built and showed that Nyasaland could not only flourish independently but also had the potential to do so in a relatively short period of time.

The structure of the economy at independence was characterised by three main sectors: the colonial estate sector which produced 40 per cent of the country's merchandise exports (mainly tea and tobacco); the smallholder sector producing for subsistence, providing a marketed food surplus and producing export crops amounting to 50 per cent of merchandise exports; and a labour reserve sector which supplied estate labour and migrant labour to neighbouring countries (Harrigan 2001:12). The framework of this strategy, with two major points of departure, continued without much disruption. The Malawi government considered that continuation of development on the basis of the structure inherited would "have led to the expropriation of the African peasantry by settler or company estates and the creation of landless rural class forced by circumstances into colonial towns" (Chanock 1977:407). To avert such a situation, some of the politicians advocated a populist approach to agricultural development with the expressed aim of improving the performance of the average farmer – as opposed to the Advanced/Master Farmer scheme of the colonial government. The 1962 – 65 Development Plan which, although it was drawn during the Federal period, embodied most of the elements of the Malawi Congress Party Manifesto of 1961 (Chipande 1983). The second point of departure was that post-independence agriculture did away with the hated conservation legislation that characterised the colonial agriculture programmes.

Pryor (1990) and Harrigan (2001) describe the focus of Malawi's post-independence development strategy as export-orientated labour intensive agriculture with import-substitution industrialisation that was restricted to a narrow range of consumer goods playing a secondary role. Thus to support export-orientated agriculture, the second priority was development of transport, marketing and other forms of infrastructure. Rather contradictory to

the initial populist agricultural approach, the post-independence development strategy focused on “selective use of tariffs...in order to provide domestic market security for producers operating close to the margin of international competitiveness rather than to prop up the inefficient” (Harrigan 2001:13) as well as on private investment, including foreign capital and labour intensity. This study takes interest in the central position of agriculture for an economic growth strategy in the set economy. The series of development projects/programmes for rural development were all agricultural or at least subservient to agriculture. Furthermore, the restricted industrial component of the development strategy was characteristic of the entire development strategy. Based on this evidence, I contend that the development approach in colonial Nyasaland and post-independence Malawi has been narrowly conceptualised and as a result destructive to innovativeness. The well documented collapse of the economy at the turn of the 1970s has much to do with weaknesses associated with this restricted strategy (see for example: Harrigan 2001; Pryor 1990; Kajiyanike 1992). It would appear that the hopes banked in an agro-based economic growth development strategy, traceable from the colonial times, has much to do with the erosion of innovativeness and reflexivity that would take recourse to, in Cassell’s (2003:12) words, “untried paths possibly pregnant with development potential” that are little thought of because of a kind of fixated attachment to the hardly delivering present ‘paths’. A desperate instance of this situation is exemplified by the Malawi President’s response to the anti-smoking lobby which, if it runs its course, will overthrow tobacco dependent economies: “Dr Muluzi said Malawi would continue to support the tobacco industry, the country’s second largest employer after government, until alternative cash crops were found” (Malawi defies anti-smoking lobby, 2003, 16 April).

4.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to show that the legacy of an agro-based economic growth development strategy dates back to the mid 19th century response to appeals for a Christian and legitimate trade response to slave trade and its ills in Central Africa. Thus (especially) the planter and trader

entrepreneurship that characterised this early period was meant to be an economy based on moral principles. However, we have noted also that with the establishment of a civil authority this economy that was supposed to be led by moral principles led to a significant upheaval in the life of indigenous Africans as the planters demanded their labour. Thus, a cash economy was set up and instruments such as taxes were used to force the natives to the plantations. This disrupted the subsistence peasant economy and a migrant labour tradition ensued. I highlight here two points. The first is that the activities that resulted in a disruption of native social and economic set up were meant to be *developmental*. Secondly, although the planter fraternity was comparatively small in the protectorate, it wielded a lot of influence. A result of their influence was the frustration of other possible investors in other sectors of the economy, thereby killing diversity very early. Thus, there were social, as well as discursive, practices that were involved in making the economy revolve around the planter fraternity. This in itself may not relate to the period of my interest (1964 – 1998), but the endurance of a hardly delivering narrowed view of an agro-based development strategy that bypasses other possible “paths” deserves examination. The chapter has also attempted to show that the post-independence period inherited this set up, with some modifications. However, the weaknesses that were/are inherent in it were soon manifest, yet the attachment to it is hardly affected. The construction of such an enduring yet under-delivering view of development will be the subject of the chapter following.

CHAPTER 5

IMAGES OF MALAWI

5.1 Introduction

The interest in this section of the study, and this chapter in particular, is to examine the construction of Malawi in texts of development. The analysis draws on Crush's (1995) contention that texts of development tactfully and strategically justify certain interventions and practices, and delegitimise and exclude others. Building on the historical examination of circumstances that have shaped Malawi's narrowed and non-innovative view of the *development* process, this chapter is an attempt to understand, from texts of development, the linguistic realisation of what went on to represent the agriculture led strategy as most suitable for Malawi's socio-economic change. It is important to emphasise at the outset that the interest is not so much to find out how truthful or untruthful the depictions of Malawi are (although that point comes out in the process) but how the texts of development construct this narrow based economic growth development strategy as befitting Malawi. The textual analysis will be at two levels. Firstly, a rhetorical analysis at the whole text level will look at the textual crafting that elevates an agricultural strategy while appearing to present an objective analysis of the socio-economic circumstances out of which an agricultural strategy emerges as the only viable possibility. In this analysis I draw on Billig's (1988:206) idea of going "beyond the specific text" as he suggests, "Scholars have to feel their way around their library and archival sources, backing hunches as they proceed." This is in recognition of the observation that:

Discourse does not usually come ready labeled with functions neatly displayed on show, so that one kind of form...always marks out a rationalization or always suggests consequences which we could describe as ideological in their effect (Wetherell and Potter, 1988:170).

What is really being advocated here is contextualising the textual analysis.

Secondly, a micro-analytic examination of linguistic tools that were utilised in the rhetorical crafting of the text will follow. As Phillips and Jorgensen (2002) explain, because of lexico-grammatical detail that such procedures require,

only sections, as opposed to whole texts, of the development texts that stand out in discursive features will be selected for analysis.

Socio-Political Context

As from this point onward the study focuses on texts of development for rhetorical and linguistic analyses, this chapter sets the stage by examining the framework of development that spanned across the last days of colonial rule and early years of the nationalist government. This was the 1962 – 1965 Development Plan. The socio-political situation of Nyasaland during this political transition period between 1961 and 1964 is well documented (see for example, Joffe, 1973; Pachai, 1973 and McMaster, 1974). At the time Nyasaland had just been through the 1961 Nyasaland General Elections the results of which led to the eventual dissolution of the Rhodesia–Nyasaland (British Central Africa) Federation, established in 1953. Dr Hastings Banda, who was the leader of the nationalist Malawi Congress Party, was appointed Minister (of Natural Resources) in this transition period. Together with Dr Banda, five other members of the Malawi Congress Party were appointed to ministerial positions. During this transition period, the Federal Government ran some government functions while the Nyasaland Protectorate Government ran others.

Perhaps what is informative in relation to the depictions of Malawi in the development process during this period and thereafter is the institutional legacy of the colonial period. As “Nyasaland had been the poor child of the Federation, and investors had focused their attention on the other two partners” (McMaster 1974:45), the unhappy economic condition of Nyasaland had a lot to do with choices that the Protectorate’s Administration in collaboration with the early settlers had made in establishing a socio-economic order and their failure to evaluate and review their approach. Thus at the brink of independence, Nyasaland’s rain-fed agriculture dependent sorry economic situation remained as it had been. McMaster (1974) notes that in 1960, 44.7 per cent of Nyasaland’s GDP comprised agricultural produce with most of the exported tea, flue-cured and Burley tobacco in white

planters' hands. Britain remained Malawi's major customer of this agricultural produce. Government budgets remained deficit ridden. McMaster (1974) notes that in the run up to Nyasaland's self-governing status, the British Government recognised that Nyasaland would need budgetary assistance for a number of years. "The southward alignment of communications" (McMaster, 1974:31) with a poor internal transport network, that further hampered the development process in general, and an even distribution of development, remained as such into the independence period. By 1961, the classified and unclassified road situation was as follows:

- 295.5 miles of bituminised roads
- 872 miles of "all weather" roads
- 1, 398 miles of "all-season" roads
- 3,561.5 miles of dry season roads (NP 1962: 51).

Furthermore, the neglected social services, such as education for natives, now showed openly as trained nationals to take over the functions of the expatriate staff were almost non-existent (see **table 5.1** below).

Table 5.1 Professional Persons in Nyasaland

Doctors	72	African - 3 Asian -11 European -58
Dentists	5	African - Nil Asian - Nil European - 5
Lawyers	34	African -1 Asian -4 European -29
Engineers	43	African -1 Asian -Nil European -42
Architects	14	African -Nil Asian -Nil European -14
Quantity Surveyors	8	African -Nil Asian -Nil European -8
Agricultural Officers <i>Graduates</i>	47	African -1 Asian -1 European -45
<i>Diploma</i>	1	European -1
Teachers (<i>Graduates</i>)	174	African -16 Asian -12 European -146
Geologists	15	African -Nil Asian -Nil European -15
Surveyors	10	African - Nil Asian - 1 European - 9
Veterinary Surgeons	10	African - Nil Asian - Nil European - 10
Accountants		African - 1 Asian - Nil European - 23
Economists	6	African 6 Asian Nil European Nil
Statisticians	Nil	African Nil Asian Nil European Nil

(After NP (1962). *Development Plan 1962 –65*)

Thus Nyasaland had no choice but to depend on an expatriate civil service well into independent status. In fact, Dr Banda made it clear that

“Africanisation and localization would not be carried out until there were qualified people to replace the expatriates” (McMaster, 1974:46) – a standpoint that significantly contributed to the cabinet crisis of 1964 and an eventual split between Dr Banda and some of his younger Ministers and members of parliament, shortly after attaining the independence status.

In considering the development plan of this period, it is important to note that the direction that the development process took from this point onwards was significantly influenced as much by prevailing socio-political circumstances as the colonial legacy. McMaster’s (1974:39) observation regarding groups and their political expectations is informative:

Of these four groups within Nyasaland, the mass of Africans, the young MCP leaders, the European and Asian settlers, and the Governor and the expatriate civil servants, each of the last three had fairly well defined views about Nyasaland’s political and economic future, in particular about the pattern of development to be followed. The views of the three groups were not always in accord.

As a split between Dr Banda and his younger MCP leaders had already developed during this period, Dr Banda leaned more towards the expatriate civil service and the last Governor of Nyasaland than his junior MCP leaders. The 1962 –65 Development Plan, which this chapter focuses on, was crafted by this largely expatriate civil service. In addition, Gondwe (*n.d.*: 4) asserts that at the time of independence, colonial economies had matured leaving no leeway for new governments to fabricate their own economies but to “take the line of least resistance,” although an alternative economic pathway was clearly needed.

5.2 Macro-analysis of Discourse Framing on Malawi: *The 1962–1965 Development Plan*

Introduction

A point to forerun this part of the study is that base material for analysis of this project - policies and accompanying documents - pertains to what Voss (1988) terms *ill-structured problems*. They “typically do not have solutions

which have consensual agreement among experts" (p75). Voss (1988) continues to point out that this comes about because it is the "solver [who] develops a representation of the problem and subsequently provides a solution to the problem." Similarly, pointing to a characteristic knottiness, in policy analysis and planning, such policies are qualified as "stubborn" (Rein and Schön, 1993). Rein and Schön (1993:145) further elaborate that *ill-structured problems* pose an "epistemological predicament: What can possibly be the basis for resolving conflicts of frames when the frames themselves determine what counts as evidence and how evidence is interpreted?"

What is captured in the paragraph above point to a constructive or discursive practice referred to as *framing*. The concept of framing is a figurative representation of:

a way of selecting, organizing, interpreting, and making sense of a complex reality to provide guideposts for knowing, analysing, persuading, and acting... a perspective from which an amorphous, ill-defined, problematic situation can be made sense of and acted on (Rein and Schön, 1993:146).

Framing is underpinned by what is technically termed as an *appreciative system* – systems of values, preferences, norms, and ideas on the basis of which "we frame the grand actuality of the world and thereby make it coherent to ourselves" (Rein & Schön, 1993:146). A point to underline is that an appreciative system is a mental construct¹⁶. It may be noticed, therefore, that appreciative systems are part of people's beings – the taken-for-granted. This is what makes it difficult to notice appreciative systems influencing the way individuals or groups choose what they want to present for persuasive purposes. Rein and Schön (1993) posit that both policy frames and their appreciative systems are revealed through stories that are told about policy situations. It follows therefore that a discourse analytic investigative reading¹⁷ of frames and their appreciative systems must begin from policy narratives to

¹⁶ See Rein and Schön (1993) for details of characteristics of an *appreciative system*.

¹⁷ I use reading here from a critical and cultural theory perspective, that is, making sense of the signs and the world around us in general. See Cavallaro (2001) for a more elaborate explanation of this conceptualisation of reading.

reveal the taken-for-granted elements that form the bases of framed policies and their proposed execution. To a similar end, policy analysis and planning studies advocate what they have called *emancipatory* reading (Apthorpe, 1996).

One view provided by a reading of Malawi's development policies, from the foregoing theoretical perspective, is that there was a clear persuasive effort to represent Malawi as a country that could do very little else of significance apart from crop growing – an enterprise that the settler economy was used to, despite its bleak history. The rest of this section will attempt to show discursive textual characteristics – as opposed to how the apparent 'facts' or statements approximate the truth - that were used to describe Malawi and position her and her socio-economic potentialities within the Southern African region and indeed the international polarised economy (Mabogunje, 1989).

Malawi is Basically Agricultural

Chapter 1 of Nyasaland's 1962-1965 *Development Plan* is a justification of why the plan took the shape it did. It did not set out to "define and analyse problems, to draw conclusions, to recommend solutions, to *moot* objectives and to *suggest* a scale of priorities" (NP, 1962:5). Rather, it was "an outline of *what can, and is intended to, be done* with a specific amount of resources within a stated period" (p5). The plan used two terms to make the distinction between the more holistic study of national development needs and the selected projects plan: the former was referred to as a "development survey report" while the latter a "development plan" (NP, 1962:5). Thus this development plan was a predetermined set of measures to meet a select few objectives. A further justification for the selection of the projects was that it was a "compilation of projects agreed upon by the Government...conceived against the background of a knowledge of past performance, the potentialities and limitations of the economy" (NP, 1962:5).

I argue that selection of what to do and what not to do was guided by more than the economy's capability to sustain the selected strategy and the projects under it; there were various interests and expectations and other societal dynamics among the four fractions of interest groups identified by McMaster (1974) that were in Nyasaland then. Bearing in mind that Nyasaland was preparing for secession out of the British Central Africa Federation and the British Government's imperial control, the plan was setting course for a self-standing nation that was expected to demonstrate that it would stand as a viable nation. With a lot of doubts and outright prophecies of doom regarding Nyasaland's continual survival once out of the Federation (see for example, Joffe, 1973; McMaster, 1974), the Governor and his civil service were careful to leave behind an economy that had a show of continuity and, if possible, register growth that would lead to socio-economic development. The Government's chosen strategy for the young nation's capital accumulation and economic progress was its own economic base since the protectorate was established, plantation agriculture (McMaster, 1974; Pachai, 1971), with promises of Britain's budgetary aid for political stability. The backwater protectorate that Nyasaland was had little else to fall back on in the circumstances. Furthermore, the economic base was in the hands of the privileged settler community, white and Asian. Ian Taylor (2002:2) asserts that "any developmental strategy cannot be – and is not – neutral: all developmental strategies are intimately linked to accumulation systems at the same time."

A quick examination of the class dynamics at the time would show that the privileged class were initially uncertain about political stability in general, and how a black nationalist government would deal with them once in power at a time many emerging African states were experimenting with socialism, with implications of nationalisation of means of production. McMaster (1974:46) shows that "Linked with Dr Banda's attempts to create a favourable climate for private investment were his reassurances to the European and Asian communities, and the expatriate civil servants, about their future in Nyasaland." Considering the fact that the emerging black political elite

themselves took to estate farming soon after Nyasaland's independence, it would not be far-fetched to suggest that the adopted agricultural strategy for the development process, to which some of the black elite contributed significantly (McMaster 1974), was in the interests of the emerging elite to promote national development and their own economic interests. Although Joffe (1973) argues that the political leadership took to leading by example in opening up estates as 'demonstration farms', the credit facility, specialist extension service, market information and other services, as Sturges (1998) and Gondwe (*n.d.*) point out, did not equally go to the smallholder villagers who were an important population segment designated as the target for the said agricultural revolution. Sturges (1998) argues strongly that Dr Banda and the ruling elite privileged themselves, along with estate owners, in the agriculture industry at the expense of the smallholder farmer.

In comparison to the action of emerging black elites at the time of Botswana's independence, another Sub-Saharan nation that the British left in abject poverty in the early 1960s, important differences emerge. In the case of Botswana a professional bureaucracy teamed up well with the local elites whose interest was in livestock (cattle) enterprise, mineral wealth being unknown then, to touch off development plans that benefited a broad section of the country (Taylor 2000). Taylor (2002) further shows that because of the harmonious relationship between the local elite and the established government, the local elites were instrumental in articulating the state's developmental ideology and persuading the populace that the government's developmental plans were the best in the circumstances for the country. This greatly aided the state's hegemony over the populace. This was not the case in Malawi, because shortly after independence, there was a cabinet crisis (see for example, Joffe, 1973; McMaster, 1974). This ushered in a hortatory political culture (Joffe, 1973) that had dictatorial implications. Mhone (1996:269) asserts that "the developmental crisis and the hegemonic crisis are inter-related and intertwined especially given the central role of the State in African development policies and economies."

A further point to account for the choice of an agriculture strategy to development may be found in the colonial workings of Britain, as well as other colonial entities, that we have looked at above. Employing spatial geography perspectives to delineate the essential character as opposed to differing surface manifestations of underdevelopment, Mabogunje (1989:15 -17) posits that "The most significant fact about all of these countries is their integration into a global economy where their major role has been that of producers of industrial raw materials." Taking this point into account, advocating an agricultural economy among former or seceding colonies would ensure continuity of supply of much needed raw materials for the industries in the (former) colonising nations. We have already noted above that Britain took most of Nyasaland's exports: 63.9% in 1953 and about 50% during the Rhodesia-Nyasaland Federation years (McMaster, 1974:35). In general, Mhone (1996:269) points out that "Colonial development policies in the sub-region were primarily driven by the need to extract or produce primary resources." Thus the choice of an agricultural strategy to the development process had local and imperial dimensions to it. Alternative strategies would have had deleterious effects, for which they were not ready yet, on the industrial base of the home country.

Another important point the chapter raises is in relation to the question of citizenry participation in the development process and ownership of the proposed plans. The Nyasaland Government's view was that

The plan represents an attempt by the Government to translate the desires and needs of the people into development projects. To this extent it can be said that the Plan embodies the will of the people, expressed through those of their representatives who are members of the Government. Every effort will be made to associate the ordinary man with its implementation, so that he may become a participant rather than an onlooker in the development of his own country (NP, 1962:8).

An important point to highlight here is that due to ineffectiveness of most development work among communities of the world's poor, issues of empowerment and participation of beneficiary populations in development have attracted a great deal of interest in socio-economic development work (see for example, Christian Aid, 2001; Oakley & Marsden, 1984; Oakley *et al*,

1991; Servaes *et al*, 1996; Stiefel & Wolfe, 1994). According to Oxfam (1995:12), empowerment may be viewed as part of a social development process that involves:

taking steps to challenge and overcome oppression and injustice. It is...profoundly concerned with how individuals gain the strength, confidence, and vision to work for positive changes in their situations.

They further assert that empowerment is demonstrated by the quality of people's participation in the decisions and processes affecting their lives. Although there is no universal concept of participation in development really (Oxfam, 1995; World Bank, 1996), the Plan document excerpt shows that the ordinary citizen did not participate at all in the proposed plans. Earlier notions of participation that prevailed before the 1970s, such as the view that participation is a means to make government respond to needs of the people especially those that are not part of government decision-making processes, which Olujimi & Egunjobi (1991) dismiss, would appear to support the claim. However, when we consider Arnstein's (1969) classification of hierarchies of public participation, namely: non-participation, degree of tokenism, degree of citizen power and control, these arm-chair civil service plans were tantamount to non-participation. Furthermore, the current thinking regarding quality participation (Christian Aid, 2001) makes the claim in the excerpt vacuous. The World Bank's Learning Group on Participatory Development view participation as "a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them" (World Bank, 1996:xi). In this process four levels of participation have been identified (Oxfam, 1995:15). The first is information sharing. At this level people are told about a development project, and how it may affect them. Theoretically, the concerned citizens can decide on their level of participation. The second level involves consultation with the concerned citizens on key issues, from which project managers are provided with vital feedback. The third level is decision making. People are involved in the design and implementation of a project, and thus influence its development at every stage. The fourth level is initiating action. The concerned people organize themselves to take action cognizant of a shared problem or area of interest, rather than responding to the initiative of outside agencies. I argue

that the nationalist fervour at the time may explain why in the absence of any of these elements in the planning and implementation, the projects were received with notable enthusiasm (McMaster, 1974).

Having justified the privileged choice of agriculture as a tried and tested enterprise, the discursive management of the text progresses by presenting 'Some Basic Facts about Nyasaland' in the second chapter of the development plan. The basic facts were all tied to agriculture, rendering the rest of the activities subservient to agriculture. Below is the extract of chapter 2 with early sections of geography, and climate presenting the agriculture related 'facts' followed by cursory treatment of sections dealing with political status, political parties, protectorate government functions and race relations, which may have only implicit relation to the developmental enterprise.

CHAPTER 2

SOME BASIC FACTS ON NYASALAND

Geographical Location

Nyasaland consists of a strip of land in Central Africa about 520 miles long and from 50 to 130 miles wide, running roughly north and south. The whole of the Protectorate lies within the Tropics between 10 and 17 degrees south of the Equator and 32 to 36 degrees east of the Greenwich Meridian. Its land area is 36,879 square miles, while the area of its six lakes totals 12,298 square miles, including Lake Nyasa's 11,600 square miles of fresh water. It is bounded on the east by Tanganyika and Portuguese East Africa, on the south by Portuguese East Africa, on the west by Portuguese East Africa and Northern Rhodesia, and on the north by Tanganyika. The southern tip of the country is 130 miles from the sea.

Climate

Nyasaland possesses a tropical continental climate with a single rainy season. The most important characteristics of this climate with respect to agriculture are: firstly, the absence of any arid or semi-arid areas, and secondly, the high degree of concentration of the rainfall in a single season.

All areas receive a mean annual rainfall exceeding 25 inches whilst in certain areas the total rises above 60 inches. In limited parts of the Lower Shire Valley and Upper South Rukuru Valley there are at times difficulties due to rainfall deficiency, but 'serious droughts occur only at intervals of ten or more years. Over the majority of the country, 80-90 per cent. of the rainfall occurs in four months: December/March. In the higher rainfall areas, the rainy season extends into April. This degree of concentration exceeds that found in most other tropical African areas. Temperature varies considerably with altitude, falling at the rate of 3° per 1,000 feet; there is a smaller variation with latitude. At altitudes of 3,000-4,000 feet, mean annual temperatures are 65°- 70°. Four climatic regions maybe distinguished:

(1) *Cool and wettish:* Mean annual temperatures below 65°, rainfall above 40 inches. Nyika Plateau, Vipya Plateau, Mlanje and other high-altitude areas. Low temperatures render this region unsuitable for agriculture.

(2) *Wet Regions:* Rainfall mainly 60-90 inches, rising above 100 inches in limited areas. Temperatures varying considerably with altitude. The northern margin of the Karonga Lake-shore Plain, the Nkata Bay Lake-shore Lowlands, and the Mlanje and Cholo Uplands. A marked feature distinguishing this region from the remainder of Nyasaland is the occurrence of 5 inches to 10 inches rainfall during the dry season. This, together with the high total rainfall, renders the region suitable for perennial crops, such as tea, coffee and tung.

(3) *Warm, dryish to wettish:* Temperatures 65°-70°. Rainfall 30 inches-40 inches. Rainfall during the six driest months averages less than 1-2 inches. Annual totals below 20 inches occur approximately once in ten years. The majority of the medium-altitude plains fall in this region from which the bulk of Nyasaland's tobacco and groundnut output, as well as a variety of other crops, is obtained.

(4) *Hot, dryish:* Temperatures above 75. Rainfall 25-40 inches. The Lake-shore Plains and the Upper and Lower Shire Valleys. The high temperatures render this region suitable for the cultivation of cotton; with irrigation, cocoa cultivation is possible.

Topography and Relief

There are five Major Relief Units. Each of these occupies a restricted range of altitude, and each possesses distinctive characteristics in respect of soils and agriculture. These units are as follows:

(1) *High altitude plateaux*: These lie between 5,500 and 7,500 feet and have gently undulating landforms. They represent surviving remnants of a plateau believed to have been formed in Early Cretaceous times. Due to low temperatures and strongly leached infertile soils, they are unsuitable for agriculture but have potentiality for forestry. The principal areas are the Nyika, Vipya and Mlanje Plateaux; smaller remnants occur in the Misuku Hills; the Mafingi Hills, on Chongoni, Dedza, Zomba and Chiradzulu Mountains, and in the Kirk Range.

(2) *High-altitude hill areas*: These include the scarp zones of the previous unit, together with hilly and dissected land at altitudes of 4,000-5,000 feet. The soils are mainly stony but there are potentialities for agriculture in limited areas. The principal regions are: The hilly country north-west of Fort Hill, the Misuku Hills, the scarp zones surrounding the Nyika Plateau, the Central Mzimba Hills, the Dowa Hills, the Dedza Highlands, the hills of the Blantyre-Limbe area, and the Cholo Hills.

(3) *Medium-altitude plains*: These are gently undulating to nearly level plains. In the North and Central Provinces they lie at 3,400-4,500 feet, and in the Southern Province at 2,000-3,500 feet. They contain the largest proportion of agricultural land in Nyasaland. They include both highly fertile red soils, e.g. near Lilongwe, and infertile yellowish-red soils that will only give satisfactory crop yields by means of good farming methods, e.g. near Fort Hill. The principal areas are the Fort Hill Plain, the Upper South Rukuru Basin, the Kasungu-Lilongwe-East Fort Manning Plain, and the Lake Chilwa Plain or Shire Highlands.

(4) *The Rift Valley Scarp Zone*: This consists of belts of deeply dissected country with steep slopes, forming the borders of the Rift Valley. It is of little agricultural value due to the dominance of thin, stony soils. It comprises the scarp zones west of Lake Nyasa, on either side of the Upper Shire and Bwanje Valleys, and bordering on the Lower Shire Valley.

(5) *The Rift Valley Floor*: This consists mainly of level plains of alluvial origin. The grey-brown soils which cover it have a high fertility; the principal crops grown are cotton and rice. There are three sub-divisions: the Lake-shore plains of Lake

Nyasa at 1,550-2,000 feet; the Upper Shire and Bwanje Valley floors at 1,500-1,800 feet; and the Lower Shire Valley at 100-300 feet.

10

(NP 1962:9-10.)

(Underlining mine)

After geographically positioning Malawi in the tropics and away from the sea, Malawi's continental climate is immediately shown to have the "most important characteristics...with respect to agriculture" (p9) that are described in detail. Thereafter, an evaluative description of Malawi's four climatic regions is again consistently tied to their agricultural value. For example, the cool and wettish region's "Low temperatures render this region unsuitable for agriculture" (p9) while the wet regions additional rains in the dry season "together with the high total rainfall, renders the region suitable for perennial crops, such as tea, coffee and tung" (p9). It is important to point out here that these perennial crops were mostly the preserve of white estate owners. In addition, tung was directly grown by the Commonwealth Development Corporation in North Malawi (McMaster, 1974). Whereas the warm, dryish to wettish region is pointed out to be the "region from which the bulk of Nyasaland's tobacco and groundnut output, as well as a variety of other crops, is obtained, the hot, dryish climatic region's "high temperatures render this region suitable for the cultivation of cotton; with irrigation, cocoa cultivation is possible" (p9).

A description of the topography and relief of Malawi carried further agriculturally related value statements, pointing out each of the five relief units "possess...distinctive characteristics in respect of soils and agriculture" (p9). The high altitude plateaux and the high-altitude hill areas were considered marginally useful for agriculture. The former was considered to be "unsuitable for agriculture but [to] have potentiality for forestry," while the latter was seen to have "potentialities for agriculture in limited areas" (p9). The medium-altitude plains were judged favourably to "contain the largest proportion of agricultural land in Nyasaland" (p10) while the rift valley scarp zone was rated

to be “of little agricultural value due to the dominance of thin, stony soils” (p10). The fifth relief unit, the rift valley floor, was noted to have “grey-brown soils which...have a high fertility” (p10).

Chapter 3, *Structure of the Economy*, was more revealing of the bias towards development through the agricultural strategy. It is from this chapter that the sub-title for this section is taken. The chapter opens on an exclusive note in forecasting future economic trends of the Protectorate: “A forecast of future economic trends in the country can only be based on a clear picture of the present state of the economy” (p13). To delineate what were felt as “some of the salient features of the economy” (p13), the Plan “underline[d] the potentialities as well as the limitations of the economy” (p13). Agriculture was thickly underlined in an assertion: “At present Nyasaland is basically an agricultural country. A large proportion of her people live off the land” (p13). The rest of the chapter is a belaboured description of how people live off the land and statistical figures gathered from odd sources - there being no statistical service in the Protectorate’s Administration (NP, 1962:18, 21) - indicating prices of goods, and also government expenditure and revenue. In examining the Malawi government’s agricultural strategy, Joffe (1973) observes that the nationalist government carried on with the colonial legacy, but she does not account for it. I argue that the economy and its base had an appearance of success in the eyes of the natives as their colonial masters, who were not poor as the natives were, had depended on agriculture and agriculture related commerce all along. The natives must therefore have felt that as leadership went to the natives, the inequities that the colonial administration, especially the Federal machinery, practiced, would open up opportunity for their prosperity by the same agricultural means. Besides, the white planter did not pay the farm hand adequately and this made reluctant workers making agricultural enterprises difficult to run profitably. Furthermore, a realistic assessment of Nyasaland’s circumstances should be tied to the Federation’s negative impact on Nyasaland. McMaster (1974:38-39) notes in relation to the Federal Government’s funding of the Kariba scheme and sidestepping Nyasaland’s Shire hydroelectricity scheme that

in order to placate the Southern Rhodesians, [it] ignored the real economic needs of Nyasaland. Thus, any government planning the economic future of Nyasaland...would be forced to take account of a number of unpalatable considerations: an economy based primarily upon agriculture with a large subsistence sector; an export trade dependent upon the vagaries of weather and of world market prices for primary products, and directed towards one major customer, Britain...

Chapter 4 of the Plan is a Review of Resources. What is introduced as a 'description of Nyasaland's resources as known at present' (p27) initially classifies land into different agricultural potentialities, underlining the point that "There is considerable scope for increasing not only yields per acre, but also the cultivated acreage" (p27). There is direct mention also in the early part of this chapter of "some of the agricultural projects aim[ing] at bringing under cultivation a sizeable proportion of the uncultivated land" (27).

A review of mineral resources is a story of proposals that must wait for (electrical) power, rise in demand and prices on world market or further geological surveying. The Plan points out some key mineral resources, such as bauxite, coal, monazite, niobium, iron ore, and phosphates which could be mined commercially. There is no commitment at all regarding developing this sector as a development strategy. As for coal, there is another case of colonial logistics of primary resources they sourced from the various colonies, as we have noted above. In this case, Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) was a coal producer, and therefore Nyasaland would not be encouraged to exploit her coal fields – regardless of the fact that this would help the economy. In fact the coalfield investigations in the north of Malawi were suspended "before it was possible to make a reliable estimate of reserves" (p28) because of considerations that it was possibly cheaper to obtain coal from elsewhere – Southern Rhodesia. It is important to mention here that the Federal Government's neglect of Nyasaland even when it "did have sufficient funds to finance the [1954 Shire hydroelectric] scheme" (McMaster, 1974:38) can be interpreted as a step to forestall competition in the mining sector for which, to start, power unavailability was the mentioned setback. It is also mentioned in the Plan that "In South Africa, the Rhodesias, the Congo and East Africa, Nyasa labour has an enviable reputation for hard work, ingenuity, and

dependability" (p38) – a point which raises another possible reason for the Federal Government's lack of enthusiasm for developing the mining sector in Nyasaland. Nyasaland was to remain a labour reserve.

Nyasaland's conspicuous natural resource is her lakes. The review does not attach any tourist agenda to Lake Nyasa, especially. In relation to promotion of the tourist industry, Baker (1994) reports how Nyasaland was greatly failed by the then Protectorate Administration when British Airways wanted to make Nyasaland an important Central African destination *en route* to South Africa in the 1920s. The Plan continued that neglect; Lake Nyasa was only thought of in terms of fish reservoir, generation of electricity and transportation of goods up and down the country. It is also important to mention that there is no reference to the possibility of using the water for irrigation purposes. Only rivers are mentioned to be used that way, despite the agricultural industry being adversely affected by the vagaries of weather, as we have noted above.

Another important point in the chapter pertains to human resource capacity building. I consider this point a significant contributor to the narrowing of the Nyasaland/Malawi psyche in terms of viable choices for their development strategy. Addressing the issue of entrepreneurship, the Plan states:

There are four types of entrepreneurs: "innovating entrepreneurs,"business promoters, capital suppliers, and top-level managers. At this stage innovating entrepreneurs *per se* are not absolutely necessary in Africa. There is such a lag between current techniques in undeveloped countries and contemporary technology in advanced countries that the problem of innovation in young countries boils down to adapting techniques and technology developed in advanced countries to suit local conditions. On the other hand, the other three types of entrepreneurs are absolutely essential (p39).

It is striking to note that while the Plan at the brink of the end of the colonial era discounts the need for innovation from Africa and the rest of the undeveloped world, the view missionaries, consuls and other early colonisers in Africa had of African society was that "it was static; it had not climbed the ladder of progress as the Anglo-Saxons had done [and that] only the colonial era inaugurated a period of civilizing transformation" (Chanock, 1972:429). It

is important to note that this exclusion of the undeveloped world, and Nyasaland in particular, from accessing the 'ladders' of progress was a continuing systematic practice. In examining the Nyasaland Protectorate's Post-War Development Plan and the role and state of African education during the period (1945 –1961), Lamba (1984:150) argues powerfully that the poor state of the education system, evidenced by the shameful lack of native personnel to take over at independence, resulted from a "deliberate move... and ineptitude of planners of colonial development which largely ignored or thwarted African aspirations to uphold the colonial *status quo*." According to Lamba (1984:151) colonial development planning was guided by two considerations:

First, the planning mostly gave priority to those aspects likely to benefit metropolitan development; second, colonial planning was guided by available finance rather than by local manpower and the general social and economic imperatives for genuine advancement of colonial subjects.

However, it is important also to point out that while in the pre-war period the colonial office and settler views and practices about African welfare were not different, growing post-war international pressure on metropolitan powers forced a change in the home government's conduct. Now at least they were making efforts to be seen to redress the poor state of education that several commissions reported with regret, and provide an education that would prepare the natives for self-determination. Such efforts met with local settler resistance. Lamba (1984) points out that at stake were white settler privileges and sustenance of labour provision to established economic interests in the other territories, namely the Rhodesias and South Africa. Lamba (1984:157) notes that "White privileges had to be safeguarded through an appropriate curriculum for Africans ...for the creation of a semi-literate peasantry and working class". As a result, a very basic mass education, largely under the aegis of various mission bodies, was let to run on a *laissez faire* fashion - without any control on standards of any sort. Education beyond the extended 11 year primary was unknown until the 1940s when secondary education was slowly introduced. Lamba (1984) notes that years of a sub-standard primary education showed as the two early secondary schools did not find any learners that qualified for entry for a period. Reverberations that this political

control through education that Lamba (1984) criticises for lack of the will for genuine development of natives, have continued to be felt well into the post-colonial era, as we explain below.

Bearing in mind the vested interests metropolitan powers still had in the colonies they were reluctantly giving up, it would appear that the 1962 –1965 Plan's discounting of innovation from Nyasaland and the rest of the underdeveloped world, was a continuation of the strategy to forestall competition for privileges, albeit in a subtle manner, and to safeguard continuity of metropolitan industries, and other interests. The effects of such social engineering can be identified even in the post-independence era. Mleme (1996:139) decries the "abstract, detached and irrelevant to everyday life" primary science education curriculum that was inherited from the British, as he argues:

The current science curricula were inherited from the British curricula which were used during the colonial era...there does not appear to have been any significant curriculum changes in science education. It appears the reforms that have been attempted to date focus on how best the existing curriculum can be taught rather than evaluating what is taught...it appears that science curriculum contents have been assumed to be relevant and appropriate for Malawi, and that they are fixed and 'infallible' (p1).

Because most Malawians do not go beyond primary education, such ill-prepared individuals have been vulnerable to the ravages of poverty. Generations of stifling innovation through an educational recipe for creating a semi-literate peasantry and working class citizenry, has contributed significantly to the largely non-reflexive people who can hardly set about innovatively exploring possibilities of uplifting themselves from both conjunctural poverty caused by dearth and famine as well as the more long term structural poverty (McCracken 1984a) by mustering the full potential of natural, human and social, and built capital for the good of wider community.

Chapter 5: Recent Development of the *1962 –1965 Development Plan* reviews each economic sector's performance between 1951 and 1961, as a way of pointing out by the results what sectors would show as self-evident

candidates for elevation to bases of Nyasaland's economy to be given national priority. We examine in the excerpt below observable persuasion of the promise that agriculture holds as the mainstay of the economy. Of all the sectors, agriculture and agro-based small-scale industry are shown to register good performance, while downplaying significant problems within the sector. For example, tobacco was (and has continued to be) an ace foreign currency earner. However, its performance was far from encouraging. The Plan reports that "The total picture is that of a crop whose production fluctuates violently. There has been no improvement in the total production of tobacco. If anything the reverse is the case" (NP, 1962:45). Yet, the conclusion to the sector in the Plan glosses over this, "Looked at in isolation, the conclusion might be made that, *except for a few crops*, [italics mine] production is increasing at not too slow a rate" (NP, 1962:46). Among the 'few crops', is this ace foreign currency earner. I therefore argue that bias towards the sector is clearly evident.

Agriculture

The graph opposite shows the trend in the production of cash crops. *Cotton* production shows a rising curve from 1951 to 1953. Then it dips down in 1954, it rises a little in 1955 and then it plummets down in 1956, from whence it makes steep and continuous climb until 1960 when the curve dips at a small angle from horizontal. The overall effect, despite two setbacks is that of a continuous increase production, rising from 2,651 short tons in 1951 to 12,963 tons in 1961.

Tobacco presents another picture altogether. The graph starts with a sharp e downwards, followed by a sharp rise in 1953. Then a gentler dip follows, wed by a sharper one. But once again production picks up in 1956. The curve almost levels off between 1956 and 1957, but it tilts upwards again in 1958. From onwards it slopes gently downwards until 1960 when the slope takes a sharper downwards. The total picture is that of a crop whose production fluctuates violently. There has been no improvement in the total production of tobacco. If anything the reverse is the case. In 1951 tobacco production stood at 18,020 tons. In 1961 it was 13,414 tons.

Groundnut production has grown by leaps and bounds. The graph is almost a straight line one (punctuated by a few plateaux) rising at a steep angle. 316 short tons of groundnuts were produced in 1951; in 1961 production was 25,006 tons - not a mean rise.

Coffee began to come into its own in 1955. In that year some 13 short tons were produced. By 1961 production had risen to 120 tons.

Tea production has grown steadily (if slowly) with hardly any fluctuations.

In 1951, 7,575 short tons were produced; the corresponding figure for 1961 is 13,485 tons.

Rubber which is produced at Vizara in Nkata Bay District and sold mainly to the Bata Shoe Company in Southern Rhodesia, has a production curve which is almost a perfect straight line. In 1951 some 100 tons were produced; production has hovered around that figure ever since.

Tung Oil by and large shows steady if little increase in production. There are minor fluctuations here and there, but the picture is that of continuous increase. In 1951, the country produced 310 short tons; and in 1961 it produced 1,236 tons.

Looked at in isolation, the conclusion might be made that, except for a few crops, production is increasing at not too slow a rate. But when note is taken of the fact that (1) the cash economy is here to stay; (2) $2\frac{3}{4}$ million Nyasas must depend on agriculture for money incomes; and (3) the population is increasing at the rate of 2.2 per cent. per annum, it becomes apparent that the Government cannot begin to be complacent about the growth of production in agriculture.

