

**ETHNICITY, URBANIZATION AND THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORAL
CHOICE IN MALAWI**

M.A. (POLITICAL SCIENCE) THESIS

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UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

MAY, 2010

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M.A. (POLITICAL SCIENCE) THESIS

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Social Sciences, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Political Science)

**University of Malawi
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May, 2010

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 made.

Ernest Lameck Mutuwazgobvu Thindwa

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Date

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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DEDICATION

For my late father who never lived to enjoy the fruits of his labour and wisdom.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work is an illustration of how interaction with persons of diverse social background can culminate in a desirable academic product. Many persons too numerous to mention, in one way or another, and in varying degrees, stimulated my thirst for academic exploration. I am grateful to all. I am particularly indebted to the Almighty God who has always favoured me in so many ways. I am indebted to my late father and mum who gave me the opportunity to acquire basic learning skills. It is these skills that, not in a small measure, made it possible for me to embark on an unending journey for academic exploration. The journey has taken me to a Master of Arts (Political Science) dissertation.

However the realization of this dream would not have been possible without the profound contribution of institutions and the academic fraternity at Chancellor College and the University of Bergen in Norway. My sincere gratitude go to the Government of Norway through NORAD who awarded me the scholarship to participate in the first ever Master of Arts (Political Science) to be offered in Malawi. I remain greatly indebted to the teaching staff in the Department of Political and Administrative studies at Chancellor College and the Department of Comparative Politics at the University of Bergen. Not only has their intellectual contribution broadened my understanding of the complexities

of political science as a field of study but also influenced my choice of topic for academic inquiry.

The programme coordinator, Dr Chiweza, deserves special mention. Her direction of the course made what would have otherwise been a stressful course to be an enjoyable and rewarding learning experience. The contributions of my two supervisors, Associate Professor B. Chinsinga and Professor Chijere Chirwa were well beyond the expectations of even the most optimistic student. Not only did they provide their priceless intellectual and technical support at all the stages of the dissertation but they also provided academic material relevant to the study. Their level of patience with my missing of critical deadlines and relentless tracking of my progress was unprecedented considering their respective levels of commitments.

Data collection was not the least demanding task for the study. I am grateful to the primary school teachers in the three rural constituencies in the three regions of the country and in the two major cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe whose assistance as data collectors was one of the decisive elements of the survey. The men and women in both rural and urban constituencies who responded to the questionnaires and those who participated in focus group discussions deserve my sincere gratitude. Their contribution as primary data sources of information was invaluable.

My gratitude is also extend to officials of government departments, Non Governmental Organizations working for democracy consolidation projects and political parties who gave me the audience when I wanted further understanding of emerging issues during the data analysis process. I remain indebted to academicians in political science for providing intellectual insights into the study. Dr. Martin Ott, Dr Patel Nandin and Mr. Rafiq Hadjat were particularly helpful in this regard. Special acknowledgement is due to Nicholas Shawa who provided technical support in the treatment of quantitative data. His expertise in processing quantitative data using the statistical package for social scientists was crucial in observing patterns and trends critical for the study.

I am profoundly grateful to my employer, the Malawi Revenue Authority and in particular, the Commissioner General Mr. MJM Phiri, for not only granting me permission to undertake studies whilst being maintained on the payroll but also according me an opportunity to use organizational resources for my study. I would like to register my profound gratitude to my family. My wife, Chitsanzo's unwavering moral and psychological support strengthened my resolve particularly when the tension between competing family, academic and work interests came to the fore. Our four children Merindah, Tanangachi, Ndagha and Chindikani had to cope with the inevitable deprivation of having quality time with me. I however found solace in the precious infant smiles of Chindikani born in the first four months of my two years study programme.

There are so many individuals who readily offered help and advice that it is impossible to individually single out. It is my anticipation that they will accept this general tribute. All imperfections and shortcomings of this study remain entirely my responsibility.

ABSTRACT

Presidential elections since the dawn of plural politics in Malawi in 1994 have been generally described by electoral scholars as ethnic census. Whilst the influence of ethnicity on presidential electoral preference has been widely acknowledged especially in rural constituencies, the influence of ethnicity on the electoral behavior of Malawian urbanites has not attracted adequate scholarly inquiry. This study aimed at assessing the extent to which the ethnic identity thesis as expounded by Lijphart (1977) and political anxiety theory advanced by Conteh-Morgan (1997) are accurate explanatory perspectives for understanding electoral behavior in Malawi's urban and rural settings. The main thrust of the two perspectives is premised on the widely held belief that electoral behavior in democratizing multiethnic societies is motivated by fear of exclusion of one's ethnic group from accessing opportunities when faced with electoral defeat in the changing material realities of state and market. This study investigates the extent to which urbanization has been a melting pot of ethnic loyalties that are believed to influence choice between electoral alternatives in multiethnic societies like Malawi. The study argues that although ethnicity has been a major criterion of predicting voter presidential electoral preference, its influence on determining the voter's presidential electoral choice is waning in both urban and rural areas of Malawi.

The data on which this study is based was generated using both quantitative and qualitative sources. Quantitative sources included structured questionnaires administered to 500 randomly selected respondents in the two major cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe and three rural constituencies randomly selected in each of the three regions of the country. Qualitative sources meant to compliment quantitative sources included Focus Group Discussions (FGD) conducted in the rural constituencies in which questionnaires were administered and Blantyre City. Face to face interviews with executive members of major political parties including the Alliance for Democracy (Aford), Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and United Democratic Front (UDF) were conducted. Interviews with political science experts and government department officials formed part of the qualitative sources. Quantitative and qualitative techniques were employed to yield data that was generally amenable to statistical treatment and content analysis respectively.

Empirical findings demonstrate that the ethnic identity thesis and political anxiety theory are explanatory tools of electoral behavior in Malawi only to some extent. While the ethnic identity thesis has been a reliable criterion for predicting electoral preference of voters from given localities in the first three elections since the adoption of plural politics in 1994, its predictive prowess has been on the wane over time in both urban and rural settings. The study concludes that whilst urbanization has not been a definitive catalyst for diluting ethnic loyalties, ethnic based politics is being challenged. Policy preference

and retrospective performance evaluation of presidential candidates and their respective sponsoring parties are increasingly becoming decisive factors for determining voter's electoral choice. The May, 2009 Presidential electoral results provide ample testimony of the declining influence of ethnicity in determining voters' choice between electoral alternatives as evidenced by the landslide victory of Dr Bingu wa Mutharika of DPP who generally won massive votes across the country.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFORD	Alliance for Democracy
AFBS	Afro barometer Survey
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
DSC	Department of Statutory Corporations
EC	Electoral Commission
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MDP	Malawi Democratic Party
MHC	Malawi Housing Corporation
MP	Member of Parliament
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientist
UDF	United Democratic Front
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER ONE

ETHNICITY AND DEMOCRATISATION

1.1 Introduction

Periodic free and fair elections for public offices are among the defining characteristics of the democratic credentials of any country. The basic assumption of elections is that the voting requirement enhances the accountability of the holders of the political public offices and their responsiveness to the national will. The assumption is premised on the understanding that individuals are voted into public offices on the strength of their policies and programmes and they respond to the national will for fear of electoral defeat in a subsequent election (Janda, et al.1989:247). Morris (1972:277) asserts that a vote is a commodity that the voter trades to a candidate in return for specific benefits on the assumption that the candidate or party receiving that vote has the capacity to deliver desired benefits.

It is generally believed that multiethnic countries like Malawi in transition from authoritarian regimes to democratic governments can consolidate their democracy if the electorates are guided by the merits of policies and programmes offered by competing political parties and individual presidential candidates (Berman, et al. 2004a). Policy

voting, according to Berman, tends to promote national building in multiethnic societies when different ethnic groups are united by common policy preferences thereby preventing ethnic elites to manipulate appeals to ethnic solidarity. On the contrary voting along ethnic lines, according to Conteh-Morgan (1997), tends to fuel ethnic tensions and conflict when certain ethnic groups perceive themselves as losers especially in the winner take all electoral system as is the case in Malawi.

Electoral studies in Malawi suggest that ethnicity other than policy voting determines the presidential electoral outcome (Ferree & Horowitz, 2007b). The first three presidential and parliamentary elections in Malawi since the reintroduction of multiparty politics in 1994 can be described as ethnic contests at least from the voting pattern point of view. Scholars interested in Malawian elections such as Chirwa (1994b, 1999b, 1998a), Kaspin (1995b), Patel (2000a) and Chinsinga, (2009) recognize the significance of ethnic-based factors in determining electoral presidential outcomes. Ferree and Horowitz (2007b) observed that the voting pattern for the 1994, 1999 and 2004 general elections in Malawi resembled an ethnic census. While clearly observable in rural constituencies, the validity of this view has not been adequately tested against urbanites in Malawi. This study sought to investigate whether urbanization has diluted ethnic loyalties of voters in determining presidential electoral preferences in Malawi.

Studies elsewhere in Africa have shown seemingly different voting behavior of urbanites as compared to rural voters. For instance studies in Zambia reveal that whilst people in rural areas vote according to ethnic affiliations, urbanites in major cities of the copper

belt vote on the basis of political programmes (Erdmann, 2000b:68). Whilst the voting preference of Zambian urbanites has tended to be different from that of the Zambian rural voters, the same can not automatically be said to be the case in Malawi. Whilst previous studies of elections in Malawi (Chirwa, 1994b, 1995b, 1998a, Kaspin, 1995b, Ferree and Horowitz, 2007b) established voting along ethnic lines, they did not make an attempt to find out whether urban voters in Malawi are influenced by the ethnic identity of the presidential candidates. Furthermore these studies did not establish the extent to which the ethnic identity of the presidential candidate is an electoral factor.

This study is important to the extent that it sought to fill this gap as a contribution to scholarly inquiry on voter behavior in Malawi. The study argues that urbanization has not fulfilled its potential role of diluting ethnic loyalties in determining electoral choices of urban voters. The study further argues that whilst the ethnic identity of the presidential candidate has been a key electoral factor, the influence of ethnicity in determining the voters' presidential electoral preference is on the decline. The study concludes that other electoral factors such as voters' policy preference and retrospective performance evaluation of presidential candidates and their respective political parties are emerging as important factors for determining the voters' presidential electoral choice.

1.2 Problem Statement

Questions have been raised as to whether multiethnic countries like Malawi can sustain democracy (Bogaards, 2004b). The questions become even more relevant when one considers that Malawi is effectively a unitary state where meaningful self government by

communities has not taken root in spite of the decentralization policy reform initiatives undertaken since the reintroduction of plural politics in 1994. Close observation of voting patterns in Malawi for the three consecutive presidential elections since the reintroduction of plural politics in 1994 suggests that electoral choices, especially for presidential candidates, may not be influenced so much by the merits of the policies and programmes offered by presidential candidates and their respective parties. The voting patterns for the presidential candidates in the three previous elections show strong voting along ethnic lines (Chirwa, 1994b, 1995b, 1998a; Kaspin, 1995b; Patel, 2000a; Ferree and Horowitz, 2007b and Chinsinga, 2009).

There is evidence to suggest that the three major political parties that have participated in the three consecutive elections have their electoral strength rooted in a particular ethnic group or in a coalition of ethnic groups located (not neatly though) in a specific region. The Alliance for Democracy (Aford) has traditionally performed well in the north even though the grip of the party on the region has increasingly been on the wane in recent years. The Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and the United Democratic Front (UDF) have out performed other political parties in the central and southern regions respectively. For instance the winning candidate in the 2004 presidential elections Dr Bingu wa Mutharika of UDF secured 66% of his total votes from his home region (Matlosa & Patel, 2006:20). He secured only 9% of his total votes from the northern region and 25% from the central region. The runner up, John Tembo of the MCP secured 95% of his total votes from his region of origin and only managed 2% and 3% of his total votes from the northern and southern region respectively. The pattern of voter distribution for presidential elections

in 1999 was no different (Patel, 2000a). The performance of major political parties for parliamentary seats during the same period followed the same pattern. (See Table 1.1 and Table 1.2 below).

Table: 1.1

1994 Parliamentary Results

	AFORD	MCP	UDF	Independent
North	33	-	-	-
Centre	3	51	14	-
South	-	5	71	-
Total	36	56	85	-

Source: Electoral Commission 1994

Table: 1.2

1999 Parliamentary Elections

	AFORD	MCP	UDF	Independent
North	28	4	1	-
Centre	1	54	16	1
South	-	8	76	3
Total	29	66	93	4

Source: Electoral Commission 1994

The potential threat of ethnicity to democracy in Malawi is exacerbated by the adoption of a simple majoritarian electoral system where the zero sum winner takes it all is the hallmark of the electoral outcome. The ethnic character of the voting pattern in Malawi poses potential challenges to the consolidation of democracy in the country.

In the first place voting along ethnic lines encourages dominance of politics by a single political party which enjoys electoral support from and identifies itself with the numerically superior ethnic group or a coalition of ethnic groups especially if the dominant ethnic group(s) is (are) concentrated in a particular geographical region. The dependence on numerically superior ethnic group or groups tends to undermine intra-party democracy as political party leadership tends to be vested in individuals from relatively large ethnic groups or populous regions. It has been observed that when a party monopolises the electorate within an exclusive ethnic or cultural grouping, competition does not really exist (Randall & Svasand 2002:9) and tends to be detrimental to party competition and to the prospect of democratic governance (Sandbrook, 1993). In such circumstances parties will struggle to shake-off their ethnic and regionalist appearance.

Secondly, voting along ethnic lines undermines the legitimacy of the winning president and the resulting government especially if a simple majoritarian electoral system is employed as is the case in Malawi. For instance, the incumbent president of Malawi, Bingu wa Muthalika, won presidential polls in 2004 with 35% of total votes with over 66% of those votes secured from the southern region (Matlosa & Patel, 2006) which was

a stronghold of the sponsoring party. A president elected largely on the basis of support from a single large ethnic group or from a set of related ethnic groups in a single region is likely to form a government that has limited geographical reach and appeal. This scenario poses a challenge of the government's capacity to govern especially in a presidential system with a ruling party having a minority representation in the legislature.

Thirdly, voting on the basis of ethnic affiliation, as has been the case in Malawi, fuels ethnic consciousness and loyalty thereby undermining a sense of national purpose. Appeals for patriotism among the ethnically conscious communities fail to unit sectional interests in defence of a broad national vision (Sandbrook, 1985).

The fourth problem that may emerge if voting patterns are along ethnic lines is the potential inclination of the president and the government elected on the basis of disproportionate support from the numerically superior ethnic community to respond to narrow concerns to secure guarantees for the future electoral success at the expense of wider interests. In such circumstances the president and the government will tend to be less accountable and responsive to the national will.

Lastly and perhaps the most potent threat resulting from voting along ethnic lines is the potential for ethnic violence. Ethnic consciousness heightened by ethnic political competition can lead to permanent rulers and opposition. Ethnic groups which, on the basis of size, have remote chance of electoral victory may feel excluded from political life and denied access to national resources thereby rendering the democratic process

susceptible to violent ethnic conflict. The threat is more likely when the majoritarian electoral system where the stakes are high as the winner takes it all characterise electoral outcome as is the case in Malawi. The ethnic clashes in Kenya in the December 2007 post presidential elections are a classic example. Conteh-Morgan (1997:94) asserts that one of the major threats to Africa's democratization process is the channelling of ethnic parochial frustrations into violence.

Attempts have been made to explain the ethnic or regional based voting patterns in Malawi. Scholars such as Ott (2000a) implicate colonialism. Ott sees ethnicity as a by-product of colonialism. Malawi, then Nyasaland, was politically and administratively divided into three regions to suit British interests. According to Conteh-Morgan (1997), decades of external imposition and post colonial rule established a variety of patterns of interethnic conflicts and rivalry as the colonial masters consolidated their hegemony by divide and rule. Conteh-Morgan observes that the post colonial elite in turn entrenched itself through the strategic utility of ethno-politics. The divide and rule tactic employed by colonialists pitted ethnic groups against each other. These potential adversarial ethnic groups were united by the need to subdue the common enemy-colonialists. The end of colonialism weakened the bonds between ethnic groups and proportionately strengthened the historically inherent competitive behavior. The voting pattern can be viewed as a manifestation of the inherent rivalry between ethnic groups heightened by the colonial tendency to divide and rule them.

Some scholars attribute the ethnic based voting pattern to the absence of class consciousness. Sandbrook (1985) observed that what emerged in most African countries (Malawi inclusive) after colonial rule were overwhelmingly peasant, not capitalist societies. Sandbrook (1993) laments that peasants are notoriously difficult to mobilize on a national class basis. He noted that in most African countries bourgeoisies (landed classes) are numerically small and geographically concentrated to the extent that extraction of economic surplus from peasants has not created the same tensions as in the capitalist societies. Distinct classes, he concludes, have not taken shape in predominantly peasant African countries. Malawi, with around 83% of the population living in rural areas (Worlds Bank Development Indicator Report, 2006), distinct class divisions are blurred at best. In the absence of class consciousness and political party ideological differentiation, ambitious politicians have tended to appeal to the ethnic identity of the electorate.

The other factor that explains the ethnic character of the voting pattern in Malawi is the limited urbanization in the country. Only about 17 % of Malawians live in urban centers. In many developing countries, according to Conteh-Morgan (1997), independence and the process of urbanization may have brought about a shift in levels of identification, along with their apparent weakening and strengthening of ethnic boundaries. However, urbanization in most African countries is not widespread enough leaving homogeneous ethnic composition of regions intact for ethnic political elites to exploit in an effort to satisfy their political ambitions (Conteh-Morgan, 1997, Sandbrook, 1993). The level of urbanization and economic interdependence remains very low in Malawi thereby

rendering communities to perceive ethnic loyalty during elections as a means of making a legitimate claim to national resources.

The scenario in the urban areas however is less certain. Voter behavior in urban centers as mirrored by vote distribution among presidential candidates show remarkable departure from the voting pattern observed in rural areas where the ethnic identity of the presidential candidate is seen to be a key factor in the presidential electoral choice. For instance whereas Bingu wa Mutharika won 55% of the votes cast in the southern region where he originates, he could only manage 30% of the total valid votes in Blantyre City located in southern region in the 2004 presidential elections (Electoral Commission, 2004). Chakwamba, who could only manage 25% of the total votes in the southern region, secured 54% and 3% for Tembo in Blantyre City. Similarly, where as Tembo, the runner up in the 2004 presidential elections won 64% of the total valid votes cast in the central region where he originates from, he got only 48% of the total valid votes for Lilongwe City located in the central region. Dr Bingu wa Muthalika and Chakwamba secured 25% and 20% respectively in Lilongwe City. Chakwamba, it has to be noted, secured only 7% of the total votes cast in the central region. The percentage of votes for Chakwamba in the rural areas of the central region was lower than 7 percent.

A probability however exists that vote distribution among presidential candidates in urban centers represents, to a larger or lesser extent, the proportional ethnic representation in the cities. While the validity of this description can not be contested when voting is viewed along regional lines, its accuracy when extended to urban centers

has not been ascertained. It is this lack of certainty in voter behavior in urban areas that provided the impetus for this study.

Theoretical frameworks on the link between ethnicity and voting behavior in multi-ethnic countries exist and their justifications developed. Political theorists have constructed a number of accounts of what motivates or might motivate particular voter behavior. These accounts may be regarded as types of justification for particular voter preference for the presidential electoral choice. Using relevant theoretical models within the broader voter behavior framework, this study intended to contribute to the understanding of voter behavior in urban and rural areas of Malawi. In broad terms, the study aimed at establishing whether the ethnic identity thesis provides an accurate conceptual and empirical account of voter behavior in Malawi in general and urban areas in particular. Specifically the study intended to establish whether urban voters are influenced by ethnic loyalties in their electoral choices. The relevant models of voter behavior that guided the study are discussed in the subsequent chapter.

1.3 Study Objective

Urban centers are widely believed to be melting pots of ethnic loyalty and identity (O'Connor 1983). Based on this understanding, one would be tempted to infer that the voting patterns in urban areas show different voter behavior from that prevalent in rural areas with relatively strongly ethnic attachment. This suggests that urbanites tend to vote based largely on the qualities of competing policies and programmes promised by different presidential candidates rather than being influenced by the ethnic identities of the presidential hopefuls.

However, this is purely conjecture in the context of Malawi as there has been no systematic research to explain urban voter behavior. A possibility exists though that voting patterns in urban areas might be a reflection of ethnic representation in the major cities. If this is the case, then there is need to confirm the proposition. Otherwise there is need to isolate and explain factors influencing voting patterns in urban centers in relation to factors influencing voter behavior in rural areas. To that end the study primarily endeavored to find out whether the ethnic identity of the presidential candidate is an electoral factor for voters in both the urban and rural areas in Malawi.

