

**POLITICAL PARTIES AND THEIR MANIFESTOS: INFERRING POLITICAL
PARTY IDEOLOGIES IN MALAWI SINCE 1994**

M. A. (POLITICAL SCIENCE) THESIS

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UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

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M.A. (POLITICAL SCIENCE) THESIS

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**University of Malawi
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DECLARATION

I the undersigned hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Where other people's work has been used acknowledgements have been made.

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Certificate of Approval

The undersigned certify that this thesis represents the student's own work and effort and has been submitted with our approval.

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This work is dedicated to my wife, Mian, and son, Wisdom.

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ABSTRACT

Since the reintroduction of multiparty democracy in 1993, political parties in Malawi have been at the centre of ‘ideology and policy positions’ debate. Political parties are said to be lacking substantial ideologies, and that their policy positions are almost identical. This study makes further contribution to this debate. It mainly focuses on differences and similarities in issue saliency across two main parties and across three general elections, 1994, 1999 and 2004 as reflected in the electoral manifestos. Second, the study looks at the subject of policy commitment by examining whether ideas in the electoral manifestos are reflected in decisions taken by the parties in power. In this second aspect, the study only looks at whether the intentions of the manifesto are brought onto the government agenda as opposed to examining the merits or demerits of a particular policy commitment. With the evidence presented, the study demonstrates that there are some small but significant differences in issue salience across parties and across elections. The study also reveals that ruling parties show commitment to their electoral manifesto by making sure that important issues are brought before the government agenda. Parties do not completely abandon their electoral promises. Importantly, changes in national policies with the change of government leadership signify that parties are slightly different in their ideological orientation. Overall, there are encouraging signs to indicate that although parties appear to be vague on issues when they meet the electorates, differences in issue saliency and ideological positions at the macro level are evident.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xi
CHAPTER ONE	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problem Statement.....	5
1.3 Objectives of the Study	7
1.4 Significance of the Study	7
1.5 Structure of the Thesis	8
CHAPTER TWO	10
2.0 Literature Review.....	10
2.1 Theory of Mandate Representation.....	10
2.2 Saliency Theory	14
2.3 Left- Right Party Policy Positions	17
2.4 Elections and Public Policy	19
2.5 Parties and Public Policy	22
2.6 Party Policy Positions in Electoral Manifestos.....	24
2.7 Party Policy Positions and Ideologies in Malawi	27
CHAPTER THREE	32
3.0 Research Design and Methodology	32
3.1 Research Design.....	32
3.2 Sampling	32

3.3	Review of documents.....	33
3.4	Key Informant Interviews	34
3.5	Coding Domains and Categories, and Analysis.....	35
3.5	Ethical Considerations	36
3.6	Limitation of the Study	36
CHAPTER FOUR.....		38
4.0	Issue Saliency Variation across Parties and Elections	38
4.1	Overview	38
4.2	Party Manifestos in Malawi: Do voters get the message?	40
4.3	Issue Saliency across Parties and Elections in Malawi.....	42
4.4	The National Economy	45
4.5	Agriculture and Food Security.....	50
4.6	Social Sector and Quality of Life.....	56
4.7	Governance and Democracy Consolidation.....	58
4.8	The Government System.....	62
CHAPTER FIVE		65
5.0	Political Parties and Policy Commitment	65
5.1	Overview	65
5.2	Key Socio-Economic Policies of the UDF Government since 1994	66
5.3	The Poverty Alleviation Policy (PAP).....	70
5.4	Policy developments in agricultural sector since 1994.....	72
5.5	The Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP)	75
5.6	The DPP: whose manifesto is it anyway?	82
CHAPTER SIX		90
6.0	Conclusion	90
REFERENCES.....		93
APPENDIX 1.....		98
APPENDIX 2.....		106

LIST OF FIGURES

FIG. 1 UDF ISSUE SALIENCY BY DOMAIN	43
FIG. 2 MCP ISSUE SALIENCY BY DOMAIN ACROSS ELECTIONS	44
FIG. 3 ISSUE SALIENCY BY DOMAIN ACROSS PARTIES	45
FIG. 4 SALIENCY IN AGRICULTURE ACROSS PARTIES.....	51
FIG. 5 UDF SALIENCY IN AGRICULTURE BY CATEGORIES	52
FIG. 6 MCP SALIENCY IN AGRICULTURE BY CATEGORIES.....	53
FIG. 7 SALIENCY IN SOCIAL SECTOR BY DOMAIN	56
FIG. 8 SALIENCY IN GOVERNANCE BY DOMAIN	58
FIG. 9 SALIENCY IN GOVERNMENT SYSTEM BY DOMAIN	62

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: DEVELOPMENT BUDGET ALLOCATION BY SECTOR.....	78
TABLE 2: DEVELOPMENT BUDGET ALLOCATION BY SECTOR (K MILLION) .	80

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFORD	Alliance for Democracy
APIP	Agriculture Productivity Investment Programme
DPP	Democratic Progress Party
L-R	Left-Right
MASAF	Malawi Social Action Fund
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MRG	Manifesto Research Group
NEC	National Executive Committee
PAP	Poverty Alleviation Programme
SACA	Smallholder Agriculture Credit Administration
TIP	Targeted Input Programme
UDF	United Democratic Front

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

This study is about political parties and policy representation in Malawi since 1994. It mainly focuses on differences and similarities in issue saliency across two main parties and across three general elections as reflected in the electoral manifestos in order to infer political party ideologies. Second, the study looks at the subject of policy commitment by examining whether ideas in the electoral manifestos are reflected in decisions taken by the parties in power. In this second aspect, the study only looks at whether the intentions of the manifesto are brought onto the government agenda as opposed to examining the merits or demerits of a particular policy commitment. Since the reintroduction of multiparty elections in 1994 there has been a debate in the political system about whether parties in Malawi are distinct in terms of ideology and policies they stand for. This study makes a contribution to this debate by inferring party ideologies from manifestos.

Malawi is a liberal democratic state. Johari (1982:411) defines liberal democracy as a “political system in which democracy or ‘the rule of the people’ prevails to make the regime ‘legitimate’ in the real sense of the term...and where the machinery of government is run by the chosen representatives of the people who are accountable to them for their policies and actions.” In a liberal democracy, political parties play very

important roles. Parties shape the policy direction of any government. During elections parties propose a number of issues which they intend to implement once they are given the vote by the electorate. These issues are conveyed to the electorate through the campaign podium or written down in the form of electoral manifestos. As put by Dalager (1996:487) “candidates who run for office often cite issues as their motivation for undertaking the campaign and as a way of differentiating themselves from their opponents.” It is therefore imperative that every party comes up with an electoral manifesto in which party’s ideology and important policies are either clearly defined or implied.

Issues are important to both the parties and the voters but for this relationship to harmonize there is need that a “significant portion of the campaign’s messages to voters will contain information relevant to the voters,” (Dalager, 1996:487). Second, Dalager (1996:487) argues that voters ought to have the quest to acquire information about such relevant issues. Furthermore, political parties and candidates should appear to honour their promises once voted into power for the voters to appreciate the importance of elections.

Basically, one important objective of elections in democracy is to provide mandate for successful political players to pursue a set of policies that are communicated to the electorate during election campaign. The proper functioning of representative democracy requires that voters be presented with choices among parties offering contrasting policies on important issues, and that after elections parties that are successful should be seen to be committed to those promises. Democracy is a system of governance in which the

majority of electors choose one out of a number of competing parties to form a government and carry out its programmes (McDonald et al, 2004).

The whole essence of representative democracy, therefore, is that parties should be committed to implement policies which the majority of voters prefer. In other words, representative democracy entails that there should be a positive relationship between the policy preferences which political parties offer during the elections and those issues which the electors or the public desire to be implemented. This means that those who get into power, be it political parties or independent candidates have the mandate conferred upon them by the majority of voters. The distinctiveness of parties in terms of ideology as well as policy preferences is very important because it forms a basis through which voters can make clear choices about which policy direction they are voting for. Again, it provides a yardstick for evaluating the performance of the incumbents.

Political parties continue to play an important role in socializing the masses on political issues that govern the society. At independence in 1964, Malawi had multiparty system of government with a parliamentary sovereignty. Within a short period after attaining independence, this pluralist system had been rejected by the first generation leaders who opted for the monopolist one party system within which all mass organizations were controlled. The MCP became the sole official aggregator and articulator of interests with Dr. Kamuzu Banda as the only legitimate leader of the party as well as the head of state and government. This definitely meant that the entire society was governed by ideas of the MCP without any alternative.

However, in 1993 Malawi reverted to multiparty system following the referendum, and thereafter competitive general elections in 1994. Of course from 1994-1999 politics

in Malawi was dominated by three major parties which drew their support from the three regions respectively; the UDF was strong in the Southern Region, the MCP in the Centre, and AFORD had its stronghold in the Northern Region. But results for the 2004 general elections show a significant shift in the political landscape. The imposing of party candidate in elections, emergency of new parties, and unsanctioned electoral alliances affected the performance of major parties, more especially, the UDF and AFORD.

Since 1994 the dominance three major parties, namely, AFORD, UDF and MCP on the national political scene has been on the decline with respect to share of seats in parliament. As a percentage of parliamentary seats, AFORD got 20.3% in 1994, 15.0% in 1999, and 3.1% in 2004. The MCP swings from 31.6% in 1994, 34.1 in 1999, and 29.5 in 2004. The UDF secured 48.0% in 1994, 48.1% in 1999 and dropped to 25.9% in 2004. These figures indicate significant shocks in UDF and AFORD.¹ It is also evident that the MCP was reduced to a regional party because of its failure to win even a single seat from the other two regions in the 2004 elections. The AFORD and UDF were also challenged by the emergency of new parties and independents in their once acclaimed strongholds. Basically, this shows a decline of three party ethno-regional based strengths as well as the dominance of the so-called political heavy weights.

In addition, a survey of literature shows that parties in Malawi exhibit ideological deficiency, and that parties advance the same issues. This weakness results in electoral competition which is not issue based. Khembo (2004a:92-103) argues that political parties in Malawi are said to “have weak organizational and communication capacity and exhibit transitional structures. Regularized information gathering and dissemination in political parties is difficult.” According to Svasand and Khembo (2007) parties in Malawi

¹ Source: Malawi Electoral Commission

split more often, creating new offshoots, form electoral coalitions and alliances and disband unpredictably sometimes following unilateral decisions taken by the party leaders.

Literature, further suggests that voter behaviour in Malawi revolves around ethno-regionalism, charismatic personalities, and certainly patronage. Nonetheless, in every general election parties that compete launch their electoral manifestos, communicating to the electorates about what their party intends to implement when it gets the mandate of the voters. As defined by Svasand and Khembo (2007:109) a “manifesto is a document that sets out a party’s intentions or policies for the next electoral period, explaining how different issues will be prioritized and resolved”. So the question that remains is that if manifestos do not have any impact on voter behaviour why do parties spend their precious time and money to produce them? Can Manifestos provide a basis for inferring political party ideologies?

1.2 Problem Statement

Building on this already existing pool of knowledge this study looks at the role of parties in policy articulation at the macro level. The assumption is that parties do not exist just for nothing. It is possible that because of the nature of the electoral base parties may deliberately be vague about their policy orientation during the campaign. The argument being advanced in this study is that the analysis of party electoral manifestos to determine differences and similarities in issue-saliency dimensions across parties can contribute positively to the party ideologies and party policy debate in Malawi. Second, another important way of knowing the policy or ideological position of the party is to examine what the party does when it is in power. Holding all other factors constant, congruency

between the electoral manifesto of the ruling party and government agenda is a good determinant of the ideological and policy orientation of that particular party.

Svasand and Khembo (2007:231) also add that “it is relevant to consider whether there is any connection between what a party says in election manifesto and what party’s representatives elected to public office do.” Generally, this study examines this connection by exploring “whether the priorities in the party programmes (manifestos) are reflected in the decisions made by MPs and by the governing party,” of which Svasand and Khembo (2007) have not explored. The study uses issue saliency theory to infer political party ideologies from the manifestos which parties publish at every election. Johnson and Crisp (2003:128) argue that “a politician’s party label provides a concise ideological cue used by voters to make choices among candidates...*there is* a predictable link between parties voters elect, and subsequent policy outcome.”

It is therefore important to explore the likelihood of changes in national policies with the change in government. Policies of the government are a reflection of goals and beliefs of the ruling party. This study argues that differences in national policies that result from changes in the ruling party form another important basis in defining ideological position of the party in power. However, there is a gap in the scholarly literature about Malawi that links government’s policy outcomes to the ruling party’s ideological inclination. In other words, this study argues that one can infer political party ideologies by critically analyzing issue saliency in Manifestos and compare with possible government policy outcomes while holding all other factors constant. This linkage is not on specific policy but rather the philosophical change in overall policy direction.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study examines policy representation by major political parties in Malawi in order to infer party ideologies. It discusses this objective by looking at whether parties offer different policies and also if the ruling parties get committed to their policy announcements. In order to address this objective the study has the following specific objectives;

- To find out differences and similarities in issue saliency across parties and across elections using electoral manifestos.
- To determine whether ruling parties advance policies in line with their electoral manifestos.
- Ascertain whether a change of government results in a change in national policies.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that it contributes new insights on political party development and policy representation as prerequisites for the consolidation of democracy in Malawi. Having emerged from one party dictatorship only in 1993; and being one of the poorest countries in the world, Malawi faces enormous challenges and problems of governance, poverty and development. Political parties are vehicles for public governance and development planning as well as key players in elections. Thus, by focusing on parties this study tackles problems affecting central institutions of governance and development in Malawi. Furthermore, the output of this study, justifiably, contributes towards the debate about the political party ideologies and policy positions in Malawi. Political parties, being institutions of vertical and horizontal democratic accountability at different levels, are some of the key institutions to be

interrogated in order to have new insights into the state of democracy, governance and development in the country.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is mainly an introductory chapter, which has focused on the relationship between political parties and policy representation. It points out the importance of policy distinctiveness among parties in a democracy.

Chapter two is a review of literature. It explores the literature in areas of mandate representation, saliency theory, left-right party policy positions, elections and public policy, parties and public policy, party policy positions in electoral manifestos, and finally zeros in on party policy positions in Malawi.

Chapter three is research design and methodology. It looks at issues of sampling, key informant interviews, coding of manifestos categories and domains and analysis, review of documents, ethical consideration, and limitation of the study.

Chapter four discusses issue saliency variation between the Malawi Congress Party and the United Democratic Front. This chapter looks at differences and similarities along the domains of Agriculture and food security, the Economy, Social sector and quality of Life, Governance and democracy consolidation, and the nature of government system. This chapter also discusses the role of manifesto with perspectives from key informant interviews.

Chapter five focuses on policy commitment by the ruling parties. It largely dwells on the UDF and then later discusses whether the DPP is implementing the 2004 UDF

manifesto. The chapter also looks at policy shift between MCP and UDF, and also between UDF and DPP.

Chapter six concludes the thesis by looking at the key issues discussed in the entire thesis. It argues that there are indeed policy differences and similarities in issue salience across parties. Furthermore, the chapter concludes that although parties fail to articulate the policies to the electorate during the campaign, nevertheless, ruling parties have a degree of commitment to electoral manifestos. Henceforth, elections in Malawi exhibit indirect party mandate as opposed to direct policy mandate.

Chapter one, therefore, has presented the background to the study, the problem statement, the methodology that were used in data collection and analysis, the ethical consideration, and importantly the significance and limitations of the study. The next chapter reviews the literature within the boundaries of conceptual framework used in this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theory of Mandate Representation

Przeworski et al (1999:29) argue that “the claim connecting democracy and representation is that under democracy governments are representative because they are elected, and these elections ought to be free and fair with widespread citizen participation”. It is important to understand that democracy whether in theory or practice “accepts the legitimacy of differences of opinion about what the society should do when some kind of collective decision is being made,” (Hofferbert and Budge, 1992:152). The mechanism of determining and expressing these different choices is through elections. Elections are important because they serve as a platform available to the electorate to choose or select policy bearing politicians, which they think can best represent their interests. In addition, elections also serve as a mechanism to punish poor performance by denying the incumbents continuity of office.

Basically, according to Przeworski et al (1999:29), elections can be understood within the scope of the mandate theory, and accountability theory. Ideally, democracy is different from other forms of governance because in its normative as well as empirical sense there ought to be a harmonious interaction between the citizens and their government. Largely, this harmonious interaction is realized through elections

(Hofferbert and Budge, 1992:152). The centrality of elections to democracy stems from the fact that they provide a recurring opportunity for citizens to express and empower their interests. In other words, what is important in democracy is that there are periodic elections through which citizens confer mandate upon the representative whose policies have the positive interface with those perceived by the electors. Again, under democratic elections, electors can punish the incumbent or reward them with another term of office based on the previous performance. Basically, elections functions both retrospectively as well as prospectively. Hence, electoral manifesto serve as a platform for the decisions made by electorates during voting, and also as a reference point to governments decision when implementing and formulating its policies.

Johnson and Crips (2003: 128) argue that “a proper functioning representative democracy requires that voters be presented with choices among candidates and parties offering contrasting policies on important issues.” Hofferbert and Budge (1992:152) add that “political parties compete in elections for votes which will help them attain influence or govern office, on the basis of substantive appeals to the wishes and or interests of different groups in the population.” Against this background what it means is that a well functioning democracy ought to have a well functioning party system that can ably articulate policy issues to the voters.

