

University of Alberta

GLOBALIZATION, UNIVERSITY POLICY AND POLICY PROCESS
IN POSTCOLONIAL AFRICA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI REFORM

By

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the

requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

Educational Administration and Leadership

Department of Educational Policy Studies

Edmonton, Alberta
Fall, 2004



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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband and best friend Max, for his patience and understanding with my long absence from home to study abroad. And also to my sons, Kuzani and Nthamenye for bravely enduring my long absence from home. To my young son Nkalipo for being my companion and inspiration here in Canada. This work is our collective achievement.

To my father, Manase Ndovie and my mother, Tumenyi Nakabundi for believing in me and supporting and embracing the ideals of getting an education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to my program and thesis supervisor, Dr. Margaret Haughey, who gave guidance, support and encouragement throughout the period of my study towards the doctoral degree. Her insightful comments and questions inspired me to search for deeper and more creative answers. I also benefited from Dr Jerry Kachur's patience, enthusiasm and willingness to have discussions with me on different theoretical frameworks. The lessons from the discussions enriched this study. I am appreciative of the comments and suggestions offered by Dr Ali Abdi which also enriched the study. I am also grateful for the evaluation of the thesis and the suggestions on the way forward offered by Dr George Sefa Dei, the external examiner.

My doctoral journey and experience would not have been possible without the financial support of the International Council of Canadian Studies, which provided funding for me to study at the University of Alberta through the Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship Fund. I am most grateful to Ms Diane Cyr, the program manager of ICCS for her support throughout my period of study and stay in Canada.

In Malawi, thanks are due to the University of Malawi, Polytechnic for putting my name forward as an eligible candidate for further studies. I especially thank the Principal of the Polytechnic, Mr H. Chibwana and the Registrar Ms Faustas Msonthi. I also thank my colleagues throughout the University of Malawi, who gave their support during my field study in Malawi.

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List of Abbreviations

DEVPOL	Development Policy – the ten year development strategy policy documents that were developed by the first postcolonial government in Malawi. This practice came to an end in 1994, when the new government took over and replaced the national development strategy with the internationally supported vision 2020.
EP&D	Economic Planning and Development Division
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IFIs	International Financing Institutions
M G	Malawi Government
MIM	Malawi Institute of Management
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MPRSP	Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
NEC	National Economic Council
NSO	National Statistical Office
PAI	Policy Analysis Initiative
PAP	Poverty Alleviation Program
PIF	The education sector’s Policy Investment Framework. The World Bank supported sector based - policy framework
OPC	Office of the President and Cabinet
OVP	Office of the Vice President
UNIMA	University of Malawi
Vision 2020	National development strategy initiated by UNDP in 1995. The concept is based on UNDP’s African futures project. Many countries have Vision 2020 documents

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Current world social statistics paint a grim picture of increased inequalities, poverty and fragmentation between the rich countries and the poor countries (UNDP, 1999; World Bank, 2000). Statistics also show that within poor developing countries, the gap between the poor and the rich is widening considerably. The indicators affirm that instead of improving the lives of millions of people, current policies in all social sectors are failing to alleviate social disparities resulting in increased poverty, disease, divisions and inequality. Furthermore literature on development indicates that such inequalities are occurring within a context of developing nations' decreasing policy autonomy, control ability and capability to define long term strategies for their social progress (Baylies, 1995; Carmody, 1998; Mkandawire, 1998; Moyo, 1992). This lack of policy control is seen as a consequence of their lack of economic resources and lack of control of knowledge, and therefore, of the discursive practices that underpins the whole development process and policy (Chossudovsky, 1998; Escobar, 1997).

Ironically current literature on structural adjustment and aid conditionalities indicates that in spite of tough conditions attached to developmental aid, the actual amount of aid available to poor nations has decreased (Carmody 1998; King and Buchert, 1999). Additionally aid has been privatized and politicized. The assumptions behind the development process itself are in crisis. However, despite the development theory crisis in some Western academic and other circles, in the developing regions such as Africa, development is still a hegemonic paradigm and there is continued domination of policies by international organizations leading to a homogeneity of national policy among and between developing countries (WDM, 2001).

University education policy in the developing world has tended to occur within both international and national frameworks. The international factors take precedence over national realities because of lack of national resources for social services. For the past

four decades, developing nations have been applying economic and social strategies and policies that are supposedly aimed at transforming these “underdeveloped” countries into “first world” western style developed countries. Most of these adopted strategies and policies have been instigated with the support of external bilateral and multilateral aid agencies in conjunction with local westernized policy planners and intellectual elite, through technical and scientific knowledge and expertise.

Policy and policy process is increasingly being influenced by globalization goals at the expense of national interests, values and goals. Policy is being informed by universally applied assumptions and justifications derived from the internationally dominant development theory as articulated by major international development agencies and international financial institutions (IFIs). University educated intellectuals and state technocrats adopt such assumptions and justifications and have become the natural partners of the international elite. Consequently, policy processes in Africa are most often elitist, rationalistic, technical, homogenous and exclusively dominated by top bureaucrats/technocrats and their international partners. Such homogenous policies across regions and countries seem to be unjustified considering the diverse economic, social, historical and geographical conditions of the nations in the developing world and the real need for strategies that are directed at real local problems.

Additionally, empirical evidence shows that African nations continue to adopt inappropriately designed educational reform strategies although their policy actors are aware of the difficulties of realizing the goals articulated in most of these policies (Burbules & Torres, 2000; Samoff, 1994). Some national policy actors and researchers are aware that such externally defined policy cannot solve the current national educational problems but they seem to be powerless to stop the cycle (Samoff, 1999, 1994; WDM, 2001). If such is the case, there are questions to be asked about who owns these policies, how are the needs, values and aspirations of the developing countries reflected in these policies, and how and why are these policies negotiated and adopted at all?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study is situated within the larger globalization and structural adjustment debates that surround the social policy content, context and process in poor aid-dependent developing countries. The University of Malawi reforms, and the financial reforms in particular, seem to have been planned within an exclusive and universalistic policy framework. As a result they were met with contention and resistance since they reflected fundamental changes towards the State's reduction of provision of resources for social services such as education. The study focused on understanding the policy process and context of the 2000 University of Malawi reform as one example of homogenous policies designed within an elitist and technical framework in the developing countries.

The study explored the realities of the policy development and implementation process in a poor, aid-dependent, developing country and how this reality influences the goals and values of university education policy. The central focus of the study is on the implementation process due to the fact that, in the policy under study, participation and involvement of the key policy recipients and stakeholders took place only during the implementation process. Through conversations with policy actors and analysis of key policy documents, I examined the values validated in the policy process, choices and strategies in line with Malawi's social, political, economic, cultural and institutional contexts. Additionally, through a further analysis of the process, I attempted to uncover the unequal power relations that existed between different policy actors. In so doing, I was exposing the underlying inequalities that constrained or enhanced power differentials among different policy actors and affected the policy choices and policy ownership.

RESEARCH FOCUS

I examined the broad higher education policy process and then focused on the narrower and intense analysis of the financial reforms in Malawi. First, through discussions with key policy actors, I interrogated the realities of the policy process in the current, "adjustment," post-development, pluralistic yet patrimonial "democracy" and resource-

scarce context in terms of its broad goals and the realizability of the goals that were projected. Secondly, drawing from the discussions with these key policy actors, other stakeholders, and documents, I critically analyzed the process that led to the 2000 University of Malawi cost sharing policy in order to understand how it was negotiated to accommodate conflicting goals of “adjustment” against national goals and interests. Finally, through a further critique of the different policy actors, I exposed the underlying power relations that influence this particular policy and policy process. Loosely guiding the study is a critical policy analysis framework by Ball (1990) which outlines what he theoretically and conceptually describes as both eclectic and pragmatic approaches (1990, p. 2). His framework affords alternative interpretations and analyses of what he has called “the process” and “the case.” This is premised on the centrality of power and control in the nature and concept of policy that Ball draws our attention to in the phrase that “policy is the authoritative allocation of values” (Prunty, 1985, p. 136).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To what extent did the policy development process and practice in Malawi, a small debt ridden, landlocked country incorporate and cater for local interests, values and realities, given the homogeneity of global policy across developing countries?

Specific questions were;

1. What were the policy development practices in the University of Malawi reform?
2. To what extent did the policy development practices enhance or hinder the implementation process?
3. What was the extent of stakeholder involvement in the process?
4. To what extent did policy choices and strategies relate to local contextual realities in terms of relevance and appropriateness?
5. To what extent did globalization, patrimonialism, patriarchy and hegemony impact and influence policy development and implementation processes?

ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is guided by the assumption that “policy is the authoritative allocation of values which do not float free of social context.” (Ball, 1990, p. 3) This claim is premised on two beliefs, first, it draws on the centrality of power, control and authority that the policy actors have in their “authoritative allocation of values” of their societies. Second is the belief that such values are grounded in the society that the policy aims to serve and should therefore reflect that society. Underlying such claims is also the assumption that if the allocation of values is not authoritative enough and if the values validated in the policies do not reflect those of society, the policy might have implementation problems and have ineffective results. Finally, there is also an assumption that policy or policy reform has a national purpose, which is societal change aimed at improving the effectiveness of the social system and its delivery of services. In this case the assumption was that the reforms were intending to change Malawi’s university education system and also to improve its delivery of university education. For this reason, the study specifically focused on the implementation of higher education policy to interrogate how and what authoritative values had been allocated in this policy, and whether or not such a policy improved the effectiveness of the delivery of higher education in Malawi. Additionally, I examined whether or not those who were empowered to allocate the values used their social agency to ensure that the allocated values reflected the social, economic, political and cultural ideals of the Malawi society.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is important for several reasons. First, the findings will inform policy planners, researchers and administrators as to why there is a need for a more critical, inclusive and effective approach towards future policy planning and reform. Since the State has changed its own role in public services by shifting from provision to increased individual participation, the policy process cannot continue without participation of the recipients and other stakeholders. Elmore (1980) posits that the most serious limitation of such a top-down approach is its unquestioned and implicit assumption made by policy makers

that they control the organizational, political and technical process that affects implementation.

Second, it will help address local contextual realities of the policy planning and implementation process in resource strapped developing countries. In addition, revelations of the study regarding the complexities behind the commonality of programs that are taken for granted will help policy planners towards matching policies with contexts instead of the assumed universality of policies. Since the adoption of “development” policies and the imposition of structural adjustment policies with their accompanying globalization discourse, most social policies have been adopted under the wrong assumptions that the Africa region is a monolithic entity with similar political, social, historical, and economic influences. Such an approach is clearly demonstrated in the adoption of a homogeneous financial policy with the same instruments and other related features not only in Africa but in Latin America as well. This monolithic view of developing countries blurs real differences that distinguish one country’s realities from another. It is complexities that come from the diversity of particular policy environments that this research highlighted. Finally, through the exposure of the power relations between international, national and local policy actors, the study revealed the “irrationalities,” value-laden and unequal relations behind the assumed “neutral,” rationalistic, technical and value-free policy process. Through this revelation of individual and collective constraints and limitations, the study will provide information that will be a basis for reflexive practice and therefore aid future policy processes. Exposing some of the limitations of the adopted policy approach to the planners and others concerned with policy issues brings an understanding of policy in Malawi.

Finally, as far as I know, and as was confirmed by many of the interviewees, this is the first independent study regarding university policy process that focuses on the University of Malawi apart from studies done by local and international consultants. It will therefore add valuable information to university and other social policy processes in Malawi and other developing countries.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Since I had to collect both primary and secondary text and interviews within a period of twelve months, I had a limited timeframe within which to contact all stakeholders and participants. As a result I was unable to interview certain key policy makers especially those who had moved out of the key government agencies and the university. The distance between Blantyre, where I lived, and Lilongwe, the capital city where most policy makers are, was also a limitation. The two cities were 350 kilometres apart and travel posed many practical challenges.

There was also limited access to primary and secondary source documents especially surrounding key policy initiatives. Several attempts to get documents surrounding university processes proved unsuccessful. Even public documents such as the parliamentary Hansards were unavailable at the parliament's own library, the university libraries or even the University's centre for social research. It was easier to obtain important documents such as PIF, MPRSP and Vision 2020 on the Internet than from public agencies.

DELIMITATIONS

The study was delimited to Malawi, a country in the South East of Africa and to the University of Malawi reform process. The study covered the period of 1994 to 2002. The data collection process took place within a one-year period, January to December 2002. Due to the fact that the implementation process was not complete and there were many evolving issues concerning the efficacy and appropriateness of the proposed policy strategies, many dimensions and aspects of the reform process were changing and being adjusted even as the study was taking place.

As well, the study was delimited through its selection of participants for interviews. The choice of participants included state participants, university top officials and stakeholders such as college administrators, faculty members and student participants. Although the

selection ensured that participants from each group were interviewed there many others who could have been interviewed.

Political events taking place in the year 2002 also caused further delimitation in the choice of participants. It was difficult to contact many of the political actors especially legislators due to the geographical realities of the country. I lived in the southern part of the country and key parliamentary committee members were scattered in the centre and north of the country. Combined with political events at the time, many politicians were kept busy with an issue concerning a constitutional crisis.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Aid

The term is loosely used to refer to economic, scientific and technical support that is extended to developing nations for use in their modernization endeavors. It originally included grants and low interest loans provided by Western governments. In the current environment it almost always involves privately financed loans given by the World Bank and with the supervision of the IMF.

Hegemony

Antonio Gramsci defined hegemony as an order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant and one concept of reality prevails throughout society. The dominant ideology permeates every facet of human existence, taste, morality, customs, religion and political principles (Gramsci, 1988). Therefore development as defined in the period after independence carries with it such dominant thinking. For emerging African universities their inception and existence was founded on the belief that they would use their acquisition of Western knowledge to transform their societies politically, socially and economically. Additionally, at the centre of development, was the reproductive function of the education system itself led by its intellectuals who were themselves

socialized through Western knowledge and values. Ashby (1964) has aptly argued that emerging educated elite in most developing countries were Western-oriented, in part as a result of their education. Therefore they were part of the dominant world view (p. 89). Their job was to entrench knowledge and values in all sectors and this would establish the necessary requisites for capitalism and industrialization.

Development

Development and globalization are used as related concepts as far as this study is concerned. Berman (1992) has explained that there is a continuity of assumptions and justifications between development and globalization. In this study both development and globalization are viewed as dominant hegemonic forces that have a long capitalist historical tradition. Entrenchment of development practices are maintained through the power of money, knowledge and discursive practices of powerful lending institutions and the need for power, wealth and legitimacy by the elite of the South. Rist (1999) argues that de-colonization signaled the beginning of a new era of US hegemony and this meant that there was to be a different way of doing things, basically dominated by the new world power, the US. The US replaced the European metropolis as the dominant international power and instead of adopting the imperialist discourse of “civilization” in relation to the rest of the world they adopted the “development” discourse. Rist sees de-colonization as the price that France, Britain and Belgium as colonial powers had to pay for US involvement in the Second World War and that it trumpeted the beginning of the US hegemony. Development, as defined in capitalist and liberal terms, was already a hegemonic ideology for defining the parameters of the US, Western, de-colonized and neo-colonized relations as well as ensuring the continued progress of capitalism.

In post-modern intellectual circles in the North the development paradigm is viewed as having failed and that we are in a post-development era. In this study, the failure of the development paradigm is fully acknowledged and is the starting point of the critique, but I take the view that for those faced with extreme poverty and disease, social progress in any form is still a legitimate concern. For this reason the study concedes Mkandawire’s

point when he argues that those who advocate post-developmentalism from the comfort of the developed world have not taken into account “the contexts of extreme deprivation” in the so called developing regions (Mkandawire, 2003, p. 17). He further argues that the rejection of material progress and prosperity for those in material comfort is a matter of choice and discretion. On the other hand, “in Africa it would be at best making virtue out of necessity, or like trying to find the moral equivalence of starvation and fasting” (p. 17).

Globalization

With regard to Africa, globalization is defined as synonymous with the external imposition of structural adjustment programs as a result of their serious indebtedness. The study adopts the definition of globalization proposed by Therborn (2000). He defines globalization as varied according to five distinct spatial historical regions with each region having specific characterizations. The regional variations comes in scale, of the size of the situational and opening globalization effects and, second is the perception of the predominant globalizing forces of change. The variations give rise to different perceptions of and cleavages around the world, (p. 169). The five regions identified by Therborn are Western Europe, Eastern Europe, USA, Third World, and Southeast and East Asia.

For the developing or third world region, which includes Africa, Therborn views globalization as equivalent to structural adjustment programs and economic liberalization. Globalization has led to the reduction of state power to provide services, cultural fragmentation, increased poverty and domination by international financial organizations. Therborn’s variations of globalization is very useful for this study in that it underlines the wrong premise that globalization has affected all regions and countries uniformly.

Neo-colonialism

The study adopts Altbach's definition of neo-colonialism in relation to education and educational policy (1971). Altbach defines neocolonialism as the overt or covert influence of advanced countries on the educational policies and institutions of developing countries. He argues that modern neo-colonialism has its roots in traditional colonialism. Neo-colonialism is used to analyze the hegemonic position of development and later globalization and its influence on education and the socialization of individuals. Through the socialization process neocolonial practices permeated the institutional and normative context within which policy takes place in the developing countries. It also explains contradictions of what Gramsci has called "consensus" between the elite on the one hand and the poor masses on the other as they all subscribe to development and unwittingly consent to their own exploitation. Such consensus is sustained because there are no viable alternatives or any counter-hegemonic movement. In the case of Africa, a similar analysis can be applied in the relations between the international elite and the national elite.

Patrimony

Most writers on the political economy of Africa refer to "neo-patrimonialism" as the political context surrounding African policy and politics. Political theorists in Malawi have called this phenomenon, the *achikulire* syndrome, (Lwanda, 2002, Mkandawire, 2004). Neo-patrimonialism has been defined as "the politics of economic affection." (Mkandawire, 1998) This implies that although the policy process is rational, the distribution of state resources proceeds on non-rational criteria such as ethnicity, patronage and other considerations. In this study the term patrimony will be adopted because neo-patrimonialism in the mainstream literature carries with it derogatory connotations as a result of its "irrationalities." On the other hand patrimony in this study is regarded as the inevitable policy irrationalities that cannot be ignored. The term is used to capture both its colonial and indigenous patriarchal origins and how it is entrenched in the state bureaucracy.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The first chapter introduced the problem rationale and statement. It covered the significance, delimitations and limitations and assumptions of the study and the summary of the research design. The second chapter provides the contextual background of Malawi and its university education system. Chapter three includes the literature review, which provides the basis for a review of the historical and contextual background of university education in Africa.

Chapter four is a review of the policy development process and context in the developing world especially from the current globalization perspective.

Chapter five focuses on methodology and theoretical basis of the research. Chapter six is an analysis of primary and secondary documents and respondents' responses regarding the overall historical and contextual background of the University of Malawi policy development process. The chapter contains four constructs, namely origins and rationale of policy reform, identification and definition of university policy problems, emerging policy choices and strategies and actor participation and involvement in the policy making process. Chapter seven employs a descriptive analysis of the top down and technical approach to policy development and implementation with the aim of understanding how the policy process accounted for stakeholders' and alternative views. It examines the reasons behind the political challenges that emerged during the implementation process and other emerging constraints to successful implementation.

Chapter eight critically examines issues of appropriateness of values and justifications of policy choices and strategies. It focuses on the challenges to content due to policy inconsistency and inappropriateness. Chapter nine is a further critical analysis based on the views of policy actors and their policy decisions to understand the power relations that underpinned the policy decisions. The chapter exposes the differential and shifting power relations between actors and at different stages of the policy implementation process. Chapter ten contains an overview of findings and conclusions and my own reflections. The chapter also discusses the implications of the study for policy planning

and practice, for policy related research and to the theory of policy in Africa and in Malawi specifically.

Chapter 2

MALAWI'S CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

This chapter provides a contextual background to Malawi. The first part provides information covering the historical, geographical, socio-economic and political context of Malawi as an independent nation. The second part describes the contextual background to university education in the post-colonial period. It provides information on the inception and concept of the University of Malawi, the governance and administrative structure and policy, academic and financing policies.

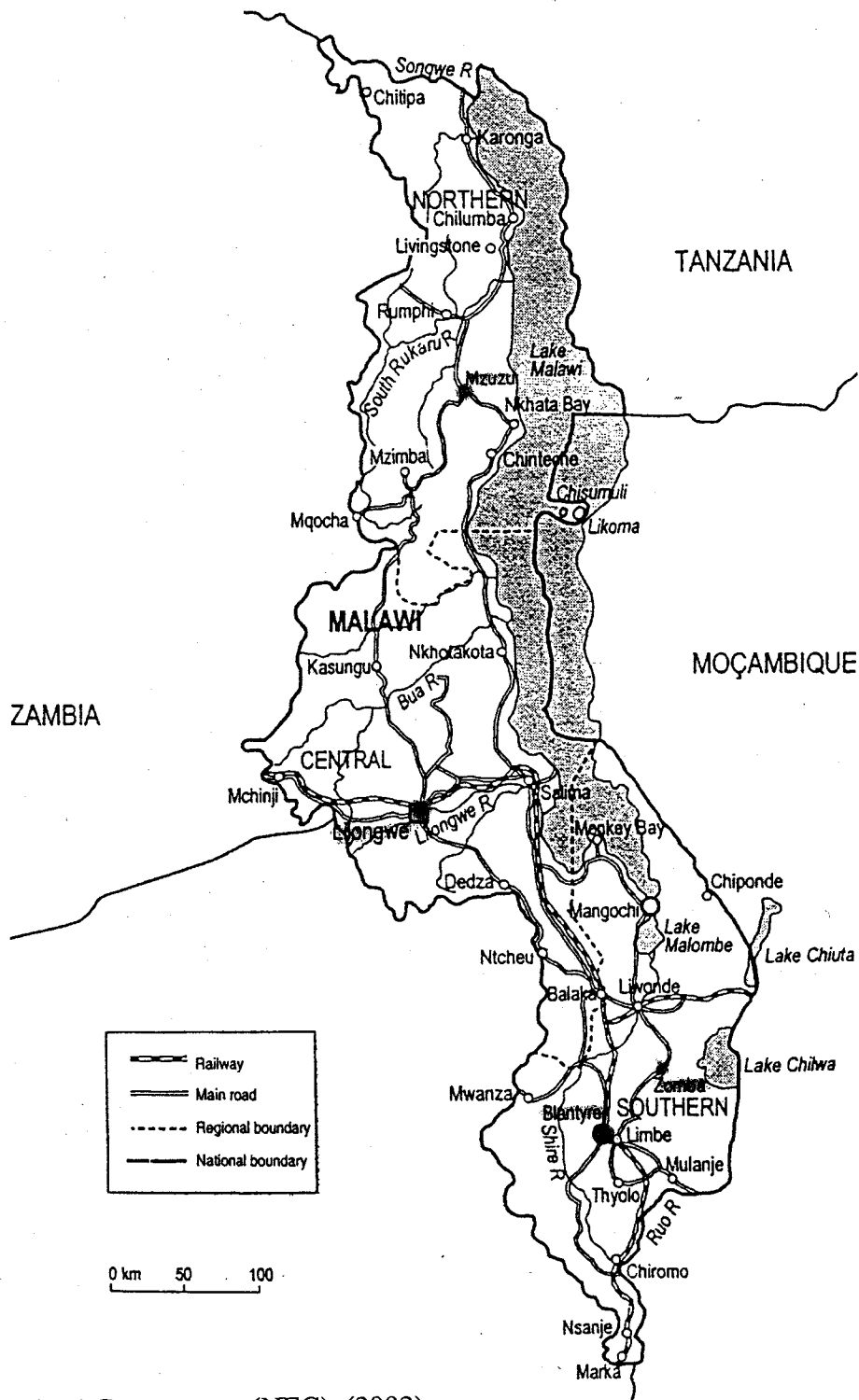
GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT OF MALAWI

Malawi is a landlocked country in South Eastern Africa (see Figure 1) and was a British protectorate until 1964 when she became self-governing. Her neighbours are Tanzania in the northeast, Zambia in the northwest and Mozambique in southeast, south and southwest. She has a population of approximately ten million and has an agricultural-based economy.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

According to statistics only fourteen percent of Malawians live in the urban areas. Ninety per cent of the rural population derive their livelihood from agriculture (UNESCO & Malawi Government, MOEST, 1996). The estimated GNP per capita in 1991 was US\$230 and in 2002 was US\$170, (UNDP, 2002; UNESCO, 1996). As MacMaster (1974) observed, under the leadership of Malawi's first president, Dr Banda, Malawi's economy was based on "the transformation of old fashioned ideas of subsistence farming and land tenure into the modern intensive method of cash crop cultivation and well-ordered land settlement on economically sized plots" (p. 74). Additionally, unlike many of her neighbouring countries Malawi never embraced socialism at any time; Banda advocated partnership between private capital and government capital in place of nationalization.

Figure 1 MAP OF MALAWI GEOGRAPHY OF UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES



Source : Malawi Government (NEC), (2002)

However, due to its landlocked status, Malawi's external trade costs are prohibitive which makes it one of the least developing nations.

The country is dependent on external sources for almost all its development financing (Malawi Government, PAI, 1999; Malawi Government, MPRSP, 2002). In the 2001/02 financial year, the development expenditure of Malawi was estimated at MK13.676 billion (Malawi Government, NEC, 2001). Of this amount, MK\$10.132 billion was to be obtained from foreign sources in the form of loans and grants from multilateral lending agencies and bilateral donors. Malawi's "cooperating" partners include the following among others: World Bank through the International Development Association (IDA); African Development Bank/Fund (ADB/ADF); the British Government; the European Union (EU), the German government, the Japanese government; Danish International Development (DANIDA); Canadian International Development (CIDA); United States Agency for International Development (USAID); Arab Bank for International Development (BADEA); Kuwait; OPEC fund (Malawi Government, NEC, 2001, p.56). Malawi's external debt was estimated at US \$2.6 billion by 1999 and debt servicing accounts for 20% of its recurrent budget (Malawi Government, PAI, 1999). Structural adjustment programs were introduced in Malawi in the early eighties and the country has been under debt restructuring and management in one form or another since then (Malawi Government, PAI, 1999; Malawi Government, MPRSP, 2002).

Poverty is significant and widespread both in rural and urban areas (Malawi Government, 1999; MPRSP, 2002; PAI, 1999). According to the World Bank definition of poverty, around 60% of the small holder population live below the poverty line. An estimated 1.6 million families are small holder families and an average family consists of five members. Thirty percent of female headed households are poor or below the poverty line. The poverty line in the World Bank's language describes those who are unable to meet nutritional requirements and essentials and non-food needs on the equivalent to US \$40 per capita per annum (UNESCO/Malawi Government, MOEST, 1996).

POLITICAL CONTEXT

From 1964 until 1994 Malawi was ruled by one president, Dr Banda, a medical doctor who had obtained his education in the 1930s and 1940s in the US and United Kingdom. Banda had been among the early African nationalist leaders who had led their countries into political independence and nationhood. In the spirit of those early African leaders, Banda had become an autocrat and Malawi became a one party state. Banda viewed himself as a patriarch of the nation and fostered an autocratic political culture and policy framework that revolved around himself as a benevolent father (Kaunda, 1992). Until the end of the Cold War, Dr Banda was the uncontested leader of Malawi and responsible for development policy (Kaunda, 1992). He was also the Chancellor of the University of Malawi from 1965 until 1994 when Malawi became a multi-party government and Dr Banda lost the election.

MALAWI'S UNIVERSITY EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

Until her independence in 1964, Malawi (or Nyasaland) had no university of her own, although, by virtue of belonging to what was known as British Central Africa, Malawians could theoretically attend the University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. It was only in 1964 that the University of Malawi was created. Before independence, Malawians who attained university education either had to attend other African regional universities such as Rhodesia, Makerere, Fort Hare or the University of London through its distance education system. One of the older educational administrators reminiscing about this era and the quest for knowledge of these early Malawian distance university education students satirically narrated how they actually camped at the post offices to wait for their educational materials from England. By the time of independence Malawi had few graduates (Malawi Government, 1971).

THE INCEPTION THE UNIVERSITY

The University of Malawi (UNIMA) was one of those institutions established within the context of post independence as outlined in the literature review in Chapter 3. It was established in 1964 through a presidential decree and the first cohort started to attend UNIMA in 1965 at various campuses in Blantyre and Lilongwe, two main cities of Malawi. The year of its establishment is quite significant because the Malawi nation also came into existence in the same year. Therefore UNIMA is a typical postcolonial university carrying with it all the hopes and triumphalism of such institutions in Africa. These postcolonial institutions were modeled on former colonisers' universities in terms of curricula, organisational structures and financing arrangements (see literature review).

THE CONCEPT OF UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

Like many former British colonies and in the spirit of post independence institutions the Malawi University adopted a British university model, which meant it was fully residential, full time and fully State funded. However, UNIMA was unique in that through its conception the university covered both vocational and academic education at senior and middle levels. Therefore, through its different university colleges, it was able to combine liberal, academic and vocational education (Malawi Government, 1971; Dubbey, 1988). For example, among its constituent colleges the university offered general degrees in science, arts, humanities, as well as specialized and professional degrees and diplomas in education, public administration, law, agriculture, engineering, nursing, business and, by the early nineties medicine. For the Malawi Government the nature of the education reflected the needs of Malawi, "The University of Malawi is designed to serve the economic, social and cultural needs of the country, by giving particular attention to education, agriculture, technical studies, biology and environment," (Banda, H. K., 1965). Some commentators viewed this conception as both pragmatic and ideal for a small country (Alladin, 1990; Dubbey 1988). The Malawi government viewed such a system as advantageous because it covered the skills needed for the country and was economical at the same time. The DEVPOL (Malawi Government, 1971) stated that

“Malawi has rightly refrained from introducing uneconomic courses to train limited numbers of specialist professionals: most technically oriented education provided by the University is at the vital middle levels rather than at top professional levels, (p. 93).

In its early formation the university was made up of existing vocational and professional colleges scattered in the southern region town of Blantyre, the main commercial town of Malawi and Lilongwe in the central region. The university initially used the existing facilities and created a central administration to coordinate these campuses. Two old colleges in Blantyre and a newly launched college offering Arts, Liberal Arts and natural Sciences was created to form the core of the newly instituted University of Malawi. This main college was named Chancellor College, which is significant for it symbolizes the relationship between the university and its chancellor. Chancellor College was the only degree granting institution in the university’s early days, (Banda, H.K., 1965). Both Chancellor College and the central administration were housed in parts of the old prestigious colonial secondary and high school called Sir Robert Armitage (now Chichiri) in Blantyre. The other colleges included the old school of Public Administration and Law and the Soche Hill College of Education. Another Blantyre based constituent college was also created comprising the old Nyasaland School of Commerce and the newly introduced Faculty of Engineering and Liberal Arts which became the Polytechnic, while the old School of Nursing became the Blantyre based College of Nursing. In Lilongwe, the Old Colby School of Agriculture became the third constituent college called Bunda College of Agriculture offering diploma and certificate courses in Agriculture. Overseeing these constituent colleges was the university central administration.

The university was established in the spirit of a modern university. Its aims and functions reflected a modernization or developmental philosophy. Its main aim was to produce the human resources required for the expected rapid social and economic development.

While UNIMA had three main objectives, namely, dissemination of information, teaching and community service, by the very nature of its objectives, the university development reflected an emphasis on the training of human resources to take over from the retreating

colonialists and to kick start modernization. This meant that teaching undergraduates gradually became the main activity of the university (MIM Report, 1997).

ACADEMIC POLICY

Under the guidance of Dr Banda, the first president of Malawi, the institution followed a policy of education that emphasized “quality” rather than quantity (Chimphamba, 1993; Dubbey, 1990; Kimble, 1983). As a result, from 1974 to 1981, university enrolment increased at 10% per annum (Malawi Government, PIF, 2000). By 1999 only 0.05% of the school-leaving cohort had access to university education. His policies of higher education reflected a belief in the trickle down effect and elitist nature of university education. As one university administrator commented, “for Kamuzu Banda it was very simple, the emphasis in higher education was quality not quantity.” Indeed in many of his speeches and those of vice-chancellors “quality” was a word that appeared again and again (Banda, 1965; Dubbey, 1988; Kimble, 1978). Banda was one of those African nationalists who had attained university education in liberal arts and medicine in the US and UK in 1930s and 1940s and valued a liberal and classical education (Baker, 2001; Lwanda, 1993). However, he was also a strict disciplinarian and a conservative in outlook, which meant that he controlled the curriculum and did not allow any teachings that were leftist in the university curriculum. Just like many other African universities academic excellence and international standards were kept through external examiners from Britain and other Western countries (Ashby, 1964; Nwauwa, 1977; Wandira, 1977).

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Because of the nature of the university that Banda wanted Malawi to have, which involved constituent colleges offering both liberal academic and vocational education, and their geographical positioning, UNIMA adopted a federal system (see Figure 2). In its original makeup it had four different university colleges in two of the three regions of Malawi. Over the years some of the faculties amalgamated into a single college. By 1974, through foreign aid, excellent and modern facilities for the main university campus were

built in the Municipality of Zomba, which had been the administrative capital of Malawi until the early seventies. Three of the four colleges which were based in Blantyre, 65 kilometres from Zomba, such as the Mpemba School of Public Administration and Law, Soche Hill college of Education and the Liberal Education Chancellor College amalgamated and became the main university college named Chancellor College.

Figure 2 THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI ORGANISATION

University Office Central Administration Zomba					
College	Chancellor	Polytechnic	Bunda	Medical	Kamuzu
Academic Focus	Liberal arts Natural Sciences	Engineering Business, Technology	Agriculture	Medicine	Nursing
Location	Zomba	Blantyre	Lilongwe	Blantyre	Blantyre Lilongwe

The university central administration also moved to Zomba although they were housed in different premises from Chancellor College. This administrative arrangement virtually scattered the university constituent colleges into three separate cities in two of the three administrative regions of Malawi (See Figure 1). By the early 1990s, with the creation of the Medical School at the Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Blantyre, UNIMA ended up with five university colleges in six campuses. The School of Nursing had campuses in both Blantyre and Lilongwe.

The federal system and the geographical positioning of the central government offices in relation to the different colleges have had implications for administration and coordination of the university. Additionally the lack of a constituent college in the sparsely populated northern region had political implications bordering on regional discrimination that was well known but not publicly acknowledged.

POLITICS AND UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

Throughout the rule of Banda, University of Malawi had foreign British vice chancellors. According to those who had worked with Banda in the early independence days, Banda, was well aware of the complications of African kinship relations on post-colonial institutions; as a result, he was reluctant to appoint local heads of such institutions (Anders, 2002). Therefore the issue of the vice chancellor of the university could be understood within such a context. However, most local intellectuals saw this state of affairs as reflecting Banda's tendency to undermine Malawian intellectuals in preference for Europeans. Although this perception seemed absurd in an independent country, due to Banda's own eccentricism and the secrecy of his background, there were many questions on whether he was "Malawian" or not (Englund, 1996). In addition to having British vice chancellors for three decades, UNIMA had British external examiners and a big contingent of mainly British lecturers who came as part of a technical aid package in support of most educational institutions in Malawi.

Most of the University Council members were political appointees. Although the university community was represented at Council level the political intimidation that had dogged the university in the seventies had bred an atmosphere of fear and it would have been unlikely that there was any independence for these representatives. For several decades the Council chairman was Dr Banda's number two man, who, most Malawians argue, became the de facto leader as the president became old. Again, this situation meant that university policies were made at the highest level of Malawi leadership with the input of the different vice-chancellors, as signified by the lack of a higher education coordinating office at the Ministry of Education headquarters. As Nsaliwa (1995) noted, in practice the Ministry took part in university affairs in a management capacity through top officials who were ex officio members of the university's governing council.

Due to the domination of the president and his close aides in the direction of higher education, the Malawi government structure seemed to lack a fully developed policy framework for higher education. The Ministry of Education, which was responsible for

Higher Education lacked a department within its structure responsible for university education policy planning or control (MIM, 1997). And as critics pointed out, apart from the University Act of 1974, there was little substantive guidance on the development of the University of Malawi by the government. They further argued that the only mention of the university in official Education Sector Policy, such as the ten-year strategies called Development Policy (DEVPOL), was only in passing (MIM, S1, p. 2). This meant that in spite of the changing demographics of Malawi such as population growth, social awareness and growing demand for university education, university development was based on the original narrow aim of educating a class of people to replace the departing administrative and professional colonial class.

UNIMA was shaped and directed by the personal vision of the man who was the life president of the country and the “life” Chancellor of the University for thirty years. Commentators have argued that his paternalistic and patriarchal approach to the university built a culture of dependency in the university that is part of the current institutional governance, administration and financial problems. The personal involvement of the head of state in the University’s affairs had both negative and positive impact on university governance and administration. On the positive side he took great personal interest and pride in UNIMA’s well being. This meant guaranteeing that even against all odds, UNIMA was a priority in Malawi’s educational policy, ensuring that within the country’s limited resources it had financial and political support. However, his personal interest in its curriculum, management and governance, and its resources meant that academic freedom and autonomy were greatly compromised and as a result there was increased political interference, which resulted in a faculty brain drain and stunted academic growth and maturity (MIM, 1997).

The political context set by the former chancellor seems to be entrenched in the system and the current president has continued the practices of his predecessor. For example in the current amended University Act the head of state is still the chancellor of the university. The University of Malawi’s enabling Act actually specifies that “ there shall

be a chancellor of the University who shall be the head of the University. The Chancellor of the University shall be the Head of State.” (2002, p. 14)

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION AND COLLEGE RELATIONS

Due to a centrally controlled administration, the colleges, despite having different academic disciplines and focus, were forced to follow similar administrative and academic policies. This often led to conflict between the purely academic and the more vocational and professional disciplines. This has had an effect on the independent development of the different colleges. Over time, the philosophical underpinnings in the vocational disciplines gave way to that of the academic disciplines because of the undifferentiated administrative model at the central office, which presupposed uniform academic institutions and failed to respond to the different underpinnings of the more vocational institutions. The uniform policy applied to the different colleges led to stifling of initiative and development of the institution in response to emerging needs. In terms of college administration, although the principals assisted by the registrar’s office and the finance office run the colleges, all policy was centralized. This resulted in competition among colleges and also unclear administrative lines of command and divided loyalties between the central administration and the colleges (MIM, 1997).

UNIVERSITY FINANCING POLICIES: AID AND STATE FUNDING

University of Malawi was established by the State and it took full financial responsibility for it. The early national Development Strategies such as the DEVPOL of 1971 to 80 clearly indicated this commitment,

The second major emphasis in the formal education field since independence has been in the development of post-secondary education through setting up of the University of Malawi, embracing all forms of post-secondary teaching in the country. This has been an expensive exercise, but Malawi has rightly refrained from introducing uneconomic courses to train limited numbers of specialist professionals. (1971, p. 93)

Further, due to the de-colonization process and the willingness of former colonial mother countries and other developed countries to assist the newly independent countries,

external resources were initially plentiful (Ajayi et al., 1996; Carmody, 1998; Kimble, 1980). The public speeches at convocation ceremonies in the seventies and early eighties identify many sources of aid “donors” of capital development and technical assistance for facilities such as libraries, laboratories, lecture rooms as well as for subsidizing academic staff and providing scholarships for staff development (Dubbey, 1988; Kimble, 1978). The list of the donors was impressive ranging from USAID and British Council, to Beit Trust, World Bank’s IDA and other bilateral and international philanthropic funding bodies (Dubbey, 1988). However, after the mid-eighties, technical aid in capital development dwindled and foreign funding of university activities became more selective. This was a reflection of the changing paradigm in the funding and importance of higher education in the international development and aid agencies (Ajayi et al., 1996; Mamdani, 1993).

By mid-eighties, university funding by the State was becoming an issue with international financing agencies such as World Bank and IMF. There was a shift against government funding, first, as a result of changed priorities of international lending agencies and second, as a result of economic downturns stemming from world economic conditions (Mkandawire & Soludi, 2001; Malawi Government, PRSP, 2002; Chimphamba, 1995). Additionally, the development agencies were beginning to move their attention away from higher education as a priority for development to adult literacy and later basic education (Samoff, 1994; World Bank, 1988). Although in 1987, there was an amendment to the University Act, no meaningful tuition fees were introduced and the government continued to fully fund the university. Token attempts were made to introduce minimal user fees and also to include private sector involvement (MIM, 1997).

This means that the University of Malawi was shielded from extreme financial hardship for the most part of Dr. Banda’s leadership although this came at the expense of academic freedom and institutional autonomy (Ajayi et al., 1996; Mamdani, 1993; Shaw, 1993). It was only during the imposition of sanctions in Malawi in 1992 to pressure Banda towards democratization process that the University of Malawi started experiencing the worst effects of structural adjustment leading to a funding crisis of its core activities. The

problems were further exacerbated by the adoption of IFI supported market liberalization by the incoming new United Democratic Front- led government which implied further cuts on state spending, and also the adoption of Free Primary Education by the government of Malawi. This was a fundamental shift in the educational policy for three decades and had negative consequences on the University.

It is important to point out that in its original conception, the adoption of the fully funded, fully residential model was realistic and practical given the social, economic and geographical conditions at the time. Economically, not many Malawians could have afforded to pay university fees. Socially and demographically, the cohort was quite small and considering the lack of infrastructure, only a full residential university would have made sense. The population of Malawi in 1965 was just below four million and there were fewer than ten secondary schools (Malawi Government, 1971). Finally, since education was viewed as a human investment for accelerated development and consequently a public good the question of the state solely of financing education was not a debatable issue. Also, given the willingness of former colonial countries and multilateral organizations to support the catching up development, none of these universities had considered alternative funding systems.

SUMMARY

By 1994, when the second Malawi republic came into being, after thirty years of one party rule and one post independence president, it was clear that like most African universities the university was in crisis. In 1997, the Malawi Institute of Management consultants summarized the University of Malawi's problems thus, "an uncertain vision, an inefficient utilization of allocated resources and a funding crisis" (MIM report 1997, S1. p. 2). The problems had started as far back as the early eighties and no long-term solutions had been put in place. The introduction of plural politics, the increasing influence of International Funding Institutions (IFIs) and other bilateral donor agencies in economic affairs, transitional problems and a new approach towards education policy especially with regard to financing all led to a policy vacuum and a need for university

policy change. The defeat of Banda specifically revealed the existing vacuum in the university education policy and exacerbated the already existing financial problems of the university.

Chapter 3

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This review of literature focuses on the historical policy context of the university in Africa. The main emphasis is on the post-colonial period although a brief overview of the colonial and de-colonization period is provided. During the colonial period education was dominated by missionaries who were concerned with education as a tool for spreading Christianity. The second period, is characterized by increasing involvement in higher education policy by the colonizing governments in Europe rather than by the governments in the colonies themselves who were initially reluctant to extend university education to the colonized African (Abdi, 2003; Ajayi et al., 1996; Ashby, 1964). The increased colonial interest in extending higher education to their colonial subjects is influenced by the changing economic and political pressures on the colonial masters in the post second world war period (Ajayi et al., 1996; Ashby, 1964; Wangari, 1977). Finally, the post colonial period university has been influenced by its original colonial institutional transfer and is characterized by the neo-colonial realities and the development process that are themselves a consequence of the integration of the post independent nations into the world economic system. University funding policies have been influenced by historical factors on the one hand and the ideological values that led to the neo colonial nature of the post-colonial nation state and its institutions on the other.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD

University education was not an option extended to the colonized during much of the colonial period. The limited access to primary, secondary or vocational education of the colonized was dominated by missionaries, whose real interests lay in spreading Christianity to the heathens and “civilizing” the “barbaric” native populations. As a result, there was no compelling need for the introduction of university education (Hauya, 1993). In the Southern Africa region, as early as the 1840s and 1850s the missionary societies in South Africa identified a need for post-primary education, industrial and

agricultural schools as well as training institutions for African teachers and pastors. Predictably, the education was aimed at meeting the needs of missionary proselytization and introducing western “civilization”. Implicitly the educational practices of the institution reflected elitist values that presented education of the few as having a “downward filtration” to the rest of the population (Altbach, 1971: 89; Ashby, 1964).

As far as colonial officials were concerned, critiques argue, there was no place in colonial Africa for educated Africans outside the specific religious, economic and political interests of the missionaries and the colonizers (Abdi, 2003; Ajayi et al., 1996). Therefore when university education came on the agenda at the initiative of the metropolitan countries, it was part of a wider response of colonial reform in politics and policies rather than a direct response to the needs of the colonized population (Nwauwa, 1997). The colonial powers only took the idea of a university for Africa seriously in the de-colonization period in the aftermath of the Second World War for political and economic reasons. For the colonized however, education at whatever level is depicted as the most critical issue between the colonized and the colonizers (Abdi, 1999; Ajayi et al., 1996). On their part, education meant entering “their” world and speaking their language (Soyinka, 1983). It meant getting empowered with “their” tools and language.

THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE UNIVERSITY

During the Second World War period and in its aftermath, the European imperial powers showed a marked interest in introducing university education to the colonies. Scholars argue that this policy shift was influenced by events outside Africa. Such events included the rise of the United States of America (US) as a new hegemonic power; the expansion of university education to formally excluded classes in the West itself; and the rise of national liberation movements in most colonial countries which signaled the inevitability of the de-colonization process (Amin, 1997; Nwauwa, 1997; Ougedebuure 1996; Rist, 1999). Therefore during this period the colonial powers were more willing to initiate higher education policies that include the possibility of universities (Ajayi et al., 1996; Aladdin, 1990; Ashby, 1964). These writers further argue that with the inevitability of de-

colonization, the colonialists shifted their policies from partnerships with traditional leaders towards building partnerships with the newly emerging educated elite.

During this period the metropolitan colonial offices, rather than the colonial administrators in the colonies, were at the forefront of this new initiative (Nwauwa, 1997). Many university education policy initiatives were introduced especially by the British colonial office in London as evidenced by the multiple commissions in the different parts of British Africa (Ajayi, et al., 1996; Ashby, 1964). Two results came out of these activities. The first was the inception of the pre-independence university colleges, such as Makerere, Ibadan and others, in the major colonial regions in Africa. These university colleges were the precursors to the post independent universities.

The university colleges were theoretically premised on two assumptions. First, they were to take account of the educational limitations of the African context by adopting a slow change approach. Second, they were to synthesize African theory or traditionalism with European elements (Kerr 1968; cited in Ajayi et al., 1996, p. 50). However in reality this group of universities were regarded as extensions of metropolitan universities such as London (Aladdin, 1990; Nwauwa, 1997). They drew their curricula (with some adaptation), admission and standards criteria, examinations and other practices from the metropolitan universities. It was presumed that the emphasis on a slow change approach was a realistic goal since access to education especially at secondary level was still very limited at this point in time. This implied that there might not have been the required secondary cohort for the university admission. However as remarked by Ajayi and others (1996) the principle of synthesizing “traditional” African and European theories was much more difficult to translate into practice.

Many writers have also argued that the character of the future African University was formed during this period. A major policy document that was to have a lasting impact in the post independent universities was the British instituted Asquith Commission of 1943 and its subsequent report (Ajayi et al., 1996; Aladdin, 1990). The Asquith commission laid the foundation for the model of university education that would be adopted in the independent nations and is viewed as the most influential document for post colonial

universities all over Africa (Ajayi et al., 1996; Aladdin 1990; Ashby 1964; Nwauwa 1997; Wandira; 1977). The recommendations of the report reflected an emphasis on external Western philosophical and epistemological values, governance structures and curriculum practices inherent in the European and British “Modern University” with a concomitant lack of attention to the touted adaptation to traditional African practices (Flexner 1968). The social function of the university as articulated in the Asquith commission was underpinned by human capital theory, which was the ascendant paradigm in the post war period in the West. The function was thus summarized as aimed at producing men and women with standards of public service and capacity for leadership which self-rule requires (Ashby, 1964). In all fairness, while this function or role of university education in Africa met the short-term goals of the envisaged rapid de-colonization process, the universities seemed to lack long term goals for the newly independent nations.

Some scholars further argue that this Commission had a political corollary in that it provided a blue print for the export of universities from Britain to its overseas colonies thereby ensuring continuity of British culture in the former colonies (Ashby, 1964; Maxwell, 1980). It is viewed by many as a preamble to the envisaged de-colonization process and the progress to self- government of the colonies (Aladdin, 1990; Ajayi et al.; 1996; Nwauwa, 1997). It ensured the continued pattern of Western based educational systems and the mother countries’ control over the political, social and economic path of the former colonies. Maxwell (1980) also argues that the creation of these universities was “a far sighted method of forging a free and lasting partnership between Britain and her colonies” (p. 13). Nwauwa also concedes this point.

Additionally, these universities were fully funded by colonial offices in the metropolis and were educationally linked and supported by metropolitan universities, such as the University of London, which in turn were rewarded for their influence in the development of these colonial institutions (Nwauwa, 1997). At this early period there were no frameworks laid down to diversify their funding sources. This was not an accident since in the British system itself higher education was fully supported by the state (Ashby, 1964; Goedegebuure et al., 1996). This funding arrangement probably

made sense under the circumstances but it also laid a foundation for future neo-colonial practices through dependency on external institutions for standards, external examiners, texts, expatriate teachers, governance structures and many other practices (Aladdin, 1990). Combined with the lack of clear long term goals beyond replacement of colonial bureaucrats and professionals during de-colonization, the university was set on a continuous path of imitative policies from their former colonial countries. This was to continue into the post independence period. Some critiques have shown that it is this foundational lack of reflexivity that has led to the limited meaningful contribution of the African university to the social, economic and political progress of the continent and the widespread inequality, poverty and war (Brock-Utne, 1996).

THE LEGACY OF COLONIAL EDUCATION

There are two opposing interpretations of the effects of colonial education on the colonized, namely positive and negative. Those who view education as having had a positive impact argue that it laid a foundation for intellectual and material development, brought enlightenment, and also suppressed slavery and other barbaric practices. On the other hand, those who view colonial education as having had a negative impact argue that the positive view of education is racist. They argue that colonialism undermined the colonized people's capacity to develop and brought underdevelopment (Rodney, 1974).

Whether one adopts a positive or negative interpretation of the legacy of colonial education, it is clear that it changed social relationships and organization in Africa forever and was used to integrate the continent into the wider world order. The most profound effect of Western education on the colonized is its introduction of a different social stratification in Africa. The new stratification distinguishes the educated from the uneducated, and socializes the educated towards "superior" Western and "modernization" values through formal educational institutions (Ajayi et. al., 1996; Altbach, 1971; Ashby, 1964). Those who gained access to Western education became the emerging elite groups with a Western orientation (Altbach, 1971, p. 89). This disrupted the local basis for social organization and introduced a new base of power, authority and status that was

sometimes in conflict with the existing ones resulting in a duality of cultures: the modern and the traditional (Gandhi, 1998; Peet, 1999). Additionally, as a result of their Western orientation through the socialization process that occurs through education, it has been argued that they are often alienated from their own cultural norms (Ashby, 1964). This is reflected in Maccauley's statement in the 1850s on the aims of education in India as creating a "class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in morals and intellect" (cited in Ashby, 1964, p. 2). Finally, colonialism laid a foundation for future integration of independent countries into the world economic system and for dependency on the Western nations.

THE POST INDEPENDENCE UNIVERSITIES AND DEVELOPMENT

The aftermath of the Second World War period witnessed a growth of national liberation movements in most of the colonies, which led to political independence and the rise of Western supported national universities in each of the newly independent nation states. Allen (1996) argues that in response to the growing radicalization of some of the national liberation movements, the colonial powers responded by granting rapid de-colonization contrary to their originally intended gradual process. Therefore there was a rapid expansion of university institutions in Africa in the period immediately after political independence. As each of the former colonies became independent, they were "assisted" to create their own national universities by the West who believed that the nations could achieve modernization based on human development (Alladin 1990, Ajayi et. al., 1996). Existing university colleges such as Ibadan and Makerere were eventually turned into national rather than regional universities. The adoption of a western-style modernization model had some positive impact in the early formation of the post-colonial university, but has negatively impacted future university policies and development.

The post independence universities were built on the existing foundations of their de-colonization "Asquith" predecessors and became institutions of development (Ajayi et al., 1996; Nwauwa, 1997; Wangari, 1977). They were modeled on the institutions of their former colonial powers and therefore they "mimicked" the systems from which they

borrowed without regard to the contextual differences (Amonoo-neizar, 1998). Their governance and regulatory structures, their curriculum content, their pedagogical practices as well as their whole conceptualization of the nature and role of the university and the intellectual reflected whichever system was closely linked to that the particular nation and institution. The values, concepts and attitudes also reflected those of their former colonial masters, since most early African leaders and intellectuals were professionally socialized in these environments where the efficacy of Western modernizing practices was taken for granted (Ashby, 1964).

In addition, right from their inception these universities were more concerned with their legitimacy in international standing than in their local community (Wangari, 1977). Hargreaves (1973) aptly characterizes the nature of the colonial university by saying that they paid greater attention to their standing in the eyes of the foreigners than to the relevance of their activities to the needs of their own countries. The preoccupation with international standards, which should be read as the “metropolitan university” standards, seems to have been very pervasive and persisted well into the post independence era.

A critique of the emerging African university in the sixties by Ashby (1964) demonstrates a continued emphasis on the standards as set by their mother institutions. Ashby also notes that African intellectuals were reluctant to adapt their own standards. Nwauwa (1997) has given two reasons for the African elite’s reluctance to break away from British standards in Nigeria. First was that the colonial administrator had treated local qualifications as inferior and those who had them commanded smaller salaries than their counterparts with foreign European qualifications. Second, he argued that the racist tendencies where Africans had been treated as intellectually and creatively inferior influenced the defensiveness and overemphasis on standards by the African educated elite.

As already noted, the African universities were established to produce personnel to run government ministries in the tradition of the former colonial administrators. The universities were founded on Western liberal principles and assumptions of equity, equality and meritocracy. Development was equated with modern industrialization,

economic growth and increased consumption. Equity and equality were based on individual merit and equality of opportunity. This was theoretically manifest in the potential opportunity of every high school graduate to enter university if they merited. Equality of opportunity was ensured by full state subsidization of university education. Inevitably, those who made it to the elite, fully - paid - for, and residential universities became the modernizing agents. They were also drafted to support the modernization endeavours of their countries within the larger capitalist framework.

By adopting an “elitist, exclusively full-time, residential with stipend” model of the university, post-colonial Africa unfortunately adopted a very expensive model. Due to the high cost of such a model, university education has failed to expand in line with growing populations of young high school graduates who meet the minimum standards or other groups who would benefit from higher education. As indicated in the current United Nations Human Development Index (1999) only one percent of eligible young people attend university in Africa (HDI, 1999). Furthermore because of its elitist bent and emphasis towards liberal education, the African elite have been socialized to over emphasize education that leads to white-collar employment and ignored applied science and technology (Ajayi et al., 1996). The result has been a lack of diversity in the whole higher education system and an overemphasis on traditional university curricula. Such an unbalanced education system has constrained expansion, over stretched universities and failed to respond to societal needs.

Finally, of great significance in the literature on the emergence of higher education and its policy, is the patriarchal nature of higher education and the lack of or minimal representation of females in tertiary education. Such inequality has its origins in the patriarchal colonial system and was continued by the African ruling elite in the post-independence period. Only one account of a female student is given by Ajayi et al. (1996) in their book on African university education. This female student was admitted to the University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, only to find upon arrival at the institution that there were no accommodation arrangements for female African students.

In summary, there was no meaningful tertiary education in Africa throughout the earlier part of the colonial period. Colonial officials rationed educational opportunities given to Africans because education was not part of the political and economic interests of the colonial countries. Consequently it was only towards the end of the colonial period when other colonized regions had started demanding de-colonization that university education was introduced as a response to these changing world political conditions and domestic opinion. The de-colonization universities became the precursor to the post- independence universities. Each of the newly independent country was assisted to create excellent facilities immediately after independence. Most of these institutions were based on their Western mother country concept of a modern university, had ties with metropolitan universities and got material and other educational support from these metropolitan universities. Finally, these universities were fully financed by metropolitan governments. These were the origins of neo-colonialism in African universities that would extend to other state institutions.

DEVELOPMENT AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN POSTCOLONIAL AFRICA

Since the de-colonization period both developing and developed nations have been pre-occupied with the education sector as a tool for development. While critics acknowledge the importance of the different agencies in offering much needed resources for educational development, they also highlight the negative consequences of the dominance of foreign experts and institutional transfer on the policies and policy process of the developing world. They argue that such dominance has led to lack of autonomy on the part of policy actors in the developing world and this in turn has led to policies that are not always relevant to the social, economic and political needs of the recipient countries. Additionally, critiques point out that external domination of policy process has led to neo-colonial practices that breed dependency. Higher education is at the centre of these negative manifestations, as it is through higher education that most developing country policy actors are professionally and intellectually socialized.

THE CONCEPT OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT UNIVERSITY

The post independence “developmental” university was modeled on what Flexner (1968) has called the European “modern university”. He posits that

By inserting the word modern, I am endeavouring to indicate in the most explicit fashion that a university, like all other human institutions - like the church, like governments, like philanthropic organizations - is not outside, but inside the general social fabric of a given era (p. 3).

Many writers have commented that the rise of the modern university in Western Europe was closely linked to the industrial revolution and its ensuing societal modernization process (Brubacher, 1977; Flexner, 1968). Therefore the university evolved in a specific way as it responded to particular social, economic, political and cultural circumstances as modern Europe evolved. Brubacher (1977) has argued that modern universities in Europe and North America were justified through two principles, namely epistemological and political. He also argues that increasingly modern universities have become more politically than epistemologically justified as they have become change agents for their societies. This is why the different European nations have universities that have distinct features and characteristics that are peculiar to their nations. This is also true of the American and Canadian universities. Flexner himself alludes to this point by saying that the European modern universities differ in different countries.

While there is nothing wrong in the independent African nation states’ modeling their universities on the European modern university, it was important that the assumptions behind the model be re-examined as the system evolved. Furthermore, it was also important that the model be set on a path of adaptation to the realities of African social, cultural and economic life (Amonoo-Neizar, 1998). It seems that the post-colonial African nation states subscribed to an idea of a university that was inside the European social fabric of a specific modern era and outside the social fabric of African life. Although subsequent writers and critics of the African university have increasingly referred to the need for the African university to have an identity and philosophy that is embedded in its own society, so far there seems to be nothing done to address this problem (Ashby, 1964; Yesufu 1973). The current university problems therefore are part

of the original lack of attention to epistemological, structural and philosophical issues that need to be addressed holistically.

Politically, the adoption of governance structures such as those of the British model has had some serious consequences on the state/university relationship. Ashby (1964) has given the example of the adoption of the British university constitution, which ensures academic autonomy not through its contradictory legal framework, but rather through conventions that have developed over a long period. Mkandawire (2000) notes the lack of an organic relationship between the intellectuals and the ruling elite in Africa. He further bemoans how this has affected meaningful contribution by the intellectuals to the transformation of society. Ajayi et al. (1996) have chronicled the transnational migration of highly trained and prized academe that has resulted from the uneasy relations between the state and the university resulting in the “brain drain”. These are factors that have impacted negatively on the growth and maturity of the university and broad societal development. The high turnover of academic staff is costly and has impeded the university from developing alternatives to state funding, for example through more meaningful research and other activities. Epistemologically, the continued dependence on text and theories from the West has also impeded national and university progress and relevance in Africa.

Therefore apart from financial problems, the African university has structural, epistemological and political problems. Amonoo-Neizer (1998) has listed these public policy problems as relevance, governance, efficiency, quality, inequity and university/state relations. The African university is also isolated from its own society, contrary to the popularly held beliefs about the place of a modern university in its own society. Consequently, it has failed to fulfill its one function to its community just as it has failed to sell itself to the public and the state. Judging from Samoff's (1999) review of educational sector research, it seems that African researchers and bureaucrats alike, while remaining aloof from their own community, have compromised themselves when dealing with the international development agencies in the name of legitimacy and

resources. Therefore any university policy reform would have to address the value-related problems as well.

THE DEVELOPMENT DEBATE

Following the de-colonization process, the accepted metaphor of development that has been applied to societies at national and global levels was dominated by ideological orientations that are premised in the origins of capitalism and imperialism (Amin, 1982; Rist, 1999). In this ideology, western industrialization, which is one mode of production amongst many, became the definitive and prescriptive terminal stage of a one direction process of social progress. Most developing nations embraced development after their political independence because it was the dominant view on social progress held by the dominant Western nations. Development resulted in further polarization and stratification between and among nations and has led to the poverty of the majority of the population of the world (Peet, 1998).

Ake (1996) argues that in the version of modernization theory applied to the developing countries including Africa, as presented in Rustow's 1960 book, "development" replaced modernization and is viewed as unidirectional, desirable and inevitable. The state of backwardness is regarded as pre-industrial; the movement to overcome it becomes the process of economic growth to be engineered by the neoclassical economic tools and the end of the social evolution. Modernity in this case is equated with industrialization and mass consumption.

Consequently, development was viewed as equivalent to industrialization and economic growth which could be manipulated through "aid schemes" and "development planning" (Mkandawire, 1998). Central to this process, were the "modernizing" or "development" elite, whose duty would be to ensure an accelerated growth process by overcoming the traditional pre-industrial tendencies (Ake, 1996; Mkandawire, 1998). These modernizing or development elite were closely tied to a conception of the "African university". This institution would produce the western style, bureaucrats, policy makers, analysts,

professionals, intellectuals and all other skilled human resources needed to “catch up” with the Western European and North American countries.

Developing nations hoped to achieve modernization and growth on the basis of the colonial heritage, and newly installed institutions, infrastructure and industry (Cassen, 1994, p. 8). They hoped to achieve all this by depending on commodity prices and eventually using foreign loans (and grants) called aid. Although the imitative developmental process and its abundant “aid” money came ended in the seventies, the education policy process in the developing world has continued to be informed by the same modernization and developmental assumptions, that is elitist, top-down and based on human capital theory (Morrow and Torres, 2000).

Critics of development fall into two categories. The first group argues that from the 1950s to the 1970s, the experience of development, however uneven, was on the whole positive. Since then, however, the process has stalled because of the general crisis affecting the developed centres of the world economy, namely the countries of the North. Ajayi et al. (1996) underline how in the first two decades, developing nations were “assisted” to build universities as centres of academic excellence. They further note that since the late seventies these institutions have faced budget cuts and inadequate resources resulting in dilapidation and deterioration of standards. Underlying such critique of development is the notion that development is synonymous with the worldwide expansion of capitalism leading to what dependent theorists call centre/periphery duality (Peet, 1998). In this regard, the failure of development driven policies to deliver social justice and democracy is seen as the natural outcome of capitalism (Saul & Leys, 2000). The underlying argument is that the world economic crisis in the seventies that affected higher education funding in the developing world is part of the capitalist cycle of things. However for nation states and universities in Africa, the crisis exposed their dependency on outside resources and the lack of internally generated policies that could deal with such tendencies.

The second group is the opposite school of thought, which argues that the development process under discussion is in crisis because it defaulted on its promises and was premised on the wrong theoretical assumptions. They also argue that development has increasingly led to unequal patterns of income distribution between societies on this planet and within societies in the developing countries who are on the periphery of the global economic system. This has in the process worsened the poverty and marginalization of the disadvantaged instead of integrating all social strata into a steadily inclusive and more stable system. Finally they also maintain that development has produced a dangerous waste of non-renewable resources and provoked a horrific devastation of the environment (Amin, 1997; Dei, 1993).

Development theorists and practitioners have also been criticized for their insistence on abstract principles that lack historicity (Ake, 1996). This insistence has led to a lack of acknowledgement of spatial, temporal and cultural specificity of the Western model of modernization (Amin, 1982, 1997; Peet, 1999). The dominant developmental model is viewed as explainable through abstract and objective theory that is autonomous and independent of politics, culture, and institutional frameworks. They argue that this is what contributed to the failure of development because the lack of acknowledgement of spatial and cultural diversity in turn glosses over the lack of democracy and justice that has hailed the whole western modernization process while ignoring the contextual diversity of the developing nations. Such beliefs lead to homogenous policies being recommended and imposed on developing nations. Translating such abstract goals into reality was problematic and detracted rather than enhanced the process of social development.

THE FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF DEVELOPMENT

Feminism has similarly critiqued the scientific foundations of development both at international and national levels. Firstly, feminists have critiqued the patriarchal nature of social science that has produced the development discourse and secondly, they critique post-colonial nationalism for not meaningfully addressing institutionalized issues of

gender inequality and poverty in policies and in the policy process. They further maintain that as a result of such Western and nationalist patriarchal practices inherent in the developmental policy and practice, transformational issues are dealt with in an elitist, rational and abstract manner. Such conceptualization of progress excludes the majority of populations in the developing world from engaging in meaningful poverty alleviation and empowerment.

Feminists question the ideological bases of the established social science definition of development (Blumberg, 1989; Scott, 1995). Scott argues that in the dominant definition of “modernity,” rational forward looking, male-dominated spheres are contrasted with feminized, backward, traditional society (1995, p. 174). The inherent assumption in such a definition is that becoming industrialized is synonymous with overcoming a power struggle in which the feminine matures to manhood. Peet (1999) also argues that

in modernization, development required the emergence of rational industrial man, receptive to new ideas, punctual, optimistic and universalistic, with a counterpart in the modern efficient state with its new mechanisms of domination and power.
(p. 176)

This is the legitimate basis for the male state bureaucratic and intellectual elite as the agents of modernization in post-colonial Africa. For, as they planned for industrialization and abandoned the “feminized, irrational, household” and “the non-receptive, inward looking indigenous tradition” they showed the characteristics of the “rational modern man”. Therefore it was regarded as inevitable for education and policy to be rational and concerned with Western ideas.

They have also shown that through the selective use of methodologies that serve established gendered conceptions of reality, the social disciplines manage to push feminist and even racial questions outside the framework of investigation. Such selective social conceptualizations are aimed at subtending the disciplines and perpetuating the patriarchal and Western system (Amin, 1997; Smith, 1989). The feminist critique of the social sciences gives an opportunity for critiquing development in the developmental societies themselves as well as in the context of the unequal development between

nations in the international development society. It affords this study the opportunity to question the basis of policy that does not take into account the majority of the people by interrogating the national and the international context of policy through policy actors.

Gandhi (1998) moves the argument beyond the male Western system to the developing nations' patriarchal nationalist systems. She urges postcolonial theorists to critique their own nationalism in terms of both gender and race. Drawing from the feminist critique of social science as representing male, white and middle class, Gandhi suggests "a productive area of collaboration between postcolonialism and feminism presents itself in the possibility of a combined offensive against the aggressive myth of both imperial and nationalist masculinity" (Gandhi, 1998). She is calling for an interrogation of the neo-colonial practices that lead to dependency on foreign resources, patrimony and patriarchal notions of equating development to western-style industrialization for a small percentage of the population when the rest have no food, are sick and desperate. Feminism urges postcolonialism to produce a more critical and self-reflective account of cultural nationalism (Gandhi, 1998).

The feminist critique has also highlighted the tokenism manifest in the development discourse in its response to the feminist critique. Feminists argue that both at national and international levels the development policy discourse is incorporating gender sensitive symbolic rhetoric without meaningful representation. They point out programs such as WID (Women in Development) or WAD (Women and Development) as examples of such rhetoric (Peet, 1999). Stromquist (1998) over a period of twenty years conducted a study on the institutionalization of gender and its impact on educational policy in 47 WID units in developing countries. WID units are the most common gender related state bureaucratic units in the developing nations.

One important finding of Stromquist's study regarding WID units was that none of them contributed to formal educational policy. She found out that following the narrowed definition of women as a subordinated and vulnerable group, gender related issues are concerned with social welfare and non-formal education such as adult literacy projects.

Stromquist (1998) argues such a definition “narrows the way in which the issue of gender is perceived so that it is framed, not as one concerning the uneven power relations between men and women but rather as one pertaining to the situation of a group of “vulnerable” women” (p. 93). Peet (1998) has also argued that the WID units originate from the liberal feminism strand, which explains gender inequality in terms of inequality of opportunities rather than inequalities stemming from unequal power relations. Stromquist also attributes the creation of WID in the national bureaucratic frameworks as a strategy for incorporating marginal concerns to bolster political order, or alternatively as a way of the state defending the status quo. The status quo in this case is a male-dominated political and economic order with token representation of women.

A comparative study conducted to find out the extent of women’s involvement in policy issues done in the Southern African Development Cooperation (SADC) region showed that women are under represented in political and economic activities that are the basis of male dominated power (Kakhongwe, 2002). Policy therefore takes place within such a male dominated framework where rationality, elitism, abstraction and universality define modernity and progress. It is such definitions of reality that continue to underpin policy and the policy process in the developing world leading to more poverty and inequality. Furthermore, the current conceptualization of gender-related issues frames them as only connected with poverty and marginalization. Such a view leads to a preoccupation with women’s issues of illiteracy and loans for business activities and distracts women from influencing policy.

THE ROLE OF THE INTELLECTUAL IN DEVELOPMENT

Critiques of development in Africa have called on the African intellectuals who have so far been on the “fringe” of the development debate to take the lead in defining the alternative for development (Amin, 1997). The failure of development in Africa has been described as a consequence of this lack of intellectual engagement by the state in forming an organic and meaningful relationship (Mkandawire, 1998). Shaw (1993) views the lack of involvement of post-colonial African intellectuals as stemming from their current

vulnerability and marginalization resulting from structural adjustment programs and the failure of development, which results in insecure scholarship. He views the post independence scholars as lacking the ideological certainty and professional security of the first generation of nationalist intellectuals. Shaw refers to the economic, ecological and political context of the intellectual as being the cause of this insecurity. Mkandawire (2000) has attributed the failure of the university and its intellectuals as agents for social progress, equality, justice and democracy in Africa as closely linked to the undemocratic political culture in African nation-states that did not give space for such meaningful agency. Mkandawire argues that the failure of the ruling elite to engage the intellectuals and intelligentsia in a productive and what he terms as the Gramscian “organic” and productive relationship has contributed to the failure of such agency and led to rampant problems of poverty, war and inequality. Of significance is the view put forward by Ake (1996) and Bayart (1993) that the lack of democratic institutions in Africa and the proliferation of patrimonial political practices is directly connected to development and the paucity of resources.

Ajayi et al. (1996) explain that the university and its alumni have been part and parcel of the undemocratic governments in Africa.

Many academics have been part of governments that prey on their people to the point of total collapse. African university people have not always stood up on the side of democracy, or of imposing limitation on the exercise of state power. There seems to have been inadequate attention even on university campuses to the need to maintain excellence in institutions so vital to national development. (p. 154).

An assumption in this proposed study is the symbiotic relation between progress and the role of the university as source of knowledge and expertise. In spite of the different critiques given on the performance of the African intelligentsia, all critiques agree that Africa needs its intellectuals to “deconstruct the new justificatory rhetoric, thus laying bare its functional connections with the tactical and strategic objective of crisis management” (Amin, 1997: 149). Amin’s statement is important given the current structural adjustment context within which the “development” policies are formulated.

The discussion so far has shown that by adopting the Western modernization model, the newly independent states had taken on too much. As many have argued, these nations hoped to achieve within a few decades what was achieved in five hundred years in the West. Achieving such a monumental task required economic, human and material resources that the newly independent nations did not have at the time of their political independence or since then. It was the need for resources on the part of the developing nations and the belief in an exact modernization path by those in the West that led to intellectual and economic dependency, lack of policy autonomy and continued neo-colonial practices in state institutions responsible for education and policy. It also led to their incurring disproportionate debts in their pursuit of “catch-up” development.

As a consequence of debts incurred in pursuit of the imitative development agenda, the nation states have become even more dependent on aid and have had to give up further control of their national policies and policy process to international funding agencies (Baylies, 1998, Stewart, 1994). Such lack of control is manifested in homogeneity of policy content, the high incidence of complete or partial failure of educational policy implementation and the continued rational and technical approach to policy in developing countries insisted by IFIs (Berman, 1992; Grindle, 1980; Samoff, 1999; WDM, 2001; Verspoor, 1992).

THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT ON UNIVERSITY EDUCATION POLICY

In relation to higher education policy, the assumption that transformation is universalistic and abstract has resulted in a rational policy reform context that is always taking place within multilateral perspective through international or regional development frameworks rather than within national frameworks. Since the early seventies, long before adjustment programs were introduced, there has been debate about the role and future of university education in Africa. These debates and their subsequent reports are chronicled in many documents, for example, the 1972 Accra conference and the Yesufu (1973) report, several UNESCO and Association of African University Publications, and the current WB sponsored Working Group on Higher Education (WGHE) in Africa (Nieuwenhuis,

1997). However what is missing from these debates are meaningful national debates that can translate the awesome and holistic ideas into meaningful, crude and workable policies at the national level.

Rist (1999) argues that during the first decade of “development”, the United Nations by US design was wholly occupied with “developmental” issues. This was evident in the proliferation of experts and consultants from the more prominent and prosperous international organizations such as UNESCO, ODA, World Bank and other philanthropic foundations from the West. The function of these development agencies was to promote the vision of development as expressed in the UN’s development decade (Aladdin, 1990; Berman, 1992). These were the origins of the all-pervasive “aid” business and the subsequent debt burden of developing countries in the eighties. Suffice it to say that the aid relationship was enhanced by the “cold war” between the “first world” and the “second ‘socialist’ world”, as well as the genuine need for “development” resources by these newly independent countries (Ake, 1997; Rist, 1997; Shaw, 1993). This formed the continued basis of the neo-colonial relationship between the “aid” providers and the recipients leading to dependency and domination of international institutions over national ones based on economic and intellectual control.

The universities and educational planning units have been characterized as neo-colonial institutions (Aladdin, 1990, Amonoo-Neizar, 1998). Neo colonialism is the tendency to depend on foreign experts for economic, intellectual and more recently, policy support (Altbach, 1971). Neo colonialism is a result of the manifestation of foreign interests, as well as the needs and interests of some local sectors of society, notably the ruling and educated elite. International development and philanthropic agencies perpetuated a dominance of a particular world- view through supporting a specific education philosophy and values. They achieved this by giving financial, material and intellectual resources to the developing nations. On the other hand, local universities also perpetuated the same dominant worldview through the educational socialization and training of individuals on the Western conceptualization of local developmental problems, strategies and even discursive practices. Both internal and external influences have therefore helped

entrench the Western hegemonic ideology in the independent nation states. This entrenchment has spread throughout the political and social institutions since most of these universities are responsible for training practically everyone who works in a decision and policy-making capacity.

Significantly most policy researchers and bureaucrats have been socialized in the beliefs and values implicit in such institutions. As a result there is resistance towards change and almost a romanticizing of the national universities and a conservatism that leads to the protection of the status quo despite the failure to address relevant poverty, inequality, democracy and justice problems. As Ajayi et al. put it

The stranglehold of inherited traditions in African Universities, which can be likened to the fate of the Ancient Mariner in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem has frustrated efforts to make these institutions really proud of being African and doing things African. (1996, p.234)

In the current atmosphere doing things African would not only help their image, but also address some of the institutional and national economic and social problems.

Additionally, the policy process in Africa takes place within a rationalistic, technical and bureaucratic framework. Berman (1992) argues that the adherence of development and lending agency researchers to a research paradigm drawn from the Western rationalistic tradition has led to policies and funding of projects that are often inappropriate and ineffective to the needs of the recipient nations. Dyer (1999) has also noted that among developing nations' bureaucrats, policy planning is viewed in a rationalistic top-down approach that is highly prestigious and exclusive. These two critiques are very important because they apply to the issues at the centre of this study, namely, the context of higher educational policies in the developing world itself and the role of the intellectuals and bureaucrats both national and international who are socialized with those developmental values. It also raises a question about whether or not the policy process can be considered to be completely rational or abstract.

Donor prescriptions of policies without due attention to adaptation to national values and clear goals also negatively impacts educational systems because there is lack of policy

continuity. Samoff (1994) and Berman (1992) draw our attention to the different donor policy emphases over a period of four decades. They note how one aspect or another of the education system is emphasized depending on what theorist and theoretical assumptions are in vogue in the influential development and lending institutions. In the early sixties the emphasis was on secondary and higher education, in the seventies vocational education gained prominence, then non-formal and rural education and currently it is basic education that is at the top of the development policy agenda of influential development and lending agencies. Peet (1998) has also noted the connection between the changing development agendas in the World Bank as new presidents take the mantle. Morrows and Torres (2000) have specifically connected the influence of policy changes at WB and IMF with theoretical and ideological change in the US, which has been described as having leverage over these powerful development agencies. These changing emphases are usually accompanied by discontinuities in funding in other sectors of education. Due to lack of resources in the developing world and the pivotal role that the international experts occupy in the policy process because of their control over economic and informational resources, there is a lack of policy attention to those sectors that do not interest donors. Therefore no effort is made to even put in place other forms of policy instruments such as regulatory ones that might enhance the provision of education.

AID, NEO-COLONIALISM AND UNIVERSITY POLICY

Even at their inception, universities in Africa adopted foundational policies that were externally influenced and premised on the dominant hegemonic “development” paradigm. This allowed for policy content and context to be dominated by exogenous rather than endogenous factors. As a result, higher education policy reform failed to address the institutional and philosophical problems facing the higher education system. Failure to address such problem has led to further entrenchment of externally based solutions to local problems.

As a result of development theory’s hegemonic position and the educational and economic ties between the newly independent nations and their former colonizers, many bilateral and multilateral development agencies supported the development efforts of the

newly independent nations. Both the international agencies and the elite in the developing world believed by investing in infrastructure and social institutions the required economic growth would be achieved. The university and other educational institutions were directly or indirectly financed through external bilateral or multilateral “aid” sources.

Directly, many of these agencies gave resources to build physical infrastructures, train staff, support other human, technical and scientific resources, and provide intellectual resources such as texts to the newly formed institutions. Berman (1992) notes specifically how the philanthropic organizations supported the staff development needs of universities, research centres and planning units of developing countries by supporting graduate studies to Western universities. During the first two decades after independence, the University of Malawi had a very large presence of expatriate lecturers and administrators who were part of educational development aid from different Western nations (Dubbey, 1988). The university also had foreign British vice chancellors until 1995, when the first local vice chancellor was appointed.

Internally, the universities were also almost fully funded by states whose developmental budgets were supplemented by foreign debts and grants. This meant that even at their own national level, university funding was indirectly tied to external resources. Such external dependency on resources had potential repercussions if problems arose from the external sources. Many writers have highlighted the fact that 90 percent of university funding in Africa comes from the state (Ajayi et al., 1996; Amonoo-Neizar, 1998; Berman, 1992;). As Cassen (1998) argues these states planned to fund their developmental activities from proceeds of their commodities. Where such resources were not sufficient the developing nation states were able to obtain low interest loans extended by bilateral and multilateral agencies.

With such support, most universities continued to indiscriminately offer fully subsidized, full time, residential university education extended primarily to post secondary students until the IFIs pressured them to introduce some form of tuition. Furthermore caught up in their own earlier success they increased access without paying attention to physical capacity or shifting national and international economic and social conditions. The

economic and ideology shift in the late seventies was the beginning of such shifts. Ajayi and others (1996) have described the serious financial problems faced by universities in Africa as a result of structural adjustment programs that were adopted to address national debts and economic collapse. However many states resisted the introduction of a tuition fee payment for as long as possible.

THE CHANGING POLICY CONTEXT: GLOBALIZATION AND HEGEMONY

Since the late seventies education policy reform all over the world has taken place within a neo-liberal ideological framework. This ideological shift was a direct result of the seventies economic crisis and the fall of the Soviet Union signifying the end of the cold war, and the emergence of a new political and economic ideology in the developed nations. The emerging ideology emphasized reduced state spending on social services such as education, privatization, deregulation, marketization and increased private involvement in social spending. In the developing world the new policy context was introduced as part of structural adjustment programs which are also popularly dubbed, globalization (Therborn, 2000). The programs were imposed on most developing nations because of their indebtedness to international lending agencies such as the World Bank during the first two decades of development. Structural adjustment would therefore become the context for policy that would lead to increasing covert and overt influence by external agencies with the consent of the ruling and intellectual classes.

NEO LIBERAL AND STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT STRATEGIES

Educational policy literature from both the developed and developing world show that educational policy context, content and process have undergone fundamental changes over the past decade (Ajayi et al, 1996; Fowler, 2000; King, 1999; Kwong, 2000; Middleton, 2000). These changes have their origins in the economic slow down of the global capitalist economy in the late seventies that paved the way for a market economy. Fowler argues that the world of education policy changed from a relatively quiet and predictable world to a rapidly changing and unpredictable one (Fowler, 2000, p.3). Ball

(1990) agrees with this view as he compares the policy process in the UK in the pre-1980s period to the post 1980s. The result of the economic slow down was the ascendancy of the neo-liberal ideology focused on the market. In relation to educational policy the ideological shift resulted in the proliferation of policies that stress the reduction of state funding, criticism of public education, the encouragement of private and corporate participation in higher education and an over emphasis of the utilitarian aspect of education.

Apple (1997) has argued that within the new conservative ideology that is dominating policy, the neo-liberal strand is the most powerful. He defines neo-liberalism as based on two important assumptions, namely economic efficiency and distrust for the public sector. As a result neo-liberal policies emphasize economic efficiency by cutting down state expenditure and also prefer minimal state participation in social services favouring the market as a mechanism for economic efficiency and redistribution (Welch, 1998). Similar neo-liberal changes have been imposed and legitimated in the developing countries through the IFIs as structural adjustment programs and have been dubbed globalization, which is both desirable and inevitable, (Therborn, 2000). This is a consequence of the dominance of the policy process by Western based bilateral and multilateral donors and funding agencies due to the indebtedness of most of the developing countries and the need for development resources for development (Baylies, 1996). These pro globalization lending agencies view higher educational systems as inefficient, burgeoning bureaucracies where administrators are complacent, unresponsive and irresponsible in using public funds (Kwong, 2000). It is from this assumption that lending agencies recommend policies of decentralization, increased privatization and adoption of business models in the education sector especially higher education in Africa. The recommendation to cut state expenditure of higher education is aimed at achieving economic efficiency and equity through the redistribution of state resources to the more economically efficient and more population inclusive primary education (Moyo, 1992).

The introduction of policies of deregulation are designed to weaken the rigidities of trade unionism and dismantle and liberalize prices and wages: reduce public expenditure (principally subsidies and social services); and privatize and liberalize external

transactions (Kwong, 2000). Current education policy documents in Malawi clearly prescribe privatization as one of its policy instruments for saving state resources and expanding higher education in the country. However, while there is proliferation of private secondary schools as a result of structural adjustment, unlike Kenya or Zimbabwe where there is a history of private higher education institutions, so far no private university has been opened in Malawi (Banya, 2001). The lack of private higher education institutions in Malawi is probably a result of the economic and social realities pertinent to the country. Malawi ranks eleventh as one of the poorest nations in the world according to the Human Development Index (UNDP, 1999). Therefore private and for profit university investment might not be economically feasible.

Morrow and Torres (2000) also highlight the connection between structural adjustment, globalization and development. They argue that structural adjustment policies are directly linked to globalization to the extent that all strategies of development are now linked to the imperatives of creating stability for foreign capital. The creation of a stable environment for foreign capital supposedly leads to global competitiveness and attracts investments that ensure the trickle down distribution of resources. Although so far this competitiveness has not yet manifested itself in many African nations, governments still adopt such policies because of their indebtedness, continued belief in “development,” and the need for survival of the state machinery (Carmody, 1996). Ironically, the policies adopted are detrimental to their own capacity to construct educational policies that would enhance educational equality or seek to develop a degree of national autonomy in policy, research and development (Morrow and Torres, 2000; Samoff, 1996).

The imposition of structural adjustment policies has also given rise to a new administrative framework called the new public management. According to Pal (1997), the new public management is a loose framework that draws its inspiration from the private sector. The approach encourages public sector institutions such as universities and schools to adopt business strategies in their delivery of public services. Examples include contracting out and alternative delivery systems that are economically efficient. In more advanced countries this has resulted in what Morrow and Torres (2000) call “academic capitalism” and others have called the “corporate university” signifying increased

entrepreneurial activities by the university. A critical look at the discourse coming out of the policy text in most of the developing nations' higher education policies reveals preponderance towards the same type of framework. There is also increased reference to students as clients or products (Malawi Government, PIF, 2000). It is not however clear how such academic capitalism can be achieved in an environment where even the existence of a market at the macro level is questioned (Shaw, 1993; Leys & Berman, 1994).

Structural adjustment has resulted in homogenous policy content among the developing nations. Through the myth of globalization as a unitary and monolithic system that provide competitiveness and economic growth, which in turn answers all poverty and democracy problems, nation states that are demographically, economically, politically, historically and socially diverse adopt uniform policies with uniform implementation strategies (Mkandawire & Soludi, 1999). According to these two writers, the policy prescription by the WB and IMF is the same for all governments. The justification for the policy prescription is that liberalization frees potential initiatives stifled by interventionism and puts the engine of economic growth back on its course; those who liberalize fastest and most completely will become more competitive in open world markets.

Currently, even the World Bank acknowledges the social costs of structural adjustment and are advocating "pro-poor" policies to cushion the poor against such social costs (World Bank, 2000). However the social costs of structural adjustments affect nearly all sectors of society in the adjusting countries and especially the capacity of the state to formulate policies that would address problems of its own people (Mkandawire, 1998; Shaw, 1993). In Africa, in spite of the ethnic diversity, for the past four decades the state has been the centre of mobilization. There are whole generations of emerging Africans who have grown within such a framework. Therefore there are still expectations from the state. The World Bank (2000) in its publication acknowledges that in Africa many people trust their state rather than the NGOs.

Critics also argue that structural adjustment programs encourage a lack of policy accountability by both national and international actors. They explain that in spite of their increased domination on policy in the developing world, the IFIs do not allow for dissent and neither do they accept blame for failure (Chossudovsky, 1998). Klees (2001) argues that critique and dissent is silenced through the current incorporation of friendly euphemisms such as the “partnership” discourse by the powerful international lending institutions. UNRISD writers also agree that the World Bank and IMF’s definition of good governance that is imposed on adjusting countries due to debt leverage is functionalist and elitist thereby limiting social debate (Olukoshi, 2003). The definition of good governance for the World Bank which first appeared in its documentation in 1989 is “ the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development” (World Bank, 1992 p.52, quoted in Olukoshi, 2003, p.245). This top-down, technical and managerial definition of governance and leadership explains the current pre-occupation with exclusive consultations with experts and leaders in most policy processes.

Critics also note that the issue of capacity building in most developing nations is related to a “re-socialization of a new state elite” who can implement such neo-liberal frameworks (Shaw, 1993). Olukoshi has argued that the World Bank encourages selective use of state technocrats by preferring those who subscribe to neo-liberal reforms while marginalizing those who do not. In this regard capacity building is about incorporating technocrats into this perspective rather than genuinely addressing policy capacity deficiencies. Studies have shown a connection between the lack of successful implementation and ownership of policy and such selective use of state technocrats (Anders, 2002). Both Samoff (1999) and WDM (2000) note how national policy makers do not take ownership of the policy and policy research that are prescribed by international multilateral and bilateral agencies.

Finally, there is a disparity between the degree of dominance of the lending organizations and the actual amount of money that is given to these developing nations. Many writers have commented on how the amount of “aid” has decreased as the WB and IMF have increasingly dominated the policy process and prescribed policy instruments for

developing nations. Carmody (1996) has pointed out how aid has become privatized as well as being channeled through NGOs instead of the state. Martin (1995) notes how the United States has cut back its contribution to the arm of the World Bank, called the IDA, that extends low interest loans to developing nations (King & Buchert, 1999). Scholars also note how the two lending institutions have increasingly become the main educational development agencies' main sources and resources for research information, policy prescriptions and increased lending for education (Bennell, 1996; Chossudovsky 1998; Samoff, 1996).

The inefficacy of market economics in Africa has been critiqued, since many social scientists believe that the market itself at the macro level is very weak (Berman & Leys, 1995; Mkandawire, 1999; Shaw, 1993). Other critics of the market ideology on education have pointed out that even in the Western nations, the education market is a “quasi-market”, needing the state itself to create the market environment (Middleton, 1998). Whether such a concept would work in a context where even the broader market's existence is not clear leaves a lot of questions on the wholesale applicability and feasibility of such IFI proposed strategies such cost-sharing and cost recovery especially in highly aid-dependent nations in the developing world. Hague (1997) further argues that pro-market policies are largely based on ideological tendencies rather than rational criteria. Yet others have pointed out how these liberal market ideological strategies are understood by very limited numbers of individuals in the developing world, making their interpretation into policy practice rather difficult (Shaw, 1993; Carmody, 1996). It is no wonder that the indiscriminate application of pro-market policies into the higher education sector of the developing world has resulted in political and social upheaval. PANA (Pan African News Agency) over a period of one month reported several universities in Africa experiencing uprisings by students as a result of the introduction of cost sharing or cost recovery or simply funding problems (cited at www.allafrica.com Apr 2001).

In spite of the contention that has resulted from reforms that have taken place as the changing context and content, policy reform is still premised on a framework that is

incremental, elitist and rationalistic rather than a more comprehensive and inclusive approach (Samoff, 1994; WDM, 2000). Due to the multiplicity of values that are always present in the policy process because of its political nature, the neo-liberal strategies in the developing nations have had to coexist with nationalistic and populist ideologies (Martinussen, 1997). All these ideologies overlie neo-colonialist institutions and practices. Therefore in most development plans, such neo-liberal strategies take precedence over social, economic and sometimes political realities in the national policy context. However the lack of acknowledgement of the “irrationalities” that co-exist with the technical and rational models are generally what leads to the implementation problems of the intended policies such as the 2000 University of Malawi cost-sharing policies.