Specifically the study sought to address three main objectives. Firstly the study aimed at establishing the extent to which ethnic identity of presidential candidates influence voter preference in urban and rural areas in Malawi. Secondly the study attempted to identify and explain factors influencing voter preferences in urban areas vis-à-vis rural voter preferences. Of particular interest was the need to establish whether other factors other than ethnicity such as electoral policies and programmes, political parties, personality of presidential candidates and religion have any bearing on voters' electoral choice. Lastly the study sought to investigate the extent to which voter characteristics such as social class influence presidential electoral choice. It was anticipated that the identification and explanation of factors influencing voters in rural Malawi and urban centers will be significant in informing strategies to negate ethnic based voting patterns which potentially threaten democracy consolidation in the country.

1.4 Study Hypothesis

The hypothesis advanced in this study postulates that a voter in the urban area in Malawi is less likely to be influenced by the ethnic identity of the presidential candidate. The hypothesis is informed by popular belief that urban centers are melting pots of the ethnic loyalty and identity. By inference, it can be deduced that an urbanite in Malawi is less likely to vote along ethnic lines. Conversely, the presidential electoral preference of rural voters whose ethnic attachments are believed to be strong is likely to be influenced by the ethnic identity of the presidential candidates. Thus the hypotheses that guided the study are as follows:

- i) The urban voter's presidential electoral preference is less likely to be influenced by the ethnic identity of the candidates. Ethnic loyalties in urban areas tend to be weak due to, among other factors, common economic interests transcending ethnic groups, economic interdependence and intermarriages between members of different ethnic groups.
- ii) A rural voter's presidential electoral preference is likely to be influenced by the ethnic identity of the candidates. This assertion is more accurate when members of particular ethnic groups are geographically concentrated as is the case in Malawi. Randall (2007a) observes that rural voters in Africa do not vote on the basis of support for the ideas or programmes of a particular political party, but vote to placate the demands of their existing or putative patron. Unflinching support to one's ethnic patron is used in exchanged for material favors (Gyimah-Boadi, 2007a).

- iii) Individuals are voted into public office on the strength of their policies and programmes and respond to the national will for fear of electoral defeat in subsequent elections. This is premised on the understanding that a vote is a commodity the electorates trade to a candidate in return for specific benefits (Morris, 1972).

The study considered presidential electoral preference as a dependent variable. It was premised on the assumption that the presidential electoral choice is largely dependent on the ethnic identity of the presidential candidate. Ethnicity is the independent variable. It can not be changed as it is determined by one's birth. To the extent that urbanization is a key aspect of investigation in the study in as far as it is viewed to impact on the influence of ethnicity on voter presidential preferences, it is an independent variable. The study further attempted to establish the extent to which urbanization dilutes ethnic overtones in voter presidential preferences in urban areas in Malawi. Ethnic loyalties tend to give way under the pressures of urban economic interdependence and intermarriages between people of different ethnic groups (O'Connor, 1983). Furthermore, it is believed that relatively easy access to various media outlets provides urbanites with fairly objective information that helps them to make informed choices during elections.

1.5 Study Justification

Studies linking ethnicity and voter behavior in Africa have been few according to Erdmann (2004b:72). He attests that systematic research on voting behavior in Africa is

basically non-existent to the extent that explanations of electoral results in African countries are at best usually informed guesses. While this could be true for Africa in general, there have been studies about elections in Malawi which converge on one dominant conclusion suggesting voter preferences tend to be influenced by the ethnic identity of presidential candidates. For instance, Vail and White (1998) prophetically predicted that when the charismatic President Dr. Hastings Banda disappears from the scene, ethnic tension would characterize political competition in the liberalized political environment. The prediction, according to Chirwa (1998a), was confirmed during the 1994 General Elections when the country embarked on the process of transition from one party authoritarian rule to plural politics. Ethnic loyalties and divisions were reflected in the voting patterns as the three major political parties, the AFORD, MCP and UDF registered resounding electoral victories with votes concentrated in specific ethnic groups located in particular geographical locations. The pattern of voter preferences was repeated in the 1999 (Patel, 2000a) and 2004 General Elections (Electoral Commission, 2004).

While studies conducted so far recognize the ethnic based voting pattern, they have not attempted to establish factors influencing ethnic based voter preference. Perhaps the most significant omission by these studies is their lack of interest in finding out whether the urban voters in Malawi are also influenced by ethnic loyalties in their presidential electoral preferences. Studies elsewhere in Africa such as Zambia (Erdmann, 2004b) have shown seemingly different voting behavior of urbanites as compared to rural voters.

However there has been no systematic research in Malawi to establish the extent of the influence of ethnic loyalties on voter preferences of urbanites. This study attempted to not only establish the extent of ethnic based voting behavior in Malawi and isolate factors that influence rural voters in Malawi but also determine the extent to which urban and rural voters are influenced by the ethnic loyalties in their voting preferences. Finding explanations for variations in voting patterns between rural and urban areas is critical for purposes of identifying electoral weakness in the quest to consolidate democracy in Malawi. The presidential electoral results during the first three elections since 1994 showed ethnic based voting patterns particularly in rural areas. It is therefore important to establish as to whether ethnic attachment is an explanation, in part, of voting preferences in both rural and urban areas or if variations exist in voter preferences between rural and urban areas, causes of the variations need to be pinned down.

The results of the study are to be disseminated to appropriate civil societies to guide them design voter education programmes. Appropriate public institutions which have a stake in the electoral process such as Electoral Commission and Parliament are likely to find the results of the study useful in identifying electoral weaknesses with the view to influence electoral reform initiatives. Political parties are likely to benefit from the informed analysis of voter behavior necessary for the design of electioneering programmes. The donor community particularly those working in the area of democracy consolidation are likely to find the study useful in identifying areas in which capacity enhancement in the democracy consolidation project is acutely needed.

1.6 Organization of the Study

The rest of the study is organized as follows: chapter two provides a debate on politicized ethnicity within the confines of existing literature and theoretical frameworks. It starts with a presentation of a perspective on ethnicity and exploration of other related concepts such as tribalism, regionalism, nationalism and race. It proceeds to discuss some of the competing theoretical models of understanding voter behavior and settles for the ethnic identity and political anxiety theories as explanatory frameworks relevant to the study.

Chapter three describes the methodological approach to generating data and highlights challenges of data collection. Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection are presented as primary sources. The process of random selection of localities and respondents is described. The use of the survey through questionnaires and the tools used to process the data is explained. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews are presented as methods of collecting qualitative data. Reference is made to documents consulted as secondary sources of data collection. The chapter acknowledges the logistical challenges of data collection and ends with an explanation of techniques employed to analyze data.

Chapter four presents a discussion of empirical findings. The chapter argues that whilst the ethnic identity of the presidential candidate has been a key electoral factor, its influence in shaping voters' electoral preference is being challenged by policy voting and retrospective performance evaluation of presidential candidates and their respective political parties.

Chapter five provides the conclusion of the study and recommendation for further inquiry. The chapter concludes that urbanization has not succeeded in diluting ethnic loyalties in Malawi and that although ethnicity has been a major electoral factor, its influence is on the decline. The chapter recommends for inquiry into the causal relationship between ethnic communities perception of successive governments' distribution of national resources and voter behavior.

CHAPTER TWO

DEBATING POLITICISED ETHNICITY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical models for debating politicized ethnicity. It starts with the definitions of terms used in the study. It proceeds to conceptualize ethnicity and identify existing ethnic groups in Malawi. It further discusses four theoretical models within the broader voter behavior framework. These are maxism, modernization, ethnic identity and ethnic political anxiety theories. The focus of the chapter is on the ethnic identity and political anxiety theories essentially because, unlike the Marxist and modernization theories, they recognize the central role of ethnicity in democratizing multiethnic societies. The chapter argues that the choice of voters between electoral alternatives in democratizing multiethnic societies is influenced by consideration for ethnic loyalty. By the end of the chapter it will be demonstrated that the ethnic identity and ethnic political anxiety theories are generally reliable theoretical frameworks for predicting voters' preference between electoral alternatives in democratizing multiethnic societies.

2.2 Conceptualizing Malawian ethnicity

This section provides definitions and conceptions of some of the key terms used in this Study. This is important for purposes of providing adopted meaning of the terms to avoid

diverse interpretation as it is usually the case when they are in use.

2.2.1 Ethnicity

Conceptualizing ethnicity is an exercise that often attracts diverse view points. The concept of ethnicity is frequently used interchangeably with other hotly contested concepts like tribalism, regionalism, nation, and race (Cyrus, 2000). Even where these concepts are treated distinctly there are far too many criteria which almost invariably are cross cutting. For instance, ethnic groups are typically distinguished on grounds of language, religion, beliefs or custom, physical characteristics and ancestral origin (Marger, 1985; Cyrus, 2000). Rarely does it occur that a group possesses all these features exclusively. It is therefore not a surprise to note that conceptualizing an ethnic group and ethnicity has been a contentious issue.

Howard (1995b:285) defines an ethnic group as a community that is or has come to perceive itself primarily on grounds of language, religion, culture or race as distinct from its neighbors and wishes to assert and maintain that distinction by some form of political organization. An ethnic group has also been defined as a group of people of the same nationality who share a common culture, set of ancestors, or language (Kegley & Wittkopf, 2004:164). Ethnicity, according to Kegley & Wittkopf (2004:164) is understood as perception of likeness among members of a particular racial or linguistic grouping leading them to act prejudiciary toward outsiders in other kinship or cultural grouping. This definition approximates the one offered by Azevdo (2000a:357) who views ethnicity as one's affinity and attachment to his/her cultural grouping that elicits distinct behavior towards others in society or organized polity. Azevedo shows that the

main determinants of ethnicity generally include primarily common language, proven or imagined shared ancestry and a common monolithic or pluralistic lifestyle. Ethnicity, according to Erdmann (2004b), should not be understood as a primordial or essentialist attribute but as a historically and socially constructed identity which is multifaceted, changeable and has multiple meanings. Erdmann's conceptualization of ethnicity is shared by Berman et al, (2004a). Berman, et al. (2004:4) assert that ethnicity has been constructed from diverse indigenous and foreign cultural materials and continues to be defined up to the present. The development of ethnicity in Africa for more than a century has been marked by dialectic of expansion and differentiation (Berman, et al, 2004a). Berman (2004a) observes that ethnicities are both larger in social scale and population and more sharply demarcated from other such groups than the smaller and more fluid communities of the pre-colonial past.

African ethnic groups are not univocal and the content of culture and custom as well as the boundaries of communities remain matters of frequent conflict and negotiations (Berman, 2004a). To that end, African ethnicities are not primordial survivals of archaic primitive cultures but outcomes of continuous and continuing processes of social construction emanating from the encounters of indigenous societies with the political economy and the culture of the west, as well as the deliberate manipulations of diverse political actors (Berman, et al, 2004; Sandbrook, 1993; Conteh-Morgan, 1997). These processes, concludes Berman (2004a), are both historically specific and contingent on the outcome of internal and external struggles defining the membership and boundaries of ethnic communities and their relations with the other communities with whom they share

the same state. Ethnicity, according to Erdmann (2004b), is therefore constituted by the interaction of self ascription and ascription by others. Ethnicity, for purposes of this research study, draws guidance from the work of Azevedo (2000a) and is construed as one's sense of affinity or attachment to any of the ethnic groups in Malawi which induces one to act prejudiciary toward members of other cultural grouping.

Most large ethnic communities in Africa contain local sub-groups and identities whose relations are often problematic. The social forces shaping ethnic development and identity have been fundamentally material and ethnic politics has focused on defining the terms of access both to traditional assets of land and labour and the material resources of modernity in both the state and the market (Berman, 2004). There are a number of ethnic groups in Malawi each concentrated in one of the three regions. Documentary agreement on the number of ethnic groups in Malawi remains elusive (Kaspin, 1995b, Vail and White 1998a). Earlier surveys suggested the existence of 25 ethnic groups in Malawi. Recent geographical studies have reduced the number to 9 (Kapsin, 1995a). These include Nkhonde, Tonga and Tumbuka in the northern region, Chewa in the central region Lomwe, Nyanja, Sena and Yao in the southern region and the Ngoni ethnic group scattered in all the three regions. Three ethnic groups (Tumbuka, Chewa and Yao), each from a different region of the country, have dominated the social and political fabric in Malawi owing to not necessarily numerical superiority. The prominence of these ethnic groups in Malawi is attributed to cultural visibility (Kaspin, 1995b, Vail & White, 1998a). Kaspin and Vail & White demonstrate that the visibility and dominance of the three ethnic groups is a result of manipulation of language and ethnic relations by

colonial and post-colonial administrators and the politicization of ethnic consciousness during the same period.

2.2.2 Ethnicity or Tribalism

Ethnicity and tribalism are substantively the same only distinguished on the basis of interaction with the other in the wider social economic and political arenas. The process of interaction between members of the same ethnic group is described as ethnicity. In addition to a common ancestral heritage and a set of cultural traits, members of a particular ethnic group display consciousness of kind or an awareness of close association. There exists, according to Marger (1985), a 'We' feeling among members of the same ethnic group. It is now customary to refer to ethnicity and tribalism as the internal and external aspects respectively of interaction in the wider social economic and political arenas (Berman, 2004a). The internal dimension is concerned with relations inside the group and has been termed moral ethnicity. Berman attests that attachments many Africans have to their ethnic group and ethnic identity is not an irrational attachment to kith and kin or blood and soil. The attachment, Berman maintains, is rather tied up with a complex web of social obligations that define people's rights and responsibility and that protect people when they are most vulnerable. That, according to Lonsdale (2004a), is a point of calling it moral ethnicity.

By contrast the external dimension, concerned with relations between an ethnic group and the state or between two or more ethnic groups, is essentially amoral. This external dimension is regarded as political tribalism and describes the competitive confrontation of ethnic contenders for material resources of modernity through control of state

apparatus (Lonsdale, 2004a). In essence whereas ethnicity describes one's sense of affiliation to a particular ethnic group, tribalism describes the interaction with members of other ethnic groups in a wider social, economic and political arena of the state. Tribalism is therefore more of a behavioral definition emphasizing parochialism, inward looking, and narrow mindedness and tending towards conservatism.

2.2.3 Regionalism, Nationalism and Ethnicity

At times ethnicity is confused with regionalism when describing voter behavior especially if voting patterns tend to correspond with regional demarcations as is often the case in Malawi. Regionalism, according to Chirwa (1998a:53), refers to the sentiment of loyalty a given people have toward the administrative sub-territory from which they come, and the discriminatory behavior toward those coming from other parts of the country to which it usually gives rise. The confusion occurs because, according to Erdmann (2004b:71), the crucial and predominant cleavage in most African societies, is the ethnic and/or regional identity. Political parties in Africa, according to Conteh-Morgan (1977), tend to mobilize along lines of ethnic identities, This does not suggest that political parties in Africa are ethnic based parties. Ethnic parties dominated by one ethnic group and with a particularistic agenda are an exception in Africa (Erdmann, 2004b:72). The predominant feature is a coalition of several ethnic groups of different sizes that has been negotiated by their respective elites. Ethnic coalitions can be made and unmade. The voting patterns for the presidential elections in 1999 and 2004 are a classic example of ethnic coalitions which were made and unmade in Malawi. For instance, Chakwamba who is from a Sena ethnic group in Southern Malawi standing on the MCP ticket during the 1999 presidential elections, secured 61% of the votes cast in

the central region (Ott, et al.2000:212) which has been a stronghold of the MCP and 87 % of the votes cast in the northern region once a stronghold of Aford which had entered into an electoral coalition with MCP. He could only manage 18 % from his region of origin. The same Chakwamba standing on Mgwirizano coalition ticket to which MCP was not a party could only manage 7 % of the total votes cast in the central region in 2004 presidential elections and 25 % in the southern region but maintained the impressive electoral performance in the northern region where he secured 74 % (Matlosa & Patel, 2006:20). Whilst Chakwamba underperformed in his region of origin (southern region), on both occasions he secured 69 % and 72 % of votes in Chikwawa and Nsanje district respectively. (Electoral Commission, 2004). The two districts are predominantly occupied by the Sena ethnic group in the southern region of the country. The case of Chakwamba who has managed to secure significant votes from other regions other than his region of origin depending on the sponsoring party disapproves emphatically the long held view of regionalist voting behavior in Malawi and lends credibility to the view that recognizes the importance of ethnic coalitions in influencing voter preferences. The ultimate motive of these coalitions is to maximize the ethnic votes to secure reigns of power.

It is however important not to lose sight of the fact that several ethnic groups can live adjacent to each other, perhaps giving rise to an imagined regional identity such as northerners in Malawi (Erdmann, 2004b). In African societies, the sense of ethnic solidarity can be heightened by regionalism due to discriminatory practices, religion, appeals and activities of certain individuals (Azevedo, 2000a). However while the three

major political parties in Malawi have a clear cut regional basis (Patel, 2000a), the voting pattern in Malawi can best be described as, not rationalistic as it is often reported, but a coalition of ethnic groups often but not always living next to each other in connected territories. The results of the Afro barometer which established that there is no regional identity in Malawi (Erdmann, 2004b:80) lends credence to this assertion. Ethnicity, asserts Erdmann, is not a question of fixed boundaries or neatly delineated entities. Ethnic cleavages are variable. This assertion is supported by observations suggesting that even apparently homogeneous communities have normally been created by a dominant or hegemonial culture absorbing or eliminating subordinate cultures and consciously fashioning the community in its own image (Howard, 1995:287). It is, however, important to recognize that ethnicity and regionalism are coterminous concepts with one being based on the other to the extent of being confused with each other (Chirwa, 1998a). Often ethnic groups occupy a distinct territory within the larger society. Most multiethnic societies, notes Marger (1985), consist of groups that are regionally concentrated. This occurrence has tended to give the expression of political aspirations by ethnic groups the regionalist label. When ethnic groups occupy a definable territory and maintain or aspire to some degree, political autonomy, they are perceived, in a sense, as nations within nations (Marger, 1985).

2.2.4 Racial and Ethnic Identity

The term race is so charged and misconceived that it is difficult to employ in a useful and analytical manner. Race and ethnicity are not easily distinguished from each other as is commonly assumed. Much of the confusion stems from the fact that the term race has both biological and social meanings (Marger, 1985). Biologists define race solely in

terms of physical characteristics such as skin colour, texture and colour of hair and other attributes especially facial features (Cyrus, 2000). Races are, in a sense, frameworks for categorizing human physical types. The biological understanding of race has led to an enormous variation in thought and almost no accord among biologists, geneticists, physical anthropologists and physiologists concerning either the term's meaning or its significance (Marger, 1985). As a result most social scientists regard race as less a scientific actuality than it is a social construct; that is a classification based on social values (Cyrus, 2000).

The confusing usage and questionable validity have compelled sociologists and anthropologists dispense entirely with the term race and instead use ethnic group to describe those groups commonly regarded as racial (Marger, 1985). Marger argues that the use of ethnic group to describe groups which would ordinarily be regarded as races is reasonable because in addition to their physical traits there are always consistent and significant cultural traits that set them off from other groups. Consequently the term ethnic group is generally used in broad manner to include groups and organizations identified by national origin, cultural distinctiveness, racial characteristics or religious affiliation. This is the case because in most modern societies ethnic groups comprise combinations of these national, cultural, physical and religious traits (Marger, 1985).

In this study ethnicity is used as a broad concept covering a variety of factors (including ancestral and cultural heritage, language, race, religion and colour) which differentiate one group of people from others. This usage draws meaning from the understanding that

when differentiation factors cease to be mere means of social distinction and become the basis of political identity and claims to a specific role in the political process or power, ethnic distinctions are transformed into ethnicity (Ghai, 2000).

2.2.5 Urbanization

The conception of urbanization differs depending largely on the discipline of study. Sociologists, for instance, tend to perceive urbanization as a process by which an increasing proportion of an areas' population becomes concentrated in (legally or statistically defined) urban areas (Beer 1996). Geographers will tend to perceive urbanization as a condition of being urbanized (O'Connor, 1993). Pye (1973) defines urban as a geographical area that is highly populated such as a city or town. Whilst scholars share common grounds on the understanding that all cities and towns are urban, differences exist among them in defining the minimum level of population for a geographical area to qualify as urban. Urban areas generally include geographical area having a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile and total population of at least 50,000 (O'Connor, 1983). Thus urbanization is viewed as the condition when cities grow and societies become more urban. Urbanization is therefore being regarded in this study as both the process and condition occurring in urban areas.