The idea of mandate representation, therefore, as argued by McDonald et al (2004:4) implies that “policy preferences of the knowable and coherent majority of voters determine the winner of an election and that the winner takes its turn in running government on the policy lines it had promised before election.” Hershey (1994:226) also acknowledges that the concept of mandate is very central to the contemporary study of

elections. Hershey (1994:226) argues that “when elections are viewed as providing some control over policies, the means of translation is the concept of mandate which entails that voters through the ballot instruct their elected representatives on certain policy direction.” Furthermore, “the way in which an elected official’s mandate is interpreted determines the initiatives for which the official can claim authority” (Hershey, 1994:226). Accordingly, McDonald et al (2004:5) argue that there are several conditions for the mandate theory of representation to operationalise, however, one need not to look into each and every one of them because what is important is that each element is necessary such that “the failure with respect to any one condition means that a mandate is not present in the case in question.” These conditions include;

- *Party Distinctiveness*- meaning that at least two parties have policy profiles distinct from one another.
- *Voter information*- voters must recognize the policy profile of each party
- *Voter motivation*- voters ought to cast their ballots on the basis of the party policy profile they prefer to see implemented by a government
- *Voter majority*- a majority of voters are revealed to have the same preferences, given the choices available
- *Electoral system translation*-the election outcome clearly designates the party with majority electoral support to form government that will carry out its policy
- *Party Policy Commitment*- the parties in government carry out policies as announced at the time of election.

Similarly, Dalager (1996: 486) contend that “if issues are indeed important to both candidates and voters then; a) a significant portion of the campaign’s messages to voters

will contain information about relevant issues; b) voters will seek to acquire information on those issues in order to evaluate candidates properly.” The concept of a mandate representation, therefore, as put by Hershey (1994:227), plays a vital role in the justification of elections as institutions and in the effort to construct explanations for particular election results. In addition, Hershey (1994:227) argues that the mandate theory of election also reassures “citizens that their primary form of political participation-the vote-has an impact on policies to which they will be subjected to.” Hofferbert and Budge (1992:154) also argue that if democratic electoral competition does not give the citizens an assurance about policy change as a result of voting for one party rather than the other, then there is no reason to have elections in a democracy.

Basically, the justification for mandate representation is that in a competitive democracy, parties should offer different policy alternatives to the electorate so that the party that gets majority of votes in an election should be the one whose ideas or policies are deemed to be favoured by the electorate. The core argument is that the initial reference point for government policies should be within the parameters of the party programmes or manifesto that the majority party or rather the ruling party puts across to the electorate during an election, otherwise the whole concept of representative democracy ceases to function. Indeed, as argued by Przeworski et al (1999:33), “mandate representation is a situation in which policies adopted by the incumbents follow their electoral platforms *and* these policies are the best for the citizens under the conditions observed by the incumbents.”

Hofferbert and Budge (1992:152) further argue that “if governments failed to do so, a central justification for democracy in terms of governmental responsiveness to public

opinion would be seriously undermined.” The study of Parties and their programmes therefore, becomes important when one desires to test the workability of the mandate representation in a democracy. Generally, political parties come up with manifestos during elections promising the electorate about what they should expect if that particular party happens to be voted into office. Through this process, therefore, the manifestos emerge as a benchmark for policy discussions and at the same time as a benchmark for rewards and sanction to the incumbents in the next elections.

2.2 Saliency Theory

This study adopts the Saliency theory which many scholars on this subject have ever used (Budge, 2001; Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge, 1994; Keman, 2007; McDonald, Mendes and Kim, 2007). Saliency theory is very vital in explaining the difference in policy emphases by different competing political parties in a democracy. Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge (1994:22) observe that “the classical conception of party competition assumes that all competitors compete on the same set of issues-tailoring their formulation to the calculation of electoral advantage”.

In other words, this theory makes a strong assumption that the majority of voters are going to cast their vote for the party whose set of policy position is close to the liking of the electors at that particular moment in time. This means that political parties have to respond to the issues that mostly affect the society at a given period of time, and how they intend to handle such problems when given the mandate through the vote. Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge (1994:23) rightly argue that “the party thus has a mandate to carry through the policies that had attracted the plurality or majority of votes.”

Generally, salience theory argues that parties are different as far as selectivity of issue emphases is concerned. Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge (1994:23) contend that “if politicians are ideologically indifferent to policy but relentlessly eager to get into office, why do those in losing parties not simply join the winning party...especially in a short time perspective, centering on the current election and government?” If this question is applied to the situation of parties in Malawi since 1994, one may argue that indeed several parties have emerged almost at each general election and that some of them ended up joining the winning party.

However, the MCP has stood the test of time since the reintroduction of multiparty elections. It has been in the opposition regardless of appeals from some quarters in the society to join the ruling party in coalition at certain point in time. Again, even parties that joined the winning party at some point not all of them got submerged, they still continue to operate as independent political groupings. There certainly, has to be a reason why parties in Malawi, especially the MCP, behave the way they do.

Remarkably, Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge (1994:24) add that “party leaders, whatever their desire for office, are also attached to their party’s enduring ideological stance...parties sustain an identity that is anchored in the cleavages and issues that gave rise to their birth.” Furthermore, Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge (1994:24) note that “if parties wanted to repudiate their past for the short-term advantage, they could not easily do so, and they might not be believed if they tried...parties are historical beings. They stand for something. Each party is expected to stand for something that separates it from the *electoral* competition.” Nevertheless, this does not mean that parties are stagnant entities. They are capable of changing by “emphasizing and de-emphasizing

issues” depending on the changes in the demand side of the political game. But this change is mostly gradual across time and elections depending on problems prevailing in that society across the specified period of time. Parties do not operate in a vacuum; they respond to the needs of the people particularly those of the prospective majority voters and supporters.

Sometimes, parties do not explicitly elaborate on the policy position taken in their electoral programmes, and they also rarely “make definite statements of what the party will do when in government” (Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge, 1994:25). Electoral manifestos mostly do not make any reference to other candidates as a whole, let alone discussion of their issue position. The manifesto documents “generally present the party’s views of history of a certain problem’s development and characteristic, while also emphasizing its importance and priority. What specifically is to be done about the problem is implied or minimized” (Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge, 1994:25).

Saliency theory makes an assumption that what parties offer to the electorate is a choice between selective policy agendas but not between specific policies addressed to items on a universal agenda. “Strength for one party” as Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge (1994:25) observe “are likely to be points of weakness for the others, and program’s combination of emphases is likely to be unique to that party.” Svasand and Khembo (2007:231) simply describe saliency as a “term used to identify which problems a party thinks are most important, and therefore pays much attention to...while ideological direction refers to how the issues should be addressed.”

2.3 Left- Right Party Policy Positions

The Left-Right ideological positions of political parties play a vital role in theorizing many different aspects of democratic processes (McDonald, Mendes and Kim, 2007:62). Actually, the Left-Right is at the centre of comparative politics. McDonald, Mendes and Kim (2007:64) define Left-Right party positions to mean that “those who want the government to organize a nation’s economy are on the left; those who want private enterprise to organize a national economy are on the right.”

In studying political parties and public policy, scholars have categorized political parties depending on what they stand for in terms of their ideological policy positions, and one of the common mechanisms is to distinguish parties using the Left-Right analysis. According to Gabel and Huber (2000:94) there are several ways through which this analysis can be attained and these include; a) expert surveys on specific party policy systems, where experts are asked to provide estimates of party L-R positions in these systems; b) asking the party supporters using what these authors call ‘*euro/afro-barometer*’, whereby supporter align themselves on the policy scales hence determining whether their parties are more Left or Right. Currently, the most popularly used methodology is that of extracting information from election manifestos as was done by the Manifesto Research Group (MRG). The “MRG carefully coded manifestos using a large number of substantive categories ...and this data has been used by a lot of scholars to estimate the party L-R positions,” (Gabel and Huber, 2000:95).

Gabel and Huber (2000:95) argues that there are two frameworks, the first one involves “developing a clear argument about the policy content of the Left-Right ideology i.e. the specific issues that define the Left-Right dimension.” The major

argument under this conception is to properly isolate issues and define parameters that define the Left-Right policy positions and then later place the party under study in those policy dimensions in order to establish whether that particular party leans more to the left or to the right.

Certainly, the variety of policy issues may vary from one political system to the other because different political systems grapple with different problematic issues. In other words, some issues that are used to determine L-R in developed western countries may not necessarily apply to most African political systems. As observed by Gabel and Huber (2000:95) “it is also very difficult to develop and defend arguments about the inclusion, exclusion, and relative importance of specific issues.”

Gabel and Huber (2000:95) points out that Left-Right ideology can also be conceptualized “as a ‘constraint’ on policy position such that positions on broad range of issues are related to each other in consistent and identified ways.” According to Gabel and Huber (2000:95) what this means is that the “ideology reduces differences in party positions over many policies to differences in party position on a single dimension...*meaning that* if one can uncover the relationship between specific policies and ideological dimension...one can infer parties’ positions on the ideological dimension from their positions on specific policies.”

Party Left-Right positions are indeed a prominent component in theorizing and analyzing democratic decision making. It is important to appreciate that in a democracy, as argued by McDonald, Mendes and Kim (2007:62) “the policy meaning of elections and of the policy representation that follows requires that parties communicate along an identifiable single policy dimension...so that voters and other decision makers can know

the meaning of the policy bundles parties embody”. Parties should clearly define themselves on certain critical policy positions so that the electorate should have a reason for voting for particular party and not their opponent. The Left-Right categorization may be so remote a subject in African political parties. Most scholars argue that parties in Africa lack ideology such that parties and subsequently elections are mostly centered on personalities, ethno-regionalism, and patronage.

2.4 Elections and Public Policy

In democracy, elections play an important role of uniting the voters with the parties and possibly the policies which the parties advocate. Whatever, the preferences of voters, votes are in effect choices among alternatives. The decisions made by voters can have a major policy consequence whether or not voters are fully aware of the implications of their actions (Ginsberg, 1976:41). According to Ginsberg (1976:41) “the effects of voting behaviour are conditioned by the alternative policy positions represented by opposing candidates and parties. Given the presence of alternatives, the electorate makes at least implicit choices.” Ginsberg (1976) adds that “if the opposition parties offer policy alternatives substantially different from those defended by the incumbents, electoral choices can result in changes in national policy.”

Second, Ginsberg (1976:41) argues that voting can directly affect the public policy to the extent that winning candidates and parties implement the policies based on their pre-election positions. If winners behave randomly in relation to their pre-election positions, then the electorate choices become irrelevant. On the other hand, if the sets of winning candidates, in fact, implement policies based on their pre-election positions, the choices of the electorate are implicitly translated into national policy. This then as put by

Ginsberg (1976:43) means that the “effects of elections are thus a function of both the magnitude of the choices available to the voters and the extent to which electoral choices are implement.”

Almond (2006:85) adds that “despite the simplicity and limitation of the vote, its implications can be profound. The voters’ choice between the competing parties or candidates is one of the few ways that a nation can make a collective choice of the government goals. In other words, the outcomes of elections should have an impact on public policy. It means therefore that a shift in citizens’ support can bring to power new politicians who are committed to implement new policies. Almond (2006) argues that the influence of the citizen on public policy is not only based on the policy alternatives chosen but also through their role in selecting elites whom they trust to make and implement policies which the citizens would support.

In addition, Almond (2006:86) contends that “to some individuals elections are a simple referendum on government performance, to vote the rascals out if times are bad, and reelect them if times are good.” However, Almond argues that in some cases, “the charisma of a strong leader or the incompetence of the weak one can dominate an election.” According to Almond (2006:88) the aggregation of policy preferences through elections is important because parties generally work to fulfill their electoral promises when they gain the control of government if they are concerned with reelection.

Political parties are therefore very important as far as policy communication to the electorate is concerned. Generally, political parties are major players in elections and do provide a platform upon which the policy discussions are held. However, as observed by Almond (2006:87) in most countries multiparty elections do not yield a single majority

party such that parties have to form a coalition in order to form government. This is most common in parliamentary democracies. Parties with similar agenda or those that fall within the same policy horizon may also come together in an electoral alliance. Elections, indeed, play an important role in democracy because it is one of the available avenues through which the citizens can make a choice about which policies should be implemented and which group of politicians to be empowered with such mandate. As noted by V.O. Key, “unless mass views have some place in shaping of policy, all the talk about democracy is nonsense” (Key, 1966; as quoted in Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge, 1994:7)

Importantly, in a democracy we expect parties to offer different policy horizons or parameters in order to provide a meaningful issue-based electoral competition. The voters should have a reason for choosing party A and not party B. Some scholars on Africa party system have argued that parties in Africa are deficient of policy positions (Svasand and Khembo, 2007; Khembo, 2004) pointing out that elections in Africa are ethno-regionalism and personality based. But what these authors have failed to do is to explain the question; why is it that people vote for a candidate or party from their ethnic grouping, tribe or region? The hypothetical answer to the question could be that; *“I want my tribesman to implement the policies that are favourable to me because I am aware that no matter how appealing the policies of the opponent may be, he will not implement them in favour of me but his/her tribe.”* In other words, the voter still has policies to be implemented at the back of his mind but his overall assumption is that such policies can be best implemented by a party or candidate from his or her own tribe.

Even though this is not the main thrust of this thesis needless to say that it is important to consider looking at the debate surrounding voters, issues and elections. This controversy rages on in the scholarly literature (Dalager, 1996; Ginsberg, 1976; Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge, 1994; McDonald et al, 2004; Budge and Laver, 1993). While other scholars have argued that elections are issue-based some have argued to the contrary. As observed by Dalager (1996: 486) almost all candidates and parties that “run for public office often cite the issues as their motivation for undertaking the campaign and differentiating themselves from their opponents.”

2.5 Parties and Public Policy

The debate concerning the role of parties in public policy is ongoing and obviously in several dimensions, however, this thesis only looks at; a) differences in terms of salience of the parties policy bundles across the parties in question as well changes across elections; b) the study also examines whether parties and their representatives have any commitment to their electoral promises. As properly explained by Budge and Laver (1993:499) “the idea that the policies of the government are affected by the policies of the parties that comprise them is at the heart of the theory of representative democracy...*such that* if one does not relate to the other, then it is unclear how elections can have much impact on what governments do”.

Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge (1994:2) add that “to the remarkable extent, the policy priorities of governments in modern democracies reflect the formal programs presented by competing parties during elections...*and that* this congruence between promise and performance is at the heart of... democracy”. In order to fulfill this function parties need to explain properly what they stand for in terms policy positions as well as

ideological leaning, above all parties ought to understand what their supporters prefer and expect from the party machinery.

However, scholars like (Budge and Laver, 1986; Warwick, 2005; Budge and Laver, 1993) argue that politicians are mostly motivated by two factors when competing in an elections; office seeking which is “an intrinsic concern for rewards such as power, prestige or a place in the limelight” (Budge and Laver, 1986:485), and second, politicians can be motivated by Policy pursuit which entails the desire to “participate in the political process in order to further particular policy objectives often linked to the underlying ideological positions” (Budge and Laver, 1986:485). But the authors add that politician can be motivated by both reasons. For example “office seeking can be sought both as an end in itself and as a means to fulfill policy objectives. Equally, policy can be pursued both as an end in itself and as means to achieve office” (Budge and Laver, 1986:486).

According to (Budge and Laver, 1986:487) policy positions are very important aspects in party competition in order to achieve office such that even “an office-seeking party receives a payoff from the policies which it is associated with during parliamentary policy debates.” Warwick (2005:373) adds that “even purely office-seeking leaders must respect the political beliefs of those who put them in office if they are not to alienate their electoral base.” The importance of party voters cannot be overemphasized because voters may generally expect that political leaders should be reasonably faithful to policy commitments regardless of the policy and other consequences this might entail.

In other words, as Warwick (2005:373) argues, “accurate representation of a party’s policy position in the political arena may be valued in its own right by voters, and the party’s longer-term electoral prospects may depend more on its reputation for sticking to

its commitments than on frequency within which it can find a place for itself in the *executive*.” Policy position is what makes parties different from each other. In a well functioning party system one expects parties that have similar policy orientation to be more willing to form an electoral alliance or even to join hands in parliamentary coalition. Warwick (2005:374) argues that in case of a coalition government, “a party will normally take up an opportunity to participate in governing... if that *government* intends to adopt and implement a policy position that lies within the party’s horizon”.

Nevertheless, Warwick (2005:375) argues that “parties may refuse to take part in a certain government agenda if they are concerned not just with which policy is being implemented but also **who** implements it”. Parties may also be unwilling to participate or support any government agenda “whose intent is to implement policies that are too far way from the party’s stated policy commitments.” Warwick (2005:375) further points out the following reason for differences in parties’ policy horizons;

- “It may be because party supporters expect a reasonably faithful adherence to policy commitments and the leaders fear that they will become disaffected if that expectation is not met.”
- “It could be because the leaders themselves believe that party’s longer-term interests (and theirs as well) are best served by cultivating a distinct ideological identity or even because the leaders themselves are committed ideologically.”

2.6 Party Policy Positions in Electoral Manifestos

The concept of political manifestos has been known for a long time and is still an important part of the option available to parties to make their policies known to the electorate. This makes manifestos suitable for research in determining policy position of

parties and governments both across time and across cases- where case shall refer to political parties. Party manifestos are the key source of information in determining the policy position of a given party.

Scholars, particularly in Western Europe use party manifestos as most valuable source of information to label the policy orientation of parties both in government as well as those in opposition. There are a lot of theories which explain the use of political party manifestos. As put by Hansen (2008), the central argument for using party manifesto is that a party manifesto is the only authoritative collective statement on party policy. The party manifesto is usually passed by the highest organizational level of each internal arena. Politicians explain policy directions of the next government in electoral manifestos.

However, Hansen (2008:203) quoting Budge (1987:18) says that without manifestos alternatives will often be based on statements by party elites or on general statement by individuals who might not readily be assumed to speak on behalf of the general party. The most popular studies done are the CMP-Datasets that analyze the manifestos of most of the Western Europe political parties. The CMP data expresses “the level of saliency accorded to various areas by the parties. This means that party positions for or against a specific policy are not readily found in the dataset. Volkens (2001:40) as quoted in Hansen (2008:203) argues that the “assumption is that when the party does not mention a specific policy, we may only assume that this has a low level of salience in that party but not that the party in question has a centre position on that policy”.