Education policy reform is increasingly guided by economic principles at the expense of values and goals. Resulting from the technical and economic approach, policy has become increasingly based on cost/ benefit analysis and Rate of Return on Investment calculations (Bennell, 1996). Increased emphasis on cost/benefit analysis and rate of return on investments has also meant that the biggest loser in terms of finance and coherent policy has been higher education because its public returns on investment are perceived to be less than those on basic education (Mhone, 1992). Despite the many epistemological, political, structural and philosophical problems that have been identified by many scholars in relation to the African university, policy reform only addresses the problems of finance and ignores social, cultural and economic issues related to the financial problem.

Following the changing economic and political context under which the policy process takes place, it is becoming clear that the approach to policy process will have to accommodate contextual related issues. Recent events in Malawi demonstrated the perceived lack of legitimacy of the top-down and elitist approach to policy issues. For a whole year local media accounts highlighted the resistance to the cost-sharing policy by recipients, that is the university students, supported by other sectors of the general public. As a consequence the policy could not be implemented until student representatives and

other stakeholders were incorporated into the policy process and their views heard (Reported in the Nation on the Web, 2000). Even after this process the policy recommendations were modified to appease the students.

THE IMPERATIVE FOR POLICY AND POLICY PROCESS CHANGE

The need for a new approach to Africa's social and economic problems through redefinition of its education system has been extensively documented (Ajayi et al., 1996; Ashby, 1964; Brock-Utne, 1996; Mungazi & Walker, 1997; Kallaway, 2001, Yesufu, 1973). The international lending agencies themselves have acknowledged the need for human capacity building as a necessary ingredient for any meaningful social, political and economic transformation in the developing world (World Bank, 2000). This is generally defined as the need for individuals that have analytical and administrative skills in the developing countries.

An acknowledgement of the need for improved human capacity is also an acknowledgement of the importance of higher education and the intellectual in the social and economic progress of the developing world. Additionally, scholars have emphasized the need for holistic higher education policies that reflect the social, political economic and cultural needs of society as a prerequisite for capacity building in the developing countries (Abdi, 2003, Adjiboloso, 1995; 1993; Dei, 1997; Mkandawire, 1998; World Bank, 2000). These scholars further argue that sustainable development, poverty reduction or indeed national development of post colonial Africa requires the rethinking of the role of education in general and higher education specifically. Therefore policy reform has to address all these value concerns in addition to the economic and adjustment issues.

Since Africa and the developing world are takers of international capitalist signals, it is inevitable that globalization has been imposed on the policy terrain in all developing countries (Leys & Saul, 2000). However, the shrinking state participation in the provision of social services means that the state and its development partners can no longer impose

policy in a top- down approach. The current top-down, rationalistic, elitist and incremental approach to higher education policy fails to acknowledge the political nature of the policy process and the changed realities of the state in its capacity to provide resources. For if individual recipients are going to pay for their higher education, there is a need for individuals to have more say in how policies of higher education are to be chosen. At the same time there is a need to balance the social and economic realities of the developing countries as directed by their creditors with the need for societal progress and survival.

Chapter 4

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The public policy process in the developing world takes place within a context of scant local research and contextual information because there is an assumption that policy processes are technical and rational. Premised on these assumptions, policy decisions are based on universal justifications made by top technocrats with the belief that “decisions to bring about change automatically result in changed policy or institutional behaviour” (Dyer 1999, p. 46). Therefore, the public policy process is still discussed within the theoretical frameworks from developed countries. The weakness of discussing public policy using theories of the developed world is the difference in institutional frameworks and the availability of resources between the developed and the developing nations. Developing nations, especially in Africa, have very weak institutional frameworks and practices (Martinussen, 1997). This weakness has implications for understanding the realities of the policy process and policy effectiveness. It translates into theorization of the policy process that depicts the usual problems of neo-colonialism and dependent knowledge. Furthermore, much of the substantive research that informs policy making is commissioned by the same international funding agencies that are responsible for providing resources for most developing nation development projects (Chossudovsky 1998; Samoff, 1999). A question arises about the neutrality and therefore impartiality of most of such research given the power relations between the debt and poverty-ridden developing countries’ consultants and the rich powerful International Financial Institutions (IFIs) who are involved in such research.

Important as it is, to look at definitions and theories of public policy and the policy process, it is also essential to contextualize these theories within notions of neocolonialism and its impact on resources, the political culture of patrimony, and its implications for power and dependency, patriarchy and its legacy of inequality, and globalization with its emphasis on aid-led results. This chapter will explore each separately and then relate them in a policy critique framework, which I will use to examine the University of Malawi reform case.

DEFINING PUBLIC POLICY

There are many definitions of policy, however most of them define public policy as something that governments through their agencies are concerned with that involves addressing public social problems, and choices of action or indeed non-action (Dye cited in Howlett and Ramesh, 1995). Jenkins also stresses the decision making dimension of public policy by characterising it as,

A set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where those decisions should, in principle, be within the power of those actors to achieve.” (cited in Howlett & Ramesh, 1995, p. 5)

Individuals or groups who have the power to make policy related decisions are called actors. Such policy decisions are supported by other decisions made by other individuals and agencies located in different divisions of the state machinery. Hough (1984) identifies both formal and informal actors in the policy network. Other actors are viewed as informal actors because they are not legally empowered to make authoritative decisions about policy issues. They include targeted recipients of policy, opposition party members and some, if not most, members of civil society. In the current global policy framework, civil society representatives are intended to represent specific private interests and therefore influence the policy debate (Boyd & Meyer, 2001). In reality, the civil society in developing nations is part of the same hegemonic entity with hardly any alternative views. Furthermore, in a traditional centralized bureaucratic system the civil society is hardly allowed the space to have any influence on the policy process (Diawara, 2000; Mundy, 1998; WDM, 2001).

Jenkins’ definition of policy also addresses the issues of implementation or realizability of any policy-related decision. The importance of implementation as part of the policy process is highlighted in the use of the phrases “means of achieving” and “within the powers of those actors to achieve.” Howlett and Ramesh (1995) argue that by considering implementation in the definition of public policy, Jenkins is “suggesting that the question of a government’s capacity to implement its decisions is also a significant consideration

in the types of decisions it takes” (p. 6). Therefore, those with the power to make policy decisions must also perceive the policies to be realizable. In a situation where key state agents perceive their own policy decisions as unworkable, as demonstrated by Samoff (1999) and WDM (2001), questions arise about who “really” makes the policy decisions and what “subtle” neo-colonial influences and covert asymmetrical power relations give rise to the policy text. It also undermines the possibility of implementation of the policy.

The importance of considering implementation possibilities as part of the policy process is central to the effectiveness of policy. It has been argued that the success of policy lies in its implementation because “decisions are not self-executing” (Dyer, 1999; Elmore, 1980). Elmore (1980) further argues that analysis of choices matter very little if the mechanism for implementing those choices is poorly understood. He further claims that in a normal policy process, only ten percent covers identification of policy alternatives while leaving 90 per cent to the realm of policy implementation. Dyer (1999) argues that policy implementation is an integral part of policy formulation since “it is in the translation into practice that the appropriacy and viability of the policy message are tested” (p. 45). The importance of comprehensive implementation plans cannot be overemphasized where resources are limited and the state is breaking away from a tradition of fully subsidizing education to asking individuals to increase contributions towards their own higher education as the current university cost sharing policy in Malawi. In such a case the state agencies must also accommodate the different social and economic realities of the potential recipients of the policy while fulfilling their national goals of progress.

Ball (1994) further informs us of the importance of human agency in translating policy into action. He argues that policy is no simple asymmetry of power and that control or dominance can never be totally secured because of resistance to power. Policy is therefore open to erosion and can be undercut by the actions and embodied agency of those people who are its object. This is a powerful insight as it counters the wrong assumption both at national and international policy levels, that once decisions have been made they will be translated into action. It also emphasizes the powers of the

subordinated and dominated in resisting decisions that do not take account of their interests. The possibility of such resistance signifies the fact that authoritative discourse does not necessarily translate into workable policy as both powerful international agencies and national policy players wrongly assume by their top/down approach to policy as was the case with the 2000 University of Malawi cost sharing policy.

Policy is action on the one hand and words and deeds on the other. In this regard Ball (1994) argues that policy is both the “enacted” and what is “intended” and it is important to account for both. Policies are always incomplete if they only relate to intended goals without regard to how they will be affected by local practice. He argues that policy as practice is created in a trialectic of dominance/resistance and chaos/freedom. He further argues that while policy text is crude and simple, practice or the translation of policy into action is complex and unstable and therefore the process should always take such complexity and instability in context.

Social actions do not occur in a vacuum, rather they are always part of larger systems and of processes of inter-subjective understanding therefore, the role of the acting subject in which actions are coordinated is of importance (Brunkhorse, 1998, p. 1). Diawara (2000) has critiqued both post-structuralists and modernists for ignoring the agency of the local people in development. He points out how “local social groups and individuals play with constraints imposed on them and the resistance potentials that they mobilize against them” (p. 365). In his view it is such resistance potentials by the acting subject that have greatly contributed to the failure of development policies in the developing world.

Grindle (1980) further posits that due to the dominance of elitist, rational, analytical models of policy process in developing nations’ bureaucratic systems, policy recipients are excluded from the policy process and as a result tend to influence policy at the implementation level rather than the formulation level. This explains why implementation strategies are problematic leading to partial or total lack of implementation of policy reform. He further expounds that it is at the implementation level that policy recipients are able to interact with the “street level bureaucrats” and their own political

representatives. Such top-down approaches to policy therefore entrench the patrimonial tendencies in the political process because they disallow participation of those who have interest in the policy reform. They also undermine the policies and the policy process by incapacitating the implementation process. Patrimony in connection with the African political systems is defined as the distribution of public resources through clientelism and patronage rather than prescribed policy instruments.

THE POLICY PROCESS

Fowler (2000) defines the policy process as the sequence of events that occur when a political system considers different approaches to public problems, adopts one of them, tries it and evaluates it. Howlett and Ramesh (1995) also call it the “policy cycle” and Lindblom (1968) calls it the “policy making process.” All these writers agree that in spite of the message of orderliness that is conveyed through the use of terms like “process” or “cycle” the phenomenon is both “messy,” complex and disorderly. They also argue for the political nature to the process, which in fact implies conflicts of values and therefore interests. Hence, the policy process is both an analytically and politically complex process, with uncertain boundaries, and no clear beginning or end (Lindblom, 1968, p. 4). The current university reform in Malawi, although envisaged as a rational process by the formal policy actors, depicts the irrationality, complexity and disorderliness defined in the literature.

The classical model of the policy process is made up of the following stages agenda setting, policy formulation, decision making policy, implementation and policy evaluation (Howlett & Ramesh, 1995). There might be variations on the actual labels given to the categories and some writers differentiate between “issue definition” and “agenda setting” (Fowler, 2000, p. 15). Due to the multiple interests vested in any single public issue, the process is usually rigged with power-struggles right from the definition of the agenda to the choices at the end. Most policy theorists agree that those who set the agenda and define the problem have power on their side, that is, defining the agenda also means setting the parameters of the discourse of the whole process (Baratz & Bachrach

1970, cited in Lukes, 1998, p. 505). In the developing countries' educational sector evidence shows that the sector level with the most powerful and visible representations has the power to sway the system in its favour (Samoff, 1994). Samoff argues that the higher education system is the most powerful because of its technical and political visibility. This sector's power underpins the potential for policy failure when the inherent interests are not allowed a voice in the policy debate.

The "economistic" model of policy that is currently in ascendance in the developing and adjusting countries assumes that there is orderliness to the policy process (Verspoor, 1997). In this framework all problems are perceived to be technical and are solvable by politically neutral technical measures (Diawara, 2000). The insistence on "positivistic" rates of return on investments or economic analysis to the exclusion of other "irrational" and value-defined considerations have become a self defeating ingredient of the policy process (Bennell, 1996; Burnett & Patrinos, 1996; Samoff, 1996). Therefore, as much as re-distributive policies, such as cost sharing are well intentioned, their lack of attention to other economic, social and political-related costs, render them problematic. They are viewed as serving interests of the powerful and are unacceptable to recipients resulting in contention and resistance during the translation process. Additionally, they distract the policy network in individual countries from coming up with more rational, logical and realistic solutions that might not be "typical" but would address the same problems in a more inclusive, collaborative and systematic approach. Samoff (1994) has aptly summarized this point by saying that when a technical approach is taken, public policy becomes a matter of technique and administration rather than education and it marginalizes much of what is regarded as important in education such as values, goals and societal debate. The literature review pointed out that the agenda of development was externally determined and continues to be externally defined in spite of the changing of actual semantics.

Policy and Power

Jenkins' definition also underlines power as being at the centre of policy and the policy process. Lukes (1998) has argued that in social relationships power is the capacity to produce or contribute to outcomes by significantly affecting another or others (p. 504). Although so far power has not been explicitly discussed, power is at the centre of any policy and policy process because of the conflicting and multiplicity of interests in any given policy issue. Power is defined using three distinct attributes namely as a resource, as a potential and in behavioral terms as an influence.

To begin with, power as a resource is defined in terms of dependence and influence. Frooman (1999) working within the political framework of stakeholder theory, defines power as "the structurally determined potential for obtaining favoured pay-offs in relations where interests are opposed" (p. 192). This is a structuralist definition of power in which case it is impersonal. The term "structurally" gives the idea of power as being in built into certain relationships. The phrase "obtaining pay-offs" clearly implies resources being given as a reward for the right moves. Finally, there is also the potential for conflict that is brought forth by diverse interests. This definition of power captures the potential of conflict in the process of policy as well as the potential to influence policy by those with resources. Robert Dahl has argued that it is important to examine who prevails in the decision-making process when there are conflicting interests (Brunkhorst, 1998).

Second, power is also defined in behavioural terms in which case it takes the attributes of social interaction and is seen as a source of influence (Robbins and Langdon 1999, p. 448). A second definition is "the ability of an actor to affect the behaviour of another actor" (Muth, 1984; cited in Fowler, 2000, p. 27). For Nelson and Quick (1994), influence is a process affecting thought, behaviour and feelings of another person. According to Fowler, the word "actor" includes both individuals and groups. Again the idea of power as an inherent potential and capacity to be used to change behaviour is also implied. However, this definition seems to suggest that the person having the power has a choice to exercise this potential or not. Power as defined in behavioural terms exists in a

concrete social relationship and therefore it may be symmetrical or asymmetrical depending on the context (Fowler, 2000).

In regard to asymmetrical power, professional and educational socialization would be an example. DiMaggio and Powell (1991) in institutional theory have argued that professionalization is influenced by two factors. The first is the importance of formal education and legitimation of cognitive bases as produced by university specialists. Universities and professional training institutions are important centres for the development of organizational norms among professional managers and staff. Escobar (1995) has described the tools used by IFIs and other development and planning agencies for deploying the development discourse as professionalization, incorporation and institutionalization (cited in Peet, 1999). Second, Powell and DiMaggio also argue that professional networks that span organizations, personal transfers and turnovers also influence institutional practices. Within developing nations there is much transnational migration of skilled labour, that is, the “brain drain,” due to political repression, globalization and internationalization (Ajayi et al., 1996; Shaw, 1993). Chossudovsky (1998) has also outlined how the lending organizations incorporate individuals that are socialized in the discipline of economics in key government agencies such as central banks and treasury. Additionally, it has already been argued that national universities produce the western oriented elite who take-up positions as top bureaucrats and professionals empowered to make policy decisions.

Finally, Nelson and Quick (1994), see power as a legal-rational function of authority and therefore an exchange relationship that occurs between an agent and the target, who is the recipient of the attempt to use power. Authority is defined in terms of a legal rationalistic framework as the “right” to influence another person. Lindblom (1968) views authority as a rule, which does not directly lay down what a person can or cannot do except to say that he or she must do whatever some specified other person tells him or her to do (p. 37). He further argues that authority is limited by its specificity, in other words authority cannot be exercised outside the specific boundaries. Additionally, authority is a concession from those who are asked to obey. Lindblom (1968) argues that this concession is given

because authority is a rule. In most centralized bureaucratic systems power is derived from role authority. Therefore, it will be important in this study to understand the interplay between authority and economic/discursive power.

Sources of Power

Fowler argues that there are different types of resources, namely economic or money, knowledge, material and discursive resources. Economic power has been named as a very important source of power in the policy literature (Bonefield & Holloway, 1995; Lindblom, 1968). Lindblom proposes that apart from authority, power over funds is used to control others. Similarly Bonefield and Holloway argue that “international capital has used money as one of its primary weapons, and is the ultimate and most sophisticated instrument for world capitalist restructuring today (1995, p. 70). Others have pointed out how powerful IFIs have economic and knowledge power through controlling the source of money, being owed money and providing the informational basis for making policy decisions (Chossudovsky, 1998; Martin, 1995).

Power is also derived from knowledge resources. In a policy process, individuals or group actors can build power through gathering important and relevant information, (Fowler, 2000). Gathering information has a positive and negative side to it. Positively it can lead to realistic policies, but negatively it can lead to gathering information to disempower opponents. Finally, possession of knowledge resources also gives an actor discursive power. This power is usually exercised through language or discourse, which is an instrument of power of which policy actors are usually aware. Samoff (1994) notes the “standardised authoritative terminology promulgated and reinforced by the World Bank” in its interactions with developing countries, and at the same time he describes the bank as “research manager, publisher and source of funds”(p. 265).

Additionally, social resources are deemed to be very important where material resources are limited (Fowler, 2000). Social resources can be built by increasing numbers of allies and followers. Fowler argues that the impact of numbers can be enhanced by effective

organization which includes skillful, committed leaders; respected decision making procedures; and a planned, systematic communications system (Mann, 1992 cited in Fowler, 2000). For most developing nations, social resources may be the only resource that is plentiful. However, whether the social resources can be used effectively, individually and collectively may depend on the professional socialization of the individuals empowered to make authoritative decisions about policy. In this case, they might be limited by their intellectual dependency and lack of autonomy due to the need for legitimacy and resources. Moreover, they may be constrained by considerations of the ruling elite's political careers and the expectations of the poor.

THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS

In this part, I will discuss the theoretical constructs of neocolonialism, patrimonialism, patriarchy and globalization, which I have adopted as the basis for the policy critique of the study. These constructs will be discussed in relation to the developing countries context with specific application to Malawi. The adoption of such a critical framework is based on the assumption that policy analysis takes place within an environment of tension between the local particularities of policymaking and enactment, against awareness of general patterns and apparent commonalities, (Ball, 1998). This assumption enables the subsequent critical analysis to attend to both the rational and the irrational aspects of policy and policy process.

POLICY PROCESS IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

In his theorization of the policy process and context in the globalization age, Pal (1997) argues that globalization has changed the assumptions upon which the policy process was premised and has caused a shift in the type of policy instruments that are adopted. Fowler (2000) concedes that education policy has become more controversial and contested due to changing economic and political paradigms. The consequences of economic globalization, a new political culture, technology and governance structures have resulted in financial restraint and the rise of the new public management practices and have

impacted on public policy in two ways. First, there is the reduced role of the state in the provision of social services and consequently, an increase in individual responsibility for social services giving rise to policy instruments like cost-sharing and cost recovery. These new practices have displaced previous practices and therefore challenge the fundamental assumptions about the role of the state and its approach to deliverance of social services.

The old practice worked on the direct assumption of state provision of services and took a rational, technical and economic model with a top-down approach. It is questionable whether such an approach would be feasible in a situation where the state has limited direct provision of social services (Gibbins & Youngman, 1996; Harman; 1984 Pal, 1997; 2001). In most developing countries, as a consequence of structural adjustment policies, governments have been encouraged to down size. Therefore, questions arise as to how the new leaner governments match the old centralized practices.

Pal (1997) also suggests adopting different models of policy process in line with the degree of contextual stability. According to him, during turbulent times a more comprehensive and collaborative policy model should be adopted. On the other hand, during times of stability, policy formulation adheres to familiar and routine aspects and is therefore incremental. Incrementalism has been defined as “minor adjustments,” fine tuning with limited changes, deletions or additions made with respect to current arrangements (Kruschke & Jackson, 1987, p. 2). Pal suggests that the move away from direct provision should lead to more a collaborative policy making, increased adoption of direct support and leveraging. He is implying that in a situation where money is in short supply such as the situation in most developing countries, policy should be much more comprehensive, collaborative and imaginative. Additionally, issues of legitimacy, efficacy and appropriateness of instruments should be critically assessed, as a wrong choice would lead to lack of even partial implementation. Pal (1997) uses the term “policy power” as opposed to “money power” to emphasize the importance of ensuring that the policy will achieve its intended goals in the context of reduced funding. This

concept is important in the case of developing countries as literature has already shown that the policy process is not always thorough (Dyer, 1999).

POLICY IN THE POSTCOLONIAL STATE

To understand the socio-political context of policy in the developing world, and Africa specifically, no single theory of state/society relations can explain the internal context of policy process (Martinussen, 1997). Ball (1994) also concedes that in a policy analysis approach, any decent theory of education policy must attend to workings of the state but not be limited to the state control perspective. Gibbins and Youngman (1996) capture the need for inclusion and plurality in the policy process. They argue that the policy process is often “irrational and contradictory.” Ball (1994) also argues that the policy process is never rational or value free because of the multiplicity of interests at individual and community levels that are inherent in the policy strategies and instruments. These interests make policy process potentially conflict laden with multiple ideological viewpoints.

Martinussen (1997) has captured the multiplicity of ideologies and values that influence the policy process in Africa. He argues that apart from the neo-liberal assumptions that infiltrate the system through the dominance of international lending and development agencies, the policy process in Africa is influenced by many conflicting ideologies. He offers a very comprehensive summary of conflicting political ideologies; the colonial legacies that espouse rational Weberian bureaucracies, the rise of military dictators and autocratic rulers; and social anthropological theories espousing traditional institutions and patrimonialism as manifested in the “person rule” and “patron-client” relationships so pervasive in developing nations. Consequently, concepts such as globalization, leaner governments, fiscal restraint, decentralization, civil society involvement informed by neo-liberal values of equity, justice and liberty, have to live side by side with patronage, paternalism, nationalism and communitarianism whereby a leader distributes public resources to his cronies, supporters, and relations.

With regard to policy and the policy process, development and de-colonization have also impacted on the social and political culture of most African countries and influenced the lack of meaningful democratic practices in state institutions (Baylies, 1995).

Development theory's emphasis on autonomy and abstract principles gave the African ruling elite the advantage of unrestricted liberties whereby they could appropriate selectively from African traditional institutions and culture using what served them best to maintain and exploit power, domination and influence while discarding the rest (Ake, 1996). He further observes that for the international patrons, this conception of development offered the advantage of de-historicising development so that it was easier to represent their values and experience as objectively desirable and inevitable.

Combined with the "Cold War" between the East and West, many autocratic leaders were allowed a free hand in thwarting democratic principles (Shaw & Inegbedion, 1994).

The insistence on objective and scientific development theories without regard to institutional, cultural and historical contexts further legitimated patrimonial relations on the side of the ruling elite while foreign experts were allowed to control and dominate the policy and its process. Ake (1996) further argues that their power and legitimacy as agents of development is associated with their scientific knowledge of the development process, knowledge that is less prone to being questioned when development is regarded as autonomous. As Ake posits,

In trying to protect their knowledge of the development process from being questioned or made relative, the theorists and agents of development greatly compromised its scientific value. For by regarding development as an autonomous process they became indifferent to important issues of scientific, epistemological and ontological significance, issues arising from development's historical origins as a body of knowledge. They could no longer be sensitive to the question of why the development lore made certain assumptions, used certain conceptions, valued certain aspects of experience and not others, focused on certain issues and ignored others, and how it adopted a particular discursive practice and particular strategies for ordering experience. (1996, p. 7)

The combination of colonial legacies, abstraction of development, neo-colonialism and the interests of Western countries in the form of "the Cold War" helped create a political culture represented by two types of regimes. Allen (1997) suggests that both regimes

were characterized by patrimony or clientelist politics and authoritarian and centralized bureaucracies. He categorises them as “the one party state” and “the military state.” While acknowledging the diversity of African politics, Allen’s characterization of the one party state is pertinent in the understanding the political culture of Malawi.

He has described the rise of centralized-bureaucratic politics in the form of the one party state as a result of the crisis of clientelism that had its roots in colonial politics and was adopted in the period just before de-colonization. He traces the origins of the crisis to the rapid de-colonization process by metropolitan powers. This was partly due to the perceived radicalization of nationalist movements especially in West Africa. Power was handed to the conservative wing of the nationalist movements and in most cases the conservatives used patronage to win the elections and maintain power. He further argues that the crisis of patronage came into open as a result of a clash between the radicals and the conservatives.

Kaunda (1992) writing about Malawi confirms the above phenomenon. Allen (1997) explains that two distinctive approaches were applied to resolve the crisis. In one category, it was resolved by military intervention and, in the second case, for example in Malawi, it was resolved through reform of the political system. Allen argues that the states where there was no military intervention as in,

Senegal, Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and Malawi, the reforms were carried out in piecemeal, and to differing extents with differing emphases and timing, but in essence the packages were similar; aimed at producing stable authoritarian systems to replace the unstable systems imposed by the former colonial powers. (Allen, 1995, p. 305)

Allen further argues that the dominant institution of the one party system was the presidency and not the political party. Therefore power was centralized in the executive presidency. In this case, the president was above factional politics and he could manipulate it through control of constitutional, military and financial resources. As early as the seventies the Malawi constitution made Banda the “life president” of the state and he was also the life president of his party. All state activities therefore revolved around him and he was the head of the civil service, the chairperson of the development

commission, and the Chancellor of the University of Malawi. Kaunda (1992) observed that “the executive president has since independence, acquired both supreme political stature and concentrated powers of policy making”(p. 62). He further points out that such executive dominance in policy-making implies considerable reliance on the state bureaucracy. The development process is described as “characterized by administrative de-concentration (de-centralisation of authority to perform specified functions) rather than political devolution (decentralisation of decision making powers to legally constituted representative bodies” (p. 62). The dominance of state bureaucracy, therefore, renders the process as a typical, top down, hierarchical and elitist one. Additionally, the real power for decisions lay with one person while the state bureaucrats aided by the party machinery were in reality the implementers of the decisions (Kaunda, 1992). In such an autocratic one party system there was no space for resistance at all to any policies. Policy and policy process occurred in a very smooth and stable environment.

The result of such institutionalization of individuals and “non-institutionalized governments” may be explained in the current so called “subservience” of national policy actors towards international funding institutions (Mail & Guardian, August, 2001). Such a domination of a system by an individual is potentially disastrous when the individual is no longer available or loses control. Most of the countries mentioned above, including Malawi, have undergone “democratic” transformation as a result of the end of the cold war and conditionalities of the lenders. However, experience is showing that the consequences of a long socialization process of the actors in a strong individual dominated policy environment is affecting institutional policy framework. In the absence of the dominant “charismatic” figures there seems to be a crisis of confidence in the state policy machinery.

NEOCOLONIALISM, RESOURCES AND POLITICAL CULTURE

Altbach’s (1971) definition of neocolonialism in relation to education captures the character of post -independence university education in Africa and the context in which

its policies and practices occur. He defines neocolonialism as “the influence of advanced countries on the educational policies and institutions of developing countries,” (p. 88). He further argues that neocolonialism includes the use of foreign technical advisors on matters of policy and the continuation of foreign administrative models and curricular patterns for schools. In relation to dominance of foreign influence on national policy, Samoff has written extensively on the influence of powerful international organizations on educational policies in the developing world (Samoff 1994, 1996, 1999). The negative aspects of neo-colonialism have serious implications for the recipient country’s educational systems, the most serious of which might be lack of ownership of policies resulting in problematic implementation and lack of relevance to the recipient country’s educational context.

Altbach (1971) also argues that modern neo-colonialism is often related to traditional colonialism, which means that there is continuity of institutional and normative practices. In the historical account of university education policy in Africa and indirectly that of the educated and ruling elite, the continuity of the dominance of Western knowledge, texts, and agents has been traced from colonial through de-colonization to the post-independence period.

The literature review showed that the historical analysis of the emergence of the African university is premised on elitist trickle down assumptions implicit in the modernization process. Therefore, one clear manifestation of the introduction of university education to Africa has been the rise of a powerful educated elite who have had western educational ties since formal education was introduced to Africa in the colonial times. These are concerned with their own reproduction rather than addressing the poverty and inequality problems faced by the majority of rural and urban poor in developing countries (Diawara, 2000).

Current trends show that apart from direct foreign policy experts, there is increased foreign domination and influence of both information sources and the discourse (Chossudovsky, 1998; Samoff, 1999). This denotes an increase in power and influence on

the policy process. Altbach (1971) also notes that neo-colonialism is partly a planned policy of advanced nations to maintain their influence in developing countries. However, the difference between neo-colonialism and colonialism is that there is no direct control of any of the internal or external life of the colony. This covert show of power is more subtle and pervasive. In this case, therefore, neocolonialism is a two-way process in that if the colonizer is not directly controlling the colonized, there must be partial consent on the part of the colonized to accept the colonizers' dominance as will be shown later on in the discussion on hegemony. In such a situation, power is exercised through influence derived from the sources of money, knowledge and discourse.

Peet (1999) argues that since the colonial encounter, the economic hegemony of the West has been paralleled by academic dependence in which Third World intellectuals, trained in Western knowledge spoke the colonial language and stressed the history of the colonizer over that of the colonised. In neo-colonial terms the local experts find themselves speaking the language of the foreign experts who control the economic resources and the discursive practices. The policy actor's power is limited by the lack of resources as a consequence of national debts and adjustment; the need to be legitimated in their own intellectual disciplines as the "modernizing" elite; and the need to reproduce themselves as an educated class in the Western-type educated class. (Samoff & Carnoy, 1974; Therborn, 2000) Such need for legitimacy and recognition is explained in terms of the new institutional theory's isomorphism.

These limitations on actors also depict behavioral aspects of power as a socialization force of the educated and ruling elite of the developing countries through knowledge and education. Alatas (1993) describes the knowledge dependency of third world educated elite as "captive minds" which were too uncritical and imitative of concepts coming from the West (cited in Peet, 1998, p. 136). Samoff (1999) argues that most policy actors and researchers in Africa still work within the framework of economic and intellectual domination by foreign bodies. Therefore, knowledge carriers as socializing agents entrench the dominance of the world-view through the connection between the educated elites of the South and those of the North. The fundamental role of higher education is

that it influences the thinking, ideas and capabilities of the very same policy actors. Ironically, these socialization limitations also inhibit the scope for a meaningful policy process that would yield policies that would transform higher education itself into a meaningful agency for addressing national poverty, inequality and injustice.

PATRIMONY, DEPENDENCE AND SCARCITY OF RESOURCES

In addition, the combination of the hegemonic forces of development and globalization on the one hand and neo-colonialism and dependency on the other, have entrenched patrimony and patriarchal practices in the internal political systems which inhibit the systematic and logical re-distributive policies. Patrimony manifests itself in a political culture that is paternalistic, elitist and authoritarian, breeding immense inequality of power and wealth between the urban elite and urban and rural poor.

According to Weber (1922), patrimonialism is any form of political domination or political authority based on personal and bureaucratic power exerted by a royal household (cited in Jary & Jary, 1991, p. 357). The authors Jary and Jary (1991), further explain that the difference between patrimonialism and other types of political power is that it is formally arbitrary and its administration is under direct control of the ruler. In relation to political power in post colonial Africa, the term patrimonialism has been defined as “the politics of economic affection” (Mkandawire, 1998). The definition underscores the centrality and arbitrariness of economic or money power in the politics of the developing world policy process. The result of the economy of affection is the re-distributive activities imposed by affective relations. This process has been called negative terms such as prebendalism or clientalism and has been blamed for the lack of institutional and bureaucratic order (Bayart, 1993, Mkandawire, 1998). In this proposal “patrimony” is also defined as stemming from “ideals of manhood” that are inherent in the modernization notion originating from the “civilizational” goals of early missionary education and early colonial economic and political activities (Peet, 1998). These ideals were entrenched by the adoption of development concepts and practices to catch up with Western industrialization and the appropriation of other indigenous patriarchal ideals in

the post colonial nationalist period (Gandhi, 1998). In reality, patrimony and patriarchy define some of the irrationalities that arise from contextual realities of the postcolonial state. Lack of acknowledgement of patrimonial or patriarchal power leads to rational policy processes that do not account for such “irrational” realities, and fail to address the problems of the real poor and marginalized and subsequently leads to failed implementation.

Furthermore, patrimony as defined through a neo-Weberian critique focuses on the failure of African states to establish themselves as rational-legal institutions and rise above patrimonialism that affects them all, regardless of their ideological claims and the moral rectitude of individual leaders (Mkandawire, 1998). Political power and bureaucratic authority is therefore constructed around those state personalities with the most ability to influence and get the external resources. Hence, in an aid-dependent nation it is those who communicate and negotiate with the international lending organizations that prevail over other state agencies. Such unequal power relations between the state agencies themselves translate into more irrationalities in the policy process. The approach taken in this critique is to view patrimony as an unavoidable variable in the state/society relations just as class and race would be in other societies.

The patrimonial construction of power is both a major trait of developing societies and a decisive element in the connection between princes of the South and those of the North (Mkandawire, 1998; Bayart, 1993). Therefore, patrimonialism is perpetuated by the continued need for “development” and “development” resources in the developing world itself. Mkandawire describes it as a weakly observable phenomenon, found as much in Africa as in South Asia or the Middle East in which the ruling elite’s strategy is to appropriate for themselves the political space through redistribution of state resources to private social spaces. Although patrimonialism starts as a personal practice, it becomes a collective practice in order to benefit equally both close associates and the whole of the state bourgeoisie whose survival depends primarily on its capacity to find a place in the patrimonial logic. This is important since it explains the pervasiveness of the practice in most of these societies.

Badie (2000) concedes that patrimonialism arises from a combination of economic factors and political strategies. It arises from the paucity of resources in the countries of the South and the need for power and wealth by the elite of the developing world. He explains that the paucity of internal resources available to the political system in relation to the abundance of external resources causes patrimony. The connection between the international and local elites through the need for resources explains the intersection between development, patrimony, aid and neo-colonialism. It also explains the continued foreign experts' domination and lack of autonomy by national experts on the policy process.

Bayart (1996) further highlights the connection between the elite and the masses by arguing that although the masses are perceived to be powerless, they too are involved in the appropriation of public resources. This statement is important as it outlines the consensual relations between the elite and the poor in patrimonial politics. Badie (2000) confirms this and argues that although from a moral perspective patrimonialism is viewed with scorn it derives essentially from social mechanisms that cannot be dissociated from the conditions of dependency. This is also in line with Gramsci's assertion that hegemony worked to induce the oppressed to consent to their own exploitation and misery (Gramsci 1988; Fontana, 1993). It is the hegemonic view of development that connects and perpetuates patrimonialism to the elite in the North and South, and the poor. As Badie (2000) argues, the more limited the resources, the more likely an individual seeks to build direct relations with a superior belonging to the central political elite. This is backed by the argument that neo-patrimonial relations in developing nations transcend tribal and kinship boundaries. The effect of patrimonialism on planned policy is that it undercuts the intended policy. While such undercutting had no effect in earlier state welfare systems and their emphasis on direct provision of social services, in the current "adjustment" environment where the state has limited resources it causes contention and devalues national capacities to address real societal issues.

Many scholars have also argued that the characterization of the African nation as a “patrimonial” state has led to an unfair vilification which has to do with neo-liberal policies of the IFIs and the need to have a “leaner” state machinery. Mkandawire (1998) for example, prefers explaining patrimonialism through Bates’s (1981) public choice school’s rent-seeking concept rather than “patrimonialism.” Bates’ public choice theory explains “rent-seeking” through the presence of imperfect markets and the ability of rational pursuit of self interest groups by organized individuals who push the state to adopt policies that generate rents for them. Mkandawire (1998) argues that “in the case of Africa, rent seeking is conflated or used interchangeably with corruption, patron-clientelism and even the extended African family.” (p. 15) This argument is important since other scholars like Shaw (1993) and Leys have argued of the lack of a real private sector in Africa. They outline the weakness of the local civil society in Africa as an organized group that would lobby for alternative policy interests. As a result, it is the state bureaucrats, the military and the ruling elite that have historically been the main organized strong groups in post colonial Africa (Martinussen 1997). This has tended to entrench their power because the external resources are channeled through the state machinery.

In the case of Malawi, patrimonialism is depicted through the institutionalization of the presidency as opposed to the legalization of the state and its institutions. This failure to establish rational legal institutions, might also mean that exercise of “authority” as an attribute of power deriving from rules and concessions of those taking the rules is easily undermined (Kaunda, 1992). Consequently, authority easily gives way to other sources of power as outlined in the theoretical discussion, such as money power, discursive power, knowledge power and social power. Currently, there is an over domination of the policy process by state bureaucrats that deal directly with the World Bank, IMF and other lending and development organizations. The University of Malawi’s reform, especially the financial policy process, seems to have suffered from this domination by the Ministry of Economic Development and the Treasury Department. The contradiction in the policy process is that, while the national policy actors have the authority to redistribute resources within a patrimonial framework, in their interactions with international actors,

they seem to be powerless to stand up for the goals of their societies that they have been empowered to represent. Patrimony is therefore one of the so-called “irrationalities” that detracts from the planned top-down policy instruments and makes their implementation ineffective.

Development and its neo-colonial practices help entrench patrimonialism by ensuring the flow of scarce resources from the North to the South and by helping perpetuate policy processes that are blind to such irrationalities. For this matter, patrimonialism should not be underestimated since it further elucidates what has been characterized as “the subservient” nature of some of the developing nations’ policy state actors towards international policy actors (South African Mail & Guardian, August 2001). Of great irony is the fact that the ruling elite justify their continued relations with the international development agencies using language that valorises the patrimonial concept, that is, invoking the politics of affection by the donor community in many of their political speeches. In this regard, both multilateral and bilateral agencies are depicted as philanthropists who distribute money to “able” national leaders who in turn redistribute such wealth to their own people through state bureaucracies. The contradiction of such “personalization” of national loans and grants is that it undermines the leadership’s power to mobilize the masses, while at the same time giving a sense of powerlessness on the part of the masses to help themselves (Vernequillist, 1990). This powerlessness has been defined as “the dis-valuation of commons and culture” with the result that “traditional labour is voided of its power to generate subsistence” (Rahnema, 1997, p.123). It also entrenches the spirit of dependency on foreign aid and in an age when the aid is drying up the whole practice seems to be futile. Patrimony is a reality in the African political and policy process. It is a strategy that seeks to redistribute national resources within a framework of paucity. However its redistribution depends on external resources that are channeled through the state machinery.

PATRIARCHAL POWER AND POLICY

As already pointed out African politics continue to be dominated by patrimonialism which is underlined by patriarchal power. Patriarchy in this case is viewed as a social system in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women (Walby, 1998). Walby further says that social relations through which men dominate women include work, culture and the state. The domination of men in the state and work is an important factor in many developing nations because it perpetuates economic and intellectual dependency and neo-colonial practices of the whole society. It is the collective desire by the elite to turn themselves into “modern, rational, forward looking” individuals complete with a Western notion of an efficient state machine that influences them to continue the futile process of seeking resources for “catching up.” This male ideal distracts them from seeking more locally grown solutions that would address the needs of the majority of population (who include “traditional men and women”) through local means. It also leads them to ignore the historicity and particularistic nature of Western modernization. As Peet (1999) concludes in his critique of modernization,

The existing process of modernization cannot possibly continue. If successful, it would lead to a five or six-fold increase in global incomes, consumption, resource use and pollution of natural environments already strained beyond capacity. Such an increase shows the natural impossibility of endlessly copying the Western model. (p. 195)

GLOBALIZATION, AID AND POLICY INFLUENCE

Most critical literature on globalization acknowledges that the concept is both enigmatic, and controversial, resulting in definitions that are often ambiguous with irregular and contradictory connotations (Helvacioğlu, 2000). However, much as the concept is controversial, writers agree that globalization is a fact (Bartelson, 2000). Definitions of globalization take political, economic and cultural dimensions; dimensions of a process or an outcome, while others still take the form of spatio-historical distinctions (Bartelson, 2000; Urry 1998; Waters, 1995). The multiple definitions of the term globalization

simply indicate the complexity and inter-relatedness of nature, forms, interpretations and realities that this phenomena takes.

To put into context the distinctive features of globalization as applied to the developing countries this study adopts Therborn's definition. He defines globalization as taking place in different spatio-historical contexts, which provide different meanings and implications in the various parts of the world (Therborn, 2001). In his definition, he distinguishes meanings given to globalization in five different regions of the world (p. 169). He argues that for the spatio-historical region called the "Third World" of which Africa forms a large part, globalization takes the form of imposed economic liberalization through World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), creditors and donors. In other words in this particular region globalization is synonymous with structural adjustments strategies. The justifications given for the desirability of globalization are that it provides connections and cultural access to the global economy, which in turn position African nations for global competitiveness and translate into social and economic growth and progress. Samoff (1994) argues that structural adjustment became both the description and the content of imposition of external control. It offered the poor debt ridden nations' access to scarce capital in exchange of externally specified national policies and surrender of some national autonomy. He views it as a "stick and carrot" situation (p. 267).

Globalization has led to the definition of educational objectives in terms of the global discourse of neo-liberalism resulting in almost hegemonic policies and practices (Kallaway, 2001). Policy recommendations using global discourse ignore the links between education and the cultural/social/economic needs of the majority of the developing countries' populations who are rural based. Such policy leads to further inequality within and among nations. Globalization also reduces the state capacity as a rallying point of social change and leads to situations that are divisive, bringing "adjustment" that impacts on investment and cultural challenges (Chossudovsky, 1998; Therborn, 2000). Many view the introduction of structural adjustment policies in Africa as the beginning of the new wave of globalization's contact with Africa (Therborn, 2000).

This statement implicitly conveys the view taken in this study that globalization is a continuity of a dominant capitalist and imperialist worldview which carries the same assumptions and values as those in the colonial era, thereby entrenching neo-colonial practices in the education policy and policy process (Saul & Leys, 1999). This new wave of globalization has resulted in loss of sovereignty in economic and social policy development in many of the indebted and adjusting countries. It has also led to the introduction of homogenous social policy prescriptions by IFIs on many of these nations. Therborn's (2000) definition is also significant because it highlights the different realities and myths of globalization as they specifically relate to the so-called "Third World" region. Contrary to the myths that globalization means expansion of markets and therefore more investment and "development" in all regions, in the third world, globalization takes a different character which entails external control of policies resulting in more economic and social problems.

Urry (1998) views globalization as both a process and as an outcome. As an outcome, the concept has a dimension of a hypothetical proposition that is represented by nouns such as "to globalize" or "to modernize." On the other hand, he also views globalization as a process, that is, a discourse. Therefore, as a discourse, globalization is a powerful tool for control and influence in policy and policy processes of small, poor, debt ridden countries that are dependent on the IFIs for their short-term survival. The view that globalization is a process as defined by its discourse coincides with another view that it is an ideology that seem to have replaced development in the developing world (Amin, 1997). Additionally, it is viewed as an ideology employed by those with interests in promoting worldwide capitalist relations which undermines national identity and the kind of social democratic project that such identities underlie and authorize (Ohmae (1990, cited in Urry, 1998). Consequently, they present globalization as the new golden age of "borderlessness" that is both inevitable and necessary for social progress. On the other hand some African writers depict the outcome of globalization or adjustment as resulting in "planlessness" (Ajayi et al., 1996).

Finally, other writers have defined globalization in terms of economic, political and cultural terms (Waters, 1995). In terms of the historical space called the “Third World,” these different facets of globalization actually represent the processes and outcomes that globalization manifests. It also underlines the multiplicity of its actors and agents, all giving messages that are often conflicting and contradicting (Urry, 1998). Globalization provides a context for the potential lack of autonomy and control of local policy actors.

GLOBALIZATION VERSUS INTERNATIONALISM

Jones (1996) has aptly distinguished globalism from internationalism. His theoretical basis for this distinction is important for this study as it explains the smooth transition of the discourse from development to that of globalization. Jones argues that the advent of globalization is a phenomenon of a post-hegemonic era in which the international framework as understood is being overshadowed. He views internationalism as being concerned with democratic institutions both at national and international levels. On the other hand, globalization is viewed as an economic dynamic that aims at weakening the very foundations of the international framework. He has also argued that this phenomenon has implications for the “aid” relationship since it has tended to weaken some international organizations while strengthening others. Other scholars have noted how the powerful lending organizations have virtually taken over other United Nations organizations’ roles for scientific and technical assistance, (King & Buchert; 1999 King & Buchert, 1999; Samoff, 1994).

Jones (1999) further argues that in this process, certain ideologies are becoming hegemonic at the expense of both international protocols established in post 1945 period, and national autonomies and sovereignty. Both Jones (1996) and King (1999) also draw our attention to policy and discourse contradictions taken by different aid agencies depending on their sources of funding. This dichotomy is important in understanding whether or not national policy actors are able to discern the differences in the global aid discourse, their inherent assumptions and their influence on the values propagated in their own national educational policy.