As a process the focus of the study on urbanization is placed on the interaction of members of different ethnic groups in both the political and economic arenas. According to Conteh-Morgan (1997), independence and the process of urbanization may have brought about a shift in the levels of identification, along with their weakening and strengthening of ethnic boundaries. He however observes that weakening of ethnic

boundaries has been confined to cities. He laments that ethnic loyalties are still very pervasive in national politics because the scope and intensity of modernization is not strong enough to produce the levels of economic and political interdependence of various population segments. Sociological research suggests that moving to cities does not necessarily mean that the rural village is left behind (Erdmann, 2004b). He argues that urbanization means at least for some time, only the extension of village life into cities. The revelation of sociological research perhaps explains the formation of numerous home based organizations in urban centers in Malawi. Such home based organizations include Friends of Mzimba, Friends of Ntcheu, Mlhakho wa Lhomwe to name but a few. The existence and popularity of home based organization in urban centers in Malawi casts doubts on the capacity of major cities in Malawi to act as melting pots of ethnic loyalties. According to (Conteh-Morgan, 1997:103), ethnic boundaries are rigid, inflexible, impermeable and not permitting cross-ethnic movements in many cases in Africa. He notes that the process of interaction and intermeshing among ethnic groups, and increase in connectedness have not yet led to a situation where other broader units transcend sub national identities like the ethnic group.

The rest of the chapter is the debate on politicized ethnicity and theoretical models that explain voter behavior in multiethnic societies.

Recent years, observes Maphai (2000a), have witnessed the worldwide emergence or resurgence of communal conflict at national, regional and international levels. Often such conflict, he notes, have been expressed in ethnic and cultural terms. Conflicts

between Tutsis and Hutus both in Burundi (1993) and Rwanda 1994, those in Liberia since 1989, in Sri Lanka and those in the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union were largely ethnic based (Conteh-Morgan,1997). Uncompromising warring camps in Somalia rely on strong ethnically defined support bases. The intensive violence which erupted in the aftermath of post apartheid South Africa, according to Maphai (2000a), has generally been described as Zulu-Xhosa ethnic cleansing. Some political observers argue that ethnic conflict can become a major source of destabilization during transition from authoritarianism to democracy (Randall and Svasand, 2002b).

According to Conteh-Morgan (1997), ethnic rivalry within states represents a continuation of a widespread political process such as relations of political-economic competition and tensions between ethnically based collectivities aggravated by ethno-regional self awareness and old negative legacies that foment hostilities. Conteh Morgan (1997:98), contends that while such forms of group consciousness may have been sharpened in the colonial or post-independence era in the case of many developing countries, the widespread and intense focus on political liberalization as a systemic value to be realized in developing states is not only increasing the scale of social mobilization, sharpening the ideological articulation of ethnic solidarities, expanding the zones of competition and friction with other collectivities, but it is also raising the stakes in response to the state, and increasing the scope, intensity even duration of ethnic conflicts associated with democratization. In divided societies, argues Horowitz (1993:20), ethnicity is a crucial criterion of inclusion and exclusion. Ethnic groups tend to hedge against the negative effects of others because ethno-politics is often characterized by

exclusiveness which is manifested in ethnic relations (Conteh-Morgan,1997). Exclusiveness, notes Horowitz (1993), is reinforced by the fact that ethnicity involves consciousness of being one in relation to the other ethnic groups. In a democratizing environment with scarce resources ethnic rivalry occur directly from interaction among ethnic groups. To that end ethnic competition does not exist in an economic, a political or social void (Conteh-Morgan, 1997).

According to some scholars, a correlation seems to exist between ethnic homogeneity and democracy on the one hand and cultural cleavages and undemocratic forms of government on the other. Normal procedural democracy, according to Horowitz (1993:28-29), works when cleavages are not sharp, political affiliations are fluid and majorities and minorities can be made and unmade. Horowitz attests that democracy fails when divisions are inscriptive and immutable or where political parties are ethnically based as is the case in most African countries. Questions could be raised as to why political organization in Africa is largely along ethnic lines which historically presents a challenge to nation building. The explanation probably lies with the observation by several political scientists. Political mobilization on the basis of ethnicity is, according to Conteh-Morgan (1997), Sandbrook, (1995), Vail (1998) more tempting and easier compared to other cleavages such as class, religion, gender and the like. This is the case because political parties in Africa often lack clearly articulated political philosophy or ideological orientation. African political parties, observes Gyimahi Boardi (2007a), rarely present policy alternatives but rely heavily on dispensing patronage.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The central question is whether ethnic identity can serve as an explanatory variable with which to account for the voting patterns in Malawi. Presenting a theoretically informed perspective on the link between ethnic identity and voting behavior is fundamentally crucial. The dominant perspectives for explaining voter behavior are found in Marxism, modernization, ethnic identity theses and the theory of ethnic political anxiety.

2.3.1 Marxist Model

Some scholars and political observers have argued that democracy in a multi-ethnic society is a threat to political pluralism (Toit, 1994). The Marxist doctrine dismisses this argument. Marxists maintain that the conflict between groups is driven by economic interests. They relegate ethnicity to either a misunderstood or false consciousness or a purely surface reflection of more basic and most important class variables (Berman, 2004, Sandbrook, 1993). The Marxist doctrine contends that class circumstances would be the main cause of conflict between people thereby eliminating earlier lines of tribe, language, religion and national origin. Ethnicity, according to them, would disappear with the appropriate changes in the mode of production. Marxists therefore conclude that ethnic consciousness is an external imposition which will be diluted by economic interdependence and secularization (Maphai, 2000a:309). The Marxist doctrine therefore would reject the notion that the voting pattern in Malawi reflects ethnic competition and rivalry. While the Marxist perspective provides a framework of understanding voter behavior in industrialized societies, its relevance in the context of Malawi is limited on two major accounts.

First, the Marxist doctrine assumes that Malawi has a significant proportion of the working class which is politically well informed. The reality in Malawi is that the working class forms a small proportion of the total voter population. Second, class consciousness remains largely weak in Malawi. There is no credible indication to suggest existence of organized class expression of political and economic aspirations. Third, the Marxist prediction that ethnicity would disappear with the appropriate changes in the mode of production appears a mere illusion. Berman (2004a) contends (and rightly so) that African ethnicities are not mere survivals of primordial stages of social development to fade away with economic development. They are instead, an expression of distinctive African experience of modernity grounded in the changing material realities of state and market and the confrontation of class, gender and generations. While the Marxist perspective offers an alternative of understanding voter behavior especially in the urban areas where workers in formal employment are concentrated, its explanatory and illustrative capacity in the Malawian context is limited to say the least.

2.3.2 Modernization Model

The modernization model presents another alternative perspective of understanding voter behavior. Modernization theorists hold the belief that ethnicity would disappear with modernization as populations abandon traditional practices and values. Modernization theorists, according to (Berman 2004a, Sandbrook 1993), reduce the notion of ethnic rivalry to colonial legacy with no meaningful impact on voter behavior. The perspective contends that migration to urban centers will force the masses to abandon ethnic loyalties as they integrate into the wider economic sphere. Ethnicity is largely perceived as a

creation of colonialists throughout Africa with the sole purpose of divide and rule (Conteh-Morgan 1997, Vail 1998). The modernization model, as a framework of understanding voter behavior in Malawi is weak on two accounts. First, in restricting ethnic rivalry to the colonial legacy with no meaningful impact on electoral outcomes, the model fails to recognize the resilience of African ethnicities and their influence in the national political arena. Berman et al, (2004a) attests that African ethnicities are not just primordial survivals of archaic primitive cultures, but rather modern products of the African encounter with capitalism and nation-state in the colonial and post-colonial eras. Contemporary ethnic communities and identities, Berman et al, (2004a) maintain, did not and will not fade away with the inevitable advance of global modernity but rather represents critical aspects of particular African experience of modernity itself. Berman et al, (2004a) conclude that ethnic pluralism is and will remain a fundamental characteristic of African modernity that must be recognized and incorporated within any project of democratic nation-building on the continent. This is the case because even in modern context, ethnicity is used as an ideology for contesting power and for competing over resources. It is therefore consciously constructed, reconstructed and perpetuated for as long as it gives certain groups advantage over others (Chirwa, 1994)

Secondly while it is recognized that Malawi has one of the fastest urban growth estimated at 6 percent, the size of the urban population remains small hovering around 17 percent according to World Bank Report (2007). Moreover relegating ethnicity to a colonial creation with no influence on voter behavior is misleading in the context of African politics in general and Malawi in particular. Ethnicity, history has shown, is a key factor

in African politics. Ethno-regional sentiments, Conteh-Morgan (1997:102) observes, are still very pervasive in national politics because the scope and intensity of modernization is not yet strong enough to produce the levels of economic and political interdependence (connectedness) of various population segments. In post colonial Africa, ethnicity is feared to have a potential to destroy the fragile unity of African countries (Ake, 1993:5).

Given the smaller proportion of voters in formal employment, weak class consciousness, the historical ethnic attachments and modern forms of ethnic competition, the modernization perspective does not present a compelling model to understand voter behavior in Malawi. However, limitations of the modernization perspective notwithstanding, it would be scholarly deficiency to completely dismiss the modernization theory as an explanatory tool of understanding voter behavior in Malawi. The model could have some degree of relevance in understanding the voter behavior especially of urbanites in Malawi. When people migrate to urban areas ethnic loyalties and attachments tend to be weak due to, among other factors, multiple identities they assume, intermarriages and economic interconnectedness among people of different ethnic groups.

2.3.3 Ethnic Identity Thesis

The theory linking ethnicity to voting behavior is best captured in the writings of Lijphart (1977). Lijphart describes multi-ethnic societies as divided or plural. He defines plural societies largely in terms of cultural diversity or segmental cleavages. Lijphart asserts that interests in plural societies tend to be defined in ethnic terms, as are political

conflicts. He argues the interests merge with identity and political party membership, organization and loyalty. He maintains that given the relatively stable nature of ethnic identity and therefore of segmented composition, floating voters tend to be rare in elections in such societies. He asserts that this is the case because in multiethnic societies, party and segmental loyalties tend to coincide to the extent that there is little or no change in voting support of different parties from election to election. The ethnic identity thesis thus contends that voters electoral preference in multiethnic societies is a function of the ethnic identity of competing candidates (Toit, 2007)

Horowitz (1985:21-54) appears to subscribe to the ethnic identity thesis. He observes that in those circumstances electoral results tend to be an ethnic census, a collision of birth and choice, where the former shapes the later. He contends that the intensely emotionally bound units of identity are effective in serving a range of interests and needs. Horowitz (1985:81) asserts that ethnicity serves the needs of community, emotional support, and reciprocal help and, in the more impersonal public arena of the state, as a link between bureaucracies and citizens, and a basis for political organization. He concludes that birth, as a cornerstone of identity, eventually shapes and depending on the intensity of the salience of identity may be even decisive in matters of choice between political parties and between electoral alternatives. Horowitz observes that the link between ethnic identity, interest and party affiliation tend to be tight. The view that party electoral strategies and campaigns are significant only in terms of voter turn out is central in the ethnic identity thesis.

Empirical confirmation of this type of electoral behavior is, according to Toit (2007), found in the elections in Guyana and Trinidad in the 1950s and 1960s. In Guyana and Trinidad ethnic parties succeeded in merging identity, interest and party to a point of making party membership a function of birth. Toit warns that this kind of electoral behavior is a threat to democratic stability, as majoritarian democracy is likely to end in perpetual majority domination. However such voting behavior is considered a highly favorable condition for consociational democracy. In plural societies, ethnic based voting pattern is seen to be conducive to the institutionalizing of power sharing constitutional devices (Lijphart, 1977).

The relevance of the theory in explaining voter behavior in Malawi is supported by studies (Kaspin, 1995b, and Ferree and Horowitz, 2007b) that show ethnic based voting patterns. Malawi is a multiethnic country whose ethnic groups are concentrated in particular geographical locations.

2.3.4 Theory of Ethnic Political Anxiety

The theory of ethnic political anxiety suggests that the winner-take all practice of political competition in democratizing states encourages collective action based on ethnic identity (Conteh Morgan 1997:101). The theory contends that the winner-take all practice of political competition perpetuates economic deprivation or overall opportunity denial against losers in elections. In the political realm, the theory maintains that the implication is that only members of the ethnic based regime control the best access to jobs, housing, public contracts and other valued opportunities. The theory holds that

democratization affects ethnic groups by fermenting ethnic insecurities and increases the potential for mobilization on a large scale spearhead by ethnic power elite.

The theory is relevant as a framework for understanding voter behavior in Malawi. It recognizes the centrality of ethnic group fears of a possible loss in an election. The theory argues that ethnic group fears shape electoral preference in favor of their ethnic elite in return for protection against economic exclusion and patronage dispensation. The fear of exclusion ferment ethnic tensions and violence (Conteh-Moragn, 1997). Cases of violence directed at Moslems in the northern region were reported immediately after the 1999 presidential electoral results were announced. Similarly vengeance violence against northerners was reported in the southern district of Mangochi which is predominantly Muslim.

However both the ethnic identity thesis and ethnic political anxiety theories have limitations as models of explaining voter behavior in Malawi. Both theories assume that electoral choices of all voters in multiethnic countries like Malawi are motivated by the desire to advance and protect interests of their respective ethnic groups. The theories further fail to recognize that voters have multiple identities other than being members of particular ethnic groups. Membership to other social groupings such as working class, farmers, and business community and faith organizations may have a bearing on voters' electoral preference. However ethnicity, observes Erdmann (2004b), provides the predominant but not the exclusive social cleavage for party formation and voter behavior in Africa.

2.4 Conclusion

While there are competing theories to explain voter behavior in multi-ethnic societies, this study adopted the ethnic identity thesis and the ethnic political anxiety theory for their potential utility value in explaining voter behavior in the Malawian context. These two theories, unlike the Marxist and modernization perspectives, recognize the central role of ethnicity in political competition. Ethnicity has been a factor in Malawian politics. Keen observers of Malawian politics, Chirwa (1994b,1995b,1998a), Patel (2000a) and Ott (2000a) confirm the central role of ethnicity in political competition in Malawi. The two theories further claim relevance on the strength of their illustrative capacity in explaining voter behavior and empirical appeal observed in other multiethnic societies (Toit, 2007). However, whilst the Marxist and modernization perspectives do not present themselves as adequate explanatory frameworks of voter behavior in Malawi, the study considered dismissing them completely as scholarly deficiency. Thus whilst the study was largely guided by the ethnic identity and the political anxiety theories, insights were drawn from the Marxist and modernization perspectives especially in the process of attempting to understand voter behavior in the urban centers where not only are ethnic attachment believed to be weak generally but also where economic interests tend to be relatively distinct and pronounced. To that end the study focused primarily on finding out whether the perspectives discussed above provide theoretically informed accounts of electoral behavior of voters in both rural and urban settings of Malawi. Thus the main thrust of the study was to measure the extent to which perspectives of

understanding electoral behavior present adequate theoretically grounded propositions when tested against empirical evidence in Malawi.

In the subsequent chapters it will be demonstrated that the ethnic identity and political anxiety theories are frameworks that can be used to predict voter preferences in urban and rural areas of Malawi. Empirical findings support the basic assumption of the two theories suggesting that voters' electoral preference have been influenced by the ethnic identity of presidential candidates. It will further be demonstrated that urbanization in Malawi has not fulfilled its potential to dilute ethnic loyalties. Ethnicity has been a key electoral factor even though its influence has been reduced. Other factors such as policy voting and retrospective performance evaluation of presidential candidates and their respective parties are increasingly becoming important.

The subsequent chapter outlines how the study was designed. The chapter will show that the study employed both the quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. The chapter will also highlight that the Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS) was used to analyze quantitative data and that content analysis and process tracing were techniques employed to analyze qualitative data. It will be demonstrated that the study had challenges and how these challenges were mitigated has been explained.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter outlines the methodological approach to the study. It describes how rural constituencies, one in each region, were randomly identified as locations for the study. The chapter explains that Blantyre and Lilongwe cities were selected as urban areas for the study because it is in major cities where ethnic loyalties are believed to be weak. One of the objectives of the study was to find out whether urban centers in Malawi have fulfilled their potential role of being melting pots of ethnic loyalties. The chapter indicates that both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were used. It further describes how respondents to the questionnaires, participants in FGD and key informants were identified. Challenges of data collection and how they were mitigated have been explained in the chapter. The chapter argues that whereas a survey, as a quantitative method of data collection, was used to establish the patterns of voting behavior of different ethnic groups in Malawi over a period of time, qualitative techniques were employed to compliment it.

3.2 Units of Analysis

An effort was made to select localities and respondents from all the three regions and at least two major urban centers. A representative sample of voters and localities were selected to participate. Random sampling was employed to enhance objectivity and the credibility of the results. Respondents in rural areas (about 250) were drawn from a single constituency in one district in each region in Malawi randomly selected. All districts in a region, all constituencies in a selected district, all Traditional Authorities (TA) in the constituency and all villages in the TAs had an equal chance of being selected. Pieces of paper each bearing a name of a district in a region were placed in a hat and a single paper picked from the hat to identify the district. The same method was used to identify constituencies, TAs and villages. Individual respondents in these constituencies were identified through alternate households starting with the first name in the village register. On the basis of the distribution of valid votes during the 2004 presidential elections among three regions in Malawi, 15% of the rural respondents were drawn from Rumphi East constituency in Rumphi district in the north, 42% from Dedza South West constituency in Dedza district in central Malawi and 43% from Blantyre North West constituency in Blantyre district in southern Malawi.

Urban respondents (about 250) were confined to Blantyre and Lilongwe on the understanding that it is in major cities where, according to Conteh-Morgan (1997:103), ethnic loyalties are comparatively expected to be weak due to the scope and intensity of modernization which tends to produce certain levels of economic and political interdependence (connectedness) of various population segments. On the basis of urban

valid vote distribution for the 2004 presidential elections in the two major cities, 55% of urban respondents were drawn from Blantyre City and the rest from Lilongwe City.

Urban residential locations were categorized into low, medium and high density residential areas using the stratification by the appropriate city assemblies of Blantyre and Lilongwe. In each of the two cities, a single residential area from each category was randomly selected. Pieces of paper each bearing the name of each of the residential area in each category in both cities were placed in a hat and a single paper for each category picked to identify the residential area as a location for identifying respondents. In Blantyre City, Namiwawa, Kanjedza and Zingwangwa emerged from the random selection process as low, medium and high density residential areas respectively. In Lilongwe City, Area 47A, Area 47B and Area 25 emerged as low, medium and high density residential areas respectively. Respondents from specific residential locations were identified through use of alternate house numbers where they existed or alternate households where they did not.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

It is widely recognized that each method of research into political behavior has its weakness and limitations (Parry, et al.1992:31). This study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. The quantitative method entailed conducting a survey through use of questionnaires. Two qualitative methods of data collection were used. These included Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews. . Deliberate effort was made to ensure gender balance in the identification of respondents in both rural and urban localities. Questionnaires were

administered to almost an equal number of female and male respondents. 53 % of respondents were female and the rest 47 % male. An equal number of female and male participants took part in FGDs. The percentage of region of origin representation of respondents is shown in table 3.1 and the proportion of ethnic group representation among respondents is shown in figure 3.1 below.

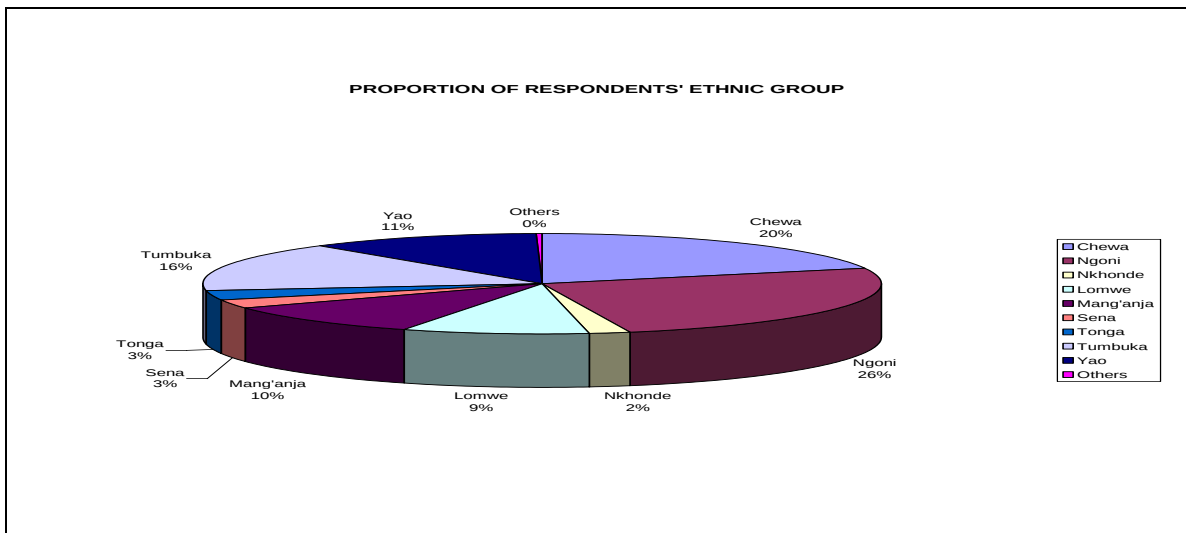
Table: 3.1

Region of Origin of Respondents

North	Centre	South
19%	37%	44%

Source: Field work, 2008

Figure 3.1



Source: field work, 2008

The survey was probably the most appropriate instrument to uncover the extent of the influence of ethnicity on voters' presidential electoral preferences. This required some exploration of what social, economic and political traits are associated with voter

preferences. The aim was to gather systematic information about ordinary voters from all walks of life. This is where the tried and tested means of sample survey was decisive. The core virtue of the survey is that a relatively small number of carefully selected respondents can provide relatively accurate and representative information about a very large population (Parry et al, 1992). Thus a structured questionnaire was administered to about 500 respondents randomly selected who voted in all the three previous presidential elections since the re-introduction of multiparty democracy in Malawi. The objective of this criterion was to observe the pattern of ethnic based partisan voting over a period of time. The survey using questionnaires allowed a range of inferences to be made about very large population that could not otherwise readily be made.