Party manifestos as described by Hansen (2008:207) should be categorized as both party programmes and election manifestos. Party programmes are general statements of

their goals and they may not undergo as much change as an election manifesto. On the other hand, electoral manifestos do not necessarily include statements of the party's goals and attitudes in all policy areas, but rather comprise party positions in those areas that the party believes to be important in the coming elections. Basically as put Hansen (2008:204), a) there should be proper consideration when determining the relevant categories and domains to be coded; b) for manifestos that are being compared there should be a reasonable variance in the number of words, and pages. It is deemed unreasonable to compare a manifesto which is 200 pages to the one which has only 20 pages.

Alternatives to party manifestos include such sources like speeches by party leaders, expert opinion surveys and parliamentary speeches and statements, and parliamentary voting. According to Hansen (2008:213), speeches delivered in parliament do give a clear picture of the policy position of a certain party; however, the problem is about which speeches to be included. In the case of this study only speeches by the president, minister of finance, leader of opposition, and budget statements from shadow ministers from the opposition parties are included. It is important to emphasize that only speeches which were made during the budget sessions of parliament from 1994 to 2008 are the ones which are included in the analysis.

Second, the expert opinion surveys are also important because as Hansen (2008:213) observes, they do benefit from multiple observations, and also that they can be performed independently of elections. Expert surveys also include information from other observers that may not be directly involved in day to day politics. But as Hansen (2008:213) argues “the downside is that they can not be performed back in time, so the time series available

only run in a given period.” Lastly, the problem with parliamentary vote is that it is heavily influenced by party discipline such that even if the voting position taken is in contradiction to the party’s policy position, members may be forced to vote otherwise. There may be other informal factors which can influence such voting patterns as opposed to what the party’s policy position may entail.

2.7 Party Policy Positions and Ideologies in Malawi

Generally, some of the important features of African politics include neo-patrimonialism and clientelism. Several scholars on African politics (Soest, 2006; Cammack et.al, 2007; Wantchekon, 2003; Khembo, 2004a; Lwanda, 2004; Mkandawire, 2003) argue that the entrenchment of patron-client relationships affect electoral processes as well as socio-economic performances of most African governments. Wantchekon (2003:400) describes clientelism as “transaction between politicians and citizens whereby material and *monetary* favours are offered in return for political support at the polls.” Wantchekon (2003:399) points out that “African leaders, whether self-appointed or democratically elected, rely on the distribution of person favours to be selected members of the electorates in exchange for on going political support.” Just like clientelism, neo-patrimonialism, according to Soest (2006) connotes that “a patron in a certain social and political order bestows gifts from own resources on followers in order to secure their loyalty and support.” In most cases these patrons are office-holders in public institutions “who misuse public funds or office in order to stay in power.” Basically, in both cases Wantchekon (2003:400) argues that patron-client relationships find fertile ground in a society where there is “low productivity, high inequality ...level of economic development and the size of public sector economy.”

Malawi is not spared from this problem. Cammack et.al (2007:11) asserts that in Malawi, “political power and control are built on personalities, centered on ‘big men’ and their networks rather than parties with clear ideologies and programmes.” Cammack et.al (2007) further argues that “in Malawi, individual charismatic politicians arise with the support of their networks which are based on clientelism and patronage relations and sectarian (religion/region/tribal) or family ties.” Although the poor and uneducated are mostly caught up in the blame game of patronage, Lwanda (2004:55-56) tends to differ.

Lwanda (2004:56) argues that “it is not the rural uneducated poor ...who have reduced the politics of Malawi to its present patronage level *but* the elite, white, brown and mostly black...contributed more to patronage formation.” Patronage and clientelism is not only problematic in elections, it is also entrenched in the whole governing machinery. As put by Khembo (2004:101) “in Malawi, the ability of the ruling oligarchy to use patronage and clientelism to capture state machine in the name of liberal democracy has particularly resulted from manipulation of the constitution and other statutes.” In other words, it means that neo-patrimonialism in Malawi, affects all sectors of the society from the poor to the rich, the educated and non-educated. Nevertheless, with the decline in ethno-regionalism, and “the end of big men dominance”² parties are forced to redefine the reasons for their existence to the voters. Dulani (2004:20) makes a strong argument by saying that;

The failure of the third term bid (*the presidency has only two constitutional term limits*) and poor performance of opposition parties in 2004 elections, both show that the era of ‘big men’ dominance is slowly

² Dulani (2004: 20)

coming to an end. Although the ‘big men’ might still exist, their influence on voting patterns is diminishing. Political parties therefore need to adopt new strategies to address emerging political challenges rather than relying heavily on individuals whose influence is on the decline.

However, the following questions still remain; are parties different from each other to the extent that they can offer platforms for alternative choices to the electorate? What are the differences in terms of issue salience across parties and elections? Do priorities in the parties’ electoral programmes get reflected in the decisions made by party representatives (MPs) and the governing party? Can manifestos provide a basis for inferring ideologies?

This study to some extent does agree with several scholars that write about political parties in Malawi (Svasand and Khembo, 2007; Khembo, 2004a; Meinhardt and Patel, 2003; Ott and Phiri, 2000), who argue that political parties lack major differences because most of them fail to articulate their ideological bases. Phiri (2000:68-87) starts his article by saying that “it is a sad, open fact that the political parties we have in Malawi are weakly grounded ideologically and are preoccupied with a narrow range of national issues”. Meinhardt and Patel (2003: 29) also argue that “one feature that stands out clearly regarding political parties in Malawi is their lack of ideological perception and orientation towards clear policies and programmes.”

However, Phiri (2000: 77) acknowledges that “all the 1994 and 1999 UDF manifestos were consistently liberal in the message they attempted to portray to the electorate... *and that the* 1999 MCP manifesto was squarely conservative in its provenance and appeal.” In other words, although Phiri (2000) faults political parties for lack of ideological

alignment, the author does acknowledge that there are some differences in issue orientation as presented in the electoral manifestos. Svasand and Khembo (2007: 207-235) also argue that parties in Malawi have “limited ideological differences”, but acknowledge that there are definitely “some differences between parties in terms of issues addressed (saliency)...*although* less in terms of direction of the policy”.

The study, therefore, builds on the premise established by these authors to further determine the differences and similarities among political parties using scoring method of issue saliency of the party manifestos for the UDF and MCP since 1994. In other words, while Phiri (2000:68-87) analyzes the 1994 and 1999 electoral manifestos, the author has not clearly shown whether there have been changes in issue saliency for each party across time. Furthermore, Svasand and Khembo (2007:207-235) have not scored the issue saliency in the manifestos they analyze, and just as in the case of Phiri (2000) they have not done the scoring of issue saliency of the parties across time; they have only looked at the 2004 electoral manifestos.

There is also very little that the literature shows concerning changes in national policies as a result of change of government. In addition, this study explores the possibility of mandate representation by determining the extent to which priorities in party manifestos are reflected in contributions made by party representatives and the governing party in parliament. Besides, it looks at the issue of policy commitment as promised in the electoral manifestos by parties in power. In other words, this study infers political party ideologies by analyzing the Manifestos using saliency theory in order to generate variations and similarities in issues emphasis across parties and across elections.

This chapter therefore, provides a base on which further research can be explored and established. The literature, particularly, on Malawi shows that parties are deficient of well developed political ideologies. However, almost all the authors agree that there are some considerable threads of differences in policy positions and orientation among main political parties in Malawi. It is therefore envisaged that a critical study of electoral manifestos of these two main parties will reveal differences and similarities in issues saliency across parties and elections. The study further assumes that there are variations in issue saliency between these parties although parties have not seriously articulated their policy differences to the electorate and therefore contribute to the debate about political party ideologies in Malawi. The next chapter is on methodology looking at how the data was collected and analyzed.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study employed “mixed method design” or “dominant-les dominant design”. This is whereby the researcher presents the study within a single dominant paradigm but elements of the other paradigm are adopted to answer a particular question (Cresswell 1994; DePoy and Gitlin, 1994 quoted in Johnstone, 2004). In this study qualitative approach was the dominant approach with quantitative elements employed with regard to the question of issue saliency. The qualitative approach was largely employed because the study aimed at exploring the meanings attached to the issue saliency variations in the Manifestos. It helped the researcher to unearth the deeper motivations and reasons parties have in producing Manifestos at every general election.

3.2 Sampling

In the first place, the study purposively sampled out two main parties in Malawi. These are the two biggest in parliament since 1994 because each one of them has managed to secure above 25% of seats in all the three general elections (1994, 1999, and 2004). These parties were the MCP, and UDF; however, the DPP was included because it controlled the executive arm of the government since 2005. MCP was selected because it was the main opposition party in Malawi and led the opposition in parliament since 1994.

Besides, since 1994 to the time of writing this thesis, the MCP had never been in any alliance or coalition with the UDF. It is therefore, assumed that these parties have distinct ideological and policy differences.

UDF provided an interesting case because it had been the ruling party since reintroduction of multiparty political system in 1994. However, the party got split just nine months after the 2004 general elections when its winning presidential candidate formed his own party, the DPP; thereby forcing the UDF to the opposition side. Nevertheless, a majority of MPs still remained loyal to the UDF regardless of the fact that the party was in the opposition.

The inclusion of DPP in the sample, as already pointed is simply because of the fact that it was running the government. Although the party never contested in the 2004 general elections, it drew its membership largely from the former UDF members; above all its president was the UDF presidential candidate, which means that he was one of the architects of the 2004 UDF electoral manifesto. The DPP played a very important role in generating information concerning the basis for government decisions or policies, and also whether the 2004 UDF electoral manifesto was completed abandoned or not.

3.3 Review of documents

The study also utilized parliamentary debates as reflected in Hansards in order to determine whether some of salient issues were reflected in statements made by political leaders in parliament. For the sake of this study only statements made during the budget session of parliament from 1994 were considered. These statements included ones made by the head of state (state opening of parliament), the minister of finance (budget statements), the leaders of opposition, and shadow finance ministers from MCP and

UDF. It is important to note that only such issues that were highlighted and are within the scope of the five domains were the ones, which were traced through in the parliamentary Hansards. Some sources of information include major government policy documents since 1994. These are overarching policy frameworks. The study only selected Hansards during the budget session of parliament because it is mainly, but not exclusively, through the allocation of financial resources that priorities of parties in government can be conceived. Parties in government allocate more resources to priority sectors.

3.4 Key Informant Interviews

In-depth Interviews were conducted with political party leaders from these sampled parties at national executive and parliamentary levels. A total of 17 key informants were involved. Out of the 17 informants six were drawn from MCP and UDF respectively, and the remaining five from the DPP. An open ended questionnaire (Interview guide) was used to gather the opinions of these key informants (see Appendix 2). In-depth interviews with the relevant key informants were the major method employed for data collection. As argued by Krauss, “face-to-face interaction is the fullest condition of participation in the mind of another human being, understanding not only their words but the meanings of those words as used by the individuals...allows us a glimpse into how and why and the meaning behind individual’s behaviour” (Krauss, 2005: 764) Thus the in-depth interviews helped the researcher to get first-hand information regarding how and why stakeholders viewed the process, other stakeholders, and the issues under review.

3.5 Coding Domains and Categories, and Analysis

The study used Content Analysis method to analyze the data from the key informant interviews and documents that were reviewed. ““Content” refers to words, meanings, pictures, symbols, themes, or any message that can be communicated” (Mouton, 2005: 165). This involved segmenting information; developing coding categories; and generating categories, themes and patterns from the data that was collected, and the electoral manifestos of the sampled political parties (UDF and MCP) in the 1994, 1999 and 2004 Presidential and Parliamentary elections.

In coding the categories of the manifestos, the study used the method which was used by Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge (1994). The study, however, modified both domains and categories so that they captured themes which are outlined in the Manifestos that were studied. There were about forty categories of analysis which were summarized into five domains; Agriculture and Food security, Social sector and Quality of Life, The Economy, Governance and Democracy Consolidation, and The Government system (see Appendix 1). These domains and categories were generated after carefully studying the Manifestos by looking at major themes which all Manifestos addressed. Each sentence or “quasi-sentence” was assigned exclusively to a single category. In other words, the sentences of each Manifesto were simply counted into categories of the coding scheme.

When using this method, as described by Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge (1994), “sentences...were used as the basic counting units because they are natural grammatical units, and they usually convey one unified point.” The rating scale of the categories is from 0 to 100 percent. It therefore means that the actual figures that are used in the

analyses are the percentages of the total number of sentences in the whole electoral manifesto which were devoted to a particular category. In most cases, scores for a single category rarely exceeded 20 percent of the coded items. After coding the sentences in the Manifestos the study used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to arrive at the percentages scored by each category within a domain. In this case, each domain rates 100 percent as accumulation from the categories within the domain. However, in order to generate the percentage differences across the five domains, the study added all sentences tallied against each category under that particular domain. In other words, the total number of coded sentences in each domain was compared against the total number of coded sentences in other domains. In total, the study analyzes six electoral manifestos.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Because of the sensitivity of study and also within matters of confidentiality, the study does not reveal names and identities of the key informants. Some key informant opted to be anonymous. It should be noted that some of the key informants offered to be interviewed without the blessing of their party leadership. The study therefore does not produce a list of the names of people that were interviewed.

3.6 Limitation of the Study

It could have been better if this study covered electoral manifestos for the other political parties but it was limited in terms of finances for carrying out such an extensive exercise. In addition, the study, particularly Key Informant Interviews were done at the time of political impasse concerning the implementation of section 65 of the republican

constitution on the MPs deemed to have crossed the floor, as a result many potential respondents could not accept to be interviewed.

This piece of legislation stops MPs from voluntarily defecting from parties which sponsored them during elections to join other parties that are represented in the parliament. The implementation of this legislation could have seen the crumbling down of the DPP led government because almost all the MPs that supported the DPP government could have their seats declared vacant. Furthermore, the fact that the UDF moved to opposition, it compromises the assessment of the implementation of the 2004 UDF electoral manifesto.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Issue Saliency Variation across Parties and Elections

4.1 Overview

Political parties are at the centre of representative democracy. Parties perform the functions of interest aggregation, voter socialization, form and run government, and oppose government among others. Every party has an agenda or program to justify its own existence and in most cases these programs are made known to the public during elections in form of manifestos or platforms. In this analysis the terms party program, party manifesto, and party platform are used interchangeably. This chapter discusses issue saliency variations across parties and elections using the data generated through hand coding of six electoral manifestos. In addition, the chapter uses data generated from the key informant interviews in explaining these variations. Party platforms contribute to rational action by both voters and parties. Party programs are benchmarks for electoral choice, policy direction, and accountability for the party in power. Variations among parties and topics are in accord with party strategies and voter expectations. The studies on voting, however, “make it clear that issues are only one element, and often a minor one, in the electorates’ decisions” (Pomper, 1967: 318). Policy is not directly initiated by the public at large, but originates among elites in the parties, interest groups and sometimes the bureaucracy.

Although policy positions are important in an election, nevertheless, it is also necessary to realize that very rarely does election serve as a policy referendum for designated future actions. In Malawi and in fact in all elections since 1994, people do not directly vote for policy change when they go to the polls. Rather, the voters choose a party and its leaders, investing in them with the supreme legitimacy of a democratic system thereby legitimizing the programs advanced and represented by that party and its leadership.

As argued by Pomper (1967:319) “policy content of elections is therefore real, but not direct. The voters approve or disapprove policies by their choice of the party and retrospective judgment on *incumbents*’ performance.” In other words, this thesis argues that although electoral campaign can be issue deficient it does not actually entail that parties are without policy positions or that parties in Malawi have completely similar or identical policy positions. Sometimes policy positions for a number of parties in a political system can appear to be similar but salience definitely differs as we shall see in the next paragraphs.

The importance of electoral manifestos cannot therefore be underestimated when attempting to distinguish parties on policy positions. As put by Laver et.al (2003:311) “political texts are the concrete by-product of strategic political activity and have a widely recognized potential to reveal important information about the policy positions of their authors.” The fact that electoral manifestos get formulated in every election by almost all parties; it is an indication that they are important. Basically, as argued by Pomper (1967: 321) “platforms provide for voter rationality if they help an individual to select the party that will bring him the greatest benefit...and platforms provide party

rationality if they contribute to the victory of their authors. Besides, manifestos are launch pads for policies of any democratic government.

4.2 Party Manifestos in Malawi: Do voters get the message?

Political party manifestos discussed in this study display almost all the features which Pomper (1967) describes; a) all manifestos take some time to discuss their strength in terms of past achievements, b) all manifestos have substantial paragraphs which point out the weaknesses of the main opposing party, c) all manifestos have sections dedicated to promises and pledges for the future government. From the study of all electoral manifestos since 1994 there is enough evidence that points to the fact that parties in Malawi mention almost the very same things in their electoral programme even though with considerable threads of variation in emphasis of such particular issues.

Ideally, both MCP and UDF take a certain path of thinking on how they would deal with issues relating to these domains. Defining whether the message gets through to the voter is absolutely a mammoth task. It requires an extensive national survey to examine voter behaviour. However, with this limitation, the study relies on information provided by the key informants. When asked if the party electoral manifesto helped them win a parliamentary seat; most respondents answered in the negative. The reason put forward is that the electoral campaign in Malawi is not based on policy-issues. In constituencies, voters look for short-term gains. Obviously, the electoral campaign is characterized by handouts to attract voters. Accordingly, money plays an important role such that without

money it is difficult to get elected in Malawi. One of the key informants says that “nobody will come to your rallies if you can dwell on policies.”³

The researcher also asked members of parliament if they feel that the party helped them win. On this question most MCP respondents are positive about the contribution of the party identity to their election. Most key informants from the MCP said that the mere fact that they belong to MCP makes their campaign much easier particularly for those coming from the rural constituencies in the central region. In the MCP “it is the history of the party that matters and not individual candidates”⁴ whereby once one wins the primaries it becomes quite simple thereafter. However, most UDF informants argue that at parliamentary election level, the competition is very stiff because of the independent candidates that are largely members of the same UDF party. If it were not for the independents, party identity is likely to play a vital role in areas where the UDF is strong.