THE POLICY CRITIQUE FRAMEWORK

The need for development resources and the emergence of “development aid” as a tool for “catching up” with the West have entrenched economic and intellectual dependency, neo-colonialism and patrimonialism underpinned by institutional and normative patriarchal power in the ruling and educated elite of most developing nations. The need for resources by the elite has blurred the realities and contradictions in the “aid” concept and its discursive practices. Consequently, policy and the policy process exist in an environment of increased external control and power of technical, scientific and policy advisers while eroding the power and control of internal policy actors. The need for international legitimacy and resources by the developing nations local elite and the domination of their nations’ policy framework by international lending institutions’ market ideology distracts the policy elite from clearly defining contextually bound achievable goals. The continued dominance of the policy process by the state bureaucrats also entrenches inequality since the state elite aims at ensuring their own reproduction. The lack of clearly defined goals and the focus on what is acceptable to the IFIs also overshadows the need for sustainable social and economic transformation that would ensure poverty reduction, food security and close the gap between the elite and the rest of the developing countries’ population. The policy process is therefore underpinned by all these realities as manifest through the contradictions and irrationalities of both the national and international environment.

In chapters 6-9, this framework is used to first describe (chapters 6 and 7) and then interrogate the University of Malawi university reform with special emphasis on the financial reforms involving the introduction of user fees. Recommendations based on the analysis are contained in chapter 10.

Chapter 5

RESEARCH ORIENTATION AND DESIGN

This research undertook to examine a policy development and implementation process, through a critical interpretive policy analysis. Choice of the qualitative method of inquiry allowed the study to go beyond the traditional deductive scientific method to embrace the multiple realities that occur in the policy world. These two approaches are “employed as interpretive resources” in an exercise which studies educational reform as social research (Ball, 1994, p. 2).

RESEARCH ORIENTATION

Broadly guiding the study is a critical policy analysis framework by Ball (1990) which outlines what he theoretically and conceptually describes as both eclectic and pragmatic approaches (1990, p. 2). His framework affords alternative interpretations and analyses of what he has called “the process” and “the case.” This is premised on the centrality of power and control in the nature and concept of policy that Ball draws our attention to in the phrase that “policy is the authoritative allocation of values” (Prunty, 1985, p. 136).

I broadly examined the University of Malawi policy process and then focused on an intense analysis of the financial reforms as a critical aspect of the UNIMA reform process. First, through discussions with key policy actors, I interrogated the realities of the policy process in the current, “adjustment,” “post-development”, pluralistic yet patrimonial “democracy” and resource- scarce context in terms of its broad goals and the realizability of the goals that were projected. Second, drawing from the discussions with these key policy actors, other stakeholders, and documents, I critically analyzed the process that led to the 2000 University of Malawi financial policy in order to understand how it was negotiated to accommodate conflicting goals of “adjustment” against national goals and interests. Finally, through a further critique of the different policy actors I exposed the underlying power relations that influence this particular policy and policy process.

REVIEW OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to delineate the parameters of the study and analysis, the developing countries' policy practice and contexts, that included both the local and the global, was the main guiding criteria for choice of research questions. The key and supporting questions reflected this criteria. The key question was, "to what extent did the policy development process and practice in Malawi, a small debt ridden, landlocked country incorporate and cater for local interests, values and realities, given the homogeneity of global policy across developing countries?"

The specific questions were

1. What was the policy development practices in the University of Malawi reform?
2. What was the extent of stakeholder involvement in the process?
3. To what extent did the policy development practices enhance or hinder the implementation process?
4. To what extent did policy choices and strategies relate to local contextual realities in terms of relevance and appropriateness?
5. To what extent did globalization, patrimonialism, patriarchy and hegemony impact and influence policy development and implementation processes?

The study presupposed that the policy process is both rational and irrational. The acceptance of policy as a rational process is based on the assumption that when policy is carried out within a framework of reduced resources provision it requires rationality, careful examination of all possible alternatives, comprehensive consultations with all concerned and all those affected by it. Pal (2001) argues that it is questionable whether a top-down, technical and rational approach would suffice in a situation where the state has limited direct resources to pump into the system as a consequence of restructuring and down sizing called by globalization. As such, Pal proposes "policy power" as opposed to "money power." The argument here is that there is even more reason to make policies that are more enunciated and well thought out because implementation success will depend on the policy themselves rather than provision of resources.

The theoretical and conceptual framework combined post-colonial theories of the state to explain the political culture of patrimony combined with neo-colonial relations of intellectual dependency and economic dependency, and adopted a feminist critique of post-colonial development. The intersection between the local economic, political and cultural interests and realities, and the international interests of debt collection and its conditions of good governance create a surface of hegemony at the macro level of policy process which needed to be explored.

CRITICAL POLICY ANALYSIS

The study adopted an inductive analytical strategy because it afforded me the opportunity to account for both rational and irrational aspects of policy and policy process through the multiple actors, ideologies and power domination/resistance that are inherent in the policy process and its ensuing talk and text. Additionally, the purpose of the research was to critically review a policy that was already implemented and a policy cycle that was already initiated and advanced. Therefore, the study was also an exercise in what Dyer (1999) has called “a black box of implementation” that is not a tool for implementation but rather a framework for informing future policy process and for getting alternative views. The approach in the study encompasses “knowledge of the policy process,” “knowledge in the policy process” and “learning for future policy” (Dyer 1999, Lasswell, 1970, p. 3). At the same time Pal (1997) defines the rational side of policy analysis as the disciplined application of intellect to public problems.

Howlett and Ramesh (1995) also distinguish between deductive and inductive approaches to public policy. Inductive approaches use a bottom-up analytic strategy. They depend on the accumulation of multiple empirical studies of any phenomenon for raw data from which they attempt to extract generalizable propositions. Wildavsky (1979) further asserts that policy analysis is not exclusively a matter of “cogitation” but of “interaction” as well as of letting problems get solved through experiment, bargaining and exchange rather than exclusively through planning. Elmore (1980) and Dyer (1999) further highlight the importance of implementation analysis as a tool for learning the successes

or failure of policy and the policy process. It was the importance of interaction that focussed this study on the implementation process where local stakeholders, policy planners, politicians and educational administrators had the opportunity to interact within the constraints of the intended policy.

One aspect of critical policy analysis is critical discourse analysis. It is used to understand the relationship between policy content and context, and to interrogate the power relations that underpin the socio-economic institutions and politico-cultural values reflected in the policy. Dijk (1998) has defined critical discourse analysis as “a type of analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social political context” (p. 1). Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) have defined discursive practices as a set of tacit rules that regulate what can and cannot be said, who can speak with blessings of authority and who must listen, whose social constructions are valid and whose are erroneous and unimportant (p. 284). In developing countries’ policy process the discourse of the international financiers intermingles with that of the technical/economic part of the state machinery and shuts out important local stakeholders of policy. The study aimed to discover how discourse influenced and underpinned the ensuing policy and policy process. In so doing the study was also an exercise in reflecting “on the role of scholars in society and the polity” which Dijk (1998) has argued is an inherent part of discourse and critical analysis.

Foucault (1981) has described how the ability of discourse to transmit power conversely provides a means of exposing it. He argues that “discourse transmits and produces power, it reinforces it but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it” (Foucault, 1981, p. 101; cited in Ball 1994, p. 2). Therefore, discourse analysis is a strong instrument for exposing power structures and relations. It is for these reasons that discourse analysis was adopted as a methodological approach that would inform data collection, analysis and synthesis.

The ability to expose power and render it fragile stems from the ability of human subjects as active agents “in the construction of their social world and personal lives.” (Comstock, 1980, p. 1) Comstock further argues that such a research approach increases the awareness of social actors of the contradictory conditions of actions which are distorted and hidden by everyday understanding. In the globalized world, discourse and language is differentiated between those having ranked societal positions, and therefore different levels of ability to manage language and discourse (Apple, 1996). In the version of globalization as applied to developing countries the language and discourse of both development and underdevelopment is defined by specific classes of international and national policy actors. The language in the discursive practices reflect certain values and assumptions as well as who is powerful in the policy network.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The design was influenced by the chosen topic, research orientation and ethical and practical considerations. As a result the selection of participants, the data collection methods, the data analysis and organization reflected the research orientations.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The selection of participants reflected the assumption that the policy process was both rational and political in nature. Also that it was in the translation rather than the construction that policy allowed meaningful interaction through its enactment. The selection of participants included those who had designed the initial policy text and those who had become active participants in the ensuing power struggles that emerged after the implementation of the high stakes of the financing policy.

The approach in selecting participants for the study was purposive. Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight, and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned based on special experience and competence (Chein, 1981, p. 440 cited in Merriam 1998, p. 44).

Hough (1984) has further posited that the realities of policy research should take into account formal and non-formal actors in order to address that “irrational” part of policy that is conflict laden. In line with this aim, the identification and selection of participants included key formal policy actors as well as non-formal actors such as representatives of students, alumni, and the civil society. Some of the key formal and non-formal actors were identified through newspaper and other media reports on the public debate that followed the attempted implementation process. The policy actors were broadly grouped according to their positions in the policy network, that is, state actors, university actors, local stakeholders and international stakeholders. Table 1 represents the sample and their categories. In order to maintain anonymity, the categories are deliberately broad.

Table 1 PROFILE OF SAMPLE OF KEY INTERVIEWEES

	Male	Female	Total
State Technocrats Bureaucrats Pseudo-politicians	2	1	3
University Governors Top Central & College Admin.	4	-	4
Stakeholders Faculty, Students	3	1	4
International IFI specialist	1	-	1
Total			12

DATA COLLECTION

As Glesne and Peshkin (1992) contend, qualitative researchers depend on a variety of methods for gathering data. They further argue that the use of multiple data collection methods called triangulation may include multiple data sources and investigators. Triangulation contributes to the trustworthiness of the data. Various methods of data collection were adopted. These were personal interviews, and document and text collection. Both primary and secondary document sources were collected and used. Since the subject of the study was current there were also many opportunities for informal discussions with extended family members, parents and current students, friends, colleagues and members of the public that I met through my visits to libraries and other public buildings in search of documents. I used a journal to document any discussions that influenced my reflexivity and interpretations.

Interviews

Contact with potential interviewees was made by telephone. In several cases contact was made through the interviewees who identified other policy participants. Patton (1990) argues that qualitative interviews begin with the assumption that the perspectives of others are meaningful and can be made explicit. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) believe that by gathering descriptive data in the “words of the participants” the interview provides the researcher with tools to develop insight into how the subjects interpret reality. In-depth and open-ended interviews with twelve selected participants were conducted in Malawi. Each interview was supposed to be one hour long although some interviews went longer than the designated one hour. Eleven of these interviews with key participants were audio taped and one was handwritten. As well as the twelve key interviews there were six other interviews, which were shorter and handwritten. Of the six one was a telephone interview.

The in-depth interviews focused on the policy actors’ own experiences, influences, perceptions and interpretations of assumptions and values informing higher education

policy and also their experiences in negotiating authority, influence, autonomy and consensus to produce policy. Two of the key participants were interviewed twice. The first of the interviews focused on their fact finding about the nature of the study.

Since this study was both a critical policy analysis and a review of an implemented policy, a backward mapping process was adopted in the data collection process.

Backward mapping is a policy analysis approach that starts from the bottom-up instead of the top/down. This approach allowed me the advantages of gathering and understanding the context of the policy from those on the ground before moving into the elite interviews with key policy and decision-makers. I started interviews at the bottom of the policy process with recipients and college administrators and faculty. This proved to be invaluable because I was able to gather concerns, perceptions and views of the lower level implementers and policy recipients before interviewing the decision-makers. It also informed me on the contentious issues surrounding the policy and its process and enabled me to focus on key controversies emanating from the top/down decisions. The elite interviews allowed me to concentrate on key issues and concerns that had emerged from my preliminary interviews with so called street level implementers and policy recipients. This enhanced the study since its very aim was to find out why and how these top policy makers make the decisions that they do.

Elite interviews and confidentiality

The focus of the study lent itself to interviewing several individuals in important national and exposed positions. In a small country like Malawi the elite are very visible and as a result there was need to take extra care in maintaining confidentiality and anonymity in contacting, arranging and conducting actual interviews. Although I had anticipated having problems of getting access to some of the key elite, through the use of gatekeepers and also through the highly political process that had taken place during the policy implementation I got access to many key actors. The problem with the elite was their busy schedules, which required long periods of waiting between contact and being

granted an interview. Additionally, elite interviews were characterized by many interruptions including cell phone sounds, and these interviews took longer.

Informal interviews

Many conversations with stakeholders such as parents, old and more recent alumni, current students, faculty and other commentators helped to add divergent perspectives to the study. I used these informal interviews to check on my own perceptions, to cross check information and to obtain a range of views. These informal interviews were not audio taped but whenever possible I would write down what I perceived to be important in a journal including my own insights.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis incorporated analyses of documents, policy text and the spoken words gathered during the interviews. The analyses were guided by concepts on policy process and context as provided by the literature review and the conceptual framework. The first stage involved the policy development analysis using the policy cycle development model. Through description and explanation of relevant data from policy documents and other supporting texts and accounts of the participants, a historical descriptive analysis of the policy process was reconstructed. Then a critical analysis of the implementation process covering the adopted policy approach and content in relation to the context was carried out using the clusters of assumptions, values and justifications of the different actors as reflected in the collected data. A critical analysis of the different actors, their positioning and how these were reflected in the policy decisions was also conducted to understand the power relations and ultimately policy ownership. Denzin (1989) argues that through “thick descriptions” the voices, actions and meanings of interacting individuals are heard (p. 83). The analysis was guided by the constructs outlined in the conceptual framework: hegemony, globalization, neocolonialism, patrimonialism and power in order to connect individuals, events and actions/or decisions to the public policy under discussion.

Analysis of Interview Data

The interviews were spaced in such a way that I had the opportunity to listen to and review the interview tape before doing the next interview. Such an approach allowed self-reflexivity and also insight into a growing sense of the story that I was building so that I could be better prepared for my next interview. This was valuable since I had been out of the country when the policy was implemented and did not have the feel of the political process on the ground. After listening to the tape I had it transcribed by a professional stenographer. This person signed a confidentiality form and returned all tapes, diskettes and materials to me. After each transcription I would read through the transcript again and make notes on the side about whatever insight I had. Apart from the tapes I also had diskettes of each transcription and this proved invaluable when my computer crashed and data was lost.

I divided the interview transcripts into those from university, state (which involved technocrats and bureaucrats) and international actors. However, there were further divisions within these categories. There was an overlap of roles by different key actors making the categorization sometimes multifaceted. For the university there were governing council members, top university managers, faculty and students. Within the state there were politicians, technocrats and educational administrators. Some of the roles included being politicians, academics, and/or technocrats. Differing stances between different roles came out in some of the interviews.

Using the four categories that I had developed surrounding the focus of the study and the questions, the data were grouped into policy development issues, implementation issues, policy choices and strategies, power relations and ownership issues. I reviewed the individual transcripts using these broad categories and labels. Using word processing, I created files of each broad theme and cut and paste identified data to the different thematic files. Each of the unit data copied from a transcript had an identification mark to guide me on who had made the statement.

Document and Related Text Analysis

Some of the background text and policy document analysis took place concurrently with the interviews and this was helpful in the construction of the story. In the analysis of the policy documents I paid special attention to the discourse and discursive elements. Many of the national policy documents provided background information regarding the rationale, important policy events, participants' involvement, participants' positioning, academic or professional background and other information. I also searched the Internet for archives of Malawi discussion lists for comments and other insights regarding the issue as it happened in 2000.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Qualitative research has generated intense controversy and has been criticized for its lack of precision in analysis and also its ambiguity regarding tools used to verify validity and reliability (Lecompte & Goetz 1982; Miles and Huberman, 1984). Validity and reliability deals with those procedures and strategies that a researcher uses to verify information and therefore establish accuracy. Several strategies have been suggested to address the issues of validity and reliability. Lincoln and Guba (1999) suggest three strategies to ensure minimum validity and reliability, namely triangulation, reflexivity and counter checks or verifications.

Data triangulation is the adoption of multiple data collection methods, data sources, analytical strategies and theories. The combination of multiple interviewees, document and text analysis, in-depth and open-ended interviews, as well as journal keeping of any informal discussions were all aimed at ensuring validity of facts and verification of events. Verifying facts from different interviewees also provided better insights into the story and clarified many contradictions.

The nature of the topic was such that it had potential problems of reliability because it examined values and power within national/international policy frameworks; therefore, reliability could be compromised through participants' unwillingness to be candid about institutional realities. To address reliability, the ethical issues of confidentiality and complete anonymity were emphasized. The letter of introduction clearly identified myself as a researcher but also indicated that I had gone through the University of Alberta's ethics review. All participants were satisfied with this letter of introduction, which also stressed the points of confidentiality and anonymity by any research assistants who would handle the data at any point and myself.

Ultimately though, the issues of validity, reliability and even credibility will be realized through the usefulness of the study in the understanding to policy processes and practice of the informants as policy actors, other members of the policy community, policy researchers and decision-makers.

ETHICAL PROCEDURES AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Patton (1990) and Lincoln and Guba (1999) argue that validity and reliability are directly linked with the researcher and how trustworthy she is. Trustworthiness is partly addressed through what Lincoln and Guba (1999) have called reflexivity. As a researcher I have to declare any personal or professional biases that may prejudice data collection, analysis and interpretation. The section on limitations in chapter one addressed my own potential biases and prejudices, which I needed to be aware of during my field process. Moreover, my keeping a record of personal feelings and experiences in a journal was yet another method aimed at minimizing the introduction of biases into the data and affording reflexivity on my part. This conscious awareness was continued throughout the process as I moved between analyses and writing.

Since some of the interviews involved individuals who were constrained by career and survival considerations it was imperative that anonymity and confidentiality be maintained. My trustworthiness in ensuring anonymity was essential because it touched

on following ethical procedures. This required vigilance on my part in the different processes that included all interviewees. Particular care was taken in ensuring that other than in public statements, as public figures, all respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity in all the phases of the research and informed of their right to withdraw at any time. During interview sessions, the informants were asked for their permission to have the conversations recorded. The ethics review approval from the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta was signed before commencing the study.

Peer Review

Furthermore, a peer review approach was adopted. Throughout the data analysis and writing process my supervisor checked and reviewed the text for any lack of anonymity. She was able to point out those instances where anonymity was not achieved and a different approach to identification was put in place. Other knowledgeable faculty in educational policy or globalization research reviewed preliminary analyses at the University of Alberta in Canada. This was also aimed at cross checking any bias and discrepancies in the analytical explanations.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ABOUT THE DESIGN AND ORIENTATION

Through qualitative research the study endeavoured to understand the multiple realities that occur in the policy world through special experiences and competence of individuals. Similarly, as a researcher part of the realities that I encountered had a bearing on the research methodology and design especially through better understanding of ethical issues such as confidentiality and in certain circumstances challenging my own assumptions about the participants. My personal reflections cover confidentiality, women interviewees and ethical issues.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I was careful not to divulge the purpose of my visit to personal assistants of individual participants. Ironically, I noticed that when I arrived for the interviews, the individuals themselves would have informed them of my purpose, especially since I had to sit for hours waiting for the different elite to be ready to be interviewed.

WOMEN INTERVIEWEES

Additionally, efforts were made to identify a representative of the National Council for Women's Affairs, which is the gender and development arm of the state bureaucracy responsible for women's issues in Malawi. While I had assumed that this would be an easy part of the process, I discovered that women were reluctant to be interviewed. Those with political influence were more fearful than their male counterparts and were reluctant to be recorded.

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

While I had gone back to Malawi with the assumption that the implementation of financial reforms was based on a university sponsored policy review and document, I subsequently realised that the 2000 finance reform was a result of the 1999 IMF/World Bank instituted Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers interim report. This cast my analysis wider, for it meant that there were more policy documents apart from the university policy review and the Ministry of Education policy document. Most of the policy initiatives had taken place within the same period of time. I needed to resolve how to present these documents and their inter-relatedness.

ETHICAL ISSUES

Initially I had envisaged potential ethical problems because the study focus was interrogating values and questioning decisions, which had been made by many of the

actors. I had anticipated unwillingness to divulge institutional realities. As a result I had been prepared to get the University's legal counsel to prepare another letter of introduction as an emphasis of confidentiality. However, the letter of introduction from the University of Alberta, stipulating that I had gone through an ethics review panel seemed to have assured many of them with regard to confidentiality. Above all, many of the interviewees were highly educated individuals and were very sympathetic to me as a graduate student.

Chapter 6

THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS: HISTORICAL AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

This chapter provides a description of the origins, development, content and context of University of Malawi policy reform process from 1994 to 2002, in the period after Malawi changed from autocratic rule to plural democracy. The chapter is divided into sections that have emerged from an analysis of key policy documents, responses from interviews and other related texts. The sections have been grouped around four broad topics namely, background, origin and identification of the policy agenda, contextual analysis of key policy documents, the description of policy choices and strategies, and the policy involvement and identification of actors. Although I had originally intended to follow the development and implementation of the University of Malawi (2000) financial reforms, specifically the cost sharing strategy, data analysis revealed a symbiotic relationship between the financial policy and the rest of the university's academic, administrative and restructuring reforms. The emerging data clearly demonstrated that the cost sharing strategy and the university reform fed into each other. Therefore, the cost sharing strategy has been treated as a critical variable on which wider financial, academic and governance reforms of the University of Malawi (UNIMA) reform process depended.

The analysis shows that the need for the UNIMA reforms was identified as early as the mid-1980s as a response to macro-economic pressures stemming from international intellectual and economic changes. The transition from one party political system to a pluralist system in 1994 provided the momentum that was seized by multilateral and International Finance Institutions to push forward far extensive neo-liberal educational reforms in the national education system in Malawi. This coincided with the new regime's populist moves to adopt the multilaterally-approved basic primary education and the World Bank's "poverty alleviation" as the core for its education and social development policy, respectively. In line with the global agenda, university problems were defined in technical and managerial terms resulting in proposed solutions that

reflected the same neo-liberal strategies such as de-subsidization, privatization, decentralization, restructuring and adoption of business management approach. Finally, in terms of actor participation the study demonstrates that all policy development initiatives took a rational, technical and top-down approach with minimum stakeholder participation which involved only elite participants such as select academic experts, traditional chiefs and representatives of civil society.

THE ORIGINS AND RATIONALE FOR POLICY CHANGE

The period after the introduction of plural politics in Malawi was characterized by a lot of policy initiatives to define and plan future social and economic development. The most important policy initiatives for this study were categorized into two parts: the nationally-generated policy documents, and internal university specific policy documents. The external or national documents addressed broader social issues concerning the University of Malawi (UNIMA) and university education in general, while the internal documents dealt with university specific public policy issues. This categorization is not in itself precise but gives a general guideline for easier analysis.

ANALYSIS OF KEY POLICY DOCUMENTS

The nationally generated policy documents were the Malawi Vision 2020 document (1995-1998) and the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP, 1999-2002). Documents specific to university reform included the education sector based document called the Education Policy and Investment Framework (PIF, 1997-2002), the University specific Malawi Institute of Management (MIM, 1995-1997) University Reform Study and the influential and authoritative 2000 national budget statement and other subsequent statements.

Apart from the University's MIM report, the other documents were instituted, supported or were a requirement of IFIs and international development agencies. The Malawi Vision 2020 was funded and supported by the UNDP and the World Bank, while the

Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP) is an IMF requirement for all countries under IMF/World Bank economic and debt management programs (UNDP, 2002; Wood, 2000; World Bank, 2003). The Education Policy and Investment Framework (PIF), which was a Ministry of Education document covering the education sector policy, is a required sector policy process under the new policy development arrangements with the multilateral donors.

The overlapping dates of these documents (Table 2) indicate the many policy processes taking place within this specific period. The overlap is also significant for it underlines the general policy change that the country underwent after the political change. Prior to this period, national policy was undertaken under what were called the ten-year development policy strategies or the DEVPOL. In fact, there was a ten year development strategy for education (1995-2005) that was the basis for the policy review undertaken by the Education Policy and Investment Framework, in line with the new sector based policy requirements of the new funding arrangements with IFIs, (Malawi Government, PAP, 2000; Malawi Government, PIF, 2002).

In terms of focus, these documents could be characterized as covering both University of Malawi specific and broader national social policy issues. All of the documents touched on the specific issues of governance, administration and academic issues as well as national social issues of equity, access and quality. The MIM report was the only document that focussed on university specific policy issues. Since the reform was addressing broader social and more specific public policy issues, the result was a complex and fragmented policy process taking place through different policy teams but within an overlapping period and involving overlapping actors.

The Malawi Vision 20/20 Document (1995-1998)

The Vision 20/20 was initiated and funded by the UNDP/World Bank in 1995 as “one of its African futures project.” (UNDP, 2002) Its aim was to develop a vision or a national development strategy for Malawi through a sector based model. In its original concept the

authors described it as “an expression of the long term interests of (Malawi) its people” (1998, p. 3). The Vision 2020 process was coordinated by the Malawi National Economic Council which also commissioned the Millennium Institute in Washington, DC (UNDP, 2000). The process involved collecting and collating information of citizens about their aspirations and hopes in economic, social, political, environmental, cultural and technological realms. The Millennium Institute’s job was to develop strategic models based on their computer program analysis.

The Vision 20/20 process took a participatory approach involving the National Economic Council’s Chief Economist and other Malawi government economists, government planners and academics from all fields (Malawi Government, 1998). They held meetings with different stakeholders including chiefs and the general public.

At its first workshop the following statement was formulated as a guiding principle:

By the year 2020 Malawi will be a united, secure, ecologically balanced, democratically mature, self-reliant with equal opportunities for and active participation by all, having social services and vibrant cultural values and technologically-driven middle income country serving as a model for Africa. (Malawi Government, 1998, p. 1)

The Vision 2020 was the national development strategy for Malawi, which was modeled on United Nations Development Program’s futures project, defined the vision for higher education in Malawi in the following words,

The challenge to improving education is improving access, quality and equity in primary, secondary and tertiary education; increasing uptake of science and commercial subjects; increasing skilled people in technical and vocational education and training; improving special education; improving access to and the quality of tertiary education; improving performance of support institutions in the education system; and developing effective and efficient management in the education system. (Malawi Government, 1998, p.102.)

The Vision 2020 document was important because it was a national strategic plan supposedly reflecting values and aspirations of Malawians. It became the foundational basis of many other government policy documents.

Table 2 POLICY INITIATIVES IMPACTING UNIVERSITY REFORM

Policy document	Objective	Coordinating Agency	Period
Vision 20/20	Long term strategic planning	Intergovernmental through national core team coordinated by the National Economic Council	1995-1998
PIF Education Policy and Investment Framework	Education sector policy	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology	1997-2002
Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP)	Macro-economic/social framework	Ministry of Finance – Economic Planning and Development Division(EP&D)	1999-2002
2000 budget statement	National Resource allocation	Ministry of Finance	2000 and subsequent
University of Malawi Reform study – (MIM)	University Audit and reform paper	University of Malawi Council	1995-1997

The Education Policy and Investment Framework document (PIF) 1997 – 2002

The Malawi Education Policy and Investment Framework is a document necessitated by the political changes and as well as the ensuing economic and educational policy changes in Malawi after 1994. It arose out of the need to review the 1995-2005 education strategy, which was produced in the tradition of the 10-year development strategies of the previous

political regime. In my view, it provided an opportunity, seized by international players, to influence economic and social development changes in the name of globalization, which included the liberalization of the economy and social services delivery (Nthenda, PIF, 2000; Safuli, PIF, undated).

In his introductory remarks the Permanent Secretary for Education, confirms the justification for new social policy changes by stating that,

Following the political changes which also brought a lot of other related economic changes the government decided to articulate its Policy Investment Framework (PIF) as its blue print for its primary, secondary and university education. (Malawi Government, PIF, 2000, p. vi)

The PIF is a twelve-year strategy guided by the over arching national social policy of poverty alleviation or “Kuthetsa umphawi” which in turn is guided by the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Poverty alleviation was the catch phrase adopted by the in-coming United Democratic Party government, which replaced Banda’s Malawi Congress party’s “fight against poverty, ignorance and disease” or in vernacular, “Kuthetsa umphawi, umbuli ndi matenda.” Notably, poverty alleviation was also the new thrust of the international lending and development agencies such as the World Bank and the United Nations. The PIF was to be guided by four principles:

- a) As a comprehensive analysis of the education sector in Malawi it was going to be future-oriented and strategic in focus. This is summarized in the statement that

Although significant policy changes have been made in the past decade, they were in most cases partial and aimed at redressing problems inherited from the past and rarely sought to address the educational challenges of the future. (PIF, 2000, p. vii)

In this regard the PIF would guide the development of the education sector as Malawi entered the new millennium.

- b) The PIF was also a response to the Vision 2020’s national educational goals and Government of Malawi’s poverty alleviation policy.

- c) The PIF authors identified the five main challenges and constraints facing the education system in Malawi that needed to be addressed. The listed challenges included the following: access, quality, relevance, governance and administration, and finance.
- d) Finally the PIF mentions the pre-eminence of and the need to pay special attention to the newly introduced Free Primary Education in line with multilateral conventions such as,

Article 28 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, which guarantees the right of the child to a basic education of minimum quality, and to which Malawi is a signatory, as well as the constitution of Malawi which enshrines this right thereby giving it the power of law. (Malawi Government, PIF, p, vii)

This statement is significant as it underlines the new government's focus on basic education and sidesteps the planning focus of both secondary and tertiary education in Malawi. Both the MIM report and individual respondents confirm this lack of attention to the university policy.

There are several versions of the document each signed by a different controlling officer. For example, the 1997 PIF draft's preamble was signed by a different Permanent Secretary from the 2000 preamble (PIF 1997; PIF, 2000). This simply signifies the lack of stability in most of the top civil service functional roles as will be established later on in the study. During the same time, the Ministry of Education was also amending its National Education Act, which was still unavailable in 2002 during the time of the study.

The Malawi Institute of Management (MIM) Report on University of Malawi Reform, 1997

Following Malawi's adoption of free primary education in 1994 after the United Democratic Front became the ruling party in government, it became clear that the university's problems would be exacerbated by the state's preoccupation with basic education. The Vice Chancellor of the university of Malawi highlighted the plight and

marginalization of the university in both funding and policy direction (Chimphamba, 1997). This was also confirmed by many of the respondents who felt that the declaration of free primary education in Malawi meant that the limited resources afforded the university were further cut. In mid-1995 the University of Malawi Council approved the commissioning of consultants from another institution called the Malawi Institute of Management (MIM), to carry out a complete study of the university. UNIMA commissioned MIM because, in the words of a respondent

The university realized that certain things needed to have been done to assist the university in charting its way forward in terms of setting priorities of academic and administrative functions and how they can be performed efficiently and effectively.

The MIM experts visited constituent colleges of the University of Malawi and examined the university in relation to governance and administration, issues of academics and finance. Their report, which came out in 1997, became the basis upon which current internal university/national reform has taken place because it was comprehensive in its identification of problems, issues and possible solutions.

Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP) 2002

Currently, World Bank and International Monetary Fund lending programs for developing countries are based on a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) upon which all donor lending and debt management programs are based. This document is the main economic and financing strategic document in debt-ridden countries and the basis upon which the countries involved are allocated funds (IMF, 1999). In addition it spells out how countries on debt management programs are going to manage those funds in line with the principles that the countries involved and their lending and financing agencies have agreed upon. In their own literature on PRSP, the IMF states that it describes the country's macroeconomic, structural and social policies and programs over a three year or longer horizon as being to promote broad based growth and reduce poverty as well as reduce associated external financing needs and major sources of financing. It is a strategy that is based on the so-called poverty reduction or pro-poor policies and is supposed to strengthen the IMF/World Bank collaboration (International Monetary Fund,

1999; Gupta, S., Dicks-Mireaux, L., Khemani, R., McDonald, C. & Verhoeven, M., 2000).

According to the World Development Movement (2000), the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers replaced the International Monetary Fund's Structural Adjustment Programs. The PRSPs are supposed to be owned by the developing countries themselves. However, they have to be endorsed by the World Bank and IMF boards (IMF, 2002). Many critics of Structural Adjustment programs such as WDM claim that PRSPs are turning out to be like the structural adjustment programs (WDM, 2000). The programs are criticized for lack of attention to contextual differences amongst developing countries; and that they have increased rather than reduced IMF and World Bank influence in policies.

Poverty reduction strategy papers are prepared by the member countries through a participatory process involving domestic stakeholders as well as external development partners, including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2001, p.1). The PRSP is updated every three years with annual progress reports. Malawi's PRSP was finally launched in April 2002. With regard to higher education, the MPRSP states that the main focus of the MPRS will be

Improving efficiency and quality of education measured by increased access of females, males and disadvantaged students in higher education, reduced unit costs, production of highly qualified graduates and less dependency on subvention through cost recovery and decentralization. The sector will also focus on increasing motivation of teaching and research staff. (Malawi Government, MPRSP, 2002, pp. 54-55)

The Malawi PRSP document had been in the preparation process for a number of years with on-going consultations to ensure the "participatory" approach stipulated in the earlier IMF statement. The 2000 national budget statement was prepared within the spirit of the MPRSP.

The 2000 National Budget Statement

Although the MIM report came out in 1997 and had been widely circulated amongst the elite policy making circles, the year 2000 became a watershed for university education reform. Until the year 2000, the MIM recommendations concerning reforms in university financing had been side tracked because they never generated the required economic and political support from the state actors (University Council, 2002). The budget statement's position as policy implementation tool for the MPRSP made it a very powerful document in relation to all other sector documents such as the PIF. In 2000 the MPSRP process only had an interim MPRSP document, however, this interim document and its strategies were fundamental and catalytic to the implementation of the university financial reforms.

Most respondents felt that by the year 2000, funding and financing had become a critical issue not only as a national social equity issue but for university revival and survival as well. According to one respondent, by the year 2000 it was impossible to keep postponing macroeconomic reform. In the interview, he commented that

It was critical well before this point [2000]. Because you are looking at an economy that is run at very high interest rates, very high inflation and an unstable currency. In order to bridge the gap, government was doing a lot of business in financing in terms of things like universities and other institutions that had not been dealt with. Therefore the only way to close that gap is either shutting down those operations, or asking those people who will want to benefit from those operations to chip in and contribute something. So it was an imperative and not a choice variable by the time we reached the year 2000.

The 2000 budget statement was therefore the first attempt by the Malawi government to put into effect these new strategies. For the Malawi government, 2000 was a critical moment for economic and financial planning and strategies. The cost sharing strategy, which was an attempt to introduce meaningful user fees, however can be traced back to other key policy documents such as the MIM report, and to the different drafts of both the PIF and the MPRSP which were key national policy documents.

IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI PROBLEMS

This descriptive analysis of the university problems is based on the MIM report, other policy documents such as the PIF and the MPRSP, and on participants' comments. The problems are grouped into two broad categories: macro-level social policy problems surrounding university education in Malawi and micro-level university policy problems (see Table 3). The national problems cover issues of access, equity, quality and relevance of university education in general and University of Malawi specifically. Micro-level organizational problems included financial, governance and management, declining academic standards and university relational problems. Because the problems are intricately linked, in certain instances it is impossible to analyze the social problems without touching on university-specific policy. As a result, the categorization is a guidance rather than grouping of problems.

The conclusions show that the problems were identified as financial, governance and administration, academic and relational. The financial problems include over dependency on public resources, lack of alternative sources of funding such as tuition fees, university's own cultural and structural problems which encourage financial inefficiency and lack of accountability. Apart from these problems, there is also the problem of lack of political will to articulate a meaningful funding policy at the state level. The governance and administrative problems are identified as continuing political interference, which undermines academic excellence and institutional autonomy. Problems emanating from the university itself included the culture of semi-bureaucracy which had led to entrenched paternalism and had resulted in the university's slow response to changed democracy and increased student political awareness and activism. Academic problems were intricately connected to both financial and governance problems that resulted in declining academic standards, brain drain and curriculum relevance. Finally, the university's lack of meaningful relations with society in general was also perceived to be a problem since it led to the university's failure to get support for its activities and to make useful contribution to society.

Table 3 POLICY PROBLEMS AFFECTING THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

Financial	Governance and Admin.	Academic
a) National	National	National
Debt, limited resources, currency devaluation, deficits	Political interference Emerging plural democracy	Limited access Declining quality
b) Organizational	Organizational	Organizational
Over dependency on state subsidy Cash budget system Debt Under-funding Under-collection of fees Lack of accountability	Faculty and Student activism Federalism and over- centralization Lack of planning and prioritization Rigid structure Inefficient and lack of flexible rules and culture	Increasing intake against declining resources Academic staff turnover Lack of teaching/learning resources Decaying physical assets Declining commitment and morale
c) External relations	c) External relations	c) External relations
Poor university/society relations	Poor university/alumni/ industry/ Business relations	Poor university/society relations

FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

Policy documents and respondents pointed out that the main cause of financial problems was the university's history of over-dependency on public resources. This meant that the university was vulnerable to any financial difficulties that the nation experienced or any change of economic policy. By 1995, government subsidy to the university made up 93 per cent of university's recurrent budget (MIM, 1997, pp. 2-7). Apart from international donors who started cutting back and targeting aid to specific selected areas from the eighties, there was no private sector involvement, no meaningful tuition fees charging or fund-raising activities initiated by the university.

Consequently as the national government faced its own economic difficulties the university suffered the consequences. Respondents including the university and college administrators acknowledged that the evolution and development of the university had resulted in a culture of dependency that was a constraint on any future development. One respondent argued that

These institutions have evolved in such a way that they are so used to being social service providers. [They have] the same disease that the students have, that is, they believe everything has to be done for them or the government has to do everything for them. It is therefore difficult for current administrators to change the university because they have worked within this dependent culture for a long time.

Most of the figures confirm that over the years the university has been one of the institutions that received a big percentage of public money (PIF, 2000). However, as the real value of money decreases, and as the university increases its intake, the subvention becomes inadequate.

Speeches made by vice-chancellors indicate that the University of Malawi started to experience financial problems as far back as the mid-eighties. Evidence of international aid agencies' questioning the cost efficiency and effectiveness of the university were raised as early as 1985 (Dubbey, 1988). In 1988, the vice chancellor in his convocation address pointedly stated that, "an increased number of students make the university more

cost effective, giving better value for the public money spent on it. It reduces the unit cost and makes the donors happy (Dubbey, 1988, p. 5). This statement is telling for it shows that cost effectiveness and emphasis on rate of return on investment was an issue raised by external donors at that early stage. In the same address, Dubbey argued that

Among some international donors, there has been a recent tendency to decry the value of tertiary education as a means of development relative to the other sectors. I would argue on the contrary, that there is a more immediate return and there are short and long term benefits to the economy and greater cost effectiveness than significant support is channeled into higher education. The economic rate of return from a successful University is hard to beat. (1988, p. 10)

According to a respondent who had been associated with both the university and Government's human resource planning, at the time both the nation and the university were under pressure to find alternative funding sources and to expand. He further explained that the pressure was perceived to have come from international sources rather than internally. Dwindling national economic resources resulted in under-funding and university budgetary deficits whose percentages have increased over the years. The MIM report also connected the university problems with structural adjustment programs and the lack of long term plans for university development. The report stated that,

The structural adjustment programs, the country has been undergoing since the early eighties have clearly paid inadequate attention to the University's development. The university does not appear to have been regarded as a key and serious partner in the formulation of reform measures that the nation requires through research and or through other forms of collaboration. (MIM, 1997, p. S2 p. 2)

Apart from the marginalization of university education, structural adjustment programs imposed negative factors for the university's financial survival through the imposition of a cash budget system. The cash-budget system created many problems of managing resources for the university. The authors of the MIM report suggested that

While the current cash-budget approach may be commendable from a fiscal and macroeconomic perspective, it is grossly inappropriate as a method for funding the university. The university needs a guaranteed level of funding, disbursed at regular intervals, for both operations and development. (S 2, p. 13)

The consequences of the national structural adjustment programs and the imposition of the cash budget system on the university were the financial uncertainties and gaps created

by the disparities between budgeted and real allocations. Money to the university was allocated on a monthly basis and increasingly less than the budgeted amount was allocated. One university respondent highlighted this problem in 2002 by describing the practical problems in this manner,

As you know we are working on a cash-budget and you cannot predict that next month they will give us enough to cover our operation costs. I will give an example, in June for instance they gave us MK12.5 million but our entire salary budget alone, for the University is about MK36.7 million per month.

University respondents also stated that although over the years, government steadily increased its subsidies to the university, the real monetary value was also constantly decreasing. This issue was well covered in the MIM report (1997). Consequently, the government funding was only sufficient for covering statutory costs, that is, staff salaries and little else. The university was perpetually in debt. It owed on its tax remittance to the Malawi Revenue Authority (MRA) and was in arrears on its insurance and other staff benefits. Further, the university owed its suppliers of food, learning materials, utilities and all sorts of material that it needed. In several instances, court bailiffs seized university colleges' assets such as vehicles as a result of the inability to repay debts.

The issue of the university's inability to charge meaningful user fees is complex because it touches on political, economic and social costs of such a move on the elite and the general populace. The presence of need to start charging tuition fees can be traced to the 1980s when structural adjustment programs were first adopted. However, although clearly identified at that early stage, the issue was addressed in a token manner by both the former MCP and current UDF governments. The 1987 amendment of the University of Malawi Act to accommodate cost sharing is proof that as early as the 1980s there was a perception that the nation and the university needed to change its approach to funding the university. UNIMA had responded by introducing a token fee paying scheme, euphemistically called "student contribution." A loan scheme run by the university was put in place to support this fee paying. By 1994 the university had increased the amount of this token fee collection from MK200 to MK1500 (in the mid-nineties this was equivalent to USD150) and it was beyond the reach of most ordinary Malawians.

However, since traditionally the university and the nation also paid its students a monthly stipend and an annual book allowance, the university continued to pay the students MK1400 as book allowance. In reality, the university collected K100 per student, which in 1995 would have been equivalent to just over USD10.00 but in 2000 would have been just under USD3.00. The MIM report showed that even after the change of government, efforts for modest adjustment in the “contributions” was met with considerable resistance from the government. The reason for government’s reluctance was the perceived incapacity of average Malawians to afford more market-related contribution levels (MIM, 1997, s2, p. 7).

According to one respondent, since the early nineties the university had consistently been under funded by 40 to 50 percent. In the budget statements of 2000 and also 2001, the Minister of Finance had argued that “a decision to undercharge or not to charge is tantamount to a decision to stop or close provision of the related service or activity or program” (Chikaonda, 2001, p. 19). Another respondent further argued that since Malawi only had 500,000 taxpayers out of its 10 million population it was impossible to keep taxing this number of individuals in order for government to subsidize institutions such as the university. In his opinion this is what made charging user fees a necessary policy strategy. It must be pointed out that the University, as a parastatal, was regarded as the same as other profit making organisations such as Electricity Supply Commission of Malawi (ESCOM), Air Malawi and others. The MIM report authors stated that “current government education policy is clearly skewed in favor of basic education at the expense if not neglect of the higher levels of education” (S2, p. 9). This neglect of university policy meant that from 1994 until 2000 when the Malawi Government implemented the cost-sharing policy there was lack of a clear funding policy even as funding was simultaneously declining and its payment erratic.

The university also owned large real estate holdings for accommodating its members of staff. In the early days, university houses for faculty were fully furnished and faculty paid 10% of their salaries for rent of the accommodation. With time, this real estate became part of the problem rather than a solution. To begin with, as the university expanded the

staff houses were not enough to accommodate everyone. As a result the university was forced to find accommodation for some of its members at the real market value. Apart from the added expense that the university has to incur to pay for real market prices of houses, the lack of institutional housing for all faculty staff introduced issues of equity within the university faculty members. Second, the University's own houses and other buildings needed much maintenance and this reduced the little funds that the university had. The MIM recommended that the university should sell all staff houses and offer housing allowances to everyone to cut on maintenance costs and to put everyone on equal footing (MIM, 1997).

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS

The MIM report cited continued political interference in university affairs in spite of the new political climate as a continuing problem of the university. Such interference resulted in perpetuation of mismanagement and entrenchment of weak administrative practices. For example, appointment of governing council members was still in the hands of political leaders. Also, the continuation of having the Head of State double as the Chancellor of the University seemed to perpetuate the perception of the university as being under direct control of the ruling elite. The blurring of boundaries between university scholars and other government and parastatal professionals and management resulted in the transfer of the limited number of eminent scholars into such organizations. This not only weakened academic capacity, but academic autonomy as well. Again, authors of the MIM University Reform study stated that

The university does not appear (even after the advent of democracy) to be sufficiently insulated from political interference. The continued movement of accomplished academics/scholars from the University and their placement into administrative and political positions elsewhere by executive action is an aspect of concern vis-à-vis the maintenance of academic freedoms and stability of the university. (MIM, 1997, S2, p. 3)

However, some respondents argued that in 2002, the governing council was the most professional and was not made up of politicians, as other previous councils. A university

respondent argued that there was no political influence in the way the university was being run.

Nationally, the emerging democratic dispensation had resulted in increased political awareness, which led to increased activism by both students and faculty. Since 1994 when the new political dispensation was adopted there have been multiple strikes, demonstrations by students, faculty and even the support staff. As a result, university calendars were disrupted and this has caused instability and unpredictability. This had implications for both governance and academic efficiency and quality.