Production in agriculture must increase at a phenomenal rate so that reliance on it as a source of income has meaningful content not only for the few but also for the Masses. It will do so only if there is a sustained and effective campaign to encourage and assist the masses to take to cash crop farming. This is what the Government sets out to do in the present Plan.

To those non-Africans who have come to Nyasaland through the years to engage in trade, agriculture and industry, this chapter pays tribute. It will be the policy of this Government to encourage such people to remain and expand their business Ventures as well as to attract others from outside to follow suit.

Co-operative Societies

The co-operative movement has not caught on in Nyasaland as well as it has done in other territories. Between 1951 and 1961 it shows a growth which is singularly stunted. There were some 74 societies in 1951, in 1961 the number had risen to only 93. Of the latter number, 79 were producer, 9 consumer, 1 credit and 4 "other" societies. The corresponding figures for 1951 were 35 producer, 36 consumer, no credit society, 1 wholesale and 2 "other" societies.

The most significant fact that emerges from these figures is that while producer societies have increased in number over the years, the number of consumer societies has steadily declined from 36 in 1951 to 9 in 1961 a remarkable leap backwards.

The failure of the co-operative movement to grow vigorously in Nyasaland can be attributed to many factors, outstanding among which are the following: (a) lack of a lead from popular African leadership; (b) failure to explain the advantages of co-operation to the masses at the right psychological moment; (c) disinclination to train personnel on an appreciable scale, and (d) poor staff employed by some of the societies,

Having regard to the principle of "mutual aid and co-operation" upon which most

African societies are founded, co-operation must needs occupy a prominent place in African economies. Moreover, it is only co-operation that on the supply side will enable the peasants to band together in the 'ale of their produce thereby brushing aside the hand of the middle man, augmenting their bargaining power and realizing higher prices for their produce. On the demand side, only co-operation can enable rural peasants to buy their consumer good:- at reasonably lower prices. In short co-operation is peasants' only method of extricating themselves from a situation in which they are compelled to sell their produce in wholesale markets and purchase their supplies retail markets.

But for co-operation to such a remedy, nationalist movement must talk, live and practise co-operation; co-operative officers and managers must be trained on a large scale and credit must be readily available to the nascent societies.

Veterinary Services

For some objectives of veterinary policy in Nyasaland have been:

(a) to increase the cattle population and to integrate it with agriculture; (b) to maintain a healthy stock population to prevent the spread of disease; (d) to facilitate the marketing of cattle (e) to distribute improved stock including poultry; and (f) to undertake research and to disseminate useful results.

Between 1951 and 1961 the cattle population has increased from 280,669 to 374,635; pigs from 41,740 to 100,469; goats from 262,051 in 1951 to 529,458 in 1961, while the sheep population has increased from 49,670 to 82,100. The number of cattle slaughtered has risen from 19,342 to 32,766 the actual off take being 13 per cent of the cattle population, a figure which compares very favourably with other areas in Africa.

Whether this increase can be deemed reasonable or alarmingly low, depends on the marketability of cattle. There is no doubt at all that the consumption of meat can be topped up considerably if-and it is an important if-there were more facilities for the speedy marketing of cattle. If consumption were to be stepped up considerably, a serious imbalance between the demand and supply of cattle would result. As it is, however, the imbalance is noticeable. What is conspicuous is the paucity of marketing facilities. Government intends to devote some resources to the alleviation of this problem.

As for the second objection, the Department of veterinary Services has endeavoured to maintain healthy stock in the country: However, diseases and epidemics have inevitably attacked the population at various times between 1951 and 1961. Table 17 shows the number of diagnosed cases of various diseases each year for the last eleven years. Actual mortality from the region of 5 per cent of the cattle population.

The distribution of improved cattle and poultry has been disappointing. In 1951 69 head of improved cattle were distributed in 1961 only 134 were distributed. Distribution on such a scale cannot produce any significant results in the near future. Distribution of poultry shows slightly better results; in 1955, 327 improved poultry were distributed; in 1961 the figure had gone up to 48,176.

Here again, the pointer is unmistakable; the government must redouble its efforts - funds permitting.

Fish and Game

The total fish catches recorded by commercial fishing firms, principally in the south-east arm of Lake Nyasa, rose from 1,900 tons in 1952 to a peak of 4,600 tons in 1958. There has since been a decline and in 1961 catches of only about 3,000 tons were recorded. There are no comparable figures available for non-commercial fishing, but the totals probably run more evenly at about 3,500 tons per annum, derived mainly from Lake Nyasa and Lake Chilwa. The maximum fish production ...

47

(from NP, 1962:45 - 47)

Further ascription of centrality of agriculture in the Plan is observable in the telling points of the conclusion of the agriculture sector, presented as 'facts' [boxed in the excerpt above]. The Plan makes it clear that with the advent of the cash economy which was introduced to the benefit of the privileged few, "2^{3/4} million Nyasas must depend on agriculture" (p46) and that "Production in agriculture must increase at a phenomenal rate so that reliance on it as a source of income has meaningful content not only for the few, but also for the masses" (p46) by means of "effective and sustained campaign to encourage and assist the masses to take to cash crop farming" which "the Government sets out to do in the present Plan" (p46). (We examine the linguistic tools of persuasion in the following section of this chapter.)

I view assessments of the remaining sectors that were potentially instrumental to capital accumulation, as probably well meant public discourse that had little substance, if any. There is obviously no significant commitment to any other sectors. For example, pertaining to the **Geological Survey**, in relation to which statements of lack of minerals in the Protectorate abound, the Plan has an illusory commitment:

It seems clear that the Department of Geological Survey has been doing the most it can within the limits imposed by the resources allocated to it and the size of its staff. But time has come for Government to intensify the search for economic minerals and consequently to allocate more resources to the Mineral investigation Unit (p49).

To begin with, the mining sector is not part of the two focal points –

modernising agriculture and human resource training programme to take up leadership roles at the doorsteps of self-determination. Secondly, thirty years of the Malawi Congress Party Government ended in the 1994 multiparty elections, without significant deliberate effort to develop the mining industry. The *Malawi Environmental Action Plan* shows that feasibility studies for the exploitation of the known existing mineral resources, such as bauxite, had just started (GoM, 1998a:8). This shows that there was no significant commitment to mineral investigation as an alternative or complementary means of capital accumulation.

In Chapter 6 *Priorities and Objectives*, the Plan narrows down the whole exercise to the training of people for various professions and trades, and modernisation of agriculture with a justification for such a priority. Having indicated in Chapter 5 that the Plan was an agricultural campaign to the people of Nyasaland, especially the masses, this chapter brings it out more explicitly in a building metaphor that “certain institutions and services are by their nature the foundation stones upon which are superimposed the brick and mortar of subsequent development. Such schemes must obviously have precedence over others. Thus a scale of priorities is well nigh inevitable” (p53). The rest of the chapter details set objectives within these priorities. As education of personnel does not accumulate capital, rather it is a spending sector, the main founding stone is no doubt agriculture. Thus, even though objectives of the other sectors are also included, they were envisaged to play a secondary role. The following Chapter 8 Main Projects in the main spells out actual projects that were planned for and funds were allocated to within the priorities – including some continuing projects from a previous plan. Having pointed out the sources of funds in Chapter 9, and special projects with a commercial nature for the private sector to take up or to work in partnership with the government, in Chapter 10, the Plan’s Chapter 11 Economic Development in Perspective is an ideological positioning of the Plan.

CHAPTER 11

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN PERSPECTIVE

If underdeveloped countries have any common denominator it is their determination to modernize their economies. The Government of Nyasaland is no less keen to develop its economy. But the question must be asked: What is the Government trying to make of the Nyasa economy ? What state of economic affairs does it want to bring about ultimately: Is it Rostow's " Stage of High Mass Consumption " ? A clear picture of the ultimate set up enables Government to appreciate that the final goal can be reached only by stages. The composite picture of these stages is what constitutes the perspective of economic development. The pattern of the stages is determined mainly by the nature of a country's resources. A realistic perspective of economic development, therefore, is intimately related to a country's resources. The purpose of this chapter is to present an outline of some of the possible stages through which the country may have to pass before it reaches the final stage.

2. Ultimately, it is hoped that the proportion of the people who live off the land will have been reduced to about 40 per cent. of the total population; that *per capita* income will have risen to at least £200; that the investment rate will have hit the 25 per cent. mark; that the propensity to save will have increased to about one-third of the GDP; that the rate of population growth will have decreased; and that the rate of growth of *per capita* income will have settled at a pace which is ahead of the rate of population growth.

3. In the field of economic activities it is hoped that Nyasaland will have developed the exchange sector of the economy to a degree where internal regional specialization is fully operational. It is further hoped that a mining industry based on the exploitation of bauxite, coal, iron ore and phosphates will have been developed; that a system of fully-fledged commerce capable of relieving manufacturers of the burden of assembling raw materials and distributing manufactured goods will have been established; that the country will be able to produce its own administrators, technicians and professional men; that the Lake-shore road will have been constructed and joined to the present main road thereby forming a ring national road; that a modern jetty will have been built at almost every port of call along the western side of Lake Nyasa; that in addition to a major hydro-electric scheme on the Shire, an electric plant with an adequate installed capacity will have been built at Fufu Falls near Rumpi; that adequate water supplies will be available at economic rates throughout the country; that three " fast growing " secondary industries (namely, the textile, cement and food processing industries) will have come into existence; that a modern tax system subjecting the tax payer to the least psychological burden, yielding the maximum revenue and operating in an equitable fashion will have been introduced; that the great proportion of raw materials will be utilized locally; that a central bank and other financial institutions which go with a modern economy will have been established; that tertiary industries will have developed to such a stage as to be able to employ the largest proportion of the labour force; that most of the capital that will be required for development will be mobilized locally; that a few heavy industries will have come into existence and that metal fabricating industries will also have been set up.

4. Briefly, this is the state of economic affairs that the Government wants to bring

about eventually. All this, however, will not be done in a month, in a year, in a decade, in twenty years or in fifty years time. But a start towards the ultimate goal must be made.

105

(NP, 1962:105)

An ideological point that stands out in the excerpt is the reference to Rostow's (1960) five stages of development, with its underpinning assumptions in the neoclassical Keynesian economics, which among other additions to neoclassical economics, "alerted economists to the notion that government action, rather than laissez faire [that is, free operation of markets' demand – supply synergies], was needed to awaken a dormant economy" (Gondwe, 1992:94). In line with this thinking, we note above that in the Plan the Nyasaland Protectorate Government made provision that in the more commercial projects it could work with private sector, and where private sector was slow, it would take the lead in those particular commercial interests. Gondwe (1992), in his quest to have political economy restored within economics for the discipline to be more socially relevant than it currently is, goes to lengths to show the interplay of economic thought, and major Western political ideologies in the political economies of underdeveloped nations. It is important to reiterate here that the dominant paradigm spurred on by success in the post-war Western European Marshall Plan in development work among underdeveloped nations was proving ineffective at the time. As a result other competing paradigms, such as the dependency school with its roots in the Marxian radical ideology, were coming on the scene (Dwivedi, 1994; Singhal *et al*, 1996). A noteworthy point in the dialectics of the time is that the economic experts, especially those from the Bretton Woods institutions changed direction. According to Gondwe (1992:94) the "western world turned back to a more conservative ideology in the 1980s, signaled by 'Thatcherism' and 'Reaganism' as the neoclassical *renaissance*, or *counterrevolution*, which essentially revived some of the older laissez faire doctrines." The results of this paradigm shift in the western world, were the World Bank's structural adjustments programmes that have been the bane of most underdeveloped economies (see for example, Gondwe, 1992; Harrigan ,2001; Kajiyani,

1992). As she examines the World Bank's performance in relation to its advisory role in Malawi's policy-makings in the 1980s, Harrigan (2001) details how the World Bank misread the political economy in their classifying Malawi's economy as market-oriented, and the advice it gave to the Malawi government at the time. Harrigan (2001:33) argues that:

The Bank staff to adopt the neo-classical rent-seeking paradigm, by which market distortions are predominantly regarded as government-induced with a non-economic rationality, led to inappropriate policy prescriptions and an inappropriate bargaining stance in the case of... Malawi's structural adjustment programme...

Gondwe's (1992:95) analysis of the fundamental factor in the Bank's poor diagnosis of underdeveloped world's (and specifically Malawi's) political economy is informative:

A crucial issue that bears repeating is that economists who went about advising governments in LDCs believed their advice to be objective. Because of the ideological neutrality they claimed for their positivist approach to economic issues, they tended to ignore the problem of how to deal with differences in the values or circumstances of different societies. Consequently, when they tried to adapt their western models of economic behavior to other societies, there was always the danger of misreading some central behavioral characteristics of the subject peoples.

Gondwe's (1992:95) further prognosis of the performance is unfavourable because "economics as *economics* (as opposed to political economy) still deals with markets and exchange in western economies. It still takes for granted the cultural, political, institutional, religious, and historical context within which markets function."

Another important point in relation to ideological influence on Least Developed Countries (LDCs) is that all the three major ideologies of the western world, conservatism, liberalism and radicalism, emphasise capital accumulation as a prerequisite to development (which really is modernisation along the lines of the industrialised western nations). Worse still, neoclassical economists' concentration on physical capital lost sight of the human element in development, "putting machines and people at par, simply as factors of production" (Gondwe, 1992:104). Instead of an allocation of resources that is

people-centred (that is providing basic necessities including education and health before catering for the luxury consumer) (Korten & Carner, 1984), both advisors and the LDCs preoccupied themselves with capital accumulation. One sad result of this is corrupt use of the accumulated capital among LDC's elites to serve their luxury appetites such as foreign bank accounts (Gondwe, 1992; Sturges, 1998) and failed development for the greater good.

Conclusion

This section of the chapter has attempted to show in the main that Nyasaland's (Malawi's) agricultural economic base was not a natural option as the abundance of the economic literature would have us believe (see for example, GoM, 1987:4). There was a choice and persuasive element that sold this option as a tried and tested economic base. Besides, all the assessments were geared towards downplaying the other options. Furthermore, at work also was wholesale transplantation of ideology which has guided socio-politically ill-informed, though well-meant, advice to most developing nation governments in relation to economic structures and their unhelpful performance. Related to the foregoing point, emphasis on capital accumulation has led to unintended results of corruption among the elite and other cases of misdirected use of public finances in developing world governance. In the section below I turn to a micro-linguistic examination of portions of the text excerpts above that show discursive practices of persuasion towards appropriacy of agriculture as Malawi's obvious, if only viable economic base.

5.3 Micro-analysis of Discourse Framing on Malawi: *The 1962–1965 Development Plan*

Introduction

This part of text analysis focuses on linguistic tools that the foregoing textual rhetorical functions brought to bear on the discursive practice of text production. The analysis continues within the two adopted discourse analytic strategies of text comparison and examination of text multivocality. While text

comparison examines assumed understandings of the world and other possible ways of presentation of realities, multivocality examines pattern of occurrence of other 'voices' and their contribution to meanings that are produced.

Considering the texts that have been chosen for their discursive features: excerpts of *Chapter 2 Some Basic facts on Nyasaland*; *Chapter 5 Recent Developments*; and *Chapter 11 Economic Development in Perspective*, two major lines of analysis emerge. One line is identifying and characterising discourses. Under this heading fall distinguishing how vocabulary lexicalises the world for sustenance or remaking particular views of reality. This is probably the dominant discursive feature in the rhetorical functioning of the identified texts. An extension of lexical analysis is the analysis of clause elements. Further analysis under discourse characterisation involves determining underlying assumptions and intertextuality, that is, presences of other 'voices'. The second line of analysis is identification of representation of social actors (and events). Under this, text representation of agency and its significance are examined along with clause elements analysis. The 'presence' of social actors is examined in terms of whether they are represented as causing action or affected by action in question.

Discourse Identification and Characterisation

Arising from the rhetorical analyses above, the creation of a narrowed view of socio-economic development strategies with its effects of crippling innovativeness, has been shown to be historically, politically and discursively located in Nyasaland's socio-political context. In this section linguistic elements in their discursive functioning in the selected texts are examined.

Lexicalising Agricultural Nyasaland

Lexical elements that were instrumental to the elevation of (plantation) agriculture as the logical viable means for Nyasaland's socio-economic development can be identified in the texts for analysis. From within the

chapter title of 'Chapter 2 *Some Basic Facts on Nyasaland*' the occlusion of other 'facts' is lexically staged. The use of the assertive central determiner "some" functions textually to accomplish occlusion of alternative 'facts', or a fuller range of what can be regarded as 'facts' on Nyasaland. Furthermore, the use of the adjective 'basic' is discursively functional. Dictionary definitions of the word 'basic' include the following notions: 'fundamental;' 'essential' (The Macquarie Dictionary, 1987). As it turns out to be, the Plan's essentialist list of 'facts' on Nyasaland is all agricultural. Examples of the 'factual' description reduced to agricultural relevance only follow below.

The beginning of the description of Nyasaland's climate is a discursive management of occlusion: "Nyasaland possesses a tropical continental climate with a single rainy season. The most important characteristics of this climate with respect to agriculture are..."(p9). With such a narrowed down focus on climatic information and agriculture, the textual function of the sentence fragment is to exclude what is not promoting the discursive function of this description, namely, non-agricultural facts. The 'factual' description of the four climatic regions again is reduced to agricultural relevance. In regards to the cool and wettish region the concluding assertion is that the "Low temperatures render this region unsuitable for agriculture (p9). In contrast, the conclusion in relation to the 'factual' description of the wet regions due to additional rainfall during the characteristically dry months of the year is that "This, together with the high total rainfall, renders the region suitable for perennial crops, such as tea, coffee and tung" (p9). In relation to the 'factual' description of the warm, dryish to wettish region, the conclusion is a reiteration of a self-evident agricultural utilitarian value of the region "The majority of the medium-altitude plains fall in this region from which the bulk of Nyasaland's tobacco and groundnut output, as well as a variety of other crops, is obtained (p9). Finally, the recommendation for the hot dryish region is that "the high temperatures render this region suitable for the cultivation of cotton; with irrigation, cocoa cultivation is possible" (p9).

Similarly, the 'factual' description of topography and relief that identifies Nyasaland's five major relief units, reduces the focus to agricultural utility, the 'factual' detail the section presents: "Each of these occupies a restricted range of altitude, and each possesses distinctive characteristics in respect of soils and agriculture. These units are..." (p10). The respective 'factual' descriptions of the major relief units also are characterised by the assessment of agricultural worthiness, in a kind of three-step move consisting of: a statement about the altitude and, optionally, geological timing and formation categorisation; the agricultural value assessment; and naming of the regions that belong to the particular relief unit categories.

In relation to the high altitude plateaux, the assessment in terms of agricultural value is unfavourable; "they are unsuitable for agriculture but have potentiality for forestry" (p10). A similar judgement goes for the high-altitude hill areas: "The soils are mainly stony but there are potentialities for agriculture in limited areas" (p10). The assessment of the medium altitude plains is that "They contain the largest proportion of agricultural land in Nyasaland" (p10). On the contrary, the evaluation of the rift valley scarp zone is that "it is of little agricultural value due to the dominance of thin, stony soils" (p10). Finally, the rift valley floor evaluation is that "the grey-brown soils which cover it have a high fertility; the principal crops grown are cotton and rice" (p10). With such a narrowed 'fact' utility value focus on agriculture, the discursive function of textual occlusion of the other 'facts' or a fuller range of agriculturally and non-agriculturally related facts is therefore clear.

Further to the occlusion of alternative, or indeed a fuller range of 'facts' on Nyasaland in the text, factual description is discursively functional (Edwards and Potter, 1992; Potter 1996). Edwards and Potter (1992:125), though working with talk-in-interaction data, assert, in relation to 'factual' descriptions as artifacts of social practice, that "when there is nothing to argue about there is no need to formulate the facts. Far from factual reporting being a *contrast to rhetoric*...it is a *feature of rhetoric*." By way of suggesting a scheme for

understanding descriptive and factual discourse, Potter (1996:108) posits that:

factual accounts have a double orientation. They have an *action orientation* and an *epistemological orientation*. On the one hand, a description will be orientated to action. That is, it will be used to accomplish an action, and it can be analysed to see how it is constructed so as to accomplish that action. On the other, a description will build its own status as a factual version. For the most part, the concern is to produce descriptions which will be treated as mere descriptions, reports which *tell it how it is*.

Potter (1996) is quick to elaborate that the view he advances is that the epistemological orientation of accounts is itself a form of action; "it is something built by speakers or writers – although it does not assume that this building is necessarily, even often, conscious or strategic. This quality is a constructed element to descriptions rather than something they either possess or not" (p108).

In view of the foregoing, I argue that the 'factual' description that the 1962 *Nyasaland Development Plan* presents has a reifying action orientation while epistemologically it appears to be a mere description of physical phenomena that were crucial to Nyasaland's socio-economic development. I attempt to locate this discursive textual operation in the Plan text below. I draw heavily on both Potter (1996) and Edwards & Potter (1992) who, considering the "study of factual accounting...an important realm of social research in its own right" (p160), explore a range of techniques of fact construction that are commonly put to use in a variety of texts. I will refer to those techniques and their action orientation that are relevant to the texts that I examine in this chapter.

Potter (1996:111) asserts that "A central feature of any description is its role in categorization; a description formulates some object or event as something; it constitutes it as a thing, and a thing with specific qualities." In examining the 'factual' information the 1962 *Nyasaland Development Plan* presents, particularly the evaluative statements in relation to climate, topography and relief in chapter 2, Nyasaland is categorised as a country

suited for agriculture. Furthermore, the chapter 5 excerpt below lexicalises, and thereby categorises, Nyasaland as an agriculturally oriented country. There are observable lexico-grammatical features that have been textually employed to achieve this sort of categorisation. I examine the boxed text below, taken from the Chapter 2 excerpt.

Looked at in isolation, the conclusion might be made that, except for a few crops, production is increasing at not too slow a rate. But when note is taken of the fact that (1) the cash economy is here to stay; (2) 2 ¾ million Nyasas must depend on agriculture for money incomes; and the population is increasing at the rate of 2.2 per cent per annum, it becomes apparent that the Government cannot begin to be complacent about the growth of production in agriculture

The whole text draws on the empiricist repertoire in which the grammatical form and function minimises author action or involvement. The text begins at this impersonal note in the phraseology “Looked at in isolation” (p45), and the following rebuttal “But when note is taken of the fact that” (p45) in which the authors’ involvement is elided. The concluding statement is again impersonal “it becomes apparent that the Government cannot begin to be complacent.” Furthermore, the three ‘facts’ that are presented in the text are action orientated; they have an import of being “literal, solid and independent of the [writer]”. In DASP, discursive techniques for accomplishing such a constructive textual ‘façade’ are referred to as ‘externalising devices’ (Edwards & Potter, 1992:105). Firstly, we have noted above that the emergence of the cash economy in Nyasaland, with its taxation system; was a coercive tool to drive reluctant local African labour to the estates where planters paid them very little and working conditions were dehumanising. In view of this, the emergence of the cash economy being presented in the text as existential – “the cash economy is here to stay” – achieves the elision of not only the agency, but also the social disruption that was associated with the establishment of that economic order. The second ‘fact’ exhibits a textual function of logical deduction in the clause: “2¾ Nyasas must depend on agriculture for money incomes”(p45). It is a foregone conclusion that given the description, Nyasaland is cut out for agriculture, at least textually. The

text makes use of modalisation to accomplish this deduction. The use of the modal “must” as a linguistic device for drawing a logical conclusion from the known ‘facts’ is a well known lexico-grammatical tool in the English language (see, for example, Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973). Two main functions of “must” as a modal are a means to express obligation or compulsion, and logical necessity. Drawing on Latour (1987) and Latour and Woolgar (1986), Edwards and Potter (1992) elaborate on the use of modalisation in the social practice of fact construction and posit that externalising, or a display of superior disinterest in fact construction is aided by manipulating various rhetorical resources in the hierarchy of modalisation. The range of rhetorical resources are such that “At one end of the continuum, statements are made highly contingent on the mental processes and desires of the [writer], while at the other they become so commonplace that they do not even need to be formulated; they are simply assumed.” The discursive as well as social practice of externalising employs the latter pole of the continuum.

Another central feature of action-orientated description is to “present some action as routine or, conversely, exceptional” (Potter, 1996:111). An examination of Chapter 2 Some Basic Facts on Nyasaland, shows a lexico-grammatical realisation of textual exceptionalisation of Nyasaland as a continental tropical agricultural country. The ‘factual’ description of Nyasaland’s *Climate* opens with an exceptionalising move that points following pick up to augment. Firstly, in describing the rainfall intensity, the Plan asserts that “The most important characteristics of this climate with respect to agriculture are: firstly, the absence of any arid or semi-arid areas, and secondly, the high degree of the rainfall in a single season” (p9). The use of superlatives in describing and evaluating Nyasaland’s climate statements is an initial step in the exceptionalising move. The point is clinched in the concluding statement: “This degree of concentration exceeds that found in most other tropical African areas”(p9). Again the superlative is employed to represent Nyasaland as standing out in natural endowments that go to make a successful agricultural country. This is an indication of Nyasaland’s agricultural advantage above most of other tropical Africa, including the other

two which were part of the now dissolved Federation, namely, Southern and Northern Rhodesias (Zimbabwe and Zambia, respectively). We have noted already above that Nyasaland provided a pool of labour for the two Rhodesias and South Africa where foreign and settler investment formed the centre of an enclave of the southern African economy, as part of the world economy with its centre-periphery perspectives (see also Gondwe *n.d.*).

Assumptions and Intertextuality

Fairclough (2003:58) posits that “Value systems and associated assumptions can be regarded as belonging to particular discourses.” He further maintains that assumptions¹⁸ and intertextuality provide space for examining what texts (or discourses) include or exclude. Chapter 5, and Chapter 11 excerpts bear some assumptions and ‘voices’ – features which are tied to ideological leanings.

An examination of the selected text of chapter 5 shows existential assumptions in the Plan. The statement “But when note is taken of the fact that (1) the cash economy is here to stay” (p9) employs definite article reference markers of existential assumptions (Fairclough 2003). This existential assumption that Nyasas would want to sustain a cash economy by means of agriculture further assumes that for Nyasas to take to cash cropping, campaign would be an effective approach and that it is in the Nyasa’s interest to take to cash cropping. Out of these assumptions came “campaigns” that were associated with the modernising sweep of the 1960s among the LDCs. It should be reiterated that most effort in the campaigns went to attempts to change the socio-cultural practices or bases of traditional African societies, such as chieftaincy, extended family system, and land tenure system, which according to the Western perspectives of development were obstacles to development (Gondwe, 1992; Ayitte & Gondwe, 1993). Clearly, in Nyasaland practices of land tenure system were primarily a target practice for change (Kandawire, 1984). However, the literature assessing the

¹⁸ Fairclough (2003) clarifies the point that what he terms assumptions in this text, other scholars, such as Verschueren (1999), call them presuppositions.

modernisation campaign point to more disappointments than attainments of modernisation goals modeled after the West (see for example, Dijkerman, 1991; Dwivedi, 1994). Citing the case of the Japanese who held on to their cultural heritage by deliberately keeping out western social values, Gondwe (1992:97) actually illustrates that “European values were not necessary for economic development.”

A point that comes out of this discourse is that the indigenous Nyasaland people were not part of the planned change; they were the *subject* of planned change. The Plan views them as “masses” to be subjected to “sustained and effective campaign” (p45). Clearly, this shows that the view of development advanced here was not only focused on capital accumulation but also was non people-centred and non-participatory. There cannot have been any consideration of participation on the part of the indigenous people as what was causing the problem to bring about the desired westernisation/modernisation, was their very essence. The people were themselves to be changed. This exclusion of the people made the people passive, and distanced, positioning themselves as recipients, if observers, of a pre-packaged development plan that Government would pursue with or without their participation and interest.

What stands out intertextually is the reference to the Rostownian perspective of development. As it stands, Chapter 11 ‘Economic Development in Perspective’ gives the ideology that underpins the entire 1962 Nyasaland Development Plan. The influence of neoclassical economics, with its disregard of socio-cultural contextual features, was heavy at the time. Couched in the discourse of empiricist accounting, the chapter presents the Rostownian view of economic development as naturally married to Nyasaland’s agricultural ‘comparative advantage.’ Asserting this view of economic development, the planners posit that “The composite picture of these stages is what constitutes the perspective of economic development” (p105). It would appear that a singular view of development had not crystalised; the ambiguity comes through in various statements. On the one

hand, “determination to modernize ...economies” (105) is singled out as the goal. On the other hand, “The pattern of the stages is determined mainly by the nature of a country’s resources. A realistic perspective of economic development, therefore, is intimately related to a country’s resources” (p105). The distinction is more than a play with words. According to Mabogunje (1989:38) “The emphasis in development as *modernization* is...on how to inculcate wealth-oriented behaviour and values in individuals...It involves principally how to make the population of a country understand and accept the new rules of the economic growth game.” The view of development as *economic growth* emphasises a “rapid and sustained rise in real output per head and resultant shifts in technological, economic and demographic characteristics of a society” (Mabogunje, 1989: 36). Mabogunje (1989:37) further notes that “This conceptualisation ...gives priority in the development process to increased commodity output rather than to the human beings involved in the production.” What went along with the *modernization* view was erecting infrastructure to lead to modernisation (p39). This ambiguity in the conceptualisation of development can be potentially self-defeating as participants are prone to pulling in different directions thereby dissipating the intended impact of developmental work.

The empiricist repertoire in use here deserves some examination. In effort to present Nyasaland as naturally agricultural, the lexico-grammatical resources to accomplish a logical necessity are observable. The passive construction is masterfully put to use for this purpose. For example:

The pattern of the stages is determined mainly by the nature of a country’s resources. A realistic perspective of economic development, therefore, is intimately related to a country’s resources (p105).

At the end of the description, there are paragraphs that elaborate on the Rostownian stages and their formulaic benchmarks at particular points. For example the following structure is consistently used:

“Ultimately, it is hoped that the proportion of the people who live off the land will have been reduced to about 40 per cent.”

"In the field of economic activities it is hoped that Nyasaland will have developed .the exchange sector."

"It is further hoped that a mining..."

This empty-*it*-subject grammatical structure accomplishes planner/agency elision and effectively presents the formulaic Rostownian stages as an automatic occurrence within the confines of what the planners see as a realistic agro-based economy that goes on to mining. However, even with the formulaic expectations, the Plan is far too tentative about the realisation of stages after onset; "It is hoped" is largely non-committal. In other words, the development process is certain at the agricultural onset, and no further. This makes the enunciation of further Rostownian stages largely a cosmetic extension. The economic order that was set on the bases of agriculture during the colonial era was going to continue substantively on the same bases.

Conclusion

This section has presented a linguistic microanalysis following two lines of discourse analysis. The first line has been an identification and characterisation of discourses. In particular, the analysis has been on lexical representation of Nyasaland on a vocabulary and clausal level. In addition, underlying assumptions and intertextuality have been examined. Textual analysis has shown that fact construction in the Plan was rhetorically and lexically rich. The following points have come up.

1. In constructing Nyasaland 'factually', exclusion of a broader range of facts was accomplished on a lexical as well as clausal level. Instead of routinising Nyasaland, the text exceptionalised Nyasaland for her agricultural comparative advantage through modalisation and lexical choice.
2. Representation of existential assumptions regarding the cash economic order have been accomplished grammatically and through decontextualisation of this cash economy. Further assumptions regarding Nyasaland being basically agricultural and Nyasas' willingness to take to cash cropping have been accomplished lexically through modalisation.

3. Intertextually, the analysis has identified the ideology that underpinned the Plan. Rostow's formulaic five stages of development was enunciated as the guiding principle behind the economic order based on agriculture. However, the tentative lexico-grammatical clausal elements of the sentences display non-commitment to any further developmental stages. The certainty appears to stop at the agricultural first push. Furthermore, conceptualisation of the development process is lexically ambiguous. At one point it is the *modernisation* process and at another it is the *economic growth*. I regard this conceptualisation of the development process not only as non-people centred, but also as lopsided. I argue that the narrowness and lack of innovation in the economy has its roots in such ideological and historical antecedents.

The second line of analysis has examined the representation of social actors and events. The interest here was to examine the representation of agency.

4. Lexically, Nyasas have been represented as non-participants but as the *subject* of the planned change; sustained and effective campaigns were spelled out the assumptions driven by the Rostownian perspectives of development.
5. In the 'fact' construction analysis, the empiricist repertoire was the resource that was employed in both lines of analyses. It was functional to marshal a disinterested stance in the presentation of 'facts', and occlusion of agency.

5.4 Conclusion: Discursive Resources for Depicting Agricultural Malawi

This chapter has examined the representation of Malawi in (socio-) economic literature, and has endeavoured to show that while the abundance of the literature depict Malawi's dependence on agriculture as natural or at least logical, there were clear choices in strategies for socio-economic change. The choice of agriculture was historically shaped, and it had local as well as metropolitan dimensions to it. At work also were ideological workings in the modernisation paradigm which were transplanted without regard to contextual differences. The study has also tried to show that at the brink of Malawi's

independence there was a clear persuasive element in the discourse to sell agriculture as the obvious course of socio-economic development for Malawi. This depiction was rhetorically managed by downplaying other equally important socio-economic options. Another point that has come out of the study is the emphasis on economic accumulation and gross neglect of the social/human dimension to development.

The analysis has shown that there were distinctive lexico-grammatical resources in the discourse that were instrumental in selling the agricultural option as a natural or logical option. Among the tools, lexical choice, working within the broader choice of 'facts' about Nyasaland, was an important tool for occlusion of other viable socio-economic options. Similarly, the representation of social actors and events was managed by use of the empiricist repertoire to present a disinterested stance and occlusion of agency. Thus, following from the analysis, the *1962 – 65 Nyasaland Development Plan* was clearly a persuasive document that discounted alternative bases of Nyasaland's/Malawi's economy, thereby consolidating the historical and ideological framing of a narrow and non-innovative economy that was perpetuated in the development process into the post-independence era, as we shall examine in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 6

REPRESENTING IMBALANCE: A VIEW OF THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5 I have argued that both historical and ideological workings have not only shaped Malawi's narrow and vulnerable agro-based economy but are also crucial in the loss of a responsive as well as innovative use of the available range of community capital (see Hart, 1998 – 2000) among Malawians for their improved living standards and societal as well as individual economic independence. Related to issues of discursive functioning in the depiction of Malawi as befitting an agricultural strategy for its development, and a dearth of innovative and responsive appropriation of community capital that I have examined above, this chapter examines the construction of an agricultural strategy to the development process that is vested not only with the ability to bear what some scholars take to be development's defining functional realisations, such as the reduction of poverty, unemployment and inequality (see Seers, 1972), but also to effect societal change (GoM, 1978).

The ironic, though inadvertent, resultant exacerbation of inequality and poverty, associated with the Integrated Rural Development Projects (1968 – 1978) and the National Rural Development Programme (1978 – present), and the overshadowing of other potential sectors of the economy that could be viable alternatives as pointed out in this study, is not unknown in development projects appraisals (see for example, Escobar, 1995; and Ferguson, 1990). Ferguson (1990) calls such inadvertent results that mismatch the objectives, “instruments effects”. The major contention in this chapter is that while the primacy of agriculture as a development indicator (Seers, 1972) is appreciated, in Malawi, agriculture that was initially taken to be a means for attaining development goals turned out to be an inefficacious means and an inhibitive influence in regards to other unexplored or marginally utilised alternative means for the pursuit of stipulated development goals.

Some scholars have argued that the near wholesale adoption of the Scottish missionary and early entrepreneurs' tools, that were later adopted and enforced by the colonial administration, for a post-independence development strategy had inherent seeds of failure (see for example, Kandawire, 1984; Kydd & Christiansen, 1982; and Chipande, 1983). The chapter's analyses will attempt to show that while the agricultural strategy is represented virtuously, on the balance, the outcome has been rated to have been unimpressive in enabling societal attainment of what some in development circles regard as development's defining functional realisations (see Seers, 1972; Gondwe, 1992).

It should be emphasised that the focus of analysis in this chapter is not to assess the socio-economic performance of the Integrated Rural Development and the National Rural Development Programmes (hereafter, IRDP and NRDP, respectively) in relation to their objectives (though this comes through in the process); rather it is an analysis, from a critical discourse perspective, of the construction of the agricultural strategy as the effective means for effecting envisaged or desired socio-economic change – the reduction of poverty, unemployment and inequality in wealth or income distribution. Because these three social benefits, among others such as improved health standards and reduction of illiteracy, appear commonly in the literature on development as features without which development may not be said to have been effected, I elect to refer to the totality of them as development's functional realisations. The common economics parlance are metaphorical renderings such as benchmarks, or indicators (see for example Yeung & Mathieson, 1998 *passim*). In ascribing these development functional realisations to the agricultural strategy as a means of Malawi's development process, I argue that agriculture was given a privileged position in national Plan documents and national budget submissions, and through them and public communication, in the mindset of the majority of Malawians too. This privileged position of agriculture in Malawi's economy, in general, and the development strategy, in particular, is taken for granted or assumed in most social and economic research. In this chapter, I problematise it to show that

alternatives of varying potentialities are not non-existent, as most discourse on Malawi's development and economy in general appears to portray.

Arguably, there is a discernible discursive framing of developmental strategising that appears to characterise the national psyche; it is either one of diffidence to pursue alternatives that have not been tried before, or such that takes comfort in efforts that yield fairly quick results - that seasonal investments in agriculture readily offer. I argue that this recourse to a quick short term solution has had such an addictive effect on the national mindset that the nation finds it hard to wean itself from. A case in point is the long-standing failure to diversify from a tobacco dominated agricultural economy¹⁹ and the fears that Malawi has about signing the World Health Organisation's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. In relation to a fixated mindset, it is noted that "Signing could be the easiest step. Changing the mindset of Malawian's (*sic*) may be the greatest challenge of all" (Malawi fears over tobacco treaty, 2004:2). This national state of affairs points to a long stifled reflexivity in an era that needs innovative responsiveness to vicissitudinous developing world economies within a globalised economy (see Roddick, 2001). Malawi's post-independence estate-led export oriented agriculture *development* strategy is well documented in the socio-economic literature on Sub-Saharan Africa (see for example: Chipande, 1983; University of Edinburgh, Centre of African Studies 1984; Hogendorn & Christiansen, 1996; Harrigan, 2001). In fact some studies have sought to shed light on Malawi's development story, among other emergent Sub-Saharan states, particularly her economic growth, which displayed marked success in the post-independence period up to the late 1970s and then showed weaknesses that could not withstand what are commonly referred to as external shocks (Pryor, 1990) - such as oil price rise - in the early 1980s that led to its hitherto

¹⁹ Malawi's failure to diversify from a tobacco led agricultural economy is well documented (see Chipande, 1983; Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation 1999; Tørres 2000). In fact, Tørres (2000) notes that tobacco is Malawi's major crop and "income generator" (p25) and that "In spite of goals of diversification, the Malawi economy is still dominated by tobacco growing" (p25). Tørres (2000) further states that in Africa, Malawi is only second to Zimbabwe as a tobacco producer, ranking Malawi one of the biggest tobacco growing countries in the world.

irreversible downward trend and with it the fading of the hopes that were associated with broader *development's* defining functional realisations (see for example Harrigan, 2001; Chipande, 1983; Kydd, 1984; Kajiyani, 1992).

It is important to explain at this point that the two programmes (IRDP and NRDP) are examined concurrently in this chapter largely for their affinity of purpose and overlap of their design. They were also implemented successively, beginning with the IRDP. Although plan documents for the IRDP were unavailable for this study, information on the IRDP is contained in the NRDP concept document. In fact the NRDP superseded the IRDP for purposes of achieving not only more geographical spread of development efforts but also reaching a larger farm population with development opportunity with its envisaged benefits (GoM, 1978:2). Because of this IRDP and NRDP were both agricultural programmes in continuity, albeit with differences in scope and management, public communication material, particularly radio campaigns, and some print media, that NRDP used were initiated during the IRDP phase. In the analysis, while the base document is NRDP's, public communication texts include both those that pertained to the IRDP and the NRDP. Below is a brief recount of the initiation of the two programmes.

At the time of independence, Malawi had inherited a colonial legacy of a dual agricultural economy. There was an export oriented estate sector (white owned) which depended on cheap (African) labour, and a largely neglected subsistence oriented smallholder sector (Chibwana, 1998). In effort to address the neglected economic situation, the nationalist government took to agriculture to meet two main objectives, namely:

- (a) improve the welfare of the people, and
- (b) to generate investible funds for overall economic development.