The survey's capacity to express results in numerical form made the approach very useful in addressing the main research question to the extent that it yielded systematic information that is generally amenable to statistical treatment. As useful as the quantification capacity might have been, a survey using questionnaires had its own limitations and distortions. While the survey revealed a pattern of voter preferences, detailed and in-depth understanding of voter behavior was perhaps best captured using other approaches other than a survey. An appreciation for the complimentary and appropriateness of other more qualitative approaches was considered. To that end FGDs and key informant interviews were used to complement the survey.

Three FGDs comprising 10 participants selected randomly from each of the constituency in the rural areas and one in Blantyre City were organized. FGDs allowed for more

detailed understanding of the electoral behavior of the respondents in rural and urban settings. FGDs ensured that context was not divorced from the study. FGDs however had their own limitations as approaches to gathering evidence. In-depth treatment of participants tended, by their nature, to be particularistic. However the detail, nuance, the sense of being very close to those being observed and the complimentary role to the survey made the FGDs an unavoidable option for gathering evidence in this study.

Key informant interviews were arranged with politicians from major political parties in the country that have participated in all the three elections since 1994. The parties included Aford, MCP and UDF. The Democratic Progressive Party (DDP) was included on the basis that it was a de facto ruling party and emerging as a potential major political party. Interviews with experts in the field of political science and civil society organizations working in the democracy consolidation project were also conducted. Interviews with politicians using an interview guide targeted members of the national executive in each of the four parties. A single member of the national executive was interviewed. Interviews with executive members of the parties were aimed at obtaining inside information on their opinion, personal and party experiences and views in respect of their respective party's response to the causes of observed voting pattern and voter preferences in the presidential electoral race. There were also interviews with experts in the field aimed at obtaining the intellectual interpretation of voting patterns in Malawi and the explanation to the response of political parties to the observed voter preferences in different localities during the presidential elections.

During the data analysis issues emerged especially from FGDs that required further clarification or cross checking of the subject matter. Government officials from relevant departments were approached to provide more insights where it was necessary. Secondary data sources included perusal of relevant publications such as reports, acts of parliament, Electoral Commission (EC) publications, national and political party constitutions and news papers. Secondary data sources were useful in complimenting and supplementing evidence gathered through primary sources.

3.4 Challenges of Data Collection

The data collection process was beset with challenges that might have impacted on the quality of data and the timeliness of results. The localities under the study selected through random sampling were far between. The localities spanned across the three regions and included Blantyre North West constituency in the southern region, Dedza South West constituency in the central region, Rumphi East constituency in the northern region and the two major cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe. This was the requirement of the study at the design stage. Conducting interviews with about 500 respondents scattered across the three regions and the two major cities using a structured questionnaire proved to be a formidable task requiring time and resources.

To deal with the challenges of reaching out to respondents within the anticipated timeframe, a total of fifteen (15) data collectors were engaged with each locality under study allocated a minimum of two and maximum of five data collectors. Personal savings were used to meet the cost of employing data collectors, production of questionnaires and

movement of the researcher. Securing an interview with politicians from various political parties was not easy to say the least. Often targeted informants tended to postpone scheduled interviews. Setting up an interview with experts in the field was not smooth sailing either. Their busy schedule meant results were obtained well beyond the anticipated timeframes. Persistence and patience finally paid off.

3.5 Data Analysis

In response to the diversity of data collection methods employed in the study, different yet not entirely exclusive techniques were employed to analyze data. Whereas content analysis was particularly useful in analyzing data collected through qualitative methods, statistical techniques were decisive in the treatment of quantitative data. The Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) was used to analyze the data collected through questionnaires. The SPSS revealed patterns that were behind the detailed individual responses. The primary aim was to determine the extent to which individual responses could be re-expressed in terms of a smaller number of more generalized forms of voter behavior. The results obtained from the analysis using SPSS were exported to excel for easy tabulation.

Content analysis as a technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages was used primarily to identify patterns, trends and time periods of particular voter behavior. The approach was further used to unearth and elucidate the strategic responses of presidential candidates and their respective political parties to the observed voting patterns. Process tracing, on the other

hand, was meant to unearth and elucidate the dynamics of voter behavior as it relates to presidential electoral preferences.

In the next chapter findings are highlighted and discussed within the confines of the voter behavior theoretical frameworks.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNICITY ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORAL PREFERENCE – EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of findings. It highlights the key findings suggesting that whilst ethnicity has been a key electoral factor, its influence in determining choice between presidential electoral alternatives has been waning. It is argued that other factors such as policy voting and retrospective evaluation of presidential candidates and their respective political parties are increasingly becoming determinants of presidential electoral preference. The chapter further demonstrates that urbanization has not fulfilled its potential role of diluting ethnic loyalties.

4.2 The Influence of Ethnicity on voter behavior

The statistical analysis of responses by respondents for the three previous presidential elections (1994, 1999, 2004) reveals that overall, the ethnic identity of the presidential candidate was not the most but the fourth influential factor in determining the voters' presidential electoral preference. In 1994 and 1999 only 11.2 % and 12.1 % of respondents respectively cited the ethnic identity of the presidential candidate as the first

consideration in determining the presidential electoral preference. In 2004, ethnicity emerged as the third most influential factor. Only 12 % of the respondents cited the ethnic identity of the presidential candidate as the primary consideration of their presidential electoral choice in 2004. However, whilst the ethnic identity of the presidential candidate was the fourth and third most determinant factor of voters' electoral preference in 1994 and 1999, most respondents (28.8 %) who vote for the winning candidate in 1999, Bakili Muluzi, cited his ethnic identity as the most influential factor. Similarly, most respondents (20.3 %) who voted for the winning candidate in 1994, Bakil Muluzi, indicated his ethnic identity as the primary consideration for choosing between presidential alternatives.

Whereas the ethnic identity was the primary consideration for respondents who voted for the winning presidential candidate in 1994 and 1999, the scenario changed in 2004. In 2004 ethnicity was the third most determinant factor for the winning candidate, Bingu wa Muthalika. Only 20 % of respondents who voted for Bingu wa Muthalika cited ethnicity as the primary consideration.

Whilst ethnicity was not the primary consideration for determining electoral preference for most respondents, it was the major factor for the majority of respondents who voted for the winning candidate in 1994 and 1999 presidential elections. Overall, only 12% of respondents cited ethnicity as the primary consideration. This statistical revelation runs counter to the general observation of voting patterns in Malawi. Studies have shown a strong ethnic influence in the voting pattern in Malawi (Patel, Ott, Kaspin). The seeming

contradiction between voter responses and the voting pattern observed in Malawi can be explained.

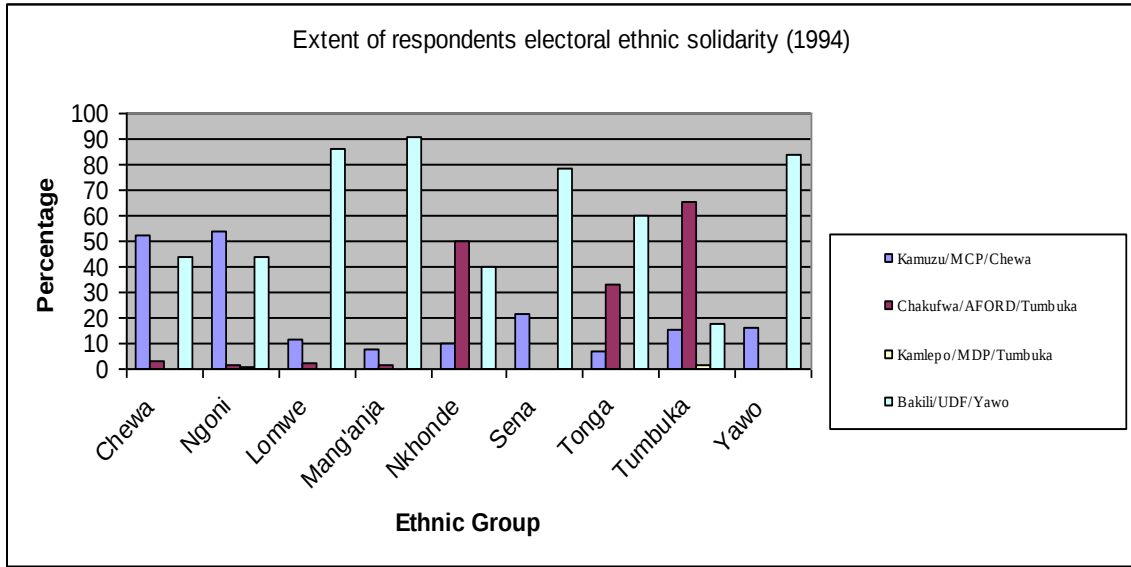
One explanation is that competing presidential candidates do not necessarily represent ethnic groups. In other words presidential contenders do not come from all ethnic groups. An analysis of voting preferences of respondents whose ethnic identity corresponds with any of the presidential candidate reveals the extent of the influence of ethnicity. In 1994 presidential elections 53% of Chewa respondents voted for Kamuzu Banda who was a Chewa, 68% of Tumbuka respondents voted for Chakufwa Chihana, a Tumbuka and 84% of Yao respondents voted for Bakili Muluzi, a Yao. The voting preference of respondents from the ethnic groups mentioned above did not change significantly in 1999 and 2004. In 1999, 47% of Chewa respondents voted for Gwanda Chakwamba who competed as a candidate for MCP associated with the Chewa ethnic group, 79 % of Yao respondents voted for Bakili Muluzi, a Yao and 50% of Senas voted for Gwanda Chakwamba, a Sena. The only deviation from the voting pattern along ethnic lines was observed among the Tumbuka respondents. 69% of Tumbuka respondents voted for Gwanda Chakwamba, a Sena from southern region as opposed to 1.2% of Tumbuka respondents who voted for Kamlepo Kalua, the only Tumbuka presidential candidate in 1999. The deviation among Tumbuka respondents can be explained by the fact that Chakufwa Chihana, the most influential Tumbuka elite at the time and his party Aford had agreed an electoral coalition with the MCP. Kamlepo Kalua, a Tumbuka, was not considered as a serious presidential contender not only by the Tumbukas but by most electorates in the country.

In the 2004 presidential elections 47% of Chewa respondents voted for John Tembo a Chewa, 61% of Lomwe respondents voted for a Lomwe (Bingu wa Mutharika, 49%, Brown Mpinganjira, 11%), 67% of Sena respondents voted for Gwanda Chakwamba and 53% of Tumbuka respondents voted for Bingu wa Mutharika and another 43% of Tumbuka respondents voted for Gwanda Chakwamba. In 2004 the deviation from the expected ethnic voting pattern was observed among Tumbuka and Yao respondents. There was no Tumbuka or Yao presidential candidate in 2004. Bingu wa Mutharika, a Lomwe profited from a Yao ethnic vote mobilized by the former president Bakili Muluzi, a Yao who campaigned vigorously for him whilst the Tumbuka ethnic vote was split between Bingu wa Mutharika and Gwanda Chakwamba. (Refer to figure 4.1 below).

Analyses of data in respect of electoral preference of respondents of various ethnic groups reveals a strong ethnic influence in determine choice between presidential electoral alternatives. A consistent partisan voting pattern was observed across respondents from all ethnic groups. Most respondents from a given ethnic group tended to consistently vote for a presidential contender either with whom they shared the ethnic group or the candidate who had the support of the ethnic elite from a given ethnic group as long as he was perceived as a competitive alternative.

Figure 4.1

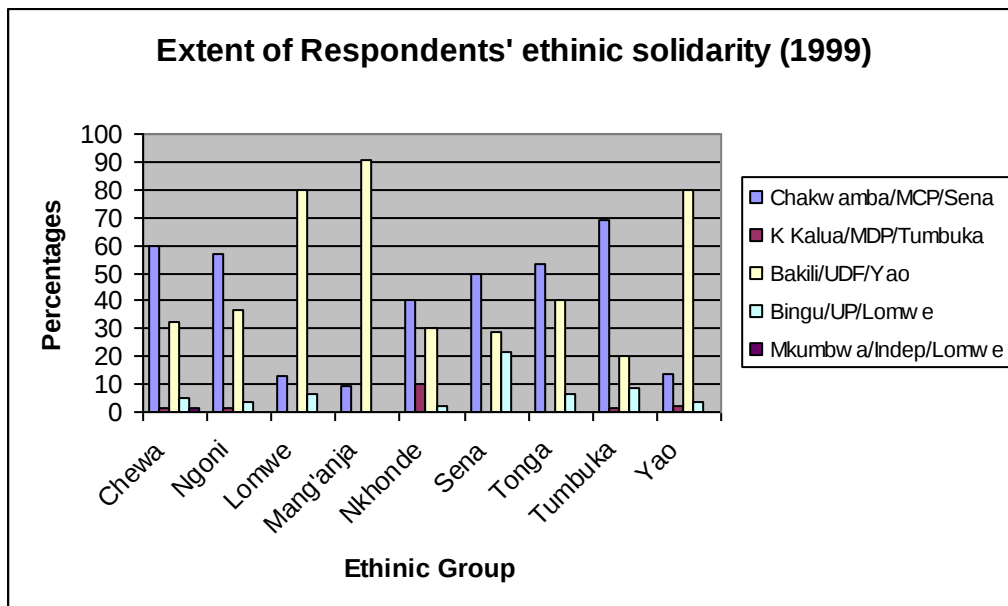
Extent of respondents' electoral ethnic solidarity (1994)



Source: Field work, 2008

Figure 4.2

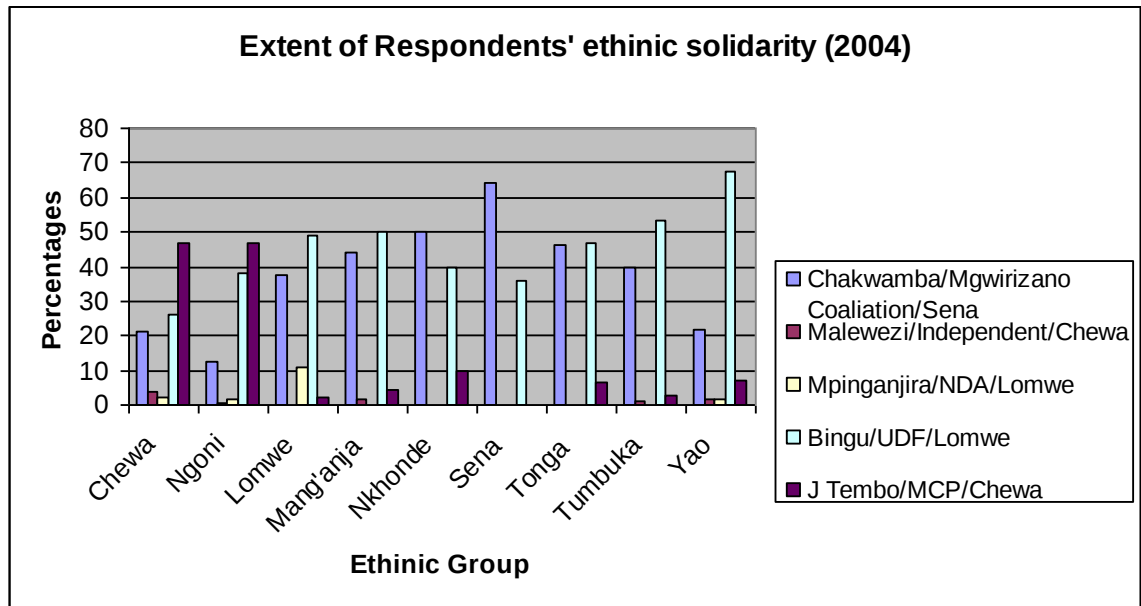
Extent of respondents' ethnic solidarity (1999)



Sources: Field work, 2008

Figure 4.3

Extent of respondents' ethnic solidarity (2004)



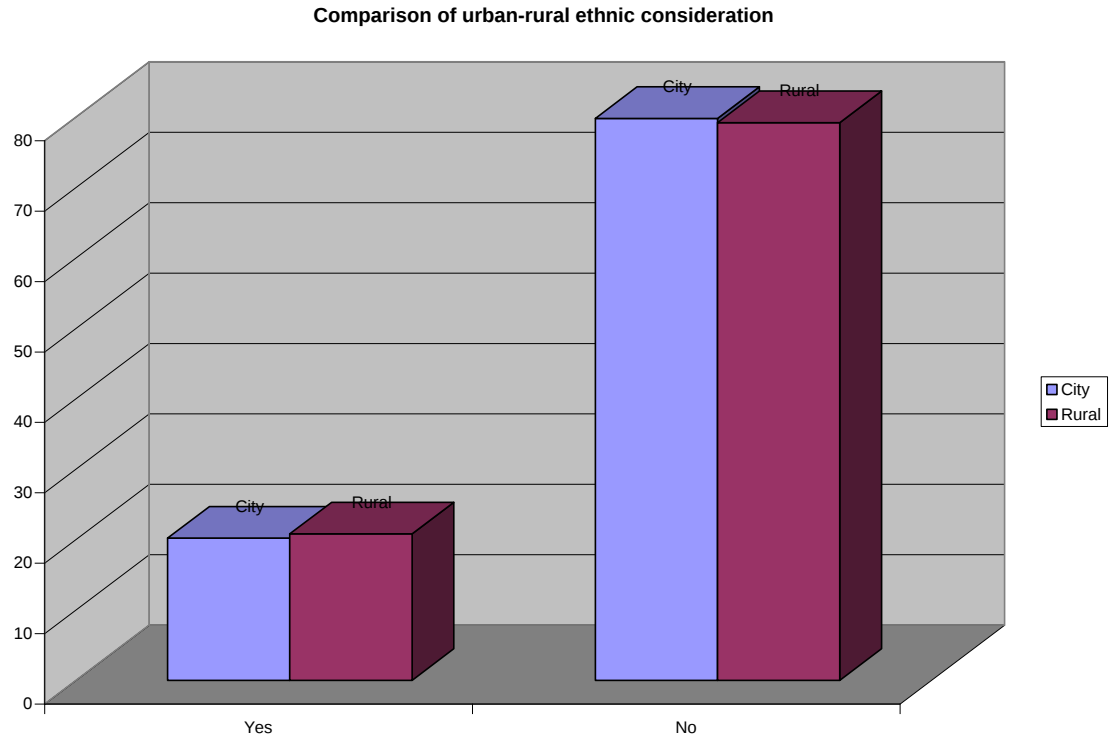
Source: Field work, 2008

Figure 4.1 illustrates the extent to which respondents of major ethnic groups (Chewa, Tumbuka and Yao) voted for a candidate with whom they shared the ethnic group. The pattern was repeated in figures 4.2 and 4.3 above the only difference being that no credible Tumbuka ethnic elites were fielded in 1999 and 2004. Similarly no Yao candidate was fielded in 2004. Figures 4.1 to 4.3 further demonstrate that between 1994 and 2004 electoral ethnic solidarity had been on the decline. The percentage vote secured by presidential candidates from respondents of their ethnic groups was showing a downward spiral over the period under investigation. However elite ethnic presidential candidates continued to attract significant proportion of votes from respondents from their respective ethnic group though at a decreasing rate. Ethnicity therefore remains a crucial electoral factor.

This observation conforms to the prediction of the ethnic identity and political anxiety theories. Embedded in the two theories is the view that voters do not necessarily exercise any electoral discretion in democratizing multiethnic societies where ethnicity is salient. These theories postulate that in such societies, electoral preference is guided by the ethnic identity of the contenders as the need to express ethnic solidarity is more compelling. It seems fairly certain that for a large proportion of respondents, their values, perceived interest and judgment of political performance, in sharp contrast to the Marxist prediction, had no significant effects on partisan support. On the basis of observed consistent ethnic partisan electoral support, it can be concluded that most respondents were merely registering their respective ethnic identity other than expressing judgment and choice. This is what is called identity expression or expressive voting (Ferreer & Horowitz, 2007)

Comparison of responses from urban and rural respondents did not show disparities of any significance. Asked as to whether they would vote for a presidential candidate whose ethnic identity is different from their own, 79.8 % of urban respondents and 79.2 % of rural participants responded affirmatively compared to 20.2 % and 20.8 % of urban and rural respondents who indicated they would not. Similarly when asked as to whether the ethnic identity of the presidential candidate matter when choosing among electoral alternatives, 16.5 % and 23.8 % of urban and rural respondents respectively stated that it matters very much compared to 56.3 % and 59.4 % of urban and rural respondents respectively who suggested it does not matter at all. Thus the urban-rural divide in terms of electoral behavior in response to the ethnic factor is not significant.