In terms of internal management inefficiency, the MIM report also viewed the university's organizational structure and culture as wasteful and lacking accountability and ability to plan. According to the MIM report the student/staff ratio at UNIMA is 3:2 and "there are nearly as many employees of the university as there are its students", (1997, p. 1). The writers also noted that the ratio of faculty to support staff was 1:5 while the accepted ration should be 1:3 and that this resulted in overstaffing of support functions. The MIM authors attributed this overstaffing to ambiguous hiring practices, an over-sized central administration and, most importantly, to the existence of ancillary roles for the university beyond learning and teaching. The multiple campuses also contributed to duplication of certain tasks resulting in redundancy and overstaffing. This was a direct attack on the adopted residential and federal model of the university, which provided student accommodation, food, medical facilities, and maintenance thereby necessitating a contingent support staff of cooks, cleaners and many other ancillary workers in the accommodation and food catering services.

The university was also criticized for its lack of operational and strategic planning. The MIM report highlighted the fact that there was a lack of balance between staffing levels and the genuine need for staff development, which in almost all cases involved sending faculty to attend universities abroad. In 2001, over one hundred and fifty members of staff were either on sabbatical or on study leave. Some of them had been abroad for over five years and meanwhile there was lack of faculty to teach students at the institution. (University Council, 2002, Annex 3)

Non university respondents also argued that top management at constituent college and university office levels was wasteful and lacked accountability. One respondent argued that the Vice chancellor of UNIMA drives one of the most expensive vehicles amongst public and private sector CEOs in Malawi and had unlimited fuel allowances. Another one felt that in their spending habits university and college officials lacked prioritization. On the other hand, university respondents argued that if they wanted to attract quality managers and professionals to the university then there was a need that they match their packages with those of private industry. Another official bemoaned the expense that the university is put to because of the geographical positioning of the university in relation to central government and the university colleges itself which meant frequent travel between Zomba, Blantyre and Lilongwe (see Figure 1).

Another perceived weakness by non-university respondents was general lack of management skills and culture that lacked the adoption of good management practices. One respondent stated that although university administrators are highly qualified in their academic disciplines, most of the top managers lacked basic managerial and financial skills. He further argued that because they were highly educated academics they were unlikely to want to acquire the prerequisite management practices on the job since they tended to view such training as beneath them. Other respondents critiqued the collegial system and blamed it for the lack of a business approach towards university business. The MIM authors had also blamed the collegial system for lack of effective decision-making and direction in the university.

The MIM authors observed that due to the paternalistic approach that the nation had taken towards the university for thirty years, the university had developed a culture of dependency which was reflected in lack of proper financial management prudence. According to MIM authors, since the university had always been assured of funding, the institution failed to develop proper planning skills and above all, failed to develop ways of raising funds independent of the state or international donors. One respondent stated that

As an administrator I believe there is much that the university is not doing. We always hide under the Act, but the Act does not allow us to bring students on fee paying, yet the Polytechnic is doing so through parallel programs. No Act was ever changed and the students are paying the fees so the University is also sleeping.

The university official was implying that there are many instances where the university had failed to take advantage of growing demands and needs of society to expand its own usefulness while addressing some of its financial and academic problems. The ability of the Polytechnic to introduce programs outside the mandated government programs demonstrated that the university could extend its academic and funding activities beyond the prescribed parameters. The Polytechnic is one of the constituent colleges of UNIMA whose main focuses are business, applied sciences, technology and technical studies, it is based in the commercial city of Blantyre.

Increased student political awareness and activism also underscored the deficiency of an old semi-bureaucratic and paternalistic university system in dealing with students who were increasingly demanding their rights and participation in the governance structure. A report by the university's governing council into the killing of a student by police during a demonstration concluded that "in this new political dispensation students tend to emphasize their rights a lot at the expense of the responsibilities which go with such rights" (University Council, 2002, p. 8). Consequently, students have increasingly challenged university decisions through court procedures. These court challenges have eroded university governance. There is a growing perception that the frequent closures of the university are a result of political decisions rather than management decisions. The down side of the political emancipation for the university is the undermining of legitimate authority and lack of enforcement of regulations and rules.

ACADEMIC PROBLEMS

Identified academic problems covered areas of declining standards and curriculum relevance. These problems were directly connected to financial, governance and mismanagement problems.

Increasing class numbers, effected as a result of meeting cost effectiveness and the emphasis on rate of return on investment demanded by international donors in the mid-eighties, had led to lowering of standards (Dubbey, 1988). This was further exacerbated by lack of teaching and learning materials and gave a negative cast to the whole issue of quality and standards. As well, declining faculty numbers and high staff turnover was the consequence of political interference and lack of academic autonomy that had been the norm during Banda's regime. Quality was further affected by diminishing and improper rewards for faculty (MIM, 1997).

Declining funding and declining currency values had also had a great impact on the faculty brain drain. Since the early 1980s the University of Malawi had suffered a considerable brain drain of its academic staff due to an unsatisfactory rewards structure, political intimidation and economic opportunities (MIM, 1997). Most staff had moved to other parts of Southern Africa where rewards were much better than in Malawi. Further, as a result of political control and lack of academic freedom many young university faculty members sent out for postgraduate studies in the developed world never came back. Those who came back tended to prefer to work for the private sector or local and international NGOs, which paid better remuneration. Others were busy moonlighting and engaged in consultation work sometimes using university time and resources, (University Council, 2002). According to the MIM report, the university was therefore on a perpetual staff development program and those who remained were either under qualified or if they were qualified, lacked commitment to the university (1997).

Technical aid, which had ensured capital development in the university's constituent colleges had been on the decrease since the 1980s when structural adjustment programs were first adopted in Malawi. The decline had continued with the shift of donor emphasis from higher and secondary education to basic education. The result was little or no investment in physical structures. Additionally, structural adjustment had led to the dwindling real value of resources. As a respondent and the MIM report stated, the state funding was barely enough to cover remuneration and welfare of students. Meanwhile,

the university with the blessings of the state chose to increase intakes in humanities and social sciences where laboratory facilities were not required. According to one respondent, this was a result of political expedience and was normal practice by politicians. He commented that “education translates into votes, and politicians are more preoccupied with short term gains such as quantities rather than quality. They want to be able to boast that the university has produced so many degrees this year.”

Finally, curriculum relevance was also interpreted in terms of a lack of research and a slow response to needs in developing courses that were in demand by society at large (MIM, 1997, S4, p. 1). There was a general feeling that over the years the university had failed to be responsive to the needs of society and business. As a result its curriculum had failed to align itself with emerging social, business and industry issues such as AIDS, technology and other related issues. The MIM report also highlighted the lack of evaluation of academic programs based on demand factors and the university’s own capacity.

UNIVERSITY RELATIONS PROBLEMS

One other issue that emerged from the respondents and from the MIM report involved the lack of a meaningful university/society relationship. Non university respondents pointed out that the university has been unable to connect with the public, and therefore, it is only seen as useful in terms of affording social and economic mobility to the small minority that are lucky enough to attend university education. One respondent simply put it that the university has been “a total failure in its role as a useful corporate citizen.” MIM authors and respondents criticized UNIMA for failure to respond to change and to seize opportunities that were currently in Malawi for them to get involved in the society. Even where the Malawi society is looking for skills that the university could provide it is slow to respond and provide such services.

University respondents argued that the alumni of UNIMA whether within the state bureaucracy or outside it were not supportive of their university. Although no data were

available on the numbers of the alumni and university support, my own sample of respondents support the fact that those in decision-making processes were UNIMA alumni. These included politicians, bureaucrats, technocrats, university and college officials and constituent college members. Most of them had also attended graduate studies in Western universities.

Other respondents had the view that Malawi as a nation needed to have a debate and redefine what the role of the university should be, considering that Malawi has changed dramatically since 1965. They felt that as long as government did not define the future role of the university it would have no priorities and in one respondent's words "the nation is paying for things that might not be important to its future well being."

The foregoing analysis has identified problems of the university based on policy documents and participants' responses as financial, governance and administration, academic and relational problems. The financial problems include over dependency on public resources, lack of alternative sources of funding such as tuition fees, university's own cultural and structural problems which encourage financial inefficiency and lack of accountability. Governance and administrative problems have been described as continuing political interference and a culture of semi-bureaucracy which led to entrenched paternalism which is at variance with the emerging culture of democracy in the country. Academic problems were intricately connected to both financial and governance problems that resulted in declining academic standards. Finally, the university's lack of meaningful relations with society in general was also perceived to be a problem since it led to the university's failure to get support for its activities and to make useful contribution to society.

THE EMERGING POLICY CHOICE AND STRATEGIES

An analysis of policy proposals and recommendation showed a convergence of the underlying principles, choices and strategies that emerged from the policy statements such as the Vision 2020, the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the Policy

Investment Framework and the MIM report. The emerging policy discourse depicted a general paradigm shift in the provision and operation of higher education in Malawi. All these national policy documents defined a future university education delivery that would involve public and private aspects in provision, operation or delivery. This was in alignment with emerging global trends, which included de-subsidization, privatization of university services and university education provision: and adoption of new business management approaches to education such as decentralization, devolution of power and restructuring. In terms of academic programs the new trends also emphasized a more vocational and utilitarian education which would be market based (World Bank, 1994; Kwong, 2000; Fowler, 2000).

Significantly, in the midst of the discussed crisis surrounding UNIMA, the Malawi government, through another presidential declaration, introduced the new University of Mzuzu in the northern region of Malawi. The creation of this institution in the northern part of Malawi was viewed as political since until 1997, unlike the two other regions of Malawi, had had no constituent college. Like the University of Malawi, the new Mzuzu University, opened in 1997, was formed through a presidential declaration and is widely viewed as a political creation on his accession to power. The MIM authors commented that

The decision to establish another public university appears attractive on the basis of the need to expand enrollment, but none the less, is less than efficient and premature approach especially given the crisis situation facing the existing public university – the University of Malawi (1997, S2, p. 3).

However, Mzuzu was based on a different model from UNIMA in that from its very inception there was an understanding that it would seek to be partly financed through private means and that it would be based on user fees that were shared between the government and the individual. Additionally, because its courses are currently based on education and health education it has managed to form links and attract donors in these specific areas. Therefore the Mzuzu University has been a positive although not significant factor in improving access. It has also shown that cost-sharing can be done in Malawi. Since the problems under discussion are not seen at part of Mzuzu, my discussion will concentrate on UNIMA.

The Vision 2020 as the key national long-term development strategy offered the following strategic solutions for improving tertiary education:

- (a) increasing access in the University by reviewing conditions for admission to allow more of those that can afford to pay and providing scholarships to those in need;
- (b) encouraging individuals and organizations to establish private universities and tailor their courses to acceptable standards;
- (c) improving quality by diversifying university programmes to serve clearly identified areas of human resources needs;
- (d) introducing more postgraduate programmes;
- (e) improving equity by paying special attention to the enrolment of women and students with special needs;
- (f) decentralizing the management of the University;
- (g) reviewing the University Act;
- (h) improving the financial performance of the University;
- (i) increasing financing for university research and increasing the number of faculties covering pharmacology, engineering architecture;
- (j) increasing the number of Teachers Training College (TTC) tutors;
- (k) upgrading tutors to degree level;
- (l) training unqualified tutors;
- (m) providing management skills to all heads of colleges;
- (n) increasing the number of TTCs;
- (o) increasing financial resources to TTCs; and
- (p) encouraging private sector involvement in TTCs: (Malawi Government, 1998)

In the definition of the Ministry of Education in its sector-based Policy and Investment Framework, government “acknowledged the significance of a solid higher education system in enhancing development through preparation of individual Malawians for positions of responsibility in business, professions and government” (PIF, 2000, p. 34). The state also acknowledged a key role for national higher education institutions in the production of knowledge through research, in dissemination through teaching, and in the

promotion of the transfer, adaptation and dissemination of knowledge, which has been generated in the different parts of the world.

The Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy paper similarly defined the goal of university education in Malawi as to “transform the higher education system to respond to new realities and opportunities within the context of poverty reduction” (Malawi Government, MPRSP, 2002, p. 51). This was a fundamental change in defining the aim of higher education as it was aligning higher education to the aims of poverty reduction and economic growth. The change was significant as it defined a basis for a more entrepreneurial and vocalized university as opposed to a liberal education university. These two aims also reflected aims of global institutions such as IMF or World Bank. However their definition of poverty reduction in terms of education was closely linked to an emphasis on basic education with higher education only mentioned in passing. Second economic growth for these global institutions meant cutting down support for subsidized parastatals such as the university in order to stimulate economic growth.

Another important aspect of the emerging national higher education policy was the changing financing policy. Connected with the changing mission of the higher education, funding and financing policy was enunciated thus: “future provisions and expansion of tertiary education will rely on both government and non-state initiatives” (Malawi Government, PIF, 2002, p. 5). This shift in provision of funds to the university was in line with emerging national economic policy. The MPRSP had defined the same funding policy changes, which were implemented through the national budget statement. According to the Minister of Finance through the 2001/ 2002 budget statement, poverty reduction was highlighted as the core of the current development strategy. He further articulated that this was a “shift from the poverty alleviation through government controls and handouts, to empowering the poor to take an active role in the task of reducing their own poverty” (Chikaonda, 2001, p. 2). The policy of reducing government handouts or subsidies when applied to expensive higher education became quite complex and contentious given the poverty levels and the salary structures of Malawi.

In the 2000 budget, the policy choices included taking away subsidies from many social and other services provided by government agencies and statutory organizations and this included the University of Malawi. Many of these proposals were also reflected in the MIM report. However unlike other policy documents, the MIM report provided conditions that needed to be met before introducing some of the financial reforms. The most important of these conditions was first that the government should articulate a national policy regarding university education that was holistic and involved all stakeholder government ministries and the university itself. The second was that the government should establish a specialized department in the Ministry of Education to oversee tertiary education policy. And the final condition was concerned with the introduction of cost sharing as a funding policy. The MIM maintained that,

It does not seem to us ethical to require that students contribute toward payment of excessive inefficiencies. In principle, the tuition fee sharing should gradually be introduced and implemented but only after some basic pruning have been effected by the colleges. (S2, p. 11)

With regard to the process of effecting any changes the MIM report cautioned against introducing such changes without the inclusion of all key stakeholders. The authors stated that, “the University needs to proceed with a lot of caution and prepare government, politicians, the victims and society at large for the inevitable” (1997, S3, p. 17).

In summary, based on national policy documents, the emerging policy strategies indicate a new definition of a future university education delivery that would involve public and private aspects in provision, operation or delivery. The emerging discourse reflect emerging global trends, as indicated by terms such as de-subsidization, privatization, adoption of new business management approaches, decentralization, devolution of power and restructuring. In terms of academic programs the new trends also emphasized a more vocational and utilitarian education which would be market based.

PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT OF ACTORS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The analysis on actor and stakeholder involvement in the various policy development teams reflected a rational, elitist and paternalistic process. Bureaucrats, technocrats and

government planners, international experts and advisers, select academics, university governors and top management, traditional and civic leaders dominated the different macro level processes.

Table 4 ACTORS AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Policy document	National Participants	Other participants
The University reform study (MIM report)	Local technocrats and consultants	Constituent college managers
The Malawi Vision 2020	Academics and scholars, private sector representatives, government planners and economists and international advisers	International stakeholders and consultants Traditional, civil business political leaders
The Education Policy and investment Framework (PIF)	Government planners, university academics and administrators.	International stakeholders as advisers
Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper	Government technocrats, economists and planners, consultations with academics, civil, NGO and private sector, academics	
Budget statement	Ministry of Finance technocrats in consultation with other government ministries, parastatal organizations	University of Malawi. Prebudgetary consultations with civil, business, NGO, media and others

Even the MIM process which was an exclusively university process consulted administrators and other academic leaders and overlooked students as stakeholders.

Based on the interviews and documents, there were multiple teams of formal actors involved with different aspects of higher education reform. I was able to identify and group them into three categories. The first category was the macro-level policy teams with international actors' involvement or influence. The second included national/sector based policy communities involved in articulating the education sector policy and in interacting with international stakeholders and advisors (Malawi Government, PIF, 2000; Chikaonda, 2000). Last, the micro-level/institutional policy team, which was nationally mandated through the University Act, and was able to commission consultants to do a policy analysis process. This was the university governing council, which commissioned the MIM study in 1995. Within these policy teams were multiple layers of sub-committees formed in response to specific issues. The different policy participants and stakeholders in the initial policy development phase are listed in Table 4.

Government economists and planners, academic experts and international advisers from United Nations Development Program (UNDP) dominated the Malawi Vision 2020 process. Stakeholder consultations for the vision process included formal business, civil society representatives and traditional leaders. The MPRSP process also included a broad consultative process with academics, business and civil society, and other social institutional stakeholders although the consultations were technical in approach.

On the other hand, the education Policy and Investment Framework team comprised sub-sector task forces involving experts from academic institutions, bureaucrats from education and other stakeholder government ministries, and donors, according to an interviewee's response, According to this interviewee, the members were appointed based on their curriculum vitae. Despite the perception of informal networking conveyed by this respondent, ultimately the members held different positions of influence in government and education related statutory organizations. The criteria for involvement in

the PIF process reflected a highly rational and bureaucratic process with emphasis on rationality, functions and tasks.

In its pre-budget consultations, the 2000 national budget statement took a participatory approach that listed among the stakeholders consulted, churches, civil society, private sector and the media. This was in line with the IMF/World Bank recommended criteria for the PRSP processes (World Bank, 2003; Wood, 2000). With regard to the budget process, which is also closely related to the MPRSP process, a respondent had this to say about the consultative process.

The concept of user fees was discussed right through the country with stakeholders including churches, religious leaders, traditional leaders and civil society representatives. Ministry of Finance officials went all over the place and consulted everyone including trade unions and even journalists.

In all the policy development processes there was a marked absence of those who would be directly affected by the proposed changes such as students, parents, alumni, and college administrators and faculty members. The sector based PIF process was putting in place policies that went beyond public provision of university education and were expanding to involve and incorporate parents and the civil society. However, in the PIF Process, there was no representation of the private sector, alumni or student representatives. It is not even clear if the views of these potentially important stakeholders were sought at all.

The MIM process was a classic rational, objective, top down policy process mandated by the University Council. MIM as an organization had emerged in the late eighties as an answer to public management and policy training needs. The irony of the Malawi Institute of Management's involvement in the university's strategic planning was that it was a product of the perceived university problems which it was now investigating and making recommendations about. Some respondents said that during the MIM process, top university and college officials were consulted and interviewed with regard to university problems. Although in certain constituent colleges, such as the Polytechnic, support staff

members were briefed about the MIM recommendations such as contracting out and intended retrenchment, students were not briefed about intended cost-sharing strategies.

All policy development processes took a top-down, technical and paternalistic approach towards policy recipients and street level bureaucrats. There was an assumption of a trickle down effect of consultations from the top leadership to the bottom. However, from the interviews and events in the implementation it was clear that the lack of stakeholder involvement became an issue, which affected successful implementation.

REVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Based on key policy documents and responses from key policy actors, the chapter has described and analyzed four historical and contextual themes involving the university of Malawi policy development process. The following four themes were identified: the origins and rationale for policy change, the identification and analysis of university policy problems, the emerging policy choices and strategies, and finally the participation and involvement of actors and stakeholders in the policy development process.

The analysis has shown that the need for University of Malawi reform was recognized as early as the mid-eighties due to economic and international pressures. There were indications that due to a lack of political will only a token attempt to address the problems was made. As a result, meaningful attempts to address the university came about as a result of changed political circumstances after 1994. In trying to establish the policy agenda for the University of Malawi reform, the foregoing discussion has identified multiple initiatives that all impinged on the university reform process in one form or another.

Three categories of initiatives were identified in the transition period after a new government was installed in Malawi. The first involved broad national initiatives directly

influenced by international funding and development agencies such as the UNDP initiated Vision 2020 and the IMF/World Bank influenced Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Stemming from these overarching national policy documents, the second category, the sector- based education Policy and Investment Framework was initiated in line with the new economic, political and policy focus (Malawi Government, PAI, 1999; Malawi Government, PIF, 2000). The third category was the university-specific initiative by the University Council in 1995, which appears to have set the original rationale for reform through the 1997 MIM report on the university (MIM, 1997). This third initiative never really took off because of lack of support from the State, as the main sponsor and stakeholder of the university. The university's initial initiative was taken against a backdrop of other macro-level policy changes towards university education. The 2000 budget statement as the implementation tool of the most important national economic policy, that is the PRSP, became a critical variable in resuscitating the stagnating university initiated policy reform process that had started in 1997.

The rationale for the university policy reform can be traced to wider national and economic changes, which were influenced by the political and economic changes that had occurred in the international scene in the early and late eighties. These changes impacted the environment of university education in Malawi, where fiscal problems had been identifiable as early as the eighties. The 1994 Malawi political change became a catalytic event for the already evident need for national higher education policy change but which the former government had lacked the political impetus to initiate.

The changing political system and leadership in Malawi created an opportunity and provided a renewed impetus to the ongoing structural changes that had already been initiated as a result of debt management processes by international lending organizations (MIM, 1997; PAI, 1999). The restructuring of the state machinery as well as the changed educational emphasis of the new government administration had an impact on university policy-making structures and policy strategies. For the University of Malawi the proposed structural and substantive policy change had two implications on its future. Firstly it showed a structural vacuum and lack of clear policy direction, and second, it

revealed the urgency with which the university needed a new direction with the absence of its benefactor, the state and the former president.

A more profound impact of the new political dispensation was the adoption of the Education for All (EFA) approach, at the basic schooling level. This shift in educational policy reflected a global and multilaterally accepted intellectual shift towards basic education. However, in Malawi this was done at the expense of both secondary and tertiary education because the change was implemented without carefully designed policy alternatives to the funding of secondary and higher education. While the former government had taken a gradual and more cautionary move towards introduction of free primary education, the new government used the promise of introduction of free primary education as a trump card to win and attract a lot of donor funding. Consequently, the introduction of education for all without preparatory planning meant that the other educational sub-sectors were plunged into financing and planning crisis.

The problems of the University of Malawi were complex as they entailed both wider socio-economic public policy issues and internal and university-specific policy problems. National problems covered wider issues connected with university education provision, delivery and management. The problems were specifically defined in terms of access, equity, quality, relevance, finance and governance (MIM: 1997, Malawi Government, PIF, 2000, Malawi Government MPRSP, 2002). The University of Malawi also had internal policy problems, which were defined as finance, academic and governance and administration. The multiplicity of policy initiatives and the overlapping policy and social problems, was an indication of the complexity and fragmentation that underpinned the policy process in the period after 1994 in Malawi.

Since there was an overlap of actors in the different policy initiatives there was homogeneity of problem definition and policy choices and strategies. Coincidentally, through its Ministry of Education Science and Technology the State was also trying to develop a comprehensive sector-based national education policy in line with newly outlined prescriptions of IFIs (IMF, 2000). It was only when the new global policy

framework for national financial management was adopted by the Ministry of Finance's 2000 National Budget Statement that university reform was once again on the state agenda.

Market strategies and a business management approach to university management guided the emerging policy choices and strategies, although an attempt was made to incorporate some social justice issues of access, equity and expansion. A new definition of university that incorporated private aspects within a public university was proposed. Within this definition the Government stressed the provision of university education that would incorporate both state and non-state provision. It also explored the possibility of distance education as an alternative and flexible delivery system of higher education in Malawi.

The policy choices and strategies could be seen as reflecting the influential position of the IFIs on the national policy agenda. The study also showed that most of the influential and authoritative policy initiatives, such as the Malawi Poverty Reduction Paper, were initiated under the influence of the World Bank and IMF. The former DEVPOL based 1995-2005 Education strategy was reviewed and rewritten to become the sector based PIF, which was a new way of developing policies under the new IMF/World Bank influence as well (Malawi Government, MOEST, 2002; Malawi Government, OVP, 1999). Key policy documents such as the PIF and Draft MPRSP as well as the MIM report itself, indicated policy strategies that were shifting towards less dependency on national resources as far as higher education is concerned. There was a major shift in the funding approach from a system where government had dominated the university education, to one where government was willing to share the funding responsibilities with beneficiaries and other private providers.

Finally, in terms of participation and involvement of actors and stakeholders, all policy development initiatives took a very, rational, technical and top-down approach. The externally influenced policy initiatives had encouraged an elitist participatory approach that involved the newly emerging civil society representatives, academics, and traditional

chiefs but ignored the targeted policy recipients and other stakeholders. Both the MIM study and the 2000 budget statement adopted a rational approach to policy demonstrated by the emphasis on objectivity and neutrality of the policy development process. Even pre-budgetary consultations carried out prior to the 2000 national budget statement had adopted a technical and functionalist approach to consultations. The rational technical approach adopted in the different policy development resulted in policy processes that were stable and orderly projecting hegemonic and consensual relations. However as analyses in Chapter seven and eight will show, the implementation process became a space for conflict and irrationality as stakeholders who were initially excluded from policy consultations voiced their concerns with regard to the intended policy implementation.

SUMMARY

The analysis has shown that the rationale for the UNIMA reforms emerged as early as the mid-1980s as a response to macro-economic pressures stemming from international intellectual and economic changes. The 1994 political change from an autocratic to a pluralist political system provided an impetus for different international and national players in the Malawi economic and political system to push forward neo-liberal educational reforms. University problems were defined in technical and managerial terms resulting in proposed solutions that reflected the same neo-liberal strategies. Finally, in terms of actor participation the analysis has demonstrated that all policy development initiatives took a rational, technical and top-down approach with minimum stakeholder participation.

Chapter 7

CHALLENGES, ISSUES AND CONSTRAINTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIVERSITY REFORM PROCESS

The chapter is a critical analysis of the actual implementation process. It begins with an outline of the implementation events, from the implications of the MIM recommendations (1997-2000), to the attempt at cost sharing in the national budget (2000), and explores the political and other context-related challenges to implementation of the critical financing strategies. The chapter addresses the questions of the chosen policy development approach and how it enhanced or hindered implementation process. It also touches on the issues of involvement and consultation in the policy process and how alternative views were accounted for.

The university reform process can be understood in terms of two distinct and yet overlapping periods. The first period covered the commissioning of the University study by MIM, the subsequent publication of its findings in 1997 and an attempt by University Council and top management to implement some of the recommendations. This period is characterized by little economic and political support for the implementation of the university's reforms by the major stakeholder, namely the State and its related agencies and departments. The second period was after the June 2000 budget statement, which was characterized by clear political support and will as well as a clearly defined national economic policy, giving momentum to a formerly slow moving unsupported university reform process based on the MIM report. This second period also became a space for political struggle between formal policy actors and the initially excluded policy recipients and implementers which led to political resistance, incorporation, policy consultation, negotiation and revision. Apart from political challenges other structural problems were identified such as lack of a national policy framework, university/state relations and lack of policy development capacity in the state structure.

EMERGING ISSUES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Although an attempt is made to reconstruct the implementation order, as policy literature indicates the policy implementation process is never smooth. It is punctuated with contention, discontinuities, fragmentation and revision (Ball, 1990). In trying to understand the issues, challenges and re-negotiations that occurred in connection with the university reform process there is need to reconstruct the implementation with reference to the MIM and the 2000 national budget implementation processes. The following conclusions emerged from the analysis on the implementation of the MIM and the 2000 budget statement. The first conclusion is that although the MIM report came out in 1997, the government did not support or show interest in the recommendations of the MIM. As a result, whatever reforms were implemented at the initiative of the university itself involved non-controversial and inexpensive aspects such as devolution of power and the revision of the University Act which involved University's own personnel. The reforms also involved the introduction of full paying programs alongside the main government subsidized programs, euphemistically called "parallel programs" to avoid giving the impression that the new government was moving towards encouraging full private paying students. The second conclusion was that due to pressure from internationally instituted macro-economic reforms that culminated in the implementation of the draft MPRSP through the 2000 budget statement, the university reforms gained momentum and support from the government especially for its financial and other related reforms. The implementation process is outlined in Table 5.

Table 5 AN OUTLINE OF KEY IMPLEMENTATION EVENTS

1997, June – the publication of the MIM university reform study document

Study discussed internally by committee of college principals and other top management officials

Results circulated to all key stakeholder ministries

Ministry of Education reviewing 1995-2005 education strategy

Ministry of Education also reviewing the Education Act

No clear response by State players

- 1998 Formation of an internal subcommittee within the University Council to oversee implementation
Some colleges start parallel programs alongside government mandated courses
- 2000 Amendment of the University Act to include regulatory tools for cost sharing.
New governors appointed in the governing council
- 2000, June Introduction of cost sharing strategy by Government of Malawi
Student resistance, state response, negotiations and revision of tuition amount
Higher education directorate formed in the MOEST
A senior member of university management appointed as director of higher education at MOEST
- 2000 A new sub committee is formed as part of University Council's implementation revival
An authoritative Tripartite Commission made up of top level officials from Finance, Education and university personnel put in place to coordinate university reform – but only met once
- 2001 University Council sub-committee makes recommendations on implementation process
No movement in the Tripartite Commission
- 2002 Restructuring and some retrenchment effected

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MIM RECOMMENDATIONS: 1997-2000

According to university authorities when the MIM report came out, they ensured that it was circulated among all the key stakeholders before it was implemented. For instance, it is

reported in the University office's own document that the report findings were "extensively discussed by the university Senate, Committee of College Principals, the Project Steering committee and the University Council itself" (University Council, 2002, p. 1). No attempt was made at a university-wide debate regarding the intended changes.

The University Council (2002) document also states that the MIM report was sent to all key stakeholder ministries including Education, Science and Technology; Finance; Labour and Vocational Training; as well as the Department of Human Resources Management and Development. However, none of these state agencies gave formal feedback in connection with the document. Apparently, all that the different representatives of these ministries gave were "casual comments" (University Office, 2002, p. 1), although in the make-up of the Council, the university governing body, both the Permanent Secretary for MOEST and Treasury are *ex-officio* members. This raises questions of the extent of formal responsibilities, authority and influence of such *ex-officio* members in relation to their functional roles as members of the University Council a body, which held mandated responsibility for university policy. (University of Malawi Act, 1974, 1998, 2002)

As early as June 1998, the University Council had put in place a Council sub-committee to oversee the implementation process. Interestingly, this sub committee on implementation included *ex officio* members from the same stake-holder State departments and ministries yet no meaningful implementation was achieved until 2000 when a new university council membership was appointed and other macroeconomic issues necessitated revisiting state subsidies to the university (Chikaonda, 2000, 2001).

Up to this stage, the implementation process just like the policy development process was trickling down slowly with no controversy. The changes were stable, incremental, top down and non-threatening to stakeholders such as students or even the university central administration, which was slated for restructuring and down sizing. University participants argued that no meaningful change had been made affecting financial arrangements consequently the university and its colleges faced increased funding problems.

There was no meaningful State action regarding the MIM recommendations, therefore its policy choice at this stage can best be summarized as inaction. Policy literature states that inaction is a legitimate policy position (Pal, 2001, p. 2). Most respondents observed that the new government was unable to pick up on the agenda because of populist political considerations. As the second government took over from an autocratic government that had considered the university among its most treasured institutions and had supported it through subvention, they were unsure of public reaction to their government if they suddenly cut government support and encouraged meaningful fee paying from students.

As one respondent aptly put it “education means votes for politicians. As long as they could show the growing numbers of graduates, then they were seen to be achieving something. Never mind that the numbers were in fields that are not really that pertinent to the societal needs.”

Another respondent argued that the current administration seemed to have had no clear policy on higher education. He argued that while they had adopted Education for All as their prize education policy at the primary level, no clear thought had been given to either secondary or higher education. At this transition period, the PIF, which was to be the national education policy, was still a document in progress. A third respondent who had been involved with the implementation process argued that as far as he was concerned the political will was there but he perceived the problem to be that of actual technocrats and their ability to implement the program. Reasons for the inaction varied from the inadequacies of bureaucrats to the lack of a vision and public support for university education, which made the government hesitant to proceed.

By 2000, the only official implementation of the reform was the draft amendment of the University Act, decentralization of the University central office and the devolution of some powers to the college level. According to a key university respondent, power had been devolved from the central office to the colleges and faculties. He stressed that the “initiative responsibility” was devolved to colleges “so that they should not feel like secondary schools waiting for orders from above”. This was possible because such reform did not require any

funding although it required legal tools such as an amendment of the UNIMA Act. According to university respondents, restructuring and retrenchment were awaiting the budget of about MK 58 million (this was equivalent to US\$ 1m in 1999) that had been agreed to for rationalization and retrenchment of about 1100 non -core staff and to dissolve the Malawi Polytechnic Board of Governors.

To support the decentralization process the University itself had taken the initiative to draft amendments to the University Act. These amendments were based on the MIM recommendations, ongoing consultations with the Malawi government ministries of Finance and Education during the processes of PIF and MPRSP, and other policy relevant information gathered by the university team itself. However, although changes had been introduced in line with the amended act, the legal process of the amendment had not yet run through the legislative process. A university correspondent had this to say about the status of the amendment and its implications for the implementation process,

The university wishes to move forward but speed is very slow. The University Act for instance, we have done the draft amendment. The people who are holding us back and, you can't believe this, are parliament and the MOEST, again, because it has got to pass through there and because the country also wants to amend the whole Education Act, but we are part of that act as a University.

The respondent added that the University team had tried to fast track the amendment of the University Act by taking it through the process outside the Education Act. However the process was slowed down by the MOEST's inability to start the parliamentary process in time. The university efforts were more of a token than a pragmatic move to solve problems since at this point, according to respondents, the university, had not yet done its strategic planning which was key to the reform. Moreover, government was still working out its national policy and there was a possibility of inconsistencies between national policy and the University Act.

THE CASE OF PARALLEL PROGRAMS AT THE POLYTECHNIC

According to college respondents, in the aftermath of the MIM report some of the university colleges had drawn up plans of how they could raise alternative funds and had sought

approval from government to allow them to carry out programs alongside the fully government subsidized courses. Although government did not give a clear go ahead, colleges such as the Polytechnic had launched parallel programs alongside the traditional meritorious and fully subsidized courses. Respondents observed that the Government's response to such programs was ambivalent in that, while it did not give the go ahead for the colleges to mount full fee-paying courses, it did not discourage those colleges that introduced the parallel programs. This in reality was an implied approval by government.

My own observation, having taken part in the introduction of some of these courses at the Polytechnic was that specific courses such as business, technology and industrial diploma courses were very popular with the general public although the tuition was much higher than the K1500 of regular government subsidized courses. Some respondents also involved in curriculum development and implementation of these courses said that by 2002 the courses had become self-sustaining and self-paying. However there were issues regarding who should benefit and be rewarded for such courses. Most of these courses were perceived to be outside the normal working hours of staff and there was an expectation that extra rewards should be accorded to those involved in teaching them.

Currently, attempts are being made to introduce more relevant graduate programs in line with the policy documents. A Masters in Economics course at Chancellor College and an MBA at the Polytechnic have been introduced which will be run in partnership with South African universities. However, some respondents have already criticized the manner in which the courses were identified and run as defeating the idea of self-sufficiency in which they were designed. For example, in case of the MBA program, the criticism was that it was not as self-sustaining as it was intended to be.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FINANCING STRATEGIES, JUNE 2000

The first clear implementation initiatives with State support and action were the financial reforms that were introduced in 2000 through the national budget statement (Chikaonda, 2000). As a consequence of macro-economic factors driven by international considerations,

such as debt and structural adjustment, Treasury in its national budget targeted the University and other social services organizations for partial de-subsidization. (Maeresa, 2000) The result was the introduction of the cost sharing strategy giving momentum and visibility to the whole university reform process. The 2000 budget statement and its implementation could be understood as an attempt to implement the MPRSP. According to the MPRSP, the national budget is the “implementation tool” for the IMF/World Bank support: “Government will ultimately implement only the MPSRP, through various supporting mechanisms of which the budget is the most important,” (Malawi Government, 2002, p. 2). It is important to note that although the MPRS final draft was not yet out, in 2000 the process was already in place and there were other drafts. Therefore many of the respondent saw this as an internationally influenced agenda.

Although in the course of the study only one participant acknowledged the involvement of the university’s top management and governance officials, it was a deputy in the University Registrar’s office who made the actual announcement of the fee hike (Chapalapata, 2000; Paliani, 2000; Munthali & Kashoti, 2000). However it was not clear whether she made the announcement as an officer of the University or not. During the same period of time she was Chair of the MOEST higher education task force responsible for developing the PIF. Most respondents who knew about the event were unwilling to talk about this issue. Others had moved on and had been replaced by new officials. However, it is clear that ultimately no group or agency - university officials, MOEST or Treasury officials - took responsibility for the official launching of the university cost sharing in 2000.

According to the faculty, college administrators and students who were all key stakeholders in the tuition fee increase, they heard that university fees had been increased by 3000% from the local radio and TV station on the six o’clock morning news bulletin. The lack of prior information on their part was detrimental to the implementation process since they represented the key recipients and street level implementers. “Inevitably, by 7.30 am there was a full fledged anti tuition hike demonstration at the Blantyre campus” explained one of the Polytechnic respondents. The same was true at all campuses that were in session.

On the other hand, government technocrats closely involved with the change argued that the university officials were fully aware of the changes and had actively taken part in the information gathering processes. They pointed to the university's MIM report, some of the colleges' own proposals to government regarding alternative funding sources and also the fact that the figure that was stipulated in the budget statement was based on the university's own figures of unit costs per student. However, it is clear that there is a difference between an awareness of the existence of MIM recommendations towards cost-recovery measures for several years, and the fact that those recommendations are being implemented immediately. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that top university officials (such as the Deputy Registrar) had a degree of awareness of the government's intention to introduce these measures.

Most of the respondents connected with the university office, which has responsibility for budget proposals to Treasury were reluctant to speak about whether or not they were fully aware of the impending tuition fees hike and what their role was in the policy formulation and implementation proposals. Only one official acknowledged that the University Council, through its finance and budget sub-committee, had provided figures to the Ministry of Finance during the pre-budget consultations. In any case it is normal practice that parastatals submit their annual budgetary requirements to Treasury during the budget making time. Even the officers whose office was responsible for making the announcement glossed over what their roles were in the 2000 fee hike. I understood this to be an act of self-preservation given the degree of conflict and fall-out that the original tuition hike generated.

The events surrounding the initial university cost sharing implementation, can best be understood in the context of a national economic policy rather than a university-specific policy change. According to those responsible for running the economy, by 2000, the state of the national economy was such that there was a need to define and make priorities on what would be subsidized by government in line with its limited resources. One respondent noted,

The state of the economy as it stood was so unacceptable that even the graduates out of the university would find no companies at all that would employ them if the government continued with that phase. The tax base was shrinking drastically because of heavy inflation and high interest rates. So it became imperative and when you

have so much demand on the resources, against very few resources, you have no choice but to prioritize and decide on who picks what.

Other nationally connected respondents confirmed this state of affairs. They agreed that by 2000, the macroeconomic situation was such that the need for finding alternatives to funding institutions such as the University had reached a critical situation. A respondent associated with international development agencies said that developing countries were faced with a dilemma regarding which educational sub-sector to fund in the face of diminishing resources. They were forced to choose whether to fund basic education with an increased rate of return on investment or higher education with less.

From the Treasury's point of view the issue was not about the University but rather the national economic situation. In this regard, the cost sharing and recovery strategy was one that was applied to all sectors of the social services delivery and to goods provided by government such as licenses, passports and other documents. The whole strategy was based on broad principles that applied across wide and varied services and not only university education.

Two main conclusions have emerged from the analysis on the implementation of the MIM and the 2000 budget statement. The first conclusion was that the government did not support or show interest in the recommendations of the university-commissioned 1997 MIM report although the University took the steps to forward the recommendations to all government departments that were considered stakeholders of the university. As a result, the limited reforms that the university itself initiated covered non-controversial and inexpensive aspects such as decentralization, devolution of power and the revision of the University Act which involved University's own personnel. To avoid controversy and censure from the government, individual colleges with the approval of the university office also introduced full privately paying programs alongside the main government subsidized programs, euphemistically called "parallel programs." The second conclusion was that it was only when the government faced internationally instituted macro-economic reforms that culminated in the implementation of user fees in the 2000 budget statement, that the university reforms gained momentum and support from the government.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTATION

This section outlines some of the challenges and issues evident in reactions and responses that followed the policy announcement in order to illustrate how policy recipients were able to influence the policy text at this late stage in spite of their exclusion during the policy formulation stage. The critical account is based on observations and experiences of the respondents. I have called these reactions and events “irrationalities” that are not accounted for in a rational top-down policy model but seem to be part of policy implementation (Ball, 1990).

The conclusions regarding the challenges to the policy implementation are discussed in two parts. First, is the very visible and political conflict following the introduction and attempted implementation of the 2000 cost sharing strategy through the budget statement. These challenges were the result of student political mobilization to resist the sudden introduction of user fees without their prior consultation or knowledge. The student resistance triggered a cycle of events that included anti-tuition fees demonstration, followed by government’s mobilizing riot police for coercion purposes, government change of tactics to embrace student involvement, consultation, debate and finally policy revision. The second category of the challenges involve contextual realities in connection with the policy recipients, the institutional framework of those organizations required to implement the policy and the wider societal attitudes, expectations and practices.

STUDENT RESISTANCE AND PROTESTS

As soon as an announcement was made to the effect that university tuition fees had been increased, students organized demonstrations that disrupted college activities as a show of resistance to the intended implementation and their lack of inclusion or consultation in the original policy development process. For several days demonstrations were held across the campuses of the university that were in session. Although initially most of these demonstrations were intended to be peaceful, they often ended up becoming confrontational

clashes between the students and the riot police, mobilised by the state to disperse the demonstrating students. Newspaper reports highlighted the extent of the disruption especially at the Polytechnic, which is right in the centre of Malawi's commercial capital, Blantyre. The articles describe a picture of hundreds of Polytechnic students taking to the streets of Blantyre and bringing traffic and life in their part of the city to a halt. The state had responded by sending in anti-riot police with tear gas resulting in battles between students and anti-riot police as they chased students away from the main streets. There were accounts of the police chasing the students into their hostels and nearby residential areas, thereby extending the areas affected by the demonstrations, (Nation, June, July 2000; Daily Times, June, July 2000). The following descriptions from newspapers capture the nature of the student political activities, state response and the disruption caused by the confrontations between students and police:

“The desire for a peaceful demonstration was aborted after some emotionally charged students put logs, stones and tree branches at the traffic light near the college which drew attention of the policemen.” (Chapalapata, July 20, 2000)

“Students strike against fees hike - police besiege the Polytechnic to quell the demonstration by students. Angry Polytechnic students yesterday clashed with armed anti riot police, after they took to the streets, several students were arrested.”
(Paliani, July 20, 2000)

“Over thirty heavily armed policemen besieged the Polytechnic premises including, hostels, lecturers' offices where they fired teargas which choked students around the campus.”
(Paliani, July 20, 2000)

The student and faculty respondents gave several reasons for this student resistance. The first was the sudden announcement and their lack of psychological and economic preparedness; second, the whole idea of paying fees was new; and lastly, the amount of K46, 000 (equivalent to US\$ 1800 in 2000), frightened them. In short, all the reasons underline the lack of participation, information and public awareness of key stakeholders regarding the problems, the necessity and timing for the change. One student respondent argued that

The way the policy was introduced was crude. We just woke up one morning and heard it on the radio. And the students said to me, “We are confused and there will be a demonstration like you have never seen”. Indeed by 7.30, there was a big anti-tuition demonstration and clashes had started between the students and the police. The student leadership should have been told.

An administrator said she heard about the fee hike on the news and since she was not even aware that this was an intended policy change she was not surprised to see the total chaos on campus. A newspaper editor commented on the suddenness of the policy change said

Malawians have accepted that individually funded private schools could be expensive considering the overheads. But for government with its budgetary allocation to be caught up and surprise the college goers with such a bombshell of the fee hike! (Daily times, 29, July 2000)

The sudden change meant that parents and guardians had to come up with the thousands of kwachas that were required for tuition fees because economic conditions in Malawi cannot support students working for their tuition fees. The whole university community was therefore unprepared for such a substantive change to the culture of university education, its economic implications for parents, and finally, the implications for university administration practices and culture. One faculty member argued that the policy was premised on practices and behavioural assumptions that are absent in Malawi culture. She argued that Malawians had no “saving culture” for educational purpose. In any case even if they could save, most Malawians could not afford the amounts involved when one considers the salary structures. An editorial in one of the influential newspapers summarised some of the concerns in the following manner,

The boycott by the university students over the incredible hike of their contributory fees is not unreasonable. A 3000 percent hike for some of the students who might well be orphans is no laughing matter. How many cattle are some of them going to sell to meet the K46, 000? That is if they have the cattle in the first place. And how many of their parents or guardians can fork that much to keep their wards in college? (Daily times, July 29, 2000)

One key interviewee defended the manner in which the substantive financial change was introduced while acknowledging the suddenness of the change. He justified the sudden change on the premise that the country had lost ten years of the opportunity to have incrementally implemented user fees that would have been realistic and would have cushioned the policy recipients. He felt that if this had been done earlier, by the year 2000, the amount would have been high but people would have absorbed and internalized the change. Consequently, by 2000 the only option according to him was the “shock treatment.” What this respondent was saying was that the key policy formulators were aware of the

repercussions of introducing such a substantial policy change in a sudden manner but felt that there was no choice. However, he could have been arguing with hindsight knowledge. Other critics viewed such policy changes as “rationalized by applying obsolete economic formulae” (Daily Times, July 2000).