With a background that characterised smallholder (peasant) agriculture with trauma during the colonial era, the nationalist government was keen to avoid "direct government intervention" (Chipande, 1983:46). The nationalist government adopted, rather, a "persuasive and educative" approach

(Chipande, 1983:46). This approach was not rushed nor time-tabled; it depended on peasants' 'natural' adoption. This populist approach in the face of an urgent need to generate investible savings could not be depended on practically. Thus a balance between political correctness and practical national wealth creation was arrived at by "following a dual approach, whereby the estate sector would spearhead the country's economic development, through export expansion, while the smallholder sector would ensure the country's self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs" (Chipande, 1983:46).

In smallholder agriculture development, three main approaches to improving smallholder productivity were tried, namely: the Integrated Programme approach; the General approach; and the National Rural Development Programme approach. Two of these approaches were attempted simultaneously as a twin strategy between mid -1960s and mid-1970s, viz:

- (a) the Integrated Programme Approach (IRDP), and
- (b) the more General Approach

Below is a brief introduction of the twin approaches, followed by that of the National Rural Development Programme approach .

The Integrated Rural Development Programme's main objective was to provide focal growth points in the form of high productivity projects such as land development, irrigation projects and settlement schemes. The approach was mostly capital and management intensive. It aimed at raising marketable food and non-food produce among the smallholding community in "selected high potential agricultural areas where rural development projects were established. According to Chibwana (1998:11) the thinking behind the IRDP strategy was that the "success of these projects would serve as a catalyst for improving the conditions of other farmers in the neighbourhood." Chibwana (1998) further elaborates that the "post-independence policy shifted from soil conservation in the colonial era to commercialisation" (p11) whereby smallholder farmers would be assisted to increase their productivity by adopting high yielding varieties. Because in the conceptualisation of the IRDP there was an assumption that the relevant technology for increasing

productivity was available but farmers were ignorant, lacked capital and infrastructure, IRDP was equipped with technical advice and credit as well as provision of rural infrastructure such as roads, health clinics, markets, boreholes, and cattle dip tanks (Chibwana, 1998). At full development, the IRDPs were meant to cater for about 20 per cent of Malawi's smallholder farmers. By 1973/74 the IRDPs were accounting for about 57 per cent of the funds committed to agriculture (Chipande, 1983:48). The General Approach was applied in areas not covered by the major projects (IRDP) or Crop Authorities (such as coffee, tea, cotton, sugar) and settlement schemes. To improve smallholder productivity the General Approach relied on gradual improvements in extension services, land husbandry and farm training, supported by minor rural development projects such as ox training for draft power, dairy and poultry improvements, and agro-support facilities and marketing.

According to Chipande (1983) the results of the twin strategy, that is the IRDP and the General Approach, did not prove particularly successful. There is general consensus that the IRDP limited resources to few people and geographical places making the IRDP neither cost effective nor egalitarian (see Chipande, 1983; Chibwana, 1998). The more general approach also proved ineffective in dealing with the whole rural population (outside project areas). Of the General approach, Chipande (1983: 49) notes that the assessment was that it "degenerated into a spotty and selective programme that was limited to a few progressive elements in the rural society." The mid-1970s saw the replacement of the twin strategy by the NRDP.

The NRDP strategy was adopted to spread the benefits cost efficiently to a wider area. As Chibwana (1998:11) explains:

The assumption...was that the majority of the farmers in the project areas [under the IRDP] did not adopt the high yielding varieties because they were either ignorant of them or had no capital. The...NRDP would then focus on increasing the farmers' awareness of the technologies, increasing availability of credit to the majority of the farmers, and improving rural infrastructure.

Chipande (1983:49) elaborates that the idea behind the NRDP was to stimulate rural development in a manner that would produce “balanced development between rural and urban areas while also generating growth in all geographical areas throughout the country.” This idea of ‘balance’ and its practical application is a subject of interest in this analysis. At the time the NRDP was proposed, the planning process had developed some coherence and clearer direction than before. Thus more coherent project plans than were previously compiled came to be written²⁰. The main text for analysis is that of the NRDP with other points drawn from yearly revised plans for budget re-submission, which, according to Morton (1975), was the repetitive procedure that was adopted in the absence of more comprehensive long-term plans.

This chapter analyses linguistic realisations of discursive and ideological representations of the agricultural strategy to development as it was defined at the time in the project concept documents and public communication.

6.2 Macro-analysis of the Discourse in IRDP and NRDP Programmes

Introduction

The one hundred and four page *National Rural Development Programme (NRDP) Policies, Strategy and General Features* concept document is divided into three parts. Although I will give a brief synopsis of the whole document, there are some parts of the document that stand out discursively. I will particularly pay attention to those parts both in the macroanalysis and in the more nuanced microanalysis.

²⁰ Morton (1975) describes the incoherent developmental planning post-independence (1964) up to the writing of the *Statement of Development Policies 1971–80* - known as Devpol - produced in 1971. Although this was “a more detailed and explicit statement of the government’s developmental strategy,”(p108) Morton describes the 1971 Devpol as “basically a perspective plan...the document itself does not provide a wholly coherent, or complete, statement of policies...But it is undoubtedly valuable window dressing for those external donors...who have pressed for a greater measure of forward planning”(p108).

From IRDP to NRDP: Formulating an Agricultural Revolution for Socio-economic Change

Part I is the introduction, where the planners set out goals of the NRDP and the efficacy of the agricultural means by which the goals would be attained. Here also are set out the higher objectives of wider social change which wealth created by means of commercialised agriculture was expected to effect. The shift from dependence on the IRDP to the NRDP as the means by which social change would be attained is also briefly stated in this part. This part is discursively important and analysis for this chapter significantly focuses on this part of the document for its conceptualisation of the NRDP.

Part II is titled 'Background.' It is a background to the choice of the agricultural strategy packaged as the NRDP. This is a fairly long part divided into sections. It sets out to describe the performance of the various sectors of the agricultural economy, and its limitations or under-utilisation of the potential resources that the NRDP was designed to either correct or engage its potentials maximally. These are some of the ills that the NRDP was designed to either ameliorate or eliminate for desired social change. Section A starts as a description of Malawi's physical geographical features and climate as they relate to the agricultural intervention. I examine the importance of Malawi's geography in the justification of the agricultural strategy to development and, arguably, the role it has played in de-emphasising reflexivity in approaches to development, in the microanalysis. Detailed land classification and distribution statistics and population distribution are marshalled to show that there was more arable land that was unused for agricultural purposes. The NRDP intervention, therefore, had some land in some parts of the country which could be gainfully used for commercial agriculture. Section B is sub-titled 'The Agriculture Sector in the Economy.' The description of agriculture from 1964 (post-independence) and the proportion it contributed to export earnings, and its contribution to employment in the Malawi economy was intended to show that agriculture was the *de facto* central economic activity. Employing implicature, this section of the document positions the expansion and commercialisation of the agricultural sector in the NRDP intervention as

only 'natural,' or at least logical, and legitimate. I should highlight, though, that the strategy choices for development did not seem to address the question of how gainful agricultural employment was. A closer examination of both explanatory information and statistical data on income inequality shows that the labour of smallholder farmers is rewarded least. As development discourse often has it, according to Ferguson (1990), this was probably the very justification for an agricultural intervention citing this sector of the population as needy of this sort of intervention. However, early studies intended to create an economic development data base on Malawi show that both before and years into the NRDP, income inequality clearly weighed against the smallholder farmer. Although statistical information on Malawi was difficult to find (as noted above), the gleaned and standardised statistics (see **Table 6** below) clearly indicate that at that rate agricultural employment was not quite gainful.

Table 6.1 Income Inequality Statistics

Groups of families	Number (1000)	Average total income (MK)	Inequality coefficients		
			Gini	Theil	Log variance
1968/69					
Smallholder families	885.0	86.42	.203	.113	0.11
Families on estates	28.0	140.31	.187	.093	0.11
Families in small towns	11.0	606.93	.466	.417	0.651
Families in four major towns	42.6	907.65	.660	.884	1.494
Total/average	966.5	130.03	.448	.796	0.317
Assuming all incomes in a group equal to mean of group	966.5	130.03	.317	.432	0.274
1984/85					
Smallholder families	1252.0	358.2	.453	.348	0.607
Families on estates	89.2	425.1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Families in small towns	34.2	2157.1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Families in four major towns	98.5	3235.4	.621	.776	1.065
Total/average	1473.9	596.2	.599	.944	0.860
Assuming all incomes in a group equal to mean of group	1473.9	596.2	.365	.447	0.361

[After Pryor (1988: 54)]

Section C, 'Land Tenure and Holding Sizes' describes land availability under different tenurial systems: freehold (0.09%); leasehold 2%; public (17.62%) and customary (79.7%) (GoM, 1978:7). The bulk of arable land was therefore under the customary tenure system. Under the customary tenure system, land rights varied between matrilineal and patrilineal ethnic groups. The failure of enterprising commercial agriculture was blamed on the prevailing land rights practices, especially the matrilineal system which throughout the colonial era was blamed for discouraging an entrepreneurial spirit²¹. An important point of textual implicature in this section is the highlighting of the point that the more densely populated Southern region had similar size land holdings as they did in the more sparsely populated Northern region. Rather laconically, the document notes that

It is interesting to note that the size of holdings in the Northern and Southern regions is about the same. Farm size is dictated by the amount of land which can be cultivated by a single family, as well as by availability of arable land (GoM, 1978:7).

The NRDP intervention had an answer for this trend, in the face of a rising population: popularising hybrid seed technology and use of chemical farm inputs, especially fertilisers, to maximise land productivity, which is the subject of the section following. Section D, 'Production and Marketing,' is rich discursively. It sets out the two sectors of agriculture in Malawi, largely subsistence smallholder (on customary land) and export-oriented estate agriculture. The focus of the NRDP intervention was mostly to commercialise the former. The desire to bring about acceptance of this 'green revolution' led to "emphasis ...being placed on fertilizer as the major force behind increased crop production" (GoM, 1978:8) supported by a credit facility during the years the project would run. A point to highlight here is that the quest for commercialisation of agriculture especially among smallholder farmers brought about a deliberate move to dissuade them from organic agricultural practices, such as the use of farmyard manure (GoM, 1978:10). It is reported about smallholder capability prior to the NRDP intervention: "Enough food [was] produced and retained for consumption while the rest [was] marketed" (GoM 1978:8). This production capacity was largely dependent on the

²¹ See Kandawire (1984) for a fuller discussion and his counter argument.

predominantly organic farming practices. 1960 is the date noted when fertiliser started to be used noticeably in Malawi (GoM, 1978:9). The 1968/69 National Sample Survey of Agriculture reported that “approximately 12.9 per cent of smallholders applied fertiliser” while “about 1.4 per cent of the farmers were still applying manure, and the rest probably did not apply anything” (GoM, 1978:10). The drive to popularise fertilisers was done with full awareness of the likely difficulty of the smallholder (peasant) population sustaining such an agricultural practice – especially when the project credit facility discontinued at the end of the project years. It is notable that while NRDP planned for concerted research efforts in seed and livestock improvement, alternative farming cultures, such as relay cropping, were not included in the revolution of the day. While it is acknowledged that fertilisers lead to higher yields, recent research in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), especially in Zambia and Malawi, has shown that significantly greater productivity is possible with such practices as relay cropping (agroforestry) (Ngugi, 2002). This research is a recognition of the fact that most smallholder farmers cannot afford fertilisers and alternatives for higher productivity farming must be sought for them if food security is to be attained. Loss of soil fertility as one face of land degradation is attributable to, among other factors, population pressure which has led to continuous farming that exceeds soil regenerative and assimilative capacity.

Perhaps a more discursively important point in section D of the NRDP document is that it hypothesises a lot about the yields that the new agricultural practices were meant to bring about. Thus, prognostications that are constructed to “*seem precisely...description rather than...claim[s], or...speculation*” (Edwards and Potter, 1992: 104) and epithets such as ‘improved’ tagged to the practices proposed abound. These are examined in the microanalysis.

Sections E, F, and G describe sectoral contribution towards the total development effort of the NRDP. The sections are ‘Livestock Improvement,’ ‘Forestry,’ and ‘Fisheries,’ respectively. Discursively, ‘Livestock Improvement’

continues to present the green revolution as all superior to the former agricultural practices, while the 'Forestry' section blames deforestation on farming practices that had been practised hitherto. In fact, there is mention that lack of fuel wood leads rural populations to use crop residue for fuel "instead of them being used as livestock feed and to ameliorate the soil" (GoM, 1978:19). However, much as poor farming practices have contributed to deforestation, I argue that lack of alternative sources of energy in the country has progressively played a crucial role in deforestation and general environmental degradation (see for example, GoM, 1998a; GoM, 1999; Glavovic, 2002). The *Malawi State of Environment Report* notes that:

Biomass energy accounts for over 90% of Malawi's primary energy consumption of which 37% is derived from customary forests, 26% from forest reserves, plantations provides (*sic*) 11% and crop residues 10% and other sources provide the rest 16%. Expressed in aggregate terms this represents clearing of 50000 hectares per year (GoM, 1998c:1).

Another discursively important feature in this section is a specification of participants in the environmental saving efforts championed in the NRDP. The two pronged approach of the national afforestation programme and, especially the village forestry programme, sought to engage the "average villager". Such classification of participants is a point of interest in this analysis, and, accordingly, I examine participant classification in the microanalysis. The 'Fisheries' section is a numerical account of fish landing from Malawi's lakes, with suggestions of regulatory mechanisms. Such alternatives as fish farming, in a country rich in surface water resources, were not decisively planned for in the NRDP. Exploitation of available lake fishes was promoted with suggested processing industries (GoM, 1978:23).

The long section H positions smallholder agriculture in the rural sector services sector of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (hereafter MANR). A detailed description of the restructured ministry, major development projects and statutory bodies serving particular agricultural interests is provided. In addition, ADMARC's dual role of providing a dependable market for farm produce and leading in development, which meant engaging in commercial agriculture and agro-industry, is also spelt out.

Discernible also are the discursively and textually important epithets that establish superiority of NRDP's agricultural revolution (GoM 1978). A conspicuous absence of information pertains to the Geological Surveys Department's role in Malawi's development as depicted in the NRDP document. The reduction of the Geological Surveys Department's role to a search for water speaks volumes of agriculture's overshadowing of alternatives in the quest for Malawi's development. After a cursory mention of information and technical services which the department offers to government and members of the public, the report states that:

The surface geology of Malawi has already been surveyed in detail, (*sic*) the department's main intention in the next decade is to turn more attention to the estimation of groundwater resources, so as to ensure that the present rapid expansion in the number of boreholes does not destroy the groundwater balance (GoM, 1978:30).

Considering the fact that there was a whole Hydrological Department to which such duties would be directly relevant, and the fact that Malawi is known to be rich in surface water (see GoM, 1978; 1994a), it appears a serious misdirection of expertise to disengage a Geological Surveys Department from tasks that are generally regarded central to geologists, namely, "provid[ing] information on the geology and mineral resources" (GoM, 1978:30). A later report, the 1994 three volume *National Environmental Action Plan*, lends support to this assessment, "The mineral resources of Malawi are not fully known and only a few have been identified and quantities estimated" (GoM, 1998:8a). I argue that this was an example of the way over-expectation that agriculture would bring about rapid wealth and social change clouded other opportunities.

Perhaps also discursively important are descriptions of roles of other ministries participating within the NRDP developmental framework. While the subservience of their roles to the agricultural cause is common to all, there are descriptions of roles pertaining to some ministries that stand out discursively. The Ministry of Education's role in illiteracy reduction, and training of manpower to advance the cause of commercial agriculture was spelt out. This section raises two points that are significant for discursive

analysis. One of the points is the sense of 'immediacy' that is attached to the agricultural development strategy. The expectation of rapid results from agriculture that planners attached to the NRDP and its predecessor have been referred to above. Education was expected to train manpower to take up the novel agriculture. Another discursively important point in this section is the textual metaphorical investment. The agricultural sector is depicted as holding the "key to Malawi's development prospects" (GoM, 1978:41). The bulk of the literature on Malawi's economic and other circumstances are often metaphorically invested. The most recurrent are (land)lock and key(s). They form a dominant motif in discussions of Malawi's poverty in general and particular interventions in the name of development. Further textual as well as ideological metaphorical functioning is examined in the microanalysis. Another ministry that is mentioned is the Ministry of Labour. This ministry was responsible for determining minimum wages to ensure fairness to the estate workers, and availability of "gainful employment" (GoM, 1978:43) and to enable the agricultural enterprise to compete on the world market. The claims of ensuring wage fairness and provision of gainful employment do not seem to have any referential value, according to the literature that examines estate agriculture in the 1970s and 1980s, especially tobacco which remains the leading cash earner (see for example Harrigan, 2001 and Terres, 2000). In a political system that swallowed up trade unionism into the single ruling party and effectively suppressed the unions, claims of maintaining wage fairness are not supported. Furthermore, reference to estate employment as "gainful" is ironic in the face of studies of the plight of labour on tobacco estates in Malawi (see for example, Terres, 2000) and Malawi's continual appearance on bottom end of the list of poor nations. Textually, this part of the document, borrowing from Ferguson (1990), bears very little referential value. I further discuss this in the microanalysis.

Part III of the NRDP document gives a historical perspective of the NRDP. Sections A to C include the origin of the NRDP, highlighting the change from the IRDP to the NRDP. The thinking behind the change to IRDP is stated. Three points came up. The first was that the NRDP was intended to change

emphasis to “assure a more rapid and more equitable expansion of development activities and benefits” (p47). Secondly, during the project’s first stage “emphasis would be placed on investments with an immediate impact on agricultural production” (p47). Thirdly, the early stage would also include “improved extension and training, marketing, supply of inputs, credit and construction of supporting infrastructure” (p47). These points are ideologically and discursively significant for the project and the nation. There is also a statement of NRDP’s supporting institutions such as the World Bank, European Development Fund and African Development Bank. I observe that what characterised both the IRDP and the NRDP was provision of infrastructure along with agricultural services, for example: rural roads, boreholes, health facilities, etc (GoM, 1978:47). A reading of this feature in the development strategy and the expressed “idea of extending them [the projects] to other areas of the country” (47) was a way the nationalist government was trying to be seen to be spreading social and economic change to areas that were grossly neglected, for example, the “dead north” (Morton, 1975). This is reflected in the document as it outlines the reason of change from IRDP to NRDP as a way “to assure a more rapid and more equitable expansion of development activities and benefits” (p47). Issues of political correctness to dispel thoughts of ethnic partiality were regarded as important. However, my contention is that this practice of spreading these “development activities and benefits” which may have been a pragmatic necessity for the legitimisation of the nationalist government appears to have bred a discernible mentality among the general populace that *development* means very little else beyond erecting physical infrastructure in the community. Thus erecting buildings to house a school or clinic is regarded as *development*. This view of development does not have much social and economic dimension to it. A tracer study by the Development Broadcasting Unit of the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (2000) lends support to this observation.

The reduction of the concept of development to infrastructure arises from the general problem of the definition of, and approaches to development in the country. In fact, the official approach to development in Malawi emphasizes the establishment of infrastructure. A good example is the way politicians talk about development in terms of construction

of roads, classrooms, bridges, and boreholes. As a result, the majorities of Malawians, and especially those in the rural areas, do not conceive of development in terms of the individual or group's socio-economic improvement (p10).

This issue is examined further in **Part III** of this study, **Purposes within Purpose**, most specifically in Chapter 8 **Development and Hegemony**.

Sections D to J is a description of the organisation of Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MANR) with the restructuring that the NRDP brought about. With the explication that is involved, there are some conceptualisations that are defined, such as "rural" and "small scale farmers" (p56). Another interesting point that reflects the often ignored role of international politics in developing nations' *development* prospects in favour of the apparently non-human-influenced market forces, concerns the relationships between developing nations and the overseas markets, especially the EEC markets at the time discussed under 'Agricultural Crop Marketing and Pricing'. As Gondwe (1992) argues, political economy is highly relevant to explain relationships on the market. The NRDP planners were cognisant of the political dimension to the relationship between international trade and development prospects in developing countries, especially those that have advocated the agricultural strategy. Such insight indicates that there is general awareness that the international political dimension determines more the outcomes of what developing countries can hope to achieve developmentally out of their agricultural strategies than has probably been openly acknowledged. It is noted in regards to cassava, which was becoming popular on the world market as a replacement for the more expensive grain (maize and barley) for the livestock feedstuff industry:

It is extremely difficult to try to forecast the actual course of future prices for this commodity in the European market since EEC import prices depend to a large extent on the balancing of political, rather than purely market forces. It could be that the continued successful penetration of some of the European markets could bring about a reaction in the form of higher tariffs or other restrictions (p74).

Thereafter the subsection F 'Farm Inputs Supply' is a description of the provision of seed, fertiliser and other chemical inputs, and the credit facility

that was instituted. Perhaps more discursively important in this section are two points. One of the points is the description of small scale farmers, “farmers whose farms have not been cadastrally surveyed for agricultural purposes” (p77). The second point is that the credit facility was not easily accessible by all generically described smallholder farmers. The Plan spells out that “credit is given to those who are worthy of credit” (p81). Much as it is expected that credit cannot be given out without financial prudence, the criteria of “progressive farmer” (p26) that was set and the 15% standard interest charge, more often than not became deterrents to the credit facility for many smallholder farmers. Furthermore, some scholars have pointed out that mostly due to poor governance, access to credit ended up in the hands of a privileged few while many were systematically excluded or neglected (for example, see Sturges, 1998 and Harrigan, 2001) or opted out so as not to be perpetually indebted. This point is further developed in the microanalysis.

The final sections H to L are statements of the roles of the livestock sector, research sector, physical infrastructure development and health services as cooperating departments and descriptions of categories of skilled manpower that were required to carry out the NRDP mission within the restructured Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MANR).

Conclusion

In the analysis, I have examined the perpetuation of the colonial dual agricultural economy under both the IRDP and the NRDP agricultural development strategies invested with objectives and structural arrangements intended to bring about an innovation of commercialised agriculture among smallholder farmers while the estate sector continued with production of export produce for foreign exchange. In particular, the rhetorical analysis has shown that the agricultural strategy was given a privileged position using such justification as Malawi's geography, agriculture's pervasiveness within the society and claims associated with its provision of employment, albeit without questioning how gainful it was, considering the point that Malawi remains on

the bottom end of highly challenged nations (Yeung & Mathieson 1998). Linguistically, recurrent motifs and the use of metaphor have been effectively employed.

Aware of how traumatic colonial agriculture, with its harshly enforced conservation laws was to the peasant population, the nationalist government's agricultural strategy was vested with virtues that were to appeal to the citizenry for its adoption. Thus, discursively, descriptions of this superior agriculture abound with epithets. As a corollary, previous agricultural practices are blamed for environmental ills. Examination of conceptualisations of participants and their roles and provisions that were made in the programmes have shown the subservient role the other government arms were to agriculture. This subservient role effectively disengaged the other government arms from their otherwise mainstream roles that would have offered viable alternatives to, or work to complement, agriculture in the creation of investible wealth for the desired socio-economic change. A discernible characteristic of developmental instruments that have been used has been possible immediacy of impact. Such a 'hurried' quest for development has led to a kind of fossilised mindset regarding use of the range of community capital for desired social change.

Another point that has come out in the analysis is that goals beyond achievement of higher productivity, such as creating a 'balance' in access to development opportunity across the population, did not only lead to an imbalance in the actual provision of opportunity, but also to an inadvertent conceptualisation of development that is reduced to infrastructure provision. These points are further looked at in the next section of this chapter, which analyses linguistic realisations and discusses discursive features in the base NRDP document above, and in other public communication texts.

6.3 Language in Representation of Agriculture and *Development*

Introduction

The discourse and social practice that was involved in the crafting of the NRDP Plan document was enabled by a variety of resources that planners (writers) in this field draw upon. This part of the analysis intends to examine the tools that were instrumental in representing the NRDP agricultural strategy for the *development* process as befitting the Malawian context, and the beneficiary population that was specified. A few focal points in this are outlined below.

This part of the analysis picks up points that have been raised in the macroanalysis in Chapter 6.1 above. As I have demonstrated in Chapter 5, geographical descriptions of Malawi are not disinterested factual depictions of the country's physiography; but rather they are a discursive resource. The analysis also shows that understanding the discursive function of descriptions of Malawi's geography enlighten us as to why development strategies in Malawi do not seem to utilise a fuller range of the community capital. Related to the choice of the agricultural strategy is the representation of agriculture as an efficacious means not only of creating wealth, but also attaining development quickly. Of interest is the language that was used to represent agriculture to the citizenry as an appealing strategy. Another point of interest is the textual depiction of players, such as beneficiaries, and their roles in the activities and processes that were purported to bring about development. The depiction of the social actors is important as an indication of the extent to which the players in development were empowered.

Physiography, Dearth and Development Strategy

In the development literature, geographical locations and physical features are presented as justifications for policy options. In some cases, geographical characteristics have been brought together with other topical issues about the developing world, such as demographic characteristics, to delineate economic

problems that have justified particular *developmental* interventions (see for example Mitchell, 1995 and Pain, 1996). In fact Pain (1996:64-65) in examining policy options for *development* intervention in Bhutan, argues that

the language characteristics used in describing Bhutan and how the status of being mountainous (which by all objective criteria Bhutan is) is interpreted in terms of isolation and inaccessibility. It has become accepted as a dominant piece of development language with a set of normative meanings with implications for policy and practice.

In this section of the chapter, I examine the depiction of Malawi's physiography that is recurrent in development policy frames as they present the efficacy of the agricultural strategy. In particular, Malawi's 'landlocked' circumstances and its geology, particularly the purported dearth of mineral wealth, dominate in the socio-economic literature. I examine below linguistic realisations of the efficaciousness of the agricultural strategy, its authority and plausibility which were related to the way the world was understood and the appropriateness of interventions, drawing primarily on the excerpt below.

[Extract from: *National Rural Development Programme (NRDP) Policies, Strategy and General Features.*]

Page 3

II. BACKGROUND

General

2.001 Malawi is a landlocked country extending to some 559 miles (900km) from north to south and 124, miles (200 km) from east to west. It is bordered by Zambia to the west, Mozambique to the east and south Tanzania to the north east. Malawi's access to the Indian Ocean is through Mozambique. Imports and exports go through the ports of Beira and Nacala,

2.002 There are three main topographical regions in Malawi:

- (a) The Shire Valley and Lake Malawi littorals ranging in altitude from 130 ft. (39-6m) to 2,500 ft. (762.0 m);
- (b) the plateau areas of the Shire Highlands, Central Region and Mzimba District in the Northern Region. The Central Region plateau comprises the Lilongwe and Kasungu plains which extend into the plains, and Chitipa. The elevation is generally between 2,500 ft. (762.0m) and 4,600 ft. (1,402m); and
- (c) the highland areas of the Nyika, Viphyra, Misuku, Dedza, Kirk Range; Zomba and Mulanje with altitudes between 4,600 ft. (1,402.0m) and 9,000 ft. (2,743). Mulanje Mountain is the highest.

2.003. The rainy season in Malawi ranges from November to March. The months of May to August are characterised by a cool dry season while the months of September and characterised by a hot dry season. The higher altitude areas, e.g. Mulanje and areas along the Lakeshore receive above 64 inches, (1,600mm). The plateau areas of the Shire Highlands and the Central Region receive about 35 inches (875 mm) of rain. The lower Shire Valley,

Mzimba west and parts of Rumphu receive less than 30 inches (750 mm) of rainfall because they are in rainshadow areas. Temperatures are high in the lakeshore areas and the Shire Valley (average 24⁰c) and low in the higher plateau areas, especially the Viphya and Nyika plateau areas (average 18⁰c).

(GoM, 1978:3)

(underlining mine)

This excerpt is typical of descriptions of Malawi in development-related and other documents. Depending on the textual purpose, textually, Malawi's physiography often functions to introduce particular interventions, mostly agricultural programmes. The declarative statement that introduces the background to the NRDP is the physiography "Malawi is a landlocked country" with details of dimensions of the entity that is 'locked' (up) (p3). Supporting details to the declarative elaborating this geographical representation are also given as declaratives: "Malawi's access to the Indian Ocean is through Mozambique. Imports and exports go through the ports of Beira and Nacala" (p3). According to Quirk *et al* (1972:386) statements (declaratives) "are primarily used to convey information." In this regard the planners' assessment is authoritative.

The physical location on Africa's map does show that Malawi is not on the coastal line. However, this physical location and other physiographical features are given as problems that warrant particular interventions. Yeung and Mathieson's (1998:196) views on Malawi's physiography and economy are revealing in this regard:

Economic Development. With a per capita income of \$160 in 1995, Malawi remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Geography poses daunting challenges to the nation's economic development. It is small and landlocked, lacks mineral resources, and is among the most densely populated sub-Saharan nations.

Yeung and Mathieson's (1998) assessment is what most of the NRDP document orchestrates rather obliquely. I should hasten to point out that difficulties that countries that do not have direct access to the world's seas experience in trade transactions are real and serious requiring effective answers, if the lives of people in those countries are to be meaningfully uplifted. Hagen (2003) points out some of the difficulties.

Nine of the twelve countries ranked lowest on the 2002 Human development index are landlocked. Although landlocked developing countries represent 12.5 per cent of the world's land area and 4 per cent of the global population, their combined gross domestic product accounts for only 0.3 per cent of the total. Without direct access to the oceans, these countries must pay an average of 15 per cent of export earnings on transport; for some African countries it is as high as 50 per cent, other developing countries spend only 7 per cent on such services and developed countries 4 per cent.

The point that needs highlighting here is that inland location for any country makes further transportation demands on all of its trade. This state of affairs is exacerbated by preferential trade politics that the developed nations practice to the detriment of developing nations' economies, as exemplified by the European markets (GoM, 1978:74). In view of the difficulties that landlocked countries experience, it is fallacious to present the agricultural enterprise as an answer to being landlocked. Arguably, the fact that most unprocessed or semi-processed agricultural exports from landlocked least developing countries compete poorly with the produce from subsidised mechanised farming of developed nations on the international market, agriculture in the developing countries is unlikely to be of much help to uplift the lives of the people. Thus, a simplistic geographical explanation for the socio-economic difficulties of landlocked countries bypasses other crucial social-political factors that compound socio-economic problems of landlocked countries.

In the case of Malawi, it has been pointed out above that her mineral resources have not been fully explored. This is a point ignored in well meaning reviews that hastily conclude that there are no mineral resources in Malawi. Further illustrations of this point are progressively becoming available. The Malawi *Environmental Action Plan* GoM (1998b:8) lists some of the mineral resources that have been identified and it also acknowledges that "Although the country has these minerals, the mining industry is still in its infancy. The existence of bauxite on Mulanje Mountain, said to be the largest in the SADC Region, has been known for sometime, but it is only now that a feasibility study to exploit it is being done." Most likely, the lucrative mining

activity further south with South Africa as the locus has de-emphasised the need for mining explorations further north. Another explanation is that as the case was with labour that went to mines in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia, those that engaged in estate agriculture in Malawi were keen to stop loss of labour. Encouraging mining investment within Malawi would have adversely affected estate agriculture. Because the nationalist political elite were some of those who benefited most out of estate agriculture (see Sturges, 1998; Harrigan, 2001 and Joffe, 1973) there was little political will, if any, to encourage either foreign or local mining investment. Subtle political rhetoric managed to cover choices of economic activities, as I illustrate below. In fairness, if political will was there, probably because agriculture did not require as much investment as mining would, and its seasonal yields were shorter than the time lag that investors have to endure before they realise returns from mining, it was easier to choose agriculture. As Kydd and Christiansen (1981:100) shed some light on prevailing conditions of the time, “The immediate post-independence phase was characterised by a scarcity of development resources and considerable continuity in policy with the terminal colonial period.” However, the privileging of the agricultural strategy well into post-independence and presidential pronouncements that defined the direction of development effort even towards the fall of the thirty-years long Malawi Congress Party single party rule, cast serious doubt on this explanation, especially regarding later years of the 20th century of Malawi’s nationhood.

In the mid 1960s – soon after independence - Dr Banda made several statements in relation to mining, indicating the potential that Malawi had/has and his government’s apparent willingness to develop the sector. For example, in a state address, he made the following statement.

For years and years we have been told time and again that Malawi has no mineral resources worth speaking of. Even our own official geologists in the Department of natural Resources have often, and to my bitter disappointment, only too readily, joined the chorus of those who say there is no mineral in the country worth mentioning. Only in one instance have they conceded that we have enough deposits of a particular mineral.

This is in the case bauxite on Mlanje Mountain. On bauxite they have conceded its presence in Mlanje in respectable tonnage...

I am glad to see that at last, great interest is being shown in our mineral resources, by people in other countries. For its part, the Government of this country will do its utmost to give the necessary incentive and encouragement...(Ministry of Information 1969:4)

Later in this speech, though Dr Banda mentions that his Government intended to develop also tourism, trade and industry, he positions agriculture in the following words:

As it has been stated time and again, economic development in this country means agricultural development above all things...I am happy to inform the House that, generally speaking, since we, the Africans took over the Government, we have done very well in developing our natural resources, in particular, agricultural resources. (Ministry of Information 1969:5).

Similar pronouncements were common. For example in his 1967 state address, Dr Banda clearly makes the choice of agriculture above all other sectors: "As I have said many times before, our wealth lies in our soil and in our agricultural potential. To this end a large proportion of our public expenditure has been, and will continue to be devoted to the development of our natural resources" (Ministry of Information, 1967:1). Towards the end of his rule, in 1992, the preference for agriculture was subtly couched in words purporting individual financial freedom and control over time that agriculture accorded Malawians who engaged in it:

We are a nation of people who work hard in the fields. We are people who have been self sufficient in food for many years. The majority of our men no longer go to South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, or now Zimbabwe to work in the mines, away from their families. They are now self-employed on farms or estates or in other businesses, right here at home with their families (Ministry of Information and Tourism, 1992:1).

Although the picture that is portrayed in these words is desirable, accounts of the plight of tenants on tobacco estates (see for example Tørrres, 2000) show that while the few that ran estates and owned businesses worth the name prospered, most of the common Malawians that worked for the affluent on their estates, sank into a vicious cycle of hunger, poverty and near servile labouring work. Hence, Dr Banda's pronouncement bore very little referential

value, if any. To the few affluent estate owners, there was wealth, but to the majority of Malawians, hardship.

Therefore, a careful reading of socio-political factors of international and local dimensions renders the formulaic explanation of Malawi's socio-economic ills, dominated by descriptions of Malawi's unique physiographical disadvantages and mineral dearth, inadequate. There is more to Malawi's socio-economic ills than what the physiography thesis accounts for. In particular, the role of human agency cannot be ignored. A study of historically situated societal preferences of available community capital to use for the betterment of life standards is helpful to come to an understanding of factors that have led to the prevalence of certain strategies for Malawi's development and the resultant socio-economic circumstances. These factors can be worked out textually from the social practices that obtained in the development planning discourse of the time. Other factors such as political instability among neighbouring countries as they fought for freedom from colonial domination have their own role in the story of Malawi's socio-economic difficulties in the post independence period through the late 1980s. However, this subject is outside the scope of this study. Suffice it to say that political instability of the region at the time made exporting and importing extremely hard for Malawi.

Investing Virtues in Agricultural Strategies

The NRDP concept document begins by introducing agriculture as "the most important sector of the Malawi economy" (GoM, 1978:1). While acknowledging that the other sectors too were growing in importance, there is a clear choice of agriculture. The introduction goes on to advance what the Malawi Government hoped to realise *developmentally* through agriculture. It is important to highlight the point that smallholder or peasant agriculture under the colonial era was very unpopular. In fact, the nationalists used the evils of the conservation laws to campaign against colonial rule, especially the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The nationalist Malawi Government's choice of agriculture, therefore, needed selling to disenchanted Malawians. To make agriculture appealing it was imbued with qualities that it had not

been associated with during the colonial times. In addition, the immediate post-independence agricultural strategy with its credit support and technical assistance was limited to IRDP project areas. As such, it was necessary to mount a nation-wide campaign to popularise agriculture as a development strategy. Employing text comparison and multivocality techniques, this section of the chapter examines how the agricultural strategy was textually constructed to appeal to the citizenry in the Plan documents and in public communication materials. Analysis of the text below demonstrates use of lexico-grammatical resources that were employed in constructing an appealing description of the commercial agricultural strategy as a way of accomplishing the discursive function of categorisation (Potter, 1996:111).

[Extract from: *National Rural Development Programme (NRDP) Policies, Strategy and General Features.*]

1.002 Rural development is a primary social and economic objective of the Government.
[1]

Beyond the aim of raising agricultural productivity, it is also conceived as an effective vehicle for Government's objective of redistributing incomes in favour of the rural poor. [2]

At present, most smallholders are on the fringe of the market economy. [3] Their staple crop is almost exclusively maize and their principal cash crops are tobacco and groundnuts.

In the past the main instrument for increasing smallholder productivity has been the integrated development package introduced in four specific areas. [4]

(i) Lilongwe Lend Development Programme (LLDP - supported by IDA Credits 113,244 and 550) in the Central Region was the first (1968/69) and is now completing its third phase.

(ii) Shire Valley Agricultural Development Project (SVADP - supported by IDA Credits 114 and 363), in the Southern Region which followed in 1969/70 and is now in its second phase.

(iii) Karonga Rural Development Project (KRDP- IDA Credit 282 and Bank Loan 1286), which commenced in 1972/73 in the Northern Region and is also now in its second phase.

Page 2

(iv) Lakeshore Development Project had been assisted by the Federal Republic of Germany (1968-1974), and is now assisted by the European Development Fund (EDF).

These major projects are characterised by:

(a) provision of infrastructure, such as rural roads, input stores and produce markets, health facilities (for people and cattle), boreholes, housing and office accommodation for project staff; land improvements, comprising land consolidation (and in LLDP land registration), irrigation development and conservation works; strengthening the staffing of extension, marketing, research and public health facilities; and establishment of credit facilities for agricultural inputs' such as fertilizer, seeds, insecticides, work-oxen and farm implements.

Projects are being implemented in the more densely populated areas of the country

and will, at their completion, cover only one fifth of the total population. [5]

While significant contribution to increased agricultural production, institution building, and improved standards of living for large numbers of people, a change of emphasis is needed to provide, over a reasonable period, the remaining four-fifths of Malawi's improved production opportunities. [6]

Therefore the Government decided on a strategy whereby priority will be given to investments with an immediate impact on agriculture, while other investments are either relatively more costly or have a less direct production will be implemented in the more distant future. [7]

This new strategy is embodied in the National Rural Development Programme be implemented over a 20 year period through about 40 development projects in eight Agricultural Development Divisions. [8] (GoM 1978:1)

(Underlining, extra spacing and numbering are mine)

Identifying and Characterising the Discourse

An examination of the text above shows that the factual description has a reifying action orientation (Potter, 1996) as much as epistemologically it appears to be a mere description of an agricultural programme. It should be pointed out that in its categorisation role, the description in this text formulates the agricultural strategy as constituting qualities that would enable social change for the majority of its citizens unlike the former agriculture they knew that was practised during the colonial days with its harsh conservation laws that the indigenous Malawians could not stand, and the largely productivity oriented IRDP.

This text (extract above) largely draws on the empiricist repertoire, managing delicately the representation of actors, who on one hand constitute the Government, which is the initiator of the agricultural *development* strategy and, on the other hand, the citizens who are being 'persuaded' to take up the agricultural strategy and implement it effectively. An examination of the text shows that 'Government' is the actor participant in a possessive circumstantial capacity whereas the rural poor are represented as the affected. According to Fairclough (2003) there are several choices available in the representation of social actors. Of the four categories that Fairclough (2003) identifies, there are two that are particularly relevant to this analysis. One of them is 'grammatical

role' (2003:145) where the social actors are realised either as Participants in clauses (such as Actor, Affected), or within a Circumstance (such as in preposition phrases or as possessive noun or pronoun). The other social actor representational category pertains to the designations of 'activated'/'passivated' actors. The 'activated' actor is the one who does things and makes things happen while the 'passivated' social actor is the Affected or beneficiary (Fairclough, 2003:145).