Figure 4.4



Source: Field work, 2008

There are explanations as to why the ethnic identity of the presidential candidates is an issue to voters both in rural and urban areas. The ethnic identity thesis contends that interests in multiethnic societies tend to be defined in ethnic terms as are political conflicts (Lijphart, 1997). Ethnicity, argues Lijphart (1997), serves the needs of the community and acts as a link between the bureaucracy and citizens in the wider public arena of the state and forms the basis for political organization (Horowitz, 1988:81). Ethnic identity, according to the thesis, shapes and depending on the intensity of the

salience of identity may even be decisive in matters of choice between political parties and between electoral alternatives.

The theory of ethnic political anxiety postulates that democratization affects ethnic groups by fermenting ethnic insecurities and increases the potential for political mobilization on a large scale along ethnic lines spearheaded by ethnic power elites (Conteh-Morgan, 1997). According to the theory, political mobilization by ethnic elites is particularly evident in democratizing societies where the winner-take all is the hallmark of political competition. The theory contends that the winner-take all practice of political competition perpetuates economic deprivation or overall opportunity denial against losers in elections. Given close association of major political parties in Malawi with particular ethnic groups as demonstrated in chapter two and given the simple majoritarian electoral system in use, feelings of winners or losers tend to be high on both sides of the electoral divide. Findings highlighted above reveal a strong influence of ethnicity in presidential electoral outcomes especially for dominant ethnic groups in the country. However these findings do not provide explanations for the observed voting behavior. In explaining the significance of the ethnic identity and political anxiety theories as relevant frameworks of understanding electoral behavior in Malawi, a number of factors need to be examined.

First the colonial legacy can not be ignored. Studies have shown that the interaction of local communities with the colonial economy and the manipulation of inter-ethnic relations by colonial administrators in pre-independence Malawi, fueled rather weak pre-colonial ethnic divisions and consciousness (Kapsin, 1995). Kapsin demonstrates that

colonial administrators promoted the dominance of the Chewa in the central region, Tumbuka in the northern region and Yao in the southern region. The emergence of three electoral front runners from these dominant ethnic groups in the immediate post authoritarian rule of Kamuzu Banda was inevitable. Kamuzu Banda, a Chewa, Chakufwa Chihana, a Tumbuka and Bakili Muluzi, a Yao were clear electoral front runners in the first multiparty election of 1994 that followed authoritarian rule. The three ethnic elites drew massively disproportionate votes in their favor from their respective ethnic constituencies. However the ethnic voting pattern observed in Malawi over the years can not be reduced entirely to the colonial legacy.

Secondly the study revealed that the interaction of various communities with the state in the wider political and economic arenas has also been influential in determining electoral preferences of voters in the rural and urban areas. FGDs in all the three rural constituencies in the three regions reveal a strong feeling of either inclusiveness or exclusivity in the enjoyment of state resources depending on which side of the ethnic divide the respondents belonged. FGDs in the north suggested a general feeling of exclusiveness, marginalization and victimization of communities in the northern region during the one party rule of the Banda regime and during Muluzi's era. One participant in Rumphi East constituency whose views were shared by others said 'MCP does not like northerners'. Similarly FGD in the center gave the impression that communities in the central region were marginalized during the Muluzi era. Reference was made to the fertilizer subsidy with communities in the central region whose perception suggest they did not benefit as much. FGD in the center gave the impression that communities in the

central region were well off during the Banda regime. They claimed that, to put it in their words, ‘ the situation was better during Dr Banda’s rule than it was under the Muluzi administration’. This is in sharp contrast to the general picture projected by the FGD held in the south which suggested that communities in the southern region were well off in terms of access to state resources during the Muluzi regime. The FGD in the south further revealed that communities felt worse off in terms of accessing state resources during Banda’s authoritarian rule.

On the basis of perception of rural communities it can be concluded that rural communities have tended to have a positive assessment of the ruling regime if they share the same ethnic identity with the ruling elite or if the ruling elites at least originate from the same region as the community concerned. Conversely, a given community’s assessment of the regime tended to be negative if the ruling elites associated with the regime were of a different ethnic identity or originate from a different region than that of the community. Results of the Afro barometer survey (AFBS) conducted in Malawi to evaluate the performance of government confirm perception of inclusion or exclusivity (Chinsinga, 2009). The validity of communities’ perceptions of inclusion and exclusion from the sharing of state resources may be contested. It was beyond the scope of the study to establish empirical evidence to support or discredit community perceptions. However studies by Kaspin (1995b) confirm the validity of traces of inclusion or exclusion from the enjoyment of state resources on the basis of the place of communities on the ethnic divide. Kaspin’s study on ‘Politics of Ethnicity in Malawi’s Democratization Transition’ reveal disproportionate share of state resources enjoyed by

Chewas and the Central region under the Banda regime and the marginalization of Tumbuka and Yao ethnic groups and their respective regions. According to Kaspin, the Tumbuka ethnic group was the least favored together with the rest of other ethnic groups in the northern region and the most victimized by the authoritarian regime of Kamuzu Banda. Banda's electoral performance and that of his party in the north and south has been dismal. Refer to figures 4.1 to 4.3. and tables 1.1 and 1.2.

The response of urban participants (just like that of rural respondents) to their interaction with the state confirms the accuracy of the ethnic identity and political anxiety theories as frameworks of understanding the ethnic based electoral preferences observed in Malawi. FGD in Blantyre City revealed that the ethnic identity of the presidential candidate is key in influencing presidential electoral choices. Urban participants were of the view that access to state resources such as public housing, jobs, secondary school places for children, connection to public electricity and water system, among others, dependent largely on having a relation or persons with decision making authority in the appropriate public institution with whom one shares the ethnic identity or region of origin. One participant whose observation was shared by all participants complained that 'you need to have a relation or somebody you know at Malawi Housing Corporation (MHC) to be allocated a house'. Opportunities to benefit from public institutions, according to the urban FGD, tended to be enhanced if one's ethnic representation is well connected to the political authorities. Interviews with officials from MHC and Department of Statutory Corporations (DSC) confirmed the validity of perception of urban respondents. In the words of the official 'political heavyweights interfere with the operations of the House

Allocation Committee by giving houses to party faithfuls or their relations'. These sentiments were shared by the official from DSC who complained of use by politicians of appointment to the Board of Directors positions in various parastatals for patronage support often along ethnic lines. He stated that 'only about a third of names proposed by DSC for board positions are retained by authorities'. The rest are filled by party functionaries often without relevant expertise.

Some urban participants suggested that some people tended to give electoral support to presidential candidates with whom they share the ethnic identity or region of origin because of their experience with public institutions. As one put it, 'if you don't have one of your own, forget about a service or be prepared for a bribe'. To that end, presidential electoral victory or defeat is generally perceived as either enhanced opportunities for accessing state resources for ethnic groups and ethnic coalitions whose sponsored candidate secured victory or deprivation and exclusion from enjoyment of state resources for the ethnic groups whose sponsored candidate lose an election.

Whilst urban centers in other countries such as Zambia have been melting pots of ethnic identities limiting their potential impact on electoral preferences (Erdmann, 2004b), responses from urban participants in Blantyre City suggest otherwise. It is apparent, on the basis of discussions of urban participants that urbanization has not diminished the influence of ethnicity on the presidential electoral choice of urbanites. Urbanites in Malawi remain attached to their ethnic roots and frequently visit their respective villages for various reasons including funerals, attending to the sick, weddings and other cultural

obligations. Village visitations and gathering of members of the same ethnic groups in urban areas for social and cultural functions tend to renew ethnic attachments of urbanites. Home based groups with a particularistic social, cultural or economic agenda are not uncommon in urban areas in Malawi. Such groups promote the feeling of ethnic attachment or oneness among urbanites of the same ethnic group and define the ins and outs in the wider multiethnic urban arena. Home based groups act as a source of psychological, social, cultural and material support when one is vulnerable. The experience of urbanites in their interaction with the state and the role of home based groups in urban centers tend to influence the electoral choices of a significant proportion of urbanites.

Insights from FGDs suggest most participants do not trust the state as a fair allocator of national wealth. As one participant in Blantyre City put it, ‘justice is lacking in the provision of services. You have to rely on relations and connections’. The mistrust of the state tend to fuel ethnic consciousness as citizens find security in ethnicity which has visibly assumed the role of the state in fulfilling the basic needs of the individual. Historically ethnicity has protected the individual from acts of deprivation, violence and persecution by agents of the state (Ekey, 2004a) and provided material, social and psychological support to individuals when they are most vulnerable. The individual, asserts Ekey, will gradually be weaned from his bondage to ethnicity when he can rely on the state to provide him with basic security needs and when the state ceases to be the source of threats to his existence.

Thirdly the imposition of the one party system of government heightened ethnic consciousness. According to Kaspin (1995b) and Vail & White (1989a), President Banda's one party personal rule had profound effect on ethnic consciousness in Malawi. The personal rule could only be sustained by securing political support of the reliable political base. The search for a loyal political base became more acute after the cabinet crisis of 1964 when it became apparent that cabinet ministers from northern and southern regions were not only ideologically at odds with President Banda but also threatened the stability of his presidency. The gulf between President Banda and ambitious and relatively young politicians had also a generational and ethnic dimension (Kaspin 1995b, Vail & White 1989a). President Banda opted for a Chewa political base, himself a Chewa and dispensed political and material patronage to cement ties with the most loyal area of the country, the Chewa dominated Central Region (Vail and White, 1989a))

The promotion of the Chewa culture and suppression of other cultures by the one party personal rule bred resentment among ethnic groups from other regions. In the absence of democratic space ethnic solidarity became the source of opposition and succeeded in providing social and material support and to some extent provided communal security from persecution by state agents. It is the move towards ethnic solidarity by the marginalized and favored that has tended to haunt elections in Malawi. The experience of the one party rule and exploitation of ethnic solidarity by ethnic elites have had profound impact on the voting behavior of Malawians. The general voting pattern has tended to reflect to some extent the experience of ethnic groups with their encounter with the one party regime. Whilst the northern and southern regions registered disapproval of the

Banda regime, central region voted overwhelmingly for Banda and his MCP in the 1994 general elections. The pattern did not change significantly in 1999 and 2004 presidential and parliamentary elections. (Refer to table 1.1 and 1.2 and figures 4.1 to 4.3).

Lastly the role of the electoral system in promoting the ethnic based voting pattern can not be ignored. The study revealed that majoritarian electoral system employed in Malawi tends to heighten ethnic consciousness among voters. The zero sum electoral system fuels feelings of exclusion from the public arena for those ethnic groups who register electoral defeat (Conteh-Morgan,1997). Owing to the fact that mobilization of electoral support has tended to be ethnic based, electoral success or defeat has tended to entail loss or win for a given ethnic group or groups. Communal pressures and compelling desire for ethnic solidarity was cited as key factors among rural participants. Participants from Dedza South West constituency agreed to sentiments expressed by one of them that ‘ visible support for a political party or presidential candidate from other regions often attracted scorn or even violence’. Apparently political parties and presidential candidates tend to be associated with particular regions.

Participants suggested a significant proportion of voters participated in the electoral process to secure victory for their ethnic elites. This proposition was more evident during FGDs conducted in rural constituencies though they acknowledged change of attitude over the years. Participants in Blantyre North West constituency said that ‘things have changed now. People are not looking at faces or ethnic identity or region of origin of

presidential candidates’. Urban participants suggested less consideration for ethnicity when choosing among electoral alternatives though they too conceded that ethnic identity was a key consideration during the first three multiparty elections since 1994. In their own words they that stated that ‘now days people are more aware and differentiate between real campaign issues and mere political rhetoric or ethnic appeals’.

To the extent that voting patterns have tended to be influenced by ethnicity and given the above explanation for such a pattern, the ethnic identity and political anxiety theory emerge as accurate predictions of electoral behavior in Malawi. It is apparent that providing electoral support to one ‘s ethnic elite to win an election, according to FGDs conducted, has been perceived generally to guarantee access to state resources and defeat may imply exclusion in the political and economic arenas. This is the main electoral outcome prediction of both the ethnic identity and political anxiety theories. However it is evident as demonstrated above that such perceptions have been changing over the years.

It is important to recognize that not all respondents showed consistent partisan loyalty to a president associated with their respective ethnic groups. To that effect it is not accurate to suggest that voting in Malawi has been, on the whole, an act of expressing one ‘s ethnic identity devoid of careful weighing of policy positions of contenders and performance evaluation. A significant proportion of respondents, the study revealed, was not merely registering their ethnic identity as predicted by both the ethnic identity and political anxiety theories. They showed a departure from ethnic based electoral choice.

Participants in FGDs conducted in Rumphi East and Dedza South West constituencies suggested that how the president and his party have performed when in power was increasingly becoming important when choosing between electoral alternatives. During FGD in Rumphi East, participants stated in their own words that ‘in the beginning people were voting by looking at the identity of competing presidential candidates but that has changed’. This claim is supported by conversation with participants in Dedza South West constituency. There participants felt that, as one summed it up, ‘the majority of people want to see changes in their own lives by voting for a candidate and political party seen to have the capacity to deliver desired change’. Over the years percentage of respondents who consistently demonstrated electoral ethnic solidarity with a given president or political party has been on the decline. (See figures 4.1 to 4.3). For instance whereas 84 % of Yao respondents voted for Bakili Muluzi, a Yao in 1994, the percentage of Yao respondents who voted for him in 1999 declined to 79. Similarly whereas 53 % of Chewa respondents voted for Kamuzu Banda and his political party MCP in 1999, the percentage of Chewa respondents who voted for John Tembo and MCP declined to 47. To that end the predictive power of the ethnic identity thesis and ethnic political anxiety theory is increasingly been challenged in Malawi. There is need to find out other factors shaping the observed voting pattern in Malawi.

4.3 Influence of Non-Ethnic Based Factors on Electoral Preference

Evidence gathered during the study suggests that voters’ presidential electoral preference is a function of a multiplicity of factors other than just the ethnic identity of the presidential candidate discussed above. The extent of influence of each factor in

determining voter's preferences tend to vary over time and between individual voters, ethnic groups and regions.

4.3.1 Policies and Programmes

During the study policies and programmes offered by competing presidential candidates and their respective political parties emerge, in aggregate terms, as the most influential factors in determining voters' presidential electoral choice. The majority of respondents (39 %) cited policies and programmes as the primary consideration in determining presidential electoral preference in 2004. Political parties presidential candidates represented and their ethnic identity emerged as the second and third most influential factors respectively. The trend was the same in 1999 and 1994 presidential elections with no significant movement in percentages. Policies and programmes emerged as the first consideration for 38.8 % and 37.7 % of respondents in 1999 and 1994 respectively. Political parties and ethnicity emerged as second and third respectively most determinant factors representing 26.2 % and 12.1% of respondents in 1999 and 22% and 11.2 % of respondents in 1994 respectively. (See table 4.1 below).

Table 4.1

Determinants of respondent's presidential electoral preference

Factor	2004 %	1999 %	1994 %
Policies	39	40	38
Ethnicity	12	12	11
Political Party	27	26	22
Religion	8	8	7
Personality	12	12	13
Others	2	2	9
Total	100	100	100

Source: Field Work, 2008

Whilst policies and programmes offered by presidential candidates have, in aggregate terms, tended to be among the most influential factors in determining presidential electoral choice, only 7.5 % of the respondents who voted for Bingu wa Mutharika, the winning candidate in 2004, regarded policies and programmes he and his party (UDF) offered as the primary consideration. Most respondents (42.5 %) who voted for Bingu wa Mutharika cited his personality as the primary consideration with religion (21.3 %) and his ethnic identity (20 %) emerging as second and third considerations respectively.

Policies and programmes were second most influential factors for respondents who voted for the second placed candidate (John Tembo) in the 2004 presidential race. 52 % of respondents who voted for John Tembo cited the party he represented as the primary

consideration. Policies and programmes emerged as the primary factor in the presidential electoral preference for the third placed candidate Gwanda Chakwamba in 2004. 65 % of respondents who voted for Chakwamba cited the party he represented (Mgwirizano coalition) as the first consideration.

Research findings further reveal that policies and programmes were not the primary factor for determining the presidential electoral preference for most respondents who voted for the winning candidate (Bakili Muluzi) in 1999. Only 11.9 % of the respondents who voted for the winning candidate cited policies as the primary consideration. The majority of respondents (28.8 %) who voted for the winning candidate in 1999 cited the ethnic identity of Bakili Muluzi as the primary consideration with the party he represented (24.6 %) and his personality (22.9 %) emerging as the second and third most determinant factors respectively.

In contrast, ethnicity came as the third considered factor for respondents who voted for the second placed candidate (Chakwamba) in the presidential race of 1999. Policies were the primary consideration for respondents who voted for Chakwamba in that year. 62.2 % of the respondents who voted for Chakwamba cited policies and programmes as the main reason for the their presidential electoral choice with the party he represented emerging as the second most determinant factor cited as the primary consideration by 27.1 % of the respondents who voted for him.

In 1994 presidential elections, most respondents (58 %) who voted for the winning candidate (Bakili Muluzi) cited personality as the major factor. Policies and programmes were a joint fourth determining factor with the party he represented as only 4.3% of respondents who voted for the winning candidate citing them as primary consideration. Ethnicity and religion emerged as the second and third respectively most influential factors in determining presidential electoral preference among respondents who voted for the winning candidate.

Policies and programmes were primary consideration for 61.7 % of respondents who voted for the second placed candidate (Kamuzu Banda) in the 1994 presidential elections. The party Kamuzu Banda represented and his ethnic identity emerged as second and third most determinant factors for 22.3% and 5.2 % respectively of respondents who voted for him. Policies and programmes were not even the primary consideration for determining the presidential electoral preference for the third placed candidate (Chakufwa Chihana) in 1994. The majority of respondents (32.7%) who voted for Chihana in 1994 cited the party he represented as the primary consideration with policies and programmes and his ethnic identity emerging as second and third most influential factors respectively.

The study clearly showed that whilst overall most respondents (39 %) regarded policy and programmes offered by competing presidential candidates during the three previous elections as primary consideration, most respondents who voted for the winning candidate on all the three occasions did not view policies and programmes as primary consideration. In essence it can be deduced that a presidential candidate in Malawi is less

likely to secure electoral victory solely on the basis of the merits of policies and programmes on offer. This revelation runs counter to the popular view held in advanced liberal democracies suggesting presidential candidates are voted into office on the strength of their policies and programmes and respond to the national will for fear of electoral defeat in subsequent elections. The study unearthed factors attributable to the weak appeal of policies and programmes as the basis for determining the respondents' choice between presidential electoral alternatives. The factors are many and reducible to two major ones. These include failure by political parties and presidential candidates to identify interests groups whose agenda they should advance and gross ideological deficit.

4.3.1.1 Interest Group Identification

There is compelling evidence suggesting presidential candidates and their respective sponsoring parties have failed to identify their electoral constituencies other than their traditional ethnic bases. The expectation in liberal democracies which is a bench mark for the democratization project in Malawi is that presidential candidates and their respective sponsoring parties need to be identified with interest groups or constituencies with a given social formation or body polity (Phiri, 2000:71). Accordingly contending candidates should be seen to be advancing the principles and programmes based on the political conviction of contenders and their respective parties. These principles and programmes should be deemed to promote the interests of their defined constituencies. The study revealed that in Malawi hardly is there credible evidence to suggest presidential candidates and their sponsoring parties have enduring political convictions that inform not only electoral messages but also public policy choices and programme

design. Devoid of political philosophy and clearly identified interest groups constituencies, presidential candidates have almost invariably tended to accommodate all interest groups presumably in attempt to maximize votes. In the absence of interest group differentiation in the design of electoral messages by competing candidates, ethnic identity of the presidential contender becomes the overarching basis for choice between electoral alternatives. Observations by Phiri (2000:69) lends credence to the explanation when he lamented that in the absence of clearly articulated political philosophy, regionalism and ethnicity have tended to become the main guiding principles for the electorates in Malawi. Lack of political philosophy and conviction by presidential candidates is further evidenced by not only the pattern of choice by parties of both presidential candidates and running mates. The basis for electoral coalition formation is also evidence of bankruptcy of political philosophy.