Lastly, asked whether they had read their party’s manifesto before elections, most informants explained that they did not. Interestingly, most MPs argued that a party manifesto is largely a document which is very useful to the presidential candidate as opposed to them. The argument is that in Malawi you define a ruling party by the presidency such that even if a party gets more seats in parliament but loses the presidency, it loses all. Therefore, policies of the party are functions and responsibilities of the presidential candidate and that is why most MPs do not pay much attention to the party manifesto. In fact, some respondents say that they do not even have a copy of their party’s manifesto.

³ Key Informant (UDF MP)

⁴ Key Informant (MCP MP)

Based on the information from the key informants, party manifestos play a very minimal role during the campaign for parliamentary elections. Most voters do not make their decision based on parties' policies. This means that the electoral campaign is not issue based and that voters are influenced by other factors. However, this does not mean that party manifestos are worthless documents. It is important also to examine this subject further by looking at differences in issue salience across parties and elections. In chapter four, the study looks at whether parties in government have some sense of commitment to policies that are laid down in electoral manifestos. In other words, this study examines party policies not on the basis of voter behaviour or electoral campaign but rather using political text to infer party ideology at the macro level.

4.3 Issue Saliency across Parties and Elections in Malawi

Similarities and differences of policies across parties, and within parties across elections are not lacking, they are very clear from the data collected. Although parties carry the same messages in their electoral manifestos, it is apparent that they differ in the nature of issues they emphasize. Basically, there is very little issue-conflict dimension. These parties agree on a number of issues. Nevertheless issue salience along different domains is evident across the parties as well as across elections.

This study examines differences in policy emphasis along five domains; a) the agriculture and food security; b) the social sector and quality of life; c) the economy; d) governance and democracy consolidation; and e) the nature of government system. The scores that are captured in this analysis depict only issue emphasis along a certain category or domain. The analysis does not necessary capture issue conflict whereby

parties completely take different opposing view on a certain issue although this can be inferred.

In addition, where the category scores zero it simply means that the party did not mention that particular issue but not necessarily that the party holds completely different view on that issue. Furthermore, the analysis as already indicated under the methodology section, only uses information from electoral manifestos for the MCP and UDF since 1994. Explanations to the findings are also supported by qualitative data generated from the key informants. There are no scores for the DPP because the party has no manifesto at least by the time the data collection for this study was done. Nevertheless, a discussion about the DPP is more important in the next chapter.

Fig. 1 and Fig. 2, graphically present issue saliency dimension across elections within each party respectively. Both figures present changes along the five domains in each party across elections since 1994.

FIG. 1 UDF ISSUE SALIENCY BY DOMAIN

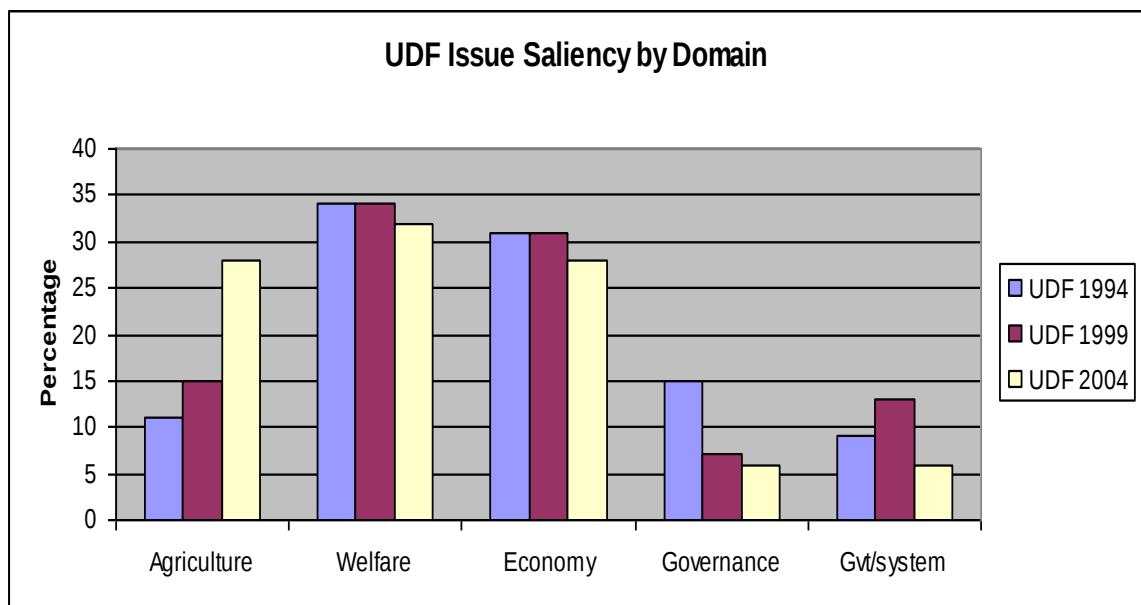
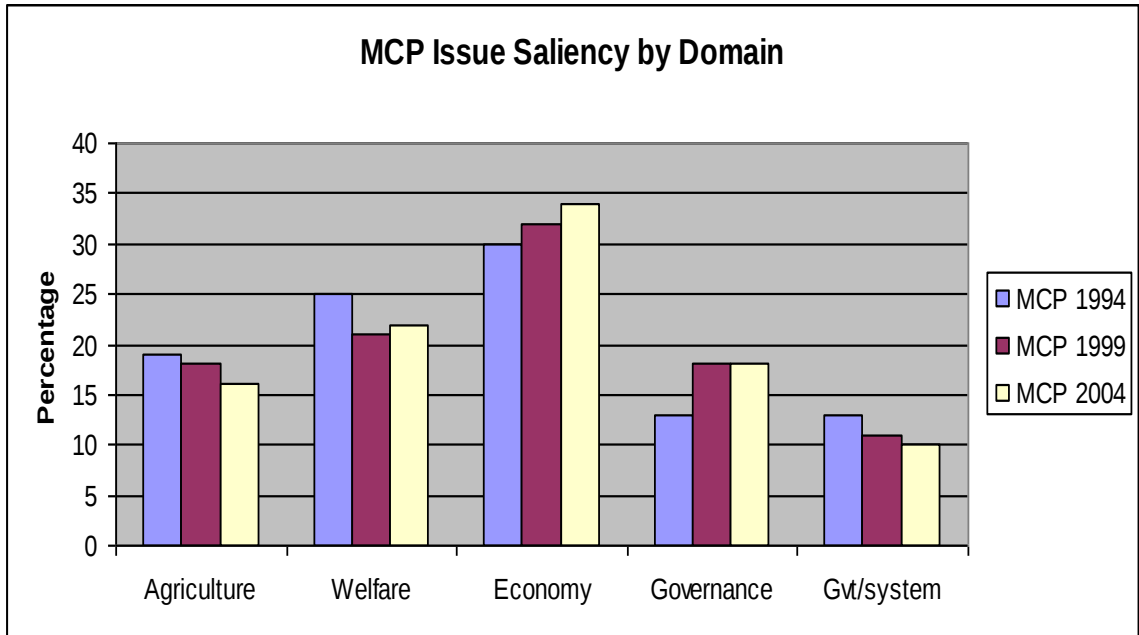
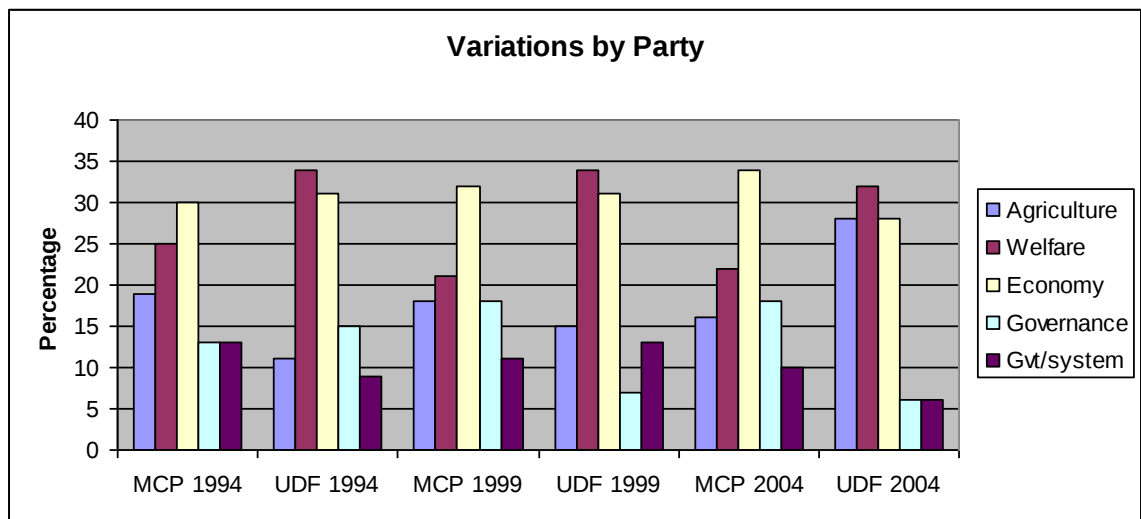


FIG. 2 MCP ISSUE SALIENCY BY DOMAIN ACROSS ELECTIONS



Generally, Fig. 1 shows that considering all the five domains since 1994 general elections, the UDF is significantly consistent in issue emphasis along the social sector and quality of life domain. Importantly, the economy scores are not very distanced from the social sector domain. Although the scores in other domains appear to be changing across time, nonetheless, the social sector domain remains the most salient domain comparatively. Similarly, the MCP as shown by Fig. 2 indicates that the most salient issue that is consistent across elections is the economy. It is also noted that changes within the domains across elections are also minimal in the MCP as compared to the UDF. However, Fig. 3 also gives a good comparison of issue saliency across parties.

FIG. 3 ISSUE SALIENCY BY DOMAIN ACROSS PARTIES



Interestingly, when you compare the domains, it does show that both parties emphasize the economy and social sector domains considerably with a greater magnitude above the other three domains. It is also clear from Fig. 3 that although the economy is the most salient domain in the MCP, there are small differences when compared to the same domain in the UDF. Where the distance is greater is in the comparison of the 2004 manifesto because that is where the MCP registers 34% while the UDF registers 28%. Otherwise, the significant distances in saliency variation across parties are along the social sector and quality of life domain.

4.4 The National Economy

The economy of Malawi depends largely on agriculture. Nearly 85 percent of the population lives in the rural areas and only 10 percent of the population is engaged in formal wage employment. It is therefore incumbent that when political parties discuss economic policies the most attention is paid to the agricultural sector. Nevertheless, this

study discusses the economy separate from agriculture simply because all the manifestos analyzed in this study consider these issues under separate sections.

Johnson and Crisp (2003) argue that on issue of the economy, parties whose policies are towards the left advocate for policies that decrease unemployment at the expense of increasing inflation, while parties on the right choose policies that that increase unemployment but decrease inflation. Consequently, “left-leaning governments invest in human capital to raise productivity, offsetting inflationary pressures, while right-leaning governments lower taxes to spur private saving and investment to fuel growth” (Johnson and Crisp, 2003).

Economy emerges as the highest ranked salient domain across elections within the Malawi Congress Party. In 2004 manifesto this domain scores 34 percent, the rating for 1999 is 32 percent, and in 1994 the domain rates 30 percent. However, what is important is not only highest score but rather the fact that the party appears to be consistent in its dedication to the issues of the economy above any other issue. Importantly, this domain increases by 2% across every election; meaning that from 1994 to 2004 the party’s dedication to this domain has increased by 4%. This consistence can inform a voter to predict that an MCP government is likely to have economic development as its main agenda. Henceforth, informed voters that are concerned with good economics to improve their quality of life can bank on the MCP government.

When asked about this trend and consistence in issue emphasis along the economy. The MCP argues that it is only good economics that leads to social and economic prosperity. The theory has ever been tried under the MCP to the extent that the

government used to register budget surplus; “it is therefore not something new or something out of the blue for the MCP to stress on the importance of good economic.”⁵

The party believes in first getting it right on macroeconomics. It argues that a government that is characterized by high inflation and interest rates, unsustainable budget deficits and corruption cannot claim to be helping its people. Unstable macroeconomics is not a good environment for investment because it becomes difficult for people to borrow from banks due to high interest rates, and people are not sure about the value of their money in the near future. As result people become poorer.⁶ The MCP therefore believes in keeping inflation, interest, and tax rates⁷ at possible minimum levels in order to spur investment.

Basically, what the MCP says is that once the country achieves good macroeconomics there should be mechanisms put in place to ensure that the gains trickle down to the local people. The party argues that although it emphasizes on good macroeconomics, these should be pursued with a human face and that is why the party also emphasizes the importance of social sector and quality of life in its manifestos. In its 2004 manifesto the party promises sound economic policies if elected;

It is intended, once the MCP is elected into power, to reverse the declining trend in socio-economic development...by developing a sustainable economy and state infrastructure that grow, provide jobs, and make life better for all Malawians. This will be achieved by among other things, reducing government over expenditure and economic mismanagement, initiating projects and programmes aimed at growth and development, correcting imbalances in resources distribution, eliminating inequalities prevalent in the society, reducing corruption at

⁵ Key Informant (MCP MP)

⁶ Key Informant (MCP MP)

⁷ 2004 MCP Manifesto, p 21. ‘The party promises to move the top tax rate to be at 30 %.’

all levels, supporting and subsidizing production instead of consumption...⁸

Obviously, the talk of subsidies tilts the balance and makes the MCP shifting towards the centre from the right. It is a known fact that any mention of subsidies is a call for increased government expenditure which is followed by higher taxes in order to meet such demands. When asked about this dilemma, the party says that “no party in the world can strictly claim to be far left or far right. All parties are moving towards the centre because parties would want to be more inclusive in order to gain electoral advantage.”⁹ In addition, the MCP argues that every party is interested in office and in order to win a party needs to put up a manifesto that touches on issues which affect the voters most because that is being rational.¹⁰

The bottom line in the MCP economic policies is that the party is orientated towards the right or the conservative. Nevertheless, the party does not lean to the far right as evidenced from its insistence on issues of subsidies. Furthermore, the mere fact that the party insists on economic growth as a means of meeting people’s social needs is an important indication of being conservative. In other words, the party is likely to look at the economy first before it considers social welfare needs. The MCP underscores the argument that people’s social needs are efficiently and effectively met when the economy is performing well.

⁸ 2004 MCP Manifesto, pp 4-5

⁹ Key Informant (MCP MP)

¹⁰ Key Informant (MCP MP)

In UDF the economic domain ranks second across all elections. In 1994 manifesto the UDF promises deregulation of money and capital markets. Liberalization of the economic sector is largely highlighted in all the UDF electoral manifestos. The party believes that the economy under the MCP regime was stifled by unnecessary restrictions and controls on both monetary and capital markets. The implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes brought disastrous consequences on the economy. Although the UDF favours big business, and foreign direct investments, it believes that social spending to improve the lives of the poor Malawians is of paramount significance. The United Democratic Front positions itself as a party that is more interested in business which will have a positive impact on the poor Malawians. The party regards itself to be associated with the liberal democrats.¹¹

The United Democratic Front contends that whatsoever happens to the economy must not be done at the expense of poor people's social needs. Actually, in 1999 the UDF manifesto literally indicates the intention of the party to increase welfare spending. In 1994 manifesto, the UDF promises to ensure that macro-economic planning is poverty focused ensuring that priority is given to uplifting the standards of the poor. The UDF argues that in order to achieve its goal in poverty reduction there is need to "pursue a flexible exchange rate policy with the aim of maintaining external competitiveness... and put in place proper measures for import liberalization."¹²

¹¹ Key Informant (UDF MP)

¹² 1994 UDF Manifesto, p 16

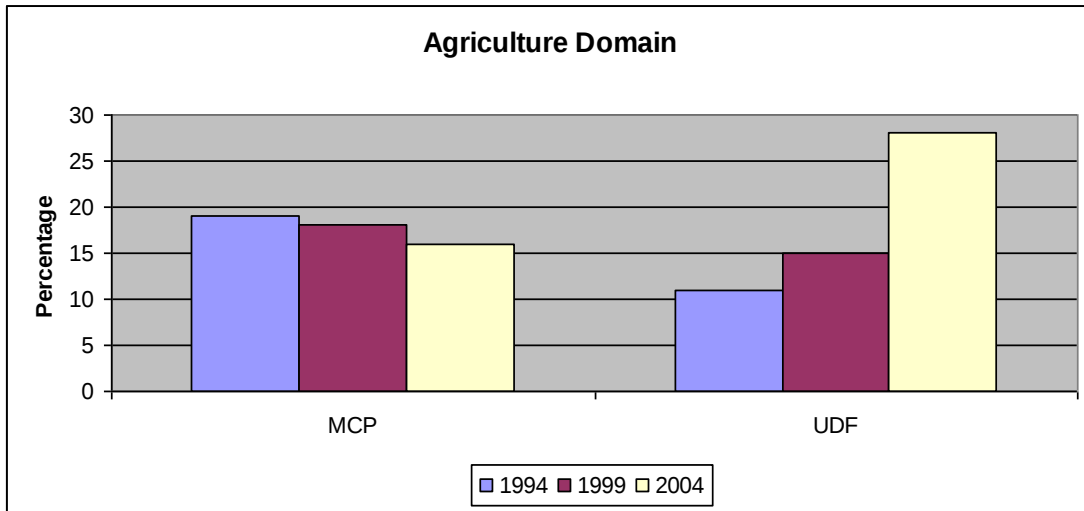
Although, there are fluctuations across elections within this domain along parties, Fig. 3, shows that the Malawi Congress Party is consistent in its pursuit for economic governance and economic growth while the United Democratic Front places more attention to the social sector. In other words, one would rate the MCP as portraying considerable traits of conservatism but moving towards the centre right whilst the United Democratic Front can be linked to the liberal democrats (social democrats) more concerned with wealth distribution.

4.5 Agriculture and Food Security

Agriculture is the hub of Malawi's economy and every party in politics cannot ignore this sector. Parties explain their position on how they intend to tackle either some or all issues relating to this sector. Agriculture affects every person from the employed to peasantry, from the rich to the poor. People in both rural and urban areas are interested to know parties position on agriculture policies.