The text (extract) begins with an assertive propositional assumption (Fairclough, 2003:57) that clearly identifies the actor, the (nationalist) Government: "*Rural development is a primary social and economic objective of the Government*" [1]. The picture constructed here is that whatever activities and investments the Government would initiate, the rural ranked first on its priority list to have their socio-economic circumstances changed for the better. Judging from characteristic provisions of the IRDP projects, this probably referred more to infrastructural provisions than anything else. It is important to reiterate here that the NRDP set out to utilise idle or underproductive customary land, which was mostly in the rural areas of Malawi. By presenting the programme as directly intended for the betterment of the rural population, the Government expected more positive response from the rural population in owning the programme's activities and implementing them. The second sentence [2] introduces another Government objective, namely, "redistributing incomes in favour of the rural poor" (p1). This objective is also appealing and potentially acceptable. The attempts to present the agricultural strategy as the means by which this redistribution of incomes would be accomplished (that is enabling the rural poor to access resources to be able to engage in commercial agriculture) is textually managed both by employing both lexical and discourse-pragmatic information structuring resources. Dooley and Levinsohn (2000) have succinctly described the workings of discourse-pragmatic structuring in general, and *focus*, in particular, in texts (spoken or written). An examination of the text above shows that both of these resources have been used to reify the agricultural strategy for development and also to promote the Government's

image as the agent of change for the new nation state. I point out the relevant notions for this analysis below, drawing heavily on Dooley and Levinsohn's (2000) work.

The notion of discourse-pragmatic structuring explains the processes in communication whereby speakers/writers guide hearers/readers in adding material to their mental representations. Whereas semantic content relates to *what* is added, discourse-pragmatic structuring relates to *where* it is added and *how* it relates to what is already there. An important point that Dooley and Levinsohn (2000:31) clarify is that some pieces of information merely point to something already present in the hearers'/readers' mental representation, while other pieces are intended to *change* what is there. The importance of *focus* is that it is that part of a text that is important for writers/speakers to indicate that it is the most important or salient change to be made in the readers'/hearers' mental representation(s). Textually, focussed material is generally realised as either contrastive or new. Dooley and Levinsohn (2000) further explain that new or added material (*focus*) can be added in an activated propositional framework. In the sentence the focus may be positionally marked as *fronted* to show its prominence or saliency. Furthermore, fronted material is also known to provide what is technically referred to as *point of departure* (Dooley & Levinsohn, 2000:35). The workings of this discursive feature is that the initial fronted element cohesively anchors the subsequent clause to "something which is already in the context (hearers'/readers' mental representation.) The *point of departure* is backward-looking in the sense of locating the anchoring place within the existing mental representation, but is forward-looking in that it is the subsequent part of the sentence which is anchored in that (schematic) place.

Based on these notions, the analysis of sentence [2] reveals these described discursive workings. The planners were cognisant of the fact that the indigenous Malawians were disenchanted about agriculture as it was practised during colonial times and that the post-independence IRDP was little known of nationally, save in the selected areas where the projects ran.

Because of this, if the rural population, whose idle or underutilised land the government was keen to see used for commercial agriculture, were to accept the agricultural *development* strategy, there had to be a **clear point of departure** with the previous. Textually, sentence [2] introduces the point of departure. The *fronted* part of the sentence which appears to offer the familiar aim of raising agricultural productivity, is marked by a prepositional adverb “beyond”. Functionally, it prominently marks out the point of conceptual (re-)orientation (Quirk *et al*, 1972:313-314) of agriculture from the colonial representation, traumatic experience and a tool of socio-economic inequity, and the IRDP, a selective opportunity, to a virtuous means for bringing about an uplifting of life styles. The second subsequent part of the sentence asserts the new orientation of agriculture, that it was designed to favour the rural poor in accessing wealth creation means for their *development*. Lexically, the NRDP as a *developmental* strategy is qualified as “an effective vehicle” [2].

Sentence [3] represents the ‘rural poor’ as hyponyms of the “smallholders” who appear to be not quite integrated in the modern economy. The superlative “most” shows that by sheer numbers the smallholders are a right candidate sector for the planned intervention. It is important to point out here that the smallholders, generically represented, are textually represented as beneficiaries only. Sentence [4] and [5] state the limited role of the IRDP in the *development* strategy as it was conceived to be merely an “instrument for increasing smallholder productivity” in selected “more densely populated areas of the country... cover[ing] only one fifth of the total population”(p1). The following clause complex (sentence 6) continues to emphasise the point of departure in the NRDP, but showing the limited achievements that the post-independence IRDP can be credited for. This is effectively managed textually by employing grammatical principles of subordination to ‘downgrade’ (Quirk *et al*, 1972:721) information importance of one part of the clause complex. To ‘downgrade’ inequitable gains that were made through the IRDP, information regarding the said gains was subordinated, opening up opportunity to show the point of departure in the NRDP. Whereas a subordinate clause can be

either at the beginning or later in the sentence, in keeping with the intention to show the added value of the NRDP's principles of social change, the subordinated information regarding IRDP's gains was decidedly given in the earlier part of the clause complex. This was not an arbitrary way of writing; it was strategic to represent the NRDP agricultural approach to *development* as virtuous and innovative unlike *development* approaches that were adopted hitherto.

The introduction then positions the agricultural strategy of the NRDP as the effective instrument that would benefit the majority of Malawi's population. Thus, the current NRDP strategy carried *equity*. That was a point of departure. The sentence that follows [8] is an authoritative declarative that presents the strategy as "*new*" and that the conceptual construct to bring about the described social change culminated in the NRDP institution for effective execution. I examine below a few other epithets that were intended to represent the NRDP not only as superior in its ideals but also answering the socio-economic need of the time.

Although *developmental equity* was an important feature that was attached to the NRDP's agricultural strategy to popularise it among the majority rural population, several scholars (see for example Kandawire, 1984; Kydd & Christiansen, 1981 and Harrigan, 2001) have made critical commentary regarding its realisation. Although significant economic growth was registered in what was generally hailed as "an alternative pattern of development" (McCracken, 1984a), Kydd's (1984:349) overall assessment is that "investment in rural development programmes was largely unsuccessful, partly because of a price policy which was out of the control of the planners and managers of these programmes, but also because of basic flaws in their conception." Kydd's (1984) assessment of factors that contributed to failure runs true to what Ferguson (1990) calls the operations of instruments effects.

Because this study is mostly concerned with the constructivist view of the development strategy, the latter factor of flawed conceptualisation of rural

development programmes is directly relevant. Kandawire (1984) has elaborated on some of the conceptual flaws that failed redistribution of incomes in favour of the poor. He points out that there lacked a self-critical examination of the approach; the strategy replicated the colonial institutional set up. Kandawire (1984:538-39) particularly singles out two features of the NRDP which replicated the colonial legacy of class formation. The first was the NRDP's selective support of individuals they judged were 'progressive farmers [*Achikumbi*]'; "Such progressives are the object of the creation of EPAs [Extension Planning Areas] so that they may be assisted by a limited amount of credit" (p539). The other feature was the provision of a more intensified approach to what they regarded as "specialised areas...What makes these projects 'special' is that they receive external funding" (p539). These practices replicated the colonial agriculture's system of master farmers, who received government support for following government's prescribed husbandry which was meant to be emulated by the rest of the peasant population in the area (see for example, Chibwana, 1998 and Chipande, 1983). Thus, not much innovative thought had been given to creating an effective implementation tool for income redistribution in favour of the poor. Kydd (1984:350) locates this flaw in the:

dominance over policy making, and the remarkably detailed supervision over policy implementation, by one man, Dr. Banda, who had firm views about the appropriate development strategy for the country. Dr Banda's prime interest was in rapid growth, and especially in achieving a pattern of growth which would yield substantial savings which he could control and direct towards investment in projects which he favoured. He had little time for the 'redistributional' concerns fashionable in the later 1960s and 1970s.

Another point to highlight was the factor(s) determining the choice of investing in particular agricultural instruments. Sentence [7] expresses what the determining factor was.

Therefore the Government has decided on a strategy whereby priority will be given to investments with an immediate impact on agriculture, while other investments which are either relatively more costly or have a less direct impact on production will be implemented in the more distant future (GoM, 1978:2).

Two points stand out here. The first is that immediacy or rapidity of results from an investment was an important deciding factor for a strategy. The

second point is that other alternatives that were deemed to be not so rapid in yielding results were effectively excluded from consideration. Thus investing in such enterprises as mining, and tourism, for which there was potential, was not a priority because they would need some time lag before results would be seen. These are points of interest in this analysis. In fact, this sentiment was echoed in various public communication texts of the time, as I exemplify below. In his state address, Dr. Banda pointed out that “it is my primary aim, and that of my Government, to build and develop this country as fast as possible” (Ministry of Information, 1967:12). Dr Banda’s ministers echoed this sentiment too as they went about motivating Malawians to support the government’s *development* initiatives. For example, the government controlled paper of the time, *The Times*, featured an article where a government minister addressed trainee Community Development Assistants at a Community Development Centre:

**Malawi is in a hurry
for development - Nyasulu**

Malawi is a country in a hurry to develop herself and thus to catch up with other countries...

Malawi was so much in a hurry to develop herself and catch up with other more developed countries that she could not afford to delay, or to neglect any resource which could be used to develop the country...(MANA, 1970:3).

It should be pointed out, however, that this notion of development was not peculiar to Dr Banda and his ministers. Quebral and Gomez’s (1976:2) notion of development agrees with Dr Banda’s:

It took centuries for the developed countries to get to where they are now. What we should like to do is to compress the process into the shortest time possible. Development today must, therefore, be at a faster rate, be according to a carefully designed plan, and make use of scarce resources most economically and effectively.

The point I emphasise in relation to Malawi’s development process is that this notion of rapid development was partly responsible for the choice of an agricultural strategy at the expense of equally promising alternatives. Probably an unintended effect of this choice is, arguably, a mindset that is hardly reflexive, finding it hard to re-orient itself towards use of a fuller range

of the community capital available for a more wholesome development than had been possible that far.

Slogans, Epithets and Metaphors: Concretising Constructs of a Social Change Strategy

Slogans for Progress

Soon after attaining independence, the Malawi Congress Party Government embarked on a heavy campaign to reach out to the indigenous Malawians to popularise agriculture as the main thrust of Malawi's development process. The party machinery was used to address people by word of mouth at various levels of organisation from village to the entire nation. The radio was an effective channel that carried various messages to the rural communities, using radio listener clubs. At political meetings, on the air, and in print media agriculture was represented in appealing epithets, slogans and metaphors. The reason was to dispel the negative image of agriculture as the colonial government wanted the indigenous Malawians to practice it (see Mackie, 1971:106). In this part of the study, I examine some of the representational language that set apart commercial agriculture as an organising idea in the political economy of *development* in Malawi.

In 1966, the Extension Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources added a programming concept known as "Slogans for Progress" to the range of agricultural advice broadcast. This was an adaptation of the

United States Military's use of "spot" radio announcements on the Armed Forces Radio Service that were designed to encourage participation in educational and self-improvement activities and to urge courtesy among military personnel toward citizens of host countries (Mackie, 1971:114).

Malawi Broadcasting Corporation's Director General Aleke Banda suggested that brief spot announcements dealing with development themes might make an impact on Malawians. Mackie (1971) notes that the first series of development announcements dealt with agriculture. This was done because government wanted to utilise the radio's ability to alert people to new ideas

and to arouse interest. The hope was that people's curiosity would be whetted enough to seek further information. "Slogans for Progress" was broadcast ten times daily on a rotating basis in Chinyanja (a central and southern regions lingua franca) and Tumbuka (a northern region lingua franca). Mackie (1971:115) lists some of the slogans that featured on the radio:

- Get bigger crops by using fertiliser
- *Prevent bush fires and save the land*
- Well conserved soil is our children's best heritage
- Save your best seeds for bigger harvests next year
- Good kholas [cattle sheds] mean better cattle
- *Listen and learn from farm radio programs*
- *Eggs are good for you. Eat them often*
- *Save our soil. It is our wealth*
- Buy fertiliser for better crops

From the examples above, the abundance of comparatives, superlatives (underlined) and authoritative declaratives (*italicised*), agriculture was represented with a capability not only to meet Malawi's immediate human nutrition needs, but also to enable wealth creation for all and sundry for a better standard of life that had been a preserve of very few hitherto.

According to Rees (1982:8), slogans as "a form of words for which memorability has been bought, may owe their success to engineering or encouragement," and he also claims that although slogans may rarely contain universal truths or profound insights, they all "*promote* a product, a cause or an idea." With further agriculture-related programming that developed post-independence, the promotion of the agricultural strategy to Malawi's *development* was pervasive, and the endurance of this strategy in people's mindset can be understood in the light of such concerted effort that went into its representation. However, in relation to the point of imbalance (or inequity) in the development strategy, Mackie (1971) puts it on record that although with programs such as 'Slogans for Progress' effort was made to provide for Malawi's linguistic diversity, radio listener clubs, as a means to ensure farmer access to agricultural information and maximum benefit from the program, were initially established in the centre and south, but not in the north. An

already neglected north was, therefore, disadvantaged in accessing agricultural information.

Epithets and the New Agriculture

In the extract 1.002 above we note that “Rural development” is synonymous to “agriculture”. (Commercial) Agriculture which was being introduced to the smallholder (peasant) farmers was qualified as “an effective *vehicle* for the Government’s objective of redistributing incomes in favour of the rural poor.” The (underlined) epithet and metaphor (*italicised*) are prominent in this telling statement. Because associations of wealth and agriculture were not in the common schema of the citizenry, the task of ‘selling’ the new agriculture was enormous. Thus, the new agriculture was represented with qualities that were to appeal to the citizenry, especially the rural poor who were also the majority, and an abundance of epithets is evident in depictions of the new agriculture and its practices in texts. The epithets attributed to the new agriculture superiority to past husbandry that should enable wealth creation. Textually, the descriptions were accomplishing a contrastive analysis of potentials that the ‘new’ agriculture offered as opposed to the ‘conventional’ or traditional husbandry. The other contrast made is between farmers (social actors) who would adopt the ‘new’ agriculture and those that would not. I will illustrate this notion of contrast and the inherent superior capability of the new agriculture with examples extracted from **Part II Background** of the NRDP concept document, and some public communication materials.

[Extract from: *National Rural Development Programme (NRDP) Policies, Strategy and General Features*]

Production Opportunities

Page 13

2.032 ...It is believed that the following yield levels can generally be achieved by farmers:

	With Unimproved TechniquesFarming	With Improved Techniques	
	Yield (lb./Acre)	Yield (lb./Acres)	
Maize	1,200	3,000	
Groundnuts	400	790	
Fire-cured Tobacco	250	490	
Flue-cured Tobacco	-	1,250	1
Burley Tobacco	700	1,000	
Cotton	450	880	
Rice (irrigated)		3,500	
Rice (rainfed)	1,500	2,500	
Cassava	900	2,900	
Pulses	300	650	

Source: Ministry of Agriculture & Natural Resources

1. Large scale farmers and smallholders

2.033 Recent developments and production opportunities for the main smallholder crops are summarised as follows:

(a) Maize

Maize is grown throughout the country and an average 85% of the cultivated land is usually under maize. Some districts have up to 95 of the cultivated land under maize levels with improved seed and fertilizer application and good farm management have been achieved both in the major project areas and elsewhere by some progressive farmers, e.g. 4,000 lb s of UCA maize per acre has been achieved by many progressive farmers...

Page 14

(c) Groundnuts

Groundnut production has also shown modest increases since the poor harvest of 1973 because of slightly reduced yields in the Central Region, the major groundnut growing area, *which partly resulted from rosette disease*. 1976 ADMARC purchases were, however, lower than 1975 purchases. Yields have been variable but potential for increased production up to 800 lb/acre is possible in most groundnut-growing areas.

(d) Rice

Rice production has increased despite weather setbacks in recent yields of up to 3,500 lb/acre in scheme areas. With the introduction of high yielding cultivars and other innovations this yield level could be maintained.

(GoM, 1978 :13-14)

(Underlining and italics mine)

Adopting the empiricist repertoire, extract (2.032 – 2.033) opens with a hedged passivated impersonal statement of belief introducing a table of promise of possible yields (and wealth) that the new agriculture was offering

the willing smallholder farmer. Very likely, the hidden subject were research scientists at agricultural research stations, whose statements are authoritative. The table's graphic categories attribute the poor yields and the bumper yields to the type of agriculture that the rural poor would like to take up. The poorer yield is associated with "Unimproved farming Techniques" whereas the promise of bumper harvest (and the monetary benefits that can be realised out of it) with "Improved Techniques." These epithets were meant to de-campaign all that the rural poor understood as crop/animal husbandry to adopt the new agriculture. This is a case, therefore, of overthrowing (as opposed to integrating) indigenous knowledge systems by way of negative labelling. Thus, a rejection and eroding of a people's age-old farming practices was systematically orchestrated.

With respect to maize (which is a national staple crop) there is mention of achievement of "Impressive yield levels with improved seed and fertilizer application and good farm management." Although, the smallholder farmer has been growing the crop over generations, the new agriculture would lead to prosperity unknown to the rural poor – as long as the rural poor adopted the new husbandry. Implicit here is that the smallholder farmer needed personal development too to be able to carry out "good management". Already, mention is made of the adopters of the new agriculture – "progressive farmers" – who have realised yields beyond the provided projections on the table. In the case of rice, the variety referred to as "Improved rainfed and irrigated" was said to have "shown remarkable yields." The high yields of up to 3,500lb/acre were expected to continue because of adoption of "high yielding cultivars and other innovations." It may be noticed from references to "good management" that the role of the extension service within the NRDP institution was justified. This was evident from public communication through state controlled magazines and daily papers, besides political meetings. On July 6²², the Malawi News carried a lengthy Development Supplement, in which the following was reported:

²² On July 6 Malawi celebrates her Republican status.

Besides capital assistance to farmers, the LRDP (Lakeshore Rural Development Programme)²³ teaches its farmers modern farming skills through extension workers who supervise and advise farmers ...

From almost negligible production before 1968, the programme's farmers have realised record output figures... A notable feature about the LRDP is the extensive training it gives to both its staff and the farmers at the Chitala Farm Institute near Salima Boma (MANA, 1980:18).

Again contrastive representation is evident between the new agriculture using epithets within a modernity framing and the less rewarding traditional agriculture. The rural poor who were largely illiterate needed training in "modern farming skills". The results of such instruction, and especially adoption of the skills from the "extensive training" provided, the "negligible production" associated with traditional crop/land husbandry practices turned into "record output figures."

Another state-controlled magazine also carried similar contrastive representation using epithets of modernity: "The Ngwazi (Dr Banda) noted that Malawi had made a success of her independence because his people had listened to his appeals for hard work in the fields and because agricultural officers had followed his instructions to go out and teach the people modern methods of farming" (Kamlomo, 1986:4).

An interesting point of discursive workings in the text is in regards to cotton and groundnuts, which registered 'poor' yields. Whereas the poor yields could not be denied, there was a sensible scientific explanation that had failed "good management". In the case of cotton, the explanation was "factors beyond the farmer's control, such as weather, rise in costs of insecticides, and cotton pests"(p13). In the case of groundnuts, the failure was explained away as "partly resulted from rosette disease." Despite these failures, the new agriculture has the promise of "potential for increased production up to 800lb/acre...in most groundnut-growing areas" (p14).

²³ This was part of the projects that started under the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP).

These epithets of “improved (techniques),” “good (management)” and “progressive (farmers)” or “modern methods” were common in the NRDP text and public communication texts. They had a significant function of representing the agricultural strategy, the “vehicle for income distribution” not only as effective but also desirable, and those that adopted it as admirable achievers. Although Wetherell and Potter’s (1992) interest was in discourse pertaining to race relations among the Pakeha and Maori of New Zealand, they have demonstrated that the epithet “modern” can be a powerful rhetorical device in political discourse. Bearing in mind that *development* and politics are closely linked, political discourse is not uncommon in *development* discourse.

Metaphors

The general ‘linguistic turn’ in the humanities and social sciences (see for example Fischer & Forester, 1993; Apthorpe & Gasper 1996) has brought about interest in the role of metaphors in social organisation and understanding of world problems (see for example Ortony, 1979; Union of International Associations, 1907 - 2004; Judge, 1989). Arguing for the importance of studying and understanding the role of linguistic representation in policy analysis and planning, Fischer and Forester (1993) assert that policy planners and analysts direct attention to problems and options of solutions they assess by communicative and rhetorical strategies. By understanding the communicative and rhetorical strategies, we may understand the ways analysts:

not only solve but formulate problems, the ways their arguments express or resist broader relations of power and belief, and the ways their practical arguments are inescapably both normative and descriptive...reveal[ing]...agenda setting, selective representations, and claims, and the macropolitics of analysts’ participation in larger discourses, whether those are articulated in relatively organized discourse coalitions or through more diffuse, if perhaps more subtly influential, ideologies and systems of political belief (Fischer & Forester, 1993:14)

It is further recognised in policy planning and analysis that linguistic representation influences understanding and approach to situations. In

particular, Fischer and Forester (1993:45) regard linguistic representation of phenomena as having

repercussions for politically essential questions such as Who is responsible? What can be done? What should be done?...argu[ing] that the analysis of discursive constructions...is especially powerful in the context of the study of the social-historical conditions in which the statements were produced and received.

Among the features of the language of representation, metaphors feature highly in attempts to clarify concepts or abstractions in terms of what the audience already knows. Lakoff and Johnson (1980:115) assert that "Because so many of the concepts that are important to us are either abstract or not clearly delineated in our experience...we need to get a grasp on them by means of other concepts that we understand in clearer terms (spatial orientations, objects, etc)." The term and concept *development*, elusive as it is to a clear-cut definition, lends itself easily to metaphorical representations in various socio-political contexts, as exemplified below.

My interest in examining the metaphorical representation(s) of development is to illustrate that these have had a pivotal influence in the privileging of the agricultural strategy to the *development* process as Dr Banda's preferred strategy. As such, the analysis should contribute to our understanding of the socio-political choices, as opposed to largely physiographical circumstances, that have contributed to the particular developmental strategy that is well worn and more of a liability than not today.

EXCERPT A

[from: *National Rural Development Programme: Policies, Strategy and General Feature*, p3]

Page 3

II. BACKGROUND

General

2.001 Malawi is a landlocked country extending to some 559 miles (900km) from north to south and 124 miles (200 km) from east to west. It is bordered by Zambia to the west, Mozambique to the east and south Tanzania to the north east. Malawi's access to the Indian Ocean is through Mozambique. Imports and exports go through the ports of Beira and Nacala... (GoM 1978:3)

(underlining mine)

EXCERPT B

[Extract from: *National Rural Development Programme: Policies, Strategy and General Features*, p14.]

2.128 The existing education policy is geared towards both the immediate economic role of overcoming the country's manpower constraint as well as the long term objective of reducing the level of illiteracy. There are broadly three areas where manpower needs appear sufficiently crucial; the agricultural sector which holds the key to Malawi's development prospects; the technical field and the executive field...

(GoM 1978:41)

(Underlining mine)

EXCERPT C

[Extract from: President Banda's *State Address: Opening of the Parliament of Malawi, Tuesday 3rd October, 1967*, p2.]

NATURAL RESOURCES

As I have said many times before, our wealth lies in our soil and in our agricultural potential. To this end a large proportion of our public expenditure has been, and will continue to be devoted to the development of our natural resources.

On the agricultural side, this year's crops of maize and groundnuts are the biggest this country has ever produced. There has been a surplus of about 100,000 tons of maize this year, which is far bigger than ever before. (Ministry of Information 1967:2)

(Underlining mine)

EXCERPT D

[Extract from: President Banda's *State Address: Opening of the Parliament of Malawi, Tuesday 3rd October, 1967, p2.*]

DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

The Ministry of Development and Planning has been primarily concerned during 1966 with the preparation of the Government's new three-year Development Programme for 1968-70, which will shortly come before this House. It covers the development plans of statutory bodies and public corporations as well as Central Government itself: it represents the most ambitious programme of public investment ever contemplated in Malawi, involving capital expenditure of over £40m. or more than twice the annual rate of development expenditure experienced in recent years. The policy behind this Programme provides for determined efforts to stimulate development in accordance with Government's stated aims and policies, to create employment, raise incomes and improve the general well-being of our people. It accepts natural resources as the bulwark of Malawi's economy, and gives the lion's share of assistance to such projects in this field.

(Ministry of Information 1967:2)

(Underlining mine)

The NRDP concept document, and other government budget submissions show a mix of metaphorical representation in relation to development strategy in Malawi. The most widely used metaphor in relation to Malawi's socio-economic performance is in relation to her geographical location inland, without access to ports on the oceans. The prison metaphor of Malawi being a "*landlocked country*" [EXCERPT A] is more than a geographical description; it is in fact an organising idea or representation for most, if not all, discussions of economy and human development issues. A complementary, though oblique, imagery is the loosing metaphor of the key: "the agricultural sector which holds the key to Malawi's development prospects" [EXCERPT B]. An examination of these complementary metaphors suggests that agriculture itself is NOT the key; agriculture is only credited with stewardship over the key. In EXCERPT C "wealth" metaphorically "lies in the soil" and...our agricultural potential". Thus, working with agriculture, wealth, the key, can be realised, to loose Malawi from her socio-economic 'incarceration'. The point that comes out here is that economic growth was regarded as the answer to Malawi's development. Malawi's preoccupation with the notion of development as economic growth is discussed fully in Chapter 9 "Representing People Centredness."

Two points emerge from the imagery. There is a loose suggestion in the representation that the fact of being far from the sea qualifies Malawi for an agricultural answer. I have already argued in Chapter 5 above that such a suggestion is fallacious; wealth can be created from any other available community capital. Metaphorically, seeing the *key* in the custody of agriculture is a matter of choice as to which ‘steward’ appeals most to the leadership and planners of the day. It has been suggested that Dr Banda’s choice of agriculture as a means of creating wealth or as a *development* strategy was a result of an agricultural background and training during his early years in Malawi and the United States, respectively (Brody 2000). A second point is that the view of wealth lying in the soil and the view that the NRDP was an “effective vehicle for Government’s objective of redistributing incomes in favour of the rural poor” (GoM, 1978:1) suggest an existential view of development and this has influences in deciding approaches to acquiring wealth. This contention finds support in the other metaphor which speaks of “stimulat[ing] development” [EXCERPT D]. Furthermore, there is a fatalistic suggestion in the other metaphorical representation: “It accepts natural resources as the bulwark of Malawi's economy.” The acceptance that introduces the defensive “bulwark” metaphor does not portray plans that provide for innovation. The defensive stance that the “bulwark” representation suggests evokes images of a people that accept apparent limitations that may be found within their community without making room for innovation to muster their circumstances. I argue that this may have influenced a mentality of dependence on extraction of or working natural capital as inexhaustible resource(s). The National Environmental Action Plan states that “The rapid expansion of agriculture from the mid-1970’s to the late 1980’s led to extensive deforestation (GoM, 1998b). This was true of other natural resources evidenced by the general environmental degradation and depletion of resources (GoM, 1998a). The latter metaphor of the mixed metaphor in EXCERPT D indicates how little thought of other options were as self standing or combined development strategies. The agricultural strategy was given “the lion's share of assistance.” This should indicate that some alternatives were known but they were summarily ignored. The following excerpt also indicates similar choices that were in operation.

EXCERPT E

[Extract from: *Development Programme 1985/86 to 1989/90: Malawi Government's Development Projects for the Financial Year 1985/86*, p5.]

Head 077 - Agriculture

The Government continues to accord the highest priority to the development of the Agricultural Sector as the springboard and backbone of the country's economic development. A large proportion of financial resources of the Agricultural Development Programme is accounted for by the National Rural Development Programme (NRDP) under which various rural development projects throughout the country are being successfully implemented.

(OPC 1985:5)

(*Underlining mine*)

The underlined sentence continues to show Malawi's development strategy was dominated by agriculture. The reason for this preference for agriculture is reflected, albeit not clearly, in the mixed metaphor in the latter part of the sentence. Agriculture is regarded as "the springboard and backbone"[**EXCERPT E**] of economic development. It is rather problematic to understand the representation in the mixed metaphor as Grey (2000:5) also observes: "It [mixed metaphor] generates distracting images or ideas which subvert discourse instead of facilitating it." My understanding of the **orientational** metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:14) of the "springboard" evokes associations of a quick and effective means of development for the desired improvement of people's living standards. Betterment is often associated with the upward orientation exemplified in other metaphors such as 'uplifting standard of life' that are often used unconsciously as dormant metaphors (Grey, 2000:4). I have already referred to the notions of hurry that Malawi's leadership had in their approach to development. The biological metaphor of "backbone" evokes an **evolutionary** approach to development. Based on associations of the development of the (human) body as starting from the backbone, agriculture may have been expected to initiate and support a differentiation of the economy as a whole. As I have indicated, one metaphor suggests a rapid or hurried approach while the other a more evolutionary approach, further evoking association of a **burden bearer** in the agricultural strategy. If agriculture was expected to be the burden bearer, then we may understand why it was over-supported, at the expense of other alternatives. Its capacity may have been overestimated. If agriculture was

expected to allow a 'naturalistic' differentiation of the economy, there was little chance given to other sectors to realise full potential. However, the use of the mixed metaphor is ineffective in clarifying thought here.

As the analysis has shown, whereas some metaphorical representations showed direction of choice strategy (for example, the key metaphor pointing to wealth accumulation), others were fundamentally unrewarding in terms of clarifying what direction development was to take (for example, the 'springboard and backbone' double metaphor). Such lack of metaphorical clarity is, in my view, a surface indication of more deep-seated planning problems that Malawi had post-independence. Morton (1975:106) has pointed out that

While Malawi's overall long-term strategy has been clearly stated, no attempt has been made, until recently, to show in detail how public sector policies conform with long-term goals, and Malawi's development planning has tended to proceed on an *ad hoc*, short-term basis. It has, nevertheless, considerably improved since independence.

The contention that disparate and sometimes unclear representations of the developmental strategy may reflect a lack of clarity at the level of planning and implementation finds support in the growing body of literature in policy and planning studies. For example, Judge (1989:7-8), acknowledging the difficulty experienced in representing what sustainable development is, argues that

it makes a critical difference what metaphor is used, whether implicitly or explicitly, to view the relationship between competing policy concepts...Whatever the multiple, alternative or competing articulations of 'sustainable development' at the conceptual or policy level, the insight integrating...dynamic relationships can only be adequately communicated at the metaphoric level.

Furthermore, in Schon's (1979) view, difficulties in social policy may be attributable more to problem setting than problem solving. In this regard, he asserts that the framing of problems is often dependent on metaphors that underlie stories that generate problem setting and set the direction of problem solving. Judge (1989) also argues that there are strong indications that implicit metaphors condition thinking so as to divert attention from vital

opportunities. In view of this observation, I argue that the lack of an active innovative and reflexive approach to *development*, evidenced by over-dependence on agriculture and the neglect of other viable alternatives, can be partly understood at the level of problem setting which is reflected at the metaphorical and, indeed, general, representational level.

Conclusion

In this part of the chapter I have attempted to show that in the concept documents and public communication texts, the agricultural strategy was reified at the expense of other alternatives. Thus the imbalance of opportunities that the strategy intended to eliminate among the rural poor was ironically instituted within it. Textual examination has shown that the discourse was characterised by an empiricist repertoire thereby evoking an authoritative positioning against possible competing discourses. Within this empiricist framework, the agricultural strategy was represented with qualities that not only overshadowed the other alternatives, but also set it apart from the conventional agricultural practices the people traditionally practised, and the traumatic colonial agricultural practices. However, although the use of slogans, epithets and metaphors in circumstances of euphoria associated with new won political independence, were discursively powerful to win the people's support of the agricultural strategy, lack of clarity in their articulation of strategies was not uncommon. As such there was little benefit from use of these discursive resources to map out development strategies that would stand the vicissitudes of developing world economies.

I have also argued that considering the centrality of representational language in clarifying concepts, the use of disparate representations that were not always clear was indicative of the unclear direction development was to take. Furthermore, based on studies in policy studies that argue that the influence of representational language on thought may have the effect of deflecting attention from vital opportunities, a study of conceptualisation of development and strategies at the level of representational language in problem setting may be useful in understanding the largely unexplained reason for Malawi's

non-use of the fuller range of community capital when the agricultural strategy is meeting multiple challenges. In view of what I have called the prison organising metaphor, the metaphor may explain not so much Malawi's physiographical circumstances as the state of the human capital in dealing with the developmental challenge.

6.4 Conclusion: Linguistic Representation and Development Strategy

In this chapter I have attempted to show three main points. The first is that the view that the agricultural strategy was the most suitable for Malawi's development process was effected discursively. The second point is that although the agricultural strategy was discursively reified as an effective means of eradicating social inequality, social inequality was instituted within the strategy, rendering the discourse referentially valueless. The third point is that lack of an innovative and reflexive approach to socio-economic development matters is reflected in the representation of both Malawi's problems and their suggested solutions.

In support of the first of these points, the analysis has attempted to show that lack of an innovative and reflexive approach to strategising Malawi's development process, evidenced by over-dependence on the agricultural strategy, has a discursive dimension. The representation of Malawi's inland location on the African continent has been discursively, if not ideologically, used to claim limitations as to what Malawi can gainfully engage in socio-economically. I have attempted to show that the prison and loosing (key) metaphors are the main organising representations and to show inadequacies of this position and what I regard as its disabling influence on innovative strategising, reflected in other (metaphorical) representations.

In relation to the second point I have shown that development planners were aware of the traumatic associations agriculture had on the indigenous Malawians throughout the colonial times. Thus, to make commercial agriculture appealing to the indigenous Malawians, the post-independence representation of agriculture made the promise of an enabling means of food

security and an effective strategy for an egalitarian society. Discursively, commercial agriculture was contrastively represented by means of slogans and epithets that reified agriculture. In addition, there was contrastive representation of the rural poor as adopter social actors or not. Adopters were represented in favourable epithets. In addition, the adopters had access to project benefits such as a credit facility for purchase of farm in-puts and extension services. This point and also the fact that there were some areas in the IRDP that were in some unclear way regarded as 'special,' thereby accessing external funding, were an ironic twist in a strategy that was said to be an enabling means of bringing about egalitarianism. Such ironic twists in development intervention are not uncommon (Ferguson, 1990).

In relation to the third point I have shown that representational language is useful in clarifying concepts. Development being a protean concept is liable to disparate conceptualisations which are often concretised through representational language in policy and planning texts. In the analysis of representational language in the concept document and public communication texts I have shown that the representations evoke paucity of innovative and reflexive strategising together with promotion of dependence on a single strategy that, despite qualities of social change that were discursively invested in it, has fallen short of the promise(s). Based on the growing scholarship in policy studies that has indicated a link between representational language and conditioning of thinking in planning for socio-economic change, I have argued that a study of representation in the conceptualisation of development at the level of problem setting and solution devising may be useful to understand a largely non-innovative and non-reflexive utilisation of community capital for social change in Malawi.

PART III: PURPOSES WITHIN PURPOSE

7.1 Introduction

This part of the study looks at what I call non-explicit goals that are actively, though perhaps not ostensibly, pursued within development programmes. Of discursive interest in the analysis is the construction of representation of non-conspicuous goals alongside explicit programme objectives. Though they appeared subsidiary, these non-explicit goals drew significant attention in government circles, and in some cases overshadowed the explicit goals in programme implementation. The two chapters that comprise this part examine this feature of non-explicit goals in two different realisations. In Chapter 7 *The Agricultural Link in the Rural Service Centres*, I examine how the Rural Growth Centres Project (hereafter RGCP), piloted in 1979, was practically subservient to the agricultural cause, although there were more of other non-agricultural aspirations that were explicitly stipulated to justify the intervention. In fact, agriculture was not explicitly featured as an objective; rather it was embedded within the broad socio-economic argot that suggested industrial thrust. Thus the agricultural agenda was backgrounded (see Fairclough, 2003) in the programme's objectives. In Chapter 8 *Development and Hegemony*, I examine the ubiquitous embeddedness of political legitimisation in project plan/submission documents and public communication texts of development programmes in post-independence Malawi. An important point regarding this relationship between explicit and non-explicit goals is that the course of projects seemed to have been impelled by non-explicit goals which some reviewers regarded as problems of design, especially in relation to the Rural Growth Centres Programme.

CHAPTER 7

THE AGRICULTURAL LINK IN THE RURAL GROWTH CENTRES

7.1 Contextualising Rural Growth Centres in the Rural-urban Divide

In rural and urban planning studies, three views in relation to the rural-urban divide are identified (see for example Mabogunje, 1989; Mutizwa-Mangiza, 1999). The anti-urban view regards urbanisation as a destructive force that leads to the breakdown of social cohesion associated with rural life. The anti-urban view, therefore, idealises rural life and decries its disappearance. The pro-urban view takes urbanisation as a driving force in technological innovation, economic development and socio-political change. These two views have a strong bearing on, among other things, development investment policies and human settlement. Investments in rural areas have often been justified on the basis of reducing rural-to-urban migration while urban investments have been seen as reflecting urban bias. The third view, however, occupies a middle position. According to the rural-urban linkages (or the rural-urban continuum) view, there are visible and invisible flows or linkages between rural and urban areas. These linkages, according to Mutizwa-Mangiza (1999:1) “have traditionally been categorized into economic, service, demographic, environmental and infrastructure, even though these categories are not mutually exclusive.”

The conceptualisation of Malawi’s Rural Growth Centres in concept documents as well as public communication texts is examined in the light of these divergent views on the rural-urban divide. My main contention is that social practice provided planners with socio-cultural discursive tools by which they appropriated the various views of the rural-urban divide to advance particular set objectives that obtained at the time. There did not seem to be a clear adherence to any one view, especially in public communication texts. While reviewers’ observations regarding RGCP as a planning and design dilemma may be a valid point (see for example, Mlia Ngoleka & Kaluwa 1989), I argue that socio-ideological positioning and the momentum of the preferred agricultural strategy were the main driving forces in the RGCP

planning and implementation. In relation to socio-ideological positioning, the nationalist government played on the notion of addressing the colonial neglect of the country's infrastructure and went in the direction of providing infrastructure as an important show of the envisaged socio-economic change. This act was a way of legitimising the political change to self-determination and entrenching the Malawi Congress Party (hereafter MCP) after the 1964 cabinet crisis. As a result, the MCP-led nationalist government took advantage of development projects to promote its own political legitimacy. As far as the influence of the agricultural strategy's momentum was concerned, the RGCP was in the main a facilitative tool, equipped more lavishly from grants than the former IRDP, to better retain the much needed farm labour *in situ*, as it were. In view of the points that have been raised in Chapter 6, the agricultural strategy sought to retain farm hands for Malawi's commercial estate agriculture. Also, smallholder farming, which fed Malawi, needed to retain peasants who were otherwise characteristically attracted to mine employment in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. This subservience of the RGCP to the agricultural strategy to Malawi's development process can be examined discursively. The following analysis examines the non-conspicuous discursive construction of the RGCP as primarily an agricultural strategy's facilitative tool while the import of the text remained in keeping with the conceptual traditions of growth centres, projecting the industrial thrust. The non-agricultural growth/pole aspirations were more ostensibly stipulated, albeit not always clearly in terms of their implementation. The lack of clarity of the more growth centres goals, in my view, gave advantage to the more practically familiar agricultural objectives to be operationalised.

7.2 Framing Malawi's Rural Centres: A Macro Discourse Analysis

Introduction

The main focus in this chapter is to show that the RGCP was fundamentally subservient to the agricultural strategy, although the prominent and abundant growth centre economics argot in the concept (plan) documents would give an otherwise impression. A reading of the Malawi context (which I have to shown in Chapters 5 and 6) is important for the discursive analysis to show

that the RGCP was fundamentally a facilitative tool of the agricultural strategy, bearing many characteristics of the integrated rural development package.

Positioning the RGCP in Malawi's Spatial Development Planning Policy

The story of Malawi's Rural Growth Centres Programme is well documented (see for example Mlia & Kaluwa 1982; Mlia, Kaluwa & Mkwezalamba, 1988; Christiansen, Kydd & Ngalande, 1983). A brief recount would therefore suffice here. With financial and technical assistance from the German Government, the Malawi Government implemented the Rural Growth Centres Programme (RGCP) on a pilot basis in 1979. There were ten rural centres altogether in Malawi's three administrative regions. Based on this experience, the Malawi Government modified and expanded the idea to create more service-oriented rural service centres. Thus, seven years later in 1987, the RGCP was changed to National Rural Centres Programme (NRCP), placing more emphasis on the service functions than growth functions of rural centres. The programme aimed at providing "new, or upgrading existing, facilities and services at rural service centres, including health, education, water, sanitation, postal, development extension and commercial (particularly retail) services" (Mutizwa-mangiza, 1999:6). Another development was that in 1985 there was initiated the Secondary Centres Development Programme (hereafter SCDP) that focuses on "managing the development and growth of the secondary centres part of the national central place hierarchy"²⁴ (Mutizwa-mangiza, 1999:6). The NRCP and SCDP are outside the scope of this study; suffice it to say that the Rural Growth Centres Programme informed the plans and designs of a more coordinated six-tier central place hierarchy that brought the spatial dimension to bear on national development policy. A point to underline is that unlike the Rural Growth Centres Programme, the latter programmes explicitly pointed out the service functions of the rural service centres.