It is widely acknowledged that in Malawi parties have their electoral strength rooted in particular ethnic group or groups concentrated in specific regions of the country. Aford has always elected a Tumbuka from the north as the party's torch bearer. MCP has always opted for a Chewa from the center whilst UDF has elected a Yao from the south in the last three but one election and once a Lomwe also from the south. In all cases and for all parties presidential running mates of each candidate has been chosen from a different ethnic group and region. The choice of the running mate is not, on the basis of feedback from party representatives interviewed, influenced even in the slightest sense by the political conviction or competence but by the ability of the running mate to amass the ethnic vote. Brown Mpinganjira of UDF and a Lomwe from the south is reported to have

promised John Tembo, a Chewa of the MCP a million votes from southern region when he was nominated by the latter as a presidential running mate for the 2009 presidential elections (The Nation, 31st March, 2009). Political party electoral coalitions are formed on similar criteria. As a result electoral manifestos (rarely the main thrust of electioneering program) by competing presidential candidates are characterized by policy and programme contradictions in the process of attempting to accommodate all competing national interests. The lamentation by Patel (2000) confirms the reduced role of manifestos when she observed that political parties in Malawi have tended to be inadequately articulate on policies and programs which marginally feature in political campaigns.

The composition of the presidential electoral pair have tended to reflect attempts to represent numerically superior ethnic groups as opposed to policy position on issues of national importance. A classic illustration is the case of choice of running mate for the 2009 presidential elections. UDF initially opted for Stambuli, a Chewa from the center as a running mate to Muluzi who is a Yao from the south before the latter was disqualified on the basis of constitutional limitations. MCP settled for Brown Mpinganjira, a Lomwe from the south as a running mate of John Tembo, a Chewa from the center. DPP opted for Joyce Banda, a Yao from the south as running mate for Bingu wa Muthriak, a Lomwe from the south. The north which is sparsely populated and whose ethnic groups combined do not provide compelling numerical electoral advantage did not appeal as a source of both the presidential candidate and running mate for the major parties. The identity of the

presidential candidate and running mate coupled with the ability to amass the ethnic vote is a more appealing criterion than policy position and leadership competence.

4.3.1.2 Ideological Deficit

In advanced liberal democracies presidential candidates and their respective parties place themselves on either the left or center or right on the political spectrum (Grant, 2003). The electorates are expected to respond to electoral messages on the basis of electoral policies that are informed by the candidates' ideological position on the political spectrum. The failure by contending presidential candidates and their sponsoring parties to clearly articulate policy positions on issues of national importance is pronounced by the inability of those candidates and parties to place themselves on the political spectrum. There is no evidence to suggest presidential candidates in Malawi have tended to construct electoral messages and make policy choices on the basis of definite ideological position. What is obtained rather are policy choices guided not so much by the ideological conviction of contending parties but reflecting various ideological positions on various national issues oscillating between left and right on the political spectrum. Whilst candidates could be faulted for lacking ideological positions, perhaps they have not seen electoral incentives for adopting a particular ideological position to inform policy choices or program design but are encouraged to accommodate all interests with the view to maximize votes.

In Africa (Malawi is no exception), election campaigns have tended to be issueless and candidates that have attempted to win elections by the merits of their policies have not succeeded (Gyimah-Boadi; 2007:21). This results in ideological contradictions on the

policy choices on various national issues. Given the lack of ideological and interest group differentiation in the policy choice and programme design of presidential candidates, the ethnic identity becomes a clear dominant criterion for determining electoral preference for both urban and rural voters. For instance, when asked as to whether campaign by presidential contenders helps them to choose between electoral alternatives, only 53% of urban respondents as compared to 76% of rural respondents responded affirmatively. 47% of urban respondents and 24% rural respondents did not think campaign by contenders help them to make a choice between electoral alternatives. The percentage of the affirmative response by urban respondents (53%) is significantly lower than that of the rural respondents (76%). The difference could be explained by different education levels between urban and rural respondents and the understanding and interpretation of campaign by respondents in these settings.

The study revealed that relatively high education levels of respondents in urban areas make them critical such that they are able to draw parallels between electoral messages. Urbanites, unlike rural voters, are able to note minimal differences in policy positions between presidential candidates because of their relatively high education levels. The study further revealed that electoral campaign, according to FGDs conducted in rural constituencies, is understood by rural voters as provision of material and financial inducements by electoral contenders to prospective voters. Given the high poverty levels especially in rural constituencies, provision of material and financial inducement to prospective voters is an electoral factor though not a guarantor of the vote. Lack of ideological guidance perpetuates the practice. Ideological viability, according to Phiri

(2000a), demands that a presidential candidate and sponsoring party take a bold and clear stand on one of the several overarching issues seen as having a bearing on national survival. This has not been the case in Malawi.

The Malawian voter, findings revealed, are not tasked very much to make choices between policy alternatives. This is largely due to lack of clearly cut policy differentiation as is the case in advanced liberal democracies. Policy voting demands that candidates take differing positions and those voters accurately perceive these positions (Abramowitz, 2004). The FGDs in both rural and urban areas revealed gross failure by contenders to sell to the electorate differing policy positions on key issues that mattered at the time. All contenders have tended to campaign on the platform of poverty reduction, food security, eradication of poverty and improved social services such as health, education, transport and security without articulating policies to realize these broad objectives. In essence what are often sold to the electorates are not policy choices but electoral goals which tend to converge as national aspirations.

The vagueness of policies and disproportionate emphasis on national aspirations have proved to be obstacles to policy voting as electorates can hardly distinguish contenders on the basis of policy positions. The impact of policy voting on electoral outcome is dependent both on the clarity of differences between the candidates and the relative proximity of the candidates position to those of voters (Abramowitz, 2005:187). For instance, there were clear policy differences between Barack Obama of the Democratic Party and Mc Cain of the Republican Party during the 2008 electoral campaign in the

United States of America (USA). Sharp differences were evident on foreign policy in respect to relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran and Cuba, withdrawal of USA troops from Afghanistan and Iraq, and handling of the Israel-Palestinian conflict (Obama, 2008). Sharp policy differences between the two were also clearly evident on health insurance, reduction of carbon gas emissions, taxes and general management of the economy. These policy differences made it easier for electorates to exercise policy voting in the USA. That is not the case in Malawi.

Given the absence of policy differences by contenders, ethnicity becomes the dominant criterion for choice between electoral alternatives. In multiethnic societies like Malawi where ethnicity is salient, interests (which should have been the target for electoral policy design), tend to be defined in ethnic terms (Rabushka and Shepsle, 1972). This, according to Rabushka and Shepsle, means that ethnic criterion serves as the perpetual screen for calculating interests and for defining and classifying adversarial positions. Interests in this regard are not necessarily laden with materialist content (Toit, 2007) but perceived in terms of deeper psychological gratification embodied in electoral success and public recognition especially by rival groups.

Comparative evidence shows that class positions and interests tend to be redefined in ethnic terms once contenders sense that ethnic demands may be pursued irrespective of class differences or commonalities (Toit, 2007). Toit's assertion is supported by observations by Horowitz (1985:141-220) showing that given the propensity of people to associate themselves with groups who can be positively assessed and given the emotional

quality of ethnic affiliations, added to political contexts of collective competition, then ethnic groups are especially prone to becoming vehicles for the pursuit of collective esteem, worth, dignity, honour and status. Individual status and dignity, then become inextricably linked to the status and dignity of the group one associates with. It is the intensity of the interest for individual and collective gratification that has tended to influence voter's electoral choice in a large measure given the vagueness and lack of differentiation of policy alternatives by contenders in Malawi's presidential elections.

The tentative conclusion drawn from the study is that there is marginal difference on policy voting between rural and urban voters. Urban voters are comparatively critical in assessing electoral policies. The major difference between rural and urban voters is observed on the understanding of the role of electoral campaign. Material and financial inducement during the campaign period are key though not exclusive decisive electoral factors in rural constituencies.

4.3.2 Political Parties

Overall political parties presidential candidates represented emerged as the second most influential factor in determining voter presidential electoral preference. 22% of respondents cited political parties as the most determinant factor in determining presidential electoral choice. However the political party the winning candidate (Bingu wa Muthalika) represented in 2004 was only joint fourth with policies and programmes as the primary consideration for respondents who voted for him. The majority of respondents (42.5%) cited personality as the most determinant factor with religion (21.3

%) and ethnic identity of the winning candidate emerging as second and third most influential factors respectively. The political party was the most influential factor for the majority of respondents (52.4%) who voted for the second placed candidate John Tembo. The political party was the second most influential factor for the third placed candidate Gwanda Chakwamba. 25.3% of respondents who voted for Chakwamba cited the party he represented as the most determinant factor.

The political party, as factor in influencing voter presidential electoral preference, was not the most determinant for respondents who voted for the winning presidential candidate (Bakili Muluzi) in 1999. Only 24.6 of respondents who voted for a Bakili Muluzi in 1999 cited the party he represented as the primary consideration. The political party was not the most influential factor even for the second and third placed candidates in the same presidential elections. Only 27.1 % of the respondents who voted for the second placed candidate cited political party as the primary consideration. The party as a determinant of presidential electoral preference came a joint fourth with policies as the most determinant factor for respondents who voted for the winning candidate. Neither was the party the primary consideration for the majority of respondents who voted for the second placed candidate in 1994. Only 22 % of respondents who voted for the second placed candidate cited policies and programmes as the first consideration.

The majority of respondents (61.7 %) who voted for the second placed candidate in 1994 cited policies and programmes as the most influential factor. (Refer to table 3.1).

Analysis of data obtained through questionnaires by respondents and interviews with key informants shows that political parties sponsoring a presidential candidate have an influence on voter preference but they are not a primary consideration for choosing between electoral alternatives. It is important to find explanations for the failure of political parties in democratizing Malawi to generate electoral appeals to the level achieved by political parties in advanced liberal democracies. The starting point perhaps is the understanding of party functions in a democratic system of government, assess and explain to what extent political parties in Malawi have fulfilled such functions. A measure of political party loyalty along ethnic lines is also crucially vital in explaining the relevance of the ethnic identity thesis and ethnic political anxiety theory as accounts for electoral behavior in Malawi.

4.3.2.1 The Electoral Appeal of Political Parties

With reference to mature liberal democracies which Malawi is striving to emulate, a political party is defined as an association of like minded people who pursue common political goals and for which they usually try to get into government (Erdmann, 2007b:38). A party, according to Erdmann (2007), is regarded as an instrument to gain power to exercise political domination within a state. Parties perform a number of functions in a liberal democracy but scholars agree generally on four broad ones. Such functions include providing ideological orientation, aggregating and articulating interests based on societal interests of different classes or social strata, mobilizing and socializing electorates, and recruiting and forming government (Randall, 2007a)

According to scholars of African politics, political parties in Africa have failed to provide ideological orientation to the electorates (Randall, 2007a). This is also the case in Malawi. When asked how their political parties are differentiated from other major political parties, party representatives tended to make reference to historical capital or personality of the leader or invoke the competence of the leader. There was virtually no attempt to differentiate political parties on the basis of ideological or policy position. One key informant interviewee said ‘our party is the oldest and it led the foundation for this country’. The other key informant claimed that, in his own words, ‘we are not associated with atrocities and corruption as is the case with these other parties. Our president is clean’. It is clear that political parties in Malawi do not have an ideology and program that differentiate them from one another and give their members, supporters and voters a clear value system to act as a basis for choosing between electoral alternatives. Party differentiation is often based on claimed competence to govern, integrity reputation or historical glory. Yet these attributes are not sustainable as grounds for party differentiation compelling party activists to directly or indirectly appeal to ethnicity or regionalism as a party label.

On the issue of aggregating and articulating interests of various social classes the study showed that political parties in Malawi have no incentives to construct electoral messages that relate to interests groups. Asked whether their respective political parties have specific targeted interests groups, key informants claimed their respective parties are for all Malawians. In his own words one of the key informants said that, ‘we want each and every vote from all Malawians, we represent all social groups’. Given weak organization

of civil societies and poor interest group articulation in Malawi, political parties need not relate to these groups and have succeeded in defining their own constituencies and find ways of rewarding them for their political support through patronage clientelist relations. Studies by Kaspin (1995b), Vail & White (1998) among others confirm widespread use of patronage in Malawi to secure political support. To that end parties have tended to aggregate and articulate interests of particular identity groups such as ethnic, regional or even religious groups to be represented at the power center of a political entity and gain access to the center's distribution of resources.

On the issue of recruiting elites and form government, political parties in Malawi, on the basis of key informants have succeeded to attract elites. However recruitment, the study revealed, is guided and elevation to position of influence is largely dependent on one's ability to attract an ethnic vote. One of the key informants from Aford conceded that , in her own words, 'we can not win election and a northerner can not be elected to lead one of the major parties other than Aford because we are few in the north'. Asked why MCP has always elected a Chewa or someone from central region, the key informant argued that, to put it as he said it, 'most of our voters are in the central region'. Thus whilst political parties in Malawi can be said to have succeeded in recruiting personnel to fill party positions as evidenced by fielding of presidential candidates and Members of Parliament (MP), the recruitment of political elites by parties operating in the politically conscious multiethnic Malawi has been tainted and distorted when compared to similar practices by parties in advanced liberal democracies. The recruitment has generally tended to focus on ethnic elites with the potential to secure the ethnic vote. Political

parties in Malawi and Africa in general are, directly or indirectly, seen and used as vehicles for ethnic political contest. This is not to suggest that parties in Africa and Malawi in particular are ethnic parties. What is observable though is that parties mobilize along lines of ethnic identities, morality or solidarity. Parties in Africa (Malawi is no exception) are multiethnic whose predominant feature reflect a coalition of several ethnic groups of different sizes that have been negotiated by their respective elites (Odhiambo, 2004a). According to Erdmann, (2004b:47) ethnicity is the predominant cleavage for party formation and voter behavior. He observes that party leaders make clear strategic calculations about which person with specific ethnic background should be included in the ethnic coalition and which particular person should be placed in which constituency in order to win the elections.

In liberal democracies social conflicts between different cleavages are settled democratically through the aggregation function performed by parties. According to the cleavage model by Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan (Erdmann, 2004b) traditional social conflict in Europe revolve around urban vs. rural, religion vs. state, labour vs. capital, center vs. periphery. Such cleavages, observe Osaghae (1994a), do exist in Africa but weakly developed and contribute little to party politics. The predominant cleavage in most African societies is ethnic and or regional identity. To that end, ethnicity, observers note, provides the predominant, not exclusive social cleavage for voter behavior. On the basis of this realization, it can be inferred that parties in Malawi where other social cleavages other than ethnic are extremely weak can be viewed and have been used directly or indirectly as vehicles for securing, protecting and advancing personal and

particular ethnic interests. To that end, it can be concluded that what matters to the voter is not so much the party but the ethnic group(s) whose interests the party is perceived to advance.

In essence, contrary to conventional political theory suggesting voter behavior is shaped by the social and economic conditions (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2008a:104), electoral preference of voters in Malawi has tended to be informed not so much by the social and economic conditions but it has largely been a function of the place of one's ethnic group in the hierarchy of political authority. This is so because the position of one's ethnic group in the control of political authority is perceived to determine one's likely social and economic condition. FGDs allude to this observation as one put it in Blantyre City FGD, 'you need a relation in political authority or connections to people who matter'. This observation is particularly accurate when reference is made to Banda's one party rule (Kaspin, 1995b). To that end, parties become relevant as the basis for determining electoral choices only in so far as a particular party is seen to advance the interests of the preferred ethnic group. This observation conforms to the central prediction of the ethnic identity thesis and political anxiety theory.

4.3.2.2 Party Identification

Establishing the extent of voters' party loyalty or identification is critical in the process of explaining voter behavior. Understanding the basis of party identification becomes central in appreciating voters' electoral choices between parties. This is not to suggest that party identification invariably translates into a vote for the party one identifies with.

Studies in US and Europe show that party identification is analytically separate from actual vote (Schulz-Hezberg, 2008a). In spite of criticism of the concept of party identification that it has limited explanatory power as a measurement variable, recent studies, according to Schulz-Hezberg, demonstrate that the concept remains a significant methodological variable in electoral choices.

Party identification is understood as the psychological attachment of citizens to any given political party (Abramowitz, 2004:74). It provides a common explanatory framework and can be applied usefully across different political settings including those obtained in Africa. To that end, the concept provides an appropriate starting point for any analysis of a partisan political party preference. Party identification is widely used as an indicator of partisan loyalty or voter behavior and measures the extent to which voters identify with or feel close to political parties in much the same way that they identify with social groups (Burnell, 2007a). This study however was not meant to measure the extent of party identification of respondents. The intention of the study was to unearth the basis of party identification and its influence on electoral preference of respondents.

Studies in the US show that party identification exerts influence on individual voting decision and electoral results by shaping attitudes toward the candidate and issues (Abramowitz, 2004). Party identification is believed to provide electorates with a simple cue for selecting a candidate. Whereas party identification in the US tended to be influenced by parental heritage up to as late as 1980s, recent studies show a shift toward party identification based on policy preferences (Abramowitz, 2004). Clear differences

between the parties' ideological positions have made it easier for citizens in advanced liberal democracies to choose a party identification based on their policy preferences. Finding out existence and explaining the basis for party loyalties among voters in Malawi is important in trying to understand voter behavior in the country. This was achieved by observing electoral preferences of respondents from across ethnic groups in the country.

The study revealed a consistent pattern of respondents' electoral loyalty to a particular party. Respondents of the same ethnic group tended to be consistent in their voting preference for a particular party. Respondents of the Chewa ethnic group have tended to consistently vote for a presidential candidate sponsored by MCP. Respondents of the Yao ethnic group have tended to consistently vote for a candidate sponsored by UDF while Tumbuka respondents have tended to consistently vote for a candidate sponsored by Aford until 2004 when Aford lost its Tumbuka constituency. (See figure 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3). To that end, a tentative conclusion would suggest that floating voters among respondents are rare except for respondents from ethnic groups in the north. This is particularly true for respondents from central and southern regions.

There are explanations for both scenarios in the north on the one hand and the center and south on the other. In the north and on the basis of FGD held in Rumphi East rural constituency, Aford generally perceived to advance the interests of Tumbukas and related ethnic groups in the region lost the trust of its ethnic constituency. Chewas remain largely loyal to MCP as do Yaos and other ethnic groups who remain loyal to UDF except for the Senas who have tended to pursue the political direction chosen by

Chakwamba, a Sena ethnic elite. The study revealed that party identification inferred by the largely consistent ethnic voting preference is a function of not necessarily admirable party image or policy and program superiority . It is largely a function of ethnic interest the party is perceived and expected to secure, protect and advance.

Party identification has been observed to be dynamic in mature liberal democracies. Party realignment and general decline in the number of citizens likely to be party identifiers has been observed to be on the decline in advanced democracies. Major shifts in partisan orientation of the electorates, studies show, involve primarily conversation of voters' party loyalties in response to changes in the issue context or social and economic environment. At individual level, studies demonstrate that party identification can be influenced by presidential vote choice as well as retrospective evaluation of party performance (Abramowitz, 2004). It is the evaluation of the performance of the party other than policy that has a huge potential to significantly change party alignments. Aford lost its grip on the northern region because, according to the FGD in Rumphi East constituencies, the party was not perceived to advance interest of the ethnic groups in the region. The unilateral decision by Aford leadership to enter into an electoral coalition with UDF as a junior partner in 2004 presidential elections did not have the support of ethnic groups in the north. A participant summed up the group's attitude towards Aford when she stated that 'Chakufwa Chihana did not listen to people', apparently refereeing to the party's decision to enter into a UDF led coalition government and the support for the third term presidential bill. Studies have revealed that ethnic groups in the north did not approve the performance of the Bakili Muluzi UDF led government (Chinsinga,

2009, Tsoka, 2009). From a total of 36 parliamentary seats in 1994 and 29 seats in 1999, AFORD could only manage one seat in parliamentary elections of 2004.

This study established that for most respondents the political party is not the primary consideration. Out of the six major factors impacting on electoral preferences of respondents, political parties were ranked third. The study concluded that even respondents who considered the party as the primary factor, their electoral loyalty is not motivated by the party image or policy consideration. Rather they are largely persuaded by the perception of interests of the ethnic group(s) the party is perceived to advance. The study further established that loyalty of the ethnic group(s) to a given party can shift depending on, not necessarily policy preferences as is the case in western democracies, but largely on the basis of performance evaluation of the party by the concerned ethnic group(s). This finding does not conform to the prediction of the ethnic identity thesis and ethnic political anxiety theories on motivation for electoral behavior nor does it support the Marxist and modernization perspectives as frameworks for explaining voter behavior.

The conclusion to be drawn from this study is that whilst a political party can secure electoral loyalty of a given ethnic group or groups, sustained ethnic loyalty is dependent on the perceived capacity of the party to advance the aspirations of a given ethnic group or groups. The study further concluded that party identifiers on the basis of ethnicity are losing the electoral appeal. The proportion of members of a given ethnic group consistently voting for a given party is declining. Refer to figures 4.1 to 4.3. This is the case partly because performance evaluation of presidential candidates and their respective

parties is increasingly becoming electoral issues among voters. These are discussed later in the chapter.