Although there are some variations from the ranking along the domain across election and parties, the ratings show that agriculture comes third after economy and welfare in both parties. As is indicated in Fig. 3 above; in MCP, agriculture occupies 19% in 1994, 18% in 1999, and 16% in 2004 electoral manifestos. Similarly, the UDF agriculture domains scored 11% in 1994, 15% in 1999, and 28% in 2004 electoral manifestos. These figures show that agriculture ratings in the MCP have been decreasing although not very significant, while that of the UDF has been increasing across elections since 1994. These trends are explained differently by both parties. Fig. 4 shows percentages of variations across parties and elections.

FIG. 4 SALIENCY IN AGRICULTURE ACROSS PARTIES



The MCP argues that it convinced that the policies it used to take during its reign are the best ever and there is no need to depart from such. The MCP argues that adequate attention should be paid to estate farming. According to the MCP¹³, estate farming is the only sector that can improve food security. The MCP alleges that this sector has been neglected since 1994. The party argues that this neglect has led perpetual hunger among the population and also reduction in the export industry.¹⁴

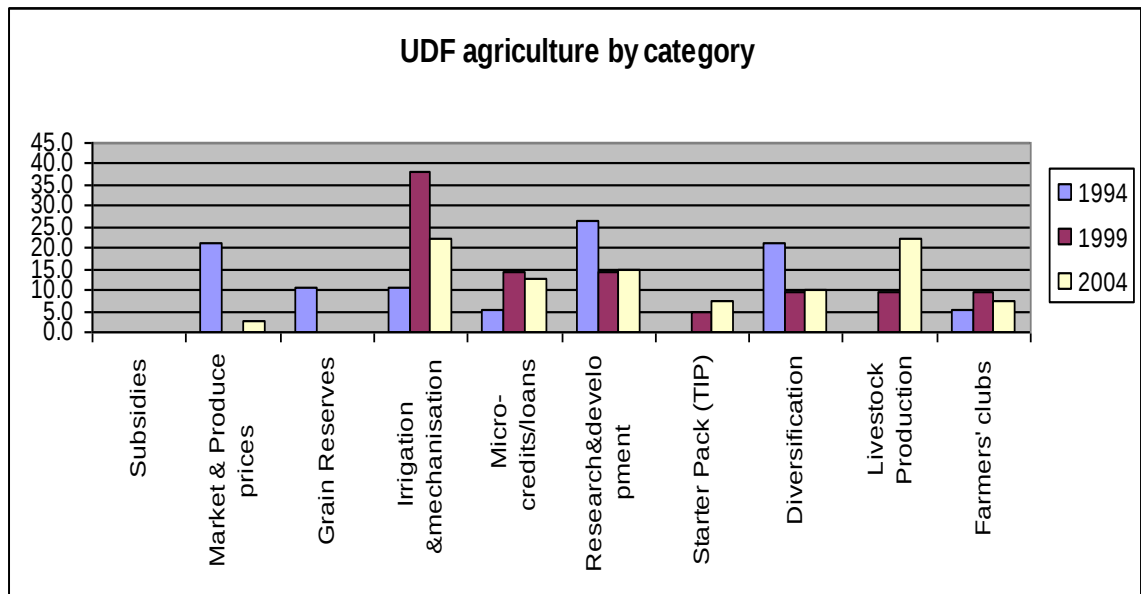
However, the UDF does not agree with the MCP on its emphasis on the estate farming. In its 1994 electoral manifestos the UDF literally indicates that it would focus its attention to the local subsistence farmers as opposed to large land holders (estates) which was the case with the MCP regime. The 2004 UDF manifesto pledges that deliberate action of policy shift will be taken to make sure that the UDF government dedicates its energies to helping the poor local farmers and completely neglect the estate

¹³ Key Informant (MCP MP)

¹⁴ Key Informant (MCP MP)

farmers.¹⁵ Again, the sharp rise in emphasis on agriculture in 2004 UDF manifesto as argued by the party is largely due to the party's response to the biting hunger in 2002. The UDF argues that party wanted to put more emphasis in agriculture because the opposition (MCP) was capitalizing on this premise in the run up to the 2004 general elections.¹⁶ Fig. 5 and 6 show the specific areas in agriculture which parties emphasize across elections.

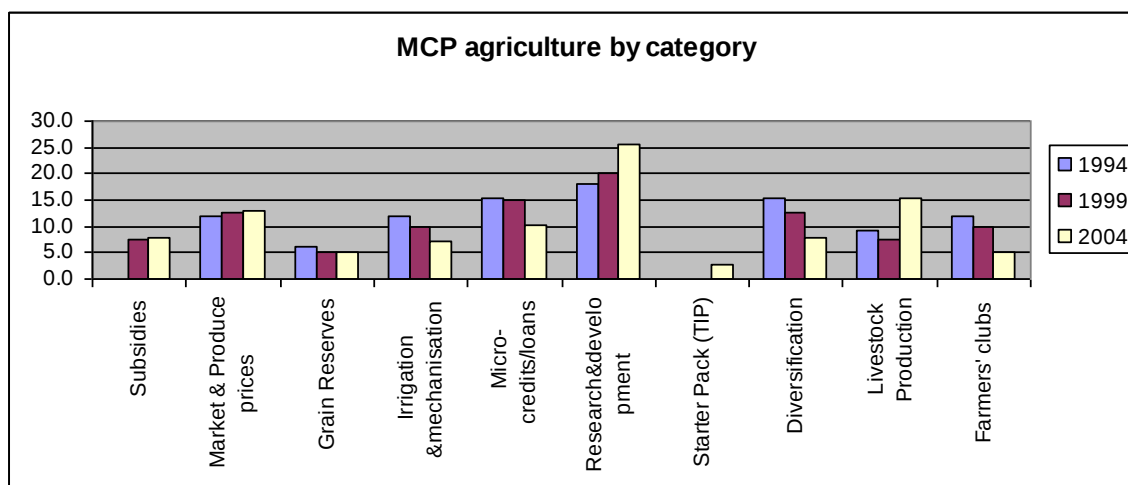
FIG. 5 UDF SALIENCY IN AGRICULTURE BY CATEGORIES



¹⁵ 1994 UDF Manifesto

¹⁶ Key Informant (UDF MP)

FIG. 6 MCP SALIENCY IN AGRICULTURE BY CATEGORIES



The Fig. 5 shows that the 1994 UDF manifesto emphasizes the market and producer prices, research and development, and diversification. Nonetheless, research and development is salient among all the categories, on average. In 1999 manifesto it is irrigation and farm mechanization which is more important followed by micro-credits to farmers. In 2004 the UDF places emphasis on irrigation and livestock production. On the other hand, the MCP places more emphasis on research and development across all elections with the rating along this category increasing in each election. Livestock production becomes equally important to both parties in 2004. The debates in parliament also reinforce both parties commitment to livestock production as indicated in these statements;

The other thing I would like to talk about in the ministry of Agriculture is that of the fertilizer subsidy. Attention has been overdrawn into that area at the expense of other activities. For instance, what are we talking about livestock development in this country? What are we talking about in chicken development? All these things, fish

farming, extension services, when we go in our areas all dip tanks were run dry years back, there are no dip tanks.¹⁷ Another notable thing is that both parties never mention anything about fertilizer subsidies in their 1994 electoral manifestos. The 1999 and 2004 MCP manifestos talk about targeted fertilizer subsidy programme but all the UDF manifestos do not. The MCP argues that it never included the issues of subsidies in its manifesto because by that time it was already doing it as such it considered it as an issue not worthy mentioning.¹⁸ However, other views within the MCP argue that the government at that time was under pressure from the international community (IMF and World Bank) to abandon the input subsidy programmes because subsidies were considered as a burden to the government. The party therefore had to avoid any mention of this issue to avoid contradicting these lending institutions.¹⁹ This latter view is also similarly shared by the UDF. The party argues that it could be so naïve and irrational to stage its campaign on the basis of input subsidization because that could have affected its relationship with the donors.²⁰

Besides research and development, input (fertilizer) subsidy and estate farming form an integral part of all the MCP agricultural policies. The MCP argues that the agriculture and food security sector can best perform by empowering the estate farmers who have the capacity and ability to produce at a larger scale. Thus, fertilizer subsidy programme should extend to include these large scale farmers.²¹ It is also important to note that

¹⁷ Hon. F. Jumbe, MP; as quoted in Hansard No.015 of 15th August, 2007 of the Fourth Meeting-Thirty-Ninth Session of the Malawi National Assembly, p 18

¹⁸ Key Informant (MCP MP)

¹⁹ Key Informant (MCP MP)

²⁰ Key Informant (UDF NEC member)

²¹ Key Informant (MCP MP)

although the MCP currently advocates for universal fertilizer subsidy in parliamentary debates, it is not what its manifestos says. Both 1999 and 2004 MCP manifestos talk about targeted subsidies as this statement indicates;

Reinstatement of some form of subsidies on essential inputs such as seeds, commercial fertilizers, and pesticides. Instead of wholesale subsidies, which have proved to be prone to waste and abuse, and MCP administration will work to implement targeted subsidies to those that really need them.²²

The UDF is not extremely different from the MCP in terms of its approach in addressing issues relating to agriculture. Although the UDF talks about access of affordable farm inputs to poor people the argument is that this can be achieved through complete liberalization of seed and fertilizer markets. The party believes that if this industry is left to the market forces, prices will automatically be lower because of competition hence being affordable to farmers. However, the UDF accepts that there are some people that are literally poor. The party then introduced the input Starter Pack Programme (TIP), a safety programme meant to bail out the disadvantaged that are in dire poverty. In its 1999 and 2004 manifestos the UDF speaks highly of the achievements in food security realized since the implementation of this programme.

Generally, this analysis reveals that both parties have little differences in their agricultural policies. Although agriculture is the backbone of the country's economy, parties appear to be vague and inconsistent in most categories across elections. However, MCP manifestos consistently emphasize the area of research and development while the UDF manifestos swing along different categories. Largely, estate farming is more important to the MCP while UDF emphasizes subsistence farming. Besides, while the

²² 2004 MCP Manifesto, p 29

MCP talks about target input subsidies in 1999 and 2004, the UDF talks about safety nets programme of starter pack and targeted input (TIP).

4.6 Social Sector and Quality of Life

This domain ranks high above all the other domains in the UDF. In 1994 this domain covers as much as 34%, the same 34% in 1999 and 32% in 2004 manifestos. On the other hand the MCP ranking for this domain include; 25% in 1994, 21% in 1999, and 22% in 2004. As seen from Appendix 1, this domain has 9 categories and the key one include health and education.

It is also apparent that this domain is the one that mostly distinguishes the UDF from the MCP. The UDF comes out very strong across all elections. Above all, the consistency by both parties along this domain ensures the magnitude of importance the parties attach to this domain.

FIG. 7 SALIENCY IN SOCIAL SECTOR BY DOMAIN

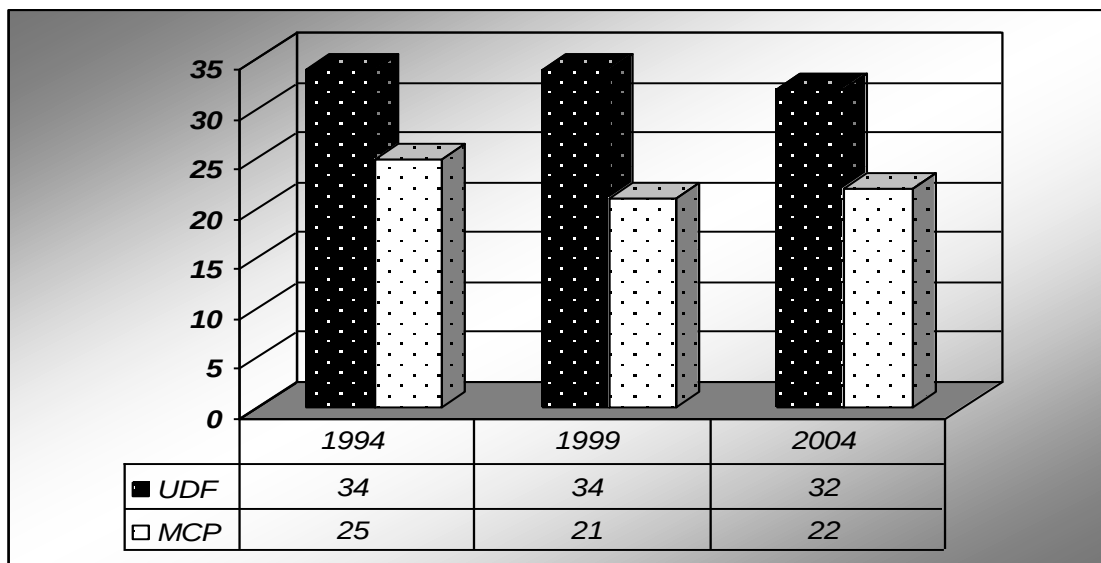


Fig. 7; shows that the distance in issue salience between UDF and MCP in 1994 is 9%, in 1999 is 13%, and in 2004 the distance is 10%. The scoring is positive towards the United Democratic Front. This means that the UDF places emphasis on issues of social sector more than does the MCP. Consequently, holding all other factors constant, it means that the UDF government is likely to be associated with higher public expenditure which will call for considerably higher taxes in order to meet the demands of welfare spending. The UDF argues that people in Malawi are poor and therefore require to be first lifted from their deep poverty before they can start investing in the economy. One of the key informants argued that “as a party we believe in alleviating peoples’ poverty in order to achieve economic development...put money in peoples’ pockets before you think of good macroeconomics.”²³

The UDF believes that people should acquire the basic needs first before they can start thinking of saving and investing. In other words, the UDF shares a liberal perspective which argues that “some people need assistance to get themselves into positions where they can exercise their freedom,” (Sargent, 1993:113). Liberals are willing to use government to improve human conditions so that people live better lives and fulfill their individual potentials. Liberals place more emphasis on individuals freedoms but mostly uncertain about economic freedoms. This ideological perspective is evident in all the UDF manifestos since 1994.

It is evident that both parties have been consistent in this domain across elections and this forms a basis for differentiating these parties. Accordingly, Norrander and Wilcox (1997: 123) argue that “it is possible that party leaders establish consistent issue positions which are then adopted by rank-and-file members: in this scenario the consistency is

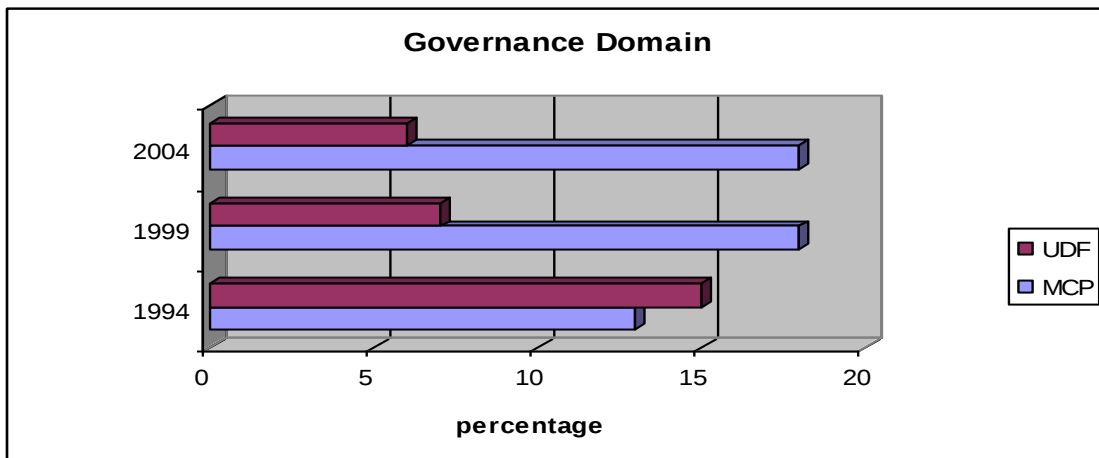
²³ Key Informant (UDF MP)

provided by elites and adopted by party adherents.” This consistency therefore establishes the UDF as the main player in welfare liberalism because the rating of this domain is higher both across elections and parties. In other words, a conclusion can be made that by voting for the UDF, people are choosing a group of politicians whose orientation is towards policies which are within the scope of social sector domain.

4.7 Governance and Democracy Consolidation

All parties agree on the importance of the respect of human rights and rule of law. The 1994 UDF manifesto promises to dismantle all structures that were used by the MCP to perpetrate human rights abuses. Actually, the wave of political change in 1993/4 came about because largely the MCP was faulted on human rights record. Basically, although the 1994 UDF manifesto captures intentions of human rights observance the party does not dwell much on this domain in 1999 and 2004. The 1999 and 2004 MCP manifestos emphasize the need for observing human right and the desire for democracy consolidation. Fig. 8 shows saliency dimensions along the governance domain.

FIG. 8 SALIENCY IN GOVERNANCE BY DOMAIN



Across elections and across both parties, this domain appears to be more volatile with trends that are quite strange. From 1999 to 2004, the UDF started losing ground to the MCP on issues along this domain. The last two UDF manifestos pay very minimal attention to this domain, which of course happens to be its major platform in 1994. For the UDF, scoring along this domain portrays a downward trend, while the MCP shows a significant increase from 1994 to 1999 but remain constant thereafter. As shown in Fig. 8 the UDF's attention to this domain decreases from 15 percent in 1994 to just 6 percent in its 2004 manifesto, while the MCP increases its attention from 13 percent in 1994 to 18 percent in 1999.