The second reason given by the students for their resistance was that the policy did not realistically consider affordability, which is the issue highlighted in the newspaper editorial quoted on the previous page. One faculty member expressed the same sentiments noting “the lack of psychological preparation” of the public or indeed the whole university community before the introduction of such a substantial policy change impinging on the economic cultural context of university education in the country.

Most respondents also stated that the original announcement or policy statement was vague and never mentioned supporting policy instruments such as the loan scheme, which addressed the issues of affordability and equity. Moreover, the budget statement lacked clarity on when the policy would be in effect and what would happen to the students who had been selected on the basis of merit and full subsidy. This policy inconsistency, therefore, gave an impression that government was withdrawing from higher education and leaving poor students to fend on their own. In their petition to the state president students clarified their concerns regarding affordability and the inequity of cost sharing as introduced in the budget statement. Most importantly, students questioned the disparity between cost sharing and the government-touted policy of poverty alleviation whose aim was to empower the poor.

STUDENTS DEMANDS

Students were able to influence the policy and policy process revisions in the following way:

- 1 The state had to explain and articulate the concept of a loan scheme; a related policy instrument, which had vaguely been alluded to in the policy documents;

- 2 The current cohort to have access to the loan scheme without any exclusions until the last group graduated;
- 3 The fees to be reduced to an affordable amount.

The students gained concessions to most of their demands including an inclusive loan to all current students until 2004 when the last group would graduate. They also gained an assurance that they would not be required to actually repay any amount. All they were required to do was sign a non-binding form as an application as a formality. After negotiations and a further policy process where the students were included, the fees were reduced to K25, 000. The student representatives were included in the reconstituted policy development teams including the committee that was revising the cost-sharing strategy, the fact-finding mission to other universities in Africa and the committee on the loan scheme.

PETITION TO THE STATE PRESIDENT AND THE EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

In the midst of the protest, faculty and other college administrators advised the student body to regroup and write down their complaints instead of aimlessly demonstrating and clashing with the police who were sent to keep the “law and order.” The students drafted a petition to the President of the country. When I asked one student leader why they felt they needed to write to the president and not the Minister of Education or Finance for instance, his answer was,

The Minister of Finance slapped increased fees on us, and normally if you want redress, you have to seek higher authority and the only higher authority to the Minister, and as this was approved by the parliament itself, we had to appeal to the president himself.

In the new Malawi petitions to the state president by different groups or individuals seeking redress, is a common feature. There is a view that only the president can address issues, reflecting a continuing paternalistic and patronage approach to policy issues.

From the highest level of the Malawi leadership a combination of responses were demonstrated, ranging from appeasement, to an attempt to engage the students in a

consultative effort with the formal policy formulation team, to populist rhetoric. According to newspaper reports, the State President responded by accepting an audience with the student leadership at which he addressed the issue of affordability (The Nation, Nov, 2000). He asked the students to suggest what would be a reasonable amount as tuition fees. The president also constituted a Presidential Commission on Cost-sharing made up of three senior cabinet ministers representing education, finance and presidential affairs to investigate and come up with solutions. Presidential Commissions constituted to address failed policy implementation processes are a common feature in the new democratic environment. For sure, the commission's members were all former professors of the University of Malawi and other universities. The Vice Chancellor was the fourth member of this committee. Therefore overriding assumptions in policy process were rationality, expertise, prestige and a top-down approach. The difference this time around was the inclusion of the students in the consultations. As a corollary to this high level committee, there was another lower level committee chaired by the Vice-Chancellor whose membership included the student representatives.

A fact-finding mission was put in place as a result of a "directive" from His Excellency the State President, according to a senior respondent. The State President who was "out of the country" on a visit to New York, also directed that students should be part of this fact-finding mission to other nations in the neighbouring countries (Madziakapita, Nation, 2000). The team included a deputy minister, principal secretaries from the three stakeholder ministries of education, finance and presidential affairs, the Vice Chancellor and student representatives from four university constituent colleges. In the whole period of consultations, negotiations and revision of the policy, presidential affairs became a key stakeholder state department reflecting the potential political costs attached to student resistance by the political elite.

THE POLICY TEAM'S RESPONSE: DEBATE, INCLUSION AND NEGOTIATIONS

The immediate response of the key actors to the student resistance was to embark on a round of debate and consultation with the students in all the campuses. The Minister of Finance dominated the debates and consultations although the teams comprised finance and education

ministry top officials including the Minister of Education. Some of the respondents associated with this process justified the post-policy consultation by saying that it was a defense of the principle of distributing national funds rather than the amount which was the concern of the students. One respondent had this to say.

The Minister went to every college to defend the principle but not the amount. The amount was up to the line ministry, in this case it was the Ministry of Education to decide. The line Ministry dishes out these amounts to this one and that one so if they want to continue at the ratio of 1:90 or 1:99, it is up to them. For us as Treasury we were saying here is a final amount of what you get and the principle is this. And there was no disagreement on the principle.

The idea of top politicians and technocrats visiting the university college campuses to debate a policy issue was a first in the history of Malawi. It underlined the changing democratic culture and the increasing power generated by student activism.

Student respondents felt that the debates were very open and gave them an opportunity to interrogate some of the policy justifications. They also felt that the debate was a source of important information regarding their university education. Some interesting facts emerged from the student themselves about how they became more receptive to the idea of cost sharing after being made more aware of some of the financial facts and after the fact finding mission. One student leader revealed that when they became aware that it cost the government of Malawi close to K200, 000 per annum (in 2000 close to US\$3000) to educate one university student they realized that there was no justification for their rejection of cost sharing. This has implications for policy practice and for the impact of stakeholder involvement on policy implementation.

According to the student participants, from that point onwards the issue of contention became that of affordability. Emphasis was put on renegotiating for the right amount which the majority of their parents and guardians could afford. The second issue was the students' future ability to repay the loans, and what amount would be reasonable for them to survive as employed individuals, given the salaries in Malawi. Finally, the students stated that after the student leadership's inclusion in the fact-finding trip to other regional universities especially the University of Makerere in Uganda, they became aware that cost sharing was not unique

to Malawi and it could be successfully implemented as Makerere had demonstrated. Makerere had a mixed system of fully merit based and full state subsidized students as well as a large cohort of private students. The private students were supported by privately delivered supporting infrastructures such as food and accommodation as well as flexible module based courses allowing private students to move in and out as their circumstances dictated.

INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

According to respondents' comments, the main institutional challenge to the intended policy implementation was the lack of a national policy framework that could oversee the policy process. Due to this vacuum in the Malawi State structure, the University policy process was fragmented resulting in policy text that was inconsistent, lacking clarity or other supporting policy.

Respondents more aware of the national policy framework observed that the higher education system in Malawi lacked a coordinating office within the government structure and this played against a systematic and coherent national higher education policy implementation. Another respondent who was knowledgeable about the newly established higher education directorate office revealed that no resources had been assigned to the office, no supporting staff, and no terms of reference or job descriptions had been provided for the office director. The office was characterized by such a high turnover and mobility rate of its directors that between January 2000 and June 2002 three different individuals had held that post. During the course of the study, two of the individuals left the office. The first was reassigned to a different ministry while the other found a more lucrative job.

More instability and ambiguity was also revealed with regard to leadership and responsibility for the articulation and translation of the Treasury's budgetary financial principles into a workable university fee structure and for making the announcement. The assumption of Treasury was that the MOEST as a line ministry was supposed to enter into consultation with UNIMA to decide how they would translate the 75:25 ratio within the different colleges as

guided by the priorities of the government's education policy itself. A financial technocrat stated that

It was the MOEST that was supposed to work these things out based on their own programs, but an announcement was made before those dynamics were worked out. In the budget statement it was simply stated that the university would do cost recovery but the actual figures and logistics would be worked out by the MOEST in consultation with UNIMA.

However, reality and practice on the ground seem to contradict this view. The same respondent seems to contradict himself about who coordinated the policy when he continued to argue that

What was supposed to happen was that a technical committee that had been put up, members of that technical committee including Treasury, UNIMA and MOEST should have worked out the details because Treasury only provided a broad outline. We had preliminary figures from the university on which we premised our 75:25 ratio; it was up to the line ministry and the institution concerned to actually target and redistribute according to national priorities. For example the Treasury had differentiated figures based on national priorities, such as, the College of Medicine versus Humanities or Arts at Chancellor College.

There seems to be a suggestion here that the two state agencies and the University itself were supposed to further articulate the principles used in the implementation. These contradictions indicate the lack of clarity and fragmentation in the government structures and the inappropriate premise on which implementation was based.

On the other hand, respondents closely associated with the MOEST suggested that as far as they were concerned everything had been spelt out in the MIM, although when further pressed that MIM never specified any amounts, they admitted that they did not know how the amount was arrived at. However, a key bureaucratic respondent admitted that there was ambiguity about UNIMA because although it falls under the jurisdiction of MOEST,

The university as a statutory corporation is independent and has its own budget. They get direct funding from Treasury. Statutory bodies (parastatal organisations) are like polygamists; they are partly married to the Department of Statutory Corporations, partly to line ministries and partly to Finance.

Such lack of clarity could also be a political legacy of a university system that had hitherto occupied a prominent place under the former president's own direction resulting in an

undeveloped government structure for university policy and coordination. Respondents from UNIMA argued that it was not their job to articulate policy impinging on national social issues.

Our job is to implement whatever policy government has made. You will find that even the MIM report did not address social equity issues. That is why we circulated the MIM report to all key ministries in order for them to comment and give guidance on the national issues.

Considering the lack of clarity and the fragmented nature of the university policy framework within the government structure, the approach taken by some of the university's own officials was unhelpful to the university's reform process. However, this stance was contradictory to what University Council Sub Committee and individual members were doing on the ground to ensure policy change (University Council and MCS, 2002). According to students and faculty participants, certain prominent and influential individuals were actively engaged in getting the reform to move forward. Some confirmed their personal interest in getting the reform to move forward during the interviews. They also pointed out that state bureaucrats were not very supportive. Some of these university officials also stated that the university organizational culture was also a hindrance to reform.

One particular respondent argued that apart from the fact that the MIM did not specify an implementation program, the inherent conflict of interest within the university's organizational structure and culture constrained the implementation of the MIM report. He argued that

The reform program in the university is failing to take off because we are asking individuals within the university to reform themselves. They will not, because reform requires cutting off their limbs, remaining thin; and how do you cut off things that you have gotten used to for a long time? Reform also requires changing structures, how do you do it? If you employed some of your cousins do you tell them that "look here, there is no job for you," how do you do it?

Also, the lack of an implementation strategy detracted from the MIM report as a policy document. Indeed some of the respondents argued that the MIM was an exercise in getting policy relevant information rather than a policy document. If this argument is accepted then there wasn't any rationality in treating the MIM as a policy document before a further analysis was done. On the other hand, if the MIM report was treated as an information

gathering instrument, the rational assumption would be that a well thought out consultative and public awareness process would be put in place to ensure maximum information, dissemination and debate. This would have been a rational approach aimed at minimizing some of the unaccounted-for reactions.

Subsequently, the university did launch its own second policy analysis process to look at the MIM recommendations and the financial issues through an internal university council sub committee put in place in 2002. The sub committee enlisted the help of a private consulting firm, Management Consultancy Services (MCS), and carried out the exercise in close collaboration with the sub-committee (University Council and MCS, 2002). The findings were reported back to the Council and it was not clear whether these were to be the basis for the Tripartite Commission's mandate or not. What was clear was that there were many documents lying around addressing the university reform but actual progress on the ground had stalled by 2002.

Part of the constraints on the reforms was the lack of plans about how the university should reform itself and what other supporting structures needed to be in place or what structures taken out that contributed to implementation problems. Such an omission could not contribute to the intended policy rationality and order. A respondent summarized the problem in the following words,

Because there has not been a conscious effort to provide a formal redefinition of the university organizational structures, the practices remain the same. From what I can see, from what I understand and from what I know there has not been a formal policy redefinition because the structures that ran the previous policy remain the same.

He further argued that it was impossible to create an institutional framework that "would run in tandem with the other structural developments if we have not consciously made an effort to define what it is we want from the university and how we could get there." One notable fact about the university's planning exercise was that while the colleges had done their strategic planning the central university office had not yet done theirs, (University of Malawi, the Polytechnic, 2001). This again underlined the discontinuities, fragmentation and the inconsistencies of the policy development and implementation. Lack of a university strategic plan or any plan meant that there was a fundamental flaw in the direction of the reforms.

This same criticism is made about the MOEST, which is the over seeing ministry; “At the Ministry level there is no clearly defined or mandated department responsible for looking into higher education and helping to coordinate and refocus it.” An administrator agreed that since the government has not even taken the time to redefine its priorities in university education, it does not know what it is paying for resulting in taxpayers’ money paying for courses that do not enhance social development. Yet, another state actor argued that there was a lack of implementation because there was no political will and individuals involved with the task of implementing such a policy as cost-sharing, were fearful of the political cost to their own careers. Just like the university had no strategic plan, the Ministry’s new legal framework, reflecting the proposed changes, that is the national education Act was not yet in place.

Another constraint on the policy implementation was the lack of clarity and coherence of the loan scheme. Although the budget statement had alluded to some vague notion of a loan scheme, when the cost sharing strategy was first announced there was no mention of the loan scheme as an instrument to address inequity issues. As a result, the students felt that the government was trying to get rid of poor students who were in the majority. They felt that a lot of their parents would not be able to afford such fees. It is also clear that at this early stage there were policy inconsistencies, especially regarding the issue of equity. Although students used the widespread poverty argument to lobby against increased fees, it later emerged (see chapter 8) that the student’s ability to pay was a much more complex situation than the simple slogan “poverty equals cannot pay” that they used. This highlights the importance of reliable and contextual policy related information prior to attempting any substantial policy change.

Student respondents, faculty, college management and some technocrats admitted that the original policy statement did not have supporting policy instruments such as the loan scheme. The oversight was quickly addressed when students demonstrated. Such a fundamental oversight poses the question of whether this was a problem of rationality or lack of

rationality. Regarding the lack of a loan scheme and the consequent policy inconsistency, one MOEST official noted,

We did not forget to address these issues before the introduction of the cost sharing. It was only when we started implementing the MIM report that we saw these issues about equitable distribution, the poor, the rich, gender balance and so on. We then felt it was important to take them into consideration. The solution in balancing equity between the rich and the poor was the loan scheme.

Others connected with the policy were unable to admit that there was something wrong with the lack of supporting policy tools and the way the policy was implemented. One clear failure of the policy content was this lack of response to the equity problem. There also seemed to be inconsistencies in the stories between the Treasury, MOEST and University authorities. No one was prepared to take responsibility for the mistakes in the content or the policy development approach apart from one senior university official, who had not been part of the original policy team, who admitted that there were lessons to be learnt from the whole exercise. This raises the question of whether or not there is any individual and institutional responsibility and the nature and degree of interagency relations in policy formulation in view of the inter-relatedness of government activities.

UNIVERSITY/STATE RELATIONS

University officials highlighted challenges emanating from negative relations between the state and the university. On the other hand state officials felt that the university was to blame for the negative relations. As a result two opposing views emerged in the complex nature of state bureaucracy and university relations.

From the point of view of university officials, they felt that state bureaucrats lacked understanding of and did not support the university system. University officials and managers also bemoaned the attitudes of the state decision-makers as lacking understanding of the nature of the problems that the university was facing. The majority of these decision-makers at the political and bureaucratic level were alumni of UNIMA and this revelation was inconsistent with the understood expectations that as alumni they would be helpful to their

former university. This is of special significant since almost all interviewees and the identified members in the different policy teams were UNIMA alumni.

All university respondents who dealt with state decision-makers expressed their frustration at the attitude of state bureaucrats, which could be summarised as unsupportive and uncooperative. A respondent had this to say about the attitude of the decision-makers and alumni,

When appeals are made to government, the decision-makers, who will have passed through this same university, have tended to become very impassive. They don't, can't understand the urgency of the matter so they felt that work done here is irrelevant. You go and knock a door at Lilongwe [Malawi's capital city], in some of those places you will find people giving you a cold reception . . . But also lets not forget that we do have colleagues there who are used to simply going to their offices and making people suffer. It is as if you are going to beg God.

Another university respondent expressed similar sentiments:

Certain officers in Government don't seem to appreciate the urgency of the matters in the same way we do ourselves. I think there is little appreciation of how the university operates managerially. The majority of the alumni understand how the university operates academically because that is what affected them when they were students. But they have little understanding of how the university is funded or managed financially, how its committee system functions to build consensus and so on. So these guys in the government, some of them in Treasury, others in Education, sometimes fail to sympathize with the University because they have not given themselves time to critically find out what this entity is all about.

One further respondent commented that "our alumni are the least excited alumni I have ever found in any nation I have worked in Africa. The sense of pride in the university is not there."

On the other hand, non-university respondents felt that university members lacked commitment to changing the university, were dependent on the state, unwilling to sacrifice and take risks or take advantage of opportunities to make themselves useful to society. A state respondent had this to say regarding the university/state relations,

Government has said that the University of Malawi needs to be able to stand on its own. I think it is high time that we stopped spoon feeding the university. It is a culture which we have built which has brought, can I use the word "laziness" to

lecturers. Research is not an issue for them, and yet outside universities are able to stand on their own, they are organizing income generating activities, they are running programs which bring income to their universities, that does not exist in Malawi. So we are saying the university needs to develop a culture of initiating projects which will bring money into the university. Once they learn to stand on their own they will develop programs that spearhead development. They need to be proactive rather than reacting to government's declining funding.

Coming from an important state bureaucrat this statement clearly indicate a disparity between the entrepreneurial university that the government expects and the need for continued government support that the university people still expect. To be sure the simplistic assumption that the university culture can be instantly changed is in itself problematic. Chapter eight shows the many flawed premises on which the change is justified.

AIDS AND MALAWI'S POLICY DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

A small number of respondents raised two pertinent issues in connection with AIDS. The first issue was the impact of AIDS on the civil service and the state's capacity for policy development and implementation. One respondent argued that AIDS had impacted the human resources capacity of the civil service resulting in individuals with less experience occupying key policy functions in the field of policy development. As a result, most policy related offices were occupied by individuals who might have been brilliant in their areas of specialization but have no policy related experience or training for them to make effective policy decisions. He argued that such individuals were likely to be easily influenced by international stakeholders. He observed that government should review its promotional criteria as well as staff development procedures to accommodate such perceived weaknesses.

A respondent associated with the international development organisation also stated that Malawi's policy-making capacity especially in the MOEST was very deficient. He further maintained that the presence of a fully-fledged World Bank office in Malawi is an indication of the perceived lack of policy planning capacity in the country, which merited support from the IFI. The presence of a fully-fledged World Bank office has been a development of the last decade. Of significance is the fact that most of the posts in the office are held by African

specialists. This could be seen as a rise of the African global technocrats who are blending in with the local technocrats and bureaucrats.

A bureaucrat knowledgeable about the MOEST was able to confirm this by saying there were many top-level vacancies at the MOEST which made it difficult to run a large ministry such as Education. However it is also important to point out that other issues have affected the civil service capacity. Some factors include the effects of the civil service reform especially the attempt at decentralization, which is still in its formative stages. The negative impact of the reform and rolling back of the state has led to the growth of the non-governmental sector resulting in the brain drain from civil service to NGOs and the international organizations whose local offices are on the increase in Malawi. Lack of capacity is also seen as a result of the IFIs marginalization of traditional state bureaucrats who are also likely to be against current reform.

A state respondent also suggested that the social impact of AIDS have direct consequences for policy development capacity and successful implementation. He argued that the result of many current policy changes such as cost sharing means that the small middle class will have to take on more extended family responsibilities due to the increased number of deaths of kin. Since it is the same technocrats or bureaucrats who articulate and translate policy “it was a natural role for these bourgeoisie to protect their interests.” This was a fundamental cultural fact. Just as another respondent had alluded to how it was difficult for university officials to implement restructuring when part of the retrenched individuals were kin. I only wondered if these individuals see themselves in that dilemma or not.

MEDIA AND THE ISSUE OF ECONOMIC MISMANAGEMENT AND POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Another important issue that was raised by a key respondent and the students was that of the connection between lack of state resources and economic mismanagement and accountability of the political elite. This respondent who had been present at some of the debates that were conducted between the policy team and the students described how students questioned the

state's claims that there were no resources to fully fund the university. The respondent argued that this rejection was premised on the rampant corruption charges reported by the media for the past few years. In his view because the urban and the educated people were more aware of the economic mismanagement and the lack of political accountability through the print media, they were cynical about the state's assertion that there was a lack of government resources. In a way the urban educated population was holding the government to account for the sources of the resources that they seemed to be squandering through their actions. He contrasted this reaction with that of the rural parents who, according to him, were more accepting of their role as responsible parents responsible for feeding their children even when they were at school.

In the new and open Malawi, persistent headlines of top level corruption and mismanagement stories have made the newspaper-reading urban population more aware of lack of accountability. Some of the more eye catching headlines have included the following statements; the president's weekly tours of the country in the midst of diminishing government resources; the government's purchasing of ministerial German luxury cars with British aid. Even the legislature is implicated in this mismanagement, in that they approved their own salary increments every time the Parliament meets for a budget session. Another respondent felt that the political culture in Malawi was fast becoming that of selfish individual interests rather than public service. And, finally, there was the perceived sudden enrichment of the new political elite and their cronies most of whom were not so well off just less than a decade ago.

Events surrounding the political response to university students' resistance to cost-sharing also underlined that whereas the policy machinery could ignore the rural majority, it was becoming difficult to ignore the fully politicized and aware urban and educated class whether they were in the leadership or bureaucratic elite or not. The disparity in the reactions to cost-sharing highlights the different expectations regarding the state role between the rural and the urban or between those living in the modernized parts of Africa and those in the more traditional areas.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

This part of the chapter of the study critically looked at political and other contextual challenges that arose during the policy implementation in connection with the policy development approach and context. The outline of the implementation process showed that as long as the process was tackling non-contentious issues such as amending the University Act or devolving power to colleges, the reform proceeded smoothly with no political or other challenges. The only challenges or constraints to the reform process were institutional ones like rigid cultural practices and lack of structural framework to support the envisaged changes.

The analysis also showed that the implementation stage became a space for interaction between the policy development actors and the initially excluded stakeholders who were most affected by the policy changes namely the students, faculty and college administrators. The initial policy development process had taken a top-down, bureaucratic and technical approach and had failed to disseminate information to key stakeholders regarding the intended substantive policy change concerning tuition hike. The lack of information and inclusion of the stakeholders led to suspicion and resistance, which resulted in the disruption of the whole implementation process.

Student political activism led to political challenges to the policy change which in turn resulted in a series of responses from the political and techno/bureaucratic elite, ranging from resistance and disruption of implementation, coercion, incorporation and inclusion, debate, policy information gathering missions, re-negotiation, policy revision and compromise. The contrast between the smooth rational, technical and expert dominated policy formulation process, and the unstable, fragmented, contentious and very public conflict ridden implementation process clearly indicated the changing make-up of policy players at this stage. The implementation stage became a space for interaction between different stakeholders that allowed for different interests, values and assumptions that were never part of the top-down, technical and paternalistic policy formulation stage to be heard. For the first

time, in the history of university education in Malawi, the student resistance turned the top-down technical approach to almost a bottom-up political approach.

The most pressing challenges against the implementation process stemmed from the political resistance against its top-down approach, the lack of clarity of the implementing strategy, unclear ownership of the whole policy and lack of participation of policy recipients and the college level members as the street level implementers. A key respondent argued that both the university and MOEST should have articulated the policy further and done the public relations that was needed before introducing such a change to university students. On the other hand, university officials maintained that it was not the business of UNIMA to articulate government policy or sell it to the public, their job is simply to implement what government told them to do. The MIM authors had put inclusion and involvement of all stakeholders as one of its warnings and conditions to introducing any of its recommendations that were substantive and radical. The MOEST argued that they were not responsible for any financial matters of the university because the university is directly answerable to Treasury. With such lack of leadership to coordinate and integrate different policy related agencies and mutual mistrust between university and state agencies, it is evident that the assumptions about policy implementation from the top were wrongly premised.

Apart from the political challenges, the disruption of the implementation process also showed other policy development deficiencies that had not been addressed. They included institutional practices and cultures of the university and state structures such as lack of other policy-related instruments, and lack of inter agency coordination. Above all, the disruption also revealed the general lack of matching the policy to contextual realities such as the social, economic, political and cultural environment of Malawi. The next chapter critically analyzes the mismatch between the content and context.

SUMMARY

This chapter addressed the questions how the policy development approach hindered implementation process. The analysis showed that because the policy recipients were not involved or made aware of the impending introduction of user fees, the students through political activism resisted the implementation of the policy. The political struggle between the authorities and the student was resolved through student incorporation, policy consultation, negotiation and revision. Apart from these political challenges the analysis also identified other institutional and structural challenges to the policy implementation such as lack of a clearly defined national policy framework, bureaucratic dysfunctionism leading to fragmented relations between the state and university authorities and the university's own institutional and organizational weaknesses.

Chapter 8

EMERGING ISSUES IN THE POLICY CONTEXT: JUSTIFICATIONS AND CHOICE OF POLICY INSTRUMENTS

In this chapter I adopt a further descriptive analysis to examine, evaluate and compare the empirical justifications and choices made in connection with the policy content and discourse. The analysis is based on the suggested policy solutions in key policy documents such as the MIM report, 2000 budget statement and the PIF. Additionally, responses from study participants on the implementation are used. The first part of the chapter outlines the implementation of subsequent policy choices and strategies put in place as solutions to the identified policy problems. The second part is a comparison and evaluation of the normative and empirical justifications of the chosen policy instruments with counter justifications and choices.

The analysis shows that behind these reforms was an emerging new policy discourse that had far reaching implications for the relationship of the university with the state and society. As indicated in chapter six, the emerging discourse was dominated by neo-liberal strategies reflecting market principles such as de-subsidization, privatization, decentralization, devolution of power, contracting out and other related strategies. The second group of conclusions involves the evaluation of these neo-liberal policy choices in terms of their appropriateness and consistency in relation to the Malawi context. This evaluation is outlined through voices of different actors and their alternative justifications to the policy text and enactment. The justifications and counter justifications involve issues of socio-cultural, economic and political appropriateness. The conclusion as voiced by many actors was that because the policy reform was driven by an externally generated economic agenda, contextual issues involving social, cultural, economic and political realities were not adequately addressed. This is what led to many of the implementation difficulties shown in chapter 7.

POLICY CHOICES AND STRATEGIES

The outlined policy choices and strategies are based on the policy documents' recommendations and respondents comments on the actual and intended solutions to the identified national and institutional problems contained in the PIF and MPSRP documents and the MIM report. Three categories of solutions were proposed, broadly grouped under the headings of financial, governance and administration, and academic reforms and cover quantifiable figures as projections for expansion, financial diversification to include private and gradual public de-subsidization of university funding, introduction of market and society driven programs. Management and administrative changes included the amendment of the University Act to effect decentralization, devolution of power and other restructuring activities. Finally there was also the introduction of a more business-oriented approach as signified by the central administration and colleges pre-occupation with strategic plans.

ACCESS AND EXPANSION OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION: ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY SYSTEMS

The proposed solutions to the problems of expansion were represented in quantifiable figures in the PIF. The aim was to increase the numbers of students from 3,300 in 1997 to 12,000 by the year 2012. The main target group was those aged between 18 and 23 years. Expansion would be achieved through "optimizing use of available physical and human resources through intensified use during nights, weekends and holiday as well as joint time tabling across faculties" (PIF, 2002, p. 34). Budget statements in the year 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 specified that both University of Malawi and the new Mzuzu University would be encouraged to mount distance education programs (Chikaonda, 2000; 2001). As well, for the first time the Malawi government proposed: "to encourage private tertiary education provision with an aim of having 15% of total enrolment by the year 2012" (PIF, 2002, p.34).

These quantifiable strategies were a new feature in Malawi's education policy and reflected the economic and technicist analyses that all IFI based policies generally take (Verspoor, 1992). Whether or not these figures were realistic in the Malawian situation was questionable since even the calendar for the policy document was behind its own schedule by two years by the time of this study. In addition, in the absence of policy related information, such estimated and proposed figures could be viewed as more of an academic exercise rather than a realistic process.

With regard to the problems of equity, the policy specifically addressed socio-economic inequalities, physical disabilities and gender disparities by supporting and increasing numbers of the disadvantaged. The policy changes also aimed at increasing the current 28% of female participation to 50% by the year 2012. The policy changes would be fulfilled by strategies such as scholarships to economically and physically disadvantaged students, and needy female students in non-traditional areas, and also through gender sensitization programs. The policy proposed differentiated scholarships, partial scholarships and full scholarships depending on students' ability to pay. The problem, judging by the resistance from key stakeholders was that economic disadvantage in a country like Malawi was the norm rather than the exception (UNDP, 2002). As was later suggested by some respondents only a small percentage of the Malawian population can afford to pay university fees. Furthermore, those who meet the required qualifications for entrance into university might not necessarily have the ability to pay.

According to the PIF, the government would set up a nationally coordinated student loan scheme by the year 2002. The 2000 budget statement had also stipulated somewhat vaguely that

Government will set aside some resources for bursaries for secondary students and a loan scheme for university students. Government plans are that the contributions by the students should be kept at the school to assist the school. Management of the funds will be by communities and not by government. (Chikaonda, 2000, p. 7)

This was to address the issue of those who qualify but might not necessarily meet the meritorious criteria for full scholarship. However, when implementation was attempted the loan scheme had not yet been put in place. And the lack of the loan scheme became

an issue for contention, which almost derailed the whole process. Respondents responsible for effecting the changes explained their actions by saying that there was a loan scheme in place although events showed that the loan scheme was only mentioned after students demonstrated. As well, even by 2002 the loan scheme was not in place because there were neither the funds allocated to the loan scheme nor an organizational framework for administering the loan scheme.

Similarly, different members of the university community responded differently to the issue of private universities. Some university respondents felt that the introduction of private universities would be a positive move towards UNIMA reform despite the obvious competition. One respondent argued that

We are happy that private universities will be starting may be next year. Experience in Uganda, Kenya and Zimbabwe has been positive for public universities because the new independent private universities are backed by religious institutions that have a stake in the success of the institutions and have money. So you see globalization! Since these colleges are religiously affiliated with churches in the US and other developed countries the possibility of their offering scholarships to their affiliates is there. They will have better facilities with the freedom to start relevant and marketable courses, which means they will be self-reliant.

This respondent seemed to believe that the university would need competition in order for it to change.

They will not be like us who started by saying we will build a new class of rulers. So we will have to catch up with them in the sense that since we don't have any religion to sell, we have got to give relevant courses, change our syllabuses to reflect the needs of society and hopefully do research that will be used for national development.

However, others felt that the competition from global players in the Malawi higher education market which had come as a result of the liberalization of education was unhealthy for Malawi. For instance, they bemoaned the global impact where universities from the UK and Australia were aggressively advertising for students and where the political, business and technocratic elite were sending their children to study in outside universities and colleges instead of supporting the declining local university.

On the other hand, stakeholder respondents, such as students, viewed private students whether within the university in terms of merit and qualifications. They felt that it was the right of those who do well to have a university education. Many of the students viewed the issue within the parameter of government subsidization as reflecting academic excellence with its resulting prestige and elitism. They contrasted this with private paying students who could not meet the exclusive, competitive and narrow selection criteria for government subsidy.

FINANCIAL DIVERSIFICATION: PRIVATE AND PUBLIC FUNDING

In line with its new mission of funding the university through state and non-state sources, three alternative strategies were proposed. The three strategies involved; cost-effective use of available resources, diversification of the revenue sources by the university and introduction of cost sharing measures (MPRSP, 2002; PIF, 2000). However the MIM report had stipulated that cost sharing would only make sense if the inefficiencies in the management of the university were addressed. Again, the lack of integration of other related policy strategies caused inconsistencies in the policy implementation and sparked a debate during the implementation of the cost sharing strategies in 2000. Policy recipients demanded that other policy strategies should be addressed before cost sharing could be introduced as stipulated in the MIM report. Stakeholder respondents said,

Students argued that unless these things in the MIM report were effected, “we will not pay. We will wait until the university office is trimmed down as was proposed we do not wish to be paying for management inefficiencies. We don’t want to do that”. The authorities agreed to do that and after the fees were negotiated downwards in response to our fight, we started seeing things like restructuring the colleges and the university office.

In order to address the identified inefficient management practices at UNIMA as outlined, cost efficiencies in use of resources were proposed. The measures included increasing student/lecturer ratios, student/support ratios and the student /administration ratios. Again appropriate measures were to be put in place to ensure that unit college administration costs fell. Finally, the institution would be required to submit annual audited accounts to the Ministry of Education as a means of accountability.

Table 6 Projected Student/Staff Ratio

	1997 ratio	2012 ratio
Student/lecturer	10:1	25:1
Student/support	4:1	15:1
Student/admin.	6:1	15:1

In terms of diversifying funding sources, the university was to privatize, commercialize and contract out all students' welfare services. The MPRSP proposed that

To reduce reliance of higher education on government subventions involves two types of interventions; first reducing costs of provision of higher education and secondly, generating alternative sources of resources. In order to reduce costs non-core services such as catering and boarding will be commercialized and contracted out (MPRSP, 2002, p. 55).

Events during the study showed that this part of the reform had not yet been implemented. Some interviewees viewed the lack of implementation as reflecting entrenched interests within different sectors of the university community.

Other strategies included government encouraging the privatisation of important related activities such as ownership of university bookshops and proposing a voucher system for purchase of instructional materials. UNIMA would also be encouraged to undertake fundraising activities with alumni, civil society, private sector, NGOs and foreign aid providers. Faculty would be encouraged to remit money to their institutions if they conducted consultation activities during institutional time.

The introduction of cost sharing measures was to ensure reduction of government subvention and to address the problems of under-collection of fees from users. The 2000 budget stated that to address the problem of government bearing a lot of "economically unreasonable subsidies that have resulted in government borrowing extensively to meet the cost of such subsidies," the government would introduce full and partial cost recovery (Chikaonda, 2000, p. 6). Partial cost recovery would be introduced "in certain areas where consumption of the service has some reasonable amount of individual benefit. A

good example is secondary and tertiary education where government subsidy is almost 100%” (p.6). The universities would be expected to enroll fifteen per cent full-time, fee-paying students. A differentiated fee-paying regime was to be put in place by 2002. Again, although these proposals were in place in both the MIM report and the 2000 budget statement, respondents pointed out the lack of new related structures to support such policy changes.

According to respondents associated with Treasury, the government, using the shared/exclusive consumption principle, decided that they would share the cost of education with individuals at the ratio of 75:25. The state would pay for 75% while the individual would have to pay 25%. The 25% of the initial cost translated to MK46, 000 (US\$1000) in the year 2000. The proportion provided by government would gradually decrease with time. Out of the initial 75%, 90% was going to go to tuition and only 10% to accommodation. The differential breakdown of percentages of students’ funding is as follows:

Table 7 Projected increase of student intake

Full time students	Percentage of total cohort	Funding status
Private	20%	Individual fee paying/full cost
Partial Scholarship	30%	50% state subsidy 50% individual pay
Full scholarship	50%	Full state subsidy

To address some of the logistical and legal problems raised by stakeholders during implementation, the state gave a window of four years so that those who were already in the system could graduate. The division between instruction and accommodation and also between core and non-core functions gave rise to the problem of how students would afford to pay for their accommodation in a poverty- ridden country. For practical reasons

there were only six university campuses in four districts with the remaining 24 districts having no local university college campuses.

The infrastructure problems that had originally led to a fully residential university such as the geographical position of the university colleges, transport, and availability of private residences for students had not been accounted for in the proposed strategies. Some respondents said following the Makerere model, private real estate owners would be encouraged to build and allow students to occupy private residences. However, this raises other logistical problems such as security, standards and economic issues such as affordability of hostels that are built as a profit making exercise by real estate developers. These issues were never mentioned in any of the policy documents.

MARKET AND SOCIETY DRIVEN CURRICULA AND RESEARCH POLICY

Academic reforms included policies and strategies that were intended to address curriculum relevance, quality, and flexible delivery of university education. These reforms were aimed at addressing de-motivation, lack of commitment and staff turnover by strengthening and improving the teaching and learning environment and research and graduate programs. Proposed strategies concerned resource provision by government and regulatory tools to improve and strengthen working conditions of university staff.

Strategies for improving salaries and professional and welfare benefits were proposed. The policy change stipulated that, “real wages of teaching and research staff of tertiary institutions will be increased by 70% of the value by 2002 and thereafter by 5 % in real terms over the next two five year periods” (PIF, 2002, p. 35). In addition, proposals aimed at recognizing and rewarding outstanding faculty members who excelled in research and other in-come generating activities in the different faculties were put in place. Some major provisional strategies included government undertaking the spending responsibility of rehabilitating all physical plants by the year 2002 and increasing the allocation for instructional materials.

To strengthen graduate and research programs the state undertook to increase allocation of funds to research and publication with specific emphasis on science and technology and to fund one half of the 10% full time graduate students who would be expected to be part of the university cohort. By 2002, all constituent colleges had a dean and faculty of post-graduate studies. However, according to respondents associated with the changes, the same problems of funding had not been addressed. With regard to deteriorating standards, strategies to strengthen student/staff assessment through training, enhancement of continuous assessment, and student involvement in assessment were to be encouraged.

To address the issues of relevance and of national priorities in the face of limited resources, a strategy was put in place that required universities to review their teaching and research programs in order to be more responsive to the needs of the Malawi society. The PIF and MPRSP documents, state respondents and top university officials specifically mentioned science, technology, and HIV/AIDS awareness programs as national priorities in.

Partnerships between the university, business and society at large were also encouraged. The university was to be actively involved with society and industry in planning programs. Institutions were to work closely with private sector, alumni, and civil society in their review of courses. Institutions were also expected to proactively seek out partnerships with alumni and society. To achieve this, institutions were encouraged to have public relations offices and the central administration was encouraged to create the office of a deputy or pro-vice chancellor to take charge of such relations.

By 2002, the university central office had employed its own pro-vice chancellor but a lot of issues arose regarding this office. For example, non-university respondents criticized the university authorities responsible for implementing policy, for insisting on an employment criteria based on academic rather than the agreed upon business and management criteria. Some of the interviewees outside the university perceived this as the university going back on the agreed upon criteria due to internal interests. They felt this would not help the university on its road to engage the business or civil society.

The idea of more market-driven, vocational and utilitarian courses was also proposed to encourage self-sufficiency and relevance. According to the Policy and Investment Framework (PIF), the university was expected to have 50% of its full time post graduate students attending courses directly connected with areas of study demanded by the labour market. Additionally, talented undergraduate students in science and technology fields that were in demand in the labour market would be on full scholarship. All institutions were to strengthen IT programs by ensuring that computer literacy was a compulsory subject. Finally, all institutions were to introduce and/or strengthen programs for sensitizing students on the HIV/AIDS pandemic. These actions were seen as the university being more responsive to society's needs. By 2002, most of these approved strategies were far from being in place. Most respondents attributed the lack of implementation to institutional and economic constraints.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

In terms of management and administrative changes the MIM report had recommended decentralization, devolution and rationalization complete with the new business approach. The MIM recommended the following changes in relation to the university's central administrative structure and functions,

The central administration's (University Office) primary concern in our recommended scenario, is to lead the development of the university wide policy and planning matters of teaching and research, engaging in upstream marketing, business development and public relations. In order to discharge these functions, the University Office needs to effectively decentralize all other functions to colleges. It needs to rid itself of excesses and prepare itself for a new role that is, as "standard torch-bearer of University of Malawi", "the university's dream team" that is able to articulate vision for the university's development and growth and be able to market this vision to the wider society. (MIM, 1997, S3, p. 9)

The PIF proposed regulatory changes to accommodate decentralization and strengthening of institutional governance (2000, p. 37). The MIM report had recommended complete restructuring starting from the legal foundations of the university itself, namely the 1974 University of Malawi Act.

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI ACT AMENDMENTS

Respondents argued that as early as 1998, the University had taken the initiative to amend their Act based on MIM recommendations, the PIF discussions, and the MPRSP, as well as their own experiences. By 2002 the University Council had completed another review to incorporate the emerging policy changes. Some of the key draft amendments in the 2002 proposed University Act included creation of structural support for decentralization and devolution of power such as academic boards, research centres, and executive deans in all faculties; rules for all these structures and for post-graduate studies. Also, there was provision for rules for the appointment of individuals to the different academic boards and as executive deans (UNIMA amended Act, 2002 draft part v).

In terms of governance reforms, the PIF and the MIM had also recommended the inclusion of students and the creation of offices to take care of student affairs. A Dean of Students office was recommended for each college. In the 1998 amendment of the Act under the University Council's membership, students' representatives had been incorporated into the Council. The amended Act stipulates that one female member and one male member elected by the University of Malawi Students Union (UMSU), shall be part of the Council membership" (part iii (ii), 1 j, p10). However, an additional incorporation was added in the 2002 draft amendment that, "except that such members will be recused in confidential matters where such members may have conflict of interest." (S1 j, p10,) Student representatives were to be included in the council and other governance committees at the university college level. Despite the existence of this provision for student representation since 1998, the events during the implementation stages revealed that students were not aware of the proposed cost-sharing strategies.

With the new policy changes such as commercialization, contracting out, and privatization, university constituent colleges were expected to take appropriate measures to strengthen their planning and management capacities. The MPSR articulated this strategy by stating that "institutions will create business development units to generate

resources by charging use of existing facilities and for collaborative programs outside school sessions”(MPRSP, 2002, p. 55). The same idea had also been articulated in the 1997 MIM report. Also there was to be collaboration between institutions and the state in planning higher education development. To achieve this, all institutions were supposed to have strategic plans and education management information systems and legislation would be put in place to guide the co-ordination of MOEST/tertiary education institution collaboration. Non university respondents argued that the university needed to look at their activities as business units. Two views emerged from university respondents on the issue of transforming themselves into business units. The first view was that the university did not have such a culture; therefore, if government wanted to introduce an entrepreneurial approach, they either had to change the culture through retraining or employ different kind of managers. One manager put it this way,

There is no business culture in the university. That is just the way it has developed. So to change the culture you need to change a set up of the management that is what MIM is saying. Management should be on contract for specific objectives because it is easier for a person who has been a manager in private industry to come here and effect those changes in line with business practices. I know the university too well and every time someone suggests changes I already anticipate the problems.

The candor with which this individual manager spoke was contrary to the assertion that entrenched self-interest constrained change. He added a dimension to organizational culture and the management of change.

Other university respondents felt that government needed to implement policy strategies that would improve facilities, staff rewards and put in place structures to improve academic structures before any such business strategies could be put in place. Another respondent argued that

There are a lot of things that need to be put in place first before the university can run efficiently. For instance if we want the students to be customers, we must know that, as customers the students will demand certain things especially when they are paying high fees. The demands will be that when she goes to the library she should find all the books that have been prescribed; when she goes to the computer lab, there should be a computer available for her to work on. In class she will not expect to be taught by an assistant but a fully qualified lecturer; what about special needs, the list goes on and on.

He pointed out that such issues were supposed to be gradually addressed by the tripartite committee. But since September 2001, the committee had not met and the process had stalled.

In conclusion to this section, the discussion identified three categories of proposed solutions and strategies. These included financial reform, governance and administration, and academic reforms. To address issues of access and expansion, quantifiable figures as projections were offered covering both private and state supported students. Financial diversification was proposed to include private and gradual public de-subsidization of university funding. Academic reforms using market and society driven programs were also proposed. Management and administrative changes included the introduction of a new legal framework for regulation, decentralization, devolution of power and other restructuring activities. There was also proposed introduction of more business-oriented approaches as signified by emphasis on strategic plans and the central administration's role as a planning centre.

POLICY APPROPRIATENESS AND CONSISTENCY

There was disagreement during the implementation process about whether or not the proposed changes were realistic and reflected the social realities in Malawi. Most respondents agreed that the social and poverty indicators in Malawi revealed deepening poverty rather than improving standards (UNDP, 2000, 2002). To them, this made the issue of introducing fees, especially without other supporting tools like the loan scheme very unjust. As a result there were justifications by defenders and counter-justifications by critics of the intended policy changes. The main areas of disagreement as far as the policy content was concerned were centred on normative issues of equity, affordability and merit. As well, there was disagreement involving practical issues of the policy design, which included issues of realizability, such as policy consistency, capacity for policy development. And, finally, the question of the origins of the content itself was prominent raising the issue of the role of foreign aid providers and ownership of policy.

One of the two reasons the student respondents gave for their resistance was that the proposed policy changes did not realistically consider the issues of equity and affordability given the widespread poverty in Malawi. In agreement one faculty member summarized the same sentiments as “the lack of psychological preparation” of the public or indeed the whole university community before the introduction of such a substantial policy change, which impinged on the economic and cultural context of university education in the country. One faculty member argued that the policy was premised on practices and behavioural assumptions that are absent in Malawi culture. She argued that Malawi had no “saving culture” for educational purposes. In any case even if they could save, most Malawians could not afford the amounts involved when one considers the salary structures.

