

Encumbering Development: Development Discourse as Hegemonic Resources in the Developing World ®

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Abstract

Development as a concept is as complex as it is elusive to definition. Various accounts of the chequered historical course of development thought show attempts to explain the development process as it has been perceived in various contexts and during particular time periods.

Post World War Two socio-economic development assessments show bleak as well as paradoxical trends in the developing world, given the efforts of nationalist governments and the donor community to improve people's quality of life. While assessments agree that the development project has under performed, or aggravated the poverty and suffering among the poor, explanations of responsible factors remain a subject of heated debate and shifting opinions. In the SADC region, Malawi's post-independence rapid economic growth and its fall from the early 1980s have attracted divergent explanations, given Western donor community good will and support Malawi enjoyed throughout the cold war era.

A worthwhile starting point in tackling the complexities of development is to clarify conceptions of development and their strategies in context. Adopting techniques in Critical Discourse Analysis perspectives that espouse a constructivist approach, a rhetorical and linguistic study of public communication texts within the socio-political context at independence in 1964 and post-independence, throws some light on the development project as encumbered and distracted in Malawi and by extension, among (young) states of the developing world. As such, as much as the development agenda is seen to have primarily socio-economic bearings, analyses of depictions of development show that elites subtly used the development agenda as a hegemonic resource to entrench their positions. This paper focuses on the constructive element that was involved in the conceptualisation of development and the hegemonic purposes the development concepts served.

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). Whereas the World Bank (1981) blamed African governments and their bad policies, and Bates (1981) included to the list, African state officials’ selfish motives to enrich themselves and their collaborators, African leaders challenged this view (OAU 1981). Although shortly later African leaders “acknowledged the responsibilities of African governments for the crisis, and the limitations of...actions undertaken by African states” (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 in context. Indeed the term and concept *development* itself remains elusive to definition (see Baster 1972; Mabogunje 1989; 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. Analyses of various conceptualisations of development in contexts of social practices would help to cast some light on factors that contribute to inefficacies of various development strategies.

Analytical Tools

The theoretical framework of the analysis in this paper draws mainly from the discourse analytic perspectives that embrace a social constructionist epistemology (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Fairclough 1992; Potter 1996; Potter and Wetherell 1987; Gergen 1994; Gergen 2001). While text analysis is based on Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 1989, 1992), I also

draw on Discursive Psychology (DASP) as practiced by Potter and Wetherell (1987) as it “provides particularly useful and widely used tools for research in communication, culture and language” (Phillips and Jørgensen 2002:106). In this analysis DASP is particularly useful for rhetorical analysis, which complements CDA’s analysis of formal linguistic features, using its three-dimensional analytical framework (Fairclough 1992, 1995). On a 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 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 this analysis. 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, the analysis elevates the concept of *Orders of Discourse* (whose elements include genres, styles, discourses) (Fairclough 1992, 1995) to the main pillar of the discursive/social practice analyses. 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 (Phillips and Jørgensen 2002:145).

Both, CDA and DASP are agreed that discursive accounts of reality have social consequences. In this analysis, 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), the analysis of formal linguistic features, which provide for linguistic realisations of discourses in genres, examines texts on two levels. One level is identifying and characterising the discourses in question. On this level, the analysis distinguishes how vocabulary 'lexicalises' the world in particular ways. This analysis involves examining how lexical semantic relationships are deployed in different discourses to structure the world differently. 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).

The 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." 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). Another feature of analysis on this level 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.

Another level of analysis of formal linguistic features involves identifying representation of social events and actors in addition to examining representations of development. Selections from Fairclough's (2003) tools of analysis of representational meanings are considered relevant. A pertinent feature of interest for textual and social analysis is 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, namely: processes, participants and

circumstances (Halliday 1985). For purposes of this analysis, the features of interest are transitivity, nominalisation and representation of social actors as included or excluded entities, or indeed represented as personal or impersonal entities.

Development and Social Practice in Malawi

The story of development in Malawi is well documented (see for example Chipande 1983; Harrigan 2001; Hogendorn and Christiansen 1996; Kydd and Christiansen 1982; Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh 1984; Pryor 1990). Chipeta and Mkandawire (2002:24) note that the period 1960 – 1979, particularly after independence in 1964, “Malawi’s economy exhibited above-average growth.” Malawi’s marked development success among other emergent Sub-Saharan states attracted international attention as an “alternative pattern to development” (Centre of African Studies, Edinburgh University 1984). However, due to a combination of external factors (such as oil price rise), natural disasters (particularly drought at the turn of the 1970s) and internal structural weaknesses in the economy, Malawi’s agriculture-led economy experienced a hitherto irreversible downward trend. This downward trend spelt the fading of hopes for meaningful development. Divergent diagnoses of Malawi’s economic circumstances have been made (see for example Harrigan 2001; Chipande 1983; Kydd 1984; Kajiyanike 1992). According to Harrigan (2001) the World Bank had misread Malawi’s economy as a true free market economy, thereby giving ineffective advice. Harrigan (2001) argues that the World Bank had misread the social practices of the Malawi polity under Dr Hastings Banda and their influence on the economy giving it appearances of a true free market economy. The analysis in this paper focuses on the discursive construction of the said social practices in the context of Malawi at independence and post-independence, and their socio-economic effects.

A Gramscian Reading of Malawi at Independence and Post-independence

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 2001). Thus, extra to socio-economic purposes, the development agenda has been used subtly as a hegemonic resource to promote a beneficent image of ruling parties and their governments to entrench themselves. 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.

In pointing out the elasticity and complexity of Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Harshé (1997: 149-150) argues that

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.

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 struggle of class 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, therefore, keen 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 ministers 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 subordinates 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 over hastily 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 which "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).

Instances of Dr Banda's references to the development agenda exemplify his use of development as a socio-cultural resource to legitimise himself and the Malawi Congress Party Government. An early case of Dr Banda's use of this socio-cultural resource was 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).

This paper further examines instances of such references to development as this, which were intended to be a means of winning consent of the various classes that formed the Malawi polity for hegemonic purposes. The textual analysis focuses on examination of 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

The main contention in this part of the paper is that concerns of political legitimisation 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 A** and **B**.)

TEXT A

[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 **A** 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 A** 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 and Wignell 1994:62) the structure in question pertains to verbal processes¹. In relation to these, Gerot and Wignell

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*

¹ In Systemic Functional Linguistics, 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, signaling
Relational	Being	equal to, or some attribute of
Existential	Existing	there exists
Meteorological	Weathering	

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]²...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 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 appositive of development, was invoked in another speech about a year later (**Text B** below).

TEXT B

[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

² This is Fairclough's coinage meaning “making an entity”.

what Gramsci (1971) 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 C

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.³ Joffe (1973) argues that

³ 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.

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 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 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 D** 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 D

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 honour 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. Thus, while access to these 'fruits 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 and irresponsible 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 E** below.

TEXT E

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 Malawi government adopted an "energetic political campaign in favour of 'improved' farming methods, based on persuasion rather than coercion" (Kydd and 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 and Christiansen 1981:101). This is ironic. A possible explanation lies in the political 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.

Conclusion: Development and Oblique Hegemonic Rhetoric

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. It has been 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. It has been shown also that this dependence psyche did not encourage innovative and reflexive approaches to socio-economic change among the leadership, let alone the villager. This paper also contends 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.

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