In trying to explain this trend UDF argues that “there was need to dedicate our attention to other sectors of life because we considered having achieved this during our first term in office.”²⁴ The UDF argues that the institutions of democratic governance that were established during its first term in office are a clear sign that the party is committed to the respect of human right, rule of law as well as making sure that democracy is consolidated. On the other hand, the MCP argues that the UDF committed a lot of human rights abuses prior to the 1999 and 2004 elections. The MCP further contends that UDF derailed from its promises along this domain as such the MCP wanted to fill that vacuum. According to the MCP, “UDF lost its vision and committed a lot of atrocities. We therefore took advantage of this poor performance to gain our political mileage during the campaign.”²⁵

²⁴ Key Informant (UDF member of NEC)

²⁵ Key Informant (MCP MP)

The trend in salience along this domain gives a clear indication that parties are rational actors. Although political parties consistently stick to their core beliefs, nevertheless, they do respond in their own way to the prevailing. In a competitive party democracy, parties capitalize on the weaknesses of their opponents and highlight them to the electorate. For example, the 1994 UDF manifesto is very offensive against the MCP which was the ruling party at that time, while the 1994 MCP is defensive of its human rights record. Consequently, 1999 and 2004 MCP manifestos fault and attack the UDF on poor human rights record, while the UDF manifestos spend time explaining the glorious achievements made along this domain.

Basically, every party would want to be associated with good human rights record but whether that is put to practice is beyond this discussion. It will be terribly irrational for any political party to propagate policy positions which aim at abusing peoples' rights. However, rationality entails that those parties in opposition appeal to the electorate by mentioning or magnifying the shortfalls of the party in government.

Both the UDF and MCP agree on democratic principles of human rights and freedoms, and rule of law, however, the contention is on how parties in government perform. This performance determines the degree to which issues along this domain are highlighted in future electoral manifestos. The trend may therefore keep on changing depending on which party is in power. In addition, the MCP argues that any freedom is accompanied by duties and responsibilities, as such there is need to put in place some mechanisms which will limit the misuse of these freedoms. The following quotations from 2004 MCP manifesto clearly indicate these sentiments;

From independence in 1964, Malawi was a paragon of stability and unity...problems of tribalism, and regionalism have degenerated to crisis proportions since 1994. The MCP frowns at this sad development, which, if not prudently checked, may endanger national unity, and jeopardize production, trade and investment...the MCP is therefore committed to the restoration of Malawi's prestigious beacon, namely, stability and unity...²⁶

These quotations portray conservative view. Although the MCP promises freedom but it is quick to point out that there ought to be order and stability when enjoying these freedoms. As described by Sargent (1993: 110) "on the whole, conservatives believe government power should be reduced and individuals should make their own way in the world...*but* government power to support traditional standards and limit an individual's freedom regarding them is perfectly acceptable to some conservatives." Sargent (1993: 110) states that conservatives believe "genuinely ordered freedom is the only sort of liberty worth having: freedom made possible by order within the soul and order within the state." The MCP shares this view and promises restoration of order and stability.

On the other hand, the UDF believes that government should intervene in aspects of peoples' welfare but it should not invade the rights and freedoms of the individual. Sharing a liberal view, the UDF believes that there should be no suppression of any kind on peoples' rights and freedom. UDF 1994 emphasizes freedom of the press by saying that;

The UDF believes in protecting the freedom of the press in order to fulfill the peoples' right to know. The press shall have complete freedom to report and comment. Although any violation of the public interest will

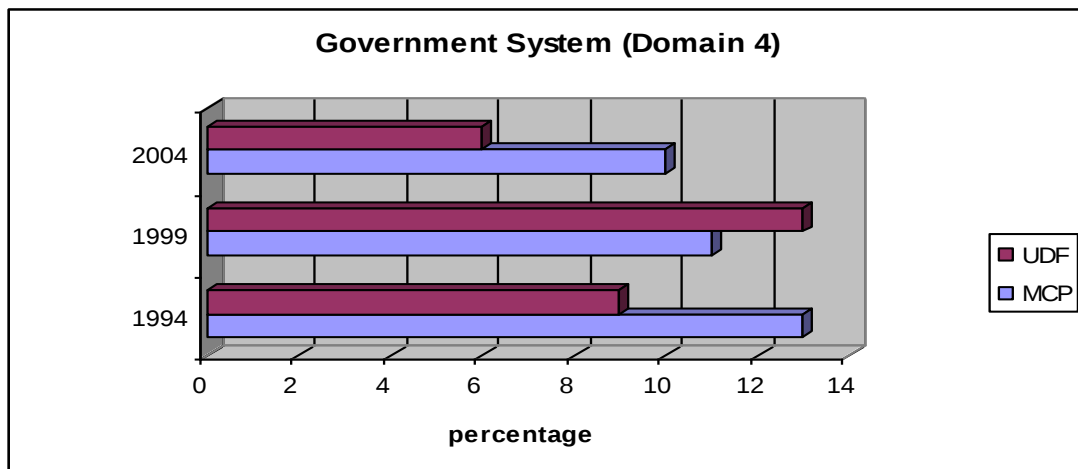
²⁶ 2004 MCP Manifesto, p 12

be subject to control under general law, there shall be no law restricting or interfering with the freedom of the press²⁷

4.8 The Government System

This domain has only four categories (see Appendix 1) which define the nature, size, and distribution of power. Among the five domains, this domain ranks equally as domain 4 on governance and democracy consolidation. Ideologically, parties differ on what they consider should be the size of government; liberals support for an extended arm of government while conservatives want a small sized government that creates a favourable environment for the private sector. Fig. 9 shows the distribution of salience across parties and across elections.

FIG. 9 SALIENCY IN GOVERNMENT SYSTEM BY DOMAIN



Relatively, both parties share the view that government should decentralize so that it is brought closer to the general population but on average the MCP advocates for a more decentralized government system than the UDF. In the MCP, this domain covers almost

²⁷ 1994 UDF Manifesto, p 6

13% in 1994, 11% in 1999, and 10% in 2004; while the UDF covers 9% of the 1994 manifesto, 13% in 1999, and 6% in 2004 electoral manifesto.

Both parties argue that the central government should be kept as small as possible by making sure that major functions that happen at the capital hill in Lilongwe are decentralized and devolved to the lower levels that are closer to the public. The reason is that by doing so delivery of services by government agencies is going to be more efficient and effective.

Both 1999 and 2004 MCP manifestos criticize that UDF government of not taking a serious stand in decentralization policy. The MCP accuses the UDF of failing to hold local government elections which is a primary indication of lack of seriousness in decentralization. The MCP therefore promises to conduct local government elections in order to fully realize the dream of decentralization. Furthermore, the MCP argues that during its reign Malawi had a vibrant local government system which had considerable autonomy.

Although the distances across parties are not very wide but the changes across elections are worthy explaining. The major change in UDF is in 1999 Manifesto where there is an increase from 9% in 1994 to 13% in 1999. UDF explains that in the run up to 1999 elections it was under pressure from the civil society and the donor community to give priority to the issue of decentralization by holding local government elections. Furthermore, the opposition campaigned to discredit the UDF on this premise. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the year 2000 the UDF government facilitated to conducting of local government elections.

Chapter four has revealed that policy differences across parties emanate from degrees of emphasis and priorities rather than direct conflict between opposing alternatives. Generally, the rivalry in policy orientation is minimal but equally significant. Both parties show some consistence in how they emphasize and prioritize some issues. The UDF emphasizes the importance of getting it right on social services in order to achieve better macroeconomics. The MCP emphasizes the importance of achieving the good macroeconomics in order to achieve better delivery of social services. The DPP shares the view taken by the MCP as is seen later in the next chapter.

This consistence in salience is a very important indicator in defining the ideological leaning of major policies pursued by these major parties. It is important to note that ideological tendencies of a party are conveyed through the electoral programs, and in this case, “through the invariant emphases given to topics in the documents, which underlie the strategic and other variations in emphasis made over time” (Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge, 1994:32). In simple terms, consistence in emphasis (salience) over a certain policy is a better clue to determine the ideological leaning of a party and its leadership. The next chapter therefore explore whether parties pursue policies in line with issues that are emphasized most in their manifestos.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Political Parties and Policy Commitment

5.1 Overview

Having discussed issue salience dimension between the two parties in Chapter 4, this chapter discusses parties' commitment to their policy documents as announced during elections. Policy commitment is one of the important elements of mandate representation. In a democracy, winning parties are expected to somewhat get committed to what they promise during the electoral campaign. Although there are several factors that may influence changes in policy direction, nevertheless, total departure from the platform would not be rational for a political party that wants to get re-elected.

First, the chapter examines major policy actions taken by the United Democratic Front during its time in power. The idea is to see whether such policies reflect ideas in its electoral manifestos. Largely, as seen in Chapter four, the social sector domain has preeminence in UDF as such this chapter examines if the UDF has been committed along this domain. Second, the chapter examines the commitment of the DPP to the 2004 UDF manifestos to see if there is any departure or adherence bearing in mind that DPP is a splinter from UDF formed after 2004 elections.

Finally, given the emphasis of the UDF on social sector and the differences between the UDF and MCP policies in the manifestos, it is expected that there should be a change in UDF government's commitment to the social sector from that of the MCP. This Chapter therefore looks closely at most important policies of the UDF government such as the Poverty Alleviation Programme, and the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper to trace if there has been any effect. The chapter examines if the policy shifts reflect the party's issue saliency as put down in the electoral manifestos. In other words, the chapter examines whether the changes of government guarantees a shift in overall national policies, and in what direction are such policies.

5.2 Key Socio-Economic Policies of the UDF Government since 1994

Upon assuming office in 1994, the UDF initiated a number of major policy changes. The first major policy changes is that poverty alleviation was put at the top of the agenda. This is a hallmark departure from the economic policies which were being pursued by the one-party MCP regime. The MCP considered any mention of poverty as a taboo and associated with the colonial era.²⁸ However, the UDF used poverty alleviation as one of the major campaign platforms in the run up to the 1994 general elections.

In its 1994 manifesto, the UDF promises to give priority towards uplifting the living standards of poor from dire poverty. It promises to increase spending in the social sectors in order to “put money in peoples’ pockets.”²⁹ The UDF promises to make sure that any

²⁸ Nthara (2003)

²⁹ UDF MP from Mulanje District explained that what mattered most to the UDF at that time was not achieving good macroeconomic while people suffered. He argued that although the MCP boasted about economic achievement during its reign there was no sign of trickle down of the same to the poor.

macroeconomic planning be poverty focused “by ensuring that priority is given to uplifting the living standards of the poor.”³⁰ This means that there was a commitment by the United Democratic Front to shift government policies towards the social sectors in order to improve people’s living standards.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the UDF’s emphasis on social sector domain has been consistently above any other domain across all the three general elections. In its determination to respond to high expectations of the people in line with its 1994 campaign pledges, the party decided to make poverty alleviation as priority number one in all development policies. It is important to mention that all along the UDF has defined poverty alleviation as “the equitable provision of basic necessities of every day life such as water, food, health services, education and infrastructure.”³¹

Upon taking office in 1994 there was a dramatic policy shift. The UDF was committed to its electoral promises as outlined in the manifesto. In his first state opening address of parliament, President Muluzi made it clear about this change in economic policy and priorities of his UDF government;

You are aware that the government has a well defined and well articulated set of economic policies different from the previous government. The number one priority of the government’s economic policies is poverty alleviation. Although Malawi may have achieved high economic growth rates at macro level in the past, this has not trickled down to the household level...It is for this reason that the

³⁰ 1994 UDF Manifesto, p 15

³¹ 1999 UDF Manifesto, p 5.

government's economic agenda will focus on poverty alleviation as priority number one. Specifically, the government will increase allocation of financial resources to primary education, health, other social sectors and income generating activities for the rural and urban poor members of the society. The increase in the resources towards poverty alleviation programmes will be achieved through cost savings, revenue enhancement measures, and donor support.³²

This statement by the then head of state and the leader of the UDF sets a pace for remarkable national policy shift from that of the MCP. The most notable thing from this statement is that what the party promised in its electoral programme is being put on the government agenda for consideration and implementation. The commitment by the UDF to bring its manifestos on the government agenda cannot be overemphasized. In the education sector, the 1994 UDF manifesto blames the MCP government of allocating very little resources to education. It also blames the MCP government of not giving priority to primary education;

The Malawi government has been allocating very little resources to education. Malawi has allocated 3.3% GNP to education compared to 4.1% for the Sahara Africa. The share of non-debt recurrent expenditure on education in 1988/89 was 22%. In 1991/92 it was reduced to 12%. The same trend is seen in the development expenditure. In 1988/89 public investment in education was 19% total development expenditure.

³² State Address made by HE. Mr. Bakili Muluzi on the occasion of the state opening of the Parliament of Malawi on Thursday, 30th June, 1994, p 6

Now the figure has been reduced to 15%. The most neglected level of education has been primary education. Recurrent budget for the primary education represented a mere 1% of the GDP.³³

The 1994 UDF manifesto promises to immediately reverse this trend by ensuring that additional budgetary resources are allocated to education, especially primary education, so that eventually the allocation moves from then 3.3% of the GNP to 6%. In the same year, free primary education was introduced for every school aged child.³⁴ True to its electoral manifesto, from 1994/95 fiscal year onwards, allocation of resources towards the social sectors was increased, with health and education benefiting the most. In fact, the UDF called for immediate revision of the 1994/1995 national budget in order to harmonize it with the implementation of its electoral manifesto.³⁵

In its commitment to the overall policy of poverty alleviation, the UDF government in collaboration with the World Bank established the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) in 1995. Throughout its time in power MASAF was the centre of the government's poverty alleviation programme. The programme was designed to address community social needs through financing of largely self-help projects and safety net programmes. The UDF government invested MK12.2billion in MASAF I and II by the year 2003.

³³ 1994 UDF manifesto, p 30

³⁴ In his state opening address of parliament on Thursday, 30th June 1994, President Muluzi said that “the government has decided to provide free primary education with effect from October this year.”

³⁵ In his state opening address of parliament on Thursday, 30th June 1994, President Muluzi said that “the change in emphasis of the economic policies from the previous government necessitates the revision of the 1994/95 budget...”

Furthermore, the UDF had planned to disburse MK6.3 billion under MASAF III.³⁶ It is worth mentioning that the UDF government considers the achievements that were realized through MASAF programme as a sure sign of lifting people from poverty. Suffice to say that this study does not necessarily examine the merit or demerits of these policies; rather the study is only interested in whether electoral promises are carried on unto the government agenda. Surely, it is evident that there is a positive relationship between what manifestos say and what actually comes out as intended policy. The UDF has all along been committed to the improvement of peoples' living standards through paying more attention to the social sectors as intended in its electoral manifestos. Through MASAF, the UDF government targeted the areas it promised to target in its manifestos.

5.3 The Poverty Alleviation Policy (PAP)

This is the major government policy which translates the 1994 UDF manifesto into government agenda. This programme was launched on 25th August, 1994. It outlines the vision of the UDF government focusing on a process of economic and social development in which people are to be directly involved and empowered, right from the community level to the national level, to improve their livelihood. The policy endeavours at assisting the poor through the Public Investment Programme, and also through direct interventions responding to the community needs identified and translated into project ideas by the beneficiaries themselves.

Through PAP, the UDF argues that it acknowledges that sustainable poverty alleviation can only take place in a dynamically growing economy. Nonetheless, the UDF

³⁶ 2004 UDF Manifesto, pg 3

contends that “a major share of that growth be generated by increasing the productivity and incomes of the poor themselves and that government’s investment programme reflect this orientation.”³⁷ The main goals of PAP include; a) raising the productivity of the poor; b) to enhance participation of the poor in the socio-economic development process so as to raise and uphold individual and community self-esteem; c) to promote sustainable poverty reduction; and d) to increase income and employment opportunities of the poor.

In line with its 1994 manifesto, the UDF government through PAP argues that strategies for achieving sustainable economic growth and meaningful poverty reductions depends on first, promoting the increased participation of poor women, men, and youth in economic, social and political affairs by the provision of basic services that enable them to take advantage of opportunities. Second, it depends on economic empowerment of the poor by promoting the more productive use of their abundant resources namely, labour, which is underemployed or unemployed. Third, it is through the development of safety net programmes to cushion those who are adversely affected by changes in policies and natural disasters. Lastly, it is the deliberate effort to improve the Poor’s access to credit facilities by deepening and broadening the financial sector to assist the poor to diversify their sources of income.³⁸ Above all, the PAP sets as a priority to “orient policies and programmes relating to taxation, investment, employment, markets, structural adjustment

³⁷ Min.of Economic Planning and Development (1995) Policy Framework for Poverty Alleviation Programme, Montfort Press, Limbe, p 9-11

³⁸ Min.of Economic Planning and Development (1995) Policy Framework for Poverty Alleviation Programme, Montfort Press, Limbe, p 9-11

and all relevant sectors of the economy that promote a more equitable distribution of productive assets, wealth, opportunities, income and services.³⁹

Indeed, the Poverty Alleviation Policy is a true reflection of the 1994 UDF manifesto. For example in this manifesto the UDF promises to “drastically change the *MCP* policy in the allocation of government expenditure *by giving* priority to poverty reduction by allocating more resources to the social sector.”⁴⁰ Furthermore, in this manifesto, the party promises to “review the taxation policy within the framework of equity and social justice and to introduce greater efficiency in the administration of the tax system.” The party adds that “increased efforts will be made to alleviate the tax burden on the low income and poorer members of the community.”⁴¹

5.4 Policy developments in agricultural sector since 1994

The 1994 UDF manifesto is the benchmark for numerous agricultural policies which the UDF government carried out up to at least 2004. The position of the UDF government is clear that there was going to be policy shift from large scale farmers to smallholding farmers. In its 1994 manifesto the UDF argues that “most of the benefits and gains of the MCP government’s agricultural policies have gone to the larger farmers leaving the subsistence farmers in abject poverty. This preferential treatment is evident in the fact

³⁹ Min.of Economic Planning and Development (1995) Policy Framework for Poverty Alleviation Programme, Montfort Press, Limbe, p 11

⁴⁰ 1994 UDF Manifesto, p 17

⁴¹ 1994 UDF Manifesto, p 16

that the former group received better treatment in terms of pricing, access to inputs, credit, and marketing and extension services.”⁴²

The 1994 UDF manifesto promises a departure from the MCP policies by paying attention to the smaller and poorer farmers in terms of both price and non price factors. The party promises to give special attention to resource poor farmers and female headed households.⁴³ The line of argument taken by the UDF was and still remains that economic growth can be achieved if the population is helped to move out of poverty by investing in social sectors. Furthermore, the UDF asserts that it is only people that have access to basic needs that have the ability and capacity to meaningfully contribute to the activities that lead to sustainable economic growth.⁴⁴

In addition, all UDF electoral manifestos stress the importance of liberalization and deregulation of the agricultural sector. The party argues that there should no controls in the agriculture market system. In financial sector, the major policy change was deregulation resulting in the proliferation of new commercial banks and the establishment of the Malawi Stock Exchange.