Most respondents stated that the original announcement or policy statement was vague and never mentioned supporting policy instruments such as the loan scheme, which addressed the issues of affordability and equity. Moreover, the statement lacked clarity on when the policy would become effective and what would happen to the students who had been selected on the basis of merit and full scholarship. This policy inconsistency, therefore, gave an impression that the government was withdrawing from higher education and leaving poor students to fend on their own. As students wrote in their memo, this was contrary to the government-touted policy of poverty alleviation.

The main social argument used by the State to introduce cost sharing was based on a major paradigm shift in development circles about the rate of return on investment of primary education compared to secondary and higher education. Moyo (1992) had written about this shift in connection with education planning in Malawi. As early as the 1980s, the shift was backed by empirical evidence mostly from international development agencies. The evidence indicated that the rate of return on investment (RORI) on primary education was higher for both the individual and society than for those in the other two sub-sectors of secondary and higher education.

According to a respondent, to understand this intellectual shift one had to trace it to the UNESCO backed Jomtien and Dakar Education For All (EFA) conventions a decade earlier. With the preeminence of pro-poor policies in the IFI-backed, Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP), this choice was implemented through the 2000 budget process. One respondent posited that

UNIMA was well supported by both government and international donors until the eighties when the Jomtien agreement was signed stipulating that basic education was the most appropriate thing for the world, to the extent that resources should be moved to ensure that all children have got access to basic education. This was the beginning of the decline in terms of funding both nominally and in real terms. But government was still struggling to make higher education to go on. But the reality was that this policy shift was forced on us.

Several respondents were of the view that the argument regarding the low social returns on higher education did not apply in a developing country like Malawi where the numbers of graduates were very small compared to the population. They argued that Malawi as a nation needed the graduates to tackle social and economic development. They also argued that given the small percentage of the graduate population the social return on investment on higher education is actually higher than argued by global intellectuals. The MIM report, former vice chancellors and many educational administrators agreed on this point (Dubbey, 1988, MIM, 1997).

The national education policy as outlined in the education Policy and Investment Framework also quoted the UN charter on basic education as the reason for the implementation and the preeminence of Education for All at the expense of secondary and higher education (PIF, 2002). The MIM report had also raised the same concern regarding the marginalization and de-subsidization of university education.

The down turn in the country's economic fortunes has compelled the nation to adopt policies that focus, among other things, on rationalizing the allocation of public finances. The international community is calling for measures of re-orienting public finances in favour of basic social services and approaches that enable universities to pay more attention to maintaining standards. (MIM, 1997, S2, p.9)

Another respondent bemoaned the lack of understanding that international financing and development agencies and bilateral donors have about the social realities in developing countries like Malawi. He argued that this is what prompts these global policy actors to institute policies that have a short-term impact, are illogical and sometimes are impossible to implement because they do not address social contexts. He said,

These individuals do not even know what conditions these students come from. They don't look at our GDP or the reality of the villagers. They only have a vision of a student coming from an average UK or US parent. Or they only envision the children of the government individuals they meet in Lilongwe who are driving Pajeros and Mercs and they say, "he can afford this".

While yet another also argued that the cost-sharing policy indeed seemed to have overlooked the socio-economic realities of Malawi and stated that

K46, 000 was on the higher side looking at the economy of this country. It did not take into account of the lack of economic power of the individuals. May be it was only serving the few elite individuals who are well to do. They did not consider the masses out there. It meant that in the end it would only be the children of the bourgeoisie who will be going to university.

Coming from an individual who was connected with the policy making process this was a very interesting and telling statement. It signified either skepticism against this policy change or demonstrated the extreme cynicism that our policy makers have towards policy issues. He further clarified his statement by arguing that he regarded the few "well to do" elite to mean basically the political elite and the very few top officials in government who are "well paid and get constant fat travel allowances" (see Anders, 2003).

Several respondents defending the policy strategy argued that the fact that the government had backed down from the original K46, 000 and settled at K25, 000 was a recognition that Malawians could not afford the MK180, 000 that is the real cost. There was also the question of the Malawian political elite sending their children abroad at the expense of their own university. The economic respondents also felt that the political response was the type of backtracking that would not help the university although they had no argument to explain the issues of affordability and poverty levels in Malawi. In fact, one respondent felt that by providing the economically disadvantaged with a loan to

cover their university education needs, the government was favouring them because it was “targeting their interests.”

On the other hand, a university official criticized the differentiated fees that was originally proposed by the Treasury as leading to poor students only enrolling in easier, shorter and cheaper courses which eventually would not be as economically empowering as some of the more expensive courses. Evidence on the ground showed that the differentials were not implemented within the mainstream state subsidized courses. Instead only parallel programs offered differentiated costs between courses. Ironically, these were the courses where sometimes standards were lowered to accommodate applicants.

POLICY JUSTIFICATIONS

In this section, the justifications and counter justifications provided by the different policy actors and stakeholders are analysed in order to expose the inconsistencies and inappropriateness of the policy choices in relation to the local context. The justifications are discussed under three categories: socio-cultural, economic and political justifications.

SOCIAL-CULTURAL JUSTIFICATIONS

Despite the normative values of access and equity propagated in the education Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) document, the original policy statement on cost sharing was not clear in providing for related policy instruments to address the normative issues of equity, access, and inequality. Several respondents defended the lack of attention to social equity issues by saying that it was time Malawians stopped depending on government handouts. Others however were able to enunciate alternative arguments and stated that given the poverty levels in Malawi,

The financial implications of cost sharing were not properly accounted for in the process. These implications include the fact that most parents have no means to support high tuition fees. Neither is there a culture of parents funding higher education in Malawi as depicted by a lack of a “saving culture”. Secondly,

students are unprepared to fend for themselves since the history of university education in Malawi has been that of full subsidization by government.

Another respondent also felt that apart from the culture of dependency, the relationship between affordability and qualification caused a serious dilemma for issues of access, equity and merit. He felt that this would be a constraint and challenge to cost-recovery and all reforms at the university. He said,

In Malawi there are two complications regarding university tuition, over dependence on handouts, and the economic incapacity for even those who have the desire to pay, but desire alone is not good enough, you need financial capacity. The experience at the Polytechnic is showing us that even if we come up with alternatives of funding and open up, let people come up with full fees, the question is how many for instance can afford one million kwacha per year at the College of Medicine? That is what it costs to educate one medical student per year. Those who can afford, do they have children who can make the grade to go to medical school? It is not just a matter of having the financial muscle, the muscle must also have the brains, now those who have the brains do they have the financial muscle is the question?

This issue is highlighted by the fact that, although the parallel programs at the Polytechnic were apparently successful, the science-based engineering disciplines had run into problems of under-qualified applicants in full fee paying programs. According to one respondent from the college, they had had to lower their standards to accommodate some of the students who formed a limited number of those who had the capacity to pay. The respondent explained that the problem of under-qualification in Math and Science could be a residual problem from secondary schools, which are suffering the same type of financial problems as higher education. Consequently, secondary school science laboratories have been known to lack materials for conducting most of the practical work in science subjects. On the other hand, the Polytechnic could emulate the College of Medicine, which gives an intensive pre-medical science course to all applicants who do not have a first degree in science at the full cost of K200, 000 per year.

Another respondent criticized the tendency to copy solutions without modifying them to Malawian social, economic and geographic conditions. His critique of the policy instruments was that,

Often times people have cited examples like, “Look in Uganda at Makerere University the majority of the students attending are actually full fee paying or

economic fee paying as opposed to those that are on government scholarship”. The response to anyone who wants to engage in critical thinking before they accept anything as gospel truth is this: “Is the economy and geography of Uganda like that of Malawi?” You will notice that Uganda has two rainy seasons. So agriculturally food is not a problem and their staple food demands less rainfall than our maize and rice. In Malawi, both in years of hunger and in years of plenty we still have certain families that have no food. In terms of education because Makerere was amongst the first of the colonial African universities, the culture of sending their children for higher education has been entrenched. Even before Makerere opened, parents sent their children to universities abroad.

He further argued that, although Makerere was devastated by Idi Amin’s policies in the 1970s, most of the Ugandan intelligentsia returned home as soon as the reform started thus ensuring that expertise, experience and high level analytical skills were easily available to turn around the university and ensure quality. He stated that this state of affairs is absent in Malawi where students are likely to be taught by a newly graduated staff of associate or assistant lecturers. In his view there were other managerial, social, economic and cultural prerequisites that contributed to the confidence of parents to send their children to the local university. These conditions are not there and are not being addressed in the Malawi context, making it unlikely that a quick turn around will occur.

Other respondents also pointed out lack of structural and regulatory tools. They posited that even within the budget statement there was no provision or arrangement of a funding pool, which would cover the loan scheme that was immediately introduced as soon as the students started demonstrating.

The other problem was that we never put in place policy instruments that would support the principle of cost sharing. In other countries you tend to have structures, funding type of organizations like a loan board, where people apply for loans and get approval, for the conditions of the loan such as criteria in terms of the payment which people have to sign for.

Neither the bureaucrats nor technocrats closely involved with the policy were able to give a satisfactory explanation regarding the absence of interrelated policy instruments such as the loan scheme in the initial implementation. The lack of regulatory and legal tools even by 2002 clearly contributed to the lack of clarity concerning the criteria and source of funding for the loan scheme. Such a lack of structural and regulatory frameworks was

likely to constrain realizability of the reform if such frameworks were not added. As late as May 2003, the issue of a responsible agency for administering the loan scheme had not yet been resolved. This may illustrate the gap between the text discourse, which is usually a copy of recent global trends, and interpretation in action.

Another respondent criticised the continued presence of the expensive, fully residential, fully catered and subsidized university. In his view it was a foundational elitist culture that had long been abandoned even in the Western universities on which it had been modeled. He argued that while it was logical in 1964 to have such a university model, it is not realistic for Malawians to expect government to pay tuition, food, accommodation with cleaners and all. He said

Older alumni tell current students that “you live in a useless age when the university is in shambles”. They say “when we were in the university in the sixties and seventies we ate hotel standard meals and we never swept our rooms. And I have to say to the students, “yes every African University started like that”. But indeed it is only the Ivy league universities in America, which were run like Oxbridge with servants to come and serve your table, clean your room, wake you up, but even there things have changed. But the result in Malawi is that each parent in Malawi, poor or rich, feels that it is the duty of the state to give university education to their children and it has not yet sunk in that they are responsible.

However, the issue of a fully residential university is also closely tied to the issue of employment of support staff especially at the lowest levels of cooks, cleaners, ground-persons and others. This is where the issues of nepotism, tribal and social networks come in as most of these lower level staff is likely to be hired on such basis. One respondent commenting on the slow process of reform in the university alluded to problems of kinship and social networks when he pointed out how such practices make retrenchment of staff difficult. According to Anders similar problems were experienced in the implementation of the Public service reform where retrenched labourers were re-employed (Anders, 2002, 2003). There were other logistical and market problems connected with the ideas of introducing privately owned residences and contracting out services.

ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATIONS

From respondents' accounts and the key policy documents, the single most important issue connected with UNIMA's decline by 1995 was finance. Consequently, since UNIMA was almost 100% subsidized by the government its economic problems became part of the macro-economic problems. Inevitably, its solutions became part of macro-economic solutions such as meeting targets for inflation, deficit, exchange rate stability and unemployment. According to respondents from Treasury,

As soon as you have inflation, unemployment and a national deficit your job is well defined and your solutions or choice of solutions are also defined. Government had also set targets for inflation, for interest rates, for exchange rate stability and for the deficit. Once those targets are set, automatically you know how much to remove from the budget deficit, which means only so much is available. The job for Treasury is to find a transparent and fair method to rationalize and ration the resources in a way consistent with the targets.

In this case the assumptions are that economic problems and solutions are universally defined and, consequently, policy tools are also universal and value free. However, the events on the ground especially in relation to the social issues of education seemed to indicate that while inflation, unemployment and deficit could be defined by a universal economic language, solutions and implementation processes had to take account of social, political and economic contextual realities. Hence, there was a disparity between the stability during the policy agenda setting, problem definitions and policy design stages in contrast to the instability during the implementation process.

In the old financing policy, higher education was perceived as a public good that needed full state financing in order to train and educate the leadership needed to carry development (Malawi Government, 1971). The criteria for entering university was simply merit. This set criteria had ensured that anyone who excelled, whether from the rural or urban school, whether the parents were top government officials or subsistence farmers from the poorest of villages, was assured of an education. The drawback was that access was very limited. The values reflected in the "university for national development"

approach, were merit, quality, and equity; therefore, it bred a very elitist and closed university community.

Significantly, though, the current policy makers and other leaders in the Malawian modern sector were alumni of this university, which means they had benefited from the system of free university education. This state of affairs sparked a debate between the decision-makers and the students on the question of whether or not the beneficiaries of the old system had any moral justification for imposing fees on poor students. They further argued that the current policy makers had no moral justification to introduce cost sharing measures when they themselves benefited from free university education. Again an editor of a newspaper captured this argument aptly when he stated, “If as adults and educators failure is detected in creative and proactive action, what miracles can be expected from the depressed students?” (Daily times, July 2000) In their petition to the president the students also argued that introduction of fees was contrary to the touted government’s poverty alleviation program.

The new university financing policy was proposing a very substantial change in the way it defined university education. In the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, three broad policy changes were offered: increase access and equity in higher education, improve quality and relevance of higher education, and reduce reliance of higher education on government subventions (MPRSP, 2002, p. 55). It is in the third policy change that the strategies were a substantive departure from what had been in place for over thirty years.

Drawing from this third policy proposal, university education and other social services were categorized as a shared consumption between the public and the individual beneficiary. The argument was that both the individual and society would derive benefit from it since most of the graduates would work in Malawi as teachers, doctors, agricultural scientists, scientists, lawyers, engineers and others. Therefore, the government had a responsibility to partly share the cost of education with the individuals who benefited from it.

The government will introduce cost sharing in certain areas where consumption of the service has some reasonable amount of individual benefit. A good example is secondary and higher education where government subsidy is almost 100%. At the moment UNIMA is 100% subsidized. Students at UNIMA contribute K1, 500 per year out of which K1, 400 is paid back as book allowance and K20 is paid as subscription to the union by students. The cost of maintaining a student is K180, 000 thus the subsidy is K179, 920 per student per year. (Chikaonda, 2000, p.6).

There was contention about whether university education was a public good or a private service between the students as policy stakeholders and the economic actors. According to student respondents, university education should still be treated as a public good because of the small ratios of graduates in proportion to the rest of the population. They argued that there was no economic justification because the social indicators in Malawi had become worse rather than improved since 1964. This was proved by the UNDP's human development indicators and the World Bank's world development index (UNDP, 2002, World Bank 2002).

Some student and faculty respondents proposed other alternatives to high university fee paying. Although some of the alternatives were simplistic and run parallel to what is internationally fashionable, the students respondents raised interesting questions about the issue of whether or not Education For All (EFA) should be implemented uniformly in all countries even in the poor and debt ridden ones like Malawi. The students argued that their government should consider bringing back primary fees payment and decrease university fees payment because it was easier for their parents to afford primary fees than high university fees. Such alternatives although not acceptable in the current intellectual consensus raise important issues regarding the one size fits all globally influenced solutions. Above all, they highlight whether or not individual countries though local collaboration can get to the same results using different context related local solutions. Significantly, there was a disparity between the students' poverty arguments and the reality when the fees were reduced to K25, 000. According to managers at the Polytechnic, only about 50% of the students took up the loan scheme, while the rest were able to pay for their own fees. This clearly showed that a bigger percentage of the people could afford to pay more than the proposed K5, 000, for which the students had lobbied.

Furthermore, some respondents pointed out that the policy should have been more enunciated and more targeted in its approach. For example, most respondents who were urban and among the educated bureaucratic, professional, business and scholarly elite felt that they did not expect government to fully subsidize their children's secondary or higher education. They were willing to pay their share of the cost as long as the university's quality could improve and as long as a more realistic approach was taken towards calculating what was reasonable for the different categories of the employed and rural Malawians. There is need for further research with students to determine the issues of affordability. According to student respondents, the extended family is a factor in the ability to pay tuition fees which explains why more students were able to pay for their fees in spite of the poverty indicator. Policy literature indicates that family is a legitimate source of provision.

Aid, International influences and policy ownership

Two interrelated views emerged in relation to the question of whether or not in the choice of policy solutions, Malawi's status as a highly indebted nation with a structural adjustment program under IMF meant that there were external pressures to cut down the deficits by any means. The view of those who were directly connected with running the economy was that, regardless of what the IMF told them, they themselves as experts already knew the options. In other words, the implication was that if you already know the options, then no one is influencing you. One respondent had this to say

We have to accept responsibility that as in any African country essentially two plus two equals four. Whether you are in North America or Africa. There is nothing that the IMF or the World Bank will tell the Malawian specialists that they already don't know. After all, the local specialist went to the same university as the external one.

The underlying assumption in the argument was that there is only one universal way of solving economic problems. Considering the complexity and multiplicity of other unforeseen contextual related issues that emerged in the implementation of the policy, this seemed to be unrealistic and self-defeating. It highlighted the intellectual dependency

on foreign-based theories and empirical justifications in policy making without accounting for specific contextual issues.

However, apart from students who were oblivious to international involvement, all other respondents said that international influences played a key role in the urgency of the need to introduce cost sharing as a means of raising funds and reducing government deficits. They felt that the macroeconomic agenda including de-subsidization was an agenda set by international financing institutions in Malawi and the Malawi government had no choice but to agree. One participant actually used the saying, “beggars are not choosers.” A senior official commented on donor influence and conditions.

That is the biggest problem of all that this country is really up against because the donors will actually describe what they want to see. So donors are also driving us. The ministers must be seen to have said, “Let us cut subsidies to the university” or “Lets privatize ADMARC”, even when they know that it is not possible to cut off funding to the university or privatize ADMARC. Donors are saying “Next time we come we must see David Whitehead is closed.”

ADMARC is a Malawi parastatal that is responsible for purchase and distribution of farm commodities from subsistence farmers as well as farm inputs. David Whitehead and Sons (DWS) is a Malawian textile company, which was a subsidiary of ADMARC. Both were in line for the World Bank supported privatization but ran into controversy because both local stakeholders and international NGOs were against completely privatizing important local companies. In June 2003 the controversy over DWS came to a head when workers blocked the new owners from occupying the company and charged that there was lack of accountability on the part of the government (Nation online, 2003).

State bureaucrats further explained that although as Malawians we were able to articulate what we wanted in terms of policy, the intentions were continually defeated because of the scarcity of resources. Many respondents admitted that donor influence plays an important part in development implementation of policies. At first when asked if the agenda was a donor rather than a Malawi government agenda, a bureaucrat had this to say,

It is a Malawi government agenda. You see, the bit that donors tend to control us is on the finance because we don't have the money. We have got ideas, we put them on paper that we should do ABCD; Now the question that they will always ask us is "Do you have the money?" We don't. So that is, if we are talking of them controlling us, it is only that bit, but in terms of spearheading in all these areas, initiating policy changes and so on, we are the ones who are responsible.

This illustrates the asymmetrical power relations between those with economic power and those with the authority to make policies.

Some respondents also argued that aid was used as an economic and political tool by both donor countries and the Malawi political elite to further their own interests. One respondent called this the "flag waving syndrome." Flag waving signifies the ceremonies where diplomats representing their donor governments or organizations would symbolically hand over a finished project such as a building or bridge to a cabinet minister or other high powered politicians. Invariably the venues are decorated with Malawian and the donor country or organization's flags. He stated,

Technicians in government are able to advise that this is what has to be done. But because we need the aid that we get from the British, the American, the Japanese etc., they in turn want to wave their flags. So they provide their aid based on quantitative and visible things, that is those that the public will see, that they can easily say, "Oh the minister or the president went to open the British or American or Japanese-funded this and that. So the local politician too wants to focus on issues which are visible. This leaves the technocrat in a dilemma and important qualitative issues such as teacher training and learning materials are marginalized.

He further argued that the concentration on quantitative resources means that children even within the education sector are marginalized at the expense of building contractors. The focus on quantifiable rather than qualitative aspects seems to be entrenched by IFI practices.

The issues of local politicians concentrating on quantitative at the expense of qualitative educational indicators was also highlighted by a university respondent. He enunciated that since education means votes, most politicians measure their success in terms of how many students have been conferred degrees, regardless of what type of degrees they were. At the same time another respondent argued that apart from influencing policy, aid

providers were also involved in influencing the introduction college programs whose long-term sustainability was questionable. This was done through aid providers selectively funding specific programs when the colleges had multiple financial problems.

What is worse is that now they can select what programs to fund in the university colleges. Bunda College is splashed with money but since they are funding specific programs the rest of the college is financially strapped. They do not care whether you don't have undergraduates or not. They will give you cars when students have no learning materials. The same is true at the Polytechnic where a school of journalism was introduced when other existing programs have no funding. And what is worse is that the Polytechnic will eventually have to sustain this school in the long term.

However, even those respondents who said there was a lot of external influence on economic matters pointed out that Malawians have to accept responsibility for making a lot of mistakes and should not wholly blame donors. One pointed out that most of our policy makers at national or institutional level lack preparedness when they go to negotiate with the donors.

Lack of preparedness means that when the donors come we do not have an alternative or a different option. We are not selling a policy, we are not selling a well thought out document. So that when the Nordic, British, Japanese and Americans come we can say, we have this program and we need support in this way. We have no project proposals on anything, if we have one it is poorly done and does not give a cost-benefit analysis or even a time frame. So these people come in and say we want to do this and that, and we agree without raising any questions.

He attributed this attitude to both the colonial legacy and thirty-one years of suppression at the hands of an autocratic leadership.

Another respondent argued that from an institutional viewpoint tribalism or regionalism is also a deterrent to people freely expressing their views. He argued that "where you come from is also an issue to an extent that those who come from certain regions or tribes have to be careful in their analysis or critiques lest they be judged as saying something negative because they belong to a different tribe." He further argued that Malawians needed to rise above that and come together in a concerted effort to solve their own problems. He posited that,

We have more brilliant men and women in our second-generation technocrats and professionals than we had in the first generation. But then somehow I think there are problems of getting together and saying let's do this. One reason is suspicion, the other is that the current Malawi leaders at all levels are judged by their cheque books. It becomes very difficult to speak loudly when you are perceived not to have made it financially.

The comment about how leaders are judged according to their financial standing has become an important political aspect in the new and democratic Malawi. Especially, since the advent of pluralist politics brought a government that is made up of former businessmen, failed and otherwise.

Another respondent further expanded on the same point of taking responsibility when he argued that much as donors influence Malawi's policies, Malawians themselves lack vision and long term planning.

We have a terrible history where we have expected results from outside our own systems and the dependence syndrome has gone on for a long time. And sometimes there is a lot of short-termism. I think if African countries looked far into the future, picked a target there and programmes according to that long-term target in the general interest, we would achieve exactly the same thing that the other countries are achieving.

A further participant acknowledged the problems of donors running poor countries' economies but emphasized the need for responsibility for local management of resources, political will, long term planning and vision by the leadership with support of the populace.

We are much richer actually in terms of resources than some of the countries that are doing better economically. So, I think this is a question of management, of political will, a question of vision, all those things come in. And also not just on the part of the leadership but also the people because there is need to have patience that will allow a leader to take courageous moves. You know, sometimes that can be a constraining factor and the university issue is an example.

MOEST bureaucrats suggested that they had patiently taken time to explain to their donor partners that Malawi needed to pay attention to all its sectors in order to achieve social development. According to one respondent, the IFI were prepared to listen to them only if

they could guarantee that qualified and experienced policy makers were overseeing this process.

A representative of one influential development organization argued that although their organization had “no policy” on higher education, they were prepared to listen to the Malawian Government and would respond to their requests according to their own priorities. For instance, they were interested in building secondary schools and supporting the university areas concerned with social services such as health and education.

However, it is clear that these international bodies have had an important intellectual and economic influence on Malawi’s national social development policy. This has been achieved through the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP) and the Education Policy and Investment Framework (PIF), and the emphasis on higher rates of return on investments of basic education. Furthermore, through the Malawi Poverty Reduction and Strategy Paper and the structural adjustment programs, they are very influential in setting out the economic policy agenda and financial discourse in Malawi that affects the direction of higher education policy.

Evidence in Malawi about the Education For All (EFA) program has shown great inefficiencies and wastage due to large drop-out rates, under-qualified teachers, lack of teaching and learning materials and large student/teacher ratios. Although initially there was an increase in enrolment of over 300% most of those who enrolled have dropped-out to the extent that there has been a lot of wastage. Comments from interviewees such as state bureaucrats from education and IFI representatives also indicated that the EFA was badly implemented, reiterating the shortages of qualified staff and teaching materials, and many school buildings which were being built by local and often unskilled builders were unfinished. Additionally, most bureaucrats argued that for the Education for All (EFA) program itself to be successful it needed educated planners, managers and teachers who were trained by the university.

POLITICAL JUSTIFICATIONS

Another issue that was connected with whether or not the policy changes could be safely attempted was whether or not the full political costs were accounted for in the policy proposals. According to a key actor, the political justification for the introduction of the policy at the 2000 budget session was that it was an opportune moment. In political terms, because it was a period a year after a general election the risks were low for the incumbent president and his ruling party. The idea was that by 2004, the people would have forgotten about this unpopular policy. He said,

Political context also matters but at that time there was a need to do something about the situation. The best time would have been immediately after the general elections in 1999 when the steam was still in the air, but 2000 was not too late. That is when that policy needed to be implemented because the closer you get to new elections, the more difficult for some of these policy decisions to carry through.

Other respondents felt that there was no political justification at all and the key actors showed political inexperience and lack of understanding of politics in a poor country like Malawi. They pointed to the fact that the key policy actors were not even defended by their own political colleagues after the challenges from stakeholders began. Indeed the first to back track was the state president himself.

Key bureaucratic and technocratic respondents defending the decision argued that it was unfortunate that the political elite could not take the heat, because the government had no choice but to implement that decision. They also pointed to the fact that at the 2002 graduation, the Chairman of the University Council reiterated this point by saying that the university had no choice but to go on with cost sharing. This point about some form of cost sharing was reiterated by many of the university community respondents including the students. This is an indication of how Gramscian commonsense can prevail and hold consensus and hegemony, especially since by 2002 it was clear that there was no viable alternative to the intended financial reform.

REVIEW OF CHALLENGES TO THE CONTEXTUAL AND CONTENT ISSUES

There were many problems that arose during the implementation stage surrounding the relevance and consistency of policy content in relation to the Malawi context. The complexity of the problems which involved both university specific and national policy problems meant that the solutions needed to be interrelated, enunciated and comprehensive. Contrary, the choices and strategies that emerged from the policy documents tended to be broad and universally justified. Only the MIM report had tackled and categorized the public policy problems and recommendation for solutions of the university into its upstream and university specific solutions. However, since it was not attempting to address national issues such as equity and access such key variables were not tackled. It was therefore the national documents such as the PIF and MPRSP that tackled the national related problems.

Meanwhile, because financing was the key to many of the reforms regarding university specific and national issues, the implementation of cost sharing was a closely followed process. However, again many stakeholders felt that cost-sharing and other financial, administrative and academic strategies had not seriously addressed the potential implementation problems related to Malawi contextual economic, social and organizational realities; they depicted inconsistencies and a lack of related policy instruments for the policy change to be meaningfully implemented. Financing solutions incorporating public provision of higher education with private aspects needed other structural and legal instruments before they could be meaningfully implemented. Such instruments included the loan scheme process complete with structures for the loan and seed money for the scheme itself. There needed to be legal apparatus defining the terms and structure of a legal framework for the loan. Above all, if the government was embarking on private and public universities there was a need for a legal framework to ensure academic standards and to regulate the institutions.

In terms of encouraging commercialization, privatization and contracting out of non – core and ancillary activities such as catering, accommodation and book stores, the same problems of lack of supporting infrastructure and regulatory instruments were the main

constraints. Privatization and contracting out presupposed that there were private providers of books, hostels and other types of accommodation. Respondents pointed out the wrongly premised solutions. The office of the pro-vice chancellor was specifically initiated to coordinate fundraising and other university and society relations. Contextual realities showed that to implement such change more contextual relevant programs needed to be put in place.

In the second part of the analysis, a critique of the major justifications arising from the policy strategies was provided. Issues surrounding values of equity, affordability and merit were highlighted as not having been properly tackled in the policy development stage. In addition, the different justifications and counter justifications regarding the policy were examined. Most of the respondents argued that the social and economic justifications for the reforms were not contextually focused to Malawi. They argued that the policy choices were premised on justifications that were influenced by shifting global development strategies rather than Malawi's social, economic and cultural realities. They pointed out to social indicators such as the GDP, poverty and education figures, which highlighted the limited access to university education in Malawi as proof that Malawi needed different and more pragmatic policy solutions than the broad and globally acceptable ones (Malawi Government, NSO, 1999). The issue of foreign influence on policy text was examined in relation to economic justifications. Many respondents observed that because of the paucity of economic resources in Malawi, there was increased foreign bilateral and multilateral policy influence. This was especially evident in the support for specific programs.

Most respondents argued that the justifications for the policy choices were backed and influenced by the economically and intellectually powerful international financing institutions, development agencies and bilateral donors. Those knowledgeable about macro economic issues argued that there was a need to address fundamental issues such as debt, inflation, unemployment, exchange instability and deficit. They argued that the Malawi government had set out targets for each of these economic categories of which

de-subsidization was one aspect. In their thinking, cost sharing was a universally acceptable way of addressing economic problems.

Consequently, in economic terms the logical solution was to cut off subsidies from social and other services. Because the university was viewed to be beneficial to both the individual and society, government decided to share the responsibility of educating university students with the individuals themselves. Those with counter arguments said university education was a public good requiring full government support. They also viewed as illogical the argument that government had no funding for university when it had just introduced free primary education. Some of the stakeholder respondents felt it was more logical to charge lower fees at the primary level, which would spread the cost than charge exorbitant fees at university.

There was a widely held view by some of the actors that globally connected technocrats subscribed to policy strategies that are not workable because they take an academic rather than practical approach to policy. Through professional and intellectual orientations of some of these African global technocrats and academics, it was felt that they colluded with international actors because they had global careers, which afforded them mobility thereby escaping the need to account for their actions at the local level. Some of the actors who had the ability to critically look at the suggested policy solutions did not have the power or influence to make much of a difference in the policy designing processes because they did not belong to some of the influential professions, state agencies or global networks.

In addition, the analysis showed that the main political justification was that in 2000 there was a window of opportunity, which was presented after the 1999 general elections. However, counter arguments were offered which revealed that there was no political justification at all for the policy reform or its timing. Instead the reform was a potentially politically costly exercise because it did not take into account the interests of the affected stakeholders.

SUMMARY

The analysis has shown that behind the proposed solutions and strategies of the university reform was emerging a new policy discourse that was introducing far reaching changes on the nature of the public university and its relationship with the state and society. The emerging discourse both from the MIM and other national documents was dominated by neo-liberal strategies reflecting market principles. In the second part of the chapter an evaluative approach was taken to examine the appropriateness of these neo-liberal policy choices in relation to the Malawi context. This evaluation is done through voices of different actors and their alternative justifications to the policy text and enactment. The justifications and counter justifications involve issues of socio-cultural, economic and political appropriateness. Many actors felt that because the agenda was both externally and economically many contextual issues involving social, cultural, economic and political realities were not adequately addressed.

Chapter 9

THE UNDERLYING POWER RELATIONS IN THE POLICY PROCESS AND POLICY OWNERSHIP

In this chapter further analysis is undertaken to establish the power relations between the different categories of actors that underpinned the policy process and ensuing policy choices. The analysis is based on the involvement and choice decisions made in the two dichotomous policy processes, namely the initial top-down, rational, exclusive, technical and hegemonic process, and the subsequent more political, inclusive, divergent and renegotiated implementation stage process. The different sources of power, influence, dominance and positioning of individual actors and the state agencies they represented are examined against key policy decisions especially during the more collaborative and consultative process of the implementation stage. The wider issue of local policy ownership is addressed through the comparison of the critical decisions made during the implementation and the original agenda.

RATIONALITY, CONSENSUS AND HEGEMONY IN THE INITIAL POLICY PROCESSES

The initial policy process surrounding both the university-specific and national policy initiatives demonstrated a process that could be characterised as stable and consensual with a hegemonic discourse and power relations among the different national, international and institutional level actors. Experts such as academics, consultants, technocrats and government planners dominated the University of Malawi policy initiatives such as the MIM process and the Ministry of Education's Policy Investment Framework process. Respondents commented that during the MIM process, the consultants had interviewed administrators at the central university office and at different constituent colleges. Following established policy practice, university problems were viewed as technical problems which were interest and value free hence requiring experts to find solutions, which in turn would be implemented in the paternalistic and

administrative manner that had existed in Malawi since colonial times including Banda's post-colonial Malawi (Kaunda, 1992).

Similarly, in some of the national processes such as the Vision 2020 and the MPRSP, stakeholders such as international technocrats and advisers were regarded as more important than the local individuals who would be directly affected by the policies being formulated. Additionally, in the substantive 2000 pre-budget consultation process, local stakeholder participation was limited to formal and elite business, civil and traditional leaders who were consulted for their views. The lack of representation by key stakeholders such as local administrators and students meant that there were no alternative views based on real vested and conflicting interests inherent in the policy choices and strategies. If there were any alternative views at these forums, they were shut off by accepted discourse and were hardly articulated. Consensus was achieved through the inclusion of experts who had been socialized into specific professional disciplines that adopted the hegemonic, global, intellectual justifications and saw them as easily transferable to the Malawi situation regardless of contextual differences (Peet, 1999).

Consequently, it was only during the implementation period when social and economic implications of the policies were raised through resistance that other stakeholder groups such as university students, faculty and administration were included in the process. Howlett and Ramesh (1995) have rightly observed that when policy problems are portrayed as technical problems rather than social questions, experts can dominate the decision making process (p. 112). They further argue that in such technically defined policy problems, only when the ethical, social and political implications of such policy assume centre stage, can a much broader range of participants suddenly become involved.

Most of the initial policy documents produced under a rational and exclusive process reflected the dominant hegemonic global intellectual viewpoint about higher education policy choices and strategies, and were characterized by seemingly convergent policy processes that were highly stable and rational. Predictably, all policy documents whether university specific or national and broadly orientated offered policy solutions such as

partial privatization, decentralization, market driven courses and a business approach in managing higher education (Chikaonda, 2000; MIM, 1997; MPRSP, 2002; PIF, 2002).

Ironically, representatives of the national democratic institutions such as the legislature and respected traditional leaders, who were presumed to represent the interests of their constituents, were perceived by some constituents as lacking any influence and therefore only rubber stamping decisions from the top. A student correspondent and leader confirmed that the reason why the student body decided to petition the state president to intervene on their behalf instead of their elected Members of Parliament was because the Members of Parliament had already rubber stamped the decision. This indicates that the criteria for consultations and participation in some of the national policy processes had assumed the presence of well-developed national institutions and lobby groups with well-defined constituents whose interests were being represented by their leaders. The reality on the ground was that these representative leaders such as Members of Parliament, civil and religious leaders often took a paternalistic or expert view of their role as representatives and seldom sought the views of constituents. The same can be said about the relationship between the university officials and students with regard to the 1997 MIM report. In view of the top level, technical and paternalistic consultations that surrounded the MIM report and the fact that it was only in 1998 that the university first made amendments to its council membership to include two student representatives, it was unlikely that student representatives were consulted as stakeholders. This represented Gramsci's concept of hegemony based on unquestioned ideological consensus. Above all it describes the discursive power that underpins academic and intellectual dependence connecting African policy intellectuals and their international counterparts (Peet, 1999).

THE 2000 COST SHARING AS A CRITICAL INCIDENT IN THE POWER RELATIONS

Consequently, with such discursive power it was only when, the ethical, social and political implications of the seemingly technical and hegemonic processes were raised by key policy recipients that a more meaningful and inclusive debate was widely opened to

groups that had no prior representation (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995). With the challenge of hegemonic relations and the homogeneous policy choices and strategies, the power relations shifted between different points and could best be described as “decentred multiplicities” (Shohat 1992 quoted in Peet, 1995, p. 112). At different policy stages, power was concentrated at different points throughout the policy spaces and among different actors contradicting the widely held initial assumption by those involved in policy practice in Malawi and their international supporters that power was concentrated at the top. Both formal and informal actors had different degrees of influence and power at different stages involving the most critical economic issue of the whole reform process.

KEY POLICY ACTORS

To examine the underlying power relations the analysis uses four groups of actors who were involved in the policy processes at different stages. The groups were divided into the four broad categories of state technocrats, politicians, university officials and students. The categories are used as a broad analytic tool and are not monolithic for within each category there are professional differences and functional roles. Some of the individuals also draw not from functional or positional power but rather from individual based political influence based on their personal networks that go beyond their formal roles. For instance, within the technocrat category there were actors who were educational administrators and technocrats and yet others who could be termed “pseudo-political” technocrats from diverse disciplines such as economics, diplomacy and education. The same was true of university actors who encompassed politically connected and not so connected university governing councilors, management and college level officials. Politicians included members of parliament and mostly those from the executive branch of government. Among the politician actors were individuals who were also from the academe and technocrats. The international actors were advisors mainly connected with financial and economic political/technocrats.

FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC TECHNOCRATS AND EXPERT POWER

Because the central issue in the university reform was defined as funding, the Treasury had more influence in defining the agenda and the policy discourse. As indicated in the respondents' comments and 2000 budget statement (Chikaonda, 2000), Treasury had already defined the principles for distributing funding to all other government ministries, agencies and statutory corporations. For university education, Treasury had decided that the principle for distribution would be shared costs between the state and the individual beneficiaries. Although students originally resisted the increased fee hike from K100 to K46, 000, their resistance was based on the issues of affordability and equity rather than the principle of cost sharing.

The students' acceptance of the principle could be viewed within Gramsci's "common sense" concept. In that they subscribed to the notion of development and therefore were willing to accept the principles on which development was based. African university students are in the unique position of being underdogs who have the potential to rise to being the most important individuals in local and global technocratic circles. Therefore students share in the idea of modernity and development and just like other modernized elite, would subscribe to the self-creation of their class.

The issue of Treasury's prominent position as negotiator with IFIs and other aid providers to indebted Malawi gave it a very powerful position in the Malawi state structure especially in setting the agenda and defining the policy discourse. However many respondents felt that although touted by Treasury technocrats as their own, most of these policies were not their own but global and universal agendas dictated or influenced by external fund providers. Consequently, Treasury's agenda and preferred discourse dominated the initial formal policy making as demonstrated by the identification, definition, choice and strategies of the policy in all the major policy documents. But since it is in the implementation that policy gets tested, then the disparity between the initial agenda and the subsequent disruption of implementation shows other inherent power relations.

The select top technocrats with connections to a political elite backed by powerful international development and funding agencies who dominated the original discourse, were not directly responsible for the actual translation of text into action; that was left to the university itself. This gave a lot of influence to the street-level bureaucrats who had to translate the abstract ideas in the policy documents into reality. Above all it gave the policy recipients the opportunity to voice their opinions towards the policies.

STUDENTS POLITICAL ACTIVISM AND SOCIAL POWER

Both Dyer (1999) and Elmore (1980) argued that policy success lies in the implementation process and that policy ideas or choices are not self-executing but rather have to be executed and translated into action. It is in the translation that these ideas are tested. The efficacy and appropriateness of the critical funding strategy of cost sharing was tested at the implementation stage and found to be inappropriate and inconsistent. The result was a disruption of the policy process that led to a complete rearranging of the hegemonic power relations that had existed during the development process.

The main stakeholders who had not had any voice in the policy development stages got a voice through active resistance and their social numbers. Due to their own perception of democracy, which was that as key stakeholders they should have been included or made aware of the impending fee hikes, and as a result of increased political activism, the students organized demonstrations that were perceived to be a threat to the political elite.

As evidenced in chapter eight, the implementation stage became a space for successful resistance and the disruption of the hegemonic policy process that had existed before this stage. The process during the implementation became a contentious, fragmented and active political process fraught with debates, counter proposals, and broad participation leading to negotiated and revised policy solutions. The original exclusion of university students combined with proposed radical financial reforms including a loss of subsidies led to resistance and an abandonment of the initial policy strategies.

Due to power resulting from their social numbers and political activism, students disrupted the whole policy process and internationally supported agenda. They were able to gain access to the highest political office in the country. They petitioned the president of Malawi and were listened to. They gained representation in the policy process, had debates with members of the executive branch of the government and their representatives from the different constituent colleges were involved in a fact-finding tour of four Southern and Eastern African Universities. Above all, through the inclusion of their representatives on the presidential sub-committee on University cost sharing along side their vice chancellor, cabinet ministers and top state technocrats, they were included in the decision-making process.

By organizing themselves and challenging the exclusive policy process and a hegemonic policy discourse, the students were breaking the consensus that had been present in the system. One respondent commented on the students' ability to organize, force their incorporation into the policy team and also force a revision of policy as "something very significant . . . that is now the full realization of students' participation in the governance of their own affairs". This was a fundamental power shift from the top to the bottom. For the first time in the presidential, paternalistic, elitist, bureaucratic history of the Malawi policy process, cabinet ministers visited the colleges to debate higher policy issues with the students, demonstrating collaboration, inclusion and acknowledging the presence of conflicting interests in the policy issues. Students spoke on the same platform and as equals to these powerful individuals and, according to respondents' accounts, students shouted down the politicians who included globally connected and supported technocrats.

In other words, the students' embodied agency as the group who were the object of the policy. Not only did they erode or undercut the enactment of policy as Ball (1990) argued, but they were able to disrupt a consensus between the international and national actors in the Malawi social development policy. The students' incorporation meant that they progressed from having no voice in the exclusive, prestigious and elitist policy space to a position where not only were they heard at the highest level of authority, but they were also actively incorporated in the university policy making process. This is in line

with Ball's (1990) assertion that policy does not imply a simple asymmetry of power and that control or dominance can never totally be secured because of resistance to power.

Although the students gained a voice and obviously upset an existing consensus and thereby transformed a policy space that had been exclusive, prestigious and elitist, they acknowledged that there were limitations to their influence and that they could not gain total access. Student respondents observed that the ultimate decisions regarding the drafting of the final policy recommendations to the state president were left with people with position and authority such as the vice chancellor, cabinet ministers and principal secretaries. They also admitted to not knowing the final decision until the President made the announcement during a convocation gathering. Through common sense, students realized that there were structural limitations to their total incorporation into the policy structure, such as hierarchy and organizational cultural practices.

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE MANAGEMENT POWER

Similarly, events surrounding the cost-sharing implementation revealed asymmetrical structural relations between the university actors and those from its supposed controlling State Ministry of Education. Related implementation decisions showed that the University had a high degree of independence from its controlling ministry over its own financial and academic affairs. Such university independence and power can be attributed to the transitional vacuum and the residual influences of a formerly presidential and paternalistic policy process with policy power concentrated at the top. The university seems not to have developed a legal institutional framework for policy formulation and implementation. As indicated in chapter two, university vision had been synonymous with Banda's own personal vision of the university. As a result all economic, governance and academic affairs of the university had been decided at that top level. Since in a one-party political system policy implementation is assured by the party, the Ministry of Education seems to have been a lame duck in guiding university policy.

Economically, the university just like its controlling Ministry had direct links to the Treasury for its budgetary needs. Hence the study showed that while top officials at the Ministry were unable to decipher who had come up with the amount of K46, 000 for students to pay, specific university respondents pointed out that top university officials provided the information on costs. Also as early as 1998, some constituent colleges such as the Polytechnic had introduced parallel programs, with full paying courses although government, supposedly through the Ministry of Education had not formally approved the 1997 MIM recommendations. This suggests that although on paper the university fell under the control of the Ministry of Education as its line ministry, there was no clear definition of its mandate over university affairs, economic or indeed academic.

A respondent described the ambivalent university and state relations using the metaphor of the fragmented, divided and masculine/feminine relational ties of a polygamist with several wives. The university was answerable to Treasury for Finance, the Vice President's Department of Statutory Corporations for human resource management and the Ministry of Education apparently for educational issues such as curriculum. Ultimately, there was no single state agency that coordinated the different aspects except the University Council through university and college management teams.

Evidently, many of the policy solutions and decisions regarding important reforms such as decentralization, restructuring and devolution were left to the discretion of university and college administrators giving them extraordinary powers in the choice of what was to be implemented or not. This meant that there was no clear monitoring agency to oversee the policy changes that were recommended by government. Much as implementation theorists maintain that discretion and flexibility is required during implementation, and that some degree of failure is inevitable, an acceptable level of implementation success on the other hand depends on diverse systemic variables including a clear legal framework to structure implementation (Howlett & Ramesh, 1995; Pal, 2001). This was clearly missing both in the university and the state structures. The university therefore was the most important and powerful variable in the success or failure of the policy

choices and strategies. This had implications for leadership, responsibility and oversight implementation of the envisaged changes.