4.3.3 Personality as an Electoral Factor

Studies by electoral scholars have shown that the candidates' personalities have an influence on the electoral preference of the electorates (Abramowitz, 2004:183). The electorates, studies demonstrate, form opinions about the candidate's personal qualities based on what they read or see in the media. Most important personal qualities electorates consider for public office in advanced democracies, according to Abramowitz, are competence and trustworthiness. This study attempted to find out the extent to which personality is an electoral factor among respondents in Malawi.

Overall personality of the presidential candidate does not emerge as one of the most determinant of voter presidential electoral choice. Only 11.7 %, 12.5 % and 13.5 % of respondents cited personality as the primary consideration in determining presidential electoral preference in 1994, 1999 and 2004 respectively. However the majority of respondents (58 %) who voted for the winning candidate Bakili Muluzi in 1994 cited personality as the primary consideration. Personality emerged as the most influential factor in determining presidential electoral choice for the winning candidate in 1994. Personality was ranked the third most influential factor for the respondents who voted for the second placed candidate Kamuzu Banda, in the same year.

Personality emerged as the most influential factor for the winning candidate in 2004, Bingu wa Muthalika. The majority of respondents (42.5 %) who voted for Bingu wa Muthalika cited personality as the primary consideration. However only 1.6 % of respondents who voted for the second placed candidate in 2004 cited personality as the primary consideration. Analysis of quantitative data suggests that in aggregate terms, personality has not been a significant factor in presidential elections. When disaggregated, the study revealed that personality has been an electoral factor for some candidates. The proportion of respondents who considered personality as an electoral factor even when disaggregated is not significant to give electoral advantage to any candidate. (See table 4.1)

4.3.4 Religion as an Electoral Factor

A profile of respondents indicated that most Malawians are believers in the existence of God. 92 % of respondents were Christians, 6% Moslems. Only about 2 % identified themselves as non believers. Studies have shown that religion can play a significant role in influencing electoral preferences. In Nigeria, for instance, where the population of faithfuls of major religions (Christianity and Islam) is split into near equal halves, religion is, just like ethnicity, a major factor in predicting electoral preference of electorates (Almond, 2006). Even in advanced liberal democracies especially in the US, studies demonstrate that the growing polarization in religious beliefs and practices within the Christian community has important implications for electoral politics because religious beliefs are strongly linked to attitudes towards issues such as abortion, gay rights, government assistance to religious schools and organizations (Abramowitz,

2004:68). In countries such as Nigeria, polarization between predominantly Christian south and Muslim north is a key electoral factor. Almond (2006) notes that the sharp north-south divide is blurred by multiple ethnic identities but focused by the Christian-Muslim dichotomy that translates into predictive electoral behavior. This study attempted to assess the extent of influence of religion on electoral preferences of respondents in Malawi.

Overall religion was ranked fifth out of the six most influential factors in determining voters' presidential electoral choice in all the last three presidential elections. Only 11.7 %, 12.5 % and 13.5 % of the respondents cited religion as the primary consideration in the presidential race in 2004, 1999 and 1994 respectively. On the basis of responses, religion as a factor of determining voters' presidential electoral preference is on the decline. The decline is marginal though with no significant impact on the presidential electoral outcome.

Whereas religion was one of the major factors for respondents who voted for the winning candidate (Bakili Muluzi) in 1994, that was not the case in 1999 and 2004. Whilst 21.3 % of respondents who voted for the winning candidate in 2004 cited religion as the major factor, only 11.9 % and 13 % of respondents who voted for the winning candidate in 1999 and 1994 respectively cited religion as the primary consideration. Whereas religion was the second most influential factor in determining voter preferences in 2004, in 1999 and 1994, religion emerged as the third and fourth respectively most influential factor for respondents who voted for the winning candidate. Religion was the

least most influential factor for the respondents who voted for the second placed candidate in all elections in 1994 (0.9%), 1999 (0.4%) and 2004 (0.8%).

The study further revealed that Muslims were more inclined to vote along religious lines than Christians. Religion did not emerge as a critical electoral factor in numerical terms. This could be attributed to the massive statistical imbalance between Christians and Muslims in Malawi in favor of the former to the extent that contenders (presidential candidates and political parties) do not see incentives to pursue an electoral campaign purely along religious lines as it is in other parts of the world such as Nigeria and India. In India for instance, the Bharatiya Janta Party, perceived as a Hindu nationalist party, has traditionally enjoyed disproportionate electoral support from Hindu faithfuls (The Daily Times, June 1, 2009). Religion, according to Almond (2006), tends to emerge as key electoral factor in spite of cross cutting cleavages especially in predominantly Muslim states of India. 82 % of India's population is Hindu according to Almond. Political conflict along religious fault lines is not uncommon both in India and Nigeria. The study revealed that in Malawi religion, as an electoral cleavage, does not have the same level of appeal as those obtained in India or Nigeria. However the potential for electoral conflicts along religious lines exist in Malawi as exemplified by violence targeted at mosques in the northern region and reiteration of violence against northerners in the Muslim dominated district of Mangochi after the 2004 electoral outcome.

The conclusion from this study is that religious differences have not been fertile grounds for designing electoral campaigns messages in Malawi. This is so principally because of

the population imbalance between the two major faiths in the country and the inflammatory potential for such electoral pursuits which often attract strong condemnation from civil societies and the general public.

4.3.5 Impact of Voter Characteristics on Presidential Electoral Choice

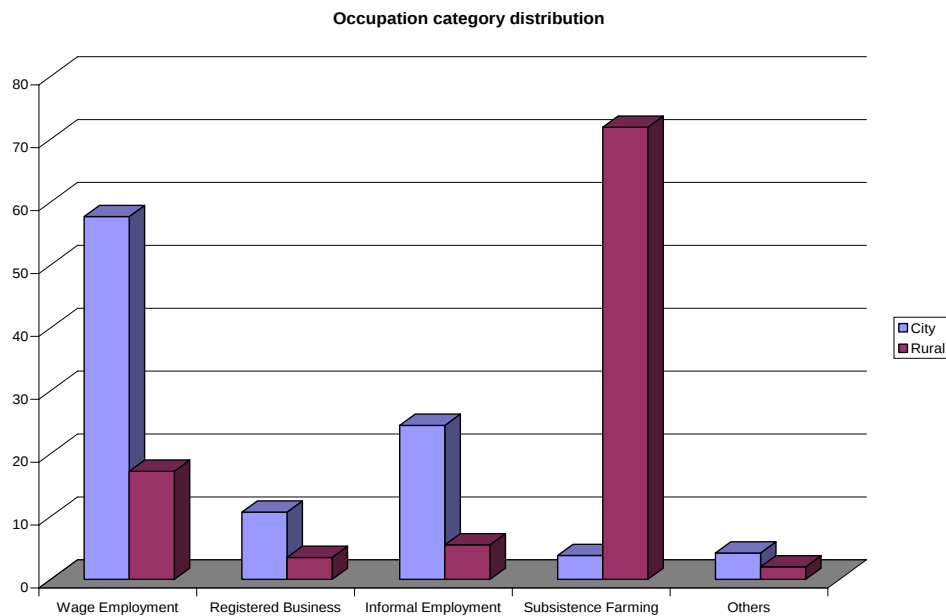
One of the major tenets underlying the analysis of liberal democracies is that the political outlooks and behavior are fundamentally shaped by the pursuit of individual and group economic self-interest (Parry, 1992:120). This is especially the case if voting is, as it is conceived by theorists, principally an instrumental activity undertaken to realize goals or protect interest through electoral choices. The intention in this study was to assess whether voter characteristics dilute or strengthen the influence of ethnicity on electoral choice.

There is general agreement that voter characteristics influence voter electoral preferences. The most fundamental decision in the study was to determine which voter characteristics to analyze and explain their linkage to presidential electoral choices. The study settled for two characteristics namely class and location (rural and urban). The two do not exhaust what might be analyzed under the general heading of voter characteristics and presidential electoral preferences but seem to provide at least the major ingredients. These two characteristics should offer an adequate account of how particular individual/group characteristics get translated into, if at all, presidential electoral choice.

4.3.5.1 Class

Class has long been recognized as fundamental cleavage in advanced liberal democracies providing a good deal of account on electoral choice (Parry,1992:124). Parry however recognize the intense debate about how most appropriately to measure class and its impact on political choices. The study adopted the categorization of occupational groupings approach in order to distinguish more clearly their distinctive economic interests and how they might translate into partisan preferences. On the basis of this approach four types of classes were identified into which respondents were categorized namely working class (39.6 %), non-working class (3.7), business owners (18.5 %) and subsistence farmers (37.8 %). These four classes formed the basis of analysis as they provided a fairly simpler scheme through which economic interest, as dictated by market position, was scrutinized for its effect on presidential electoral preference.

Figure 4.5



Source: Field work, 2008

When asked as to whether belonging to a particular social grouping determine presidential electoral choices, 25.3 % agreed strongly and 35.4 agreed whilst 18.1 disagreed merely and 21.2 disagreed strongly. Observed on the basis of urban-rural electoral divide, 35.9% of urbanites merely agreed and 27.1 agreed strongly to consider their social grouping when choosing between electoral alternatives. 20.2% of urbanites disagreed and 16.8% disagreed strongly to consider social grouping. The responses of rural respondents to the same question when compared to responses of urbanites were not significantly different. 34.6% merely agreed and 23% agreed strongly. 16.3% of rural respondents disagreed merely and 26.1 disagreed strongly.

When asked to isolate policies by contending candidates that address concerns of their respective social groupings most respondents other than subsistence farmers could not. Farmers cited subsidized fertilizer as a key policy consideration but it could not necessarily translate into partisan electoral preference principally because all candidates have tended to promise subsidized fertilizer. Fertilizer is crucial for the majority of Malawians especially in rural areas where about 83 % of population reside as subsistence farmers. It determines food security and maize production, as a staple grain, has been a central feature in Malawian Politics. Thus whilst the majority of respondents in both rural (58%) and urban (63%) areas agreed that consideration of the social grouping when determining electoral preference is an issue, it does not necessarily translate into effective policy voting. The relationship between class and electoral preference is seemingly weak overall.

However detailed analysis of classes within particular ethnic groups produced varying results. Tongas are the least likely to consider class seconded by Chewas. Only 53.3 % of Tonga respondents considered class in determining presidential electoral choice as compared to 78.8 % for Tumbuka respondents who are more likely to consider class than any other ethnic group respondents.

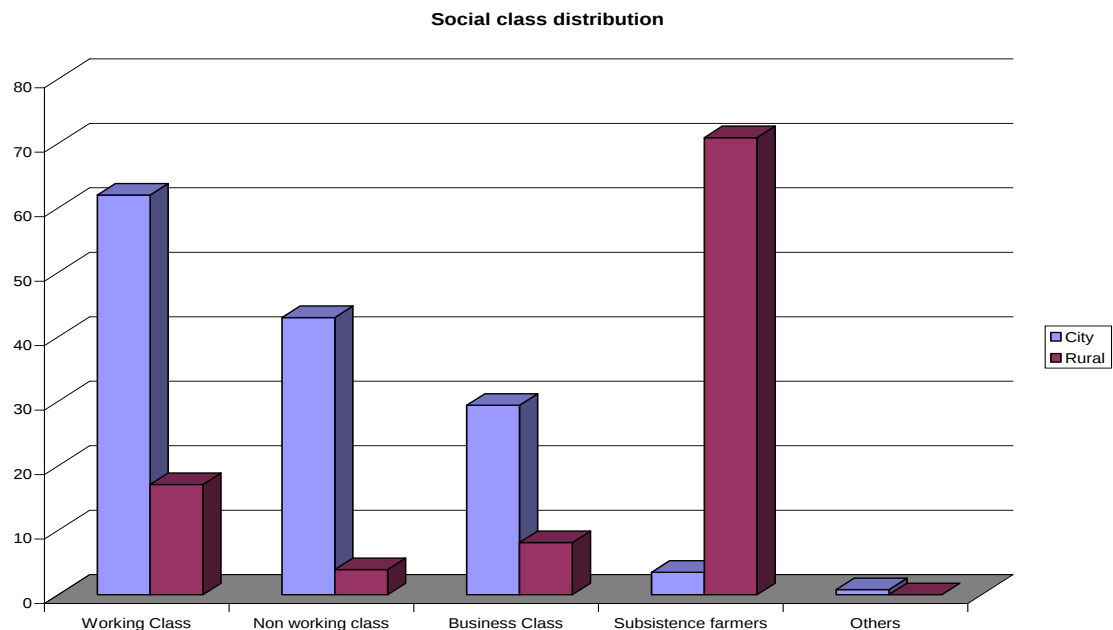
The weak link between class and electoral preference is attributable largely to weak class formation and consciousness. This is so due to a number of factors including a proportionately large and impoverished peasantry, small industrial working class, small privileged group of business community, beaurocrats and professionals dependent on the state and political parties devoid of ideological identity necessary for differentiation from other parties and guiding formulation of electoral policies. Classical theory suggests that a strong independent bourgeoisie is a necessary condition for liberal democracy. An independent bourgeoisie does not exist in Malawi. Sustainability of capital (an exclusive preserve of city dwellers) in Malawi is very much dependent on the state through patronage. Sandbrook (1993) notes that limited scope of market relations outside the cities and politicization of the economic sphere diminish the independent economic power of capital. Overall the study revealed that the difference between urban and rural respondents for choosing between presidential alternatives on the basis of class is marginal in electoral terms.

4.3.5.2 Location

The voting pattern observed in rural areas has tended to be different from those observed in urban centers in most African countries. The rural-urban electoral divide has not been

given exclusive attention by electoral scholars in Malawi. The study attempted to not only establish the existence of the rural-urban divide of electoral attitudes and preferences but also explain the basis for such occurrence or otherwise. Rural voters are predominantly subsistence farmers, a sharp contrast to urban voters who are predominantly working class. 70.9 % of rural respondents were subsistence farmers compared to 3.5 % of urban respondents who were subsistence farmers. 62 % of urban respondents were working class compared to 17.1 % of rural respondents who were working class.

Figure 4.6



Source: Field work, 2008

The study revealed that there is no significant difference between rural and urban voters in terms of electoral preferences on the basis of occupational category. Overall 25 % of respondents agreed strongly to consider occupational category in determining presidential electoral choice and 35 % merely agreed. 27.1 % of urban respondents agreed strongly to

consider occupational category which is slightly higher than 23 % rural respondents who agreed strongly. 35.9 % of urban respondents merely agreed to consider occupational category in determining presidential electoral preference which is more less the same as 34.5 % of rural respondents

On the basis of evidence presented one would conclude that overall class is not a substantial influence in determining the rural –urban vote divide. The gap between rural and urban voters in terms of voting on the basis of occupation category is extremely narrow with the urban voters slightly more inclined to consider occupation in determining presidential electoral choice.

The conclusion would seem to be that once the effect of ethnicity is removed, the residue class effect is not a strong one. This means that if class is construed in restricted and conceptually sharper terms that has been adopted in this study, it adds relatively little to understanding of voter electoral choices. In other words, there is no significant electoral advantage for presidential candidates to pursue class based electoral campaign. The imprint of the predictive power of location (rural/urban) on electoral choices on the basis of class observed in advanced liberal democracies is invisible. What is surprising in an economically impoverished political context in Malawi in which matters of economic interests are expected to be at the center of political contest is that the relevance of class on the basis of economic conditions seem on the whole so weak.

Economic interests based on class seem so weak in influencing electoral preference partly due to weak class distinction in Malawi. The proletariat, whose struggle with capital and the state in industrialized western societies have shaped the emergence of highly articulated social democracies is not only weak and unorganized but also only partially separated from the means of production and subject to, until recently, political repression. The underdeveloped nature of bourgeoisie and proletariat has had profound negative effect on class based politics. The underdevelopment of class is further compounded by the fact that many economically active individuals transcend class boundaries. Urban wage employees for instance earn extra income through self-employment in parallel economy as traders, artisans, urban farmers or small scale commercial transporters.

In the absence of class based politics ethnicity, though on the decline as an electoral factor, has tended to take center stage as a vehicle for securing political power and confirms the relevance of the ethnic identity and political anxiety theories, unlike the Marxist or modernization theories, as accurate perspectives for explaining electoral behavior in Malawi. This is principally because amidst mass poverty, weak class consciousness and substantial dependence of wealth upon the acquisition of political power through the ethnic cleavage, political conflicts are transformed into a deadly zero sum game. In such circumstances victors gain access to economic resources as well as power. Losers have almost invariably no alternative avenue of upward mobility to the extent that electoral competition runs the risk of degenerating into a violent conflict potential along ethnic/regional and religious fault lines. The post election violence in 2004 is a classic example. Acts of violence were targeted at members of the ethnic Yao

and mosques in the northern region in 2004 when the presidential electoral outcome was announced. Yaos are predominantly Muslims. In reiteration, violence was perpetuated against northerners and churches in the southern district of Mangochi which is predominantly occupied by members of the Yao ethnic group.

To the extent that the predictions of the ethnic identity thesis and political anxiety theories are mirrored in the three presidential elections held since 1994, the potency of the two theories as explanatory accounts of electoral behavior in Malawi is evident although the predictive capacity of these two theories has been waning over the years. It has been demonstrated that whilst ethnicity has been a key consideration when choosing between electoral alternatives for some respondents, other factors such as policy and programmes are shaping peoples' voting behavior. However to the extent that there has not been demonstrable policy differences between contenders and notable interest group identification, the influence of the policy design as an electoral tool is brought into question. The study has demonstrated that presidential candidates and sponsoring parties have no electoral incentives to campaign along interest group identification or class basis. This observation rules out the relevance of the Marxist and modernization perspectives as explanatory tools to understanding electoral behavior in Malawi. Yet the study has demonstrated that ethnicity is not the only criteria for presidential electoral preference. Performance evaluation of presidential candidates and their sponsoring parties as a factor influencing electoral choice becomes an area for inquiry.

4.3.6 Performance Evaluation

Presidential elections in advanced democracies, studies have shown, are a mechanism through which voters express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with performance of the incumbent president (Morris, et al, 1972). Voting based on one's evaluation of the performance of the incumbent president is known as retrospective voting (Abramowitz, 2004:190).

FGDs conducted in both rural and urban areas suggested that whilst ethnicity has been an issue for determining electoral preference, the evaluation of the incumbent president is increasingly becoming a decisive factor. Participants in the FGDs were of the view that the performance of the incumbent president and his administration, to some extent, was challenging ethnic consideration in determining electoral preferences. For instance, one participant in Dedza South West constituency whose views were shared by the rest said, 'these days people are not looking at one's ethnic identity but how he has performed in government'. However the study showed that the evaluation of the presidents' performance tended to be influenced to some degree by ethnic undertones. For instance, FGDs in rural constituencies in both central and northern regions were critical of the Muluzi administration, a southerner, as opposed to participants in the FDGs in rural constituency in the southern region which gave the same administration a positive rating. A comparative analysis of FGDs showed that the Mutharika administration was rated highly by FGD participants in rural constituencies in both the northern and southern regions. Participants in the FGD in the rural constituency of the central region whilst disapproving the Muluzi administration rated Mutharika, a southerner, relatively positive

though not as high as did participants in the FGDs in the north and south. The only FGDs in the urban area of Blantyre City dismissed the Muluzi administration's performance and rated the Mutharika administration highly.

Thus whilst performance evaluation of presidents by FGDs in rural areas tended to be influenced by ethnic undertones, participants in FGDs in Blantyre City were seemingly free from the ethnic influence. The pattern of rating the performance of presidents and their administrations shown by the study conform to the findings of the Afro barometer survey (AFBS) carried out in the country in February, 2009. The AFBS, according to Tsoka (2009), compared the performance of presidents since 1999 in areas such as provision of water supply, food security, fighting crime and corruption, fighting HIV/Aids, and economic management. The AFBS showed that Malawians approved the superior performance of Mutharika in all areas except in the provision of water supply where equalization with Muluzi was noted. The AFBS further recognized the impact of ethnicity/regionalism in the evaluation of presidents though the ethnic influence was judged to be weak in respect of Mutharika's performance evaluation.

FGDs revealed that participants were increasingly attaching importance to performance evaluation of presidents and their sponsoring parties in determining electoral preference. The increasing importance of performance evaluation was observed with the negative attitude participants directed at use of ethnicity as the basis for electoral choice. The negative connotation attached to ethnicity as the basis for electoral choice was confirmed by the decline in percentage of respondents who consistently demonstrated electoral

loyalty to a given presidential candidate on the basis of ethnicity. The increasing importance of performance evaluation and the decline of the influence of ethnicity in determining electoral behavior do challenge the accuracy of the ethnic identity and political anxiety theories as the only perspective to explain the electoral behavior in Malawi. Performance evaluation of incumbent and former presidents is likely to have profound impact on the voting pattern in Malawi which traditionally has tended to be along ethnic fault lines. To that end, there is need to search for other explanatory frameworks other than the ethnic identity thesis and political anxiety theory to adequately understand electoral behavior in Malawi.