It is important to note that economic liberalization started gradually with the MCP government through the structural adjustment programmes. When the UDF government came into power in 1994 it continued with the process largely because it wanted to please donors at that time and also because the regulatory regime under the MCP government largely worked to the advantage of estate farmers.⁴⁵ However, a major policy

⁴² 1994 UDF Manifesto, p 26

⁴³ 1994 UDF Manifesto, p 26

⁴⁴ Key Informant (UDF MP)

⁴⁵ Key Informant (UDF MP)

development in the agriculture sector was the complete removal of fertilizer subsidies in 1996. The Starter Pack Scheme was introduced in 1998/99 and 1999/2000 and the Targeted Inputs Program (TIP) in 2000/01 to facilitate access to agricultural inputs. The Smallholder Agricultural Credit Administration (SACA) was eliminated, and the Malawi Rural Finance Company (MRFC) created. The Agricultural Productivity Investment Program (APIP) was introduced to increase fertilizer use through a partially subsidized/guaranteed credit scheme.⁴⁶ In 2000, the maize price ban was eliminated and NFRA was made responsible for managing the Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR).⁴⁷

It is apparent that all these reforms were taking place as a matter of implementing the UDF electoral manifestos. Of course it is difficult to implement everything the party promises in its manifestos but what is evident is that the UDF government did not completely depart from its philosophy of prioritizing poverty alleviation by prioritizing the social sector. The intentions of party manifestos are reflected in what the government does. Ideally, what it means is that with this consistence, in the long term, the United Democratic Front (UDF) can be trusted as a party that attaches preeminence to government's involvement in the social sector. In other words, voting for the UDF is choosing a government that "will put money in people's pockets." It is also indirectly voting for a government that is likely to have higher taxes, volatile inflation and interest rates, and increased budget deficit as long as doing so is in the interest alleviating people's poverty.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ 1999 UDF Manifesto, pp 11-12

⁴⁷ World Bank (2004)

⁴⁸ Tsoka (2002) Afrobarometer Paper No. 16

5.5 The Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP)

This policy document anchors the philosophy of the United Democratic Front as reflected in its electoral manifestos more especially in its second term. The UDF government launched the MPRSP in May 2002 setting ambitious targets for reducing poverty throughout the country, in particular with respect to health, education, and agriculture. The main goal of the MPRSP was to achieve sustainable poverty reduction through the empowerment of the poor.⁴⁹ Furthermore, MPRS stresses on economic growth that is pro-poor in order to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor. According to Botolo (2008: 4) MPRS has a “strong convincing argument that as long as the growth is coming from sectors where the poor are participating, the rate of the economic growth does not matter.” MPRS therefore, reinforces the government’s commitment to invest in sectors that will help the poor realize their potential henceforth enable them to meaningfully contribute to activities that are likely to stimulate economic growth.

The MPRSP is built around four main strategic areas namely: sustainable pro-poor growth; human capital development; improving the quality of life of the most vulnerable; and governance. This policy hoped to improve healthcare through the introduction of the Essential Healthcare Package (EHP). This health plan is designed to accordingly target resources to the causes of morbidity and mortality among the rural poor. Most importantly, the government committed itself to encourage good nutrition, especially among infants, in order to combat infant mortality. This health plan (EHP) is even carried

⁴⁹ See also Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), p 3

forward to 2004 UDF electoral manifesto. In this manifesto, the party promises to deliver this service free-of-charge at the point of delivery for all who cannot afford to pay.⁵⁰

MPRSP also outlines ambitious targets for the education sector that were to be attained by the year 2005. Some of these targets include; a) qualified teacher – pupil ratio to be reduced to 1:60 and hoped to achieve this target through improved teacher training facilities; b) promises to give qualified teachers further training and also improvement of remuneration for teachers; c) to revise the national schools curricula so as to provide pupils with technical, entrepreneurial and agricultural skill; d) introduce a well co-ordinated and more effective supervision and inspection service in public schools; e) hopes to increase the enrolment of children with special needs.⁵¹

Besides, primary education, MPRSP also sets an agenda to increase the number of students attending secondary school by investing in Community Day Secondary Schools, and also recruiting more teachers.⁵² MPRSP hoped that by 2005 the number of students attending secondary would have increased by 37%.⁵³ Furthermore, at tertiary level the policy plan was to pay more attention to vocational and technical education. It promises to deliberately reserves 30 % on the enrollment to these institutions for female students.⁵⁴

Thus, MPRSP is clear translation of the UDF 1994 and 1999 manifestos into government policy. At least in health, agriculture, and education, there is no disparity between what the party says in its manifestos and the overall policy outcome. For

⁵⁰ 2004 UDF Manifesto, p 32

⁵¹ MPRSP, p 50

⁵² 1999 UDF Manifesto, p22 actually pledges to establish 150 Community Day Secondary Schools

⁵³ MPRSP, p 54

⁵⁴ See also MPRSP, p55

example, almost all that the MPRSP says about the education sector is exactly the same as to what the 1999 UDF manifesto says on page 22. Likewise, the 1999 UDF manifesto on healthcare is a valuable input to the MPRSP. Suffice to say that the 1999 UDF manifesto is as well informed by that of 1994.

The commitment by the UDF government to the social sector becomes so evident even through the manner in which resources were being allocated. The social sector received a larger proportion of both the recurrent and development programme. In 2001/2002 fiscal year, for example, social sectors allocation accounted for 60.6 percent of the overall development budget. The balance of 39.4 percent was allocated to the transport sector which got 19.9 percent, agriculture 11.6 percent, and other sectors 8.0 percent. Within the social sector, water supply and sanitation got the largest share of 18.2 percent, education had 17.6 percent, and health was allocated 16.3 percent, and community and development 8.4 percent.⁵⁵ The 2002/2003 development budget also allocated the largest share of 62.0 percent to the social sector. Within the social sector, education was allocated 17.5 percent, health was given 16.3 percent, water supply and sanitation got 15.2 percent, and the remaining 13.0 percent was allocated to the community development sector.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Economic Report 2002, Budget Document No.2, National Economic Council

⁵⁶Economic Report 2002, Budget Document No.2, National Economic Council, p 106

TABLE 1: DEVELOPMENT BUDGET ALLOCATION BY SECTOR

Sector	2001/02 allocation (k million)	% share	2002/03 allocation (k million)	% share
Social sector	8,281.0	60.6	7,741.1	61.7
Education	2,410.0	17.6	2,195.6	15.5
Health	2,229.0	16.3	2,007.4	16.0
Water Supply and sanitation	2,494.0	18.2	1,907.1	15.2
Community services and social welfare	1,148.0	8.4	1,631.0	13.0
Agriculture and natural resources	1,586.0	11.6	1,756.5	14.0
Transport	2,717.0	19.9	2,225.4	18.0
Other services	1,088.0	8.0	790.4	6.3
Total	13,672.0	100.0	12,546.4	100.0

Source: Economic Report 2002. Budget Document No.2, National Economic Council

Indeed, table 1 above shows the commitment by the UDF government to issues which are emphasized most in its electoral manifestos. The party carried out its mandate by making sure that its manifestos are to a larger extent brought before the government agenda. Whether real benefits were realized or not realized, once again, is beyond the scope of this study. What is important is that from content analysis and scoring of manifestos as reported in Chapter 4, the UDF has social sector as the most salient domain. In same vein the discussion in this chapter shows that the UDF has a greater degree of commitment to the electoral promises (manifesto) with evidence from policies it pursued or rather brought on the government agenda. It is therefore easy to predict that, holding all other factors constant, the UDF was likely to do the same with its 2004 electoral manifesto.

The afro-barometer survey done by Tsoka (2002:26) also reaffirms that the UDF government performed fairly well in the social sector domain. According to these findings, when respondents were asked to rate the performance of the government on

several issues, the UDF government was perceived as performing well (i.e., “fairly well” or “very well”) in three policy areas. The highest approval rating is for “delivering basic services like water and electricity” (66 percent). The government also received a high rating on education (63 percent) largely because of the free primary education policy. The third highest score is for “making sure everyone has enough land,” for which 51 percent of respondents say the government performs well. However, the survey also reveals that the “lowest positive ratings are on the issues of controlling inflation (8 percent), reducing crime (22 percent), and managing the economy (26 percent).”⁵⁷

Similarly, Khaila and Chibwana (2005:21) using the Afrobarometer reveal that the respondents score the UDF government higher in the social sector. The analysis portrays that the majority of respondents rate the UDF government as “doing fairly well or very well in combating malaria (61 percent), delivering household water (60 percent), improving basic health services (52 percent), and addressing educational needs (51 percent).” According to Khaila and Chibwana (2005:21) “the positive rating for malaria is most likely because of the subsidized mosquito nets (Chitetezo nets) and the campaign against malaria on the radio. As for the water, health, education sectors, the positive results may be attributed to the achievements of the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF), the activities of NGOs and some donor projects.” This Afrobarometer also indicate that the UDF government performed quite poorly in economic management.⁵⁸

On the other, the development budgets of the MCP government allocated fewer resources to the mainstream social sectors of health and education. Table 2 below

⁵⁷ Tsoka (2002) Afrobarometer Paper No. 16

⁵⁸ Khaila and Chibwana (2005) Afrobarometer, Paper No. 46

indicates these variations which can be compared to the UDF as presented in Table 1 above.

TABLE 2: DEVELOPMENT BUDGET ALLOCATION BY SECTOR (K MILLION)

Sector	1981/2	1982/3	1983/4	1984/5	1985/6	1986/7	1987/8	1988/9
Agriculture	27.87	30.52	37.31	28.72	25.88	50.44	80.20	65.31
Social .S	13.49	23.44	26.81	27.87	23.54	24.50	23.90	54.43
Transport	49.17	35.80	33.60	50.51	65.10	71.99	66.98	164.0
Other	33.64	49.82	45.20	31.28	45.70	42.8	79.85	57.52

Source: Mid-Year Economic Review 1989, Economic Planning & Development

In Table 2, sub-sectors under the Agriculture and Natural Resources include of the agriculture, forestry and game, veterinary, surveys and lands, and fisheries. The social sector includes education, health, and community and social development. The transport sector also comprise of posts and telecommunications. Lastly, other services include power, government buildings, housing, water and sanitation, and finance, communications and industry.

The estimates for the 1989/1990 development budget were K62.85 million for Agriculture and Natural Resources, K67.28 million for Social Sector, K114.78 million for Transport and Communications, and K49.49 million for other services.⁵⁹ The figures in Table 2 indicate that resource allocation to agriculture and natural resources dropped from K80.2 million in 19887/88 to K65.3 in 1988/89. This fall is as a result of a reduction in allocation to the sub-sector of Forestry and Game, which dropped from K47.45 million to K23.53 million respectively. Otherwise, allocation to agriculture sub-sector

⁵⁹ Mid-Year Economic Review 1989, Economic Planning & Development

rose from K23.24 million in 1987/88 to K32.97 million in the 1988/89 development budget.⁶⁰ In 1988/89 allocation to social sectors more than doubled that of 1987/88 because the government increased allocations to health and education. Health increased from K8.93 million to K22.78 million, and Education rose from K14.59 million to K31.21 million in the 1987/88 to 1988/89 development budget, respectively.⁶¹ However, regardless of these increases, allocation to social sectors still remains below that of the other sectors.

The most important thing which Table 2 reveals is that the MCP has not completely departed from its commitment to the activities which have direct impact on the economic sector. There is positive relationship between what the party used to do when it was in power and what the party currently advocates, as reflected in Chapter 3. The manner in which MCP government allocated resources shows little attachment to leftist policies. In other words, looking at what the 1994, 1999, and 2004 MCP manifestos say, and how the party allocated resources when it was in power, there is enough evidence which aligns the MCP towards the Right, along the L-R policy positions. It therefore means that voting for the MCP into power is indirectly conferring mandate on a group of politicians that are likely going to allocate less resources towards the development of the social sector but committed to achieving economic growth and infrastructure development.

⁶⁰ Mid-Year Economic Review 1989, Economic Planning & Development, p34

⁶¹ Mid-Year Economic Review 1989, Economic Planning & Development, p34

5.6 The DPP: whose manifesto is it anyway?

The formation of the DPP complicates the theory of mandate representation which this study partly explores. The party was formed by splinter group from the UDF just about a year after the 2004 elections. What complicates the matter most is that the leader of this party is the incumbent head of state Dr. Bingu Mutharika who was the UDF presidential candidate in the 2004 general elections. The general DPP leadership and membership is also largely drawn from the UDF. This scenario pushed the UDF away from the government side to the opposition leaving the DPP as a ruling party. In this case, questions remain: whose manifesto is the DPP implementing? Is the 2004 UDF manifestos being used or is completely abandoned? Are there changes in direction of key national policies?

The resignation of Dr. Bingu Mutharika and subsequent formation of the DPP was received with mixed reactions. However, the most important question is that of mandate. The UDF requested that fresh elections be conducted so that the incumbent president seeks fresh mandate from the electorate. This did not happen because of the legal technicalities as well as the nature of the electoral system whereby the president is directly elected by the general populace.

The change of leadership in the UDF led government after the 2004 elections is a major background for some elements of policy shift. The statement made at the swearing-in ceremony by President Mutharika clearly gives indications of significant changes in economic policies. Economic growth as opposed to social sector becomes a major theme.

In his speech President Mutharika argues that poverty reduction can only be effectively achieved if there is sustainable economic growth.⁶² This is just the opposite of what President Muluzi believed in: “real economic growth can be achieved through meaningful achievements in poverty alleviation.” These are two schools of thought whereby President Mutharika calls for strict fiscal discipline and realization of stable macroeconomic while the same UDF party under former President Muluzi call for more government spending in the social sector so long as doing so alleviates peoples poverty. Among other important issues, President Mutharika isolates four priorities of his government’s economic policies; a) implement Public Sector Reforms aimed at creating stable macroeconomic conditions for growth, and instilling donor confidence...; b) introduce deep rooted Private Sector Reforms aimed at developing and strengthening the business enterprises to contribute more positively to economic growth; c) introduce new Agricultural Reforms aimed at developing agriculture and making Malawi a hunger free nation; d) to institute Civil Service Reforms aimed at improving the conditions of service and professionalism..., and developing capacity to resuscitate economic growth.⁶³

Consistently, President Mutharika emphasizes that good and sustainable macroeconomic development is the answer to problem of poverty in Malawi. In the agricultural sector the president promises a policy shift so as to make people feed themselves not just to wait for government’s help. In education, the president places his priorities in higher education as opposed to primary education;

⁶² Statement made at the swearing-in ceremony by Dr. Bingu WA Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi on 24th May 2004.

⁶³ Statement made at the swearing-in ceremony by Dr. Bingu WA Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi on 24th May 2004, p 10

It is the responsibility of any government to feed its people. However, as a long-term solution, I shall shift our policy focus towards enabling people to grow their own food and feed themselves.⁶⁴

My government will continue to provide quality-free primary education...*but* high priority will be given to the development of institutions of higher learning. In particular, I shall establish a new university of Lilongwe to increase the intake of secondary school leavers in our universities, thereby building new capacities for development.⁶⁵

The 2004/05 budget is the first national budget to be implemented by the President Mutharika administration. This administration referred to 2004/05 national budget as a transitional budget “because this budget does not have all the key features of future budgets which will be dedicated to the anchoring of economic growth strategies of the government.”⁶⁶ The 2004/05 budget statement promises that future budget will be distinguished by far lower recurrent expenditure accounts relative to the investment expenditure account. Furthermore, the Mutharika administration promises that all future budgets will remain focused on the “generation of public savings rather than emphasizing consumption as has hitherto been the case.”⁶⁷

⁶⁴Statement made at the swearing-in ceremony by Dr. Bingu WA Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi on 24th May 2004, p 23

⁶⁵Statement made at the swearing-in ceremony by Dr. Bingu WA Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi on 24th May 2004, p 32

⁶⁶ 2004/05 Budget Statement by the Minister of Finance

⁶⁷ 2004/05 Budget Statement by the Minister of Finance

Consequently, the 2004/05 budget hedges some priority activities that were considered as Protected Pro-Poor Expenditure (PPE) within the MPRSP framework in the previous budgets. The 2004/05 budget also reduced allocations for some PPEs as compared to 2003/2004 budget. These include Agriculture Extension (K824.6million-K759million), Irrigation (K192.8million-0), Water Development (K1.6 billion-K61million), Small scale and Medium enterprises (K135.7million-K29.5 million), Teaching and learning material in primary schools (K848 million-K483 million), Teaching materials in secondary schools (K780 million-K159.7 million), Medical Drugs (K1.26 billion-K256 million).⁶⁸ This new administration started working on an expenditure framework that would bring social and productive sectors into balance.⁶⁹

Significantly, the launch of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) by the Mutharika administration in 2006 is another evidence of policy shift. The president's statement in the MGDS document literary says that "the MGDS represents a policy shift from social consumption to sustainable economic growth and infrastructure development." Although the MGDS looks at the issue of poverty alleviation but the line of thinking is that this can be realized after achieving good macroeconomics. In order to arrive at this prosperity, the Mutharika government promises;

Commitment to pursue sound economic policies geared at increasing and sustaining economic growth, reducing inflation rate, maintaining flexible exchange rates, improving foreign reserve position, increasing employment, and improving the trade balance by enhancing the country's export capabilities.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ National Assembly, Hansard No.007, Budget Meeting- Thirty-Eighth Session; 7th Sept. 2004

⁶⁹ Malawi Government (2005) MPRS 2003/04 Annual Progress Report

⁷⁰ MGDS, p10

It is important to note that although some of these goals found in the 2004 UDF manifesto, the direction, emphasis and mode of implementation are different.⁷¹ However, asked to explain if the UDF feels DPP is implementing its manifesto, most of the respondents agree but are quick to point out that the only difference is in the methodologies of implementation.⁷² In addition, the UDF argues that there are some projects which the DPP led government is implementing which are not part of the 2004 UDF manifesto. For example, Shire-Zambezi Waterway Project, eliminating street vending, and the current Fertilizer and input Subsidy Program.⁷³ This is an indication that parties in government can depart from their electoral podium.