²⁴ The national physical development plan's six-tier central place hierarchy consists of the following tiers: 1) national centre; 2) regional centre; 3) sub-regional centre; 4) district and/or main market centre; 5) rural market centre; and 6) village centre. Levels 5 and 6 are designated as "rural service centres" whose primary function is to provide a direct link to the rural population. Levels 2, 3 and 4 are designated as "secondary centres," i.e. below the national centre, but above the rural service centre

Conceptualising Rural Growth Centres

Project proposal submissions for each of the ten pilot rural growth centres were uniform in many respects. The differences were not so much in the spirit and substance of the proposals as in names, quantifications or other specific details in relation to geographical location (See Lamb, 1991). It would appear the planners had a kind of one-size-fit-all RGCP framework for the socio-economic change of rural Malawi. This runs true to Roe's (1991) notion of blueprint development narratives that are transferred to various contexts even when they are not quite suitable. As such, I chose to make rhetorical and more nuanced textual analyses of a concept document and public communication texts of one, namely, Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre, although I liberally make use of public communication texts that were written about other rural growth centres. Again, although I make a synoptical analysis of the complete concept document, the nuanced textual analysis looks at excerpts of text portions that stand out discursively in the construction of non-conspicuous agricultural purposes among the more conspicuous RGCP objectives and their justifying elaboration. Continuing with the textual comparison approach that I have used in the previous analyses, the excerpts will be analysed within the light of relevant policy and project concept texts.

The main text of the RGC project proposal submission comprises the following distinct parts. The Introduction which is discursively rich in providing the conceptual basis of the rural growth centre(s), namely, objectives and method of regional assessment. It is followed by a(n) (Executive) Summary. Again discursively rich, the summary presents the essence of issues of the conceptualisation and implementation of the growth centre project(s). **Part I** is the regional assessment of the area, examining such issues as location, socio-economic structure of the area, estate development, smallholder development, and central places and infrastructure. Fact construction and

rhetorical organisation of this part of the document is discursively important for examining the RGCP's subservient position to the agricultural strategy. **Part II** details planning recommendations across selected sectors of education, health, community services, agricultural services, trades and small scale industry, communication, water supply and housing. This is another discursively important section; it was rhetorically organised in such a way as to show the existing situation and its deficits and what the project proposed to make the centre functionally capable to meet particularly non-farm expectations associated with such a facility. This is where the representation/construction of the existing situation makes a case for the necessity of the rural growth centre in the way it was designed as a suitable intervention. This part of the document bears resemblance to development narrative construction that Roe (1991) and Roe (1994) describe and illustrate. **Part III** is a short section that dealt with general questions of the implementation of the project, particularly: building land and self-help contribution. The rest of the document consists of annexes, including various tables, maps, and estimates.

Representing Social Actors: Government and the Rural Poor

The concept document is a text constructed following the empiricist repertoire to give it a feel of factual representation of the disinterested expert. This is evident in the excerpt below which shows abundant use of the agentless passive sentence structures throughout the text.

[Extract from: *Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre* concept document]

Ten sites all over Malawi have been chosen for the first phase of the project. [1] Most of these places are remote from the District Centres, on average not less than 40 miles. The conditions in terms of existing facilities, level of economic development, geography, population density, etc, differ considerably from centre to centre.

In order to identify the particular needs of the centres a thorough analysis of the surroundings of each centre location has been undertaken. [2]

This analysis has been approached in three stages. [3] The first and most important one involved the local community represented by Chiefs, Village Headmen, Ward Councillors, Party Leaders, MPs, Teachers, Medical, Agricultural Staff and others. At the occasion of a field trip lasting about one week for each centre all these representatives have been interviewed and asked about their views of the development problems of the area concerned and about the proposals for facilities required in a Rural Growth Centre. [4] (OPC & GTZ, 1978:1)

(Underlining mine)

In all the four sentence structures (underlined in the text) no agents of the actions that went on are given, employing the perfective form of “have/has”. This structure is useful when the writer intends to have the agent elided in a text, either as unimportant or intentionally suppressed (Fairclough, 2003).

With this empiricist representation of information, the expectation is that all practices would be examined and depicted in a disinterested manner. Hence, there is a clear effort to depict the expert as not only disinterested but also involving the local members of the community in the information gathering procedures described to come up with relevant provisions in the RGC. However, a close examination of the text shows that the involvement of the members of the community was more of a consultation on already formulated plans as opposed to a deliberately designed participatory planning (Christian Aid, 2001), as I illustrate below. There are two texts (7A and 7B) which when juxtaposed show that the consultations of the local community may only have served a cosmetic purpose.

Text 7A

[Extract from: *Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre* concept document]

This analysis has been approached in three stages. *The first and most important one involved the local community represented by Chiefs, Village Headmen, Ward Councillors, Party Leaders, MPs, Teachers, Medical, Agricultural Staff and others.* At the occasion of a field trip lasting about one week for each centre all these representatives have been interviewed and asked about their views of the development problems of the area concerned and about the proposals for facilities required in a Rural Growth Centre.

- II -

At the second stage District Officials of all Ministries and *Departments have been approached* at the occasion of the field trip *to obtain more general information about the centre and surrounding places.*

Finally *statistical data information on planning norms and ongoing development programmes in and near to the Growth Centres could be obtained from Ministries and Departments at Central Government level in Lilongwe, Blantyre and Zomba.*

(OPC & GTZ, 1978:I – II)

(Italics mine)

Text 7B

[Extract from: *Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre* concept document]

The report is composed of two main paragraphs. The first one (Regional Assessment) contains the analysis of the area in which the centre is located. Apart from information gathered from local people and representatives and from direct visual observations *the regional assessment is based primarily on demographic and agricultural datas which are a most useful source to distinguish the specific characteristics of the planning area.*

The second one (Planning Recommendations) contains the details on the existing situation and proposed measures for each sector. This has been done in a detailed form to show the reader how the team arrived at each particular proposal.

(OPC & GTZ, 1978: III)

(Italics mine)

The planners claimed that the consultative involvement of the local community representatives was the “most important” of the three stages of their analysis.

I note also that from civil servants at the District Government ministries and departments, the planners “obtain[ed] more general information about the centre and surrounding places.” Most likely, the information pertained to other government projects that the various ministries/departments were responsible for within the RGC area and its hinterland, as one of the aims of the analysis was “to relate the Rural Growth Centre to other Government projects and activities going on in the same area” (OPC & GTZ, 1978:II). However, the paragraphs that signpost the structure of the concept/proposal document are explicit about what the basis of the plan was: “the regional assessment is based primarily on demographic and agricultural data which are a most useful source to distinguish the specific characteristics of the planning area” (OPC & GTZ 1978:III). Based on this observation, my contention is that the local representatives’ involvement, which should have provided local ‘expert’ specific detail for a relevant needs assessment for the centre, was largely ‘tokenistic display’ (see White, 1995). In fact Mlia Ngoleka and Kaluwa (1989:250) point out that the top-down approach was dominant in the RGCP:

The top-down approach has been the dominant mode in the sense that the final decision on centres selected was made at central government level. This also applies to the decision as regards the exact package of facilities provided at each of the centres.

Lamb’s (1991:7) diagnostic report to the donors, German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), also alludes to the point that during the pilot phase there was little, if any, genuine local participation in RGCP planning:

Whatever the truth in the assertion made in one quarter that in practice sites were pre-selected in an ad hoc manner in advance of clearly explicated location criteria and catchment area planning, and that subsequently identified objectives were used in post-hoc justification of the decisions taken, it is clearly the case that the pilot phase location objectives were principally socio-political...

Based on the larger discourse analysis, I contend that though the RGCP planning and implementation process purported to be inclusive, it did not embrace participatory notions in practice.

A clearly notable feature in the depiction of social actors in public communication texts is the government’s role in caring for the rural citizenry

and the determination to bring about social change among the rural populations of the country. For example, in an article that appeared in the government's own magazine, *This is Malawi*, the Malawi Government was depicted as successful in effecting rural development and, in rather hyperbolic description, transforming remote areas of the country (Mbalachanda forges ahead with its development, 1980:10):

Rural development in Malawi is a concept that the Government, under His Excellency the life President, Ngwazi Dr H. Kamuzu Banda, has successfully employed...In the Northern region, such inaccessible and unheard of "dead" places were many...people near or around such places simply did not dream that one day such vast forests would give way to farms, buildings and other development activities.

The political undertones that are discernible in the text are analysed in Chapter 8. For purposes of this analysis, suffice it to say that while public communication texts concentrate on depicting the government's successful role in development activities, they portray the rural citizenry as largely passive recipients of solutions towards their socio-economic underprivileged circumstances. Examples of such representations of the rural people and their circumstances are evident in **Text 7C** below.

TEXT 7C

[Extract from: Mkhota is transformed, *This is Malawi* monthly.]

Mkhota and the surrounding villages were in the past very remote and cut-off from any point of stable socio-economic centres in Kasungu District...

In all, Mkhota and the surrounding villages were poorly provided with basic services in the past...

There was one school block with four *classrooms at what was known as Mkhota full Primary School*, three temporary teachers' houses, two shelters for health services one of which was also used as a local court.

There was one agricultural extension worker and his miserable house, before the birth of the rural growth centre...

The Malawi government, with a German grant of K7.5 million, took up measures to develop Mkhota along with other 10 rural growth centres well spread in the three regions of the country.

Chambala (1983:7)

(Italics mine)

The depiction of Mkhota and the villages was that they were “poorly provided”. Examples of poor provision included an inadequate primary school, and a struggling agriculture extension worker who lived in a “miserable house”. The Government is eventually depicted as the saviour, coming up with “measures to develop Mkhota”.

The point I am trying to make here is that while the concept document made attempts to represent the rural poor as participants in the RGCP design, public communication texts were chivalric about the government’s accomplishments to save the helpless rural poor from colonial neglect and their poverty and the symbols of socio-economic change were ‘farms, buildings and other development activities’.

Framing the Object of Rural Growth Centres: Depiction of the Rural and Socio-economic Change

This section of the analysis examines the representation of the purposes of rural growth centres. In particular, this part examines first, the construction of the pervasive but largely non-conspicuous agricultural objectives, and secondly, the appropriation of the various view-points of the rural-urban divide to suit particular socio-ideological positions in the prevailing political climate of the time. The starting point of the examination of the discourses is the objectives of the RGCs.

TEXT 7D

[Extract from: *Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre* concept document]

INTRODUCTION

The project "Creation of Rural Growth Centres" has three main objectives:

- To create *focal points of development* in remote or underdeveloped areas of Malawi *by providing social and economic services to the rural population.*
- To contribute to the decentralization of administration and to further community development in order *to give rural people an opportunity to better participate in development activities at the local level.*
- To contribute to the *integration of development activities* of the various Ministries in rural areas.

Ten sites all over Malawi have been chosen for the first phase of the project. Most of these places are remote from the District Centres, on average not less than 40 miles. The conditions in terms of existing facilities, *level of economic development*, geography, population density, etc, differ considerably from centre to centre.

(OPC & GTZ, 1978:1)

(Italics mine)

The concept document's first of the three main objectives of the RGCs evokes the conventional understanding of the functions of a rural growth centre. It speaks of creating "focal points of development." However, it is important to highlight the point that the growth centre notion was not without its conceptual problems as Todd (1980:39) points out:

Much of the exasperation with the failure of growth center strategies ...can ultimately be attributed to the fact that the growth center is decidedly a tool of economic efficiency pressed into use as a welfare instrument.

However, in neoclassical terms, the growth centre would be said to be functionally viable if it attracted larger industrial activity, an increase in population that would sustain its functions in economic growth (see Shah, 1974; and Todd, 1980). This sort of understanding is evoked in the first two objectives of the RGCs. The third objective points to the integrated development approach that was incorporated. I argue that from the objectives, engagement with agriculture would not be immediately obvious. However, the agricultural link with RGCs looms large in other parts of the concept document, and is more explicitly pointed out in public communication texts.

The (Executive) Summary of concept document is rhetorically well staged to indicate the purpose of Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre as fundamentally a support for the tobacco estates and other government agricultural projects under the NRDP which we have discussed in chapter 6. After an involved description of the “economy of MBALACHANDA area” (OPC &GTZ 1978:v) based on vast estates of flue cured tobacco which started in 1975, a statement is made to the effect that “The estate development ha[d] not been accompanied by the provision of sufficient social and other infrastructural basic services” (OPC & GTZ 1978: VI). Because tobacco estates needed a lot of farm labour, tenants and other farm hands were hired from the central and southern regions for either seasonal or more permanent employment. Thus estate labour needed provision of some services for a fairly decent living standard and a healthy working force. Thus, Government planned that the

new MBALACHANDA RGC w[ould] provide basic services lacking in the area in terms of social and other infrastructural facilities in order to improve the living conditions of the population, i.e. mainly the growing number of estate labourers, and to support the economic development taking place there (OPC & GTZ 1978:VII).

The social and infrastructural provisions were not necessarily for the local inhabitants of Mbalachanda and the hinterland. Whatever the local inhabitants enjoyed were really only spin-off benefits because of proximity, although the planners’ consultations with local representation gave the impression that the RGC was primarily targeting them. The linguistic embedding of the statements is examined further in the microanalysis section of this chapter.

The discursive construction of the non-conspicuous agricultural link is further rhetorically managed by the alternating narratives of the socio-economic crises among the local inhabitants and descriptions of interventions in form of services that the estate labour required to keep the labour in remote Mbalachanda. Thus it is rather elusive to keep within one’s ken what is relevant to the local inhabitants as opposed to the estate labour, which was Government’s main interest in the RGCP. As a result when deficits of the services in the area are related, it would appear that the concern is for the

local inhabitants, or both locals and estate employees, when actually the focus of the needs assessment was the growing estate labour population. A few texts from public communication sources read in juxtaposition with the concept document show this interplay of the references that purport concern for the local inhabitant populations, when actually the planners' focus was the growing estate labour for the up-keep of estate agriculture.

TEXT 7E

[Extract from: New chapter in development, *Malawi News weekly*]

The concept of rural growth centres with its emphasis *on developing remote areas*, both socially and economically, opens yet a new chapter in the country's drive to *better the living conditions and standards of the rural population...*

From the listed facilities which will be made available in all the centres, it can be seen that the project has a human angle *which will directly benefit the masses* by being within reach of social amenities essential for their social, economic and political development...

Bearing in mind the great depths that this concept of rural growth centres will reach in *uplifting the living conditions of people in rural Malawi*, by changing the image of what is probably negated by some people who shallowly consider living in area far from urban centres as being dull...

(New chapter in development, 1980:6)

(Italics mine)

TEXT 7F

[Extract from: Malawi finds answer to urban migration, *This is Malawi monthly*.]

Another step the government undertook to contain and sustain a viable rural development strategy has been the establishment of the Rural Growth Centres Project...Each rural growth centre...is expected to be self-contained with nearly all facilities or amenities available such as postal services, health and other social amenities as well as portable (Sic) water to the *people living within the centre's boundaries*.

The essence of this project is to contribute towards making *life in the rural areas much easier for the people there* than it was before because *people would have things within easy reach*.

(Mhone, 1986:3)

(Italics mine)

The italicised portions of texts **7E** and **7F** show that public communication texts were prone to making all-inclusive claims about the objectives of the rural growth centres and the target populations. For instance, the rural growth centre would raise the living conditions and standards of “rural people” and that project facilities would “directly benefit the masses” leading to an “uplifting of the “living conditions of rural Malawi” (New chapter in development, 1980:6). Similarly, Mhone’s (1986) article refers to “people living within the centre’s boundaries” benefiting from facilities provided at the growth centre intended to make “life in the rural areas much easier for people there” as the “people would have things within easy reach” (Mhone, 1986:3). These all-inclusive statements seem to be not quite in agreement with the concept document’s focus population. Under Mbalachanda RGC’s functions are expressed intentions to “provide the basis for settlement of a permanent labour force” which was hired across Malawi. In addition to hired labour from distant places, commercial agriculture needed to “to stop the out-migration from the area” (OPC & GTZ 1978:VII) of the local labour force. The third function was “to support non farm activities, and small industry” (pVII) which really is a reference to some small scale trading activities of household items, and repair services for farm implements and other basic artisanal work such as that of tinkers and/or blacksmiths. Lamb’s (1991:34-35) report notes that

RGC populations possessed only rudimentary artisanal skills and virtually no entrepreneurial capacity, linkages to other trading centres were minimal and no institutional small scale enterprise promotion and credit facilities were available.

Thus, the third function did not have a serious entrepreneurial pool of skilled persons to draw from. The serious business of the RGC was providing livable conditions for the estate labour, and then other population groups that were within the RGC’s area of influence would receive these benefits as a spin-off. This point is further supported by the dilemma the planners found themselves in when they sought to involve the local inhabitants to contribute to the RGCP through self-help activities. While the planners knew that the local inhabitants had participated in self-help activities in community development projects prior to the RGCP, they had no clear (moral) basis for involving them in the various projects under the RGCP. The planners noted that:

In the case of the development of the Rural Growth Centre at MBALACHANDA another type of selfhelp contribution ha[d] to be found. This [wa]s because the main users of the Rural Growth Centre [we]re the estate employees who [we]re integrated in a fixed working system (OPC & GTZ, 1978:57).

One of the key statements that sheds light on the designated subjects of the RGC in the concept document is that “Now MBALACHANDA area is officially reserved for tobacco estate development” (OPC & GTZ 1978:8). This is an indication that whatever facility was associated with Mbalachanda RGC was to serve the estate agricultural purpose. Probably, going by the neoclassical notion of attracting industry, the commercial tobacco estate agriculture fitted the description in the Malawian context where the chosen strategy for economic growth was agriculture.

An important observation, however, is that there were vested interests in the Malawi Government leadership of the day that may account for the sacrifice of the facility to the agricultural cause. It is documented that some of the companies that opened up estates in Mbalachanda were Press Farming and Spearhead (see Mbalachanda forges ahead, 1980:12; and OPC & GTZ, 1978:8). Press Farming was part of the Press Holdings conglomerate, a company initially set up to run the Malawi Congress Party newspaper and of which Dr Banda held almost all the shares (Williams, 1978). Press Farming had estates on most choice lands, some of which had been formerly owned by European farmers, that were often referred to as “schools for the people” (Kamlomo, 1986:4). As Dr Banda showed preference for foreign rather than local expertise to run projects that were dear to him (Ngugi, 1986:19), most of his estate managers were foreign recruited, notably white South Africans. Spearhead was a quasi-state conglomerate that was run by the Malawi Young Pioneers movement, a paramilitary organisation answerable to Dr Banda alone, that in addition to paramilitary training, offered vocational training and run several entrepreneurial ventures, including commercial agriculture (see Phiri, 2000). The Malawi Young Pioneer movement was an embodiment of the slogan ‘Spearhead for Progress.’ With Press farming and Spearhead estates in Mbalachanda, there had to be support for the large numbers of

estate labour that the labour intensive estates needed. That Dr Banda supported estates establishment with a quasi-urban milieu was not unique to Mbalachanda. Williams (1978:283) points out that Dr Banda had been “thanked in Parliament for personally providing schools, dispensaries, and grocery stores for the benefit of families living on his estates.” Thus, the (estate) agricultural motivation in the Mbalachanda RGCP (and indeed all others) for the chosen agricultural means to economic growth loomed large despite the import of a promise of an industrial thrust from neoclassical economic theory parlance contained in the concept document and public communication.

The second part of the analysis in the section is in relation to the use of various viewpoints of the rural-urban divide as discursive resources for socio-ideological positioning in the social climate of the time. I earlier briefly outlined the three views that dominate the rural-urban divide debates. Public communication texts that I examine below show a tendency of moving from one viewpoint to another to suit socio-political trends of the day. It would appear, when agricultural projects were being promoted in a particular rural environment, the anti-urban viewpoint was elevated to conform to Dr Banda’s chosen means of developing the country. However, there was a kind of doublespeak in relation to the RGCP pilot phase. While the anti-urban view was being promoted to help with recruitment and retaining of estate labour, the conventional notion of a growth centre that the RGCP was associated with, required elevating the urban-bias view, even though the main business of the RGCs was far from attracting or initiating an industrial thrust in rural Malawi. Another observation is that with lessons from the pilot phase of the RGCP, the modified and re-named NRCP’s more explicitly service-oriented centres seemed to be associated with the rural-urban continuum view. I now turn to text examination.

TEXT 7G

[Extract from: New chapter in development, *Malawi News* 28 September, 1980.]

New chapter in development

THE concept of rural growth centres *with its emphasis on developing remote areas*, both socially and economically opens yet a new chapter in the country's drive to *better the living conditions and standards of the rural population...*

Bearing in mind the great depths that this concept of rural growth centres will reach in uplifting the living conditions of people in rural Malawi, by *changing the image of what is probably negated by some people who shallowly consider living in areas far from urban centres as being dull...*

(New chapter in development, 1980:6)

(Italics mine)

This is an excerpt from an editorial that appeared in the *Malawi News*, a government controlled paper. The title is indicative of the novelty of the RGC, a concept that would enable socio-economic change within a rural milieu. The italicised lines pick up this line of thought by highlighting “emphasis on developing remote areas” and “the country’s drive to better the living conditions and standards of the rural population.” The title of a public communication text on another rural growth centre is even indicative of this depiction of change in a rural milieu: “MKHOTA IS TRANSFORMED” (Chambala, 1983:7). However, the anti-urban view is clear when the association of dullness of life and remoteness is labelled a shallowness of thought and probably experience in **Text 7G**, above. The next text (**7H**) continues the anti-urban view by relating a crisis narrative of urbanisation in ill-prepared Africa. Though this is popular literature, the paper assumes such a quasi-empiricist stance that global and regional urban trends and prognostications are substantiated with relevant statistical detail. The popular character is nonetheless evident in the rhetoric used that on the one hand castigates the colonial urban bias, and on the other, persuades the reader to see sense in Malawi’s adopted rural development initiatives as solutions that are elusive to many other developing (African) states.

TEXT 7H

[Extract from: Malawi finds answer to urban migration, *This is Malawi* Vol. 16.]

MALAWI FINDS ANSWER TO URBAN MIGRATION

In many developing countries, one of the most pressing problems today facing governments is *the problem of people drifting from rural areas to urban areas...* In other words, the *colonial development policy was biased towards towns where only few people lived...* Something had to be done to reverse this policy. At the time of independence the government evolved a rural area-oriented development policy that aimed at benefiting more people than hitherto... Another step the government undertook to contain and sustain *a viable rural development strategy* has been the establishment of the Rural Growth Centres Project... The essence of this project is to *contribute towards making life in the rural areas much easier for the people* there than it was before... They are designed to serve a total population of about 30, 000 people *some of whom would have drifted to towns* if these centres were not established there... The government's *agricultural policy* has been *the major driving force behind the improvement of life in the rural areas* which has also *kept the people on the land after realising the abundant benefits from farming...* All in all, *life in the rural areas has become much softer now* than it used to be before independence...

(Mhone, 1986:2-3)

(Italics mine)

The rural-urban migration was classified as a “problem of people drifting from rural areas to urban areas” to which the government’s solution was a “viable rural development strategy” that took many forms. The RGCP, as one facility of the rural development strategy contributed “towards making life in the rural areas much easier for the people” who otherwise “would have drifted to towns.” Thus the RGCs were serving a re-distributive purpose so the urban centres would not be overwhelmed. However, further down in the text it is clear that beyond the RGCP, the “agricultural policy” was the “major driving force” to keep the rural populations on farms in rural Malawi, contented with “the abundant benefits from farming.” The people who took to farming in the rural areas enjoyed a “softer” lifestyle through the rural development strategy. It comes out clearly from the foregoing that the anti-urban view weighed heavier than the urban view, even though the regrouping at RGCs was encouraged as it all the same served the agricultural strategy.

The purposes of rural development as a practice, when it was initially conceptualised after World War 2, is important to understand global as well as local ideological workings that here appear to justify the anti-urban view,

ironically incorporated in a growth centre notion. I particularly draw on Ellis and Biggs' (2001) account of changes that occurred in rural development thinking from the 1950s. After World War 2 urban development was a major element of post-colonial nation building projects. Until 1960s, the dominant modernisation development theory emphasised industrialisation, closely associated with urban growth, as the means for economic and social development. In this model, the rural population was considered to be a reservoir for industry and commercial farming. In fact, Jerve (2001:91) states that "Rural development was promoted only to the extent needed to reproduce labour, and later to stem the exodus of rural poor to the cities." Thus, in the case of Malawi, the workings of global ideological shifts were influencing the policies, most probably through aid conditionalities. Although in post-independence Malawi industrial activity was extremely low, references to "small scale" industry as part of the RGCP, were part of motions of global ideological forces. Dr Banda's choice of the agricultural strategy to Malawi's development necessitated mechanisms to have the labour in rural Malawi to be retained *in situ* for commercial agriculture.

According to Jerve (2001) the dependency school of the 1960s and 1970s severely critiqued the dual economy development strategies, raising two main objections. One of them was that urban centres thrived on the exploitation of rural areas, preventing them from taking advantage of their own development potential. The other objection, the "urban bias" view, was that most governments' policies in trade, taxation, tariff and sector investment deprived rural areas of resources and infrastructure. Responding to this critique, rural development became a priority into the 1980s (the time of the RGCP) to try to make up for years of rural neglect. Along with this concern were two important shifts in development paradigms opposed to modernisation and "trickle-down" economic theories. One was the formulation of a rights-based approach to human welfare supported by the doctrine of 'basic needs' – itself by no means an unproblematic concept. The other shift was the advocating of the agriculture sector as the economic activity that would enable growth in developing countries, encouraged by the Japanese and South Korean

experiences (see Jerve, 2001:91). It was argued that agricultural surplus production was not merely a means to feed a growing urban population; it also generates demand for industrial products and knowledge which stimulate economic growth and urban development. This, it would appear, was a reversed picture; rural development was said to lead to urban development. Such notions can be traced in the growth centres' conceptualisation, most notably after the pilot phase. I illustrate this from a public communication text below.

TEXT 7I

[Extract from: Mwansambo Rural Growth Centre brings social and economic change, *This is Malawi* Vol. 16.]

MWANSAMBO RURAL GROWTH CENTRE BRINGS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE

The Mwansambo proposed Rural Growth Centre as part of Malawi's National Programme of rural centres (NPRC) [sic] is aimed at providing *selected areas in the country with integrated facilities and permanent structures to meet the fundamental needs of the rural population and boost agricultural production and trade in rural areas...*

It will also establish in the process an efficient settlement pattern which will be able to support and stimulate rural productivity, growth and trade...

To provide and improve social and economic services in the rural area and to improve social and economic linkages between rural and urban areas...

(Kumanga, 1986:6-7)

(Italics mine)

From the text above we note that the "selected areas in the country" were known to have certain potential to enable development activity that would attract a population to the centre, but intercept the population from drifting further to urban centres. In the case of Malawi, considerations of agricultural potential ranked highest, as we have noted previously. Furthermore, reference to "establish[ing]...an efficient settlement pattern...that would support and stimulate...rural productivity, growth and trade" evokes associations of unresolved conceptual dilemma that the RGC strategy is associated with – an instrument of neoclassical efficiency that is saddled with welfare concerns. However, the text is abundantly clear about the view it

takes of the urban-rural divide. The RGC was meant to “improve social and economic linkages between rural and urban areas.”

Lamb (1991:19) observes that, although the centres have been referred to variably as “rural growth centre”, “rural service centre” and “rural centre”:

‘first phase’ centres under the Rural Growth Centres project were, in practice, rural service centres aimed at ‘balancing’ the provision of basic services and the majority of which have experienced little or no growth since they were established, while... ‘second phase’ growth centre development was switched to locations with economic growth potential in already growing trading centres.

In view of these observations, I argue that the variable use of the terms/notions of centres was not a show of ignorance; rather this was a discursive resource for the government of the day to project a picture of industrial stimulation in relation to the centres when, in reality, the government wanted to support the agricultural strategy as the chosen means for Malawi’s socio-economic change. This argument finds support in Lamb’s (1991) report which points out four problems that the centres faced by the mid 1980s, namely: low level of utilisation, insufficient maintenance of infrastructure and facilities, inadequate participation by local community in centre development and activities, and poor management. Lamb (1991:13) attributes these problems to:

failure to plan from the inception of the rural growth centre initiative an effective management organisation with an adequate and buoyant revenue base from which to finance its expenditure needs and responsibilities.

I argue that the failure to plan for the centres’ own up-keep and advancement was influenced by government’s preoccupation with tobacco estates that were producing a cash crop for export, and it hoped that the rural growth center would be spurred on by the prosperity of the labour intensive estates, and simultaneously play a supportive role in the respective rural area.

Conclusion

The analysis has shown that though the RGCP was represented largely as a catalyst of industrial development, in practical terms it was reduced to a facilitative tool for the chosen agricultural strategy for Malawi's socio-economic change. It has been shown also that the empiricist repertoire – of the disinterested expert who lays down 'facts' – was used to present the RGCP concept document. This included presenting a method of analysis that purported participation of the local inhabitants to spell out what the RGCP would be expected to meet in terms of the developmental needs of the area. However, the discourse analysis has shown that the said local participation was more a 'tokenistic display' than anything else. Area analysis was based on agricultural and demographic data, while choice of centre locations were influenced by politics and not on expert decisions, nor choice of the local inhabitants.

The analysis has also attempted to show that particularly the pilot phase of the RGCP was associated with vacillation in terms of which rural-urban divide view was being promoted. Although some reviewers viewed this as a planning and design dilemma, I have argued that it pertains more to problems of transferring blueprint development (Roe, 1991) to contexts that may be hardly relevant. In the case of emergent African states, and Malawi, in particular, gross shortage of trained personnel to run government was already a problem; to imagine that rural Malawi would have the workforce to attract or support an industrial thrust was unrealistic at that date. In the wake of colonialism, neither the modern structures and requisite skilled personnel were established nor did traditional structures survive the deliberate effort to either destabilise or totally erode them. Thus, the wholesale growth economic theory argot was transferred to a context where it hardly had any relevance in terms of the socio-economic realities on the ground. The momentum of the agricultural strategy in Malawi is historically shaped. In the circumstances, any other approaches to socio-economic change were to be subservient to the agricultural strategy or be relegated to a distant future.

7.3 The Language of Multiple Purposes: A Micro-discourse Analysis

Introduction

In this part of the analysis the main interest is to point out linguistic features that were instrumental to the construction of RGC's non-conspicuous subservience to the agricultural strategy. Following the main issues in the rhetorical analysis above, there are two focal areas for the linguistic analysis. The first examines the depiction of the various social actors, namely government and the rural population. The interest in this is to examine categorisation and roles that are assigned to the different actors, and the discursive functionality of the categories and their roles. Secondly, to examine linguistic resources for construction of non-conspicuous agricultural purposes in the RGCP, the analysis will look at the make-believe inclusive language in the objectives and functions of RGCs, and the resources of communicative dynamism in information structure for accomplishing focussing or defocussing of particular information.

The notion of communicative dynamism in utterances or sentences is usually associated with systemic functional linguistics. The Prague School of Linguistics is acknowledged to have developed the first theories of **new** and **given** information which have since been named variously as *theme-rheme*; *topic-comment*; *old-new* (See Halliday, 1967); focus – presupposition (see Jackendoff, 1972); old-new (see Chafe, 1974, and 1976); context dependent – context independent (see Spenader, 1997). According to the notion of communicative dynamism, the given part of the sentence has the lowest degree of communicative dynamism whereas the new has the greatest degree. According to Halliday (1967) **given - new** in English functions at the level of the clause, and **given** items always precede **new** items in a clause, unless the **new - given** combination is intended to be a marked case, or where the sentence or utterance is all **new** information. Whereas Danes (1974) has suggested a broad scheme of principles for determining given information, such as identical wording, synonymous expression, paraphrase, and semantic inference, Nwogu (1995:4) has suggested more explicit and precise additional guidelines as follows.

1. Treat as *Given* an initial item in an utterance which corresponds with the grammatical subject plus any other information which can be deemed recoverable from preceding context.
2. Treat as *Given* any item which functions as connector, e.g. and, however, so, which includes a content item or information recoverable from preceding context.
3. Treat as *Given* an opening adverbial word or phrase, an opening participle phrase, the whole of a dependent clause, an existential there, a formal it, and their accompanying content items.
4. Treat as *Given* the *WH*-element in polar questions and New the *WH*-element in non-polar question.

For purposes of this analysis, I adopt Nwogu's (1995) scheme for determining communicative dynamism in the excerpts that I examine.

Representing Social Actors: Lexical and Structural Devices

Fowler (1991) and Potter (1996) have shown that description can be constructed to perform specific action. Potter (1996:111) asserts that apart from routinising or exceptionalising action, "A central feature of any description is its role in categorization; a description formulates some object or event as something; it constitutes it as a thing and a thing with specific qualities." Fowler (1991) positions language centrally in processes of categorisation as he asserts that "Language provides names for categories, and so helps to set their boundaries and relationships; and discourse allows these names to be spoken and written frequently, so contributing to the apparent reality and currency of the categories"(p94). Such action-oriented description was an important discursive resource in the conceptualisation of the RGCP, as textual analysis below shows.

TEXT 7J

[Extract from: *Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre* concept document]

This analysis has been **approached** in three stages. The first and **most important one** involved the **local community represented by Chiefs, Village Headmen, Ward Councillors, Party Leaders, MPs, Teachers, Medical, Agricultural Staff and others**. At the occasion of a field trip lasting about one week for each centre all these representatives have been **interviewed** and asked about their views of the development problems of the area concerned and about the proposals for facilities required in a Rural Growth Centre.

- II -

*At the second stage District Officials of all Ministries and Departments **have been approached at the occasion of the field trip to obtain more general information about the centre and surrounding places.***

*Finally statistical data information on planning norms and ongoing development programmes in and near to the Growth Centres **could be obtained from Ministries and Departments at Central Government level in Lilongwe, Blantyre and Zomba.***

(OPC & GTZ 1978:I – II)

(Italics and boldface mine)

In 7.1 above I have demonstrated that the concept document used an empiricist repertoire to present a factual and disinterested description of the RGCP. As such, the method of information gathering and other analyses were also provided for the reader to be able to evaluate the cogency of the document (and indeed the project). This portion of the text is, therefore, intended to function as a display of expert disinterestedness and participation of all stakeholders. There is a gradation of the stages of participative analysis that the text intends to portray. Of the three stages, the text refers to meetings with local community representatives as the “most important”. The superlative gradation functions to show that the RGCP espoused the principles of participatory development.

The text shows three categories of stakeholders as far as planning was concerned. The “most important” category was referred to as the “local community represented by Chiefs, Village Headmen, Ward Councilors, Party Leaders, MPs [Members of parliament], Teachers, Medical, agricultural Staff and others”. This broad category includes a range of people with different skills and authority in particular sectors of the community. Although set in a

different context and for different events, Potter (1996:135) discusses how “community leaders [are] treated as valuable informants.” Because of the rural orientation of the RGCP, expert knowledge of the planners alone would be regarded as rather far-fetched and out of touch, and ownership of the project by the local community jeopardised. This is because as much as knowledge entitlements can be built up, they can also be undermined in various ways; they are not “frozen parts of a social system” (Potter, 1996: 134). Thus the gradation of the consultative meetings is appropriating resources from social practice to represent the RGCP conceptualisation as crafted from authentic knowledge of community needs. This was important to have the RGCP accepted in the various areas, recalling from the rhetorical analysis in 7.1 above that the population that the RGCP directly intended to provide for were not local inhabitants, but the estate employees.

The other category of stakeholders includes civil servants at the district as well as central government levels. Their category entitlement positioned them as officers (experts) that were responsible for government projects that the RGCP was to work in collaboration with. The final set of stakeholders comprised the planners. Textually, they are not obviously present; their actions of “approach[ing]”, “interview[ing] and “obtain[ing]” are in passive constructions where agency is elided. According to Fairclough (2003) this set of stakeholders is suppressed, that is, it is not mentioned in the text. This, as we have discussed *passim*, was discursively important in the traditions of empiricist descriptive writing to show disinterestedness.

In public communication texts linguistic resources were used to depict an illusory all-inclusive category variably referred to as ‘people’, ‘rural population’, ‘people in rural Malawi’, or ‘the masses’ and their circumstances among which the RGCP was an appropriate intervention to effect socio-economic change. Materials in 7K and 7L illustrate this.

TEXT 7K

[Extract from: New chapter in development, *Malawi News* weekly]

The concept of rural growth centres with its emphasis on developing remote areas, **both** socially and economically, opens yet a **new chapter** in the **country's drive to better the living conditions and standards of the rural population...**

From the listed facilities which will be made available in all the centres, it can be seen that the project has a **human angle** which will **directly benefit the masses** by being within reach of social amenities essential for their social, economic and political development...

Bearing in mind the **great depths** that this concept of rural growth centres will reach in uplifting the living conditions of people in rural Malawi, by changing the image of what is probably negated by some people who **shallowly consider** living in area far from urban centres as **being dull...**

(New chapter in development, 1980:6)

(Boldface mine)

TEXT 7L

[Extract from: Malawi finds answer to urban migration, *This is Malawi* monthly]

Another step the government undertook to contain and sustain a viable rural development strategy has been the establishment of the Rural Growth Centres Project...Each rural growth centre...is expected to be self-contained with nearly all facilities or amenities available such as postal services, health and other social amenities as well as portable (*sic*) water to the **people living within the centre's boundaries.**

The essence of this project is to contribute towards making **life in the rural areas much easier for the people there** than it was before because *people would have things within easy reach.*

(Mhone, 1986:3)

(Italics and boldface mine)

In 7.1 above, I have argued that to appear like the RGCP was primarily meant for the local inhabitants, there were operational and discursive tools that were brought to bear on the processes. I have attempted to show that tokenistic consultations were operational processes of such moves. Discursively, in the concept document and, especially the public communication texts, the targeted beneficiaries of the RGCP were loosely defined; texts either made an

all-inclusive category that subsumed the real beneficiaries (estate employees), or switched between the all-inclusive category and the specific category of estate employees. This was functionally important to uphold the conventional notion of growth centres while in practical terms, the facility was meant for estate agriculture support. Thus generalist lexical references to whole populations, characteristic of media texts stereotyping, were an important resource to create a make-believe inclusiveness.

Other discursive resources that were used to describe circumstances and intervention measures are referred to, in their binary formulations, as extrematisation and minimisation, and normalisation and abnormalisation (see, for example, Potter 1996; and Edwards & Potter, 1992) which employ various lexical or phrasal modifiers or qualifiers. In **Text 7K** the metaphorical “human angle” of the project will not only benefit the masses, but does so “directly”. Furthermore, the effect of rural growth centres is viewed in terms of “great depths”. In **Text 7L**, life in rural areas is pictured as not only “easier”, but “much easier”. These are instances of extrematisation, which according to Potter (1996:187) “work persuasively to strengthen the case”, maximising the value of the RGC project for all people, within the project’s area of influence, as the all-inclusive versions put it. The case of minimisation is noted in **Text 7K**. The view that life in the rural is dull is minimised as *shallow*. This was a powerfully persuasive move aimed at keeping the rural folk either working on tobacco estates or their smallholder farms, producing the country’s food, as we note in **Text 7M** below.

TEXT 7M

[Extract from: Malawi finds answer to urban migration, *This is Malawi* monthly]

MALAWI FINDS ANSWER TO URBAN MIGRATION

In many developing countries, one of the most pressing problems today facing governments is the problem of people drifting from rural areas to urban areas...In other words, the colonial development policy was biased towards **towns where only few people lived...**

Something had to be done to reverse this policy. At the time of independence the government evolved a rural area-oriented development policy that aimed at benefiting more people than hitherto...

Another step the government undertook to contain and sustain **a viable rural development strategy** has been the establishment of the Rural Growth Centres Project...

The essence of this project is to *contribute towards making life in the rural areas much easier for the people* there than it was before...

They are designed to serve a total population of about 30, 000 people some of whom would have drifted to towns if these centres were not established there...

The government's **agricultural policy** has been **the major driving force behind the improvement of life in the rural areas** which has also kept the people on the land after **realising the abundant benefits from farming...**All in all, **life in the rural areas has become much softer now** than it used to be before independence...