Even without the regulatory tools, such as, national and institutional legal frameworks, being passed by parliament, the university authorities implemented change based on their University Act draft amendment as a statute and in the absence of the Malawi Education Act. It was also observed that by 2002, many reforms recommended by the University Council and in other state documents were not implemented or were modified by the university management system to suit their own preferences and interests. As some of the university governing councilors admitted, the Council had no framework or power to enforce policy implementation. The lack of a clear controlling ministry led to an apparent lack of stable leadership and a coordinating agency for higher education within the Ministry of Education or within the state bureaucracy.

The potential for vested and real interests by different levels of university management and community and the problems of the policy design, resulted in the shift of power from Treasury to the university and college officials' as stakeholders. Participants observed that the college leaders and faculty members did not feel compelled to facilitate the cost-sharing strategy because they felt it was imposed from the top and that the top leaders were in turn influenced by external agencies. This again proved that setting the agenda and the discourse does not necessarily mean successful policy implementation. It also underlines the fact that any policy development process has to pay attention to the implementation strategies and actors.

Consequently, the university central office and its constituent colleges had a greater degree of autonomy to influence the future direction of its own internal governance and academic policies than was acknowledged. And because the discretionary powers were not acknowledged, there was no opportunity for accountability by the university and colleges. In policy theory and practice, good implementation proceeds on the assumption that there are multi-dimensions to the process requiring flexibility, inter-agency cooperation, discretion and accountability, (Pal, 2001).

POLICY OWNERSHIP AND THE NEW TECHNOCRATS

The issue of policy ownership is examined from two perspectives, first ownership of policy by people involved and second, perceived ownership of the policy by Malawians.

Due to the pervasive top-down, elitist and paternalistic policy processes in the university and state systems, the original policy formulation processes overlooked the importance of inclusion of key stakeholders and the importance of public debate and awareness of the impending change. The result was that although it was generally understood and accepted that the university needed to reform, when the reforms that originated from the top were put in place there was lack of support and resistance from the general public and other key stakeholders. Those who were directly affected by the policies argued that they should have been involved in the policy development process. Also, most college officials saw the policies as an imposition from the top without their input. Most college level respondents felt that they were best positioned to understand the potential problems of the intended policies and therefore they should have been involved in designing them.

Secondly, many respondents felt that the policies did not reflect the social and economic realities of Malawi. Several respondents argued that contrary to assertions by technocrats working within financial institutions in Malawi, the policies were imposed by international donors, specifically the international lending institutions and not locally generated. Consequently, individual technocrats who were responsible for articulating such funding policies in 2000 were perceived as colluding with outsiders to victimize their own people because they themselves were outsiders who were not committed or lacked understanding of the circumstances of ordinary Malawians. As a result, there was a lack of acceptance and support for the policies at different levels of society. The substantive 2000 financial reforms were generally referred to as Chikaonda's Ten-Point - Plan and were always preceded by the phrase "hailed by donors". This in itself is a telling phrase for it suggests an emphasis on external rather than internal approval. The 2000 financial reforms were followed by very heated debate in intellectual circles especially, Malawi discussion lists on the Internet involving Malawian intellectuals in the diaspora

and at home. Many justified the resistance to the financial policies, especially those involving the university, as stemming from their inappropriateness to the realities of Malawi and in most cases imposed by foreign donors.

A very interesting twist to the issue of ownership of the financial policies was that several respondents pointed out that two years after the controversy surrounding the K46, 000, the university with the approval of the State was ready and willing to recommend the increase of tuition fees. Many respondents argued that many of the critics accepted the principles and the need for reforms but disagreed with the top-down, secretive and paternalistic manner in which the policies were introduced. They also disagreed with the lack of attention paid to other policy related instruments, to support the issues of affordability and equity, which were not sufficiently addressed in the 2000 policy.

The most ambivalent position regarding ownership of the policy was connected with the executive branch of the Malawi government. Although there was a clear indication that most of the financial reforms were put in place with the full knowledge and participation of the cabinet, there was a sense that they did not fully embrace the policies. Some respondents with political connections hinted that the cabinet took the view that globally connected technocrats arrogantly imposed the policies on the rest of the cabinet because of their knowledge and professional power. The first response to the political resistance was backtracking of the presidency regarding the amount of the hike. The backtracking was followed by a popular democratic stance where the executive sent a reconstructed team of policy formulators that included university student representatives from all five constituent colleges, the university vice-chancellor, and MOEST, Treasury and Office of the President and Cabinet representatives. In this regard there was a reversal of the process from that of the high level elitist process to one where top bureaucrats, politicians, university officials and students were in a consultative process. This second revised process inevitably produced policies that were more consensual and acceptable to the lower level stakeholders. It was observed that although the revised K25, 000 amount had been decided without the knowledge of the students, there was minimal resistance to this amount because student had accepted the rationale and the principles of cost sharing.

REVIEW OF POWER RELATIONS AND POLICY OWNERSHIP

The discussion analyzed two important issues of power relations and ownership of the university reform process. Using the introduction of the 2000 cost sharing as a critical incident, I compared the rational and stable nature of the initial policy formulation of the university specific and more general national policy processes, with the more divergent and irrational process that emerged during the implementation process. The analysis concluded that the initial process had been characterized by hegemonic relations and convergent policies due to discursive power and consensus gained from intellectual socialization of policy actors. On the other hand, during the implementation period, key stakeholders such as students gained entrance into the policy space and used their social and political power to influence policy through inclusion in the policy process and revision of the initial policy strategies to accommodate their concerns. The analysis also demonstrated that due to structural and institutional weaknesses, lower level implementers at university and college levels had more power and influence to direct the course of the reform due to their ability to translate policy text to reality without any overseeing national agency.

In relation to local policy ownership, due to the lack of inclusion and participation of key stakeholders in the initial policy processes surrounding the critical issue of financing, there was lack of policy ownership by implementing agencies. Although there were indications that the commonly held belief that the IFIs influence policy direction in developing countries was partly correct, the analysis showed that the international agencies were successful in influencing the agenda and the initial policy discourse. However, the international organizations had no influence in how the implementation of their agendas proceeded at the local level since there was no evidence that they got involved. Additionally, due to the perceived externally influenced agenda, local ownership of policy was compromised because many respondents felt that the initial policy process and agenda paid little attention to local, social, economic and political realities. Such lack of contextual attention led to disruption, revision or token implementation of the policy. The disparity between the intended policy text and the

locally enacted policy suggest a different power distribution reality that is not centred in one place.

Chapter 10

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

This chapter contains a synthesis of the findings, reflections and the implications of study, an overview of the study purpose and process, and is followed by a summary and a discussion of the findings. The next section contains my reflections on the policy development and implementation process and finally implication for policy and research are identified.

OVERVIEW

Following the 1994 political change in Malawi, the UNIMA governing council commissioned the Malawi Institute of Management (MIM) consultants in 1995 to carry out a strategic and policy review of the institution to give recommendations on future direction. During the same period there were many national policy initiatives whose aim was to redefine social and economic development in the new pluralistic democratic Malawi. All these initiatives resulted in policy strategies that redefined the role and character of Malawi's public post-colonial university from a public supported, residential university into a partially public and privately supported, and partially residential university. In 2000 following the World Bank /International Monetary Fund influenced overarching economic and social policy, known as the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the national budget introduced cost-sharing as a funding policy strategy for UNIMA. This became a catalyst in giving momentum to a series of attempts at university reform that had hitherto failed to materialize.

Premised on the assumption that all proposed University of Malawi policy strategies showed externally driven economic and intellectual rationalizations that lacked grounding in local realities, I examined the policy development process that led to the formulation of such externally influenced policy changes. To understand the policy development process, I explored the origins of the reforms, the definition of the problems, the articulation and justifications of the policy choices and strategies, the policy approach

adopted and the choice of actors involved. A further critical examination of the political and content challenges during the implementation process was undertaken to understand how local realities were accounted for in the policy. Also, an exploration of the actors and underlying power relations was undertaken to understand issues of domination, resistance and compromise that produced the policies during the initial policy development and implementation processes.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to understand the local realities of internationally influenced policy development processes and their effects on policy practice from the voices of those given the authority and responsibility for developing policy on behalf of the nation; and also from those affected by such policy. The study was premised within the wider post-colonial development and globalization debate regarding the perceived intellectual and economic influence of powerful international financing institutions and development agencies in policy related issues and the perceived intellectual dependency of those given the responsibility for social policy in the developing countries.

The key question was “to what extent did the policy development process and practice in Malawi, a small debt ridden, landlocked country incorporate and cater for local interests, values and realities, given the homogeneity of global policy across developing countries?”

The research design took an inductive approach through in depth and open-ended interviews, and policy document and text analysis. Interviews were conducted based on purposeful selection of respondents who had participated as formal and informal actors in the actual policy development and policy implementation of the university reform. The aim was to draw from their special “experience and competence” in the policy process (Chein, 1981, p. 440; cited in Merriam, 1998). Some key politicians, technocrats, bureaucrats, university and college administrators and governing council members as

well as faculty and students were identified as respondents from newspaper and other media reports, and also through identification by other interviewees.

A critical analysis of the policy development and implementation process and policy discourse based on data from key policy texts, other related documents, newspaper articles and the voices of the participants formed the main analysis of the study. The critical and realistic approach adopted is based on the assumption that policy comprises both rational and irrational aspects. This assumption allowed for the analysis to be both an intellectual exercise and to allow for the political aspects of the policy process especially in the implementation stage. In this way the analysis allows for a degree of rational and objective analysis while embracing the notion that policy is value laden and full of conflicting interests.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The detailed findings from a critical policy analysis of the University of Malawi policy process are presented in chapters 6 to 9. This part of the study summarizes them into three major findings with related themes and sub-topics. The major findings are discussed under the following headings: (1) the policy development process, practices and interactions, (2) implementation challenges and shifting practices and values, and (3) the shifts in actor and stakeholder involvement and power relations.

THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS, PRACTICES AND INTERACTIONS

Based on policy related texts such as convocation speeches by former vice chancellors, policy documents such as the 1997 MIM report and verified by interviews there was a general agreement that the need for university reforms had been acknowledged as far back as the early eighties. In 1987 a legal framework for UNIMA financial reforms had been put in place through an amendment of the University Act. However, no meaningful reform was embarked upon by the university or the state due to lack of political will and other social and economic considerations. Therefore, any meaningful policy development

processes were initiated in the post-one party rule period. In 1995, the University of Malawi Council commissioned consultants, the Malawi Institute of Management to carry out an internal policy audit to aid strategic planning. Externally initiated policy processes included the Ministry of Education's PIF and internationally supported initiatives such as the long term national development strategy called the Malawi Vision 2020 and the national economic strategy called the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. All these initiatives were a result of political change and internationally influenced economic and intellectual pressures

The MIM report was released in 1997. Nationally, the post-1994 period was characterized by several donor-influenced policy initiatives such as the Malawi Vision 2020, PRSP and the PIF, which were aimed at redefining economic and social development strategies.

The internal problems facing the university were technically defined in terms of funding, governance and administration, and academic inefficiencies. These problems had a bearing on academic quality, management, planning and excellence. Externally, the diminishing national financial resources that had originated from international economic and intellectual shifts in the 1980s had led to diminishing resources in government related activities including the fully state-subsidized University of Malawi. By 1995, the political and educational funding shift to basic education further exacerbated university problems. This change of focus generated a combination of economic, social, cultural and institutional issues regarding how the state could address the problems of limited access, equity, affordability, curriculum relevance, merit, quality and planning that faced its tertiary education sector within the framework of a new democratic dispensation.

Policy Choices and Strategies

There was a hegemonic discourse surrounding the definition of the policy choices and strategies reflected in all policy documents connected with the university reform. All of the policy documents spelt a shift in the funding and provision of higher education to

embrace a combination of private and public provision, which would lead to eventual minimum provision by the state. This indicated the dominance of the economic liberalization and market economics on the Malawian policy intellectuals and actors. Even solutions to governance and administration took a neo-liberal approach offering solutions such as decentralization, devolution of power, restructuring of the colleges and university central administration, and a business management approach. Academic solutions included privatization and contracting out of non-core activities, market driven courses and partnerships with business, civil and donor society.

Institutional Culture: Rationality, Exclusion and Paternalism

The initial policy development process adopted a top-down, technical and paternalistic approach with an economic analysis perspective. Academic, educational administrators from the university and government, government planners, consultants and international technical advisers and experts dominated the initial multiple internal policy processes. In some cases there was an overlap of individual involvement across policy initiatives such as the Vision 2020, the PIF and the MIM policy teams ensuring an interconnection of ideas from one policy initiative to the next. Although most of the national processes such as the Vision 2020 and the MPRSP were described as adopting a participatory approach, most of the participants were elite civil, traditional and business leaders and eminent scholars and academics. There was a marked absence of involvement and participation of relevant key stakeholders such as students and college level administrators and leaders in discussions about university policy change.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES AND SHIFTING PRACTICES AND VALUES

There were several challenges to the implementation process including political and institutional and administrative challenges. During the implementation stage some of the initially excluded stakeholders such as students challenged the lack of inclusion in the policy and consultation process; and resisted the ensuing policy strategies which were felt

to be inconsistent and inappropriate to the Malawi context. Consequently, the implementation became a space for resistance, policy disruption, re-negotiation, and new reconstituted policy teams incorporating the key stakeholders' representatives.

Apart from political challenges emanating from the lack of key stakeholder participation and policy inconsistencies, the implementation stage also showed that university policy in Malawi took place within a framework that was fragmented and uncoordinated resulting in lack of leadership and direction. The lack of coordination was a result of bureaucracy, ambiguous structural arrangements and asymmetrical power relations between the Ministry of Education, which was the line ministry responsible for overseeing the university, and the university itself. In reality the ministry lacked the power or mechanisms in place to coordinate or monitor university policy in Malawi because in the most important issue of finance the university had direct relations with the Treasury.

SHIFTS IN ACTOR AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND POWER RELATIONS

Two distinct policy processes were distinguishable between the policy development stage and the implementation stage. During the initial policy development there were several layers of policy teams having various degrees of influence involving national, institutional and international experts. Stakeholder participation was limited to elite civil, business, and traditional participants during national wide and broad based policy initiatives such as the Vision 2020 and MPRSP-connected budget consultations.

The university and education related initiatives such as the MIM study and Education Policy and Investment Framework followed traditional, rational, top-down consultations that did not include key stakeholders.

It was therefore during the implementation process that stakeholders directly affected by the policy were able to interact with the policy and key decision-makers and influence the course of the intended reforms. Consequently, the implementation process was

characterized by resistance, which followed adoption of a more inclusive and collaborative policy process acknowledging the competing interest of different stakeholders such as politicians, university officials and students. There were no international actors in their advisory roles in this process.

With regard to power relations, the initial policy development stages were characterized by hegemonic policy relations defined by acceptance of global economic and intellectual trends that were adopted and internalized by most of the local experts involved in the policy processes. As a result, all the policy documents offered homogenous policy agenda, problems and solutions.

However, during the implementation stage the hegemony and consensus that had existed before was disrupted by challenges and resistance of students. This disrupted the power relations. The power centres and sources shifted between different players. As a result of their numbers and political activism, students were able to wield influence and change the course of the implementation. Students who had not been involved in the initial process used their social power to disrupt and destabilize the implementation process and ended up being included and having input in important policy teams.

In relation to policy ownership, many educational actors whether in government or university felt that economic and financial policy was unduly influenced by international aid lenders and providers. They also felt that this undue influence on Malawi's economic policy gave outsiders undue power over social policies of Malawi since the Malawi government had limited resources to put in place her own locally articulated policies. This is what led to lack of policy ownership of most of the educational policies. Coincidentally, it was only economic policy actors that took ownership of the principles of distribution of the controversial 2000 cost sharing although they refused to acknowledge ownership of the decision to introduce 3000% fee hike. There were also instances where policies were attributed to individual actors based on their perceived relations with powerful international lending organizations rather than their government agencies. This attribution detracted from national policy ownership.

Finally, due to a lack of a meaningful role by the legislature and the public perception that they simply rubber stamped Government policy national ownership was diminished. Political partisanship, tribal/regional networking and patronage politics further hindered national policy ownership.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

As a member of the university community in Malawi and having served in an administrative capacity, I was aware of the policy problems, issues and processes surrounding the University. I had taken part in discussions concerning some of the issues both formally and informally. This study afforded me the space to go back to Malawi, after having been away for two years to look at the university policy issues in a more critical manner. It also afforded me the concepts with which to critique the process and decipher some of the contradictions and silences in the processes. This part of the study, therefore, employs the concepts to revisit and reflect some of the critical issues regarding the whole policy development and implementation attempts of the University of Malawi within the framework of Malawi as a debt ridden and aid dependent country.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS: RATIONALITY AND ELITISM

Just as its initial inception and development was premised on a changing economic and political world order, the post-Banda attempts to revive and redefine the University of Malawi proceeded within a framework of a new intellectual and economic hegemonic order after the end of the Cold War (Ajayi et al., 1996; Nwauwa, 1997; Olukoshi, 2003). Although, the need for reform had been recognized a decade earlier, it was only in the post Cold War period that the conditions for policy change became more amenable to reform. Unfortunately, since Malawi was a country under a structural adjustment program of the World Bank/IMF, the intellectual and economic justifications for the reform were to be more universally than locally defined. This led to an agenda that was set by the international funding and development agencies determining the discourse and in certain instances the processes of the reform, in line with existing hegemonic relations of

consensus between the development agencies and selected experts and elite institutional representatives. Although within the different policy documents there were subtle differences regarding educational issues, when the ultimate decisions regarding the university reform had to be made, it was the economic agenda that prevailed over any other agendas. The momentum for change was ultimately the result of international economic imperatives that really became a catalyst for meaningful change starting in 2000 with the IMF/World Bank supported MPRSP, whose implementation tool was the national budget statement (MPRSP, 2000, 2002).

Predictably, the definition of the university problems and the ensuing policy choices and strategies took the familiar homogenous route similar to other developing country university reforms. The problems were defined in technical and managerial terms such as governance, academic and financial inefficiencies. Even when social problems such as equity and access were identified, they were quoted in managerial terms and solutions. Absent from the definition of problems and yet acknowledged by many of the decision and policy makers were the university's many foundational problems such as its epistemological, philosophical and economic dependency (Ajayi et al., Ashby, 1964; Maxwell, 1980; Nwauwa, 1997). As a researcher it was interesting to note that governing councilors, educational planners and policy makers were able to articulate fundamental structural, philosophical and epistemological questions surrounding the university, which were never raised or addressed in any of the key policy documents. University of Malawi and many of its southern African sister universities that the policy team visited in 2000 during a fact finding mission was a post-colonial national institution facing many post colonial foundational problems that have caught up with them.

Post-colonial institutions are products of neo-colonial relations that started at the de-colonization period when the world believed in helping Africa construct national institutions for modernity (Ajayi et al., 1996; Altbach, 1971; Ashby, 1964). Through neo-colonial relations these institutions were assured of technical, human resource and physical resources (Altbach; 1971). As most commentators argue, neo-colonial relations have extended to include dependency on externally generated policies (Altbach, 1971).

Neo-colonial relations have also bred total dependency on national and international economic and intellectual resources. When the world changed its approach to educational aid, African public universities were left desolate and unable to adapt. They are struggling to recover from the comfort of being fully funded to the discomfort of having to produce their own resources within national contexts that are characterized by widespread poverty. Another feature of neo-colonialism has been the over emphasis on the internationalization aspects of epistemology at the expense of local knowledge (Altbach 1971; Ashby, 1964). This leads to a lack of a home grown body of knowledge that would not only aid the process of adapting universal policy principles to local realities, but would hopefully adapt universal knowledge to some of the social ills such as widespread poverty and diseases. On the other hand, in response to over internationalization of knowledge in postcolonial Africa, there is also a tendency by oppositional movements to reject outright any western thought and over emphasize local knowledge. My analysis in this study has drawn on counter and critical western knowledge and my own lived experience of African higher education system and postcolonial Africa. But I am also mindful that Africa is not a monolithic entity. Different regions of Africa experienced different encounters with the colonialists.

An illustration of the culture of economic dependency of Malawi's post-colonial university was represented by two opposing responses to cost sharing between the thirty-plus-year-old UNIMA and the newly 1997 launched Mzuzu University. Mzuzu University's students, by many accounts, accepted cost sharing fees of K43, 000 without any resistance. On the other hand, UNIMA went through almost a year of negotiations in which students had wanted their fees to be reduced to K5, 000. Eventually, their fees were reduced to K25, 000. It was also revealed by students that some of the constituent colleges had even wanted to resist the K25, 000. The contrast between the responses from the two universities underlined the foundational problems of University of Malawi.

Another issue that posed a contradiction in the process of reform was that of accountability of university and public officials. While the university bemoaned the lack of resources, their top officials at university and college level were still driving the most

expensive cars in the midst of educational institutions that lacked basic paper for printing student papers. Similarly, in the Ministry of Education while there was a shortage of teaching/learning materials and qualified teachers, whenever funds were available the first priority went to paying the local and unskilled building contractors who had been given contracts based on political patronage networks. For me it was a demonstration of the lack of acknowledgement of the relationship between the expensive cars, the lack of paper and the abstract ideas regarding solutions bound in books as policy documents to address their everyday lived lives. I subscribe to the feminist critique of development where they urge postcolonial people to interrogate practices of modernity and national development which encourage an approach to transformational issues that is elitist, rational and abstract (Blumberg, 1989; Gandhi, 1998; Peet, 1999). Feminists question the myth of imperial and nationalist modern patriarchy, which leads to policy and political players adopting development stances that do not address local realities.

The hegemonic policy practice and approach that led to a policy discourse reflecting global intellectual and economic assumptions underlined the propensity for the patriarchal modernized elite to accept and internalize ideological and theoretical assumptions based on other contexts without first interrogating or even modifying them to local contextual realities. Above all, as feminist critics have argued, it depicts the “tokenism” behind much of the so-called development policy reform (Stromquist, 1998). Behind such token adoption of irrelevant and out of touch policy strategies is a defense of the status quo (Kabeer, 1991). However such defense of the status quo often ends up being disruptive, expensive and degrades the development activities of the institutions involved. In the case of the University of Malawi, the lack of success of the reforms further erodes academic quality and deprives the nation of the production of well-prepared individuals for future social development. It also perpetuates the paucity of relevant knowledge that would enhance the policy process creating a cycle of inappropriate policies and more poverty and inequalities.

THE IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES AND RESOLUTIONS: THE MEETING OF BUREAUCRATIC RATIONALITY AND CONTEXTUAL IRRATIONALITY

As a researcher I was struck by the complexities, contradictions and dilemmas revealed in many of the policy actors' responses regarding the controversies that emerged in the implementation process. In spite of the ushering in of plural democracy many of the policy actors had worked from an assumption of a policy environment that was still autocratic. There was an assumption that policy recipients would passively accept changes to their lives without any resistance. Consequently, the impression that one got from the different responses of the policy and decision makers was that they were surprised by the students' activism and the degree of success of their political activities in getting their views incorporated in the policy discourse.

The lack of consideration to the changed political landscape by policy makers perhaps underlines the difficulty with which policy practices and norms can be broken even after a fundamental political change. Martinussen (1997) has written on the combination of contradictory ideologies such as neo-liberalism, neo-colonialism and neo-Weberian bureaucracies of the post colonial state, culturally based leadership notions of "person rule" and "patron-client" rules. In the post 1994 Malawi, one could also add autocracy and representative democracy to the ideological medley (Englund, 2002).

The original adoption of a top down, elitist policy approach underlined the pervasiveness of paternalism and elitism in the policy making practices in Malawi in spite of the introduction of democracy. It revealed the disparity in the interpretation of democracy by the grass-root populace and by those in positions of power and influence. The rational and technical approach has implicit ideological assumptions about a democratic process that can best be described as liberal and representative democratic in nature. Such liberal democratic assumptions carry with them values of meritocracy and the trickle down effect of elitist decisions. The assumptions are that those elected and mandated to make decisions do so on behalf of and for the good of the rest of the population and that they

are the best people to do so. Kaunda (1992) described how presidentialism had dominated policy to the exclusion of an institutionalized legal policy framework in the Banda era. Consequently, the state president directly controlled all development policy, it was coordinated at the Office of the President and Cabinet, and it was implemented through his one-party machinery. In this arrangement, implementation of policies was much easier because the grass-root majority would already have been prepared by Banda's single party machinery. Therefore in such an environment where control was at the centre the assumption that the decision at the top would indeed be translated into action from the grass roots was true.

The overt resistance of the financial reforms by university students and the tacit opposition by implementers at different levels of the state and university structures also illustrated the tension that exists between this interpretation of democracy and the expectations of different policy stakeholders on the ground. Student stakeholders viewed democracy as participation even by the grass roots level through representation. Hence, the students demanded that their leadership should have been made aware of the introduction of user-fees in the university. Meanwhile, faculty and college officials took a passive stance towards the changes because they also felt excluded in a process that affected their work. Such a contradictory policy framework requires an eclectic and pragmatic approach in order to accommodate the complexities of the policy reality (Ball, 1990).

Additionally, although the country changed its constitution and embraced multi-party democracy, the University Act still demonstrates a pervasive insistence on referring everything to the very top and to waiting for directives and wisdom from the father figure at the top. The University Act legitimates this arrangement and practice by making a provision for a chancellor of the university, who is also a head of state: "that there will be a university chancellor and he will be the head of state."

The whole policy process surrounding the 2000 university cost sharing strategy and its implementation also has implications on how a society that was dominated by autocracy

can mix old autocratic tendencies with the new democratic processes. In terms of political ideologies, Englund (2002) aptly defines Malawi as a medley of the old and the new. The title of the book itself, *A democracy of chameleons: Politics and culture in the new Malawi*, aptly describes this medley and movement between the old and the new. He contends that “the depth of democratic reform appears debatable when continuities between the political elite and the populace are considered; Continuities, between the old and new Malawi, are all too obvious” (Englund, 2002, p. 13).

The processes in the university reform process clearly demonstrate the tendency of the political elite to move between the old autocratic and paternalistic Malawi and the supposedly new consultative and democratic new Malawi. The paternalistic and elitist processes of the MIM study, the PIF and the 2000 national budget all give credence to this assertion.

Further, the ease with which the cost-recovery and diversification of funding discourse entered and became an acceptable part of university funding discourse demonstrated the pragmatism that is required to solve some of the complex development problems. Stakeholders accepted what critics would view as neo-liberal principles because they made practical and common sense. In contrast, it was the lack of a more enunciated articulation of the principle in line with local realities that caused the tensions. For me, this particular situation demonstrated what one experienced and retired top economic official said about policy and ideology in Malawi. He advised that when considering policy solutions, they never tied themselves to ideological stances. “Once you declare yourself to be a neo-liberal or a socialist, you are giving yourself a headache and narrowing your possible solutions. With the conditions in Africa we would rather concentrate on workable and practical solutions.” During their time they did not care from which ideological strand the policy principles were borrowed. Unfortunately the state of structural adjustment tends to take away the freedom of local policy makers to explore workable solutions relevant to their own environment. On the other hand, it must be pointed out that such judgmental utilitarianism can be dangerous since it may open up decisions to value judgement criteria.

INADEQUACY AND INAPPROPRIATENESS OF THE GLOBALLY INFLUENCED POLICY CONTENT

In the university reform process, key educational decisions concerning important issues of academic quality and curriculum relevance were ultimately decided through an economic and managerial perspective. Many educational critics of structural adjustment have argued that such insistence on “positivist” analyses is a self-defeating ingredient of the policy process (Bennell, 1996; Burnett & Patrinos, 1996; Samoff, 1996). The main weakness of this approach is that it does not acknowledge the complexity of issues that are connected with policy, especially policy that aims to transform educational funding, delivery or even expansion in resource strapped nations. The approach fails to recognize that ultimately, the policy strategies will have to be “tested” for their appropriateness and realizability through their implementation in the cold, dirty and dilapidated corridors of the colleges of the University of Malawi (Elmore, 1980). The approach fails to acknowledge that 4,000 young Malawians coming from diverse backgrounds in a country where 80% live below the poverty line will be affected by the policies.

It is no wonder that in the 2003/2004 national budget statement the Treasury minister was backtracking and speaking of finding relevant policies for University of Malawi instead of urging the nation to ensure implementation of current university policies (Ntonya, 2003). For me such a statement underlines the inherent weaknesses, such as the inappropriateness of treating educational and social issues as simply economic and academic inefficiencies that can be solved by efficiency measures alone. Such policy treatment makes educational policy a matter of technique and administration and marginalizes values, goals and societal debate (Samoff, 1994). Lack of societal debate about these important social issues led to inappropriate policy.

GLOBALIZATION, REFLEXIVITY AND NATIONAL POLICY MAKING CAPACITY

There was a lack of self-reflexivity among university and state actors regarding their roles and responsibilities as individuals who were given the authority to make policies on behalf of the nation. University actors failed to acknowledge and accept criticism from non-university actors regarding mismanagement of resources and lack of accountability on the part of the university management in the midst of dwindling learning resources.

As well, many of the policy actors, while blaming donors and selected local technocrats for inappropriate and inconsistent policies, partially blamed local policy and decision-makers for generally lacking policy skills and also locally relevant knowledge and information for policy making. Most actors felt that this lack of preparation and capacity is what led to asymmetrical power relations during aid negotiations and resulted in policies that turned out to be difficult to implement realistically within the local context. While they were able to critique the roles of other abstract policy actors, many of them failed to appreciate that they themselves were in the same group of local policy makers. Above all, most of them failed to even acknowledge that there were lessons to be learnt from the controversial 2000 policy process that would inform further policy making. I wondered if this lack of self-reflexivity was a result of the demonstrable lack of policy ownership and responsibility or lack of appreciation of their own national roles. This ambivalence regarding individual responsibility and human agency was very central to future policy success given the weak institutional framework in the government's own tertiary education framework and the revealed power and influence of the university in its policy development and implementation. This lack of acknowledgement could again be seen in the light of abstraction and rationality of policy processes within a framework that is equally rationalistic and bureaucratic in nature. In such Weberian organisational structures, functions and roles are more important than individuals.

In addition, one of the most important facts that emerged in relation to the national policy making capacity was the rise of the new local technocrats and the marginalization or

absence of the educational administrators and planners in the main decisions on university policy making. The issue of lack of policy-making capacity especially in education emerged as one of the causes of policy failure and disruption of implementation. Respondents explained lack of capacity as lack of actual human resources, with under qualified and inexperienced individuals being responsible for policy-making. From the study it emerged that globalization has contributed to the lack of local capacity.

Respondents from the university and IFI raised concerns regarding policy capacity within the Ministry of Education. Economic respondents perceived the problems as regarding implementation capacity rather than policy development. However, the issue of policy capacity can be understood within the wider issue of globalization and structural adjustment programs. Critics of structural adjustment have confirmed that what is often characterized as “capacity deficit” in the literature of international organizations is in reality their perceived absence of individuals who subscribe to the donors’ way of thinking.

Also central to the governance program of the Bank [World Bank] in Africa is “capacity building” in the public and private sectors. The Bank’s work in this area was premised on the assumption that a key element in the African crisis is the absence or collapse of “effective” policy-making and managerial capacity that is both, up-to-date and relevant to the changing international economic environment in general, and the promotion of market-based reform in particular. (Olukoshi, 2003, p. 256)

Ironically, capacity building has been happening in the developing world since the launch of the post-colonial nations and the ascendance of the concept of technical and scientific aid. The inception and launch of the post-colonial universities was in itself an exercise in capacity building (Ajayi et al., 1996; Ashby, 1964; Berman, 1992). Much as AIDS has been a factor in reducing the numbers of qualified staff, globalization’s prerogatives and the politics of patronage have played a role in reducing policy development capacity.

Other scholars have showed that IFIs prefer to work and train their own cadre of technocrats than work with the traditional bureaucrats and administrators who are likely to be opposed to the type of market reform espoused by the Bank (Anders 2002). This

orientation therefore, marginalizes a whole cadre of experienced policymakers who have worked with the very same IFIs in the postcolonial period and in the pre-adjustment and earlier years. They have the training and experience but they are generally viewed as having views that are not in tandem with the neo-liberal agenda.

Due to the imperatives of politics, these state administrators and professionals are further marginalized by postcolonial patronage and ethnic politics especially after the fall of Banda. Most top civil servants perceived to be sympathetic to the old regime and other political groupings were either fired or prematurely retired. Contrary to arguments that these top old-style bureaucrats were not educated, the reality as told by respondents was the opposite. As early as the late 1960s during the Africanisation process, the Malawi civil service gradually replaced top British colonial bureaucrats with Western university educated Malawians (Malawi Government, 1971). In fact, as the history of the African university indicates, from the seventies those who became top civil servants were African university graduates, who were not only educated by expatriate lecturers mostly from the UK but, most of whom did post-graduate courses in the West (Ajayi et al., 1996; Aladin, 1990; Amonoo-neizar, 1998, Nwuawa, 1997). The whole argument of neo-colonialist institutions focuses on continuation of technical and scientific relationships between African universities and states and Western philanthropic and other aid agencies. (Altbach, 1971; Samoff, 1994, 1996, 1999)

The irony is that this group of experts was likely to have been educated under the World Bank's early IDA funded projects and were likely to have been involved in implementing earlier World Bank and other international organizations' approved projects and programs. While acknowledging that there are indeed shortages within specific areas, it must also be acknowledged that in a small country like Malawi with limited resources, premature retirement, under-employment of qualified and experienced technocrats adversely affects national policy making capacity by failing to include benefit from those with the know how. Pal (2002) also suggested that while the current technical policy-making approach does not take account of policy implementation, policy implementation had always been the strength of the old public administration. This statement highlights

some of the dismal implementation failure of IFI supported policies in the developing world.

The marginalization of selected state administrators and professionals also adversely affects the potential for developing and adjusting countries to build a body of policy related research and praxis that would be informed by the local realities. This is further hindered by lack of independent and local research outside government or international institutions (Samoff, 1999). Indirectly this means that the lived experience of experienced individuals has not been adequately tapped, recorded or evaluated for future policy making.

Further the selective use of experts by IFIs also leads to client-patronage relationship whereby foreign donors reward specific scientists and planners who subscribe to their ideology and marginalize the rest. Samoff (1999) indicates that most researchers and policy actors work within the framework of economic and intellectual domination of the West. A senior official of the university commenting on the lack of home grown research, which would aid policy and assist the university's diversification of funding resources, argued that due to lack of financial resources the only research conducted had depended on individual scholars networking with other Western based scholars. Consequently, this distorted the relevance of research because such research was likely to be published in international journals and not local ones. With time such serious scholars relocate. The irony is that with lack of or irrelevant policy related research, government departments and ministries prefer to invite outside experts as policy consultants and the local university scholars feel left out and forgotten and therefore likely to move from the university. The marginalization of local researchers further entrenches the brain drain and erodes the role of the university and its relevance to its own society.

DEMOCRACY, ACTIVISM AND THE SHIFTING POWER SOURCES

Although the initial policy development was premised on a concept of power that was based on hegemonic relations with power concentrated at the top political and technical

echelons, the concept of power is more complex and goes beyond the simple assumption of top-down relations. Such assumed centralized notion of power could only be sustained in a completely authoritarian environment such as Banda's Malawi. In an environment where there is even a reasonable degree of grass root participation such as Muluzi's ambivalent democratic Malawi, power moves between different points depending on the sources of power of the different actors (Englund, 2002).

Fowler identified the different sources of power to include social, economic, political, information or knowledge and discursive resources. Although there is an assumption that economic power is very important, where material sources of power are limited social resources are very important (Fowler, 2000). This understanding of the different sources of power gives the potential for empowerment in a formerly viewed powerless group. The students' social resources were mobilized through involvement by the student body in almost all UNIMA constituent colleges to resist cost sharing. Their network extended further than the students and included other interested parties such as faculty and a large number of alumni who were from the middle class and who were likely to have an interest in low fees as it will be discussed later. This demonstration was one of the most interesting revelations of the study because it has implications for stakeholder inclusion and implementation processes in the new democratic Malawi.

Another unacknowledged source of power among the different policy actors concerned the concentration of the structural power of the university and its constituent colleges to influence and direct its own policy implementation. Further, unacknowledged power of the university was also wielded through individual scholars who were involved in the different national policy processes. Academics were involved in the Vision 2020, the MPRSP and the PIF. It follows that although the university, as an institution, does not receive support for research, many university individuals attend policy-related forums in their own right as academics and scholars. This raises questions about the role of individual agency in relation to economic and intellectual gain that is enabled by belonging to a profession or academic discipline that was itself enabled by society's investment in human capital. The students raised the ethical question of what right

beneficiaries of government of Malawi's free university education had to callously cut off subsidy. This question could be further extended. What ethical right do they have when they participate in policy processes and come up with such inappropriate solutions given that the state invested so many resources on them? It could be argued that since this group is the most highly taxed group, they have repaid for their education so many times over. However this does not absolve them from their responsibility that they come up with a semblance of working solutions.

AMBIGUOUS POLICY OWNERSHIP: LOCAL OR INTERNATIONAL?

The relationship between the University of Malawi and two important state agencies showed an incoherent policy structure that underlined the fragmentation of higher educational policy making in Malawi. Such fragmentation could be explained in terms of the transitional nature of policy making in the new pluralist democracy, the consequences of a decentralized sector-based policy framework and, finally, the political nature of policy-making, all resulting in a situation of ambivalence, fragmentation and lack of clear policy ownership and oversight. Surprisingly, in a demonstration of tokenism that pervades national development policy, there was a directorate for higher education in the Ministry Headquarters. But this directorate was so paralyzed by bureaucratic dysfunctionality and lack of clearly defined mandate that for all purposes it was not functional outside having compiled the tertiary education policy statement in the PIF. This lack of a coordinating agency in government was a major structural weakness for policy making and coordination for Malawi higher education. This lack of clear higher education framework is specifically significant given that there is recognition that higher education policy requires radical changes.

Finally, the perceived undue economic influence of the IFI and their favoured technocrats tends to detract rather than enhance policy ownership. As Anders (2002) argued, perception of policy as externally influenced ensures failure through deliberate implementation inactivity or token implementation that almost reverts to the status quo within a short time. The relationship between the IFIs and their like minded technocrats

could almost be defined in patronage terms that the same organisations so disparage. For it breeds a relationship where the favoured technocrats and scholars get the influential economic jobs, the consultancy opportunities and funding for the agencies that they work for and which represent the world viewpoint of these agencies. But by the same token, many people see such local technocrats as outsiders rather than insiders. In the UNIMA reform any reference to the 2000 budget statement and its substantive policy changes were always referred to with the prefix of the particular technocrat and there was always phrase which said the “donor hailed Chikaonda ten-point-plan.” These statements although innocuous enough clearly indicate the lack of national ownership. In a country where everything good is attributed to the father figure who is also the state president and chancellor of the university among other titles, such a statement speaks volumes.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This critical policy study helps provide alternate ways of policy process and challenges us to keep the rational and irrational, global and local aspects of the policy process in view. Rather than offering recommendations, the analysis proposes contextualized implications of the study that could be adapted into other similar contexts.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY PRACTICE

Policy development processes in developing and indebted countries cannot adopt western-based and IFI supported solutions without proper attention to local institutional, political, cultural, social and economic realities. Adopting such solutions presupposes that the conditions in the developing countries are the same as those in the developed or even between developing countries where similar solutions have been tried. The study showed that apart from a weak institutional and legal policy framework, the political, social and economic conditions in Malawi could not wholly sustain and support a policy reform that wholly drew its solutions from universal or global market trends without further addressing the local realities. For a critical and radical strategy such as cost -sharing to have been appropriately applicable to Malawi, an examination of complex issues such as

affordability, equity, quality, merit and even logistics of privatized and residential education needed to take place. Addressing such complex issues needed a social debate with all alternative views critically examined or acknowledged.

Additionally, contrary to the rational, value-free and technical policy development process adopted in the UNIMA policy development process, any substantive educational reform that purports to address social issues such as access, equity and merit is fraught with competing interests and therefore has an irrational and political dimension.

Therefore, any future education policy making should be treated as a complex rational and irrational process requiring collaboration, comprehensive analysis and inter-agency cooperation apart from the intellectual analysis that usually preoccupies policy makers. Ignoring the complexity of issues that surrounds education policy in countries where resources are scarce, and treating the policy development process as devoid of politics and irrationality undercuts and disrupts policy implementation and undermines further policy processes.

There is also need for policy development processes to adopt specific stakeholder consultations and policy related information dissemination to enhance policy implementation and ownership of policy. Relying on broad based policy consultations such as those that preceded the 2000 budget statement and the Vision 2020 is not enough as it failed to account for stakeholders who were the object of the policy change or stakeholder groups that were key for successful implementation. On the other hand, the tenets of democracy also showed that the university and the Ministry of Education need to be more inclusive in their participation of policy especially if they are introducing policy solutions that will be dependent on increasing individual responsibility and increased civil and business cooperation.

The government of Malawi needs to address the need for clear leadership and direction created by a lack of a clearly defined and mandated department or agency to oversee university education in Malawi as a priority. Such an agency was a matter of urgency given that Malawi intends to embark on transformation of university education, which

will entail encouraging private universities. A strong legal framework and structure for regulation of university education apart from overseeing the transformations is required.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The critical policy analysis approach adopted in this study can be used to address other public and social related studies in Malawi. It could be used in other developing countries with similar focus and contexts. It is valuable because it looks at policy in a holistic manner incorporating rational, irrational aspects and unique contextual realities.

The paucity of information on policy making in small, indebted and developing countries like Malawi means that there is still need for more research in the field of policy and specifically education policy development.

During the course of the study there were many areas that were shown to need more research for information. Some of the policy related information required for introduction of cost-sharing included a study to determine what percentage of the current student cohort are able to pay meaningful tuition fees, what were their sources of funding, and other related issues. There was also need to find out how best to engage alumni, private sector and civil society in the university activities. Finally, there was the issue of distance education, which had been raised so many times. The university needs to find out how it can usefully employ its current resources to launch distance education and expand its intake by providing educational opportunities to individuals in the work force. It also needs to look into how the criteria for eligibility to enter university can be expanded to encourage access.

Above all, the study showed the need for independent policy related research outside government or donor initiated studies with other political and economic agendas. As a student researcher attending the University of Alberta, I gained independence to carry out this research study by deciding on my own topic, research design and a theoretical framework. As already pointed out, I had the independence to draw from counter and

critical Western theoretical frameworks which would not have been possible if the research was commissioned by the government of Malawi or donor nations. Samoff (1999) has aptly captured the problems of the dominance of donor related research in Africa which include prescribed research design and theoretical frameworks. At the same time, the weakness of being out of the country during the years that the policy was introduced and contested meant that I did not experience the reality of the event and phenomena that I was researching at the critical period when it had developed and evolved. Finally, it must be emphasized that independence does not mean being away from one's base.

The main argument is that there was need for the University of Malawi, as an academic institution which has been given the role to conduct research and disseminate knowledge, to be empowered with the ability to conduct independent research that would inform policy formulation and also policy practice.

EPILOGUE: BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD?

In 2002, a committee on the loan scheme was put in place, which included officials from Ministry of Education, Finance, University and student representatives. In an e-mail communication, one of the university student representatives had this to say "the issue of loans is a gray area with problems solved only in response to student pressure, when students want loans peacefully, nothing is done until they demonstrate" personal correspondence, 8 Mar, 2003).

In May 2003 a month before the budget session of parliament, a parliamentary committee on Education went around the constituent colleges to collect information about the financial conditions of the colleges (Nation on line).

In June 2003 during the budget statement session the University of Malawi was allocated MK952.8million (in June equivalent to US\$100m but by September it was under US\$95m due to devaluation) and was the largest beneficiary of subsidized parastatals in

Malawi. However, the Minister of Finance “confessed that the allocation was not enough to cater for university requirements” (Ntonya, 2003). Also as some university officials had indicated there is a disparity between budget allocation and actual allocation. In his budget statement the Minister of Finance also admitted that “there is need to come up with policies that should ensure a pragmatic and realistic way forward for tertiary education” (Ntonya, 2003, July). This was an admission that the university reform was not working and that the policies were found wanting.

Finally, in June 2003, the Minister of Finance declared that the Malawi government would revisit the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, which was launched in April 2002. The reason for revisiting the PRSP was that “it gives little attention on how to move the sleeping economy since it was more concerned with how to reduce the widespread poverty, which according to the World Bank grips at least every six out of the ten people in the country.” The Minister was quoted as saying “the plan, widely approved by donors as the best tool to deal with poverty in least developed countries, intends to put more money in running programs to reduce poverty at the expense of growth” (Maeresa 2003). Meanwhile a representative of the prestigious Economic Association of Malawi (ECAMA), “questioned the wisdom of Malawi moving out of tune with a globally agreed plan which, major donors such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank subscribes to and asked, could we as a country divert from a globally agreed upon approach to poverty” (Maeresa, June, 2003). At the same time, an economist from the university is quoted as saying “government’s views confirm civil society fears of coming up with a half baked plan raised during the speedy drafting consultations process. He said this was like admitting the process was not effective (Maeresa, June: 2003).

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