Asked whether the DPP has a manifesto, most of the respondents say that the party does not have a written document in a form of manifesto that is being used as a benchmark for policy. The party argues that the vision and policy direction of our government comes from the president, and currently this vision is translated into the MGDS.⁷⁴ The party secretariat is in the process of authoring the party's manifesto for the 2009 election. At present the party runs the government through the trusted vision of the head of state, his ministers, and senior party leaders.⁷⁵

The UDF argues that there is a shift and departure by the incumbent DPP administration from social sector policies which the party feels are at the centre of the UDF philosophy. The UDF alleges that such shift in economic policies is leading to

⁷¹ Some of the four priorities are taken from the 2004 UDF manifesto

⁷² Key Informant (UDF MP)

⁷³ Key Informant (UDF MP)

⁷⁴ Key Informant (DPP MP and cabinet minister)

⁷⁵ Key Informant (DPP Secretariat)

increases in poverty levels among the poor. One of the respondents argues that since the coming to power of President Mutharika “*ndalama yasowa pa Malawi, nthawi ya a tcheya anthu timakhala ndi ndalama mthumba*” (meaning that money has become so scarce but during the reign of President Muluzi people had money in their pockets).⁷⁶

The UDF slightly differs from the DPP led government in economic policies. Although the UDF promises economic development in its 2004 electoral manifesto, the party argues that such economic growth should have human face. “It is cruel on the part of government to achieve economic growth at the expense of the poor people. People are not interested in balanced accounts but what they have in their stomach.”⁷⁷ This view is also shared by Hon. Friday Jumbe, the UDF spokesperson on finance as reflected in his response to the 2007/2008 national budget;

It is one thing to talk about low inflation rates, it is one thing to talk about low interest rates, growth in GDP, but if the ordinary citizenry are not benefiting from this particular achievement, then that is not a good economic development plan...There must be a meaningful transformation in the lives of the ordinary people. The question I have for the Minister of Finance is; do people now acknowledge this success in terms of having money in their pockets?... is the purchasing power of the ordinary man higher or lower than five years ago?⁷⁸

⁷⁶Key Informant (UDF MP)

⁷⁷ Key Informant (UDF MP)

⁷⁸ National Assembly, Hansard No.015, Fourth Meeting- Ninth Session; 15th August, 2007, p15

Unfortunately, when you look at delivery of service, there was better delivery of service in 2003 and 2004 than it is now. In making this remark, I am making comparisons to key ministries of education, health, Agriculture...in education, there was more teaching and learning materials in 2004 than now...in health more dugs than it is now. It means that the minister has a problem in ensuring that he implements his budget to the benefit of the people...⁷⁹

These statements and sentiments from the UDF leadership entail that the current DPP government is pursuing economic policies which are slightly different from what the UDF believes in. Even though the current DPP government is implementing some of the issues spelt in the 2004 UDF manifesto, the implementation methodology is different. Consequently, the incumbent president and his government have departed from what the UDF could have done if it remained in government. It is also noted that the UDF still adheres to its core belief of achieving economic growth and sustainable poverty reduction through empowerment of the poor. In other words, though in opposition, the UDF still shows commitment to its policy orientation as stipulated in its manifestos.

The discussion in this chapter has shown that parties have a sense of commitment to their policy document. Although parties cannot implement everything they announce in their electoral manifesto, needless to say that a considerable portion of the manifesto is brought onto the public agenda for the government to implement. It is notable that since coming to power in 1994 the UDF tried to bring its manifestos on the table of government. The overall national policies that were enacted between 1994 and 2004

⁷⁹ National Assembly, Hansard No.015, Fourth Meeting- Ninth Session; 15th August, 2007, p15

show positive linkage between government agenda and the intentions of the party as laid down in the electoral manifestos. During its time in power, the UDF also allocated more resources to the social sector domain as compared to the other domains, which is of course a true reflection of commitment to its electoral manifestos.

However, the formation of the DPP by the incumbent head of state compromises the implementation of the 2004 UDF manifesto. The DPP although it is largely a splinter of the UDF started pursuing policies slightly different from those of the UDF government. The MGDS signifies this policy shift. The DPP government has moved from giving priority to the social sector and it concentrates in the area of economic development. The DPP is seen to be closer to the MCP than it is to the UDF in its ideological policy orientation.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to examine the role of political parties in policy representation with respect to the UDF, and MCP since 1994. In order to arrive at this objective, the study examined issue saliency dimension across parties and elections. Secondly, the study looked at the issues of policy commitment by the ruling parties. With the evidence presented, the study has demonstrated that there are very small differences in issue salience across parties and across elections. The study has also revealed that parties show commitment to their electoral manifesto by making sure that important issues are brought before the government agenda. Parties do not completely abandon their electoral promises. Importantly, changes in national policies with the change of government leadership signify that parties are slightly different in their policy orientation.

However, the study also reveals that due to the nature of the electoral base and the electoral campaign, electoral manifestos have not played an important role of attracting voters to vote for a particular party. It is party identity, handouts and personalities that continue to dominate the electoral campaign. The electorates choose policies indirectly by voting for a particular party with an assumption that the party will implement favourable policies. If the party governs contrary to the expectation of the voters, this mandate is withdrawn at the next election. The assumption is that all other electoral factors remain constant. Nevertheless, with the weakening of ethno-regionalism and “big

men” voting behaviour, parties in Malawi have the potential to redefine their policies and ideological differences to the electorates.

The study has also shown that political parties are not fixed monuments. They respond to the needs of the society prevalent at that particular time. Changes in salience across some domains are a clear sign of parties responding to prevailing elements that affect the voters at that time. For example, in 2004 UDF increased its emphasis in agriculture because of the hunger which affected the nation in the year 2002.

The remarkable difference among these three parties is largely in the way they look at the economy and how to alleviate people’s poverty. The economy is the most salient issue in all three MCP manifestos. The party believes that poverty can be greatly reduced if people benefit from efficient and effective macroeconomics. Largely, the MCP argues for the need to achieve economic growth through sound macroeconomic policies, and this will eventually trickle down to the poor. This view is equally shared by the DPP. This thinking pushes these parties towards conservatives.

On the other hand, the UDF argues that economic growth can be achieved if people have the ability to invest in that economy. The UDF therefore emphasizes in giving priority to the social sector in order to improve people’s quality of life. When these people have attained basic needs then they can realize their potential and take part in activities that lead to economic growth. Consequently, this line of thought tilts the UDF towards liberals.

Importantly, parties in Malawi just like any other parties elsewhere are rational entities. They are interested in office. Parties are fully aware that ideological voters are very few and that during elections voters are rarely interested to know and acquire

information about policies. Henceforth, any rational party will only concentrate on avenues which the party thinks will push the voters on its side. In this case, even if parties would want to pursue an ideological and issue-based campaign doing so will be so naïve and irrational. Unless the party is not interested in office in the immediate future then it can take its time to educate the masses on the importance of issue based voting.

However, this does not dismiss the fact that parties in Malawi have ideological positions. As has been demonstrated by this study, parties in Malawi have the past record of the enduring historical and ideological orientation that can conceivably give the voter a strong clue for the purposes of projecting from the vote to policy consequences. In other words, as put by Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge (1994:52) “voting doggedly, election after election, according to one’s traditional party identification is by no means content-free in terms of policy.”

This study therefore argues that political parties in Malawi (MCP, and UDF) have different policy orientation as well as ideological leaning by looking at the level of variation in issue emphases in their respective electoral Manifestos. Differences in ideological orientation are also evident through the overall direction of policies which their governments pursued. The Overall, there are encouraging signs to indicate that although parties appear to be vague on issues when they meet the electorates, differences in issue saliency at the macro level are evident. The decline in defining societal factors such as tribalism, ethnicity, and the dominance of charismatic personalities will make parties and voters look to policies and ideologies as benchmarks for electoral choice.

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APPENDIX 1

CODE BOOK

Coding Categories for Party Election Manifestos

Domain 1: Agriculture and Food Security

101 Subsidies: Positive

Support for agriculture and farmers; any policy aimed specifically at providing safety nets. Commitment to subsidize farm inputs such as fertiliser and other inputs (targeted or universal).

102 Market Prices

Need to improve the prices that farmers get at both local and international market. Will these be controlled or left to market forces.

103 Grain Reserve

Need to keep grain (maize, rice) to avert food shortages during critical months. This includes both at local and national level.

104 Irrigation and Diversification

Need to reduce dependency on rain fed agriculture. This includes building of dams to conserve water for agricultural purposes, creating new and improving already existing irrigation schemes. Includes also accessibility of farm machinery to farmer such as treadle pumps, motorized pumps etc

105 Micro-Credit or farm Loan

This includes all financial incentives in form of credit and loans which are meant to help both smaller and larger farmers. Any mention credit schemes such as APIP, MRFC is counted along this category

106 Research and Development

This includes positive mention of improving agriculture sector through revamping and increasing research funding, extension services, training of the new and existing agriculture research and extension staff

107 Starter Pack (TIP)

This category scores statements that relate to positive mention of agriculture related safety net programmes to the poor farmers. These include fertilizer and seed inputs

108 Diversification of agriculture

This includes any mention of encouraging farmers to grow other food crops instead of just relying on maize. It also includes a shift from relying on tobacco as the main cash crop.

109 Livestock Production

This category includes any mention to use the government machinery in improving livestock production. Measures to be taken to revamp this sector

110 Farmers Associations

Favouring of farmers association and cooperatives and agencies of channelling government's programme as well as a means of improving quantity and quality of production

Domain 2: Social Sector and Quality of Life

201 Health

Need to expand and improve the accessibility of health facilities and services. This includes recruitment and training of staff, infrastructure development, availability of drugs, policies concerning HIV/AIDS, and improvement of conditions of service for the staff.

202 Education System

Need to expand and/or improve educational provision at all level. This also excludes technical training (technical schools), it also includes issues of fees, intake at all levels, quality and quantity of education, policies towards private schools and colleges, and increased public expenditure for infrastructure development.

203 Social Justice

Concept of equality; need for fair treatment of all people; special protection for underprivileged; need for fair distribution of resources; removal of class barriers; end of discrimination such as racial or sexual discrimination, etc.

204 Environmental Protection

Preservation of countryside, forests, etc.; general preservation of natural resources against selfish interests; proper use of national parks; soil banks, etc.; environmental improvement

205 Gender (women and Children)

Favourable references to women and children welfare. Empowerment of women in all sectors of life, and protecting them from any sort of abuse by the dominant groups

206 *Welfare State Expansion- Housing*

Favourable mentions of need to introduce maintain or expand any social service or social security scheme; support for social services such as social housing (the elderly, youth, women and children, disabled). **Note:** This category excludes education and health

207 *Transport and Communication*

Favourable references to provision of good communication services such as accessible roads to the rural areas, provision of postal services, phones, and also ensuring improvements in the air and water transport.

209 *Labour, employment and unionism*

Favourable references to labour groups, working class, unemployed; support for trade unions; good treatment of manual and other employees. Increasing minimum wage

Domain 3: The Economy

301 *Free Enterprise (Liberalised Economy)*

Favourable mentions of free enterprise capitalism; superiority of individual enterprise over state and control systems; favourable mentions of private property rights, personal enterprise and initiative; need for unhampered individual enterprises

302 *Incentives*

Need for wage and tax policies to induce enterprise; encouragement to start enterprises; need for financial and other incentives. Sometimes these may include Bank lending rates, loans given to small enterprises (MARDEF)

303 Mining and Energy Development

Need for regulations designed to make private enterprises work better; actions against monopolies and trusts, and in defence of consumer and small business; encouraging economic competition; social market economy

304 Economic Planning and goals

Favourable mentions of long-standing economic planning of a consultative or indicative nature and need for government to create such a plan. (MGDS, PRSP)

305 Private sector

Favourable mentions of the need for the collaboration of employers and trade union organizations in overall economic planning and direction through the medium of tripartite bodies of government, employers, and trade unions.

306 Productivity

Need to encourage or facilitate greater production; need to take measures to aid this; appeal for greater production and importance of productivity to the economy; the paradigm of growth. Need to move away from predominantly importing to exporting economic activity.

307 Technologies and Infrastructure

Importance of modernization of industry and methods of transport and communication (roads, rail transport); importance of science and technological developments in industry; need for training and research. (Capacity building) Note: This does not imply education in general.

308 *Privatisation of Public Enterprises*

Need to have the public enterprises privatised. This may include Government/private ownership or complete sell out.

309 *Fiscal Discipline*

Good fiscal discipline in order to achieve macroeconomics. Any mention of governments effort to stabilise interests and inflation rates. Desire to reduce government overspending

310 *Tourism*

Need to provide invest in the tourism industry as part of economic diversification. The government's commitment to encourage the public and private sector to invest in this industry to improve the foreign exchange base

Domain 4: Governance and Democracy Consolidation

401 *Freedom and Civil Rights*

Favourable mentions of importance of personal freedom and civil rights; freedom from bureaucratic control; freedom of speech; freedom from coercion in the political and economic spheres

402 *Separation of powers*

Favourable mentions of adherence of separation of powers among the three main branches of government. The empowerment of the judiciary and the legislature so that they are not dominated by the executive

403 *Constitutionalism: Positive*

Support for specific aspects of the constitution; use of constitutionalism as an argument for policy as well as general approval of the constitutional way of doing things.

404 *Political Stability and National Unity*

Deliberate action to ensure that the nation is politically stable and that it is not threatened by problem of ethnicity, tribalism and regionalism.

405 Civil Society

Need to ensure that the civil society is encouraged to grow and operate free without unnecessary regulation. Allow people freedom to form associations of their choice without restriction from government

406 Corruption in Public sphere

Need to eliminate corruption, and associated abuse of public office. Measures taken tackle the problems of corruption.

407 The media

Need to eliminate any obstacles against freedom of the press. Access to public information

Domain 5: Government and Political System

501 Decentralization

Support for devolution of powers from the capital hill (Lilongwe) to the local governments; need for improved and adequate funding to local assemblies; need for holding local government elections; conditions of service for councillors and other members of the local assemblies.

502 Civil Service (Bureaucracy) Efficiency

Need for efficient and effective civil service; cutting down civil service; training; improving governmental procedures; general appeal to make the process of government and administration cheaper and more effective.

503 Political Authority

Favourable mentions of strong government, including government stability; a government that will be able to have influence on the society

504 *Law and Order*

Enforcement of all laws; actions against crime; support and resources for police; tougher attitudes in courts fight against political violence

APPENDIX 2

Interview Guide for Key Informant Interviews

General guide questions

Do you remember some of the salient policy issues that your party promised in the 2004 general elections? Were these issues written down in the manifesto?

What contribution do you think your party's manifesto made to your campaign in the 2004 elections?

Do you have a copy of your party's 2004 electoral manifesto? Or does your party office keep these documents for reference? How often do you read it to remind yourself about the promises your party made?

If you have read the manifestos of other parties (UDF/MCP) what do you think are the major differences or similarities in policy emphasis?

When debating or voting on key policy issues at your party caucuses, do you reflect your position on the electoral promises or are you rather guided by other salient factors other than what was pronounced in the electoral manifesto?

Have you ever disagreed or has any member of representative disagreed with you party leadership (or yourself) simply because your position on a certain policy issue was

contravening what you promised the electorates in 2004 general elections? What position did you take?

On the Executive (DPP)

When the executive decides on bills to be tabled in parliament (legislation, annual budget etc), what do you see as the guiding principle?

Your party came into power (2005) and did not contest the 2004 elections. Does the party have a separate “manifesto” from that of the UDF?

Do you think that president/cabinet; who were the major flag carriers of the UDF in the 2004 PPE could be implementing the UDF manifesto?

What are the key policy issues which your government intends to or has implemented so far? What was the benchmark for such decisions?

If the DDP comes up with manifesto in the 2009, how different do you think it will be from that of the UDF and MCP?

Do you think the president has managed to fulfil some of his electoral promises? Can you mention some of the most important ones?

On the Opposition (MCP)

Are there some policy issues which you think the present government is implementing by copying from your 2004 electoral manifesto? What are some of these? Are they exactly the same or somehow modified?

When exercising its (Parliament) oversight function, do representatives (opposition) cross check with the ruling party's manifesto to ascertain whether the issues being pursued by the executive are in line with what the party (president) promised in the electoral manifesto?

In the 20004 PPE manifesto, the MCP promised to put a greater emphasis in improving agriculture, economy, and governance (separation of powers, corruption, law and order) do you think your party stands for these issues when debating and voting in parliament?

Do remember of a situation when your party caucus agreed to support government agenda simply because by doing so it would be implementing your 2004 electoral manifesto?

On the Opposition (UDF)

The incumbent president was a flagship for the UDF in the 2004 PPE. Do you think he is implementing the UDF manifesto or otherwise?

When debating and voting in parliament on government bills, do you consider whether the issues are what you stood for in 2004 PPE or not?

Suppose the current DPP government is fully implementing the UDF manifesto, what would be your first reaction? Would you be happy if the same was being implemented by the UDF?

Regardless of the DPP not having the mandate do think you can still support it if you feel that the policies being implemented are the ones the UDF stands for and also that the same were highlighted in the 2004 PPE UDF manifesto?

Do remember of a situation when your party caucus agreed to support government agenda simply because by doing so it would be implementing your 2004 electoral manifesto?