The central conclusion to be drawn from the above discussion is that ethnicity has been a key electoral factor but not the only factor impacting on presidential electoral outcomes. Other factors such as policies, performance evaluation of presidential candidates, political parties, personality of candidates and to some extent religion have influenced electoral preferences of the electorates in varying degrees. The study further concluded that the anticipated urban-rural voter divide is not significant to determine the course of electoral outcomes. The center verses peripheral electoral contest observed in other countries such as Zambia (Erdmann, 2004b) has not been a prominent feature of the electoral outcome in Malawi.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents conclusions of the study, their implications and recommendations for further inquiry. The broad conclusion is that ethnicity has been a key electoral factor in Malawi but its influence is being challenged by retrospective performance evaluation of presidential contenders and their respective political parties. The chapter further concludes that urbanization has not succeeded in diluting ethnic loyalties. The chapter argues that the implication for the observed voting pattern is that ethnicity alone can not guarantee presidential electoral victory. Other factors such as the performance record of presidential candidate and sponsoring party are increasingly becoming important in determining choice between electoral alternatives. The chapter ends with a recommendation for further inquiry on the causal relationship between perceived political party performance and the voters' electoral preference.

5.2 Conclusions and Implications

Studies on voter behavior in Malawi converge on one major conclusive view suggesting the voting pattern during the first three presidential and parliamentary elections after the third wave of global democratization in early 90s has been ethnic based. However there

has been no systematic research aimed at establishing as to whether the voter behavior in major urban centers in the country is not influenced by ethnic loyalties nor has there been an attempt to establish the extent of the influence of ethnicity on voters' electoral choice and provide account for the observed voting patterns.

The primary motivation for this study was the need to assess the extent to which ethnicity influences the presidential electoral preferences of voters in both urban and rural areas. Specifically the study intended to establish whether urbanization has diluted ethnic loyalties of voters as it has been the case in other African countries such as Zambia. The study further intended to identify other criteria other than ethnicity that inform the voter's presidential electoral choice and assess the extent to which they influence choice between presidential electoral alternatives. The characteristics of voters that are likely to influence electoral choices were also a target of inquiry for the study.

The conclusions that can be drawn from this study are numerous and varied. These conclusions and their implications are summarized below.

- The ethnic identity of the presidential candidate has been a major factor influencing the voters' electoral preference even though its influence has been declining over the years. Other factors such as policies and programmes, retrospective performance evaluation of the candidates and their respective political parties are increasingly shaping the voters' electoral choice. It has been demonstrated that voters' attitude has been moving away from ethnic based

electoral preference. However ethnicity remains a key electoral factor with a significant bearing on presidential electoral outcome. The implication is that presidential candidates are less likely to achieve electoral victory solely on the basis of superiority of policy choices and service delivery programme design.

Urbanization has not significantly played the anticipated role of diluting the voter's ethnic loyalties which tend to influence voters choice between presidential electoral alternatives. There has been no systematic attempt by voters both in the urban and rural areas to organize themselves along the lines of interest groups. Class distinctions are blurred and organization is weak. Urbanites continue to organize and associate in cultural groups with the view to preserve tradition and maintain links with the village. The dominant electoral cleavage has tended to be ethnicity often reflected in voting patterns. The simple majoritarian electoral system adopted in Malawi has exacerbated the ethnic block electoral preference as election losers perceive the potential prospects of exclusion from the political and economic sphere of the state. Thus the assumption that urbanites are less likely to be influenced by the ethnic identity of presidential candidates when choosing between electoral alternatives as compared to their rural counter parts does not hold. The anticipated urban-rural vote split along ethnic fault lines is marginal. In essence electoral behavior of urbanites and rural voters is largely similar. A converse assumption suggesting that a rural voter is likely to be influenced by the ethnic identity of the presidential candidates holds although

rural voters, just like urban voters, have increasingly demonstrated a steady move away from ethnic based voting preference.

The implication is that change of government on the basis of supremacy of policy choices and programme design is remote. Ethnicity has been a predominant electoral cleavage. Coupled with non existence of meaningful articulation of interest groups agenda, electoral campaigns will tend to be issueless. As such ethnic numerical supremacy is likely to continue providing a strong springboard for presidential electoral success. This tendency has the potential to erupt into political conflict and violence as permanent winners and losers are created on the basis of numerical advantage or disadvantage of presumably competing ethnic groups.

However no single ethnic group in Malawi can guarantee presidential electoral success solely on the basis of numerical advantage. Ethnic coalitions achieved through electoral coalitions of political parties led by ethnic elites will remain a dominant feature of electoral strategies as long as ethnicity is the dominant cleavage.

- Presidential candidates and their respective parties have no electoral incentives to identify themselves with a particular position on the ideological spectrum which should invariably inform governance and electoral policy choices. This is largely a result of potential interest groups being too small and less articulate to acquire

decisive electoral bargaining clout. Thus the assumption suggesting individuals are voted into public office on the strength of their policies and respond to the national will for fear of electoral defeat in subsequent election does not neatly hold. To the extent that the winning presidential candidate need not respond to any identifiable interests other than the ethnic constituencies, the implication is such that successive governments need not be responsive to the national will to guarantee electoral success in subsequent elections. Winning presidential candidates will be inclined to serve the ethnic constituencies that provide the most electoral advantage.

The inevitable desire to respond to ethnic constituencies which provide the ethnic vote assurance will tend to impede intra-party democracy as party presidential candidates will have to be recruited from the perceived ethnic groups that provide the electoral advantage. This occurrence will, over time, create permanent winners and losers and continue to threaten the democracy consolidation project in Malawi.

- Given the simple majoritarian electoral system and ethnicity as the dominant electoral cleavage, a presidential candidate with a minority vote overall can secure the presidential seat. The implication is the likelihood of the minority government with limited geographical appeal especially as ethnic groups which have traditionally been the most reliable base of electoral support are concentrated in specific regions. Such occurrence limits significantly the presidents' capacity to

govern especially if the minority status is replicated in the legislature as was the case with President Bingu wa Mutharika's first term in office. However, to the extent that the appeal of ethnicity as an electoral cleavage is on the downward spiral, political parties will need to expand their electoral support base beyond ethnicity if they are not to experience political oblivion.

Overall it is only plausible to conclude that ethnicity remain a major influence on voters' electoral preference in both urban and rural areas. However there are indicators suggesting the influence of ethnicity as a criterion for determining electoral preference has been waning over time. Though the influence of ethnicity is on the decline, it has the potential to remain a dominant social cleavage for party formation and voter behavior especially if politicians manipulate the ethnic appeal and those in power use it for dispensing patronage. Citizens will be freed from their loyalty to ethnicity when they start to trust the state as a fair national resource allocator and provider of basic needs. In so far as ethnicity remains a dominant electoral cleavage, democracy consolidation is under serious threat given the simple majoritarian electoral system in use in multiethnic Malawi. The majoritarian electoral system has the proven ability to heighten ethnic conflict and political violence (Bogaards, 2004a).

5.3 Recommendations

The study puts forward recommendations. The recommendations highlight areas of the study in need of further inquiry to ensure that the phenomenon of ethnicity and its

effects in the democracy consolidation process are fully understood and managed. The recommendations are stated below.

5.3.1 Recommendations for Further Inquiry

Given the limitations of the study design and scope there is need for further inquiry on ethnicity and its impact on voter behavior. Areas of interest for immediate inquiry include the following:

- Establishing and providing explanations for the causal relationship between ethnic communities' perception of successive governments' distribution of national resources and voter behavior. It is fundamentally critical to validate ethnic groups' perception of distribution of national resources and how such perceptions translate into electoral preference by members of particular ethnic groups. Such studies would contribute to the understanding of the dynamics of national wealth distribution and putting in place strategies for perceived fair allocation of resources to different geographical regions.
- Finding correlation between ethnic groups and party identification. Establishing the extent of party identifiers on the basis of ethnicity will help in understanding partisan party loyalty with the view to design civic education programmes aimed at equipping electorates to make informed electoral choices.

- Identifying and explaining factors impeding the organization of electorates on the basis of class and type of collective interests. One major conclusion from this study suggests that the inability of the electorates to organize themselves along class lines or collective interest create room for ethnicity to emerge as a dominant electoral cleavage.
- Establishing the level of participation of the rank and file within political parties in the formation of electoral coalitions. Preliminary indications in this study suggest party leaders unilaterally negotiate electoral coalitions with ethnic elites of other political parties. The unilateral decisions by party leadership in identifying electoral partners have held back intra-party democracy with wider implications on democracy consolidation in the country.

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Appendix 1

Voter Behaviour Survey

Questionnaire

RESPONDENT PROFILE

1. Respondent's

a)	City/Village :
b)	District :
c)	Region :

2. How long have you lived in the City/Village? (Tick)

5 yrs or fewer 6-10 yrs ☐	16-20 yrs
11-15 yrs	21-25 yrs ☐
26-30 yrs ☐	31 & above ☐

3. Sex (Tick)

Female ☐	Male ☐
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4. Age (Tick)

25-30 yrs ☐	36-40 yrs ☐
31-35 yrs	41-45 yrs ☐
46-50 yrs ☐	51-55 yrs ☐
56-60 ☐	60 & above ☐

5. Ethnic Group (*State*)

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6. Religion (*State*)

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7. Highest education qualification (*Tick*)

PSLC or below ☐	JC ☐
MSCE	Diploma ☐
Bachelors Degree ☐	Masters Degree ☐
PhD ☐	

8. Employment Status

Wage employment ☐	Registered Business ☐
Informal employment ☐	Subsistence farming ☐
Other (<i>Specify</i>)	

9. Average monthly earning (MK)

Below K7,000 ☐	K7,100 – K50,000 ☐
K50,100 – K100,000 ☐	K100,100 – K150,000 ☐
K150,100 – K200,000 ☐	Above K200,000 ☐

OBJECTIVE ONE

To find out the criteria guiding electorates to vote for a particular presidential candidate

10. Which presidential candidate did you vote for in the 2004 Presidential Elections?
(Tick)

Gwanda Chakwamba ☐	Justin Malewezi ☐
Brown Mpinganjira	John Tembo
Bingu Wa Muthalika ☐	☐

11 From the possible options provided, list in order of importance what influenced you to vote for the candidate you in mentioned in Q10?

Policies and programmes	.....
Ethnic identity of the candidate	.....
Party he represented	.....
Candidate's religion	.....
Candidate's personality	.....
Other (<i>Specify</i>)	.....

12 Which presidential candidate did you vote for in the 1999 Presidential Elections? (Tick)

Gwanda Chakwamba ☐	Daniel Nkhumbwa ☐
Kamlepo Kalua	Bakili Muluzi
Bingu Wa Muthalika ☐	☐

13. From the possible options provided, list in order of importance what influenced you to vote for the candidate you mentioned in Q 11

Policies and programmes	.....
Ethnic identity of the candidate	.....
Party he represented	.....
Candidate's religion	.....
Candidate's personality	.....
Other (<i>Specify</i>)	.....

14. Which presidential candidate did you vote for in 1994 Presidential Elections? (Tick)

Kamuzu Banda ☐	Chakufwa Chihana ☐
Kamlepo Kalua ☐	Bakili Muluzi ☐

15. From the possible options provided list in order of importance what
Influenced you to vote for the candidate you mentioned in Q 15?

Policies and programmes	.....
Ethnic identity of the candidate	.....
Party he represented	.....
Candidate's religion	.....
Candidate's personality	.....
Other (<i>Specify</i>)	.....

16. Did party manifestos/ policies or programmes of presidential candidates matter
in helping you decide which presidential candidate to vote for?

Agree strongly	☐	Agree	☐
Disagree	☐	Disagree strongly	☐

17. People often feel differently about various geographical regions. Could you tell me which of the statements best describes the way you feel about each of the geographical area mentioned below. Attached

	Very strongly	Fairly strongly	Not very	Not at all
North	☐	☐	☐	☐
Center	☐	☐	☐	☐
South	☐	☐	☐	☐
Malawi	☐	☐	☐	☐

OBJECTIVE TWO

To establish the extent to which ethnic identity of presidential candidates influence voter preference in urban and rural areas.

19. Would you vote for a presidential candidate whose ethnic identity is different from that to which you belong? (Tick)

Yes ☐	No ☐
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20. State reasons for stating either Yes or No in Q 16

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21. People say Malawians vote along regional lines. Would you vote for a presidential candidate who comes from a different geographical region from your own?

Yes ☐	No ☐
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22. State reason for your response in Q 21.

--

23. Does the ethnic identity of the presidential candidate matter when deciding which presidential candidate to vote for?

Very much	Fairly much
Very little	Not at all
Other (<i>Specify</i>):	

24. How much effort does/would it take to decide which presidential candidate to? vote for in the presidential elections?

A lot	Some
Very little	Not at all
Other (<i>Specify</i>):	

OBJECTIVE THREE

To establish the extent to which voter characteristics influence presidential electoral choice.

25 .People are often classified into certain social groups. To which group would you say you closely belong? (Tick)

Working class ☐	Non working class ☐
Business class ☐	Subsistence farmer ☐
Other (<i>Specify</i>):	

26. Does belonging to a particular social group influence the way you vote for a particular presidential candidate?

Agree strongly ☐	Agree ☐
Disagree ☐	Disagree strongly ☐

27. Would you vote for a presidential candidate regardless of his ethnic identity as long he/she promises to implement policies and programmes that are favourable to your social group? (Tick)

Yes ☐	No ☐
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28 Give the reason(s) for your response in Q 21.

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29. Cite policies or programmes in favor of your social group which the presidential candidate you voted for promised to implement.

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OBJECTIVE FOUR

Identify and explain factors influencing voter preferences in urban areas vis-à-vis rural voter preferences.

30. Some people say it makes no difference to them as to which presidential candidate forms the government. I would like you to tell me which statement best describes your own view. (Tick)

Agree strongly ☐	Agree ☐
Disagree ☐	Disagree strongly ☐

- 31 It has been said that political campaign by presidential candidates does not influence the minds of voters. Does campaign by presidential candidates help you to choose who to vote for? (Tick)

Yes ☐	No ☐
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32. Explain your response in Q 31

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33. When voting for a presidential candidate what influences your choice? List in order of importance the influential factors

--

34. Suppose there were four people standing for president: The first one being a Chewa, the second a Lomwe, the third a Tumbuka and the fourth a Yao, which one would you vote for?

Chewa	Tumbuka
Lomwe	Yao
Other (Specify):	

35. Give reasons for your choice in Q 34

--

Thank You

Appendix 2

Key Informant Interview Guide

Political Party Representative

Objective One

To find out the criteria guiding the political party in the identification of the party's presidential candidate

1. What is your impression on the progress of plural politics in Malawi since re-introduction of multiparty elections in 1994?
2. Tell me the factors your party considers in the identification of the presidential candidate?
3. How does each of the factors mention contribute towards the presidential electoral success?
4. Suppose your party had four presidential contenders for the candidacy for president, a Chewa, Lomwe, Tumbuka and Yao, which one would be the preferred candidate for your party?
5. Does the ethnic identity of the contenders for the party presidential candidate matter? Explain your response.

Objective Two

To find out the factors that informs the party's presidential electoral strategies

6. It has been observed that Malawians generally vote along ethnic lines. Do you share that view?
7. Could you highlight specific examples for your response in Q 6
8. Explain the strategies your party has put in place to maximize votes from your presidential candidate from all ethnic groups?
9. To what extent has each strategy been successful?

Very successful; fairly successful; Minimal success; Not successful at all
10. Give examples of policies or programmes your party has generally sold to the electorates

Objective Three

To find out factors influencing the party's distribution of support base for the presidential candidate

11. Malawi has witnessed three presidential elections since the re-introduction of plural politics in 1994. What is your impression about the voting pattern for the presidential elections?

12. Some people have argued that floating voters tend to be rare in Malawi due to principally strong identification of the political parties with particular ethnic groups. Do you agree with the observation made? Substantiate your response.
13. In the light of perceived identification of political parties with particular ethnic groups, would you say political campaigns are relevant in swaying voter preference for presidential candidates? Explain
14. How do you assess urban voters preferences for presidential elections against the perceived voting patterns along ethnic lines
15. In your view where is your support base stronger between rural and urban areas?
16. Is there any explanation for the stronger support base in the area you above mentioned?
17. Mention factors that your party think influence voters in
- a) Rural areas
 - b) Urban areas
18. If the factors stated in response to Q 17 are different could there be explanations for the differences?

Objective Four

To find out the political party's ideological differentiation and its impact on voter preferences

19. Political parties are generally classified as leftist, centralist or rightist. In which category does your party closely fall? Substantiate your claim

20. Ideologically how different is your political party compared to other major parties in Malawi?
21. Do you think the ideological party differentiation or lack of it affects the voting patterns in Malawi? Can you explain your response

Appendix 3

Expert Interview Guide

Academicians & Civil Society experts working for Democracy consolidation
programme

Objective One

To find out explanations for voting patterns observed in Malawi

1. What is your impression on the progress of plural politics in Malawi since the introduction of multiparty elections in 1994?
2. Malawi has so far witness three presidential elections since the re-introduction of plural politics in 1994. What is your impression about the voting patterns for the presidential elections?
3. It has been observed that Malawians generally vote along ethnic lines during presidential polls. What in your view could explain the voting patterns observed?
4. Do presidential candidates contribute to the voting along ethnic lines? If yes, explain.

5. Is the ethnic identity of the presidential candidate a factor in determining presidential electoral victory? Explain

Objective Two

To find out the response of political parties to the ethnic based voting patterns

6. Some political commentators have expressed fears for the voting along ethnic lines as a threat to democracy consolidation. In your view are the fears founded?
7. Some observers have argued that floating voters tend to be rare in Malawi due to principally identification of political parties with particular ethnic groups. Do you agree with the observation? Is there any explanation for the response?
8. In the light of perceived identification of political; parties with particular ethnic groups, would you say political campaigns are relevant in swaying voter preferences for the presidential elections?
9. What could be done in Malawi to deal with ethnic based voting patterns observed?
10. Do you think the party ideological differentiation or lack of it affects the voting patterns observed in Malawi

Objective Three

To find out the perception of the urban voters vis-à-vis rural voters

11. What is your perception of the Malawian urban voter against the observed pattern of voting along ethnic lines?
12. In your view do you think preferences for presidential electoral choice for urban voters is different from preferences of rural voters? Any explanation for the response?
13. Can you identify and explain the factors that influence urban voters vis-à-vis rural voters
14. Do urbanites in Malawi have strong ethnic attachments?
15. Do ethnic attachments of urbanites in Malawi influence their voting preferences for presidential elections?

Appendix 4

Focus Group Discussion Guide

1. Since the re-introduction of multiparty elections in 1994, would you say people of this area are interested in voting?
2. How would you rate the interest of people from this area in voting during presidential elections? (High, Medium, Low)
3. In your view which presidential candidate did most people from this area vote for in a) 1994, b) 1999, and 2004)?
4. Why did most people vote the way they did
5. Does/would deciding which presidential candidate to vote for involve you in a lot of arguments or conflicts with other people from this area?
6. If yes what have been the major issues at the center of the arguments or conflict with other people when deciding which presidential candidate to vote for
7. Would people from this area vote for a presidential candidate whose ethnic identity is different from that to which people of this area belong to? Give reasons for your response.

8. Do you think the ethnic identity of the presidential candidate matters to people of this area when deciding who to vote for? Justify your response
9. What do you think influence the choice of voters' in this area in the presidential electoral elections? State the factors in order of importance
10. Give a mark out of ten (10) according to how much you favor or oppose a presidential candidate whose ethnic identity is different from the ethnic group you belong to. The nearer ten, the more you favor the candidate, the nearer naught, the more you oppose the candidate.
 - a) Presidential candidate whose ethnic identity is different from the ethnic group of most people from this area but comes from the same geographical region as them
 - b) Presidential candidate whose ethnic identity is different from that of most people from this area and comes from a different geographical region
 - c) Presidential candidate whose ethnic identity is the same as most people of this area.
- 12 Some people say campaign by presidential candidates does not help in making the electoral choice because often people decide who to vote for even before electoral campaign starts. What is your view? Can you justify your view?
- 13 Tell me whether policies and programmes offered by presidential candidates matter in influencing voter preferences?
- 14 Can you cite policies or programmes that might have influenced voters in this area to vote for a particular presidential candidate

15 Any other insight on voting patterns and voter behavior in Malawi.

Appendix 5
List of Interviewees

Name	Organization	Position
Honorable Ishmael Chafukila	MCP	Executive member & Party Spokesperson
Honorable George Mtafu	UDF	Executive member & Party Chief Whip in Parliament
Honorable Loveness Gondwe	AFORD	Executive member
Honorable Dautsi	DPP	Executive member & Party spokesperson
Reverend Nkhoma	Livingstonia Synod	General Secretary
Mr. Fumbani Sichinga	Department of Statutory Corporations	Director
Mr. M'madi	Malawi Housing Corporation	Estate Manager
Mr. Rafig Hadjat	Institute of Policy Interaction	Executive Director
Dr Nandin Patel	Institute of Policy Interaction	Director