(Mhone, 1986:2-3)

(Boldface and italics mine)

This text is contrasting the nationalist and the colonial governments' policies. Minimising the effectiveness of the colonial government's development policies, the criticism is that they pursued policies that would benefit "only few people". However, maximising the effectiveness of the nationalist government's efforts, the strategy was seen as "viable" making life in rural areas "much easier" for the people "there". This strategy that changed life in the rural areas was metaphorically impelled by the agricultural policy, represented as the "driving force". Thus agriculture kept people in the now 'improved' rural areas because people "realis[ed] the abundant benefits". From maximisation, the text closes on a normalising note. Whereas life in the rural areas has been associated stereotypically with the abnormalities of poverty, suffering and dullness (textually), the conclusion of the text assays to represent it as "much softer" due to the agriculture-led rural development policy. This was a powerful tool for persuading Malawians to agriculture in the

rural areas. This led to the privileging of agriculture which we have already discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Further cases of abnormalisation and normalisation are evident in the contrastive account of Mkhota before the RGCP and the prospects that the RGCP offered, in the excerpt below, **Text 7N**.

TEXT 7N

[Extract from: Mkhota is transformed, *This is Malawi* monthly.]

MKHOTA IS TRANSFORMED

Mkhota and the surrounding villages were in the past very remote and cut-off from any point of stable socio-economic centres in Kasungu District...

In all, Mkhota and the surrounding villages were poorly provided with basic services in the past...

Population of Mkhota and the surrounding villages is 6000...

People in the area depended on the two socio-economic centres of Santhe in Kasungu and Kapiri in Mchinji, which are 14 and 27 km away, respectively. And the self-help built road from Mkhota to Santhe was impassable during the rainy season due to dambo and deep river crossings.

There was *one school block with four classrooms at what was known as Mkhota full Primary School*, three temporary teachers' houses, two shelters for health services one of which was also used as a local court.

There was *one agricultural extension worker and his miserable house, before the birth of the rural growth centre* before the birth of the rural growth centre.

The school block was built years back by people from surrounding areas on a self-help basis.

In the commercial sector, there was *one maize mill, two groceries and two part-time carpenters*.

The Malawi government, with a German grant of K7.5 million, took up measures to develop Mkhota along with other 10 rural growth centres well spread in the three regions of the country.

(Chambala, 1983:7)

(Italics mine)

The narrative of poor provision of basic services to Mkhota and surrounding villages borders on the depiction of the absurd. The two socio-economic centres were too far (14 and 27 km) away, exacerbated by the poor condition of the road which would be "impassable during the rainy season." This means Mkhota and the surrounding villages were practically deprived of the services

and opportunities which a good number in the country had access to. Furthermore, the full primary school had four classrooms in one block. Being a self-help built block, the implication was that the structure was built without proper architectural standards. Teaching staff accommodation were “temporary” structures. The abnormality of the circumstances at the school is signalled by “what was known as Mkhota Full Primary School”. In short, the inadequacy of provisions made it sound outrageous to even call this school a “Full” primary school. The list of other abnormalities include the following. Instead of a decent medical clinic they used “shelters” for health services and at that, one shelter also served as a local court. The “one” agricultural extension worker serving a population of 6000 people had a “miserable house” for accommodation. The much commerce that was known around Mkhota’s 6000 population revolved around “one maize mill, two groceries and two part-time carpenters”. The narrative’s normalisation is accomplished as a contrastive listing of the facilities which the RGCP provided with projections of rising populations that would respond to the socio-economic potential of the RGCP and its hinterland. This is attributed to the “Malawi Government” that “took up measures to develop Mkhota.” The government is represented as the activated actor while the population at Mkhota and in the surrounding villages were passivated; that is, things were made to happen to, or for them (Fairclough, 2003).

Agriculture as a Non-explicit Agenda: Focussing and Defocussing

It has been argued in 7.1 above that due to two main discursive features RGCP’s engagement with agriculture was not obvious from its objectives. One of the features was the depiction of the illusory all-inclusive category of beneficiaries of the RGCP while the other was the embedding of the agricultural purposes within the industrial thrust representation of the purposes and functions of the RGCP. This section of the analysis examines discursive resources that are used to focus and defocus either agricultural purposes, or notions of industrial thrust, particularly in the RGCP concept document. The primary discursive resource used to achieve this was

information structuring, employing syntactical tools to focus or defocus chunks of information as analysis of **Text 70** demonstrates.

TEXT 70

[Extract from: *Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre* concept document]

[1] The report is composed of two main paragraphs. The first one (Regional Assessment) contains the analysis of the area in which the centre is located. [2] Apart from information gathered from local people and representatives and from direct visual observations, the regional assessment is based primarily on demographic and agricultural datas which are a most useful source to distinguish the specific characteristics of the planning area.

(OPC & GTZ 1978:III)

(Underlining and italics mine)

Sentence [2] in the excerpt is discursively important as it defocuses the importance of planning contribution made by local people and focuses the primacy of agricultural data. While a *prima facie* reading may acknowledge the mentioning of the contribution of local representatives, the information focus is on agricultural and demographic data. Syntactically, occurring sentence-initially, "Apart from" as a prepositional adverb phrase, is used primarily in disjuncts, according to (Jackson, 1982:80). In this case, "Apart from" is introducing a dependent clause that has content information that is recoverable from the previous text (i.e. consultation with local representatives), rendering it a **Given** part of the sentence (Nwogu, 1995), which in principles of communicative dynamism has low information value. The latter clause, pointing out the use of the agricultural (and demographic) data, therefore, is the focus of the writer/planner. Commercial agriculture (tobacco estates) gains discursive ground while appearing as only one of the provisions within the broad envisioning of the growth centre. Although the planners made reference to local contribution in the text, using principles of information structure, the elevation of agriculture can be critically read. The other instances of focussing on the agricultural link, and defocussing other information follow a similar pattern, as we see in the following analyses.

TEXT 7P

[Extract from: *Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre* concept document]

Further extensions of the estates are likely to take place because of uncultivated land still being available in the area and also because of the existence of further applications for estate land there.[1]

Major constraints of the MBALACHANIDA estate development in the long term are fire-wood supply, water supply, and communication services. For example, under the given circumstances the estates are only able to operate up to 8 or 10 years with the given amount of firewood.[2]

Apart from the estate development, the economy of the area will be strengthened by agricultural projects aimed at the smallholder development and carried out by the Malawi Government such as the Mzimba (Rukuru/Kasitu) Rural Development Project and the North West Mzimba Smallholder Settlement Scheme. [3]

The estate development, however, might limit the amount of additional land that can be used for smallholder agriculture in the area west of SOUTH RUKURU river.[4]

(OPC & GTZ 1978:IV)

(Underlining and boldface mine)

The inconspicuous discursive advantage of commercial agriculture in the planning of the RGCP can also be detected in **Text 7P** above. While sentences [1] and [2] clearly position Mbalachanda (the location of the RGC) as a reserve for the tobacco estates with expansion plans, sentence [3] is a tactical toning down to create this make-believe all inclusive development push. The use of the disjunct “Apart from” in the dependent clause bearing information on estate agriculture as recoverable content, is a discursive tool for defocussing the stress on estate agriculture, which is above the means of local inhabitants. The import from this text is that the local inhabitants are also part of this development push. The upshot of sentence [4] takes the reader back to the dominance of tobacco estate agriculture in the whole RGCP arrangement at Mbalachanda. The twist that the concessive conjunct “however” (Quirk *et al*, 1972) accomplishes in the discourse shows that tobacco estate agriculture will leave little room, if any, for any meaningful smallholder participation in the economy. Thus a *prima facie* reading may lead to an understanding in which smallholder agriculture (which local inhabitants can participate in) is given due regard while a more critical reading may expose the discursive disadvantage of the smallholder farmer in the

RGCP – tobacco estate agriculture marriage at Mbalachanda. This point is further strengthened as the estates are credited with the economic and social change that Mbalachanda had experienced to warrant consideration for the RGCP. This point is again discursively managed as examples in **Text 7Q** show.

TEXT 7Q

[Extract from: *Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre* concept document]

ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

In the last years development activities in the agricultural field took place in some parts of MZIMBA District. [2] **Apart from Smallholder development activities carried out by the Malawi Government, *the tobacco estate development in MBALACHANDA area on a private basis*** has influenced the economic and social structure of the area considerably. [3] This new area of employment has attracted a high number of people to the area especially male persons in the working age group.¹ [4] Large areas of former bushland are under cultivation now for cash crop production.

[5] In 1975 SPEARHEAD ENTERPRISES started with the operation of large scale tobacco estates in the area west of SOUTH RUKURU River.[6] This area offered ideal conditions for development in this field because of the availability of huge areas of uncultivated bushland with suitable soil for tobacco cultivation. [7] In addition, the bushland is a source of firewood which is necessary for the curing process of flue-cured tobacco.

[8] Now MBALACHANDA area is officially reserved for tobacco estate development.

[9] Since 1975 almost 30 estates have been opened by private owners. [10] Up to now the total acreage of the MBALACHANDA Tobacco Estates is about 45,000 acres with plots in the range of 700 to more than 3800 acres per estate.

(OPC & GTZ 1978:8)
(Underlining, italics, bold mine and numbering mine)

In sentence [2] as in text P above, the Given – New structure that the disjunct “Apart from” (Quirk *et al*, 1972:329) introduces in the dependent clause (bold) was discursively used here to de-emphasise the smallholder farmer’s role in social and economic change that Mbalachanda experienced prior to the RGCP. Rather the focus was on the tobacco estates and the labouring employment they were credited for. This was important to justify why the RGC at Mbalachanda was to serve the tobacco estates more than, if not

rather than, the local inhabitants who public communication texts and the concept document purported to have been targeted for social and economic change. Sentences [3] to [7] continue to tell the story of estates which culminate in sentence [8] that shows the absolute sway that tobacco has over the lands in Mbalachanda. Smallholder agriculture or other development that form part of the notion of rural growth centre are out of the picture. This was a continuation of the inconspicuous tobacco estate purpose that the RGCs were to serve while appearing to be a facility for the generic rural poor, the local inhabitant.

Another discursive resource that was instrumental in constructing a make-believe all-inclusive RGCP while the tobacco estate agriculture motives loomed large in the project was to narrow the focus by use of a particularisation tool, the explicit indicators of apposition (Quirk *et al*, 1972:627). The two texts below serve to exemplify this discursive resource.

TEXT 7R

[Extract from: *Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre* concept document]

Function of the Rural Growth Centre

[1] *The new MBALACHANDA RGC will provide the basic services lacking in the area in terms of social and other infrastructural facilities in order to improve the living conditions of the population, i.e. mainly the growing number of estate labourers, and to support the economic development taking place there.*

[2] By this the RGC pursues the following basic objectives:

- to provide the basis for the settlement of a permanent labour force
- to stop the out-migration from the area and
- to support non-farm activities, and small-scale industry.

[3] The RGC will be the major central place for *the whole area west of SOUTH RUKURU River*. [4] The population expected to use the facilities of the RGC is at present probably 15,000 and will have increased to more than 40,000 in 1985

(OPC & GTZ 1978:VII)

(Underlining, italics and bold mine)

The text continues with a characteristic generalised promise to many people and the wide area when the targeted beneficiary was estate agriculture as

well as those associated with it. Sentence [1] is inclusive in services that the RGC was to provide in “the area” to improve living conditions of the “population”. Sentence [3] is also inclusive in the space that the RGC was to serve, “ the whole area west of SOUTH RUKURU River.” Here also, a *prima facie* reading would give the impression of an all-embracing social and economic development programme. However, the particularisation that the appositive of sentence [1] accomplishes, signalled by the abbreviated form of “that is”, shows that this RGC project was meant for “mainly the growing number of estate labourers “ and the tobacco estate commercial agriculture which was referred to as the “economic development taking place there”. It is in this light that the “population” referred to in sentence [4] is understood – the numbers of farm labourers that were seeking seasonal as well as more permanent employment. Similarly, in **Text 7S** below, the suggestion of an industrial thrust that the RGC notion espouses in the classical economic terms, suggested by the provision of workshops in the text, is reduced to agricultural concerns by another particularisation tool “especially”.

Text 7S

[Extract from *Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre* concept document]

Proposals:

Under the Rural Growth Centre Project the provision of workshops for skills of different type is proposed **especially for the service of the agricultural sector**.

For MBALACHANDA centre the building of 3 workshops is recommended.

According to the requests we recommend the provision of workshops for a blacksmith, for metalwork and carpentry preferably by integrating graduates from SALIMA Trade School and involving the agricultural extension service. Further discussions have to take place between the relevant Ministries/institutions (MOLG, MANR, MOTIT, MOYC) in order to find out the most optimal solution on the organizational, administrative and financial side of the workshop scheme.

(OPC & GTZ 1978:44 - 45)

(Underlining and boldface mine)

Although in the co-text the workshops provided for such trades/skills as blacksmiths, metalworkers, and carpenters, it would appear the goal was not to develop these trades in their own right as economic activities for growth, but to serve the smallholder agricultural enterprise as an assistance to the

NRDP which did not have these provisions in place. However, it would appear nothing concrete was put in place as “Further discussions [had] to take place between relevant ministries.” We have noted in 7.1 above that the skills that were present by 1991 were only rudimentary, probably just about enough to service basic agricultural tools such as draught drawn ploughs and ridgers, and ox-carts; there was no industrial thrust out of this workshop scheme.

Conclusion

In this part of the chapter I have shown how linguistic resources were used to accomplish several discursive tasks in the conceptualisation of the RGCP. Categorisation of social actors, namely the government and the rural poor, was accomplished through lexical devices. The planners were not textually obvious. Manipulation of structural resources, such as transitivity, were instrumental in backgrounding this category of social actors. Another discursive feature that was examined was the illusory all-inclusive conceptualisation of participants in planning, and beneficiaries while the participation was tokenistic and the intended beneficiaries were practically those associated with tobacco estates. Such discursive tools as the binary extrematisation and minimalisation, and normalisation and abnormalisation and principles of information dynamism were instrumental. By use of these, broad categories were created and the intended categories were also specified. This gave the impression that the purposes of neoclassical economic notions of industrial thrust associated with growth centres were kept intact in the RGCP, while the estate agricultural motivations remained not obviously recoverable textually. This was a persuasive tool for justifying the RGCP intervention in remote areas, while the undercurrent of tobacco estates provided the motivation and momentum for the RGCP.

7.4 Conclusion: Linguistic Representation and Developmental Purposes

In the two parts that comprise this chapter I have shown both the rhetorical and linguistic resources that went into a dual representation of the RGCP as bearing conventional notions of growth centres while agricultural motivations

that impelled the project, particularly the Mbalachanda RGC, remained subliminal, textually. In the rhetorical analysis I have particularly attempted to demonstrate that in the RGCP, especially the concept document, the empiricist repertoire was instrumental in carrying forward the disinterested expert's notions that suggested an illusory participatory approach to the conceptualisation of the whole project and the inclusiveness of purposes as well as beneficiaries.

In the more nuanced linguistic analysis, I have tried to show that various lexical and structural resources were instrumental in depicting various discursive features of the concept document and public communication texts. In particular, constructions of categories of social actors and their roles and keeping the depiction of agricultural motives textually subliminal was enabled by manipulations of principles of communicative dynamism, and various lexical devices working within the empiricist repertoire. The illusory all-inclusive participation and beneficiaries were particularly accomplished through the discursive lexical extrematisation and minimalisation on one hand, and on the other, the lexical tools for normalisation and abnormalisation. This also accomplished justification of the RGCP intervention which practically served (tobacco estate) agricultural ends.

In the main, what my analysis highlights is that the RGCP was not so much a case of design dilemma. Rather, the notions of the growth centre as an efficiency tool as opposed to an equity tool worked against the more established and imposing agricultural strategy. To keep the face of conventional growth centres, the conceptualisation of the RGCP was double barrelled in the sense that while the agricultural motivations that impelled it loomed large, the conventional growth centre purposes assumed textual prominence. Discursive tools were instrumental in managing the delicate textual duality of social actors, purposes and beneficiaries, while at the same time appearing to be singular in the same.

CHAPTER 8

DEVELOPMENT AND HEGEMONY

8.1 Introduction

Appropriation of successful development programmes and the socio-economic change they bring about in the lives of the citizenry for political legitimisation by governments is not an uncommon occurrence in Malawian social life (Chilowa *et al*, 2001). Thus, as much as the development agenda is seen to have primarily socio-economic bearings, it has been used subtly as a hegemonic resource to promote a beneficent image of ruling parties and their governments and also to entrench their position. Examination of hegemonic discourses of the ruling classes of post-independence Malawi shows that the development agenda was subtly used as such a socio-cultural resource. Of discursive interest in this analysis are oblique requisites within the development agenda; the populist appeal that proffered a nationalist persuasive strategy to development as opposed to the colonialist's coercion, and an illusory sense of empowerment of the people. Two points need brief explication before examination of texts. The first is pointing out pertinent elements of Gramsci's notion of hegemony that I find relevant for contextualising oblique references of the development agenda in the post-independence Malawi socio-political climate. The second is a brief socio-political context of Malawi at about the time of independence to put the hegemonic operations in a proper perspective.

8.2 Some Elements of Gramsci's Hegemony

Harshé (1997) points to the elasticity as well as complexity of Gramsci's concept of hegemony. Its elasticity is in its capacity to be applied widely

For instance, the concept of hegemony can be deployed in the domestic socio-political context of any state as well as in the context of any dominant mode of production such as capitalism that cuts across the boundaries of states, nations and regions (pp149-150).

The complexity of the concept is noted in the various elements of the socio-political practice that Gramsci attempted to understand in various socio-political formations of his time. Although I will not look at the totality of his

concept, some key elements are worth pointing out. According to Harshé (1997) one of the complexities of the concept of hegemony are its two interrelated and dialectically interactive dimensions, involving the material base that sustains the hegemony and the superstructure that provides space to legitimise the hegemony. These lead to a “moral and philosophical leadership’...which is attained through the active consent of major groups in a society” (Bocock, 1986:11). According to Gramsci (1971), the ideological and organisational functions that work within these dimensions, especially the superstructure, are accomplished by intellectuals (‘functionaries’) who are also subdivided into traditional and organic intellectuals. The ‘organic intellectuals’ are instrumental in performing mediating functions for the dominant class in the class struggle forces. According to Harshé (1997:160) Gramsci theorised that apart from the organic intellectuals, the category of traditional intellectuals “represent[ed] an essential social group from preceding economic structure [that gave] historical continuity to the intellectuals as a social group.” The ‘functionaries’ operate within two major superstructural levels, namely: ‘civil society’ “that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called ‘private’, and that of ‘political society’ or ‘the State’” (Gramsci, 1971:12). Furthermore, in exercising the function of social ‘hegemony’, which the dominant group exercises throughout the society, and ‘direct domination’ or command exercised through the State and ‘juridical’ government, two sides to hegemony are identified.

1. The ‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is ‘historically’ caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.
2. The apparatus of state coercive power which ‘legally’ enforces discipline on those groups who do not ‘consent’ either actively or passively. This apparatus is, however, constituted for the whole of society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed (Gramsci, 1971:12).

Thus, in Gramsci’s formulation of hegemony, consent was an important feature for hegemony to prevail; coercion was to be used marginally in deviant cases (see Bocock, 1986, and Harshé, 1997).

A Gramscian reading of the post-independence Malawi context is relevant for two major reasons. The first is that the victory of the nationalist government was partly a result of the record of coercion associated with the colonial period. The aspiring nationalist government was keen, therefore, to take full advantage of this weakness on the part of the colonial administration to legitimise itself and to keep the loyalty of the citizenry. The second is that because of the cabinet crisis which led to exiling dissident cabinet ministers, and the ensuing brief and weak armed revolts that were brutally crushed, the moral standing of the Malawi Congress Party Government and Dr Banda's leadership underwent consolidation that used a combination of coercion and consent concurrently. The development agenda provided a rich arena for the interplay of these hegemonic workings. Before examining these workings in detail, a brief account of the 1964 cabinet crisis to locate the analysis in context, is necessary.

1964-65 Malawi Cabinet Crisis

The story of the Nyasaland/Malawi 1964 cabinet crisis is well documented (see for example Joffe, 1973; Morton, 1975; Short, 1974 and Williams, 1978). After the Malawi Congress Party's landslide victory in the 1961 Nyasaland General election, Nyasaland was given self-governing status in 1963, with Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda as its Prime Minister. Although the Central African (Rhodesia and Nyasaland) Federation broke up, the British government was yet to be satisfied the nationalist government would manage the new nation. Out of a common overriding interest among indigenous Malawians to free Nyasaland from colonial domination, Dr Banda and his associates were all keen to demonstrate capability to run the affairs of the state for Nyasaland's/Malawi's eventual independent and republican status, bearing in mind the glaringly poor example of the Congo that was torn apart by civil war (Short, 1974). In the circumstances, differences between Dr Banda and his lieutenants were carefully suppressed. There were four main sources of tension between Dr Banda and his ministers. One area of difficulty lay in Dr Banda's autocratic style of leadership. Williams (1978) asserts that the congress leadership that invited Dr Banda to take up leadership of the party in

the fight against colonial domination was partly to blame for Banda's later autocratic tendencies that they became uncomfortable with. Judging that they needed a hero figure for mass revolution, the congress leadership ambivalently constructed a demi-god image of Banda as a man who was never wrong and knew the best in public, while they hoped to contain his human failings within the circles of the leadership. Williams (1978:206) notes that one of the ministers who went into exile after the crisis was on record in the legislative assembly that he did not see anything wrong with dictatorship and that he looked forward to the removal of all traces of opposition. What started out as a strategy to deal a serious blow to the colonial forces turned into a recipe for an autocracy, soon after attainment of self-government in 1963. As Williams (1978:213) asserts, "Dr Banda had become more rather than less insistent that he alone would make all decisions and made it clear in the most humiliating terms that he was not under any obligation to consider the views of his subordinates." Another source of tension between Dr Banda and his ministers was foreign policy, especially new Malawi's relations with white governments of Mozambique and apartheid South Africa, and the question of recognising mainland China. Whereas Dr Banda was prepared to have closer ties with the Portuguese in Mozambique and apartheid South Africa, his lieutenants preferred determined support of African struggle against these regimes. Peking, which had diplomatic ties with Tanzania, made offers to new Malawi of GBP 6million and later GBP18 million for recognition. Short (1974) argues that although it appeared that Dr Banda refused to take up these offers as a result of ideological alignment with Britain and the Western bloc, there was evidence that Dr Banda felt that these offers came out of the personal initiative of his foreign affairs minister, with whom Dr Banda had little in common on foreign policy, and recognition of Mainland China would have undermined his leadership. Another source of tension between Banda and his subordinates was over the slow rate of Africanisation. While Banda's subordinates wanted to carry out their campaign promises of rapid Africanisation of the civil service,

Banda much admired the traditions of the British civil service and was wary of overhastily promoting locally based officers, having witnessed in Ghana the corruption and inefficiency to which this could lead (Short, 1974:199).

This issue also affected the civil service in the capital Zomba and main commercial town of Blantyre. White and indigenous members of the civil service reacted differently to this. The white expatriate civil service felt unsafe if the ideas of the ministers were to succeed. The indigenous civil service was unhappy with Dr Banda, and when the crisis broke out, the civil service and educated Malawians, in general, protested violently in support of the dismissed ministers. The indigenous members of the civil service were also unhappy with Dr Banda's readiness to adopt the Skinner Report that "recommended economies in the pay and conditions offered to locally based civil servants" (Short 1974:199). Another source of tension was Dr Banda's institution of a compulsory charge of a tickey (threepence) for hospital outpatients.

On 6 July 1964 Nyasaland became the independent state of Malawi. In less than two months the tensions erupted into a confrontation between Dr Banda and his ministers. Dr Banda dismissed three of the senior ministers while three others resigned in protest. Several months of political unrest followed, during which Dr Banda made several constitutional changes to enable him to use restrictive measures, such as preventive detention, reminiscent of the frantic moves of colonial authorities earlier on against his own Nyasaland African Congress (that turned to be the Malawi Congress Party) (Short, 1974:221). Following an armed invasion led by one of the ex-ministers in February 1965, which the armed forces crushed quickly, Dr Banda made several purges in the cabinet, the party and in the regions where the ex-ministers came from. He appointed new people to his cabinet, in key civil service appointments and in the party hierarchy who were now personally loyal to him. Some traditional authorities such as chiefs were deposed, and district councils in the regions where the ex-ministers came from were dissolved. Besides, Dr Banda strengthened the Malawi Young Pioneers to entrench his power, as Short (1974:229) states "parliament passed the Young Pioneers Act, which made the movement an integral and equal part of the security forces." As such, the Malawi Young Pioneers, according to Williams (1978:227) "were able to embark upon a reign of terror which...went unchecked by army and police; unless the police had first received personal

permission from the president.” This was only part of what Banda had built to entrench himself as Harrigan (2001:31-32) describes

a personal network of support and control which was independent of the party organisation, developing a comprehensive private and informal structure of control with channels of information and command outside the formal party hierarchy.

Thus by the end of the political unrests in 1965, with the ex-ministers all in exile, Dr Banda emerged the victor. He now went about consolidating his power and young Malawi's statehood. With the euphoria over the collapse of the federation and now victory over his rebel ministers, Banda tactfully used common grievances and victories to his advantage for a long time to legitimise himself and his government. By denouncing the colonialists and inciting fear of invasion of dissident ministers, Dr Banda penetrated Malawi society with his political ideology that worked towards hegemony in the Gramscian sense. However, there was more to his means of legitimising himself and his government. According to Harrigan (2001:31) “Legitimacy was forged by an astute combination of coercion, political patronage, traditionalism, personal charisma, and a populist appeal, which reached all strata of Malawian society.” Harrigan (2001) further asserts that in the 1970s Dr Banda consolidated his position by the populist appeal, “based on continued criticism and exposure of hardships faced by all groups under the colonial regime” (p31). I argue that the populist appeal had two sides to it. One side was his denunciation of the colonial regime coupled with the alternative development agenda that he proffered in contrast to the colonial authorities. The other side was the illusory empowerment of the local people, as exemplified in one of his addresses (which he made after a sharp disagreement with his foreign minister over Nyasaland's close association with white ruled Mozambique):

You, the common people are the real Malawi Congress Party. Watch everybody! Even ministers – and I tell you when they are present here...If they do what you do not think is good for the Malawi Congress Party...come and tell me. It is your job to see that nothing injures or destroys the Party...I am saying this because I know we have strange funny people here very soon, Ambassador for this country, Ambassador for that country, and they will be trying to corrupt people in the Party, and they will be starting with Ministers and members of the National Assembly (Short, 1974:203-204).

For purposes of this chapter Dr Banda's references to the development agenda to legitimise himself and the Malawi Congress Party Government are examined. Dr Banda made use of this socio-cultural resource soon after his victory over his dissident ministers when he announced that Chipembere, who led an abortive armed revolt in February 1965, had finally ended up in the US. As a conclusion of his May 21 nationwide radio broadcast, Dr Banda evoked his determination to develop Malawi:

Chipembere, Chiume, Chirwa, Chisiza, Bwanausi and Chokani have wasted our time and efforts since August 26... Now that Chipembere and all the others have run away, let us concentrate our minds, our thoughts, our efforts on nothing else but development, and not on bitterness, hatred or vengeance (Short, 1974:230).

Such references to development as this, used as a means of winning consent of the various classes that formed the Malawi polity for hegemonic purposes, will be examined in detail.

8.3 Uses of the Development Agenda: Hegemonic Rhetoric

My interest in the textual analysis is in examining the rhetorical resource that development provided to consolidate Dr Banda's authoritarian rule and his Malawi Congress Party (hereafter MCP) Government. Because texts are from different sources as opposed to single documents, the analysis examines the rhetoric and the linguistic tools concurrently under particular micro-themes to capture the import of the texts.

Development: A Libertarian Ideology

My main contention is that concerns of political legitimation seemed to override the practical issues of bringing the citizenry to a level of awareness of the complexities of the nation's development agenda beyond the immediate euphoria of liberation from colonial domination and its many evils. Furthermore, this state of affairs persisted for a long time in Dr Banda's thirty-year reign and this may have been a contributing factor to the limiting of

emergence of innovative and reflective approaches to development among the people. As Joffe (1973:85) indicates, "This theme of colonial neglect is a constant refrain in Parliament and on the hustings and is highlighted on all ceremonial occasions in which a review of the achievements of independence is appropriate." Some political pronouncements are exemplars of this. (See **Texts 8A and 8B.**)

TEXT 8A

[Extract from: *State Address: Opening of the Parliament of Malawi*, Tuesday 3rd October, 1967]

INTRODUCTORY

When I last addressed you in July, 1966, on the day that Malawi became a Republic, I stressed then that the task *of freeing this country from economic dependence on other countries* would be a hard and difficult one; and I reminded you that **the qualities of unity, loyalty, obedience, discipline and determination** would be more necessary than ever before.

(Ministry of Information, 1967:1)

(Italics, boldface and underlining mine)

Text 8A above is an excerpt of a long account of what government had done, and the proposals it had for socio-economic development. It is clear that at that date the undercurrent of all developmental programmes was eventual self-reliance, that is "freeing [the] country from economic dependence on other countries". This notion was not unique to Dr Banda; Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, as well as other African leaders of emergent African states, shared the same notion. For example, Nyerere in his 1968 paper 'Freedom and Development' posits that "without freedom you get no development, and without development you very soon lose your freedom" (Nyerere, 1973:58). However, in Dr Banda's address, there are requisites to attainment of this liberty, namely "the qualities of unity, loyalty, obedience, discipline and determination" which were meant to satisfy his style of traditional leadership more than they would contribute to innovation for socio-economic change. Since his return to Nyasaland in 1958 to fight for Nyasaland's secession from

the Rhodesia-Nyasaland Federation, and his ascendancy to the Nyasaland African Congress's presidency, Dr Banda established this dictum that he expected everyone to follow to the letter. Joffe (1973) has dealt at length with "this logo of Banda's regime" (p52). She observes that

Enshrined in the Constitution of the Malawi Congress Party, displayed on banners heralding national political events, reaffirmed with ferocious regularity in the resolutions of party conferences, attributed with the victories of the past, invoked as the "four cornerstones" on which the future depends – "Unity, Loyalty, Obedience and Discipline" are among the essential rhetorical standards of Banda's regime...The assumption underlying the four cornerstones was clear: a movement waging war for political liberation required the same rigorous unity and unquestioning obedience to the higher leadership as a national army requires in wartime (pp52-53)

Thus, attached as a conditionality for the people's longed for socio-economic improvement, the "four cornerstones" were a discursive/rhetorical tool for hegemonic ends.

The transitivity in the linguistic representation of the 'four cornerstones' in the text is interesting, and can be observed by examining the discursive function of the nominalisation in the latter clause of the structure below (from **Text 8A** above).

"I reminded you that the qualities of unity, loyalty, obedience, discipline and determination would be more necessary than ever before."

According to Gerot and Wignell (1994), transitivity is critical in analyses of the clause as representation. The analyst's interest in the clausal functions is in relation to "who=does=what=to=whom, who/what=is=what/who, when, where, why, or how" (p52). As verbal processes are "processes of saying, or more accurately, of symbolically signalling" (Gerot & Wignell, 1994:62) the structure

in question pertains to verbal processes²⁵. In relation to these, Gerot and Wignell (1994:64) assert that they are often “realised by two distinct clauses: the projecting clause encod[ing] a signal source (*Sayer*) and a signalling (*Verbal Process*), and the other (projected clause) [which] realises what was said.” Based on this analytical scheme of functional grammar, the participants in the first clause (in **bold**) are explicit:

I {**Dr Banda, the President**} - *Sayer*
reminded - *Verbal*
you {members of parliament and nation as a whole} - *Receiver*

However, in the latter clause (underlined), which is the projected clause, nominalisation obfuscates the participants by turning “processes [of uniting; obeying; being loyal, disciplined, and determined] into states” (Fairclough, 1992:182). Fairclough (1992) further shows that in sharing with the passive the potentiality of omitting the agent, and the variety of motivations for doing so, nominalisation is a tool of “considerable cultural and ideological importance” (p183). In the projected clause, nominalisation has been instrumental in “entify[ing]²⁶...local and temporary condition[s] into inherent state[s] or propert[ies]...which become the focus of cultural attention and manipulation” (Fairclough, 1992:183). In this case, the elision of the participants coupled with objective modalisation (see Fairclough, 1992:159) (in “would be more necessary than before”) in the projected clause, have the effect of drawing attention away from Dr Banda (as well as his government) as the participant with whom the Malawi polity must be determined to be

²⁵ In Systemic Functional Linguistics (Hallidayan Grammar), there are identified seven different Process types realised by verbs. I tabulate the list below after Gerot and Wignell (1994:54). For an accessible introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics in general, and Process types in particular, refer to Eggins, S. (1994).

Material	Doing	bodily, physically, materially
Behavioural	Behaving	Physiologically and psychologically
Mental	Sensing	emotionally, intellectually, sensorily
Verbal	Saying	lingually, signalling
Relational	Being	equal to, or some attribute of
Existential	Existing	there exists
Meteorological	Weathering	

²⁶ This is Fairclough’s coinage meaning “making an entity”.

united through obeying him, and being disciplined and loyal to for his own sake than anything else. Thus, while Dr Banda was an absolute ruler (Short, 1974; Joffe, 1973; Williams, 1978), the import of the text is that Dr Banda was a disinterested conscientious leader who called all members of the Malawi polity to apply themselves to the task of socio-economic change without distraction to realise their independence. The reference to realisation of this kind of independence, as an apposite of development, was invoked in another speech about a year later (**Text 8B** below).

TEXT 8B

[Extract from: *The President's Speech at the Opening of the Nkhotakota – Benga Road*, 23rd July, 1968.]

It is not enough to have independence. I did not want independence just for its own sake. I wanted it as a means to an end. What was that end? So that the life of everyone in this country could be improved...In other words, I wanted **independence in order to improve the life of the ordinary people in the villages**.

(Department of Information, 1968:2)

(Boldface and underlining mine)

The spectrum of the object of socio-economic change in this text encompasses all social classes in Dr Banda's reference to "the life of everyone in this country" but sensitive to the kind of audience he was addressing in this rural area of the country, he particularises the "ordinary people in the villages" as his focus of the development agenda. I contend that these references to development, or socio-economic change in general, and especially, the oblique requisites that are attached to the attainment of the envisioned development, with discursive management of inclusion or elision of participants, were hegemonic tools to win what Gramsci describes as spontaneous consent of the various classes in the Malawi polity.

Metaphors of Liberation

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have demonstrated the pervasiveness of metaphors in social life. The conceptualisation of development in post-independence Malawi politics exhibited particularly two dominant metaphors that were hegemonically powerful in the public arena:

- *War against poverty, ignorance and disease*
- *Reaping/Spreading the fruits of independence.*

In the analysis that follows, it is contended that while the two metaphors served hegemonic purposes well, they did little to stimulate a reflective and innovative approach to strategising for socio-economic change.

War against Poverty, Ignorance and Disease

TEXT 8C

[Extract from: 'Malawi is in a hurry for development,' *The Times*.]

Malawi is in a hurry for development - Nyasulu

MALAWI is a country in a hurry to develop herself and thus to catch up with other countries, the Minister of Health and Community Development, Mr A. M. Nyasulu, has declared [1]...But to complement this, **the war against ignorance and economic underdevelopment must be waged from the rural front as well** [2]...Now that political independence had been achieved, **the war against poverty and ignorance had to be waged on all fronts.**[3]

(MANA, 1970:3)

(Boldface and numbering mine)

Joffe's (1973:v) analysis of the post-independence Malawi civic culture (patterns of behaviour in the public arenas of a polity) identifies the development imperative – the principle that held that, among others, the primary function of government was to promote and control development.²⁷

Joffe (1973) argues that this view came out of colonial neglect of Nyasaland, the circumstances which the nationalist government sought to correct. Although Joffe's (1973) position is rather apologetic to the colonialists' responsibility for Nyasaland's poverty, she makes an important point that while the colonial authorities "did indulge a defeatism about the country's prospects, for ultimately it was not their country...In contrast, the nationalist

²⁷ According to Joffe (1973:v-vii) the other principles include the *non-conflict principle* that held that political conflict must be severely restricted, with less latitude for the prominent than the anonymous; the *populist principle* that the people must be participants in the modern polity by giving them opportunity to fill political roles associated with the nationalist victory over colonial rule and to participate in regular rituals of explication, affirmation, and representation; *the principle of development by exhortation* that held that change in the rural areas needs to be induced at least in part by techniques of exhortation involving both tactics adapted from colonial experience and devices newly created to involve "politicians" in development work.

regime is one which almost by definition has a firm belief in the possibility of effective development of the land and the people" (p86).

In light of this determination to effect socio-economic change on the part of the nationalist regime, the metaphor was a socio-cultural resource for conceptualising and mobilising the people to do development work.

The war metaphor for socio-economic change was common pre- and post-independence. Kanyama Chiume, a prominent nationalist who became Dr Banda's foreign minister, used the metaphor in 1963 at an international conference on Africa held at Howard University, quoted in Joffe (1973:48):

We in Africa feel that there is no one type of democracy...As we see it, it is necessary to have a strong organization to fight the unholy trinity of ignorance, poverty, and disease, the insidious legacies left behind by the colonial powers.

However, much as it was a common metaphor during the pre-independence period (when Nyasaland was self-governing after the 1961 general elections), the fight for independence was prior to the fight against the inanimate enemies of poverty, ignorance and disease. After independence, such statements as [3] in the Text B ("Now that political independence had been achieved, the war against poverty and ignorance had to be waged on all fronts ") were directed to the inanimate enemies. This re-direction of the nation's attention to another common enemy was powerfully hegemonic. Joffe (1973) asserts that one of the main reasons for Dr Banda's continued and relatively peaceful tenure in office since a serious political crisis in 1964-65 had been the fact that he had not permitted "the atrophy of political institutions associated with the nationalist challenge to colonial rule" (pvi). Thus to Joffe (1973:vi), the development agenda is "in large part a logical extension of the nationalist defiance of colonial rule." Thus by re-directing the people's fight from colonialism to the inanimate enemies of their welfare, Dr Banda had an effective hegemonic resource in the development agenda for entrenching himself and the Malawi Congress Party. The requisites of unity, loyalty, obedience, and discipline, worked in unison with the war metaphor winning for Dr Banda spontaneous consent as the 'forces commander' by

which he wielded absolute authority over the Malawi polity. As Short (1974:278) observes:

[Banda] possessed supreme power, and used it to secure an ever-increasing degree of control over every aspect of Malawian life. Only thus, he believed, could the Malawi nation be developed.

Reaping/Spreading Fruits of Development

The second metaphor that dominated the Malawi civic culture of Dr Banda's regime was the 'fruits of independence' metaphor, as exemplified in **Text 8D** below. Similarly, this metaphor tapped into the euphoria of the nationalist victory over colonialism, which in a sense was like a *rite de passage* to the privileges which were in the past the preserve of the colonial masters. Its application was ambivalent: it was either *spreading*, or *reaping* the 'fruits of independence.'

TEXT 8D

[Extract from: Mbalachanda forges ahead with its development, *This is Malawi* monthly]

Mbalachanda forges ahead with its development

Rural development in Malawi is a concept that the Government, under His Excellency the life President, Ngwazi Dr H. Kamuzu Banda, has successfully employed to bring the fruits of independence to every Malawian...

(Mbalachanda forges ahead with its development, 1980:10)
(Underlining mine)

The 'fruits of independence' metaphor was commonly used in attributing to Dr Banda the political deliverance and that everything that people achieved under his reign was a 'fruit of independence'. Williams (1978) shows that after the cabinet crisis, Dr Banda used a combination of economic opportunity, politics and the law for effective control. In this regard, political positions were filled after Dr Banda's thorough scrutiny. This created a system of political patronage. Williams (1978:232) shows that "It became common practice for members of Parliament making their maiden speeches to offer profuse thanks to the president for the honor he had done them when he appointed them to the Assembly." It is also well documented that Dr Banda and those in political positions had easy access to means of

production and other benefits while the rest of the people struggled on to make a living (Short 1974; Mtewa1986). In fact, Williams (1978:284) argues that:

The ease with which prominent party members are able to obtain loans from the government raises doubts about the extent to which schemes for the identification and support of master farmers or master fishermen can be divorced from considerations of patronage, but even if the people chosen for these schemes were selected entirely on merit as prospective farmers and managers, it would still be the case that a small number of people have received great benefits from the state while the great majority, who continue to use traditional methods, have gained very little...

I contend that the 'fruits of independence' such as political positions that opened up privileges that only few had access to were instrumental to Dr Banda and his Malawi Congress Party's hegemonic agenda. I have argued in Chapter 6 above that the modernisation programmes, such as the NRDP, were themselves a source of inequality. Loans for agricultural input and expert extension advice were available to very few progressive individuals. The prominent party members formed the bulk of these privileged individuals. In Dr Banda's view, these political leaders were to be examples in their constituencies (Joffe, 1973:539). Thus, while access to this 'fruit of independence' remained elusive to the majority, economic opportunity was a useful hegemonic resource among those that had the opportunity of access and those who aspired to access the opportunities through political positions. However, despite the hegemonic effectiveness of the operations of this metaphor, there is an unproductive side to it.

According to Mtewa (1986:65) "the personal disposition of Malawians to join government has invariably been more dependent on their desire to advance themselves economically than on a commitment to democratic ideals." This perspective is a variant of the 'fruits of independence' metaphor that has it in the social imaginary that the state has wealth and all an individual has to do is gain access through political positions. This has been injurious to Malawi's innovative approach to socio-economic change and national productivity in general. The kind of political commitment that pre-occupied the politicians

was exhortation of their constituents over the blessings and privileges that were conferred on them by their leader. Such shallow commitments were far from encouraging more sophisticated search for alternatives towards socio-economic change. Joffe (1973:549) asserts that “Undoubtedly local politicians under Banda’s regime have frequently failed to show any remarkable initiative or enthusiasm for rural development.” Mtewa (1986:66) is incensed against this political practice “which diverts the attention of subordinates from matters of substantive economics or politics.” Thus the ‘fruit metaphor’ was in many ways counter productive. The local rendering of this metaphor was more revealing of the absence of sustainability in the socio-political outlook of the time: “*Kudiyelera ufulu wa Ngwazi*”. Literally: “Revelling in the independence/liberty that the *Ngwazi* [praise title of the President as a hero in the fight against colonialists] has brought about.” Such an outlook did not speak of participation and planning for sustainability in development work. In this view, the *Ngwazi* would continue to provide, and those who had access to the ‘fruits’ would continue to enjoy the ‘fruits’, caring only to continue in the routines of displaying their loyalty to the *Ngwazi* and the party. As a result of this psyche, political speeches at all levels abounded with “ecstatic eulogies on the president’s character, capacity, and achievements” (Williams, 1978:232), ending up in wishes of long life for the *Ngwazi*, so that future generations would continue to enjoy the *Ngwazi*’s ‘fruits of independence’ as well. As an extension, this view consolidated the centralised top-down view of development planning and practice. Because development was Government’s responsibility, individual responsibility over built community capital in general has been gravely lacking. The common local sentiment is that whether amenities and infrastructure are destroyed or vandalised, there is no individual who will be offended; they belong to government and government will replace them. A local common saying that characterises such an impersonal psyche towards built community capital is “*Ndi za boma*.” Literally, “they belong to government.” This has also been counter-productive to socio-economic progress. Although these sentiments were hegemonically advantageous to Dr Banda and the Malawi Congress Party Government in that the citizenry were made dependent on the

government, they did not encourage the innovation and reflexivity and individual responsibility that would benefit socio-economic change.

Based on this analysis of the two metaphors, I argue that the call to arms against ignorance, poverty, and disease did not find in the 'fruits of independence' metaphor a helpful complement. In fact, it is ironic that the bulk of the leadership that ought to have been encouraging the citizenry to seeking alternatives in the fight against the inanimate enemies, had itself settled to harvesting the 'fruits' that they had now accessed in place of the colonial masters. Joffe (1973:62) calls to our attention the fact that

under Banda's regime, the metaphor [war metaphor] ha[d] been maintained throughout the independence period more or less in its original liturgical form, and ha[d] not been clothed with more subtle or complex expressions or replaced by new imagery.

This was also true of the 'fruit of independence metaphor.' Joffe's (1973) observation is indicative of a socio-political culture that, probably unwittingly, stifled the imagination, creativity and innovation that would have helped to contribute more profitably to socio-economic change in the vicissitudes of the underdeveloped economy.

A Persuasive Strategy to (Agricultural) Development

The nationalist government of Dr Banda adopted persuasion, or exhortation as a hegemonic resource which provided a clear point of departure from the colonial approach to (rural) development. It was common rhetoric in political circles and even in public communication to make:

continual reference to the idea that the defeat of British colonialism in Malawi meant the end of coercion as a technique for producing the behaviour appropriate to good citizenship and its replacement by techniques of persuasion (Joffe, 1973:516).

This can be exemplified in **Text 8E** below.

TEXT 8E

[Extract from: Impact of agriculture on the people of Malawi, *This is Malawi* monthly.]

IMPACT OF AGRICULTURE ON THE PEOPLE OF MALAWI

...The Ngwazi noted that Malawi had made a success of her independence because **his people had listened to his appeals** for hard work in the fields and because agricultural officers had followed his instructions to go out and teach the people modern methods of farming. (Kamlomo, 1986:2-4).

(Underlining and boldface mine)

This excerpt indicates that Dr Banda (the Ngwazi) had won people's spontaneous consent, in the Gramscian sense, in that "his people had listened to his appeals for hard work in the fields" and "agricultural officers had followed his instructions to...teach the people." The independence that is successful in this case is the positive response of the indigenous Malawians to engage in commercial agriculture – which they hated during the colonial period because of coercion. Kydd and Christiansen (1981:100) point out that "conservation measures had formed an important focus for African opposition to colonial rule and, as a consequence, the agricultural extension service emerged discredited from the political struggles of the later 1950's." The nationalist government continued to use this issue throughout Dr Banda's reign to legitimise itself in the sight of the citizenry. To rehabilitate extension service of the nationalist government in the eyes of the rural population, the new Malawian government adopted an "energetic political campaign in favour of 'improved' farming methods, based on persuasion rather than coercion" (Kydd & Christiansen 1981:101). Although this campaign won the support of the indigenous people to take to farming, "it is doubtful whether this activity succeeded in correcting the bias towards the richer peasant of the extension service (*sic*)" (Kydd & Christiansen 1981:101). This is ironic. A possible explanation lies in the political fervour/euphoria of the time that must have overshadowed other equally important issues, such as equity.

Linguistically, the prominence of Dr Banda as the prime participant in the text exemplifies the dominance of Dr Banda over all affairs in Malawi. This dominance is informative of authoritarian tendencies that dominated Malawi politics and social life in general throughout Dr Banda's thirty year reign. For development to succeed "his people had listened to him" and agricultural officers, who were specialists in their fields "had followed his instructions...to teach the people". An important point here is that although Dr Banda was capitalising on the euphoria associated with political freedom from colonial rule for hegemonic ends, the fact remains that exclusion of the citizenry from active participation in planning for socio-economic change and its implementation may have contributed to the paucity of innovative approaches to complex issues of socio-economic change in the Malawi polity among the leaders, as we have noted above. However, the subtlety of Dr Banda's approach lay in his principle of explication which was the "idea of nationalist persuasion displacing colonial coercion" (Joffe, 1973).

The idea that the politician's major responsibility was 'teaching' needs a brief explanation. Dr Banda established a range of political structures to "keep the people informed of government policy and to teach them what the regime require[d] of them" (Joffe, 1973:521). Joffe (1973) specifies three major 'messages' the politicians took to the citizenry. One of them consisted of liturgical reiteration of the central principles of the civic faith, that is, to uphold the four cornerstones of unity, loyalty, obedience and discipline. Another was admonishing people to perform specific political duties such as renewing party cards, paying taxes and to be vigilant against the rebels. A third, comprising specific advice and instruction in rural development work, is what Joffe (1973) calls didactic exhortation. Politicians' routine responsibilities included addressing constituents regularly on such things as: the need to prepare gardens in time for early planting; the benefits of fertilisers; the evils of excessive drink; the necessity to refrain from dancing *malipenga* when work in the field remained unfinished; the dangers of deforestation; men not to leave work of cultivation entirely to women; the importance of proper grading of harvested crops for the marketing board; the best techniques of storing the

harvest. In relation to such responsibility, there was a flurry of political activity that followed seasonal patterns. Much of this activity overlapped with government agricultural extension work. However, civil servants were expected to deal with the technical side as specialists and practical agents of change, while the politicians were specialists in civic leadership. Thus the politician was sent out as the moral agent of the nationalist government. Thus, despite Dr Banda's intolerance to dissent and emphasis on absolute leadership, the rhetoric in the explication principle of the nationalist government superficially appeared to be more friendly to the citizenry than the colonialists' blunt coercion, thereby winning the consent of the citizenry. Development in its various conceptualisations was instrumental as a hegemonic resource, notwithstanding primary objectives of socio-economic change.

8.4 Conclusion: The Oblique Hegemonic Rhetoric and Development

The largely rhetorical analysis of this chapter has demonstrated that in the main, the nationalist Malawi Government's development agenda provided space for oblique hegemonic rhetoric of the ruling classes. I have shown also by a Gramscian reading of the socio-political context, particularly the 1964-65 cabinet crisis, and requisites within the development agenda, that Dr Banda and his Malawi Congress Party Government manipulated the new Malawi nation's quest for socio-economic change to consolidate his (authoritarian) political power. The resources for this hegemonic manipulation included the populist appeal in which discrediting the colonialists and dissidents carried on for a very long time in Dr Banda's thirty-year reign. This was mainly carried in the libertarian conceptualisation of development. The subtlety of the hegemonic rhetoric in the libertarian conceptualisation of development lay in attaching requisites of conformity to Dr Banda's traditional view of a leader (Short, 1974). Linguistically, this was managed by transitivity which drew attention away from Dr Banda as the participant demanding conformity to his dictum.

The libertarian conceptualisation of development was further represented metaphorically within the new Malawi's civic faith. The analysis has shown how the metaphors nurtured a dependence psyche among the citizenry thereby legitimising the continuation of Dr Banda and his Malawi Congress Party Government. I have also shown that this dependence psyche did not encourage innovative and reflexive approaches to socio-economic change among the leadership, let alone the villager. I contend also that this political culture did not include any notions of sustainability in the planning and implementation of socio-economic change and general outlook to life. The adoption of a persuasive strategy as opposed to coercion was a powerful hegemonic resource that fed the memory of the grievances against the colonialist while Dr Banda's intolerance to dissent was couched in the rhetoric of a libertarian conceptualisation of development. The analysis has also demonstrated that the operations of the explication principle gave the people an illusory sense of participation. All these worked towards winning the people's consent in the Gramscian sense. Thus the development agenda served a hegemonic end for Dr Banda and his Malawi Congress Party Government, albeit inexplicitly.

PART IV: A CONCERN TO DEVELOP PEOPLE

CHAPTER 9

REPRESENTING PEOPLE CENTREDNESS

9.1 Introduction

This last part of the study examines a re-conceptualisation of development in the light of socio-political changes that, on the global level, have been associated with the thaw of the cold war and, in Malawi in particular, the change from single party to multi-party politics. The chapter examines the shift of emphasis in development planning and implementation, from economic growth to concerns of developing the people. Emphasis on developing the people has brought into the limelight notions of good governance, human rights, and empowerment mostly realised through participation of individuals or communities that are clients to the intended development. The examination of the change of discourse from the largely neo-classical growth economics argot heavily influenced by authoritarian mono-partisan politics to people-centred development discourse is situated within its socio-political context.

Because the quest to develop the people, as a government initiative in Malawi, is associated with the work of the Malawi Social Action Fund (hereinafter MASAF), this chapter examines the dramatic change of development discourse within MASAF's conceptualisation as a programme. In effect, this chapter contrasts MASAF with development planning in the pre-democratic Malawi, particularly represented in *Statement of Development Policies* (hereafter DEVPOL) and project submissions within its framework. Considering the fact that MASAF started in 1996 (and continues to run), and that the cut-off period of this study is 1998, this study only considers the conceptualisation of the MASAF programme and the notions of development in it. An evaluative examination of MASAF's performance is not part of the present study; rather the focus is on the examination of emergent discursive

construction(s) of “bottom-up, grassroots, or ‘process approach’” (Ellis & Biggs, 2001:443) notions of development that MASAF espouses.

A Socio-political Context for People-centred Development

When Malawi fought for independence from British colonial rule at the turn of the 1950s, the world had already been aligned into two socio-political camps – East (communist), and West (capitalist). Perhaps due to his long association with the Western education system and culture in general, and Britain’s promise of budget support for Malawi into the 1970s (Morton, 1975), Dr Banda’s short-lived open door to potential communist donors at the time of independence, ended with his firm alignment with the “West” (Joffe, 1973). This positioned Malawi as a friendly nation to the Western powers. Some have argued that the “West” turned a blind eye to Dr Banda’s thirty-year ruthless autocratic leadership partly because of this anti-communist alignment (see Nzunda & Ross, 1995). Again some scholars have argued persuasively that the thaw of the Cold War, especially marked by the collapse of the Berlin wall in 1989, led to international attention being diverted to the human rights and governance concerns that Malawi was known to have had for a very long time (see Nzunda & Ross, 1995). Chipeta and Mkandawire (2002:88) have offered an explanation to an

apparent puzzle in Malawi’s [socio-economic] story up to the late 1970s; namely, that political oppression co-existed with efficient bureaucracy, and policy choices based on political patronage contributed to high annual economic growth rates as well as other good macroeconomic measures of performance such as relatively small budget deficit/GDP ratios.

In their view, Dr Banda’s dictatorship had certain features that were potentially conducive to development, namely persistent exhortation of the masses to work hard (which quality he himself had), and Banda’s zero tolerance to lazy, incompetent or corrupt public servants. However, Dr Banda’s aversion to dissent, and indeed, critical minds of the educated, denied his development agenda necessary innovativeness and reflexivity. Page (1992:2) notes that

It is perhaps the greatest tragedy of Malawian political life that the chief quality which has characterized those who have spoken out against the government, as well as many of those who have left in frustration, has been competence. Able to see

clearly the lost potential and the possibilities for corrective action, they have become suspect. As a result, the best and brightest of Malawi's independence generation are now gone, unable to provide leadership for the future.

The gravity of such loss in human capital is captured by Staley (1965) who asserts that

we are least likely to go wrong when we think of economic development in terms of changes in human beings and social institutions and only secondarily in terms of material capital or equipment...The real key to development is the human factor. And this is the realm of the political leader, together with the educator and the business organizer (p310-311).

In view of the importance of the human capital in socio-economic change, and its ill use by the Banda regime, the determined pursuit of socio-economic change of that regime was unlikely to achieve much. Chipeta and Mkandawire (2002) point out that Dr Banda's regime had bred feelings of bitterness that were mounting up in the majority of Malawians over the years. Sources of bitterness were multiple. People were bitter against the ruthless political oppression. In addition, many Malawians were getting disillusioned and bitter because poverty grew worse despite continued hard work in the gardens as Dr Banda exhorted them. The latter was partly due to inequities that were built in the dual estate and smallholder agricultural strategies in which the privileged estate sector prospered on the profits that emanated from smallholder agriculture which was itself ill-supported and exploited. Harrigan's (2001:62) analysis is a grim picture of the circumstances of the greater proportion of Malawians that had heeded Dr Banda's call to hard work in the fields over the years.

By the 1980s the central plank of President Banda's estate development strategy, namely, the exploitation of the smallholder sector to promote estate expansion had run its course. The impoverishment of the smallholder sector was such that ADMARC could no longer extract a financial surplus for reinvestment in the estate sector, land and cheap labour could not be continually annexed and food self-sufficiency, both nationally and individually could no longer be achieved.

Considering such circumstances, Chipeta and Mkandawire (2002) see a clear link between the bitterness of the majority of failed Malawians and the onset of political change in a nation where political activism had been systematically suppressed, and human rights had been violated with impunity.

The regime had failed to deliver the goods to the masses. That type of political stability could therefore not be sustained forever. Thus when external donors began to exert pressure on the government by calling for transparency and accountability, respect for human rights and other principles of good governance as conditionalities for aid, the situation in the country was silently already ripe for political change (p54).

Thus, Dr Banda was progressively losing total grip on the socio-political circumstances of Malawi, old age and ill-health contributing to this.

Between 1992 and 1994, events leading to change to political pluralism developed a rapid and irreversible tempo. As internally the pro-democracy movement was actively though covertly working, in March 1992, the Roman Catholic Bishops seized the opportunity. In a management feat of circulating and reading to their congregations throughout the country at an appointed time on an appointed Sunday, March 8, their pastoral letter titled *Living in Our Faith*, Dr Banda as well as his Malawi Congress Party (MCP) was once again openly criticised after close to three decades after the 1964-65 cabinet crisis. The Catholic bishops' criticism of the Banda regime's abuse of human rights, growing nepotism and bribery in political, economic and social life touched off mass demonstrations hitherto unknown in Malawi. In the changed climate, the MCP's desperate efforts of threats of detention without trial and assassinations that scared so many Malawians in the past, neither stemmed the local tide of change nor did they get carried out.

A month later, a trade unionist, Chakufwa Chihana, returning to Malawi from Zambia where he attended a meeting on Malawi's political future largely of political exiles and other Malawians living abroad, further challenged Dr Banda to introduce democratic reforms in Malawi. Although Chihana was detained for a few months, such a response showed that Dr Banda and the MCP were not in a strong political position any longer. Meanwhile, political pressure groups emerged in abundance. The mounting local and international pressure drew Dr Banda and his MCP to the June 1993 referendum, the results of which showed that Malawians were decided for political pluralism, which they considered to have held promise of respect for

human rights and good governance. These pressures, not totally bloodless, culminated in the 1994 presidential and parliamentary elections in which Dr Banda lost to Muluzi for President with voting patterns following regional/ethnic lines. Muluzi's United Democratic Front (UDF) with its power base in the most populous Southern region took the largest number of seats in parliament, seconded by the old mighty MCP with its power base in the Centre, while Chihana's Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) with its power base in the least populated North was in the third position. Several other smaller parties won no seat at all; they only helped to make MCP's competition against democratic parties stiffer.

Thus, the emergence of another discourse in Malawi's development agenda, especially in the conceptualisation (and implementation) of the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) programme, that this chapter examines, was prefaced by unabating, if not aggravating, poverty over the years, making the independence promise, an unrealised dream, in a socio-politically oppressive environment that bred a lot of animosity and a certain quest for change. I now turn to text examination for evidence of changes in the discourse of development as largely initiated in the MASAF programme.

9.2 Representing Refocused Development: a Macro-analysis

Introduction

It is important to mention that there were rapid changes in development policies at the beginning of multiparty democracy. The MASAF programme as a tool of the Poverty Alleviation Programme was preceded by *Statement of Development Policies 1987 – 1996* (DEVPOL) which was a broad outline of guiding policy within which individuals and either domestic or foreign institutions would legally operate. The statement “set out the Government's view of Malawi's economic and social objectives and proposals on how these objectives w[ould] be realized” (GoM, 1987:i); it was not intended to be a “detailed and quantified blueprint for action” (GoM, 1987:ii). Outlining ten-year

statements of development policies, DEVPOL marked a stage towards more coherent long-term development planning in post-independence Malawi.

The Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF)

The new regime under Muluzi took up the idea of 'poverty alleviation' as its campaign slogan, although it had its beginnings in the last days of the MCP Government. 'Poverty Alleviation Programme' became the Muluzi government's catchphrase. Although it sounded innovative in the Malawi context, Ellis and Biggs (2001) classify poverty alleviation of the 1980s together with 'poverty reduction' of the 1990s and 'poverty eradication' of the 2000s as some of those themes in rural development that evolved as development 'spin', that is, "ways of mobilising the development lobby in rich countries...phrased in different ways over time" (p438). The Malawi Social action Fund (MASAF), established in 1995, became a "key instrument for [the Malawi] Government's poverty alleviation programme in both rural and urban areas" (MASAF, 2002a:5). Because its principles were in concord with the conditionalities of both bilateral and multilateral donors, the MASAF programme was (and continues to be) implemented under the aegis of the World Bank. A clear departure from past development planning and implementation was that in accordance with MASAF's underlying principle of community participation, and the operational principle of autonomy from Government (MASAF, 2002b:55-56), the programme was established after a country-wide gender and age sensitive client consultation exercise covering both rural and urban communities. Out of consultations and other studies of the poverty and development situation hitherto in Malawi, MASAF implementation was organised into three categories of projects. Community Sub-projects (CSP) "enabled funds to be used for the creation of social and economic infrastructure for the benefit of participating communities" (MASAF, 2002:19). CSP formed the biggest component in MASAF's phase 1 (1995 - 1997). The second category of projects was/is Public Works Programme (PWP). Like the CSP component, PWP was designed to transfer "cash incomes to very poor households through the employment of community members in the labour intensive projects" (MASAF, 2002b: 27). The very

poor included unskilled labourers, marginalised persons such as women and old people. A third component is the Sponsored Sub projects (SSP), which came out of the review of coverage of beneficiaries in phase 1. The beneficiaries include: orphans, street children, HIV/AIDS infected and affected people, the aged, people with disabilities, widows and widowers who were not able to organise themselves and approach MASAF directly. The Sponsored Sub projects component finances “initiatives identified, prepared, implemented, managed and maintained by an intermediary organization on behalf of beneficiaries” (MASAF, 2002a:iv). Despite much activity that the poverty alleviation programme produced, long term planning along the lines of Banda's former DEVPOL²⁸ remained a necessity. Out of this need, the National Long Term Planning, commonly known as Vision 2020, became the broad framework policy guide in national development planning.

National Long-Term Perspective: Vision 2020

Unlike the singularly top-down planning that dominated Malawi's development story for three decades, work towards Vision 2020 that ran between 1996 and 1997 involved wide national consultation with representations of different classes of the Malawi society. The principles that underpin this framework are captured in the following statement:

The conceptual framework for developing the vision is adapted from the National Long-Term Perspective Studies (NLTPS) approach formulated by the African Futures Group in Abidjan. The NLTPS methodology is used as a tool for development management. It emphasises the following conceptual elements: strategic long-term thinking, shared vision and visionary leadership, citizen participation, scenario planning, strategic management and national learning (GoM, 1997:ii).

²⁸ Due to rapid socio-political changes within the decade, associated with the fall of communism on the international scene, and locally the onset of political pluralism and the emphasis of human rights in governance, DEVPOL was overtaken by several events that ushered in new emphases to development planning and praxis, and socio-political organisation. As a result, the ten-year DEVPOL did not hold true to the end of the decade. Instead, national long-term planning perspectives and people-centredness became the discourse obtaining in national development planning and praxis.

All current principles of development planning and implementation, including principles governing poverty alleviation, and within it MASAF, are subsumed in this framework. Launched in 1998, nothing significant has come out of the Vision 2020 to date. A possible explanation is the lack of “high-level political commitment to serious reform” (Jenkins & Tsoka, 2003:119) that the corrupt Muluzi Government has been known for. As the Vision 2020 comes at about the turn of the 1990s, it does not form part of this study. Suffice it to say that the development principles it espouses are in agreement with those that govern the MASAF, which this chapter examines.

9.2.1 Participating Community: From Didactic Exhortation to Consultation

In this part of the study the main interest is to examine the change of discourse regarding the community – from a receptive and largely passive entity to a participative partner that can determine needs, prioritise them and be entrusted with management at project implementation. MASAF’s Systematic Client Consultation (hereafter SCC) establishes the notion of community as a participative client, unlike the recipient community waiting to be ‘told’ that pre-democratic Malawi development work was characterised by. Using the text comparison approach, I examine the rhetorical and conceptual departure from the top-down view of development to a process approach view. The SCC was an exercise in seeking local/indigenous knowledge as a starting point to effect socio-economic change that started with the people as critical capital. After making a synopsis of the SCC report as the basis of the MASAF project conceptualisation, I examine portions of the MASAF project concept document to illustrate changes in development discourse (and notions) that obtain in Malawi’s democratic dispensation.

The SCC Report is a six-part document. Part I, the introduction, lays down the two fundamental components of the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF), which require certain requisites within communities if they are to be operationalised. One of the components is “community participation in a demand led process” (Chimbwete, Cottam, Chimutu, Kampani, Kamwendo, Liwewe, Ndalama, Nkhoma, Nkhoma, Owen, & Simwaka, 1995: 5). This

involvement of communities in identifying, prioritising, planning and implementing projects was/is intended to “strengthen...community capacity through community organisation and ownership of projects” (Chimbwete *et al*, 1995:5). The second component is “rapid disbursement [of funds] to ensure that community demands are met in a timely manner” (p5). This component requires financial, and indeed, project management capability within communities. With these two central ideas, the SCC exercise focused on three areas in the consultation with the communities: existing community organisations and institutional networks; community experiences and attitudes towards participation; and to find out available skills, that is ‘technical’ capacity, at community level to enable MASAF’s direct community financing.

The SCC exercise found out also that there is no single definition of ‘community’. While there are differences between the rural and urban definitions, within the rural as well as urban categories there are differences of how communities are constituted. The rural communities were variably constituted in terms of legal/administrative boundaries of group village headman; social units of interaction; resource boundaries or following geographic features such as catchment areas. Among urban dwellers, communities were largely constituted spatially, in terms of the named urban area; or in terms of socio-economic groupings.

Part II of the SCC reports on availability and capacities of both indigenous and non-indigenous organisations and leadership structures at local levels. These were regarded as important to determine level of experience for purposes of MASAF project management. It was found out that indigenous organisations exist to take care of community social functions such as weddings, funerals, rites etc. Some organisations, especially those that organise the rites of passage, were split along gender lines. The central authority is the traditional authority – chief/village head. In addition to presiding over land distribution, and overseeing social welfare, the traditional authority’s duties are also judicial. Non-indigenous organisations that have been in operation in both rural and urban communities pertain to functions for socio-economic change.

Such committees as those for productive/commercial clubs, or service provision (for example, school, health) had the generic structure of chairperson, secretary and treasurer. However, knowledge of non-indigenous organisations in communities was limited among women. Although experience with organisations in general was available, it certainly needed to be augmented to enable financial management and project monitoring skills for MASAF projects (Chimbwete *et al*, 1995).

Part III of the SCC Report are findings in relation to community participation. The major point in this part is that communities' notion of participation reflected the many years that they were only called upon to actively support implementation of projects that were handed down to them from government, or other government authorised organisation. Rural communities often contributed their labour and sometimes cash too. In urban communities, cash contributions and use of contractual labour were common forms of contribution at project implementation stages. Communities pointed out that project ownership and maintenance have been problematic as a result of marginal participation. Worse still, women and other marginalised groups, such as the poor, marginally participated because they were unskilled; their labour was almost always unremunerated. On the whole, sustainability of projects for socio-economic change was judged to be minimal, if any. The SCC exercise found out also that communities were aware of the shortcomings of the top-down non-participative approach to projects for socio-economic change and they had suggestions for improvement.

The SCC Report highlighted the need for MASAF facilitation "to catalyse a bottom-up approach in communities that have been part of a system of top-down, authoritarian rule for over 30 years" (Chimbwete *et al* 1995:22).

Part IV of the SCC Report relates to assessment of community technical capacity for project identification, planning or implementation, particularly for MASAF, experience with the management of funds and procurement, and availability of skilled labour. On the whole the exercise found out that largely

due to high illiteracy rates, skills in the communities were limited, much more so in rural communities than urban communities. It was also reported that skills that would be useful to MASAF were concentrated among the male population. One implication of these circumstances is that women would be in the category of those whose skills do not have market value “such as the collection of water” (p24).

Although there was some limited experience in resource and financial management, and procurement, particularly with non-governmental (non-indigenous) organisations offering productive/commercial services, communities urged that direct community financing would be the way forward in MASAF projects. In this regard, the SCC report recommended that technical expertise would be necessary at particular points in the project cycle.

Part V, Project Identification, reports results of the SCC exercise involving communities’ ranking of their perceptions of key problems and prioritisation of projects that they would support. Although there were differences in problems identified among individual communities and administrative regions, three categories emerged. One category was deficiency of economic infrastructure (e.g. roads and bridges to access markets, social services, etc). Another category was inadequate income at community and household level, indicated by demand for credit for small businesses and agricultural in-puts. It was noted that there was intention to diversify sources of income away from traditional agricultural products. A third category was lack of social service provision (that is, rehabilitation or construction of clinics, schools, boreholes). The ranking of these community problems was revealing as to what direction socio-economic change should take from the communities’ perspective. The report notes that “while social infrastructure projects achieve the highest ranking in terms of numerical demands...it is the demand for credit which is most consistently ranked as the first priority” (Chimbwete *et al*, 1995:34).

Part VI are the SCC team’s recommendations to MASAF based on the communities’ perceptions of development needs and priorities, and the skills that were available among the people. The rest of the report are annexes of the research tools of the consultative research and information on communities the team consulted.

Rhetorical analysis reveals discourse and conceptual change in development planning and praxis. In section 8.1 note has been made of the nationalist regime’s determination to effect socio-economic change, with a centralised approach to development planning and practice being adopted. Government sectoral ministries did all the planning which they implemented or handed down to communities to implement (see Kadzamira, 1977). Such an approach excluded the participation of communities and, as has been noted, was ineffective in bringing about socio-economic change. The aggravated poverty situation in Malawi indicated that this approach to development was ineffective in bringing about socio-economic change. **Text 9A** below is an excerpt from the *MASAF Project Document* (hereafter PCD) that introduces the change in development conceptualisation and its discourse.

TEXT 9A

[Extract from: *Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF): Project Concept Document.*]

Introduction Within the PAP initiative of the GOM a concept for a social action fund has been designed as <u>a quick disbursing instrument to support development activities at community level</u>. Participation of beneficiaries in <u>identification and prioritisation of needs, decision-making, implementation, monitoring and maintenance of project outputs</u> is the underlying principle in the social action fund concept. This concept has been drawn up by GOM in consultations with communities, NGOs, special interest groups and donors. (GoM, 1995:ii) (Underlining and boldface mine)

Two key notions that form a point of departure from the development planning and practice during the Banda regime are “participation of beneficiaries” and “consultation of communities” (pii). These principles were markedly different from those that dominated development planning and practice during the Banda regime. During Dr Banda’s reign, developmental sense that would provide direction to socio-economic change was regarded as being absent

among the (rural) communities. As a result of such a view, the “political’ apparatus of the regime [was engaged] in the efforts to improve the standard of living in the countryside” (Joffe, 1973:523). The prevailing discourse therefore, showed that politicians (the elites) were enlisted as ‘teachers’ of their communities. Joffe (1973:520) notes that at the 1967 Malawi Congress Party convention in Mzuzu Dr Banda emphasised the role of ‘teacher’ to the party leadership, “I want you to go back home and tell the people [about the importance of producing high quality crops]. You are the leaders of the people and you are also teachers.” As a consequence of such notions the (rural) people were not provided with an enabling environment to participate meaningfully towards their own socio-economic change.

In development studies (see for example Korten & Klauss, 1984) the delicate balance between concerns of production and a concern for people is known to be elusive to many well-meaning socio-economic programmes. Arguing for planning frameworks for action for a people-centred development, Korten (1984:300) makes a distinction between people-centred and production-centred development:

One critical distinction between production-centred and people-centred development is that the former routinely subordinates the needs of people to those of the production system, while the latter seeks consistently to subordinate the needs of the production system to those of people.

The Banda regime’s development programme was (probably unwittingly) more concerned with production than with the human dimension of development. The economic growth analyses of the time point to achievement of this growth objective, despite some fluctuations, (see for example, Chipeta & Mkandawire, 2002 and Christiansen, 1984) while attendant upliftment of standard of life has been elusive. (Refer to **Table 7.1** below for Malawi’s economic growth performance.)

Table 7.1 Malawi Halfdecadal [*sic*] Rates of Growth of Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Real Per Capita GDP

Halfdecade	Average Annual Rate of Growth of Real GDP %	Average Annual Rate of Growth of Real Per Capita GDP %
1960-64	4.6	1.9
1965-69	5.8	2.2
1970-74	6.4	3.1
1975-79	5.8	3.2
1980-84	2.1	- 1.3
1985-89	2.6	- 0.6
1990-94	0.6	- 1.4
1995-99	7.4	5.4

(After Chipeta & Mkandawire 2002:2.)

An important point to make at this point is that growth has a part to play in the development of people. Seers (1972:25) states that “From a long-term viewpoint, economic growth is for a poor country a necessary condition of reducing poverty. But it is not a sufficient condition.” There is general consensus that abundance of resources or wealth do not necessarily spell development for that country (see Mabogunje, 1989; and Woods, 1993). In fact, Woods (1993:4) argues that:

The assertion that ‘increasing GNP is the purpose of development’ can, and needs to be rewritten. It is *the development of people*, and of groups, communities and institutions that is the primary purpose of development – to permit them to achieve...lasting increases in GNP. This means more than increasing human productivity in a narrow economic sense. It includes their empowerment to understand and manage their own processes of change, as well as managing their physical and financial resources.

What these viewpoints point to is the need to make provision for the various dimensions of development (physical, economic and human/social) to be holistically addressed (Woods, 1993). This appears not to have been the case in development planning and practice in the pre-democratic Malawi of Dr Banda. A possible explanation for the emphasis of the economic and physical dimensions at the expense of the human dimension may be found in the poor condition in which Nyasaland/Malawi was at the break-up of the Central

African Federation and eventual independence of Malawi. McMaster (1974:38-39) lists Nyasaland's economic, infrastructural and social gaps that needed immediate attention.

Thus, any government planning the economic future of Nyasaland and attempting to see beyond the breakup of the Federation would be forced to take account of a number of unpalatable considerations: an economy based primarily upon agriculture...an export trade dependent upon the vagaries of weather and of world market prices...a very small manufacturing sector, and a small internal market; a level of current expenditure inherited from Federal days of which Nyasaland's revenues would probably fall short by some 4 million [British Pounds] per annum...an underdeveloped internal transport system...a great shortage of professionally and technically trained Africans...

Although it may be said that this state of affairs showed gross neglect of the physical and economic dimensions which the nationalist government felt it needed to address immediately, the neglect of the human dimension was no less deplorable. However, if the nationalist government's consideration was to give priority to the economic and physical dimensions, the human dimension was not given any significant attention throughout the three decades of the Banda regime despite clear signs of aggravating poverty and declining of general standard of life (Harrigan, 2001). I argue, therefore, that failure to reflect on how holistically development was strategised and to innovate in the face of falling standard of life had much to do with absolutist tendencies of Dr Banda's regime. As Kydd (1984:349) observes regarding the underlying consistency of both the means to and goals of, development in Dr Banda's pre-democratic Malawi, "The key factor in this underlying consistency has been the dominance over policy making, and the remarkably detailed supervision over policy implementation, by one man, Dr Banda, who had firm views about the appropriate development strategy for the country."

A point worth commenting on regarding community participation in the post-Banda development strategising is the communities' unanimous pointing out of the need for credit facility for individual or communal wealth creation as their perception of an effective way to counter poverty. Although the Systematic Client Consultation was clear about this view from all

communities, the team's recommendation was dismissive. Citing past institutional failure to deal with defaulters, they recommended an evasive stance to MASAF by encouraging MASAF to concentrate on infrastructure provision and "encourage other donors or NGOs to address the credit needs with relevant institutional framework" (Chimbwete *et al*, 1995:36). According to MASAF's management, because there were other donors or NGOs that were active in this venture, it was felt that credit would not be considered at least in phase one (Kajumi, 2002 and Nkhoma, 2002). I contend that this is not convincing. Firstly, other donors and NGOs were as active in infrastructure provision as well as in credit provision. Therefore, claiming that MASAF would duplicate efforts in credit provision when MASAF duplicates infrastructure provision is not convincing. Secondly, if the NGOs or other donors had met the need in credit provision for income generating activities among communities, credit provision would not have featured as a top priority with such unanimity across communities. In view of these points, Phase One of MASAF can be viewed as rather evasive in its response to community perceptions in regards to the way forward to countering poverty. Such evasive responses point to complexities and challenges that are involved in notions of empowerment. It remains a question how far the financing institutions (donors, governments, NGOs, etc) are prepared to go to take the beneficiaries' perceptions of problems and suggestions of their solutions.

Another point worth bringing to attention is that a (textual) comparison of development objectives in the two socio-political contexts show marked differences of provisions for and emphases of development dimensions. Planning in pre-democratic Malawi displays emphasis on physical and economic dimensions of development while in the democratic Malawi objectives significantly cover the human dimension as they do the economic and physical. **Text 9B** below, an excerpt from MASAF PCD, and **Text 9C** below which is an excerpt from DEVPOL, exemplify these features.

TEXT 9B

[Extract from: *Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF): Project Concept Document.*]

2.2 Objectives of the MASAF Project

The overall objective of the MASAF project is to contribute to the goal of poverty alleviation as perceived by the individual community.

The specific objectives of MASAF are:

- (i) to upgrade community infrastructure by rehabilitating old structures and construction of new ones in education, health, water and transport and communication sectors;
- (ii) to improve the **delivery of and access to** social and economic services .
- (iii) to **foster grassroot initiatives** (social action) intended to enhance the technical and managerial capabilities and attitudes to self-managed development; and
- (iv) to **reorient and build capacity of actors in community development including communities themselves, extension workers, NGOs, the private sector and religious groups to equip them with skills in participatory methods for planning and implementing poverty alleviation interventions.**

(GoM, 1995:7)

(Boldface and underlining mine)

TEXT 9C

[Extract from: *Statement of Development Policies 1987-1996*]

FOREWORD

This is the second Statement of Development Policies produced by Malawi. It sets out the Government's view of Malawi's economic and social objectives and proposals on how these objectives will be realized over the coming decade. **The objectives relate to sustained economic growth, income distribution, the maintenance of self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs, and an improvement in economic security for both the citizen and the nation.** The means of achieving these are many and varied, sometimes involving very specific action by the Government, other times involving direction or support to private individuals or institutions...

Chapter 3

THE DECADE AHEAD

National Policies and Strategies

3.1 Malawi's economic and social objectives for the next decade may be summarized as the **reduction of poverty, ignorance and disease by the achievement of rapid and sustained economic growth; an improvement in income distribution; and a reduction in the instability of welfare for both the individual and. the nation.** These objectives are not seen as having any order of priority as all must be pursued at the same time to achieve a satisfactory pattern of development and, from time to time, they may be in direct conflict with each other. Indeed, a major aim of this document is to try and strike the right balance between objectives in individual areas of policy.

(GoM, 1987:13)

(Boldface and underlining mine)

While MASAF's general objective of contributing to poverty alleviation was guided by perceptions of the "individual community", what was set out in *the Statement of Development Policies* (DEVPOL) were "Government's view of Malawi's economic and social objectives and proposals on how...objectives w[ould] be realized." The differences in concern for the human dimension of development are set out from the lead texts of these excerpts. In DEVPOL, Government was concerned primarily with economic and physical objectives. It did not seek to get down to people's perceptions and reach out to work with them from their perspectives to empower them to be able to realise their potentials to muster their environment in a broad sense for their betterment. Woods (1993) discusses what studies have found out as factors that distinguish between less and more successful change agents in both more developed and less developed countries. Studies have shown that

The language and reasoning used by the more successful agents...took account of the farmers' individual and social considerations, while the language and reasoning of the less successful agents was much more confined to technical content and logic (Woods, 1993:47).

The objectives themselves are also markedly different in what they emphasise. While MASAF's four overall objectives include the three dimensions of human/social, economic and physical, the preoccupation with the human/social is observable. The two objectives that are ostensibly human/social in orientation seek to "foster grassroot initiatives" and to "reorient and build capacity of actors in community development including communities themselves, extension workers, NGOs, the private sector and religious groups to equip them with skills in participatory methods." (p7) The conceptualisation of MASAF as a social fund was partly motivated by the recognition of how little attention the human/social dimension had received in development work under Dr Banda's regime. In analyses that were carried out to establish the MASAF, it is stated, "The poverty scenario...poses a definite challenge that cannot only be tackled by macroeconomic policy strategies. A programme of action that targets human capital development and poverty alleviation in general would be necessary" (GoM, 1995:2). MASAF's objectives include also one ostensibly physical objective, namely "to upgrade community infrastructure by rehabilitating old structures and

construction of new ones in education, health, water and transport and communication sectors” (GoM, 1995:7). It is within MASAF’s workings that the physical are used as a vehicle of the social/human dimension. MASAF’s position in regards to infrastructure provision/rehabilitation is captured in the statement that: “MASAF is financing and facilitating PWP and CSP projects as a way of accomplishing the ‘hidden curriculum’ – to effect behaviour change among the people and empower them” (Kajumi, 2002). Thus, MASAF’s focus is on human capital development while the physical and economic, which were given disproportionate attention in the pre-democratic Malawi’s development agenda, are utilised as catalysts for the social/human dimension. MASAF operations are therefore participatory, taking communities as active participants not only in decision making processes and in-put contribution, but also in managing project implementation. This participatory approach is meant to reverse dependency behaviour which former approaches encouraged.

The provision of (financial) management and other relevant training that MASAF management organises at the launch of approved projects is meant to build capacity in local communities. It is Government’s expectation that when communities are empowered practically they will be in a position to identify problems within their settings and set about working out solutions or mitigation measures – with or without external assistance (Kajumi, 2002 and Nkhoma, 2002). This is in contrast to the objectives set out in DEVPOL “summarized as the reduction of poverty, ignorance and disease by the achievement of rapid and sustained economic growth; an improvement in income distribution; and a reduction in the instability of welfare for both the individual and the nation” (p13). The Banda regime’s DEVPOL’s focus was primarily economic growth. Although income distribution features as a component of economic growth, Kydd (1984:350) notes that “He [Dr Banda] had little time for ‘distributional’ concerns fashionable in the later 1960s and 1970s.” Thus if distributional concerns were not attended to, the pre-democratic development agenda realistically stopped at the physical and economic. Kydd (1984:312) is in agreement with this assessment, as he

asserts that the “Central Government’s investment pattern since Independence is an emphasis on economic infrastructure (i.e. physical infrastructure designed to facilitate increased production) at the expense of ‘basic needs’ welfare investments in rural health, education, etc.” Thus, although development during Dr Banda’s regime was rhetorically depicted as encompassing the economic, physical and human/social, the human/social concern was minimal in contrast to the development agenda in the post-Banda Malawi. The post-Banda development thrust is characterised by the human/social concern while the physical and economic dimensions function as catalysts as much as they meet truly physical and economic needs.

Conclusion

The rhetorical analysis in this chapter has shown that there are marked differences in the depiction of development and the means to pursue it in Malawi under Dr Banda, and in the post-Banda democratic Malawi. Firstly, whereas during Dr Banda’s regime, growth and physical infrastructure had the preponderance over the human/social dimension, the development agenda in post-Banda democratic Malawi has tended to depict development as primarily a human/social concern that is catalysed by the physical and economic growth components. Furthermore, in the Banda era, “designed on the basis of the ‘trickle down’ philosophy in circumstances where the institutional framework did not allow any reflection on the merits or demerits of...policies” (GoM, 1995:2), development was depicted as government’s prerogative. The people were depicted as ‘pupils’ who the leadership of the time, assuming superior knowledge was to ‘teach’ what would lead them to the desired socio-economic change. In contrast, in the post-Banda Malawi, the thinking has shifted towards a process approach to development which views communities as active participants not only in decision making processes and input contribution, but also in managing project implementation. Although there were institutional limitations in responding to some community perceptions of strategising for socio-economic change, the importance of the participatory approach to effect behaviour change and build capacity in local communities

is underlined. The importance of developing the human/social capital is depicted as prior towards attainment of socio-economic change.

9.3 Linguistic Resources in Representation of Empowerment

Introduction

The linguistic resources in constructing objectives in the MASAF PCD (**Text 9B** above) and in DEVPOL (**Text 9C** above) and the problem construction for the justification of the MASAF approach to social change (**Text 9D** below) are informative in regards to representation of divergent emphases in the development agenda by the Banda regime and in the post-Banda democratic socio-political context. Of particular discursive interest in this section are lexical and metaphorical resources for problem construction and contrastive representation of development during the two eras. The texts are examined working from problem construction as perceived in the MASAF approach to objective construction in MASAF approach contrasted to those in DEVPOL.

TEXT 9D

[Extract from: *Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF): Project Concept Document.*]

1.2 Rationale for a Social Action Fund Approach in Malawi

Since May, 1994 poverty alleviation has been singled out as the main development priority of the Government of Malawi. While, indeed, substantial investments have been made in the past through development programmes and projects in education, health and agriculture the strategies and implementation frameworks for such interventions lacked sufficient poverty focus. They were designed on the basis of the "trickle down" philosophy in circumstances where the institutional framework did not allow any reflection on the merits or demerits of these policies.

Community participation in the development process has over the last two decades been dampened by a top-down system that crippled the potential capacities of the ordinary citizens to mobilise and organise for **self-managed development**. Recent studies have revealed that the Government-created committee structure has been dominant in rural Malawi. This structure **has not been as responsive to the needs of rural communities** - as would be expected.'

Recognising the absence of a **responsive institutional framework** for community development, the Government has conceptualised a Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) which is expected to draw its content and direction from the **active participation of the intended beneficiaries** of that programme. While several reasons could be cited for the dormancy or ineffectiveness of whatever institutions that existed and operated at the **grassroot level** (be they endogenous or exogenous), what seems to have **killed the local initiative** is the lack of opportunities to mobilise collective action for local development. Worse still, where communities were able to mobilise and reach out to Government seeking support for their self-help initiatives, the latter could not respond quickly with the necessary financial or technical resources. This state of affairs **virtually created a chasm** between the community and the Government, critically **impairing the spirit of voluntarism** in the community.

To this effect, the Government has decided to establish a social fund to be known as the Malawi Social Action Fund, MASAF, in short, which will, among other objectives, aim **to promote a sustainable development process at the community level**. The Fund is part of a process where people will be assisted to change their attitudes to become masters of their own development. MASAF will provide the opportunity for communities to build up capacities for organising, identifying, implementing and administering community actions with the appropriate motivation and expectations to improve and benefit their own welfare.

(GoM, 1995:2)

(In-text underlining and boldface mine)

A View of Maldevelopment: Lexical and Metaphorical Resources

In establishing the rationale for establishing a social action fund, the post-Banda government planners and others depicted a harsh or disabling socio-political environment that discouraged actualisation of the potentials of the social dimension in the development strategy of the Banda regime. The planners were/are therefore of the view that the development strategy under the Banda regime was ill-equipped to deal with poverty. Thus the construction of the problem in **Text 9D** involved depicting an adverse socio-political environment and specific negative results on development at large and on specific development elements in particular. In this representation, the discourse of maldevelopment is primarily accomplished by lexical as well as metaphorical linguistic resources.

The socio-political context includes the philosophy that underpinned the former development strategy – “trickle down” - and the “institutional framework that did not allow any reflection on merits or demerits of...policies” (p2). The philosophy is therefore questioned, and the socio-political context is regarded

prohibitive of reflection. This finds support in Kydd's (1984) assessment of development planning and practice during Dr Banda's regime as essentially Dr Banda's own views only. Because of the philosophy and the point that it was not subjected to criticism due to the prohibitive socio-political context, several components of the social/human dimension of development did not flourish. The lexical choice in representing the stifling of elements of the social/human dimension is striking; the lexical as well as conceptual metaphor (Lakoff 1993) choices range progressively from diminishing the human dimension's capabilities to disabling certain functionings to eventual destruction of the social/human dimension.

According to Judge (1993) the health metaphors are a powerful discursive resource for depicting societal wellbeing. However, in the case of Malawi's development narrative, the depiction of society as a body, with indicators of ill-health and eventual 'killing' become meaningful in representing the dire effects of the ill use or neglect of the human/social dimension of development. Firstly, the top-down governance style initially "dampened" "community participation" in the development process. Thus instead of nurturing and enriching people's potentials, the "top-down" development planning and practice "dampened" the potentials. The metaphorical conceptualisation is that community effort was not taking full effect to counter poverty over two decades. Furthermore, while at whole community level the top-down socio-political context had the effect of diminishing efforts to counter poverty, at individual level, the results are not just reduced effect of efforts but "crippling...potential capacities of the ordinary citizens to mobilise and organise for self-managed development." The potential to take up the development challenge among the ordinary citizens was not put to use over a long period. Because the potentials were not exercised, the conceptual metaphor is that the latent capabilities lost opportunity to develop. Therefore, the people are incapable to mobilise and organise themselves for their socio-economic change. This is an issue of empowerment. The former socio-political context disempowered the ordinary citizen. The definition of

empowerment in Woods (1993) sheds light on how the metaphorical “crippling” was actually an issue of disempowerment.

Empowerment is often seen as something one can ‘do’ to another person. This is not so. People are empowered by an environment that gives them freedom to express themselves. Leadership is about creating such an environment that enables individuals to develop their potential to the fullest, and then encourages them to build on those skills and abilities for the future (p xiii).

In the end because the ordinary citizen was not empowered, local initiative was “killed”. The progression of the metaphorical societal health representation is significant. Initially, the efforts were slowed down (dampened), then the continued inactivity led to “crippling” individuals and eventually the shrivelled individual innovation and reflection got “killed”. Thus the Malawian ordinary citizen was made dependent on others for their own development.

It is also pointed out that where pockets of collective action sought government’s financial and technical support, the response was not quick. The effect of slow response is depicted as creating a “chasm” (p2) between the communities and the government. In short, neither government, nor communities were in any meaningful working relationship. This divide between government and the local communities affected voluntarism among communities. Voluntarism is said to have been “impaired critically” (p2). The total picture of the metaphorical representation of the circumstances of citizen potentials, and community participation is that the socio-political context during the Banda regime, led to a social malaise and eventual ill-development.

The Poverty Alleviation Programme, through the MASAF strategy is intended to correct the maldevelopment: “to change their attitudes to become masters of their own development” (p2). The metaphorical contrast between the Banda regime’s ‘teacher-pupil’ relationship between the political elite and the communities, and that obtaining in the democratic era which views communities as ‘masters’ of their socio-economic change, is striking.

Promulgations of catalytic purposes of infrastructural projects in the MASAF to develop social capital as a 'hidden curriculum' abound (MASAF, 2002b). Based on what has been observed in Chapter 7 in regards to the subtle subservience of the new Rural Growth Centres Programme as centres of industrial thrust to the more established agricultural strategy, it can only be mooted at this point that the 'hidden curriculum' of capacity building via infrastructural projects stands the danger of relapsing to the former approach that stopped at the physical and economic dimensions of development. Innovative conceptualisation is required to operationalise the delicate process by which communities can take-off from immediate economic and physical concerns, due to "entrenched [poverty] in Malawi" (MASAF, 2002b:7), to capacity building in the rural communities that the 'hidden curriculum' envisages. Assessment of MASAF's performance in this endeavour will have to wait for later research as the MASAF programme is on-going.

The rationale as well as the MASAF objectives display a richness in the lexical resources that contrast with the objectives in DEVPOL. What is discursively interesting is the contrasting discourse that emerges between the MASAF and DEVPOL development strategising. Schon (1993:150) asserts that "problems are not given, nor are they reducible to arbitrary choices which lie beyond inquiry. We set social problems through the stories we tell." This assertion provides a starting point in the examination of the contrastive (textual) representation of development strategising. The post-Banda development planning has embraced the guiding principle of community participation whereas the Banda regime's view of the local citizens was that of "pupils" to be taught and told what to do. Thus the discourse of development planning and practice in the post-Banda context draws on lexico-grammatical resources that show attempts to empower communities to be able to manage their own development. There is, therefore, a clear departure from the exhortation of the Banda regime. In **Text 9D** the Banda regime's committee system is depicted as neither "allowing any reflection on merits and demerits of...policies" nor was it "responsive to needs of rural communities" (GoM, 1995:2). In contrast, the post-Banda PAP/MASAF development planning and

practice is depicted as designed “to draw...content and direction from active participation of...beneficiaries” (p2). Furthermore, the PAP/MASAF development strategy’s objectives show that government experts would be in the background while the ordinary citizens in the local communities are in the foreground of action. In **Text 9D** MASAF is represented as promoter of “sustainable development process at the community level” (p2) by way of “provid[ing] the opportunity for communities to build up capacities”(p2), and “assist[ing] to change their [local communities’] attitudes to become masters of their development” (p2). Such a strategy requires “appropriate motivation” (p2). The drive in the post-Banda development strategy is to reverse the dependence tradition that the didactic exhortation has produced among the local citizens and to stimulate participation.

In **Text 9B** the development principles that are in **Text 9D** are presented as specific objectives. Of discursive interest in **Text 9D**, in addition to the contrastive lexicalising of principles of empowerment, is the identification of social actors (Fairclough, 2003) – MASAF and the local citizens (communities). This is not the case with **Text 9C**. Apart from the authorial presence of the Government, no other social actors are represented. This indicates not only textual backgrounding of social actors (Fairclough, 2003), it is also indicative of the general oppressive and didactic civic faith as they prevailed during the Banda regime. Furthermore, **Text 9C** displays the empiricist repertoire with characteristic passives and nominalisations (for grammatical impersonality) (Potter, 1996) which, according to Fairclough (2003), lend themselves to cultural and ideological manipulations.

In **Text 9B** MASAF’s role as a facilitator of empowerment is to “improve the delivery of and access to” (p7) socio-economic services and “foster grassroots initiatives”(p7). The ‘hidden curriculum’ is noticeable in objective (iv) which calls MASAF to “reorient and build capacity of actors”. The other actors, for example, the ordinary citizens are expected to make effort to “access social and economic services” (p7) and to avail themselves of the initiatives that MASAF will make available to enhance the technical and managerial

capabilities. Then there is an array of social actors to whom MASAF is offering “skills in participatory methods for planning and implementing poverty alleviation interventions” (p7). The actors are expected to avail themselves of these skills so they can build capacities. However, an observation in relation to the use of infrastructural projects to run the purposes and intents of MASAF’s “hidden curriculum” is that there is a danger of falling short of expectation. It has been observed in Chapter 7 in the RGC project that the conventional industrial thrust objectives that were textually explicit were overtaken by the historically shaped momentum of the inexplicit agricultural motivations. In the case of MASAF, the past pre-pluralist Malawi’s emphasis of the economic and physical have acquired prominence in the national mindset. I argue that there is need for clear thought pertaining to making the people manage the ‘learning’ transition from taking the infrastructural projects as goals in themselves for the communities to regarding the projects as largely ‘realia,’ in the capacity building educational process. Unless this transition is clearly thought through, there is danger that MASAF’s noble goals may relapse into the physical and economic emphasis that is already prominent in the development experience of Malawians.

In contrast to **Text 9B**, **Text 9C** displays empiricist discourse. While it is stated that the economic and social objectives and proposals are “Government’s view”, the use of the passives - “will be realized over the coming decade” (p13) - obfuscates the other actors and their roles. Although at the end of the foreword there is mention of “Government, private individuals and institutions” (p13) it was not clear what specifically the actors’ roles were. The summary of objectives in **Text 9C** does not show at all which actor was assigned what specific objective. This section makes use of nominalisation such as “**reduction** of poverty, ignorance and disease...an **improvement** in income distribution; and a **reduction** in instability of welfare for both the individual and the nation.” The effect of this empiricist discourse was that Government remained the prime mover of development interventions and the other actors were only brought in where they were allowed to participate as it was not explicit what would be their responsibilities.

Conclusion

In this section I have attempted to show that **Texts 9B** and **9D** (MASAF) show marked differences from **Text 9C** (DEVPOL) as they construct the poverty problem from their different perspectives. According to **Texts 9B** and **9D**, the problem has to do with the neglected or stifled human/social dimension of development. The conceptual metaphors were instrumental in constructing a stifled human dimension of development. However, the metaphorical shift from societal health to educational/motivational representations may be indicative of a truncated train of thought. This may be a reflection of the paucity of innovative and reflexive thought as far as development strategy is concerned. In **Text 9D** the problem was perceived in terms of economic growth for the individual and the nation. The empiricist discourse, utilising the passive and nominalisation to accomplish grammatical impersonality was a resource to keep Government as the prime mover of development interventions. Discursively, Government's top-down centralised planning was reflected in the discourse which kept other actors only back grounded. Attempt has been made to show that socio-political contexts are influential in the approach to development. Malawi under the Banda regime was run under authoritarian tendencies, where the people were to be told what to do. Lexical differences between MASAF and DEVPOL texts have showed the partnership in MASAF texts **9B** and **9D** whereas the grammatical impersonality has retained the top-down planning of the Banda regime's development planning and practice. In contrast in post-Banda Malawi, the participation of the ordinary citizen and local communities are taken to be critical in the MASAF strategy to poverty alleviation. This shows in the discourse also in that social actors are clearly marked and their roles too. Discourse is inclusive showing the active participation of ordinary citizens as a way forward in a poverty-focussed initiative.

9.4 Conclusion: Emergent Discourse of Developing People

The interest in this chapter was to examine contrasting discursive representations of development during the Banda and democratic eras, thereby demonstrating that the people-centred development discourse of the post-Banda era is situated in a socio-political context. On the one hand the socio-political influences were global, pertaining to the collapse of communism, and on the other hand, local, the challenge to the poor human rights record of the single party Banda regime. The current thinking attributes much of the failure of the development efforts under Dr Banda to the neglect of the human dimension of development, a point that ties with the oppression of Dr Banda's absolutist tendencies.

The analysis has also shown that under Dr Banda, Government centrally controlled all development planning and implementation. The view of the ordinary citizen was a rather disparaging one in the civic faith of the then Malawi. Apart from the sectoral ministries and their extension services, the Malawi Congress Party formed its own structures that were used in development implementation. In this development imperative, a teacher – pupil relationship was instituted. The ordinary citizen was to be told what was good for the upliftment of their standard of life. In contrast, in post-Banda Malawi, the development thinking seeks to empower the ordinary citizens to enable them to manage their own socio-economic change. I have pointed out, though, complexities and challenges that are there in latitude that is given to the beneficiary of a particular development initiative. Another contrasting view is that while under Banda the poverty problem was viewed from lack or inadequate physical and economic capital, in the post-Banda development practice the problem is viewed from the neglect or ill use of the human capital. Thus in the post-Banda development planning, the focus is on building people's capacity while the economic and physical objectives are used as catalysts.

In representing these contrastive foci of development and in the different socio-political contexts in which development is conceptualised, the discursive

resources that are used in Banda's DEVPOL are markedly different from those used in PAP/MASAF of the post-Banda democratic era. Attempt has been made to show that in DEVPOL the empiricist discourse using the grammatical impersonality resources of passives and nominalisations, depicted the Government as the prime mover of development intervention and backgrounded the ordinary citizen and other social actors while appearing to be including them in the development process. Furthermore, the language of the development objectives is predominantly economic and physical. Although there is inclusion of concern for the social, it is documented that the social was not given attention then. In contrast, the PAP/MASAF construction of the problem shows the ill use of the human capital. The health metaphorical discursive resource was used to show societal ill-health and eventual demise of human capacity under the centralised development planning and authoritarian rule of Dr Banda. Furthermore, seeking to empower the ordinary citizen, the lexical resources show partnership and support as opposed to the patronising of the Banda and his Malawi Congress Party centralised development.

The emergent discourse is therefore a reflection of an attempt to correct the dependence psyche that the Banda rule (probably unwittingly) instituted, and to bring about capacity among the citizens to manage their own socio-economic change. The analysis has indicated that unless there is innovative operationalisation of the use of the economic and physical dimensions as catalysts of the social/human dimension, MASAF's drive to build capacity in rural communities stands the danger of relapsing to the purely physical and economic emphases which directly answer the entrenched poverty in Malawi's rural communities. An interesting point also has been the metaphorical shift in the representation of the rural communities in the Banda and post-Banda development practice. While in the pre-democratic era the rural communities were regarded as 'pupils' and political elites as 'teachers', in the democratic era, the rural communities are represented as 'masters' of their socio-economic change. This metaphorical shift is significant in the different emphases that development practice makes in the two eras.

CHAPTER 10

THE SUM OF DEVELOPMENT REPRESENTATIONS IN DISCOURSE

10.1 Introduction

This study set out to examine representations of development in discourse with three primary areas of interest. The first was to examine how enabling or disabling a factor in development praxis were/are wider (international) discourses and power strategies as they represent(ed) the developing world and its problems along with proposed solutions. The second area of interest was the manner in which development is/was represented in (government) plans and how these translate(ed) into specific discourse types such as public communication texts. The third was to examine how social and discourse practices were articulated in constructions of social actors in development planning and implementation, and how these constructions impacted on participation and development sustainability.

Because development interventions are characteristically standalone programmes this study examined particular programmes as part of a larger development agenda. Thus, much as analyses of individual programmes/projects were interested in specific representations and social constructions influenced by intents and purposes in addition to instruments' characteristics of particular programmes/projects, the narrative was positioned in the whole development thrust as answering particular notions or dimensions of development. Largely drawing on critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1992, 2003) and adopting tools from discursive psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Potter, 1996), along with other lexicogrammatical tools, the study sought to understand discursive workings in development conceptualisation and praxis in context from a constructionist perspective (Potter, 1996). It is important to reiterate here that the study did not seek to find out how far the texts approximate the 'truth'; rather, the study was interested in discursive constructions and other realisations of conceptualisations of development within socio-political contexts within a time period. The study, therefore, involved examining "structures of whole texts"

(Deacon *et al*, 1999:179) as well as functions of lexico-grammatical features in the whole text representations. In addition, the study went beyond the text in its analyses, employing such strategies as text comparison and multivocality, primarily intertextuality (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002; Fairclough, 2003).

Although I adopted a two level analytical scheme for all data texts of each programme, rhetorical and lexico-grammatical, some texts lent themselves more to one level of analysis than the other. While texts that showed illusory disinterested 'factuality' lent themselves more to the rhetorical level, those that were explicitly persuasive tended to lend themselves more to the lexico-grammatical level. Subsequent sections of this chapter are organised along the lines of themes that are indicative of concretised programme bounded representations, following the major parts of the study and their chapters. Substantive parts and their chapters begin from **Part II**, **Part I** being a general introduction, literature review and the analytical approach.

10.2 Socio-political Contexts and Representations

Framing Agricultural Malawi

To situate Malawi's development story in a relevant perspective, the study has examined the relevance of the concept of 'framing' in the creation of an agro-based economy from colonial times to post-colonial times. In Chapter 4, the analysis has shown that there were historical influences dating back to the late 19th century when Scottish missionaries and entrepreneurs and later, a British Government's Civil Protectorate Administration, chose to run the protectorate on proceeds from agriculture. Attention has been drawn to two significant points in relation to the planter economy as contributory factors to Malawi's narrow based (agricultural) economy that has continued to be a liability post-independence. The first is that though the planter fraternity was comparatively small in the Protectorate, their influence on the economy and in politics in general was disproportionately significant. Using their influence, the planter fraternity was instrumental in frustrating possible investors in other sectors of the economy, such as mining. As a result Nyasaland remained a

labour reserve for the other Southern African economies, and its economy agro-based. Furthermore, the study has highlighted the ironic twist of events in the early years of the making of colonial Malawi's economy. Although the early missionaries and entrepreneurs had intended the economy to be based on moral principles, that is, to stop the slave trade by introducing Christianity and legitimate trade, by the time the civil Protectorate Administration was established, the agro-based economy destabilised lives of the indigenous Malawians. The Protectorate Administration imposed taxes on the indigenous Malawians to force them to the labour intensive white-owned estates where pay was miserable and conditions in general dehumanising. The point to underline here is that the establishment of an agro-based economy was a result of a conscious choice that was made and sustained by interests of the influential few backed by coercive instruments of an established civil authority. Furthermore, the study has contributed an alternative perspective in understanding the non-industrial economy that was inherited post-independence. It has been argued that socio-political as well as historical factors are responsible for Malawi's largely non-industrial economy. It is important to highlight that British colonial policies of the time were responsible for this state of affairs. Imperial statecraft had it that all colonies were only allowed to be sources of raw materials to feed the metropolitan industries (Mabogunje, 1989). This was also a socio-political choice that was consciously made. Thus, a metropolitan dimension to Malawi's agro-based economy (and those of other former colonies) can be traced historically.

Following from the choice of an agro-based economy, the notion of 'framing' has also been used to question the justification of Malawi's agro-based economy in physiographical factors. Chapter 5 of the study has demonstrated that the abundant and involved references to physiography in the literature on Malawi's economy by-pass the socio-political factors that underpinned the establishment of such an economy. In addition, the fallacious reasoning that limits landlocked polities to agricultural economies has been questioned. A counterargument to the fallacious reasoning that limits landlocked polities to agricultural economies is that landlocked conditions pose challenges to all trade including agricultural produce. Probably alternative economies rather

than agro-based ones that can absorb transportation costs better may actually be a way forward to landlocked polities. By examining other community capital that are potentially viable bases of alternative economies, I contend that the physiographical thesis needs to be questioned seriously.

Another angle to the workings of 'framing' in establishing an agro-based economy that the study has pointed out is the discursive construction of the economy as a logical result of the natural endowments that Malawi has. Largely, 'fact' construction within empiricist discourse (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996) was instrumental in crafting the agricultural comparative advantage thesis around Malawi's economy. In addition, use of underlying assumptions and intertextuality in discourse were instrumental towards constructing the agro-based economy not as a conscious choice among alternatives, but a logical conclusion of ecological factors. In relation to the first objective of the study, examining larger discourses of donor multinational institutions such as the World Bank and IMF and their expert economic advisors and their influence on the development, the study has highlighted that the literature on Malawi's economy is replete with the 'frames' of Malawi's exceptional qualities and endowments as an agricultural country. This feature is ideological; it is taken to be the basis of decisions of what socio-economic programmes can or cannot be readily considered for funding. Thus the creation of a narrow-based agricultural economy with little room for innovation and reflexivity has roots partly in the exceptionalising discourses of international dimensions. However, it has been pointed out too that the nationalist government sustained this position post-independence, citing elite interests as largely responsible for the perpetuation of the agricultural economic *status quo*. Thus, local and extra-local discursive synergies have ironically contributed to a fragile agro-based strategy for socio-economic change. Again the influences of such notions as accelerated development have been at work. I have argued that the seductive power of the discourse that represents agriculture as enabling the rapid creation of wealth for socio-economic change has been largely responsible for a fixated mentality in regards to alternative strategies for development.

In examining the agricultural economy in the IRDP and NRDP programmes in chapter 6, the study looked at the 'framing' of an agricultural strategy as the effective means for the desired socio-economic change, namely, the reduction of poverty, unemployment and inequality in wealth distribution. The analysis has demonstrated that a few rhetorical and lexico-grammatical tools were instrumental in the discursive workings. Again, 'fact' construction was a discursive resource to legitimise some 'facts' and delegitimise other 'facts' in the discourse (Potter 1996). A point that has been highlighted is that with an unpleasant history in colonial times, the agricultural strategy was heavily marketed to the citizenry by the nationalist Malawi Government. The texts analysed have exemplified that to make agriculture appealing, plan documents and public communication texts used metaphors and copious amounts of epithets vesting the agricultural strategy with virtues. Furthermore, such tools as slogans were also instrumental in public communication texts to concretise constructs of the agricultural strategy for social change. It has been demonstrated also that metaphors adopted did not quite clarify thought regarding strategies for development, as some bore a limited view of community capacity to muster circumstances for social change. It has also been demonstrated in the analysis that the adopters of the 'new' agriculture were not only vested with appealing epithets, but they also accessed project privileges such as credit facility for farm inputs. Paradoxically, this move to reward the adopters and thereby motivate the other peasants, ended up as a tool for perpetuating inequality, albeit in a different form.

In examining the socio-political context and the strategies for socio-economic change that have been adopted in Malawi, the study has shown that of the three phases of major development thought, the Malawi experience mostly worked within the dominant paradigm's "trickle-down" philosophy. Whereas in other developing nations in Africa, such as Tanzania, and those of South America, such as Brazil, which moved from the dominant paradigm to the socialist motivated dependency paradigm, the Malawi case appears not to have followed that trend, even though the libertarian notions of development Dr Banda used tactically for hegemonic ends, examined in Chapter 8, tended

to give such an illusion. Furthermore, the contrastive analysis of development discourses during Malawi's two post-independence eras in Chapter 9 has shown that from independence to the change to political pluralism in 1994, Malawi's development thought was singularly guided by the "trickle-down" philosophy, possibly due the anti-socialist stance which Dr Banda took. However, the poor performance of strategies based on the dominant paradigm's "trickle-down" philosophy was already manifest by the close of the 1970s. Thus, the Malawi development experience appears to be a leap from the dominant paradigm to the alternative approaches which are markedly human-centred and leaning towards social movements, by-passing the dependency philosophy. As the analysis has shown, the singularity of development thought may be regarded as a reflection of paucity of innovative search for alternative strategies for socio-economic change.

Opportunistic Forces in Development

The study also examined extraneous and inexplicit purposes that had been carried in Malawi's development agenda before the change to political pluralism. This part of the study, covering Chapters 7 and 8, sought to understand workings within the development agenda that were not planned for, but actively operated within development programmes' instruments. In the case of the RGC Project such workings deflected the project's focus so much so that the resultant malfunctioning of the centres gave the impression that project design was largely to blame. This analysis of inexplicit workings in development interventions, which are not without effect on planned operations, serves as a pointer to complex dialectics that operate in development work.

In relation to the RGC Project in Chapter 7, the neoclassical economic purpose of growth centres was to generate industrial activity in the economy in addition to other services that the centre's community would need or want. In Malawi's RGC Project, however, the analysis has shown that while agricultural motivations that impelled the project loomed large, the conventional growth centre purposes assumed textual prominence in the

discourse. The study has also demonstrated that in the case of the Mbalachanda RGC, the apparent duality of purpose was illusory. Although the underlying purpose for the centre was to serve the needs of tobacco estates, the discourse of the government in power and its coercive instruments gave the impression that it had taken the local inhabitants' perceptions into consideration in planning the growth centre and its functions. My analysis, however, shows that the participation of the local population in the planning of the growth centres was at best tokenistic. Discursive resources that constructed this illusory import of local inhabitants' inclusion and participation in the texts, included the disinterested empiricist repertoire within which operated various lexical and structural devices, and manipulations of principles of communicative dynamism.

Working within the theme of multiple purposes, Chapter 8 has examined inexplicit socio-political practices associated with Malawi's development agenda in general during Dr Banda's reign. The collapse of the colonial rule and rise to power of the nationalist Malawi Congress Party Government provided a context that enabled utilisation of the development agenda for hegemonic purposes. This part of the analysis has demonstrated that the development agenda was represented as a means to realising liberty beyond political freedom. Thus, two protean concepts were in use, 'freedom' and 'development,' the former being instrumental in constructing a dimension that 'development' was called upon to satisfy. The analysis has shown that the political leadership of the time utilised inexplicitly the people's quest for development to entrench themselves. Conformity to the party's political dictum was represented as a requisite to realisation of development. Metaphors were discursive resources instrumental to keeping inexplicit hegemonic purposes of promoting people's loyalty to the president and his government. Textually, attention was drawn away from the president as well as the party as the locus, by using such resources as transitivity. It is in this regard that I argue that a libertarian conceptualisation of development was subtly used to give the citizenry an illusory sense of participation in their socio-economic change agenda.

The analysis has also demonstrated that by dwelling on failures of colonialists in developing Malawi and positioning his dissident former ministers as distracting from development effort, Dr Banda capitalised on the political euphoria of the time to establish his government's hegemony in the Gramscian sense (Gramsci 1971). My contention here is that the development agenda was an inexplicit tool to establish Dr Banda and his Malawi Congress Party Government's hegemony. A point to underline here is that Malawi's case points to possibilities of development work being encumbered by concerns of political legitimation in political circumstances where good governance has not been established. The encumbrance of development work with such inexplicit purposes work towards impairment of development in one way or another.

Human-Centred Development

In examining problem construction in development interventions, planners show different perspectives. In Part IV the study undertook a contrastive analysis of development discourse at problem construction level. Examined in the light of the two contrasting political contexts, one autocratic and the other a budding democracy, development planning discourse shows differences of emphasis of development dimensions. Textual evidence as exemplified in DEVPOL shows that Dr Banda's regime viewed the physical and economic dimensions as critical to Malawi's development strategy. The prevailing view was that tackling poverty should begin at the physical and economic levels. In the analysis, it was observed that the planning discourse heavily displayed such physical and economic language. In such an economic growth driven development agenda, the human/social dimension was neglected, if not stifled. In fact, the relationship between the leadership and the citizenry was metaphorically represented as teacher-pupil. The people were to be told what to do, and the people were expected to carry out the instructions. In contrast, post-Banda development initiatives locate Malawi's problems in the neglect or ill use of the human capital. In depicting ill use of the human capital a range of metaphors were instrumental. Metaphors of societal ill-health (physical disability) were used to show how the

autocratic political culture stifled capacities among the ordinary citizens, thereby indicating the citizens' loss or lack of control of their life circumstances. A geographical metaphor depicting the divide between government and the people showed how voluntarism was failed by a centralised development approach that did not allow reflection and review. The metaphor of death indicated how the neglect of the human/social dimension has been crucial to the failure to understand circumstances of aggravating poverty while government pursued a determined economic growth development programme based on the "trickle-down" philosophy.

In the process of undertaking this analysis, I have highlighted that the emergent 'empowerment' discourse in MASAF is not without complexities and challenges. Texts show striking metaphorical shift from one era to another. While during Banda's reign disempowered rural communities were represented as 'pupils' and politicians as 'teachers', the post-Banda empowering development practice represents rural communities as 'masters' of their socio-economic change. However, it has been mooted in the analysis that there is need for innovative operationalisation of the transition from catalytic instruments of infrastructural and economic dimensions that deal directly with palpable issues of poverty, to capacity building in the rural communities as a corrective measure of the damaged social/human dimension of community capital. Without a clear mode of operation, I contend that MASAF might unwittingly end up largely repeating the emphasis of the physical and economic dimensions whose unsatisfactory effects it is trying to correct, discursive assertions to the contrary notwithstanding.

Another unclear area is how MASAF intends to effect "attitudes" change in (rural) communities. The drive to change attitudes that is indicated in the MASAF programme, in Chapter 9, echoes the reference to a fixated mindset that was pointed out in Chapter 6 – **A View of Maldevelopment**. Although the need to change a dependent and fixated mindset has been mooted, there lacks a clear conceptualisation of the way forward to realise such a goal. Furthermore, how far beneficiaries' perceptions will be taken on board to be operationalised for socio-economic change interventions remains a grey area

in the new discourse. The study has called attention to the dismissive element that has been carried through in the SCC, which provided a conceptual foundation for the MASAF programme.

10.3 Conclusion

As this study concludes, it is clear that development work is fraught with complexities and challenges. From analyses under the theme of *framing*, it has been observed that development goes beyond disinterested objective physical and economic interventions. The interventions are discursive products that are presented persuasively as realities that obtain at the time and in the context. These discursive formations go to affect society in real-life. Thus, it is my view that in seeking to correct maldevelopment, it is important not to ignore the discursive workings that go to creating a community mindset. I argue that solutions that overly elevate the physical or economic conditions, by-passing the power of discursive operations, are unlikely to make any significant change.

Two main observations have been made in the analyses under the theme *multiple purposes of development*. One is that while interventions may be intended to address an identified need, opportunistic motivations may be actively at work within the entire or some of the instruments of the intervention. These are often not explicit, but their effects are no less significant. Sources of distortions or deflection of goals may not be obviously understood. There are subtle compatibilities that discourses construct to obfuscate intrusive motivations. However, the added 'baggage' that development interventions are encumbered with works disadvantageously on the course and outcomes that particular interventions are designed to bring about. A point to underline, therefore, is that any associations that are either explicitly stated or insinuated with any development interventions need to be viewed with caution. The other point is that development intervention is not neutral; it is bound up with political interests of various groups, especially the elite. The political interests may be either helpful or distracting from intended goals of the intervention.

There are also power relationships that develop among social actors associated with particular development interventions, which may encourage social change or discourage it. These power relationships are discursively constructed to persuade and seek advantaged position. The issue of relationships among various social actors has been dealt with particularly under the theme *human-centred development*, where the importance of the human/social dimension to social change has been highlighted. Powerful discursive representations that operate to accomplish either disempowerment or empowerment in the human/social dimension are exemplified. In all these observations, there is neither a single disinterested perception, nor do perceptions continue interminably; they are bounded in space and time. This is indicative of the importance of understanding contexts, socio-cultural practices, and discursive resources that are brought to bear in any development interventions.

Another point to highlight is that this study has shown that there is potential of developing viable alternative futures in revisiting the conceptualisation processes of a development problem as well its proposed intervention. Such processes may benefit from innovative and reflexive approaches to societal problems. Morgan (1986:337) asserts that:

People who learn to read situations from different (theoretical) points of view have an advantage over those committed to a fixed position. For they are better to recognize the limitations of a given perspective. They can see how situations and problems can be framed and reframed in different ways, allowing new kinds of solutions to emerge.

Morgan's (1986) argument points to the importance of emancipatory reading (Apthorpe, 1996) of the discourse that is constructed around societal problems and intended interventions. A point that this study underlines is that all development work has constructionist discursive foundations. Borrowing the language of UNESCO's constitution preamble (UNESCO, 1995), I conclude that since development conceived in human mind finds expression in their discursive resources, hopes of correcting maldevelopment, or bringing about social change in general, must not by-pass scrutiny of their representations in discourse.

10.4 Suggestions for Further Research

This study has sought to understand social meaning in context, and the dialectics that are involved, especially as they are realised in discourse. The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework was the theoretical and methodological basis of analysis, along with lexico-grammatical tools drawn from discursive psychology. The multi-perspective design was a recognition of two points in regards to discourse analysis as a field of study, and Critical Discourse Analysis as a perspective of the broader field of Discourse Analysis. The first point is that discourse is not readily labeled; rather it involves exploratory analysis. Multiperspective tools of analysis enrich the researcher's exploration. The second point is that critical linguistics is a developing field that can be adapted to seek answers to specified questions of (social) research. The tools that CDA has developed (Fairclough, 2003) for social research are rewarding in analysis of social practices as they are realised linguistically.

It should be pointed out, though, that data for this study has been Malawi Government documents, or government-controlled public communication texts. Apart from the fact that the sheer volume of work that discourse analysis generates is a factor that limits the amount of textual data that one can work with, there were hardly any other worthwhile records for early development programmes such as the Integrated Rural Development Programme, the National Rural Development Programme, and the Rural Growth Centres Project. It was rather disappointing to learn that the British Government's DFID office in Malawi had disposed of such old files. DFID indicated that the Public Records Office in London might have some records. The German Embassy in Malawi also has disposed of all files on the RGCs. In their case there is no person in Malawi that was connected with the project who could provide any information at all; all diplomatic staff that had been involved with the project have since been redeployed to various duty stations abroad and probably others have retired from service. It is my view that a future study would benefit from comparative analysis of the texts from donors and the beneficiary Malawi Government. Such comparative analyses would shed light on operations of opportunistic discursive forces that often operated

inexplicitly in the project instruments. Although reviewer comments have been useful to check referential value of data texts, counterpart donor texts would be instrumental for identifying points of discursive variations in the envisaged development.

Another valuable source to check for referential value of the data texts would be interviews with some project/programme social actors, especially those designated as beneficiaries. Interviewee responses would supplement textual analyses of social practice, especially the consumption of discourses and their content. DASP has developed some useful interview techniques (Wetherell and Potter 1992; Puchta & Potter, *n.d.*) that minimise the danger of confirming the researcher's own views in the mouths of respondents. An important difficulty that I experienced within the constraints of time and resources was that participants that were involved in the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the agricultural and rural growth centers projects are hard to come by, mostly due to natural attrition. In the absence of primary information from beneficiary social actors and texts from donor counterparts, reviews and evaluations of various projects, and commentaries on the socio-political contextual features have been extensively used instead. However, it would enrich studies to work with primary instead of secondary sources to see the constructionist workings that operated through the government and the government-controlled media discourse.

Referred to variably as 'attitudes' or 'mindset' in calls for social change, Malawi's current national mindset shows paucity in innovative and reflexive strategising for socio-economic change. In relation to organisational problems, Morgan (1986:335) asserts that an "appreciation of the close relationship between thoughts and actions can help to create new ways of organizing." The centrality of linguistic and social psychological work to understanding mindsets has been indicated by Fisher (1988). This study can be considered to be a preliminary contribution to the importance of analysis of metaphors (and indeed all representational language) as a discursive resource in national/community development work. As far as this study has shown, the use of metaphors, especially the mixed metaphor, did not facilitate

choices and direction in Malawi's development thought. In some cases, metaphor use was deployed to aggravate social inequality (albeit unwittingly). There is substantial work carried out by the Union of International Associations (see for example UIA, 1991) in relation to the importance of metaphors (representational language) in developing alternative approaches to human problems. Although Fisher's (1988) interest is in international relations, he also points to the importance of language as a means of "gain[ing] an entre into the thought patterns of the people" (p172). He suggests studying several features of particular communities and their cultures including "idioms, maxims and proverbs" (Fisher 1988:173). Malawi has a rich oral tradition, and further research in this direction may be useful in understanding perceptions of social change that obtain in a time period. Such knowledge may be useful in operationalisation of the 'hidden curriculum' that MASAF's human-centred development is advancing, and the broader issues of effecting change of dependent and non-innovative mindsets.

Until recently, when the development agenda has shown obvious failure in the developing world, issues of socioeconomic change were almost exclusively a preserve of schools of economics. However, the 'linguistic turn' in the humanities and social sciences is making a significant contribution in the human dimension that is important in societal shaping and reshaping, accomplished primarily through discourses of international, local or institutional dimensions. The present study's use of tools developed in CDA and Discursive Psychology is indicative of benefits that discursive approaches can contribute to social change. The suggestions for further research that have been made in concluding this study are only indicative of a field that has not received much attention in studies that advance social, cultural and economic change. Fairclough's (2003) call for multi-disciplinary use of discursive approaches are potentially rewarding to the understanding of social problems and interventions that may make a significant difference.

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